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### How a Hearer Listens to a Sermon: Setting the Presuppositions of the "Second Text"

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HOW A HEARER LISTENS TO A SERMON:  
SETTING THE PRESUPPOSITIONS OF THE "SECOND TEXT"

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APRIL 2009

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CONCORDIA SEMINARY

SAINT LOUIS, MISSOURI

HOW A HEARER LISTENS TO A SERMON:  
SETTING THE PRESUPPOSITIONS OF THE “SECOND TEXT”

A MAJOR APPLIED PROJECT SUBMITTED TO  
THE DEPARTMENT OF DOCTOR OF MINISTRY STUDIES  
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF  
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY

REVEREND JEFFERY D. NEHRT

GREENVILLE, ILLINOIS

APRIL 2009



He who has an ear, let him hear  
what the Spirit says to the churches.

Revelation 2:7a NIV

To my loving wife, Rebecca,  
who has continued to support me throughout this project  
and all of my college education from completing my bachelor's degree  
through the doctorate program.

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## CONTENTS

<b>Title</b>	<b>i</b>
<b>Copyright</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>Epigraph</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>Dedication</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>Abstract</b>	<b>x</b>

<b>Chapter</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>1 INTRODUCTION OF THE PROJECT</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>To Set the Presuppositions of the Second Text</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Process and Methodology</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Hypothesis</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Theology</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>2 THEOLOGY FOUNDATIONS OF THE PROJECT</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>A Theology of Preaching of Christ Crucified</b>	
<b>to the Hearer</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>A Theology of the Word of God and the Power of</b>	
<b>the Holy Spirit Creating Faith in the Hearer</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>A Practical Theology for the Hearer Listening to the</b>	
<b>Sermon</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>3 BIBLIOGRAPHIC RESEARCH: THE SECOND TEXT</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>How a Hearer Listens to a Sermon</b>	<b>26</b>

<b>4 THE PROJECT DEVELOPED</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>The Problem and Goal for the Project</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>The Development of the Project</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>The Pre-Sermon Bible Study</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>The Sermon and the Post-Sermon Survey</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>The Data Calculated and Tabled</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>5 THE PROJECT EVALUATED</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>Analyzing and Interpreting the Data of the SID Pastors</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>The Four Filters of Hearing</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>The <i>Logos</i> Filter of Hearing</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>The <i>Pathos</i> Filter of Hearing</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>The <i>Ethos</i> Filter of Hearing</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>The <i>Ethos</i> Filter of Hearing Comparing Only the</b>	
<b>“Very Much” Responses</b>	<b>73</b>
<b>The Community Filter of Hearing</b>	<b>80</b>
<b>The Community Filter of Hearing Comparing Only the</b>	
<b>“Very Much” Responses</b>	<b>90</b>
<b>Conclusion of Data</b>	<b>97</b>
<b>6 THE FOUR FILTERS OF HEARING CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Impact of the Project</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Implications and Content</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Contributions to the Members of Our Redeemer</b>	<b>100</b>

<b>Future Enrichment</b>	<b>102</b>
<b>Contributions to My Ministry</b>	<b>103</b>
<b>Recommendations for Congregations</b>	<b>104</b>
<b>Recommendations for Pastors</b>	<b>104</b>
<b>Personal Growth for Myself and Other Pastors</b>	<b>106</b>
<b>Future Studies to Be Made</b>	<b>107</b>
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>108</b>
<b>Appendixes</b>	
<b>A. Outlines for Preaching on the Seven Letters to the Seven Churches</b>	<b>110</b>
<b>B. Pastor's Notes</b>	<b>124</b>
<b>C. Sermons</b>	<b>152</b>
<b>D. Post-Sermon Surveys</b>	<b>187</b>
<b>E. Pre-Sermon Notes</b>	<b>201</b>
<b>F. Letters to the Congregation</b>	<b>202</b>
<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>205</b>

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of the project was to answer the question: Can preachers influence how a hearer listens to a sermon? To answer that question, 70 pastors of the Southern Illinois District, Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod were asked if they every used a pre-sermon Bible study to help the hearer listen to the sermon. A seven week pre-sermon Bible study was developed and taught based on four filters of hearing. Those filters were *Logos*, *Ethos*, *Pathos*, and community. A post sermon survey was given and separated into two categories, those who attended the pre-sermon Bible study and those who did not. The results were fairly conclusive that those who attended the pre-sermon Bible study had a greater connection to both the sermon and the preacher. Summaries, conclusions and recommendations are included for pastors, congregations, and laity.

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION TO THE PROJECT**

As a 1993 candidate from Concordia Seminary St. Louis, my first call was to serve as pastor at Our Redeemer Lutheran Church in Greenville, Illinois. Even though I have received calls from other congregations, I have continued to stay at Our Redeemer. After serving Our Redeemer for over six years, I felt that my sermons were no longer connecting to the listeners of Our Redeemer. Knowing that there was a continuing education program at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, I asked if I could observe a class to see if this could help my preaching. The director of the Doctor of Ministry Program gave me the opportunity to observe a class for three days. The presenter of the lectures on preaching was the late Dr. Oswald Hoffman, former speaker of the Lutheran Hour, which is a weekly Sunday radio program that is known for the theme of “Bringing Christ to the Nations-and the Nations to the Church.” The following Sunday, after the service, I had several members ask me what I had done to change the way I preached. Knowing that I had changed my delivery and sermon content as a result of Dr. Hoffman’s teaching, I knew that I needed to apply for the Doctor of Ministry Program in the Homiletics Tract so that I could continue learning how to be a better preacher.

Since that time, I have had the privilege to take many classes that continued to educate me in many areas of homiletics. I have grown in knowing how to prepare and deliver a sermon. However, throughout my education, I had never asked the question, “How do my members listen to the sermon?”

Every time I prepare a sermon, I use certain presuppositions that impact how I preach. The sermon must be Christ centered<sup>1</sup>, have proper distinction of Law and Gospel<sup>2</sup>, and be applicable to the hearer. Additionally, although these presuppositions are important and needed for me to write and proclaim a proper sermon, it is just as important for me to understand the presuppositions of the hearers so that they can hear the sermon. The presuppositions of the hearer can be described as the “second text.” Voelz (1997) says,

"A reader/receptor is herself a complex of beliefs, knowledge, attitudes, ideas, experiences, etc. When she interprets, these are brought into connection with the text as interpretation takes place and proceeds... **She is, as it were, a 'text' herself** - a complementary '**second text**,' which is always a factor in textual interpretation. Therefore - and this is the basic point - **the interpretation of any given text involves, in actual fact, two texts** - the given or 'target' text (e.g., the book of Galatians), and, a part of the matrix for understanding the target text... the so-called 'second text' of the interpreter."<sup>3</sup>

Because these prejudgments, prejudices and presuppositions do exist in the second text, all interpreters must be aware of how this effects their own interpretation. As Lutherans, we have our own presuppositions that we bring to a text. Some of them are “*sola fide*,” (faith alone) “*sola gratia*,” (grace alone) “*sola scriptura*,” (scripture alone) “law-gospel,” and “*simul justus et peccator*.”<sup>4</sup> (at the same time saint and sinner). These are presuppositions and prejudgments that we always must bring to the text no matter which text is used. These presuppositions must become a part of our second text so that we can help the hearer listen to the sermon more Christological.

It is our basic contention that one cannot really speak of confessional theology without such presuppositions as the above, at least not without a radical redefinition of terms. If

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<sup>1</sup> “For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.”(1 Corinthians 2:2)(NIV) All scripture references are from *New International Version* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1995)

<sup>2</sup> C.F.W. Walther, *Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1989)

<sup>3</sup> James W. Voelz, *What Does This Mean? Principles of Biblical Interpretation in the Post-Modern World* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1997), 208-209.

<sup>4</sup> Paul Althaus, *The Theology of Martin Luther* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), 242.

there is no fundamental unity in Scripture, how does one speak of biblical teaching or biblical theology on much of anything? How does one ultimately define terms other than on the basis of personal whim and subjectivity?<sup>5</sup>

In a 1999 study funded by the Lilly Endowment, 263 lay people in 28 various congregations of different ethnic and racial profiles were given the opportunity to tell how they heard a sermon. Throughout the study, those tested were interviewed and asked questions that resulted in the conclusion that all people hear sermons through four basic filters. Ronald Allen, researcher of the study, compares the hearers of a sermon with the analogy of a mixing console. Allen says,

The sermon is the input that goes into the mixing console. *Ethos, logos, pathos*, are the settings mixed within the self. The settings are different for every parishioner. In some listeners, the *ethos* settings is mixed very high while the *logos* or *pathos* are much lower, while in other hearers *logos* and *pathos* is mixed higher... A mixing console is a mechanical device whose operations can be controlled and predicted, whereas the human being can respond to sermons (and other stimuli) in ways that are spontaneous and unexpected and that create unimagined possibilities. However, the analogy does help us grasp what happens when people hear a sermon.<sup>6</sup>

Allen's research shows that the idea of filters is one paradigm for looking at how the hearer listens to a sermon. Knowing that these filters are a significant part of how a hearer listens to a sermon and also knowing that each hearer listens to a sermon as a second text, the primary purpose of this study will be to research how a pre-sermon Bible study helps set the presuppositions of the second text, that is, to prepare the listener to receive the sermon through the four filters of hearing.

### **To Set the Presuppositions of the Second Text**

As the Lilly Endowment Study referenced above has theorized, people hear through different filters. Having this insight creates a need for the pastor to not only know as many of

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<sup>5</sup> Horace Hummel, *Studies in Lutheran Hermeneutics* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1980), 220.

<sup>6</sup> Ronald J. Allen, *Hearing the Sermon* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2004), 3.

these presuppositions that the hearer may have, but also to help the hearer of the sermon set these presuppositions for hearing.

It has now been eight years since I was able to attend the three days of teaching with Dr. Hoffman. I have had the privilege to take many classes in homiletics and have been exposed to many styles and methods of preaching. I have had the opportunity to be taught by very good preachers. I have even been taught how to study a text and interpret it more clearly. Yet with all this additional education, I have never asked the question, “How do the members of Our Redeemer hear the sermon?” This project asks and answers this question. I have come to the understanding that preaching is not just about how I prepare and preach a sermon. Additionally, it is also about how the hearers listen to a sermon.

When I preach a sermon, the hearers will interpret my words using their own prejudices, presuppositions, culture, history, confession and person. Therefore, it is not only important for me to know how to properly prepare and preach a sermon, it is also important to know how my hearers listen to a sermon. Although I am quite grateful for this education, and I have grown in many areas of homiletics, the problem that I still need to address is “How I can help the hearers of my sermon connect to the text as much as is humanly possible to do.” There is no doubt that the Word of God is clear. It is His Word that does the work through both the Law and the Gospel. It is also clear that this is a gift from God and delivered by the power of the Holy Spirit.

However, this does not mean that pastors and congregations should not use the human instruments and knowledge that God has given as gifts to hear His Word. To my knowledge the members of Our Redeemer have never been asked or taught how to hear a sermon. Nor have they specifically been taught that they may hear through four filters of hearing. Many of the members may make a comment about how good the sermon was or how they related to a particular part of



the sermon. However, as the pastor proclaiming the sermon, I would like to do all I humanly can to help them listen to the sermon better.

Therefore, I will explain how a hearer of a sermon can be influenced by four filters of hearing. Three of these filters are based on Aristotle's understanding of human communication. They are: *logos*, *pathos* and *ethos*. The fourth filter is the filter called embodiment or community. This filter is based on the relationship of the individual within his/her personal congregation and his/her relationship with the community surrounding the congregation. By using a pre-sermon study, I will undertake to create an atmosphere that will engage the filters of the hearers so that there is a greater attachment to the sermon.

This Major Applied Project will focus on how a pre-sermon Bible study can be used to set the presuppositions of the second text by using the four filters of hearing. For example, if I as the teacher teach a pre-sermon study that is biased to a *logos* filter, the hearers that use *logos* filters would most likely hear the sermon based on the presuppositions planted during the study. However, those who use an *ethos* filter may have heard the same pre-sermon study but due to their *ethos* filter the presuppositions of the second text would not have the attachment to the sermon. Thus, the questions this paper seeks to answer are: "What theological justification is there for using a pre-sermon study?" "How many Southern Illinois District (SID) Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod (LCMS) pastors use a pre-sermon Bible study, and if so, what kind?" "Can the preacher help the hearer listen to the sermon by using a pre-sermon Bible study?" "Can using a pre-sermon Bible study create an atmosphere that engages the four filters of hearing?" "How can pre-sermon Bible studies help other congregations hear sermons more effectively and how can pre-sermon Bible studies help pastors prepare and preach so that the hearer listens to the sermon?"

## **Process and Methodology**

I will develop and conduct a survey of SID LCMS pastors who are serving congregations. The survey will include:

- What types of Bible studies do they offer?
- Have they ever offered a Bible study that was intended to help the hearer listen to the sermon and, if so, what kind?
- If they did offer a Bible study to help the hearer listen to the sermon, did they notice an increase in Bible study attendance?

I will develop and offer a pre-sermon Bible study that engages the four filters of hearing.

I will write and preach sermons that will be intended to engage the four filters of hearing.

I will develop and give post sermon surveys that will give me data about the influence of a pre-sermon Bible study that sets the presupposition of the second text.

I will separate and tabulate the data according to those who attended the pre-sermon Bible study and those who did not.

## **Hypotheses**

The hypotheses for this project are the following:

- That a pre-sermon Bible study will set the *logos* filter of the second text so that the hearer will have a greater connection to the sermon.
- That a pre-sermon Bible study will set the *ethos* filter of the second text so that the hearer will have a greater connection to the sermon.
- That a pre-sermon Bible study will set the *pathos* filter of the second text so that the hearer will have a greater connection to the sermon.

- That a pre-sermon Bible study will set the community filter of the second text so that the hearer will have a greater connection to the sermon.
- That as a result of the members connecting to the sermon better due to the pre-sermon Bible study, the attendance at Bible study will improve.

## **Theology**

There are three primary areas of theology that must be investigated and clearly described in this project: (1) a theology of preaching Christ crucified to the hearer, (2) a theology of the Word of God and the power of the Holy Spirit creating faith in the hearer, and (3) a practical theology for the hearer listening to the sermon.

### A Theology of Preaching Christ Crucified to the Hearer

As an LCMS pastor, every sermon must proclaim the message of Christ crucified. Without Christ crucified being proclaimed, a preacher may say many things that sound good but that is not a sermon.<sup>7</sup> This project will explore the Lutheran Confessions, along with Luther's insights of preaching Christ crucified.

### A Theology of the Word of God and the Power of the Holy Spirit Creating Faith in the Hearer

As an LCMS pastor, I know that it is not the efficacy of man that connects the Word to the hearer, but it is God's Word through the power of the Holy Spirit.<sup>8</sup> This project will explore the Lutheran Confessions, along with Luther's insights of the power of the Word of God and the power of the Holy Spirit.

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<sup>7</sup> "But we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles" (1 Corinthians 1:23).

<sup>8</sup> "Therefore I tell you that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, 'Jesus be cursed' and no one can say, 'Jesus is Lord' except by the Holy Spirit." (1 Corinthians 12:3) "So is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it." (Isaiah 55:11)

### A Practical Theology for the Hearer Hearing the sermon

As an LCMS pastor, I know that even though it is not the efficacy of man that connects the Word to the hearer, as I preach I should use all God's gifts of man's reason and senses to reach the hearer. Martin Luther made this quite clear in his explanation of the third article of the Apostles Creed when he said, "he gives me reason and all my senses."<sup>9</sup> This project will explore what the Lutheran Confessions say about the use of human reason, along with Luther's insights of God's human gifts that He has given to the church.

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<sup>9</sup> Theodore G. Tappert, ed., trans., *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), 345.

## CHAPTER 2

### THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE PROJECT

There are three primary areas of theology that must be investigated and understood for this project. These three areas will give a biblical and confessional foundation of how a hearer listens to a sermon. The three areas are: (1) A Theology of Preaching Christ Crucified to the Hearer. (2) A Theology of the Word of God and the Power of the Holy Spirit Creating Faith in the Hearer. (3) A Practical Theology for the Hearer Listening to the Sermon.

#### **A Theology of Preaching of Christ Crucified to the Hearer**

St. Paul says, “Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.”<sup>1</sup>

The first and primary question for Lutheran preachers before they prepare any sermon must be, “How is this sermon going to proclaim Christ crucified?”<sup>2</sup> For without the Cross of Jesus Christ there is no salvation, victory, or comfort and peace in the hearts and ears of the hearer.<sup>3</sup>

A preacher can preach a sermon that tells the hearer how to make certain changes in their lives, but without Christ crucified being proclaimed, the change is incomplete.<sup>4</sup> A preacher can preach a sermon that speaks of victory, but without Christ crucified being proclaimed, their victory will not stand.<sup>5</sup> A preacher can preach a sermon that speaks of salvation, but without

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Corinthians 1:22-24.

<sup>2</sup> “For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.” (1 Corinthians 2:2) See also. Theodore G. Tappert, ed., trans., *The Book of Concord; The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), 531.

<sup>3</sup> Richard Cammerer, *Preaching for the Church* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1959), 3-6.

<sup>4</sup> Tappert, 42.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 492.

Christ crucified being proclaimed their salvation is only speculative.<sup>6</sup> Christ crucified must be proclaimed in every sermon for the victory to be certain, salvation to be absolute, and the comfort to be complete.<sup>7</sup>

For a sermon to be centered on Christ crucified there must be a cross. Christ was not stoned, although they tried. Christ was not struck down by a sword although many may have wanted to. Christ Jesus died the most horrible death that one could die, as prophesied in the Old Testament, "You must not leave his body on the tree overnight. Be sure to bury him that same day, because anyone who is hung on a tree is under God's curse."<sup>8</sup>

It is ironic how such a brutal instrument of death brings Christians true peace, comfort and salvation. Christ crucified must be proclaimed.

For a sermon to be centered on Christ crucified, it must proclaim the works of Christ.<sup>9</sup> It was His righteousness; it was His works; and it was His death and resurrection that brought forth the forgiveness of sins. The sermon that does not center on the righteousness and works of Christ becomes a sermon of glory.<sup>10</sup>

Gerhard Forde, a well known Lutheran systematic theologian says,

A theologian of the cross says what a thing is. In modern parlance: a theologian of the cross calls a spade a spade. One who 'looks on all things through suffering and the cross' is constrained to speak the truth. The theology of the cross, that is to say, provides the theological courage and the conceptual framework to hold the language in place.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 623.

<sup>7</sup> Jan D. Kingston Siggins, *Martin Luther's Doctrine of Christ* (Yale University Press New Haven and London, 1970), 265-266.

<sup>8</sup> Deuteronomy 21:23.

<sup>9</sup> Jan D. Kingston Siggins, *Martin Luther's Doctrine of Christ* (Yale University Press New Haven and London, 1970), 54-60.

<sup>10</sup> Gerhard O. Forde, *Where God Meets Man :Luther's Down – To — Earth Approach To The Gospel* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1972), 39.

<sup>11</sup> Gerhard O. Forde, *On Being a Theologian of the Cross Reflections on Luther's Heidelberg Disputation, 1518* (Grand Rapids, Wm .B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997) x.

Without the proclamation of the cross, the sermon is empty words. There is no foundation and all that is being said cannot give eternal life and hope. It is only by the cross that man's unrighteousness can be truly seen as filthy and unclean. "All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away."<sup>12</sup> When Christ crucified is proclaimed, humankind can find their peace and salvation outside of themselves and trusting in the works of Christ.

St. Paul proclaims over and over again that Christ crucified must be preached.

By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.<sup>13</sup>

"I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified."<sup>14</sup>

It is only in preaching the truth of Jesus Christ's death and resurrection that preaching has the power of God. If we only speak of Jesus as a good man, prophet, or a man who did great miracles, we avoid the cross and the reality of our sin. Richard Caemmerer, an author of several homiletical books and long-time professor at Concordia Seminary says, "since the good news of Jesus' death and resurrection has such superhuman and eternal power and purpose, men should preach it with force, persuasiveness, and the impress of God's own seriousness and design."<sup>15</sup>

Caemmerer continues:

The cross cannot be considered therefore as one option among several in our attempts to see God. The cross shuts down alternatives... Theologians of the cross are those from whom all support other than the cross has simply been torn away.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Isaiah 64:6.

<sup>13</sup> 1 Cor. 15:2-4.

<sup>14</sup> 1 Cor. 2:2.

