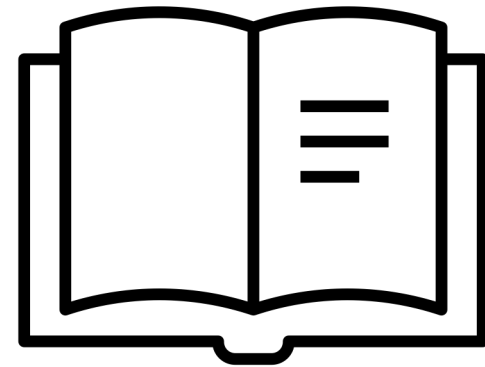


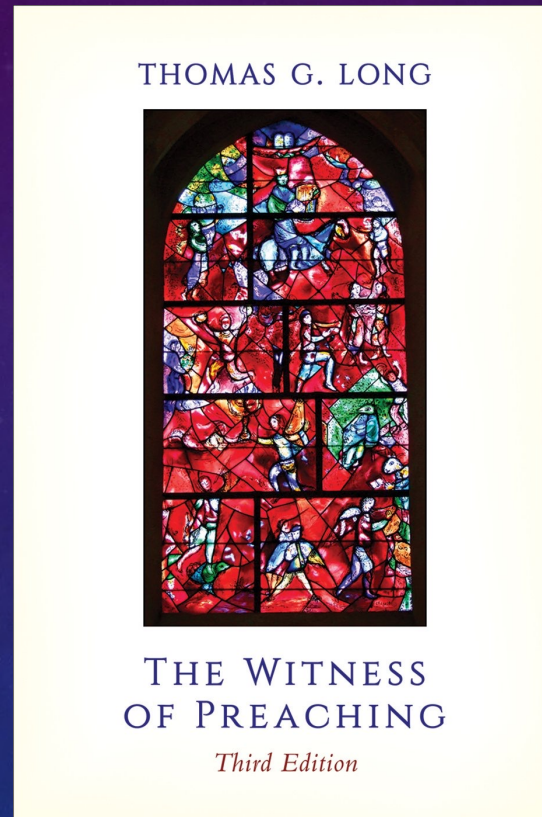
MINING THE  
SCRIPTURES DAILY  
FOR HIDDEN  
TREASURE



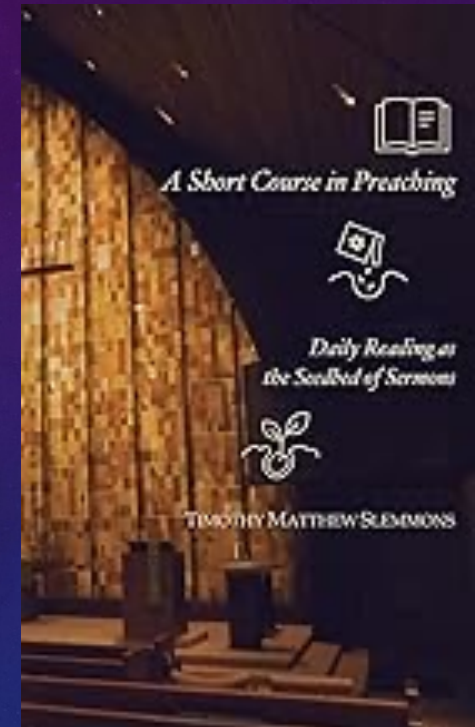
In terms of length and thoroughness ...



The *physical* steps,  
a basic to-do list



The standard textbook,  
the whole methodological *rationale*



Aims to streamline the  
process, and foster the  
preacher's *intuitive* sense  
of (or muscle memory  
for) preaching as a  
*spiritual* vocation,  
discipline, and offering



# THE PROCESS OF SERMON PREPARATION (COLOR ENHANCED!)

*Presupposition I: Devour the Scriptures Daily*

1. Pray (Give thanks for the call; ask for the message.)

2. Text

3. Context

4. Word / Promise / Christ [Exposition and Doctrine]

5. Walk / Practice / Church [Application]

6. Pray (Give thanks for the word; ask help in living it.)

*Presupposition II: Deliver the Sermon Doxologically*

~A Short Course in Preaching (p. 17)

# TWO PRESUPPOSITIONS

## *Presupposition I: Devour the Scriptures Daily*

(1) The more you apply yourself over the long haul to ... the daily devouring of the scriptures, the more easily Steps 1 through 6 will take care of themselves, and ...