<sup>15</sup> Richard R. Caemmerer, *Preaching for the Church* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1959), 6.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.* 79-80

Martin Luther understood that preaching Christ crucified was a must. Eugene Klug says, “Luther believed that Christian preaching should focus on the truth – Christ by His atoning, vicarious sacrifice, has suffered and completely paid for each sinner’s salvation.”<sup>17</sup> According to Forde,<sup>18</sup> Luther knew that man’s righteousness had to be found outside oneself. He knew that when a man would look inside himself, all he would find would be sin and death as the scriptures say, “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”<sup>19</sup> Luther’s *Heidelberg Disputation*,<sup>20</sup> gives evidence on just how important it is for a preacher to preach Christ crucified. In his essay, Luther explains that man’s sinful nature falsely looks to his own works and will to appease God. Luther shows how preaching Christ crucified removes all confidence in a person’s own works. In thesis eighteen Luther says, “It is certain that man must utterly despair of his own ability before he is prepared to receive the grace of Christ.”<sup>21</sup> By preaching the fullness of Christ crucified, the Law of God declares that only those without sin can enter His eternal kingdom. Luther knew this Law and the power it had to drive one to the cross. Luther says, “The Law wills that man despair of his own ability, for it leads him into hell and makes him a poor man and shows him that he is a sinner in all his works.”<sup>22</sup>

According to Forde, Luther knew that there was a difference between preaching about the Law of God and preaching Christ crucified. To preach about the Law is to give examples of how to live and tell of the consequences of those who could not keep the demands of the Law. To

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<sup>17</sup> Eugene F.A. Klug, *Lift High This Cross The Theology of Martin Luther* (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2003), 54.

<sup>18</sup> Forde, *On Being a Theologian of the Cross Reflections on Luther’s Heidelberg Disputation, 1518*, 47.

<sup>19</sup> Romans 3:23.

<sup>20</sup> Martin Luther, *Luther’s Works vol.31, Career of the Reformer, I*, ed. Helmut T Lehmann, trans. Harold J. Grimm *Luther’s Heidelberg Disputation 1518* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press 1957), 39-69.

<sup>21</sup> Gerhard O. Forde, *On Being A Theologian Of The Cross Reflections on Luther’s Heidelberg Disputation, 1518*, 65.

<sup>22</sup> Luther, cited in Forde, *On Being A Theologian Of The Cross Reflections on Luther’s Heidelberg Disputation, 1518*, 65.



preach about the Law is to give a false idea that by their own power and their own willingness the hearers can eventually improve themselves so that they can fulfill all that the Law demands. Luther knew there was no room in the pulpit for such ideas. Preaching about the Law gives no true peace or salvation. In the book *Where God Meets Man*, Forde says this about Luther's understanding of the Law.

When we begin to realize that on the cross Jesus was not playing theological games with God but dying, being forsaken; when we begin to realize that for him too there was no way out, then we begin to hear the real voice of the law. This voice of the law, the preaching of the cross, puts the old Adam to death. It puts to death in us the pious fraud, the man who thought there was some other way out – even if that meant using the cross itself for his own – “theology of glory.” A theology of the cross puts an end to all that.<sup>23</sup>

After the law has done its work of emptying one's own works from himself, preaching Christ crucified is the healing power of the cross that comforts those driven to despair.

All that God says and does the devil must say and do first. One must first go to hell before one can be raised. There is no other way here. God must be accorded the absolute right to do this. The sinner must suffer this if there is to be life.<sup>24</sup>

Luther stated that the only way true spiritual life can happen is from the preaching of Christ crucified. In thesis twenty-five of his *Heidelberg Disputation*, Luther teaches that the only true righteousness that man can find any comfort in is the righteousness of Christ. “He is not righteous who works much, but he who, without work, believes much in Christ.”<sup>25</sup> It is the righteousness of Christ that gives life. It is the righteousness of Christ that gives true comfort to the troubled heart.

Luther gives one more reason to preach Christ crucified in his final thesis as he explains how one is moved by the power of Christ to serve God. When the joy of Christ overwhelms the

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<sup>23</sup> Gerhard O. Forde, *Where God Meets Man: Luther's Down – to – Earth Approach To The Gospel*, 39.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 90-91.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 103.

heart, the response of the hearer is to care for others. “Rightly speaking, therefore, the work of Christ should be called the operative power, and our work, the operation; so our operation is pleasing to God by the grace of the operative power.”<sup>26</sup> In Christ, all that is done by faith is a good work in the eyes of God. By preaching Christ crucified, the hearer is slain by the law of God, healed by the power of the cross, and is moved to respond with care. Luther believed this to be true and proclaimed it.

Luther believed that every time a preacher stepped into the pulpit, he was in combat against the devil and the prize was the hearer’s conscience, as Perry Tosco demonstrates:

Preaching is nothing less than mortal combat for the conscience. The Theology of the cross reveals to the hearer the full horror of the situation in which he finds himself when his conscience is attacked or tempted, and then delivers that conscience safely to faith in Christ. Preaching, as understood by Luther, is not only meant to be clearly understood, but actually to create understanding. Thus preaching is actually a saving event where the word the preacher speaks will grasp, shape, and save the hearer.<sup>27</sup>

According to Tosco, Luther understood that every preaching event involved God, the devil, and the hearer of the sermon. If the God that was being proclaimed was a God of man’s ideas, thoughts or emotions, then this God could only bring confusion and terror of conscience. However, if the God that was being proclaimed was a God found in Christ, then this God was a God that could defeat the devil and bring comfort to a troubled conscience.<sup>28</sup> Tosco continues,

For Luther, God is God as revealed in Christ. The central interpretive principle of theology of the cross is that the Scriptures are about one thing: Jesus Christ... The Scriptures are about Christ alone and him crucified... We rely with our whole existence in the preaching of Christ crucified. The God not preached is none of our business, and will

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 110.

<sup>27</sup> Perry Tosco, *A Reader in Pastoral Theology Articles from LOGIA A Journal of Lutheran Theology* (Concordia Theological Seminary Press Fort Wayne, 2001), 77.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 78.

terrify us and drive us from faith into despair, should we try to pry into these things and thus divert our eyes from Christ alone.<sup>29</sup>

Luther understood that preaching Christ crucified, was the only way the hearer could not only understand but also truly hold fast to God. For in preaching Christ crucified God was a God of grace, mercy and love.<sup>30</sup>

### **A Theology of the Word of God and the Power of the Holy Spirit Creating Faith in the Hearer.**

When Christ crucified is proclaimed, the Holy Spirit creates faith through the Word of God. The scriptures are very clear: “Faith comes from hearing the message.”<sup>31</sup> Throughout the scriptures, we see that God creates faith through His Word. It is God’s powerful Word that can turn around the sinful heart and drive it to repentance. Eugene Peterson, gives a picture of the human level of emotions and the relationship a person can have with the Word of God.

Soon or late, we realize that it is not enough to get the nouns and verbs right, to explain the articles of the Creed adequately, to present God revealed in Jesus truly and well. We also have to deal with ears and eyes, hearts and minds, kidneys and feet – all these organs of human receptivity and response, most of which seem to be malfunctioning in some way or other most of the time. We find ourselves in the thick of what our ancestors were apt to designate ascetical theology, the wisdom/knowledge in preparing, cultivating, correcting our human condition for an adequate response to the revelation of God.<sup>32</sup>

As Peterson points out, on a human level there can be many effects on a person when it comes to the Word of God. However, the greatest effect comes not from the person but the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit creates and sustains faith. As the scriptures say,

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 78.

<sup>30</sup> Gerhard O. Forde, *On Being A Theologian Of The Cross Reflections on Luther’s Heidelberg Disputation 1518*, 12.

<sup>31</sup> Rom. 10:17.

<sup>32</sup> Eugene Peterson, *Subversive Spirituality* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B Erdmans Publishing Co., 1994), 81.

“Therefore I tell you that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, ‘Jesus be cursed,’ and no one can say, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ except by the Holy Spirit.”<sup>33</sup> Throughout the Scriptures, the Holy Spirit creates faith by means of God’s Holy Word. When Jesus’ mother, Mary, was told by an angel that she would bear a son, Mary was confused and surprised and responded, “How can this be, since I am a virgin?” The message that came to Mary was the Word of God saying, “The Holy Spirit will overcome you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you.” It was the power of the Holy Spirit that created faith to believe the word and Mary responded: “Be it done to me according to your word.”<sup>34</sup> It was not her experience or her feelings that caused her response. It was the Holy Spirit working through the preaching of God’s Holy Word.<sup>35</sup>

On the day of Pentecost, as Peter preached the Word of God to the crowd, he concluded his sermon by saying, “Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.” After hearing the Word of God by the power of the Holy Spirit, the people were cut to the heart and cried out, “What must we do to be saved?”<sup>36</sup> The Holy Spirit worked in their hearts and moved them to see their need of salvation. As stated in the Formula of Concord Solid Declaration, Article II,

Through this means (namely, preaching and hearing of his Word) God is active, breaks our hearts, and draws man, so that through the preaching of the law man learns to know his sins and the wrath of God and experiences genuine terror, contrition, and sorrow in his heart, and through the preaching of meditation upon the holy Gospel of the gracious forgiveness of sins in Christ there is kindled in him a spark of faith which accepts the forgiveness of sins for Christ sake and comforts itself with promises of the Gospel. And in this way the Holy Spirit, who works all of this, is introduced into the heart.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> 1 Corinthians 12:3.

<sup>34</sup> Luke 1:34-36.

<sup>35</sup> Tappert, 313.

<sup>36</sup> Acts 2:36-38.

<sup>37</sup> Tappert, 531.

Martin Luther wrote that a preacher's words were nothing unless he spoke God's Word in its truth and purity.

It is taught among us that one holy Christian church will be and remain forever. This is the assembly of all believers among whom the Gospel is preached in its purity and the holy sacraments are administered according to the Gospel.<sup>38</sup>

However, when the preacher preaches the Gospel of Jesus Christ and Him crucified, it is the Holy Spirit who opens the hearts of the unbelievers. According to Luther,

Gospel means nothing but a preaching and proclamation of the grace and mercy of God through Jesus Christ, merited and won by His death, and historically and etymologically speaking, it is really not that which is contained in books and is put together in letters, but rather in oral proclamation, a living Word, a voice that resounds through the entire world and is publicly proclaimed that it might be heard everywhere.<sup>39</sup>

The Large Catechism says concerning the Third Article of the Creed that the Holy Spirit works through the preached Word of Christ:

Neither you nor I could ever know anything of Christ, or believe in him and take him as our Lord, unless these were first offered to us and bestowed on our hearts through the preaching of the Gospel by the Holy Spirit.<sup>40</sup>

Luther continues by saying, "The Holy Spirit reveals and preaches that Word, and by it he illumines and kindles hearts so that they grasp and accept it, cling to it and persevere in it."<sup>41</sup>

Luther not only believed that it was by the power of the Holy Spirit that faith could be created to believe the promises of God, he also knew that without the preaching of Christ there would be no power of the Holy Spirit. Words can be proclaimed and sermons can be given but if

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<sup>38</sup> Tappert, 32.

<sup>39</sup> Henery J. Eggold, *Preaching is Dialogue: A Concise Introduction to Homiletics* (Grand Rapids: Baker Publishing House, 1980), 21.

<sup>40</sup> Tappert, 415.

<sup>41</sup> Tappert, 416.

there is no Christ then there is no Holy Spirit and there is no faith. Continuing in his explanation of the Third Article Luther says,

Therefore there was no Christian Church. For where Christ is not preached, there is no Holy Spirit to create, call, and gather the Christian Church, and outside it no one can come to the Lord Christ.<sup>42</sup>

The Holy Scriptures, the Lutheran Confessions, and Martin Luther, as demonstrated above, make it very clear that God creates faith through His Word by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Furthermore, God uses the Office of Holy Ministry and pastors as his instruments of proclaiming His Holy Word.<sup>43</sup> In the *Bondage of the Will*, Luther says,

It has thus pleased God to impart the Spirit, not without the Word, but through the Word, so as to have us as cooperators with him [1 Cor.3:9] when we sound forth outwardly what he himself alone breathes inwardly where he wills, thus doing things that he could of course do without the Word, though he does not will so to do.<sup>44</sup>

Luther says that preachers are the cooperators who are God's instruments. As cooperators with God's Holy Word and the Holy Spirit, they should use all their human reason and senses that God has given them to reach the hearers with His holy precious Word.

### **A Practical Theology for the Hearer Listening to the Sermon**

Knowing the people and oneself is important for sermon delivery and understanding. Even though it is the work of the Holy Spirit, preachers can remove obstacles that may hinder the Holy Spirit's work.<sup>45</sup> This happens when preachers know their flock, the Scriptures, and themselves. John H.C. Fritz, Concordia Seminary Dean from 1920-1941, says,

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<sup>42</sup> Tappert, 416.

<sup>43</sup> Norbert H. Mueller and George Kraus, *Pastoral Theology* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1990), 19.

<sup>44</sup> Martin Luther, *The Bondage of the Will, Luther's Works*, vol.33, *Career of the Reformer: III*, ed. Harold J. Grimm, trans. Lowel J. Satre (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1957), 155.

<sup>45</sup> John H.C. Fritz. D. D. *Pastoral Theology: A Handbook of Scriptural Principles* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House 1932), 65.

The pastor must also keep abreast of the times and should therefore be generally well informed. He must know the conditions of his own time and also know what the people of his day are reading and thinking and saying and doing.<sup>46</sup>

The more the pastor knows about the sheep in the flock that he has been given, the better the pastor can bring Christ to their needs.

In Martin Luther's explanation of the First Article of the Apostles Creed, he says that God has given humankind their reason and all their senses. Knowing that their reason and all their senses are gifts of God should motivate pastors to do all they humanly can do to reach the hearer.

Therefore, we should use all of God's gifts of research, human knowledge, and all that would be considered adiaphora to reach the hearer. Francis Pieper, former President of the LCMS and Professor of Systematic Theology of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, says, adiaphoran are "customs within the church that are neither commanded nor forbidden by God."<sup>47</sup> Throughout the years of the Church, customs have been changed to meet the needs of the people of God. When changes are made in the church, they must always be within the boundaries of not going against what the Word of God says or promote what is forbidden by God's Word. Within these boundaries, a pastor may and should do all he can to reach the hearer but he must do it with caution.

Therefore we believe, teach, and confess that the congregation of God in every place and at every time has the right, authority and power,(in matters truly adiaphora) to change, to reduce, or to increase them, without frivolity and offense, but in an orderly and appropriate way, as at any time may seem to be most profitable, beneficial, and salutary for the good order, Christian discipline, and the edification of the church.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 20.

<sup>47</sup> Francis Pieper D.D., *Christian Dogmatics*, vol. III (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1953), 282.

<sup>48</sup> Tappert, 612.

The Lutheran Confessions give the freedom to use methods and means so that the hearer can better listen to the sermon, as long as it is done in good order. The Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) of the LCMS states it in this way,

The Lutheran church has always maintained that specific strategies for missions are neither commanded nor forbidden in scripture. The church is at liberty, therefore, to determine how it will organize its mission program.<sup>49</sup>

Even though the CTCR document specifically mentions missions, the same boundaries hold true for reaching the listener of a sermon.

Martin Luther is well aware of the listeners and warns pastors to be aware that the hearers are not stones but are God's people who need to hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He makes this very point in one of his sermons as he says, "Therefore, he who believes takes his rightful place at this sacrament. That's why I have said that these words are spoken, not to stones or a pillar, but to Christians."<sup>50</sup> Luther goes on to say:

And above all note these words, 'for the remission of sins,' as the pledge of the sacrament which assures us that we have the forgiveness of sins because it is proclaimed, not to a stone, but to you and me. Otherwise the minister might as well keep silent.<sup>51</sup>

Even though Luther is specifically addressing the words of institution in this sermon, the application holds true to all sermons. Preachers preach to people, not to stones. Therefore, preachers should do all they can as preachers to reach the people. Charles Arand, a systematics professor at Concordia Seminary, explains that there is a horizontal relationship to people and a vertical relationship to God that a preacher needs to be aware of. Arand says,

In the first article, reason serves a magisterial role over and against creation. It is used for the exercise of dominion and the pursuit of human righteousness. With it we develop the sciences, the liberal arts, the social sciences. Each of these serves the preservation and

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<sup>49</sup> *Commission on Theology and Church Relations of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. Evangelism and Church Growth: With Special Reference to the Church Growth Movement* (St. Louis: LCMS, 1987) 23.

<sup>50</sup> Martin Luther, *Sermons Ten Sermons on the Catechism, Luther's Works*, vol.33, Sermons: I, ed. John W. Doberstein, trans. Helmut T. Lehmann (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1957), 191.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 191.



continuance of creation in their own way. Within the first article God gives us the Ten Commandments, but He lets us figure out how to do them.<sup>52</sup>

By using the God given gifts to better understand how humans relate and communicate with each other, the ministerial role of reason are applied and used. This does not mean that the magisterial role will ever be greater than the ministerial role of reason relative to the Word of God. Arand continues,

In rejecting a magisterial use for fallen reason does not mean we reject a ministerial use of reason in the third article. Take the Bible as an example. Reason can help us understand the grammar and vocables of the Bible. It is through reason's development of Greek grammars and lexicons in the first article that we can read the Scriptures in their original languages. Reason can help us understand better its historical context and the structure of its arguments, etc. But it cannot help us understand the "foolishness of the Gospel." Similarly, rhetoric can serve the proclamation of the gospel and render an audience willing to hear it, but rhetoric cannot create faith.<sup>53</sup>

Pastors should use all the gifts of human reason and understanding to know their flock. However, human reason should always be guided by God's Holy Word. In the postmodern world, pastors should do all they can to reach the listener with the good news of Christ. One way to do this is to understand how a hearer actually listens to a sermon. By doing this, pastors are using the ministerial gifts to God's glory.

Ronald Allen, a prominent professor of preaching at Christian Theological Seminary, says,

One of the most important findings of our study is the remarkable diversity with respect to how people listen to sermons in the typical congregation. As an interviewee stated, 'Indeed, the authors of this book no longer speak of the way people listen to sermons, as if all of us hear sermons in the same way. We speak instead of different clusters or

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<sup>52</sup> Charles P. Arand, *Moving Between Two Worlds: The Challenge of Church and Ministry in the 21 Century* (unpublished paper, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, December 2001), 3.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

patterns of listening that are present even in the same congregation, and certainly in the different congregations.’<sup>54</sup>

Allen’s quote makes it clear that all people hear sermons differently. Faithful preachers should use all of the First Article gifts God has given. The following chapter will explore the information that Allen has mentioned. By better understanding how a hearer listens to a sermon, pastors are using their God – given gifts to the glory of God.

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<sup>54</sup> Mary Alice Mulligan and Diane Turner-Sharazz and Dawn Ottoni Wilhelm and Ronald J. Allen *Believing In Preaching: What Listeners Hear in Sermons* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2004), 2.

## CHAPTER 3

### BIBLIOGRAPHIC RESEARCH : THE SECOND TEXT

Each time a pastor goes out of the sacristy and into the sanctuary to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ, he is proclaiming to a gathered group of people. James Voelz calls this gathered group the “second text.”<sup>1</sup> What this means is that even though the pastor is going to be proclaiming from the text before him, each member that is listening to the proclamation will be interpreting the words that he proclaims with their own text. They will interpret the pastor’s words using their own prejudices, presuppositions, culture, history, confession and person. Therefore, it is not only important for the preacher to know how to properly prepare and preach a sermon, it is also important to know how the hearers listens to a sermon.

With these insights available, preachers can use this information to help the hearer listen to the sermon. This chapter will (1) provide research about how the second text (the hearer) interprets what it hears; (2) demonstrate how a hearer listens to a sermon through four filters of hearing.

Although the name, “second text” is given by Voelz, the idea of the second text has a history as far as Aristotle. Hans-Georg Gadamer, a German philosopher of the continental tradition and a historicist of Aristotelian philosophy, says,

The implicit presupposition of historical method, then, is that the permanent significance of something can first be known objectively only when it belongs to a closed context – in other words, when it is dead enough to have only historical interest. Only then does it seem possible to exclude the subjective involvement of the observer. This is, in fact, a paradox, the epistemological counterpart to the old moral problem of whether anyone can be called happy before his death. Just as Aristotle showed how this kind of problem can serve to sharpen the powers of human judgment, so hermeneutical reflection cannot fail to find here a sharpening of the methodological self-consciousness of science. It is true that certain

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<sup>1</sup> James Voelz, *What Does This Mean? Principles of Biblical Interpretation in the Post-Modern World, Second Edition* (St. Louis: CPH, 1997) 209.

hermeneutical requirements are automatically fulfilled when a historical context has to be of only historical interest<sup>2</sup>

Gadamer continues Aristotle's idea by developing the presuppositions that each experience becomes its own horizon. Within each horizon, there is both before and after experiences that fuse together to create a continuum of experiences. Gadamer also says,

Rather every such intentional experience always implies a twofold empty horizon of what is not actually meant in it, but toward which an actual meaning can, of its nature, be directed; and the unity of flow of experience obviously includes the whole of all experiences that can be thematized in this way.<sup>3</sup>

Gadamer understands that each experience builds toward other experiences which effect interpretation. He also believes that this same concept is affected by each person's own presuppositions, prejudices and prejudgments. Therefore, each interpreter must be aware of his/her need for neutrality.