## *Presupposition II: Deliver the Sermon Doxologically*

(2) the more you apply yourself conscientiously to Steps 1 through 6, the more ... the worshipful, doxological delivery of the sermon ... will likewise take care of itself.

*A Short Course in Preaching (p. 18)*

## *Presupposition I: Devour the Scriptures Daily*

The more you are in the Word daily, reading it as the gift, regarding it as the treasure that it is, trusting God to speak through this book, digesting it inwardly as God's love letter to you, to the church, and to the world, and the more you take pen in hand to record your discoveries, the more ...

- (1) you will find yourself responding naturally with prayers of gratitude and wonder,
- (2) texts will arise that beg to be preached,
- (3) you will become acquainted with the context in which these texts were written,
- (4) the primary (Christological) sense will come through as God's promissory Word,
- (5) you will start to intuit ways in which we might practice this Word in our Christian "walk", both individually and in the church; and
- (6) you will find yourself both seeking and trusting God to help you and the church to live more faithfully.

## *Presupposition I: Devour the Scriptures Daily (cont.)*

- *The Daily Lectionary* (2 year plan; mostly complete)
- Annual reading plans are probably better suited to those who preach regularly.
  - Consecutive reading from Genesis to Revelation: this may seem simplest, but it neglects one testament while engaging other.
  - Consecutive in both testaments at once: this is better, reading, say, 4 pp. OT, 2 pp. NT per day, stopping at the first paragraph break on the new page of each testament. OR you could use ...
  - Seven bookmarks ...

## Seven Bookmarks\*

- OT 1: Read **one chapter per day** of Genesis through 2Chron (3 chapters per day in that final book)
- OT 2: Proverbs through Malachi, then Ezra through Job (or vice versa: Ezra through Job, then Proverbs through Malachi). This is also done **one chapter per day**.
- NT1: Read a **pericope** or **up to a half of a chapter per day** of Matthew through Acts.
- NT2: Read a **pericope** or **up to a half of a chapter per day** of Romans through Revelation.
- Psalms: Read **three per day** in a skip-fifty cycle, starting at 1, 51, 101, and ending at 50, 100, 150. This will take you through the Psalters seven times per year. This is fitting, because the Psalms train us in the language and logic of prayer!



\*(Explained on pp. 22-25 of *A Short Course*.)

This is the form of reading you will find in the trilogy of books which, inspired by the OT character of Elihu, I wrote under the penname or “sobriquet” Eliot Young.





A SUGGESTED  
FORMAT FOR  
TURNING JOURNAL  
ENTRIES INTO  
DEVOTIONALS  
(*A Short Course*, p. 96)

You can use a blank bound  
journal (recommended),  
loose leaf binders, or  
reproduce this worksheet to  
your heart's content.

**A Devotional Worksheet**

**Presupposition I: Devour the Scriptures Daily**

1. **Pray** (Give thanks for the call; ask for the message.)  
Turn this into a **PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION:**

2. **Main preaching text:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Supporting texts:** \_\_\_\_\_ ; \_\_\_\_\_ ; \_\_\_\_\_

3. **Context:**

4. **Word / Promise / Christ [Exposition and Doctrine]**

5. **Walk / Practice / Church [Application]**

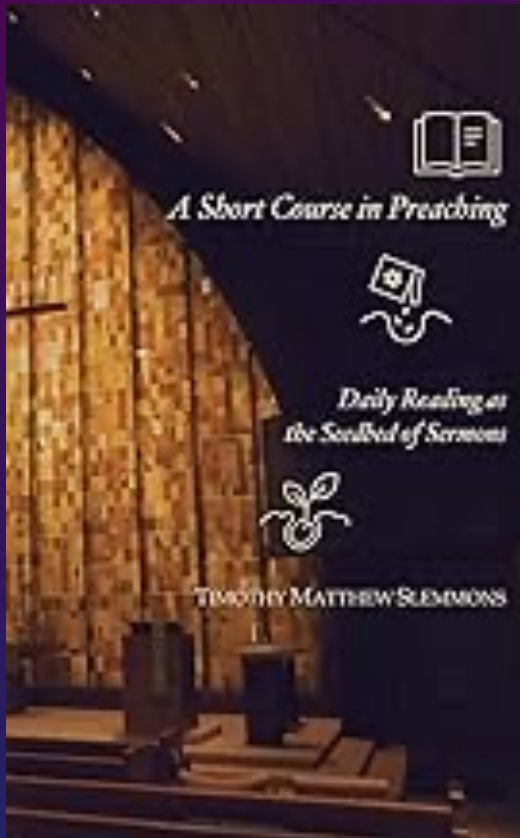
6. **Pray** (Give thanks for the word; ask help in living it.)  
Write a prayer with which to conclude your sermon:

**Sermon Title:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Presupposition II: Deliver the Sermon Doxologically!**



## THAT IS THE PROCESS IN BRIEF.



- Like a cornerstone on which the whole building is aligned, the first presupposition is the most important one, whether your calling is to teach or preach or simply be edified for daily discipleship and service.

AS FOR  
THE  
TREASURE  
HUNT,  
THERE IS A  
LOT TO BE  
SAID FOR  
STARTING  
SMALL.

• *Starting small is a kingdom principle:*

✠ *a rock destroys the statue, grows into a mountain, becomes a kingdom filling the earth (Dan 2)*



✠ *seed parables (Matt 13, Mark 4, par.)*

✠ *“Whoever is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much; and whoever is dishonest in a very little is dishonest also in much.” (Luke 16:10)*

✠ *“unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.” (Matt 18:3)*

✠ *“Enter through the narrow gate.” (Matt 7:13-14)*

✠ *What about small books? Could 3John be a narrow gate? 2John?*



## BY STARTING SMALL WE CAN, WITH THE SPIRIT'S HELP, CREATE AND BUILD MOMENTUM

- ✧ *every skill, art, talent, or discipline is learned a little at a time*
- ✧ *The sermonic remains of John Calvin the great expositor are missing the early years (when he had no stenographer) AND most of the books untreated are the shorter epistles. 2+2=Calvin started small and preached through the shorter books.*
- ✧ *With my own translation work, I have lived this small principle all over again, only making progress once I worked, not sequentially, but from shorter to longer pieces.*

BY STARTING SMALL WE OBVIOUSLY  
LIMIT THE SCOPE OR FIELD OF VISION,  
BUT TREASURE ~ *assuming we are focused on overlooked  
regions ~ SHOULD EMERGE QUICKLY  
(even if progress may seem "small")*

*3John is the shortest of the Johannine epistles*

*It has 221 Greek words (15 vv.). [2John has 246.]*

*What is it even doing in the Bible?*

*The RCL excludes it.*

*Even Karl Barth's "Aids to the Preacher" (Index to the Church Dogmatics) include no entries for 2-3 John.*

*Colin Kruse: "It has little theological content ..." (p. 243)*

*I'm not proposing we revisit whether it belongs in the "canon."*

*We trust 3John should be in the Bible, but why is it?*

*What does it offer? That is the object of our treasure hunt.*



**EXAMPLE:  
3JOHN**



# WHAT DOES 3JOHN SAY? WHAT DOES IT HAVE TO TEACH?

- 1 The elder to the beloved Gaius, whom I love in truth.
- 2 Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health, just as it is well with your soul. <sup>3</sup>I was overjoyed when some of the friends\* arrived and testified to your faithfulness to the truth, namely, how you walk in the truth. <sup>4</sup>I have no greater joy than this, to hear that my children are walking in the truth.
- 5 Beloved, you do faithfully whatever you do for the friends,\* even though they are strangers to you; <sup>6</sup>they have testified to your love before the church. You will do well to send them on in a manner worthy of God; <sup>7</sup>for they began their journey for the sake of Christ,\* accepting no support from non-believers.\* <sup>8</sup>Therefore we ought to support such people, so that we may become co-workers with the truth.
- 9 I have written something to the church; but Diotrephes, who likes to put himself first, does not acknowledge our authority. <sup>10</sup>So if I come, I will call attention to what he is doing in spreading false charges against us. And not content with those charges, he refuses to welcome the friends,\* and even prevents those who want to do so and expels them from the church.
- 11 Beloved, do not imitate what is evil but imitate what is good. Whoever does good is from God; whoever does evil has not seen God.<sup>12</sup>Everyone has testified favorably about Demetrius, and so has the truth itself. We also testify for him,\* and you know that our testimony is true.
- 13 I have much to write to you, but I would rather not write with pen and ink; <sup>14</sup>instead I hope to see you soon, and we will talk together face to face.
- 15 Peace to you. The friends send you their greetings. Greet the friends there, each by name.