Anthony C. Thiselton, Professor of Christian Theology at the University of Nottingham and Canon Theologian of Leicester Cathedral, describes how Gadamer understands "pre-judgment" or "prejudice."

"Prejudice" or "pre-judgment" (*der Begriff des Vorurteils*), Gadamer insists, should not be made to bear the negative meaning which popular usage today derives from the Enlightenment. The word calls attention only to the preliminary or provisional nature of the judgment in question....In German legal terminology the term signifies a provisional legal verdict before the final verdict is reached.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Corporation, 2<sup>nd</sup>, revised edition, 1989), 298.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 245.

<sup>4</sup> Anthony C. Thiselton, *The Two Horizons: New Testament Hermeneutics and Philosophical description with Special Reference to Heidegger, Bultmann, Gadamer, and Wittgenstein* (Exeter: The Paternoster Press, 1980), 305.

Gadamer rejected the idea of the Enlightenment which states that all authority and tradition was suspect. He argued that authority and tradition could have the right human reason to support one's own prejudices and pre-judgments. Thiselton continues by saying,

The acceptance of authority, he argues, is not necessarily blind or irrational obedience. It may be based on the thoroughly rational insight that as an individual of a particular historical generation I have my own built-in limitations, and may stand in need of learning from a source which has a better understanding of something than I do.<sup>5</sup>

Don S. Browning, Alexander Campbell Professor of Ethics and the Social Sciences Emeritus at the University of Chicago Divinity School, explains Gadamer's teaching as dialogue or conversation that shapes the way we interpret. He says,

This has brought recognition that our present concerns shape the way we interpret the past. The reverse is also true. Solving our present ethical problems involves appropriating and reconstructing the past. These philosophical currents emphasize the importance of situations and how the situations of our inquiries inevitably color not only our practical thinking but all pursuit of knowledge and understanding<sup>6</sup>

Browning compares Gadamer's understanding of the fusion of two horizons to what he calls the envelope of practical reason. For Browning, all the experiences that pastors have had in the past do not remain isolated but become a part of how they shape our present events.

Even though Gadamer or Browning never spoke of the second text in their writings, their ideas and concepts were influential enough for Voelz to call it the "second text" in his book.

Therefore – and this is the basic point – the interpretation of any given text involves, in actual fact, two texts – the given or "target" text (e.g., the book of Galatians), and as part of the matrix for understanding the target text (as a whole or focused on any of its parts), the so-called "second text" of the interpreter.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 305.

<sup>6</sup> Don S. Browning, *A Fundamental Practical Theology :Descriptive and Strategic Proposals* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press 1991), 35.

<sup>7</sup> Voelz, 209.

Voelz makes it very clear that the second text is a part of all interpretation. Therefore, because these pre-judgments, prejudices, and presuppositions do exist in the second text, all preachers should do all they can to learn how the second text listen to the sermon and learn how to set the presuppositions of the second text.

### **How a Hearer Listens to a Sermon**

There are some theological concerns that may be raised about this approach. For instance some might say, “You cannot manipulate the Holy Spirit,” or “preaching is an activity of God, not man.” Indeed the Word does the work of quickening the heart and the Holy Spirit works through the means of God’s Word as confessed by the Lutheran confession.

That we may obtain this faith, the Ministry of Teaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments was instituted. For through the Word and Sacraments, as through instruments, the Holy Ghost is given, who works faith; where and when it pleases God, in them that hear the Gospel, to wit, that God, not for our own merits, but for Christ's sake, justifies those who believe that they are received into grace for Christ's sake. They condemn the Anabaptists and others who think that the Holy Ghost comes to men without the external Word, through their own preparations and works.<sup>8</sup>

The Lutheran Confessions and the Bible tell us that God is always acting with His Law and His Gospel to work in the hearts and lives of the hearer. As the Bible says,

As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Tappert, 31.

<sup>9</sup> Isaiah 55:10-11.

“Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.”<sup>10</sup>

It is clear in the Word of God and throughout the Lutheran Confessions that God is active through His Word. It is also clear that God has chosen to use the Holy Spirit to guide and direct us through His Word. However, the preacher can hinder or enhance how the hearer listens to the sermon. By understanding how the hearers listen, a preacher increases his ability to reach the hearer. This should be a major part of both preparing and delivering a sermon. Richard Caemmerer says,

But we mean the writing that keeps on asking what the preacher began to ask with first glimpse at his text? What’s here for my hearer? In the second stage of preparation he said it more acutely: How can I move my hearer God’s way? Even under the drudgery of outlining he was saying: How can I get my hearer to assimilate this message most easily? And how the preacher is still saying: How can I say this so that he will understand me, pay attention to me, hang on to me paragraph by paragraph, and take it along to try out in the days ahead?<sup>11</sup>

William H. Roen, pastor of Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church and former professor at the Catholic University of America, describes and applies the teachings of Aristotle’s rhetoric of *logos*, *pathos*, and *ethos* in a theoretical context. He says,

When we speak, we use three ways to hold the attention of others and convince them of what we are saying. These “modes of persuasion” are really three kinds of meaning which make up all communication. The Greek philosopher Aristotle (384-322) in his Rhetoric calls them “*ethos*,” “*pathos*,” and “*logos*.” Loosely translated these terms mean “character,” “feelings,” and “word”.<sup>12</sup>

Roen understands that Aristotle’s ideas of rhetoric are as applicable today as they were in the days of Aristotle. In the postmodern world that we live in, there is an overpowering force of

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<sup>10</sup> Romans 10:17.

<sup>11</sup> Richard R. Caemmerer, *Preaching for the Church* ( St. Louis: CPH, 1959), 100.

<sup>12</sup> William H. Roen, *The Inward Ear: A Sermon Evaluation Method for Preachers and Hearers of the Word* (New York City: An Alban Institute Publication), 3.

information, communication, media, and just plain clutter that strives for our attention. When the preacher is preaching to the hearer, he should be aware of more than just the words he proclaims.

Graham Johnston explains that in this postmodern world, a preacher's communication is more than words.

Communication is the reception of words and perception by the listener on a cognitive, intuitive, and emotional level. The message received has more to do with the tone of a speaker's voice, the gestures, and facial expressions than the words chosen.<sup>13</sup>

Johnston continues his understanding of reaching the hearer as he elaborates on the use of Aristotle's rhetoric. He says,

Aristotle spoke of the *logos*, the words, the *ethos*, the motive of the speaker, and the *pathos*, the emotional appeal to the audience. Each of these elements plays a key role in the communication process. For modern listeners, preaching was the age of the *logos*, the word. For twenty-first-century listeners, preaching must value the *ethos* and *pathos* as well, both the message's perception and feel<sup>14</sup>

The latest information and research has added a fourth concept of hearing, known as community. This understanding was discovered as a result of the Lilly-funded research by Ronald J. Allen mentioned earlier in Chapter One. As a result of this study, the hearers that were questioned shared that they listen to a sermon better when those around them also appear that they too, are actually engaged in listening to the sermon. Mary Alice Mulligan describes this mode of hearing as she explains communal identity listeners. She says,

The third cluster of answers gathered around the understanding of the sermon as not only addressing individuals but also speaking of communal identity listeners. An analogy we might use again is popcorn, but this time we might understand the individuals popped in the bowl together, but then as a congregation there is an additional ingredient added from the sermon(perhaps the infusion of the Holy Spirit), and they become something different together, as when we add caramel to the bowl of popcorn and other people, to use another food analogy, treat the bonding within the faith community as almost total, as if they

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<sup>13</sup> Graham Johnston, *Preaching to a Postmodern World: A Guide to Reaching Twenty-First Century Listeners* (Grand Rapids: Barker Books, 2001), 66.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.



were gelatin crystals on which the boiling water of the Spirit is poured during the sermon. In this case, the individual almost disappears, melted into the communal.<sup>15</sup>

Browning points out that even though Gadamer's hermeneutic does not emphasize community, the understanding of it is very implicit. Browning says,

The community as a whole, with members participating to varying degrees, enters a dialogue toward the end of achieving a working consensus – a consensus that may break up and be reformulated repeatedly.<sup>16</sup>

When a preacher begins to prepare a sermon, he should be aware that each of the hearers are going to listen to the sermon through the filter of either *logos*, *pathos*, *ethos*, and community.<sup>17</sup> When a preacher has a better understanding of how these four filters affect the hearer, it can help him better understand how to prepare the sermon.

The *logos* filter, in classic rhetoric, “refers to how the speaker appeals to the audience by developing the content of the speech.”<sup>18</sup> The *logos* filter connects the word to the listener's reason. For a hearer to listen to a sermon through a *logos* filter, he needs to be able to understand and digest the information in his mind. What is important for this type of hearer are the facts, data, logical argument, persuasiveness of the words spoken, use of reason, life orientation, deductive and inductive world views, examples, comparisons, illustrations, imaginative experience, and contextual thinking.<sup>19</sup> A good example of this type of filter would be to think of a lawyer's brief. Everything is in a systematic order and is ready for debate. Allen also says:

For a lot of these listeners, in fact, the sermon must have at least one discernible point. They want the logic of the sermon to be internally consistent, and to be consistent with other things that the church believes and does. They also want the sermon to be

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<sup>15</sup> Mary Alice Mulligan, and Diane Turner-Sharazz, and Dawn Ottoni Wilhelm, and Ronald J. Allen, *Believing in Preaching : What Listeners Hear in Sermons* (St. Louis, Chalice Press ,2004), 140.

<sup>16</sup> Browning, 50.

<sup>17</sup> Ronald J. Allen, *Hearing the Sermon: Relationship/Content/Feeling* (St. Louis, Chalice Press ,2004), 12-15.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 44-45.

intellectually credible. In other words, they want to be able to believe that the major points of the sermon are true.<sup>20</sup>

The filter of *ethos* is activated by the trustworthiness and character that the hearer has for the preacher.<sup>21</sup> The hearer must trust that the preacher is real.<sup>22</sup> The hearer must believe that the words that the preacher is proclaiming are not just words from his mouth but also actions lived in his life. For the hearer who listens to the sermon through the filter of *ethos*, it is important that the preacher understand the following characteristics and relationships. These characteristics are trust, values, having credibility, being honest, being positive, confidential, having respect, confident, and being virtuous. The hearers of the *ethos* filter are affected by the moral character of the preacher not only as he presents himself in the church but also in the community. Ronald Allen gives this example of one interviewee who said, “You need to be consistent between your messages and your daily life. If you are going to preach against something, and then you go out and do it, why am I going to listen to you the next day?”<sup>23</sup> To preach so that the *ethos* hearers will hear, the preacher must be true to himself and to his hearers.

*Pathos* hearers receive information by the feelings and emotions in the sermon.<sup>24</sup> For the hearer with a *pathos* filter, the sermon must engage the hearer and evoke feelings that stir the emotions. Allen says,

A speaker seeks to use *pathos* in such a way as to create a favorable disposition towards the claims of the speech in the sermon. A speaker using *pathos* sometimes tries to invoke emotions that relate to the content of the sermon.<sup>25</sup>

The other filter that is a part of the way a hearer hears a sermon is community. This filter is not directly connected to Aristotle’s understanding of communication, but it relates to how a

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 44.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 25.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid. 25.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid. 70.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid. 71.

hearer listens to a sermon in two ways. First is the individual's relationship of community within the congregation. This relationship could relate to the terms in the scriptures of the royal or holy priesthood, which is known as the priesthood of all believers.<sup>26</sup> Second is the individual's relationship within the community beyond the congregation. When the hearer listens to a sermon as an individual, he also is surrounded by his fellow believers. As the sermon is heard, the emotions, reactions and relationship that individuals have with their fellow believers can effect how the sermon is heard. The facts show the better relationship the congregation has with each other the better each individual is able to hear the sermon. Mary Alice Mulligan says this about the filter of community.

With these thoughts in mind, we invite preachers to ask themselves: What do you think your preaching is doing in shaping who your congregants are becoming as individuals? And what do you think preaching is doing in your congregation communally? We invite you to consider the shape you believe God may be calling your congregation into, and what role preaching may have in manifesting that shape.<sup>27</sup>

Just as it is important to know that a hearer mainly hears a sermon through one of the four filters of *ethos*, *logos*, *pathos*, and community, it is just as important to know that a hearer often is affected by the other filters. This may cause a hearer to question some of his own feelings or reasoning, due to a cross-wiring of information.<sup>28</sup>

The categories do not function in the self as carefully defined lines of rhetorical effect that operate on parallel tracks, but they impact one another in a gestalt that is unique for each person. To see the inexact analogy of the electrical parts of an automobile engine, it is as if *logos*, *ethos*, *pathos*, and embodiment are not only wired into the self function like separate electrical components in the motor, but are crossed-wired to affect one another in ways that are distinct to each motor.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> 1 Peter 2:5, 9.

<sup>27</sup> Mary Alice Mulligan, and Diane Turner-Sharazz, and Dawn Ottoni Wilhelm, and Ronald J. Allen, *Believing in Preaching*, 151.

<sup>28</sup> John S. McClure, Ronald J. Allen, Dale P. Andrews, Susan L. Bond, Dan P. Moseley, and G. L. Ramsey, Jr. *Listening to Listeners: Homiletical Case Studies* ( St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2004), 127.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 127.

Because of this cross-wiring effect, it is important for the preacher to understand that hearers may feel uneasy if they hear a sermon through one filter but they are being affected by another filter. A good example of this might be if a hearer listens to a sermon mainly through a *logos* filter and the sermon is overwhelming in *pathos*. In this case, the hearer may start to fight within himself to not trust his feeling while trying to find reason and logic. As a result, the hearer does not listen to the sermon but struggles within himself. This is another reason why a preacher should understand not only the sermon and the text but should know who his hearers are and how they listen to a sermon.

When a preacher in the LCMS begins to study a text for a sermon, he may have in mind certain presuppositions such as Law and Gospel. The preacher may ask these questions, “How can this sermon proclaim the sweetness of the Gospel?” and “How can I teach the full Law of God?” It is equally important that the preacher uses the understanding of the four filters of *ethos*, *logos*, *pathos*, and community as part of all sermon preparation.

Hearing the sermon is just as important and holy a business as preaching it. Without listening, speaking is void. Both the hearing and the speaking of God’s Word are necessary, and both are accompanied by the promise of the Holy Spirit who, according to Luther’s Small Catechism, “calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian church on earth.”<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup>(*The Inward Ear: A Sermon Evaluation Method for Preachers and Hearers of the Word*) x.

## CHAPTER 4

### THE PROJECT DEVELOPED

#### Introduction

As both the Word of God and the Lutheran Confession state, Christ crucified is to be proclaimed. The Holy Spirit works through the means of the proclaimed Word of God and therefore, preachers should humanly do all they can to engage the hearers with the proclamation of Christ and not become a stumbling block to the proclaimed Word. As already shown in the previous chapters, the hearers of the Word of God hear through different filters. A premise of this project is that preachers should do all they can to enhance each of these filters of hearing.

#### The Problem and Goal for the Project

This project will investigate whether a preacher can set the presuppositions of the second text (the hearer), by using a pre-sermon Bible study to engage the four filters of how a hearer listens to a sermon. Discovering that hearers listen through four filters as documented by the four-volume series, *Channels of Listening* by Chalice Press, the author developed and conducted a survey during the month of October 2008. The survey was conducted with the Southern Illinois District (SID) Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod (LCMS) pastors. Its intention was to find how many pastors were doing Bible study that engaged the hearer by using these four filters. Out of the 72 pastors 49 responded.

The author specifically asked what kind of Bible studies were taught and what the pastors did in the Bible study to help the hearer listen to the sermon, as illustrated by example 1 below.

## EXAMPLE 1

### PORTION OF SID PASTORS SURVEY

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What human factors do you attribute to what draws or hinders members towards Bible study?

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Have you ever offered a Bible study that was designed to prepare the hearer for the sermon?  
Yes \_\_\_ No\_\_\_

If so what did you do and how was it received?

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The results of the survey were then used to formulate the specifics of the remainder of the project.

#### **The Development of the Project**

The author offered a seven week series involving pre-sermon Bible studies and seven sermons that were based on the text involving the seven churches of Asia Minor in the book of Revelation (Rev.2-3). After each service was concluded, a post-sermon survey was distributed for all adult members to complete, which was collected by the ushers. This gave the author the same data from two groups those who attended the pre-sermon Bible study and those who did not. The surveys were then recorded, measured, and the two groups were then compared.

#### **The Pre-Sermon Bible Study**

The author offered seven pre-sermon Bible studies 1 hour before each service. The pre-sermon Bible studies were conducted each week from October 4 through November 16, 2008. There was an average of 25 members who participated in the studies. Knowing that the hearer listens through four filters, as mentioned earlier, the author developed seven pre-sermon Bible studies. These studies, offered prior to the service, were based on the text of the

seven churches of Asia Minor in the book of Revelation (Rev.2-3). The Bible study consisted of discussion that would engage each of the four filters of hearing: a *logos* category that gave insights and information, an *ethos* category that allowed the author to create a personal connection to those attending the pre-sermon Bible study, a *pathos* category that asked questions about feelings and emotions, and the community category that encouraged the group to talk about their relationship as members of the priesthood of believers of Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, the community of Greenville, Illinois, and beyond.

To create a consistent pattern of Bible study, the author developed a series of questions that needed to be answered in each category. These questions were developed from insights and information gathered from the readings and research on how a hearer listens to a sermon, including the four volume series *Channels of Listening* already mentioned in the previous chapters.

These are the questions that relate to the *logos* dynamic that the author asked himself: What data can the preacher use to enhance the text? What is the one point of the text that can be woven throughout the sermon? What are examples of how the text has been misunderstood? What insights can the preacher share about the text that may be new knowledge to the hearer? The following example is a sample of type of questions that the author used to develop the *logos* category of the pre-sermon Bible study.

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## EXAMPLE 2

### *LOGOS* QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PRE-SERMON STUDY 1

Q: What data can the preacher use to enhance the text?

A: Give information about the city and the church.

Q: What is the one point of the text that can be woven throughout the sermon?

A: Jesus Christ is the one who never lost His first love.

Q: What are examples of how the text has been misunderstood?

A: If humans try really hard they can eventually find the first love that they lost.

Q: What insights can the preacher share about the text that may be new knowledge to the hearer?

A: The seven golden lamp stands that are mentioned in chapter Rev.1:13. The Lord removed Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden so they would not to eat from the tree of life. (Gen.3:22-24),(1 Jn. 5:4)

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These are the questions related to the *pathos* dynamic that the author asked himself: What emotions and feelings emerge from the text? How can the preacher help the hearer name their emotions? What real life story helps generate emotions and feelings of the text? The following example is a sample of the type of questions that the author used to develop the *pathos* category of the pre-sermon Bible study.

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### EXAMPLE 3

#### *PATHOS* QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PRE-SERMON STUDY 1

Q: How can the preacher help the hearer name their emotions?

A: By using the Law to show the sin of losing their first love.

A: By using the Gospel to show the Savior who has great love for them.

A: By asking how do you feel when you see the dedication of the church of Ephesus.

A: By asking what emotions you have when you hear Christ saying to this dedicated church "I have this against you."

Q: What real life story helps generate emotions and feelings of the text?

A: The story of Jonathan Edward's wife and children.

A: The story of celebrating a 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary.

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These are the questions related to the *ethos* dynamic that the author asked himself: How does this text relate to the preacher and the congregation? How can the preacher use his relationship with the congregation to communicate the text? What illustrations can be used in the sermon to cause the hearer to recognize themselves? What are the positive qualities that are found in the text? What life experience, struggles, and memories can be used to enhance



what the text is saying? The following example is a sample of the type of questions that the author used to develop the *ethos* category of the pre-sermon Bible study.

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#### EXAMPLE 4

##### *ETHOS* QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PRE-SERMON STUDY 1

- Q: How does this text relate to the preacher and the congregation?  
A: We all have lost a first love.  
A: We all our sinners and lost our first love for the Word.  
A: We all are saved by Christ the Light of the World.  
A: In Christ we all will eat from the tree of life.  
Q: How can the preacher use his relationship with the congregation to communicate the text?  
A: I can tell of a lost love that I had.  
A: I can tell of the struggles I have with loving the things of the world.  
Q: What illustrations can be used in the sermon that causes the hearer to recognize themselves?  
A: Tell a story of a married couple who lost their first love from the book, *Rekindled*.  
A: Tell about a time when singing “He’s Got the Whole World in His Hands”.  
Q: What are the positive qualities that are found in the text?  
A: The church of Ephesus was working hard as far as it appeared to the world.  
A: The one who holds the seven stars and walks among the seven golden lampstands is our Savior.  
Q: What life experience, struggles, and memories can be used to enhance what the text is saying?  
A: Tell about a time the author struggled with trying to be consistent in personal Bible study to keep God first in life.
- 

These are the questions related to the dynamic of community the author used in the Bible study: How does this text help you relate to the rest of the congregation? How does this text help you relate to the community of Bond County and beyond? What events of the community can be used to illustrate a picture of what the text is saying? The following example is a sample of the type of questions that the author used to develop the *ethos* category of the pre-sermon Bible study.

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## EXAMPLE 5

### COMMUNITY QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PRE-SERMON STUDY 1

Q: How can the preacher help the individual hearer see a relationship between themselves and the congregation based on the text?

A: By explaining that the church is called the bride of Christ.

Q: What events of the community can be used to illustrate a picture of what the text is saying?

A: Wedding of the community.

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So that the Bible study was even more consistent, the author developed an outline for the *logos* category of the study that introduced the data portion of the study. The outline consisted in the following: (1) Introduction, (2) Who is Jesus Christ? (Gospel), (3) What about the city and the church? (Information), (4) What did Christ see?(Malady), (5)What does Christ see in us? (Malady), (6) Illustration, (7) What does Christ call us to do? (8) Where is the hope? And (9) What is the promise?

After the outline was completed the participants were given more details of each particular church and city.

#### **The Sermon and the Post-Sermon Survey**

Following the pre-sermon Bible studies, the author delivered the seven sermons each week from October 4 through November 16, 2008. After each service, the post-sermon surveys were passed out by the ushers. The congregation completed the surveys in their pews and the elders received them as the congregation was leaving. To be consistent and to enhance the *logos* filters, the sermons followed the same format as the outline given in the Bible study. However, many of the illustrations that were used in the sermon were different. This was done so that the author would not bias the outcome of the post-sermon surveys.

The only identifiers on the survey that were used were two questions? The first question was, “Did you attend this week’s pre-sermon Bible study?” The second question was, “How many have you previously attended?” Using only these two questions as identifiers, the confidentiality and anonymity of the respondents was assured and the survey would be less biased.

The survey consisted of the same four categories as the Bible study. The *logos* category asked nine multiple choice questions. A sample of this type of question is found in example 6.

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#### EXAMPLE 6

##### SAMPLE OF *LOGOS* QUESTIONS FOR POST-SERMON SURVEY

According to the text, the reward for keeping our first love was:

- (A) A home in heaven.
- (B) That Christ would love us.
- (C) We will be able to eat from the tree of life.
- (D) Both A and B

The hands of Christ that bore the marks of the cross also held the:

- (A) Seven stars.
- (B) Seven churches.
- (C) Seven lampstands.
- (D) Seven angels

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The *pathos* category consisted of nine emotional responses. Four of the responses would be related to emotions of the Law, four responses would be related to emotions of the Gospel, and one response was marked other which allowed participants to add their own emotional response. Example 7 is a sample of the *pathos* section of the survey.

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EXAMPLE 7

SAMPLE OF *PATHOS* RESPONSES FOR POST-SERMON SURVEY

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Check the feelings you felt during the sermon.

- Pride
- Shame
- Guilt
- Anger
- Peace
- Love
- Joy
- Hope
- None of the Above
- Other feelings

Please describe. \_\_\_\_\_

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The *ethos* category was designed to show a relational connection to the preacher by asking the hearer to rate how the preacher related to the hearer using these three categories: (1) personal story, (2) logical manner, and (3) if the hearer felt the preacher was speaking directly to them. A Likert rating scale was used: “not at all”, rated 1; “neither more or less”, rated 2; “some”, rated 3; and “very much”, rated 4. Example 8 will show a sample of a post-sermon *ethos* rating.

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## EXAMPLE 8

### SAMPLE OF *ETHOS* LIKERT SCALE RATINGS FOR POST-SERMON SURVEY

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Rate how the personal story of the preacher helped you relate to the sermon better:

(not at all), (neither more or less), (some ), (very much)

Rate how the preacher proclaimed the sermon in a logical manner:

(not at all), (neither more or less), (some ), (very much)

Rate how the preacher made you feel that he was speaking directly to you.

(not at all), (neither more or less), (some ), (very much)

---

The community category asked the hearer to rate the value of how the sermon created a relationship with first, the members of Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, and second with the community of Greenville, Illinois. In this category, a Likert rating scale was also used: “not at all”, rated 1; “neither more or less”, rated 2; “some”, rated 3; and “very much”, rated 4. Example 9 will show a sample of a post-sermon Our Redeemer and community *ethos* rating.

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## EXAMPLE 9

### SAMPLE OF COMMUNITY LIKERT SCALE RATING FOR POST-SERMON SURVEY

Throughout the sermon, I felt a relationship with the other members of Our Redeemer.

(not at all), (neither more or less), (some ), (very much)

Throughout the sermon I felt a relationship with the community of Greenville.

(not at all), (neither more or less), (some ), (very much)

---

The survey concluded with a place for the hearer to respond with any additional comments.

### **The Data Calculated and Tabled**

After separating the survey sheets of those who went to the pre-sermon Bible study and those who did not, each survey sheet was calculated and given a value that measured all four aspects of hearing. The *logos* aspect was measured based on the number of correct answers in the nine questions of each week. The *pathos* aspect was measured based on the number of emotional hits the hearer had marked on the survey. To get a value for the three *ethos* ratings, the author totaled the number based on the Likert scale as mentioned above. The total number, based on the Likert scale, was also used for the two community ratings.

The data of the two groups were then compared and the results were recorded. The results gave evidence that a pre-sermon Bible study can help the hearers set the presuppositions to listen to the sermon through four filters of hearing: *logos*, *pathos*, *ethos*, and community.

## CHAPTER 5

### THE PROJECT EVALUATED

This chapter will present the data that has been collected from both the Southern Illinois District (SID) Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod (LCMS) pastors and the members of Our Redeemer Lutheran Church who participated in a seven week post-sermon survey. The data will address the proposed questions introduced in the first chapter. Those questions were: Does any SID LCMS pastor use a pre-sermon Bible study and if so what kind? Can the preacher help the hearer better to hear the sermon by using a pre-sermon Bible study? Can using a pre-sermon Bible study create an atmosphere that engages the four filters of hearing? How can pre-sermon Bible studies help the members of other congregations hear sermons more effectively? How can the pre-sermon Bible studies help pastors prepare and preach so that the hearer listens more closely to the sermon?

#### **Analyzing and Interpreting the Data of the SID Pastors**

The following data was gathered from the SID LCMS pastors who were serving congregations at the time of the survey. The data was collected by e-mails, USPS mail and received by the author at the SID Fall Pastors Conference October 2<sup>nd</sup> 2008. The data consists of responses from 50 pastors out of a possible 72. One of the 50 responses was not completed due to the pastor just having received a call and not being sufficiently knowledgeable of the calling congregation to provide the data requested. Thus there were 49 usable responses.

The responses were as follows: 25 or 51% of responses were “NO” to both questions:

Has there been a noticeable increase or decrease in attendance at Bible study?

Have you ever offered a Bible study that was designed to prepare the hearer for the sermon?

Six or 13% of responses were “NO” to the first question: (Has there been a noticeable increase or decrease in attendance at Bible study?) but “YES” to the second question (Have you ever offered a Bible study that was designed to prepare the hearer for the sermon?) 3 out of these 6 said that they offered a Bible study designed for the hearer of the sermon. The other 3 respondents did not explain what type of Bible study they offered.

Eleven or 22% responses were “YES” to the first question (Has there been a noticeable increase or decrease in attendance at Bible study?) but also said “NO” to the second question (Have you ever offered a Bible study that was designed to prepare the hearer for the sermon?)

Seven of the 11 respondents said they had an increase in attendance. Four said the increase was due to new studies and more studies offered. Two said they were due to new pastors in the congregation. One had no idea why an increase had occurred.

Four of the eleven respondents said they had a decrease in attendance. They thought the decrease was to be attributed to an attitude of “I already know what is in the Bible.”

Eight or 32% said “YES” to both questions: Has there been a noticeable increase or decrease in attendance at Bible study? Have you ever offered a Bible study that was designed to prepare the hearer for the sermon? Four of these 8 had an increase that they attributed to new families in their congregations, Bible study promotions, and new pastors. The other 4 had a decrease credited to transfers, death, and problems with past clergy. All 8 said that the Bible studies that they offered to prepare the hearer for the sermon were based on the lessons appointed for the day from the lectionary.

In summary, in the SID, 73.5% of the responding pastors had never offered a Bible study that was directly designed to help the hearer listen to the sermon. Only 13 or 26% said that they offered a Bible study to prepare the hearer for the sermon using a textual study to analyze the



lessons of the day. This type of study would be intended to engage those who hear with a *logos* filter of hearing. However, the hearer who listens with a filter of *pathos*, *ethos*, and community may not be as prepared to hear the sermon. Therefore, pastors should be aware to better reach their hearers they should try to engage all filters of hearing.

### **THE FOUR FILTERS OF HEARING**

The hypothesis of this MAP is that a pre-sermon Bible study increases the connection of the hearer with the sermon in all four filters of how a hearer hears a sermon. This hypothesis was tested over seven weeks. As a reminder, the evaluative measures were as follows: *Logos* – correct and incorrect answers; *Pathos* – number of emotions of the hearer that were identified (For this study these emotions are called emotional hits); *Ethos* – number of preacher-hearer connections including personal story, logical manner, and personal connection; Community— number of community-hearer connections as registered by the hearer in the two categories of Our Redeemer and Greenville. Tables 1 and 2 are the complete results of those attending the pre-sermon Bible study and the church service following the pre-sermon Bible study during the seven weeks and those who attended the church service only during that time.

TABLE 1. TOTAL RESULTS OF THOSE ATTENDING 7 WEEK PRE-SERMON BIBLE STUDY

Week	Number of Respondents Attending the Pre-Sermon Bible Study	<i>Logos</i> : Total Number of Incorrect Multiple Choice	<i>Pathos</i> : Total Number of Emotional Hits	<i>Ethos</i> : Total Value of Preacher Relationships	Total Value of Community Relationships	Total Value of All Relationships
1	19	27	45	190	105	295
2	17	41	38	185	103	288
3	25	48	54	263	146	409
4	15	15	36	161	87	238
5	18	20	49	187	113	300
6	24	28	60	250	143	393
7	19	14	52	210	126	336
Mean	19.6					
<b>Average per Respondent</b>		<b>1.4</b>	<b>2.4</b>	<b>10.6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>16.5</b>

TABLE 2. TOTAL RESULTS OF THOSE NOT ATTENDING PRE-SERMON BIBLE STUDY

Week	Number of Respondents Not Attending the Pre-Sermon Bible Study	<i>Logos</i> : Total Number of Incorrect Multiple Choice	<i>Pathos</i> : Total Number of Emotional Hits	<i>Ethos</i> : Total Value of Preacher Relationships	Total Value of Community Relationships	Total Value of All Relationships
1	24	71	59	242	130	372
2	29	100	61	309	152	461
3	27	74	60	278	147	435
4	36	82	76	360	186	546
5	26	72	55	261	131	392
6	23	59	44	248	128	376
7	38	63	75	380	192	572
Mean	29					
<b>Average per Respondent</b>		<b>2.6</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>10.2</b>	<b>5.3</b>	<b>15.5</b>

According to the data displayed in Tables 1 and 2, those attending the pre-sermon Bible study had a greater connection to the sermon based on the average number of incorrect answers over the seven weeks (*logos*). For those attending the pre-sermon Bible study the average number of incorrect answers was 1.4. For those not attending the average number of incorrect answers was 2.6.

Those attending the pre-sermon Bible study had a greater number of emotional hits than those who did not attend (*pathos*). Those that attended had an average number of emotional hits of 2.4. Those that did not attend had an average number of emotional hits of 2.1.

Those attending the pre-sermon Bible study had a greater connection to both the relationship to the preacher (*ethos*) and to the community. Assigning values, using the Likert Scale as described of page 53 of Chapter 4, those that attended the pre-sermon Bible study had a mean average per respondent of 10.6 relationships to the preacher. Those not attending the pre-sermon Bible study had a mean average per respondent of 10.2 relationships to the preacher.

Those attending the pre-sermon Bible study had a mean average per respondent of 6.0 relationships to the community. Those not attending the pre-sermon Bible study had a mean average per respondent of 5.3 relationships to the community.

The total data for the seven week study shows that the pre-sermon Bible study that sets the presuppositions of the hearer by engaging the four filters of hearing can improve how a hearer hears a sermon.

The previous data showed the average number of all seven weeks. The following compare the data week by week and filter by filter.

### The *Logos* Filter of Hearing

First, the following results in Tables 3-16 compare the data from week to week.

TABLE 3. WEEK 1  
THE CHURCH OF EPHESUS – THEME: CHRIST IS THE ONE WHO IS OUR JUDGE.  
RESULTS OF THOSE ATTENDING PRE-SERMON BIBLE STUDY

Question	Number of Responders	Total Correct	Total Incorrect	% Correct	% Incorrect
1	19	15	4	78.9%	21.1%
2	19	18	1	94.7%	5.3%
3	19	12	7	63.2%	36.8%
4	19	17	2	89.5%	10.5%
5	19	15	4	78.9%	21.1%
6	19	18	1	94.7%	5.3%
7	19	18	1	94.7%	5.3%
8	18	17	5	94.4%	27.8%
9	19	17	2	89.5%	10.5%

TABLE 4. WEEK 1  
THE CHURCH OF EPHESUS – THEME: CHRIST IS THE ONE WHO IS OUR JUDGE.  
RESULTS OF THOSE NOT ATTENDING PRE-SERMON BIBLE STUDY

Question	Number of Responders	Total Correct	Total Incorrect	% Correct	% Incorrect
1	24	14	10	58.3%	41.7%
2	24	14	10	58.3%	41.7%
3	23	7	16	30.4%	69.6%
4	24	18	6	75.0%	25.0%
5	24	13	11	54.2%	45.8%
6	24	19	5	79.2%	20.8%
7	23	22	1	95.7%	4.3%
8	23	18	5	78.3%	21.7%
9	24	17	7	70.8%	29.2%

Those attending the pre-sermon Bible study scored higher on 8 of the 9 (88.9%) questions on the post sermon survey. Also, of those attending the pre-sermon Bible study, the highest percentage incorrect was 36% compared to those who did not attend with a highest

percentage incorrect of 69.6%. The information for questions # 7 and # 8 of the survey was not mentioned in the pre-sermon Bible study and only during the sermon so that it would not bias the survey. However, those attending the pre-sermon Bible study scored 94.7% on question 7 and 94.4% on question 8. Those not attending scored 95.7% on question 7 and 78.3% on question 8.

Next comparisons are made from week 2 of the project.

TABLE 5. WEEK 2  
THE CHURCH OF SMYRNA – THEME: CHRIST IS THE FIRST AND THE LAST.

RESULTS OF THOSE ATTENDING PRE-SERMON BIBLE STUDY

Question	Number of Responders	Total Correct	Total Incorrect	% Correct	% Incorrect
1	17	15	2	88.2%	11.8%
2	17	15	2	88.2%	11.8%
3	17	9	8	52.9%	47.1%
4	17	7	10	41.2%	58.8%
5	17	16	1	94.1%	5.9%
6	17	12	5	70.6%	29.4%
7	17	14	3	82.4%	17.6%
8	17	15	2	88.2%	11.8%
9	16	8	8	50.0%	50.0%

TABLE 6. WEEK 2  
THE CHURCH OF SMYRNA – THEME: CHRIST IS THE FIRST AND THE LAST.

RESULTS OF THOSE NOT ATTENDING PRE-SERMON BIBLE STUDY

Question	Number of Responders	Total Correct	Total Incorrect	% Correct	% Incorrect
1	29	23	7	79.3%	24.1%
2	29	15	14	51.7%	48.3%
3	29	13	16	44.8%	55.2%
4	29	9	20	31.0%	69.0%
5	29	26	2	89.7%	6.9%
6	29	14	15	48.3%	51.7%
7	29	21	8	72.4%	27.6%
8	29	20	9	69.0%	31.0%
9	29	20	9	69.0%	31.0%

Those attending the pre-sermon Bible study scored higher on 8 out of the 9 (88.9%) questions on the post sermon survey. Also, of those attending the pre-sermon Bible study, the highest percentage incorrect was 58.8% compared to those who did not attend with a highest percentage incorrect of 69%. Questions 7 and 8 of the survey were not mentioned in the pre-sermon Bible study and only during the sermon. However, those attending the pre-sermon Bible study scored 82.4% on question 7 and 88.2% on question 8. Those not attending scored 72.4% on question 7 and 69% on question 8.

The data for week 3 of the project is as follows:

TABLE 7. WEEK 3  
THE CHURCH OF THYATIRA – THEME: CHRIST IS THE ONE WHO HAS ALL  
AUTHORITY.

RESULTS OF THOSE ATTENDING PRE-SERMON BIBLE STUDY

Question	Number of Responders	Total Correct	Total Incorrect	% Correct	% Incorrect
1	25	23	2	93.0%	28.0%
2	25	16	9	64.0%	36.0%
3	23	12	11	52.2%	47.8%
4	25	18	7	72.0%	28.0%
5	25	24	1	96.0%	4.0%
6	25	24	1	96.0%	4.0%
7	24	22	2	91.7%	8.3%
8	25	18	7	72.0%	28.0%
9	25	18	7	72.0%	28.0%

TABLE 8. WEEK 3  
THE CHURCH OF THYATIRA – THEME: CHRIST IS THE ONE WHO HAS ALL  
AUTHORITY.

RESULTS OF THOSE NOT ATTENDING PRE-SERMON BIBLE STUDY

Question	Number of Responders	Total Correct	Total Incorrect	% Correct	% Incorrect
1	28	26	2	92.9%	7.1%
2	28	12	16	42.9%	57.1%
3	28	9	19	32.1%	67.9%
4	28	14	14	50.0%	50.0%
5	28	27	1	96.4%	3.6%
6	28	26	2	92.9%	7.1%
7	28	26	2	92.9%	7.1%
8	28	17	9	60.7%	32.1%
9	28	17	9	60.7%	32.1%

Those attending the pre-sermon Bible study scored higher on 7 out of the 9 (77.8%) questions on the post sermon survey. Also, the highest percentage of incorrect answers for those attending the pre-sermon Bible study was 47.8% compared to those who did not attend with a highest percentage incorrect of 67.9%. Questions #5 and #7 of the survey were not mentioned in the pre-sermon Bible study and only during the sermon. However, those attending the pre-sermon Bible study scored 96% on question 5 and 91.7% on question 7. Those not attending scored 96.4% on question 5 and 92.9% on question 7. This data did not support the author's hypothesis.

The data of the responses for week 4 are as follows:

TABLE 9. WEEK 4  
THE CHURCH OF PERGAMUM – THEME: CHRIST IS THE ONE WHO  
HOLDS THE DOUBLE EDGED SWORD

RESULTS OF THOSE ATTENDING PRE-SERMON BIBLE STUDY

Question	Number of Responders	Total Correct	Total Incorrect	% Correct	% Incorrect
1	16	13	3	81.3%	18.8%
2	16	13	3	81.3%	18.8%
3	16	14	2	87.5%	12.5%
4	15	13	2	86.7%	13.3%
5	16	15	1	93.8%	6.3%
6	16	15	1	93.8%	6.3%
7	16	15	1	93.8%	6.3%
8	16	14	2	87.5%	12.5%
9	16	15	1	93.8%	6.3%

TABLE 10. WEEK 4  
THE CHURCH OF PERGAMUM – THEME: CHRIST IS THE ONE WHO  
HOLDS THE DOUBLE EDGED SWORD

RESULTS OF THOSE NOT ATTENDING PRE-SERMON BIBLE STUDY

Question	Number of Responders	Total Correct	Total Incorrect	% Correct	% Incorrect
1	36	33	3	91.7%	8.3%
2	36	18	18	50.0%	50.0%
3	36	21	15	58.3%	41.7%
4	36	23	13	63.9%	36.1%
5	36	28	18	77.8%	50.0%
6	36	33	3	91.7%	8.3%
7	36	29	7	80.6%	19.4%
8	35	33	2	94.3%	5.7%
9	34	18	16	52.9%	47.1%

Those attending the pre-sermon Bible study scored higher on 7 out of the 9 (77.8%) questions on the post sermon survey. Also, the highest percentage of incorrect answers for those attending the pre-sermon Bible study was 18.8% compared to those who did not attend with a



highest percentage incorrect of 50%. Questions #5 and #7 of the survey were not mentioned in the pre-sermon Bible study and only during the sermon. However, those attending the pre-sermon Bible study scored 93.8% on question 5 and 93.8% on question 7. Those not attending scored 77.8% on question 5 and 80.6% on question 7.