NB: “the church” only occurs here (in vv. 6, 9, 10) in the Johannine epistles.

# EMPHASES IN 3JOHN (TO GAIUS)

✠ *Truth and Love = 13 times! (5.882% of the entire letter!)*

- *Truth (6)/true (1) = 7 times (3.17%)*
- *Love (2)/Beloved (4) (ἀγαπητῶ/Ἀγαπητέ) = 6 times (2.71%)*

✠ *The greatest joy! To know believers are walking in the Truth.*

✠ *Welcome, support, send believers in a manner worthy of God.*

*They labor "for the sake of the Name," with no help from unbelievers;*

*but we can collaborate with them and thus with the Truth! (vv. 5-8)*

• *(~) Abuse by Diotrophes: self-aggrandizes, slanders, banishes other believers and their supporters, rejects authority (vv. 9-10)*

✠ *"Beloved, do not imitate what is evil but imitate what is good. Whoever does good is from God; whoever does evil has not seen God." (v. 11)*

• *(+) "The Truth" testifies! ... to Demetrius' integrity (v. 12)*

*Raymond Brown: Demetrius (trad.) was later Bp. of Philadelphia*

✠ *Meeting face-to-face is to be preferred (vv. 13-14)*



# A GLANCE AT THE MAPS:



# A HISTORY OF INTERPRETATION

*Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, NT, Vol. 11, pp. 239-244 (6 pp. pdf) has brief quotes from:*

- ✠ Bede
- ✠ Hilary of Arles
- ✠ Gregory the Great
- ✠ Oecumenius
- ✠ Andreas
- ✠ Didymus the Blind
- ✠ Pseudo-Dionysius
- ✠ Clement of Alexandria

*Roughly one “authority” for each of the 8 centuries represented in this commentary, after which the ages go “dark.”*

# DID YOU KNOW ...

*Andreas Althamer, a largely forgotten Reformer (Lutheran) and the first Reformer to produce a commentary on 2-3John, was, at the same time,*

- ✦ *searching for the treasure of pure doctrine in the general epistles in order to reconcile seemingly contradictory scriptures,*
- ✦ *forging a fresh theology of baptism*
- ✦ *writing the first Catechism for children [NB: the first “Catechism” by name.]*


**CONTEXT:** Oecolampadius issued his “Q&As for the Examination of Children” in Basel in 1526 (see my *Return to God*), Althamer in 1528, then Luther thought it a good idea (*Small Cat*: 1529); Calvin’s *Institutes* (1<sup>st</sup> ed.) would be written, also in Basel, in (1536).



WHEN HAVE  
OTHER  
PREACHERS  
PREACHED ON  
OR EVEN  
REFERRED TO  
3JOHN?

- George Whitefield, “Soul Prosperity” (3John 2) (.pdf)  
[This emphasis did not even make my list above, but GW preached 9+ pp. on this one verse. ~TMS]
- “When evil lives in the heart, the eye sees offense, but when purity lives in the heart, the eye sees the finger of God. The pure always see God, but ‘he who does evil does not see God.’ (3John 11).”

~Kierkegaard, “Love Will Hide a Multitude of Sins,”  
Eighteen Upbuilding Discourses, p. 60.



## WHEN HAVE *MODERN* PREACHERS PREACHED ON 3JOHN?

- Alistair Begg preached three sermons on 3John in 2008.

<https://www.truthforlife.org/resources/?type=sermon&scripture=3%20John&chapter=1>

- In my Year D proposal, I suggest 3John as an appropriate epistle for All Saints' Day (oops!), but it would be just as fitting for a mission focus on any ordinary Sunday.



**HAVE YOU FOUND ANY TREASURE?**

**ANY DOCTRINES THAT MIGHT BE INFORMED?**

(E.G., MISSION, HOSPITALITY, LOVE/TRUTH,  
I.E., THE TRUTH THAT TESTIFIES!  
GOOD V. EVIL, TYRANNY V. (PROPER) AUTHORITY,  
IMITATION/ETHICS/THE CHRISTIAN LIFE,  
ECCLESIOLOGY, FELLOWSHIP, ETC.)?

**ANY SOURCES WORTH EXPLORING?**

**ANY POINTS OF CONTACT WITH  
CHURCH/CHRISTIAN LIFE TODAY?**

(E.G., FACE-TO-FACE MEETINGS?)

**ANY SERMONS BREWING?**