Below are the results from week 5 of the project.

TABLE 11. WEEK 5  
THE CHURCH OF SARDIS – THEME: CHRIST IS THE ONE WHO  
HOLDS THE SEVEN SPIRITS OF GOD

RESULTS OF THOSE ATTENDING PRE-SERMON BIBLE STUDY

Question	Number of Responders	Total Correct	Total Incorrect	% Correct	% Incorrect
1	18	13	5	72.2%	27.8%
2	18	18	0	100.0%	0.0%
3	18	18	0	100.0%	0.0%
4	17	15	2	88.2%	11.8%
5	18	18	0	100.0%	0.0%
6	18	18	0	100.0%	0.0%
7	18	17	1	94.4%	5.6%
8	18	9	9	50.0%	50.0%
9	18	12	6	66.7%	33.3%

TABLE 12. WEEK 5  
THE CHURCH OF SARDIS – THEME: CHRIST IS THE ONE WHO  
HOLDS THE SEVEN SPIRITS OF GOD

RESULTS OF THOSE NOT ATTENDING PRE-SERMON BIBLE STUDY

Question	Number of Responders	Total Correct	Total Incorrect	% Correct	% Incorrect
1	24	12	12	50.0%	50.0%
2	26	20	6	76.9%	23.1%
3	25	18	7	72.0%	28.0%
4	21	10	11	47.6%	52.4%
5	25	23	2	92.0%	8.0%
6	25	23	2	92.0%	8.0%
7	24	23	1	95.8%	4.2%
8	26	8	18	30.8%	69.2%
9	25	15	10	60.0%	40.0%

Those attending the pre-sermon Bible study scored higher on 8 out of the 9 (88.9%) questions on the post sermon survey. Also, the highest percentage of incorrect answers for those attending the pre-sermon Bible study was 50.4% compared to those who did not attend with a highest percentage incorrect of 69.2%. Questions 5 and 7 of the survey were not mentioned in the pre-sermon Bible study and only during the sermon. However, those attending the pre-sermon Bible study scored 100% on question 5 and 94.4% on question 7. Those not attending scored 92% on question 5 and 95.8% on question 7.

The data from week 6 of the project is show in Tables 13 and 14 below.

TABLE 13. WEEK 6  
CHURCH OF PHILADELPHIA – THEME: CHRIST IS THE ONE WHO  
HOLDS THE KEY OF DAVID

RESULTS OF THOSE ATTENDING PRE-SERMON BIBLE STUDY

Question	Number of Responders	Total Correct	Total Incorrect	% Correct	% Incorrect
1	22	17	5	77.3%	22.7%
2	24	24	0	100.0%	0.0%
3	24	24	0	100.0%	0.0%
4	24	19	5	79.2%	20.8%
5	24	24	0	100.0%	0.0%
6	24	21	3	87.5%	12.5%
7	24	23	1	95.8%	4.2%
8	23	22	1	95.7%	4.3%
9	23	22	1	95.7%	4.3%

TABLE 14. WEEK 6  
 CHURCH OF PHILADELPHIA – THEME: CHRIST IS THE ONE WHO  
 HOLDS THE KEY OF DAVID

RESULTS OF THOSE NOT ATTENDING PRE-SERMON BIBLE STUDY

Question	Number of Responders	Total Correct	Total Incorrect	% Correct	% Incorrect
1	24	17	5	70.8%	20.8%
2	22	22	2	100.0%	9.1%
3	23	15	8	65.2%	34.8%
4	24	17	7	70.8%	29.2%
5	24	24	0	100.0%	0.0%
6	24	19	5	79.2%	20.8%
7	24	20	4	83.3%	16.7%
8	24	17	7	70.8%	29.2%
9	24	15	9	62.5%	37.5%

Those attending the pre-sermon Bible study scored higher on 9 out of the 9 (100%) questions on the post sermon survey. Also, the highest percentage of incorrect answers for those attending the pre-sermon Bible study was 22.7% compared to those who did not attend with a highest percentage incorrect of 35.5%.

Questions 5 and 7 of the survey were not mentioned in the pre-sermon Bible study and only during the sermon. However, those attending the pre-sermon Bible study scored 100% on question 5 and 95.8% on question 7. Those not attending scored 100% on question 5 and 83.3% on question 7.

Finally, presented is the project data from week 7.

TABLE 15. WEEK 7  
CHURCH OF LAODICEA – THEME: CHRIST IS THE ONE WHO  
IS THE AMEN, THE FAITHFUL AND TRUE WITNESS

RESULTS OF THOSE ATTENDING PRE-SERMON BIBLE STUDY

Question	Number of Responders	Total Correct	Total Incorrect	% Correct	% Incorrect
1	19	18	0	94.7%	0.0%
2	19	19	0	100.0%	0.0%
3	19	18	1	94.7%	5.3%
4	19	19	0	100.0%	0.0%
5	19	18	1	94.7%	5.3%
6	19	13	6	68.4%	31.6%
7	19	17	2	89.5%	10.5%
8	18	15	4	83.3%	22.2%
9	19	15	4	78.9%	21.1%

TABLE 16. WEEK 7  
CHURCH OF LAODICEA – THEME: CHRIST IS THE ONE WHO  
IS THE AMEN, THE FAITHFUL AND TRUE WITNESS

RESULTS OF THOSE NOT ATTENDING PRE-SERMON BIBLE STUDY

Question	Number of Responders	Total Correct	Total Incorrect	% Correct	% Incorrect
1	38	29	9	76.3%	23.7%
2	38	35	3	92.1%	7.9%
3	38	30	8	78.9%	21.1%
4	38	36	2	94.7%	5.3%
5	38	35	3	92.1%	7.9%
6	38	31	7	81.6%	18.4%
7	38	36	2	94.7%	5.3%
8	38	21	17	55.3%	44.7%
9	38	19	19	50.0%	50.0%

Those attending the pre-sermon Bible study scored higher on 9 out of the 9 (100%) questions on the post sermon survey. Also, the highest percentage of incorrect answers for those

attending the pre-sermon Bible study was 31.6% compared to those who did not attend with a highest percentage incorrect of 50.0%.

Questions 5 and 7 of the survey were not mentioned in the pre-sermon Bible study and only during the sermon. However, those attending the pre-sermon Bible study scored 94.7% on question 5 and 89.5% on question 7. While those not attending scored 92.1% on question 5 and 94.7% on question 7.

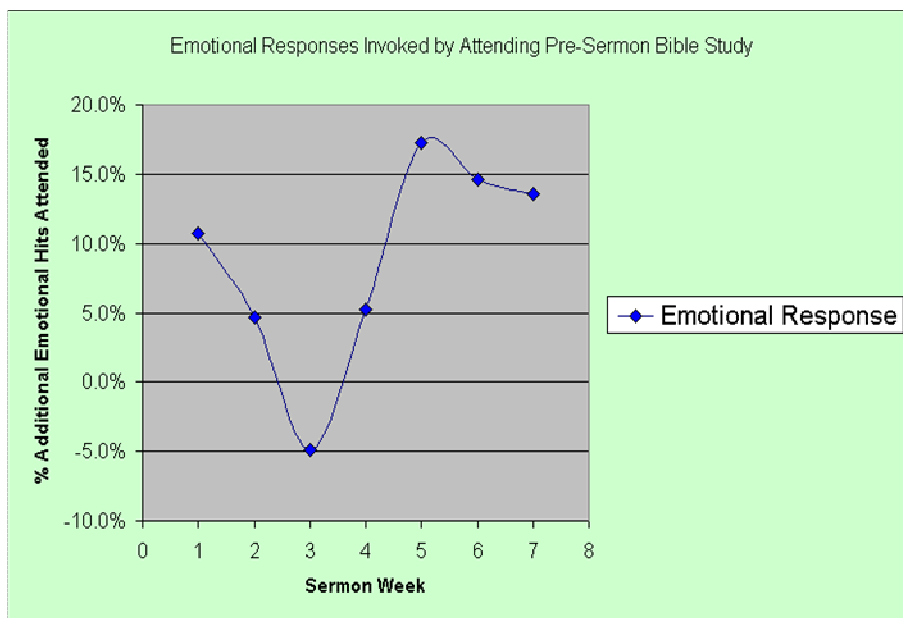
#### Summary of the *Logos* Filter

*Logos* filters are engaged by information, analytical dialogue, facts, and a systematical format. Overall out of the 63 questions of the seven weeks of the post-sermon surveys the group attending the pre-sermon Bible study had an average of more correct answers on 59 of the 63 or 93.6% questions. The data is supportive of the conclusion that the pre-sermon Bible study set the presuppositions for hearing the sermon with a *logos* filter.

## The *Pathos* Filter of Hearing

*Pathos* filters are engaged by the emotions and feelings of the hearers as they hear the sermon. Figure 1 shows the percentage of emotional responses of those attending the seven week pre-sermon Bible study compared to those who did not attend.

Figure 1. 7 WEEK  
OVERVIEW OF *PATHOS* FILTER OF HEARING  
PRE-SERMON BIBLE STUDY



The hypothesis is that by teaching a pre-sermon Bible study a pastor can set the presuppositions of the hearer who hears through a *pathos* filter. The *pathos* filter would include emotions and feelings that hearers have as they hear the sermon.

Table 17 presents the comparisons of the data from week 1 of the project.

TABLE 17. WEEK 1  
THE CHURCH OF EPHESUS – THEME: CHRIST IS THE ONE WHO IS OUR JUDGE.  
EMOTIONAL HITS FROM THOSE ATTENDING &  
NOT ATTENDING PRE-SERMON BIBLE STUDY

Emotional Hits: Attending			Emotional Hits: Not Attending		
Emotions	Number of Hits	Percent of Total Hits	Emotions	Number of Hits	Percent of Total Hits
Pride	0	0.0%	Pride	1	1.9%
Shame	8	15.4%	Shame	4	7.4%
Guilt	6	11.5%	Guilt	8	14.8%
Anger	0	0.0%	Anger	0	0.0%
Peace	10	19.2%	Peace	11	20.4%
Love	6	11.5%	Love	9	16.7%
Joy	6	11.5%	Joy	6	11.1%
Hope	16	30.8%	Hope	14	25.9%
None	0	0.0%	None	1	1.9%
Other	0	0.0%	Other	0	0.0%

Out of the 19 who attended the pre-sermon Bible study there was a total of 52 emotional hits recorded. The emotion of hope had the greatest number hits with 16 or 30.8% of the responses. Out of 24 who did not attend there were a total of 54 emotional hits recorded. The emotion of hope also had the greatest hits with 14 or 25.9% of the responses. The results of the first week show that the average number of emotional hits for those attending the pre-sermon Bible study was 2.73 per person. The average number of emotional hits for those who did not attend the pre-sermon Bible Study was 2.25 per person.

Comparisons are noted from week 2 of the project.

TABLE 18. WEEK 2  
 THE CHURCH OF SMYRNA – THEME: CHRIST IS THE FIRST AND THE LAST.  
 EMOTIONAL HITS FROM THOSE ATTENDING &  
 NOT ATTENDING PRE-SERMON BIBLE STUDY

Emotional Hits: Attending			Emotional Hits: Not Attending		
Emotions	Number of Hits	Percent of Total Hits	Emotions	Number of Hits	Percent of Total Hits
Pride	2	4.8%	Pride	3	4.8%
Shame	2	4.8%	Shame	0	0.0%
Guilt	2	4.8%	Guilt	7	11.3%
Anger	1	2.6%	Anger	0	0.0%
Peace	9	21.4%	Peace	14	22.6%
Love	5	11.9%	Love	11	17.7%
Joy	5	11.9%	Joy	6	9.7%
Hope	11	26.2%	Hope	18	29.0%
None	4	9.5%	None	3	4.8%
Other	1	2.4%	Other	0	0.0%

Out of the 17 who attended the pre-sermon Bible study there was a total of 42 emotional hits recorded. The emotion of hope had the greatest number hits with 11 or 64.7% of the responses. Out of 29 who did not attend there were a total of 62 emotional hits recorded. The emotion of hope also had the greatest hits with 18 or 62% of the responses. The results of the second week show that the average number of emotional hits for those attending the pre-sermon Bible study was 2.47 per person. The average number of emotional hits for those who did not attend the pre-sermon Bible study was 2.13 per person.



The data for week 3 of the project is as follows:

TABLE 19. WEEK 3  
THE CHURCH OF THYATIRA – THEME: CHRIST IS THE ONE WHO HAS ALL  
AUTHORITY.

EMOTIONAL HITS FROM THOSE ATTENDING &  
NOT ATTENDING PRE-SERMON BIBLE STUDY

Emotional Hits: Attending			Emotional Hits: Not Attending		
Emotions	Number of Hits	Percent of Total Hits	Emotions	Number of Hits	Percent of Total Hits
Pride	1	2.0%	Pride	4	6.5%
Shame	5	9.8%	Shame	7	11.3%
Guilt	8	15.7%	Guilt	5	8.1%
Anger	0	0.0%	Anger	1	2.0%
Peace	8	15.7%	Peace	11	17.7%
Love	5	9.8%	Love	9	14.5%
Joy	4	7.8%	Joy	5	8.1%
Hope	16	31.4%	Hope	15	24.2%
None	4	7.8%	None	4	6.5%
Other	0	0.0%	Other	1	1.6%

Out of the 25 who attended the pre-sermon Bible study there was a total of 51 emotional hits recorded. The emotion of hope had the greatest number hits with 16 or 64% of the responses. Out of 28 who did not attend there were a total of 62 emotional hits recorded. The emotion of hope also had the greatest hits with 15 or 53.6% of the responses. The results of the third week show that the average number of emotional hits for those attending the pre-sermon Bible study was 2.04 per person. The average number of emotional hits for those who did not attend the pre-sermon Bible study was 2.21 per person.

The data of the responses for week 4 are shown in Table 20.

TABLE 20. WEEK 4  
THE CHURCH OF PERGAMUM – THEME: CHRIST IS THE ONE WHO  
HOLDS THE DOUBLE EDGED SWORD

EMOTIONAL HITS FROM THOSE ATTENDING &  
NOT ATTENDING PRE-SERMON BIBLE STUDY

Emotional Hits: Attending			Emotional Hits: Not Attending		
Emotions	Number of Hits	Percent of Total Hits	Emotions	Number of Hits	Percent of Total Hits
Pride	1	2.6%	Pride	2	2.5%
Shame	3	7.7%	Shame	9	11.1%
Guilt	9	23.1%	Guilt	13	16.0%
Anger	1	2.9%	Anger	0	0.0%
Peace	4	10.3%	Peace	9	11.1%
Love	4	10.3%	Love	8	9.9%
Joy	5	12.8%	Joy	12	14.8%
Hope	9	23.1%	Hope	18	22.2%
None	2	5.1%	None	6	7.4%
Other	1	2.6%	Other	4	4.9%

Out of the 16 who attended the pre-sermon Bible study there was a total of 40 emotional hits recorded. The emotion of hope and guilt had the greatest number hits with 9 or 56% of the responses. Out of 36 who did not attend there were a total of 81 emotional hits recorded. The emotion of hope also had the greatest hits with 18 or 50% of the responses. The results of the fourth week show that the average number of emotional hits for those attending the pre-sermon Bible study was 2.50 per person. The average number of emotional hits for those who did not attend the pre-sermon Bible study was 2.25 per person.

The results from week 5 of the project are shown in Table 21.

TABLE 21. WEEK 5  
THE CHURCH OF SARDIS – THEME: CHRIST IS THE ONE WHO  
HOLDS THE SEVEN SPIRITS OF GOD

EMOTIONAL HITS FROM THOSE ATTENDING &  
NOT ATTENDING PRE-SERMON BIBLE STUDY

Emotional Hits: Attending			Emotional Hits: Not Attending		
Emotions	Number of Hits	Percent of Total Hits	Emotions	Number of Hits	Percent of Total Hits
Pride	1	1.9%	Pride	2	3.4%
Shame	3	5.8%	Shame	8	13.8%
Guilt	11	21.2%	Guilt	8	13.8%
Anger	0	0.0%	Anger	0	0.0%
Peace	5	9.6%	Peace	8	13.8%
Love	3	5.8%	Love	9	15.5%
Joy	13	25.0%	Joy	4	6.9%
Hope	12	23.1%	Hope	13	22.4%
None	1	1.9%	None	6	10.3%
Other	3	5.8%	Other	0	0.0%

Out of the 18 who attended the pre-sermon Bible study there was a total of 52 emotional hits recorded. The emotion of joy had the greatest number hits with 13 or 25.0% of the responses. Out of 26 who did not attend there were a total of 58 emotional hits recorded. The emotion of hope also had the greatest hits with 13 or 22.4% of the responses. The results of the fifth week show that the average number of emotional hits for those attending the pre-sermon Bible study was 2.88 per person. The average number of emotional hits for those who did not attend the pre-sermon Bible study was 2.23 per person.

The data from week 6 of the project is shown in Table 22 below.

TABLE 22. WEEK 6  
CHURCH OF PHILADELPHIA – THEME: CHRIST IS THE ONE WHO  
HOLDS THE KEY OF DAVID

EMOTIONAL HITS FROM THOSE ATTENDING &  
NOT ATTENDING PRE-SERMON BIBLE STUDY

Emotional Hits: Attending			Emotional Hits: Not Attending		
Emotions	Number of Hits	Percent of Total Hits	Emotions	Number of Hits	Percent of Total Hits
Pride	2	3.4%	Pride	1	2.2%
Shame	7	11.9%	Shame	7	15.6%
Guilt	11	18.6%	Guilt	12	26.7%
Anger	0	0.0%	Anger	1	2.7%
Peace	7	11.9%	Peace	6	13.3%
Love	4	6.8%	Love	4	8.9%
Joy	7	11.9%	Joy	3	6.7%
Hope	20	33.9%	Hope	10	22.2%
None	0	0.0%	None	1	2.2%
other	1	1.7%	Other	0	0.0%

Out of the 24 who attended the pre-sermon Bible study there was a total of 52 emotional hits recorded. The emotion of hope had the greatest number hits with 20 or 38.5% of the responses. Out of 24 who did not attend there were a total of 46 emotional hits recorded. The emotion of guilt also had the greatest hits with 12 or 26.1% of the responses. The results of the sixth week show that the average number of emotional hits for those attending the pre-sermon Bible study was 2.16 per person. The average number of emotional hits for those who did not attend the pre-sermon Bible study was 1.91 per person.

Finally, presented is the project data from week 7.

TABLE 23. WEEK 7  
CHURCH OF LAODICEA – THEME: CHRIST IS THE ONE WHO  
IS THE AMEN, THE FAITHFUL AND TRUE WITNESS

EMOTIONAL HITS FROM THOSE ATTENDING &  
NOT ATTENDING PRE-SERMON BIBLE STUDY

Emotional Hits: Attending			Emotional Hits: Not Attending		
Emotions	Number of Hits	Percent of Total Hits	Emotions	Number of Hits	Percent of Total Hits
Pride	3	6.1%	Pride	4	5.3%
Shame	9	18.4%	Shame	7	9.2%
Guilt	10	20.4%	Guilt	12	15.8%
Anger	0	0.0%	Anger	1	1.5%
Peace	4	8.2%	Peace	11	14.5%
Love	3	6.1%	Love	7	9.2%
Joy	4	8.2%	Joy	9	11.8%
Hope	14	28.6%	Hope	22	28.9%
None	1	2.0%	None	3	3.9%
other	1	2.0%	Other	0	0.0%

Out of the 19 who attended the pre-sermon Bible study there was a total of 49 emotional hits recorded. The emotion of hope had the greatest number hits with 14 or 73.7% of the responses. Out of 38 who did not attend they had a total of 76 emotional hits recorded. The emotion of hope also had the greatest hits with 22 or 57.9% of the responses. The results of the seventh week show that the average number of emotional hits for those attending the pre-sermon Bible study was 2.57 per person. The average number of emotional hits for those who did not attend the pre-sermon Bible study was 2.00 per person.

Summary of the *Pathos* Filter

*Pathos* filters are engaged by the emotions and feelings of the hearers as they hear the sermon. Overall out of the seven weeks of post-sermon surveys the group attending the pre-sermon Bible study had an overall average of more emotional hits six out of the seven weeks. The data shows that the pre-sermon Bible study appears to set the presuppositions for hearing the sermon with a *pathos* filter.

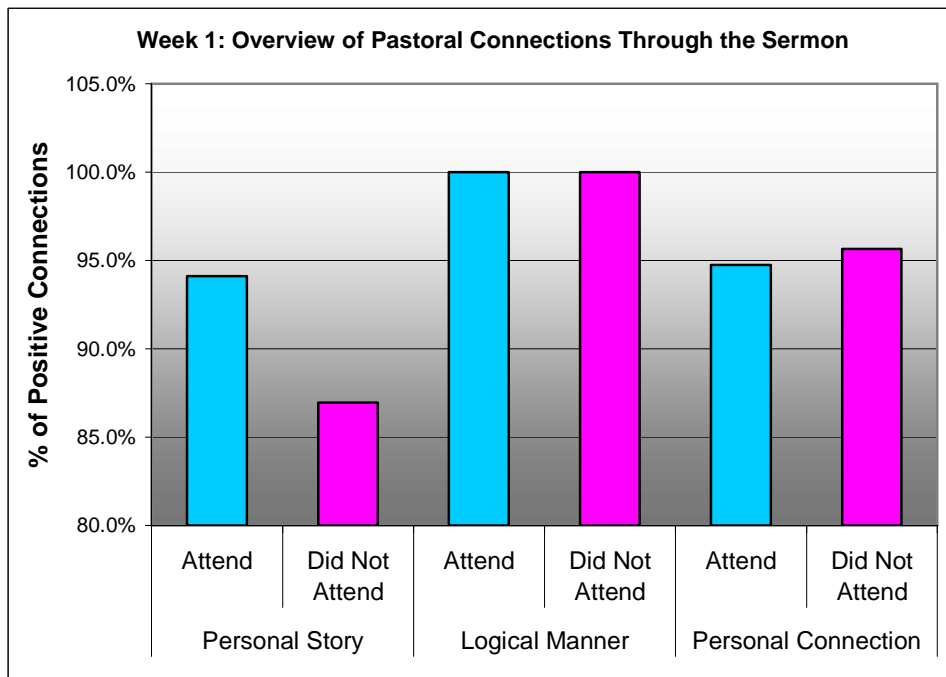
**The *Ethos* Filter of Hearing**

*Ethos* filters are engaged by the relationship the hearer has with the preacher.

Table 24 compares the data from week 1 of the project.

TABLE 24. WEEK 1  
THE CHURCH OF EPHESUS – THEME: CHRIST IS THE ONE WHO IS OUR JUDGE.

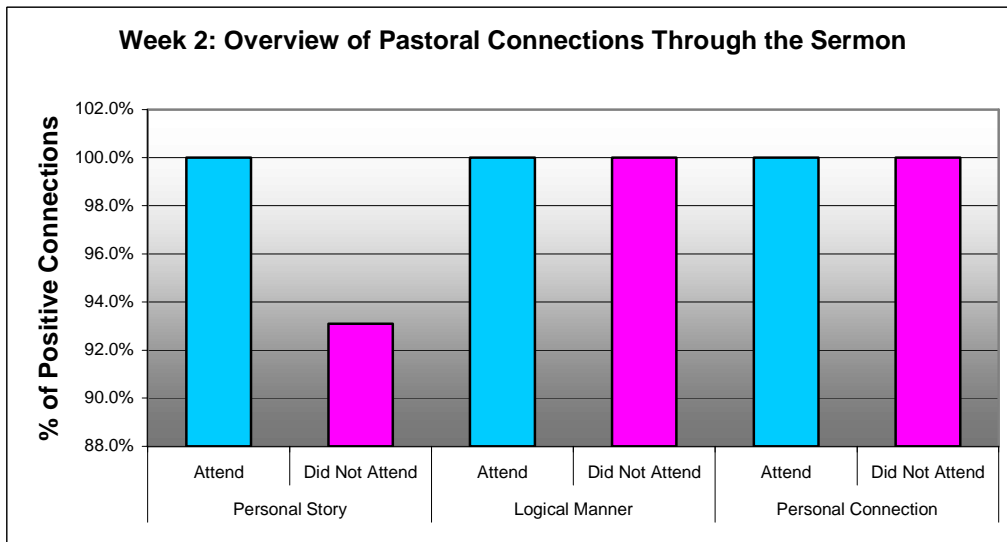
OVERVIEW OF THOSE ATTENDING AND  
NOT ATTENDING PRE-SERMON BIBLE STUDY



Those attending the pre-sermon Bible study had more positive connections in the categories of personal story and personal connections than those who did not attend. They had the same percentages of connections in the category of logical manner. Their greatest difference of positive connections was a difference of 7.1% in the category of personal story.

Table 25 compares the attending and not attending from week 2 of the project.

**TABLE 25. WEEK 2  
THE CHURCH OF SMYRNA – THEME: CHRIST IS THE FIRST AND THE LAST.  
OVERVIEW OF THOSE ATTENDING AND  
NOT ATTENDING PRE-SERMON BIBLE STUDY**

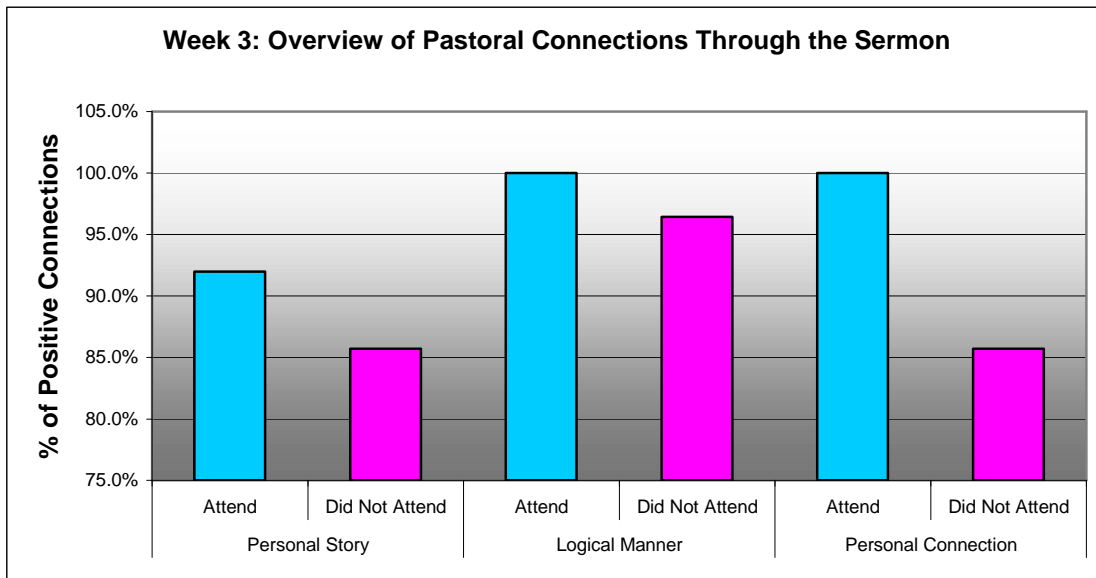


Those attending the pre-sermon Bible study had more positive connections in the category of personal story than those who did not attend. They had the same percentage of connections in the categories of logical manner and personal connection. Their greatest difference of positive connections was a difference of 6.9% in the category of personal story.

The data for week 3 of the project is as follows:

TABLE 26. WEEK 3  
THE CHURCH OF THYATIRA – THEME: CHRIST IS THE ONE WHO HAS ALL  
AUTHORITY.

OVERVIEW OF THOSE ATTENDING AND  
NOT ATTENDING PRE-SERMON BIBLE STUDY



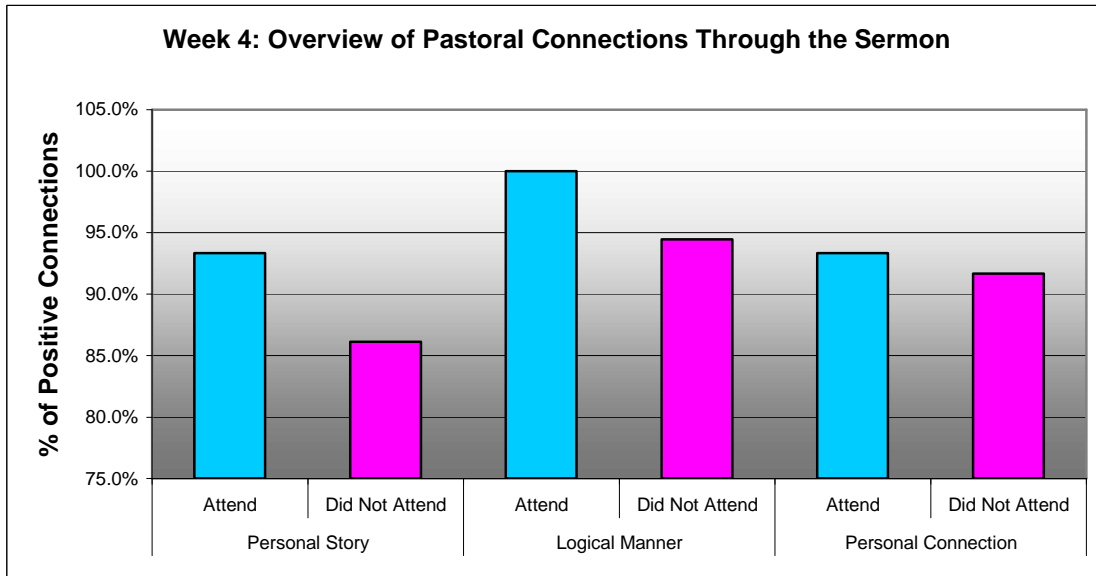
Those attending the pre-sermon Bible study had more positive connections in all three categories than those who did not attend. Their greatest difference of positive connections was a difference of 14.3% in the category of personal connection.



The data of the responses for week 4 are as follows:

TABLE 9. WEEK 4  
THE CHURCH OF PERGAMUM – THEME: CHRIST IS THE ONE WHO  
HOLDS THE DOUBLE EDGED SWORD

OVERVIEW OF THOSE ATTENDING AND  
NOT ATTENDING PRE-SERMON BIBLE STUDY

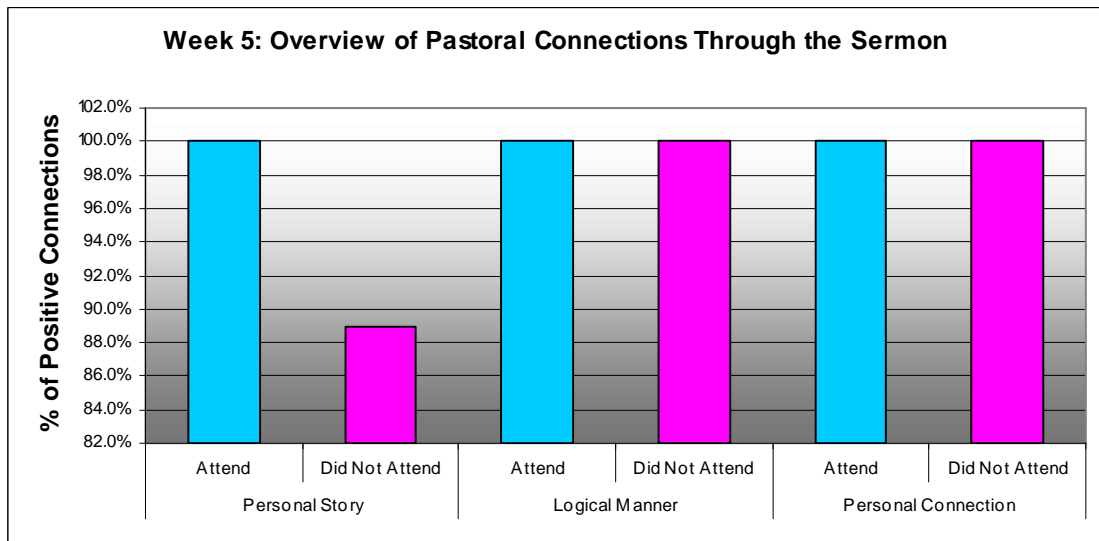


Those attending the pre-sermon Bible study had more positive connections in all three categories than those who did not attend. Their greatest difference of positive connections was a difference of 7.23% in the category of personal story.

The results from week 5 of the project are shown in Table 28.

TABLE 28. WEEK 5  
 THE CHURCH OF SARDIS – THEME: CHRIST IS THE ONE WHO  
 HOLDS THE SEVEN SPIRITS OF GOD

OVERVIEW OF THOSE ATTENDING AND  
 NOT ATTENDING PRE-SERMON BIBLE STUDY

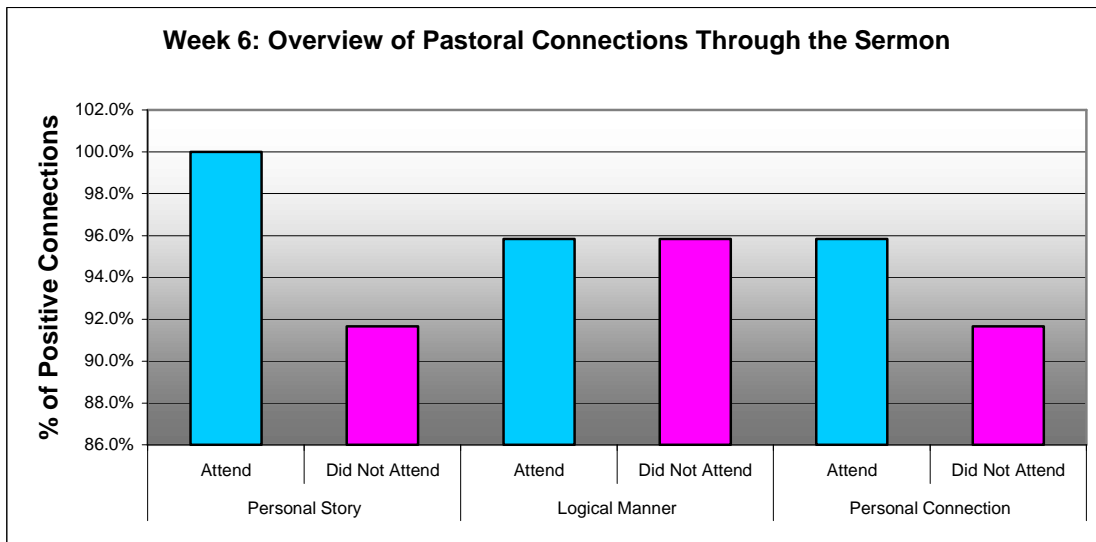


Those attending the pre-sermon Bible study had more positive connections in the category of personal story than those who did not attend. They had the same percentage of connections in the category of logical manner and personal connection. The greatest difference of positive connections was a difference of 11.1% in the category of personal story.

The data from week 6 of the project is shown in Table 29.

TABLE 29. WEEK 6  
CHURCH OF PHILADELPHIA – THEME: CHRIST IS THE ONE WHO  
HOLDS THE KEY OF DAVID

OVERVIEW OF THOSE ATTENDING AND  
NOT ATTENDING PRE-SERMON BIBLE STUDY

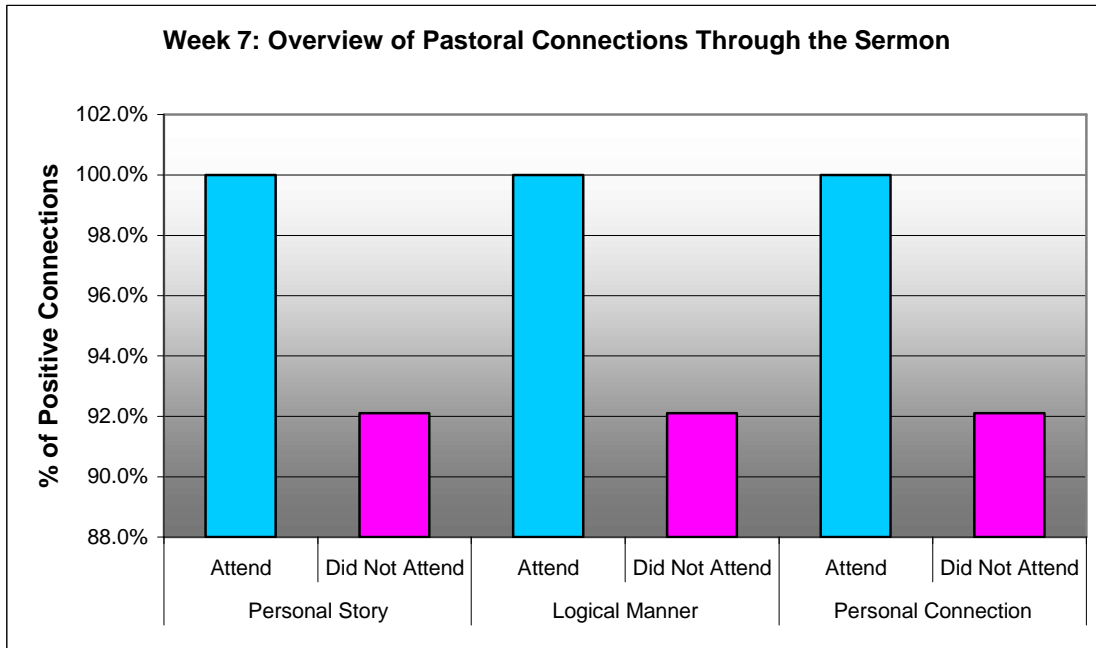


Those attending the pre-sermon Bible study had more positive connections in the categories of personal story and personal connection than those who did not attend. They had the same percentage of connections in the category of logical manner. Their greatest difference of positive connections was a difference of 7.1% in the category of personal story.

Finally, presented is the project data from week 7.

TABLE 30. WEEK 7  
 CHURCH OF LAODICEA – THEME: CHRIST IS THE ONE WHO  
 IS THE AMEN, THE FAITHFUL AND TRUE WITNESS

OVERVIEW OF THOSE ATTENDING AND  
 NOT ATTENDING PRE-SERMON BIBLE STUDY



Those attending the pre-sermon Bible study had more positive connections in all the categories than those who did not attend. A 7.9% difference of positive connections was found in all three categories.

Summary of the *Ethos* Filter

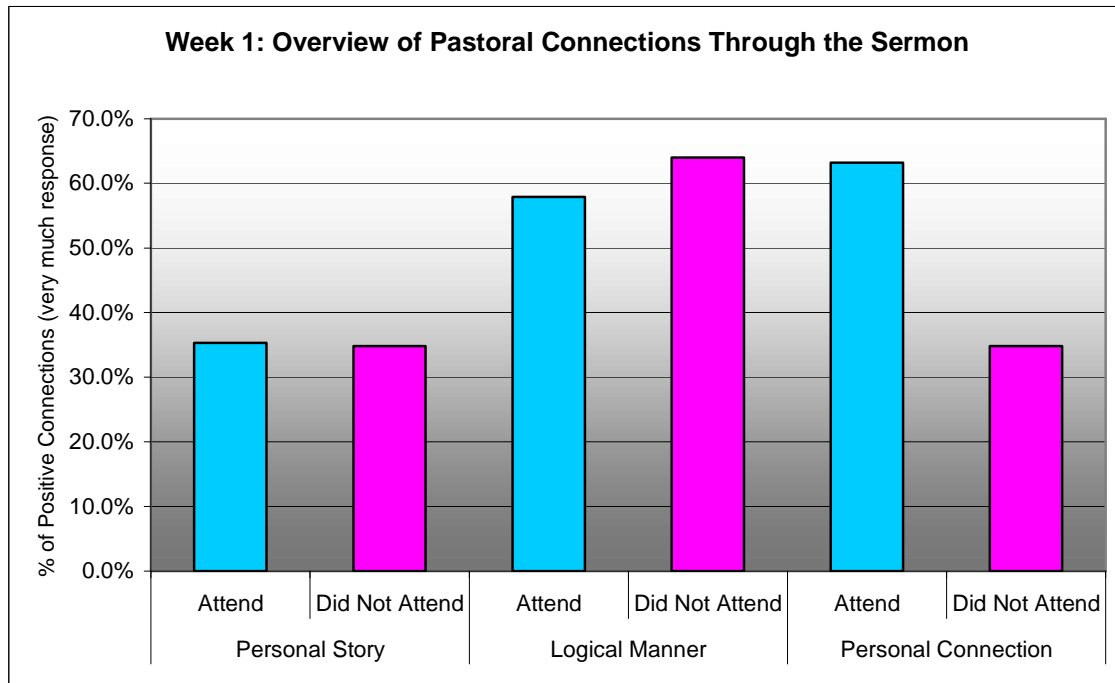
*Ethos* filters are engaged by the relationship the hearer has with the preacher. Out of the seven weeks of post-sermon surveys the group attending the pre-sermon Bible study had an overall average of more positive connections each week than those who did not attend. The positive connections were found in all three categories that were tested. The data shows that those who attended the pre-sermon Bible studies may have had the presuppositions set for hearing the sermon with an *ethos* filter.

### The Ethos Filter of Hearing Comparing Only the “Very Much” Responses.

In order to get greater insight to the *ethos* filter, the Likert scale was again used to compare only the “very much” rating 4. This helps measure the intensity of the response.

Table 31 compares the data from week 1 of the project.

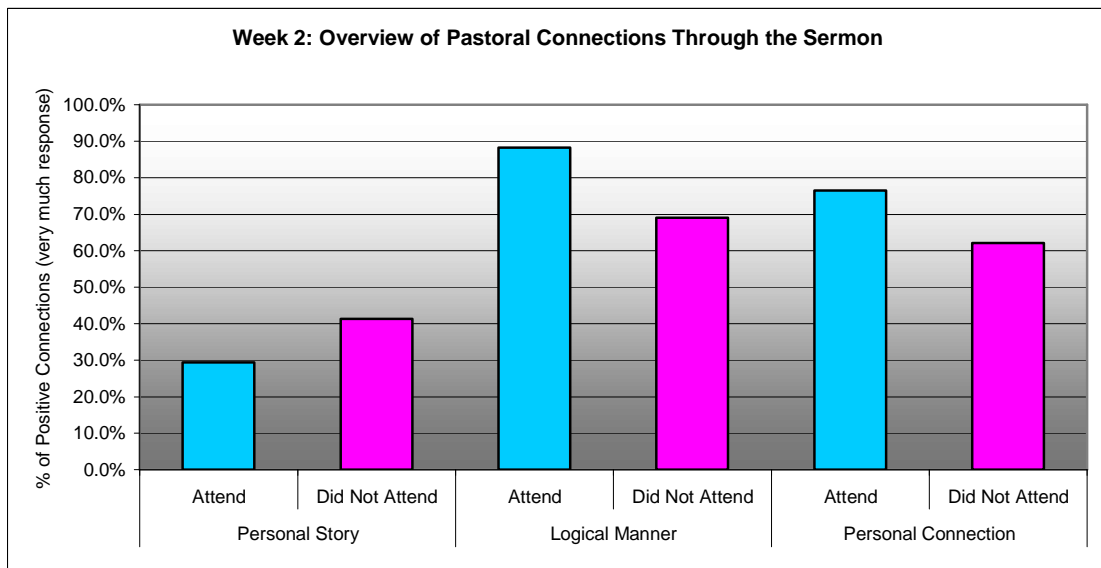
TABLE 31. WEEK 1  
THE CHURCH OF EPHESUS – THEME: CHRIST IS THE ONE WHO IS OUR JUDGE.  
OVERVIEW OF “VERY MUCH” RESPONSES OF THOSE ATTENDING AND NOT ATTENDING PRE-SERMON BIBLE STUDY



Those attending the pre-sermon Bible study had more “very much” responses in the categories of personal story and personal connection than those who did not attend. However, they had fewer “very much” responses in the category of logical manner. Their greatest difference of “very much” responses was a difference of 28.4% in the category of personal connection.

Table 32 compares the attending and non-attending from week 2 of the project.

TABLE 32. WEEK 2  
 THE CHURCH OF SMYRNA – THEME: CHRIST IS THE FIRST AND THE LAST.  
 OVERVIEW OF “VERY MUCH” RESPONSES OF THOSE ATTENDING AND  
 NOT ATTENDING PRE-SERMON BIBLE STUDY

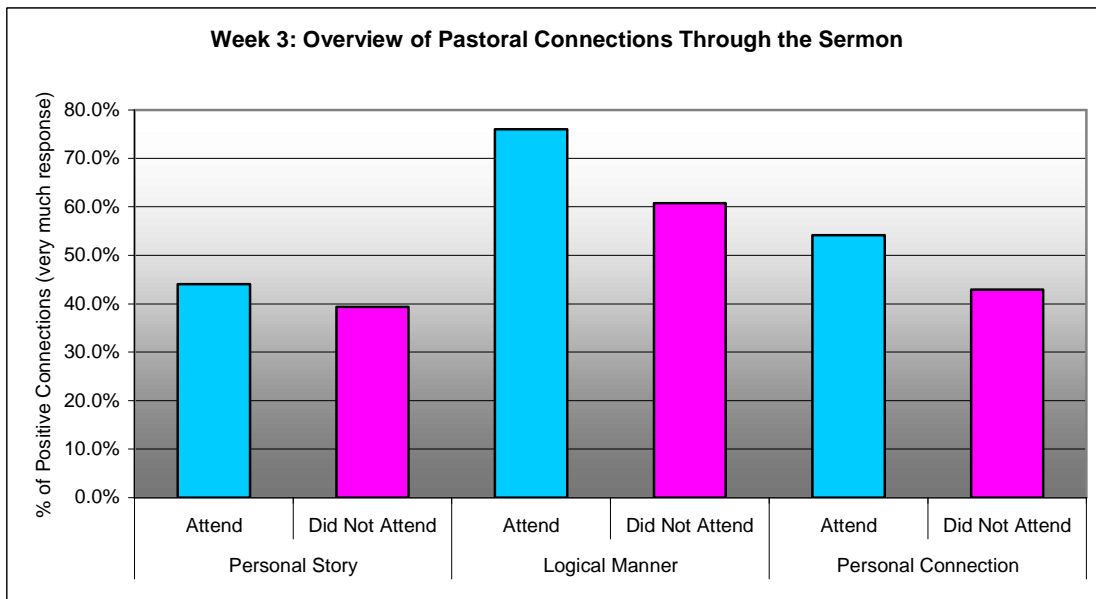


Those attending the pre-sermon Bible study had more “very much” responses in the categories of logical manner and personal connection than those who did not attend. However, they had fewer “very much” responses in the category of personal story. Their greatest difference of “very much” responses was a difference of 19.2% in the category of logical manner.

The data for week 3 of the project is as follows:

TABLE 33. WEEK 3  
THE CHURCH OF THYATIRA – THEME: CHRIST IS THE ONE WHO HAS ALL  
AUTHORITY.

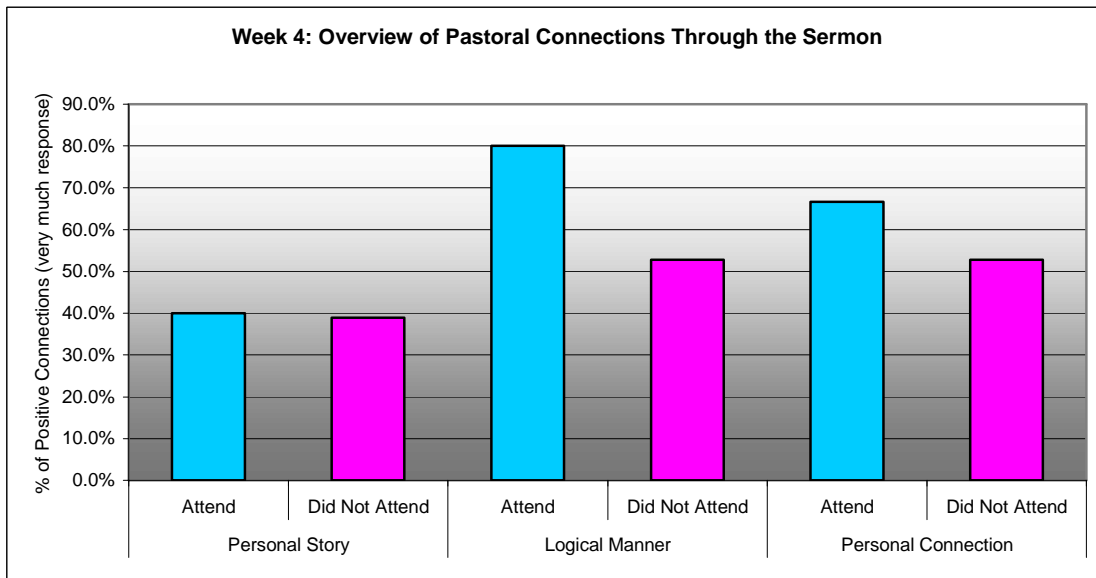
OVERVIEW OF “VERY MUCH” RESPONSES OF THOSE ATTENDING AND  
NOT ATTENDING PRE-SERMON BIBLE STUDY



Those attending the pre-sermon Bible study had more “very much” responses in all three categories than those who did not attend. Their greatest difference of “very much” responses was a difference of 15.3% in the category of logical manner.

The data of the responses for week 4 are as follows:

TABLE 34. WEEK 4  
THE CHURCH OF PERGAMUM – THEME: CHRIST IS THE ONE WHO  
HOLDS THE DOUBLE EDGED SWORD  
OVERVIEW OF “VERY MUCH” RESPONSES OF THOSE ATTENDING  
AND NOT ATTENDING PRE-SERMON BIBLE STUDY



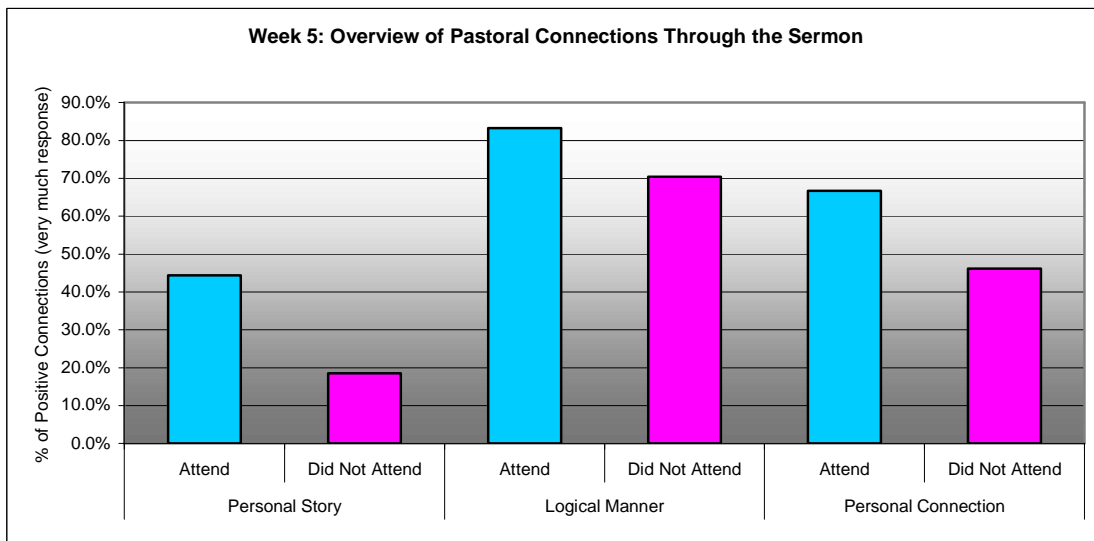
Those attending the pre-sermon Bible study had more “very much” responses in all three categories than those who did not attend. Their greatest difference of “very much” responses was a difference of 27.2% in the category of logical manner.



The results from week 5 of the project are shown in Table 35.

TABLE 35. WEEK 5  
 THE CHURCH OF SARDIS – THEME: CHRIST IS THE ONE WHO  
 HOLDS THE SEVEN SPIRITS OF GOD

OVERVIEW OF “VERY MUCH” RESPONSES OF THOSE ATTENDING AND NOT  
 ATTENDING PRE-SERMON BIBLE STUDY

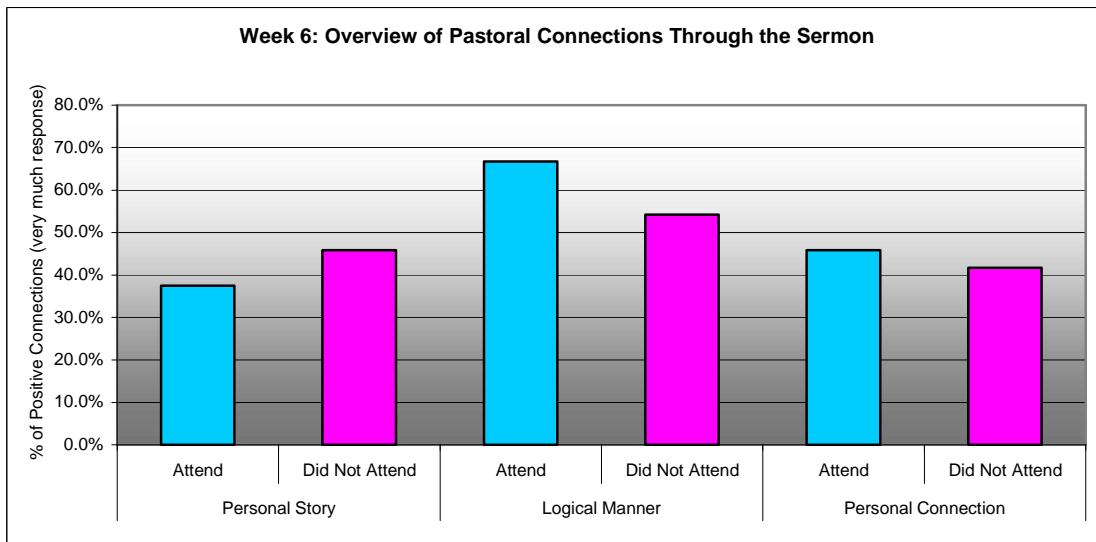


Those attending the pre-sermon Bible study had more “very much” responses in all three categories than those who did not attend. Their greatest difference of “very much” responses was a difference of 25.9% in the category of personal story.

The data from week 6 of the project is shown in Table 36.

TABLE 36. WEEK 6  
CHURCH OF PHILADELPHIA – THEME: CHRIST IS THE ONE WHO  
HOLDS THE KEY OF DAVID

OVERVIEW OF “VERY MUCH” RESPONSES OF THOSE ATTENDING AND  
NOT ATTENDING PRE-SERMON BIBLE STUDY

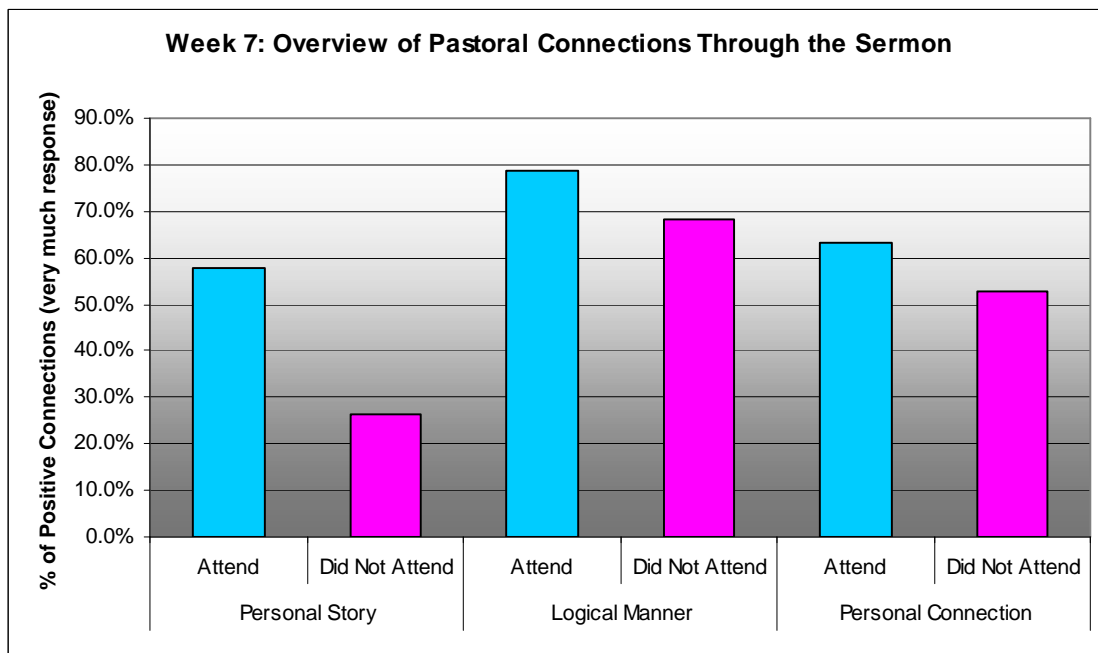


Those attending the pre-sermon Bible study had more “very much” responses in the categories of logical manner and personal connection than those who did not attend. However, they had fewer “very much” responses in the category of personal story. Their greatest difference of “very much” responses was a difference of 12.5% in the category of logical manner.

Finally, presented is the project data from week 7.

TABLE 37. WEEK 7  
 CHURCH OF LAODICEA – THEME: CHRIST IS THE ONE WHO  
 IS THE AMEN, THE FAITHFUL AND TRUE WITNESS

OVERVIEW OF “VERY MUCH” RESPONSES OF THOSE ATTENDING AND  
 NOT ATTENDING PRE-SERMON BIBLE STUDY



Those attending the pre-sermon Bible study had more “very much” responses in all three categories than those who did not attend. Their greatest difference of “very much” responses was a difference of 31.6% in the category of personal story.

Summary of Ethos Filters Of Hearing Comparing Only the “Very Much” Responses

Out of the seven weeks of post-sermon surveys the group attending the pre-sermon Bible study had a higher overall average of “very much” responses than those not attending each week. The “very much” responses were found in all three categories that were tested. The data shows

even more evidence that those who attended the pre-sermon Bible studies had the presuppositions set “very much” for hearing the sermon with an *ethos* filter.

### The Community Filter of Hearing

Community filters are engaged by the relationship the hearer has with his/her fellow worshipers and the community as a whole.

Figures 2 and 3 show in percentages the results of the Likert Scale for those who attended and did not attend the pre-sermon Bible study.

Figure 2.

#### 7 WEEK OVERVIEW OF OUR REDEEMER COMMUNITY FILTERS OF HEARING

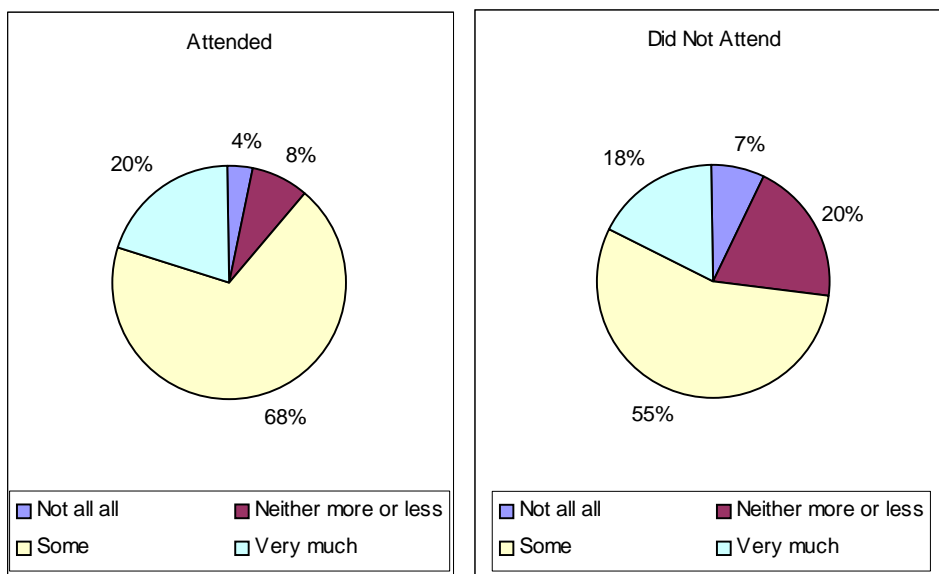
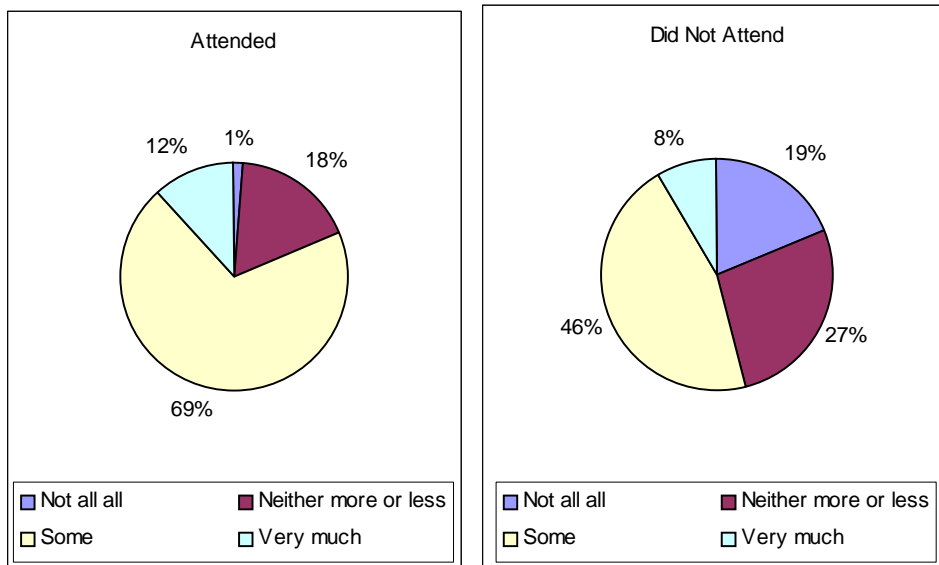


Figure 3.

7 WEEK OVERVIEW OF GREENVILLE AND BEYOND  
COMMUNITY FILTERS OF HEARING



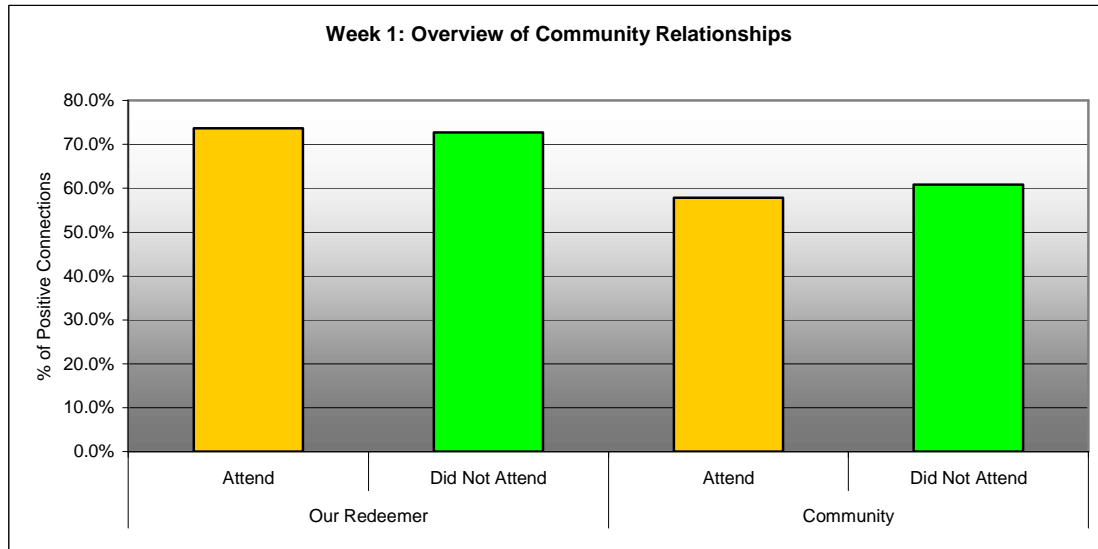
88% of those attending the pre-sermon Bible study indicated positive connections with Our Redeemer members during the sermon. 73% of those who did not attend the pre-sermon Bible study indicated positive connections with Our Redeemer members during the sermon. 81% of those attending the pre-sermon Bible study indicated positive connections with Greenville and beyond during the sermon. 54% of those who did not attend the pre-sermon Bible study indicated positive connections with Greenville and beyond during the sermon.

The total data for the seven week study shows that the pre-sermon Bible study that sets the presuppositions of the hearer by engaging the community filters of hearing can improve how a hearer hears a sermon.

The previous data showed the average number of all seven weeks, the data will be now compared week by week.

Table 38 compares the data from week 1 of the project.

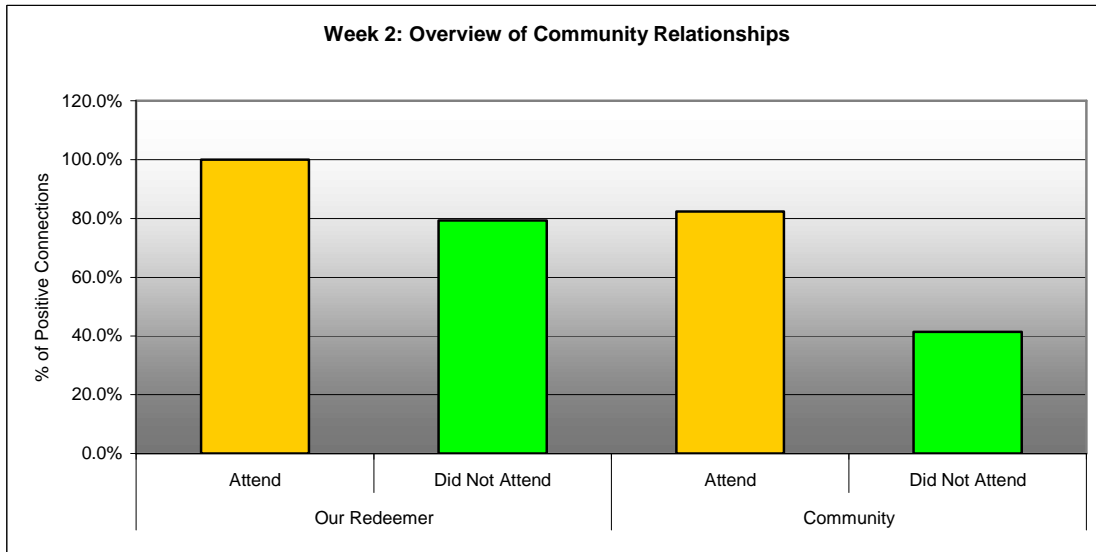
TABLE 38. WEEK 1  
THE CHURCH OF EPHESUS – THEME: CHRIST IS THE ONE WHO IS OUR JUDGE.  
OVERVIEW OF THOSE ATTENDING AND  
NOT ATTENDING PRE-SERMON BIBLE STUDY



Those attending the pre-sermon Bible study had slightly more positive connections with Our Redeemer. They had less positive connections with the community. Positive connections with Our Redeemer was 1% less for those attending pre-sermon Bible study than for those not attending pre-sermon Bible study. Those not attending the pre-sermon Bible study had a 3% greater difference of positive connections with the community than those who did not attend the pre-sermon Bible study.

Table 39 compares the attending and non-attending from week 2 of the project.

TABLE 39. WEEK 2  
THE CHURCH OF SMYRNA – THEME: CHRIST IS THE FIRST AND THE LAST.  
OVERVIEW OF THOSE ATTENDING AND  
NOT ATTENDING PRE-SERMON BIBLE STUDY

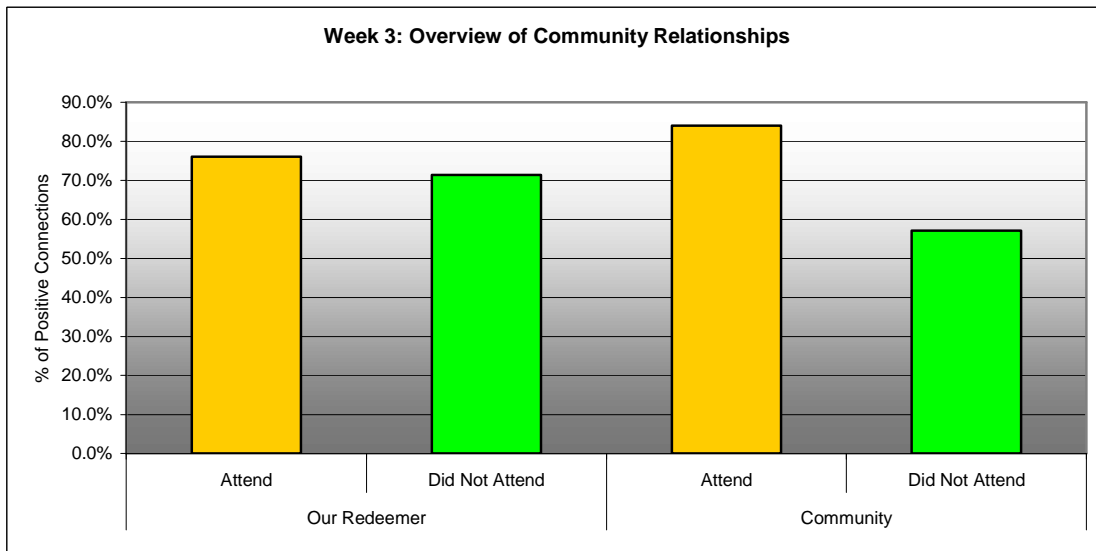


Those attending the pre-sermon Bible study had more positive connections with Our Redeemer and with the community than those who did not attend. Those attending the pre-sermon Bible study had a difference of 20.7% with Our Redeemer and a difference of 41% with the community compared with those who did not attend.

The data for week 3 of the project is as follows:

TABLE 40. WEEK 3  
THE CHURCH OF THYATIRA – THEME: CHRIST IS THE ONE WHO HAS ALL  
AUTHORITY.

OVERVIEW OF THOSE ATTENDING AND  
NOT ATTENDING PRE-SERMON BIBLE STUDY



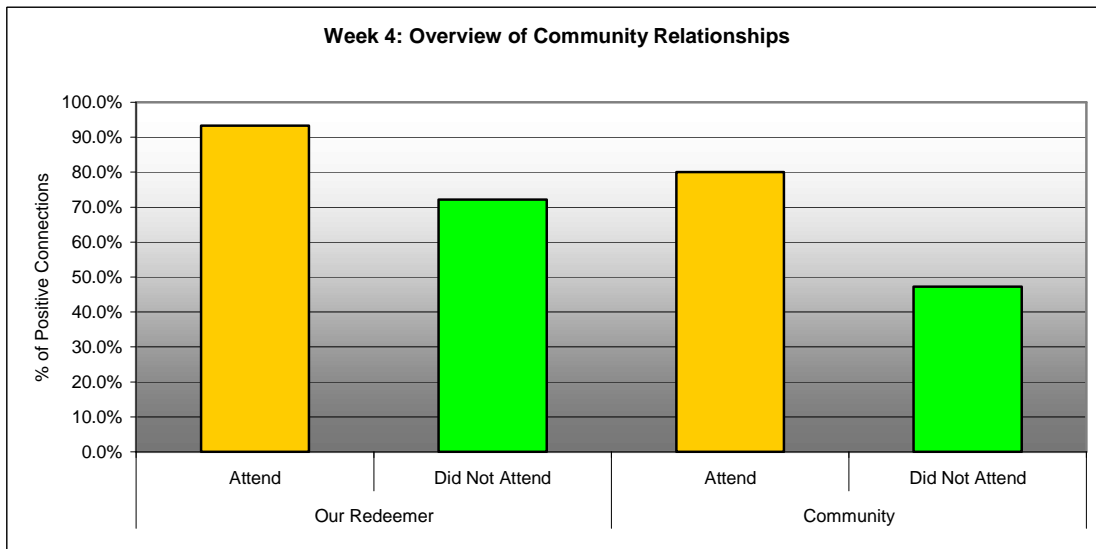
Those attending the pre-sermon Bible study had more positive connections with Our Redeemer and with the community than those who did not attend. Those attending the pre-sermon Bible study had a difference of 4.6% with Our Redeemer and a difference of 26.9% with the community compared with those who did not attend.



The data of the responses for week 4 are as follows:

TABLE 41. WEEK 4  
THE CHURCH OF PERGAMUM – THEME: CHRIST IS THE ONE WHO  
HOLDS THE DOUBLE EDGED SWORD

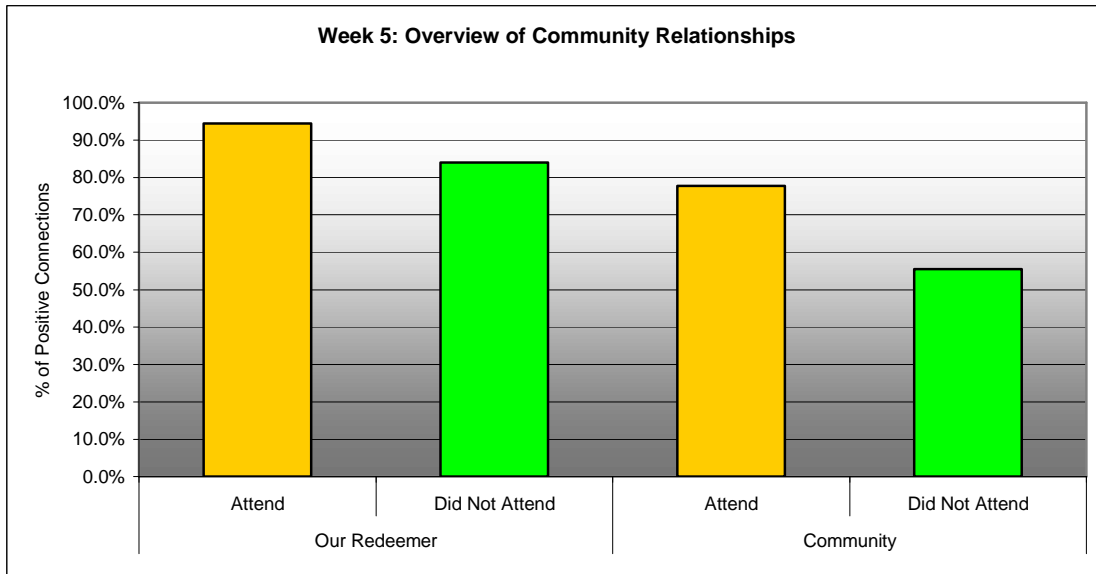
OVERVIEW OF THOSE ATTENDING AND  
NOT ATTENDING PRE-SERMON BIBLE STUDY



Those attending the pre-sermon Bible study had more positive connections with Our Redeemer and with the community than those who did not attend. Those attending the pre-sermon Bible study had a difference of 21.1% with Our Redeemer and a difference of 32.8% with the community compared with those who did not attend.

The results from week 5 of the project are shown in Table 42.

TABLE 42. WEEK 5  
THE CHURCH OF SARDIS – THEME: CHRIST IS THE ONE WHO  
HOLDS THE SEVEN SPIRITS OF GOD  
OVERVIEW OF THOSE ATTENDING AND  
NOT ATTENDING PRE-SERMON BIBLE STUDY

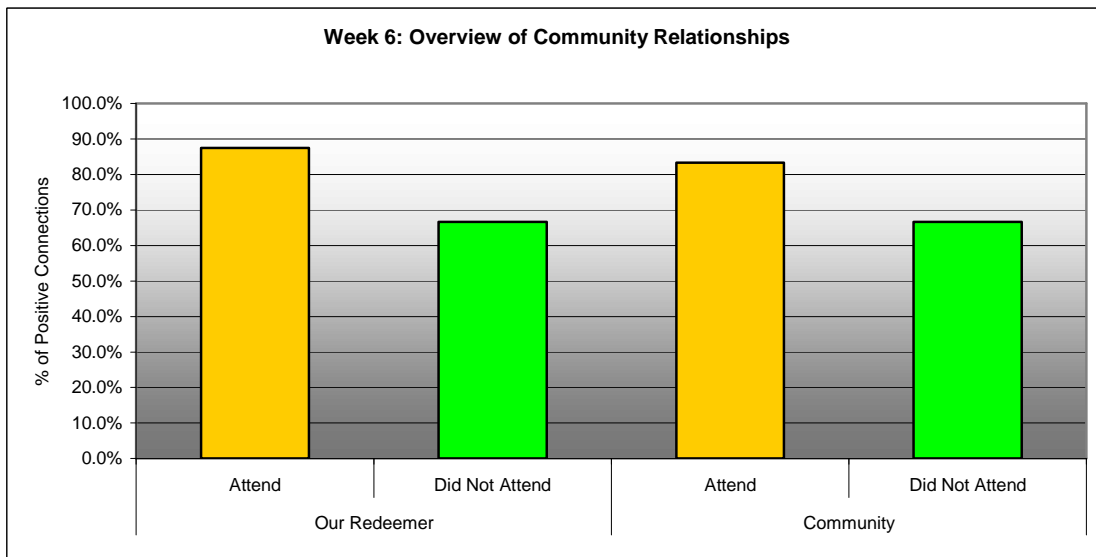


Those attending the pre-sermon Bible study had more positive connections with Our Redeemer and with the community than those who did not attend. Those attending the pre-sermon Bible study had a difference of 10.4% with Our Redeemer and a difference of 22.2% with the community compared with those who did not attend.

The data from week 6 of the project is shown in Table 43.

TABLE 43. WEEK 6  
CHURCH OF PHILADELPHIA – THEME: CHRIST IS THE ONE WHO  
HOLDS THE KEY OF DAVID

OVERVIEW OF THOSE ATTENDING AND  
NOT ATTENDING PRE-SERMON BIBLE STUDY

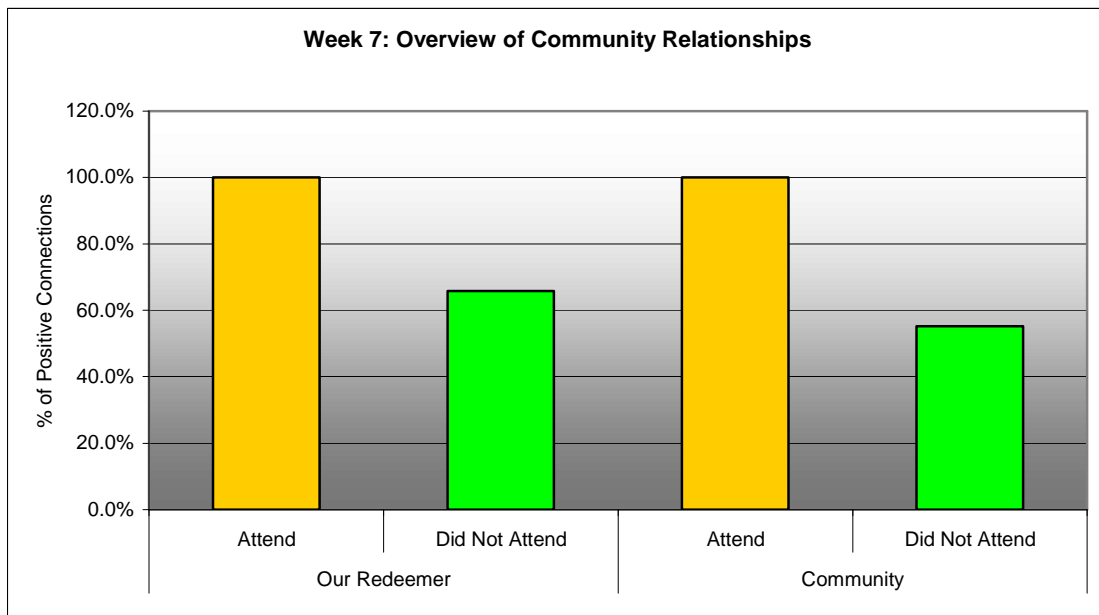


Those attending the pre-sermon Bible study had more positive connections with Our Redeemer and with the community than those who did not attend. Those attending the pre-sermon Bible study had a difference of 20.8% with Our Redeemer and a difference of 16.6% with the community compared with those who did not attend.

Finally, presented is the project data from week 7.

TABLE 44. WEEK 7  
CHURCH OF LAODICEA – THEME: CHRIST IS THE ONE WHO  
IS THE AMEN, THE FAITHFUL AND TRUE WITNESS

OVERVIEW OF THOSE ATTENDING AND  
NOT ATTENDING PRE-SERMON BIBLE STUDY



Those attending the pre-sermon Bible study had more positive connections with Our Redeemer and with the community than those who did not attend. Those attending the pre-sermon Bible study had a difference of 34.2% with Our Redeemer and a difference of 44.7% with the community compared with those who did not attend.

Summary of the Community Filter of Hearing

Community filters are engaged by the relationship the hearer has with his/her fellow worshipers and the community as a whole. Out of the seven weeks of post-sermon surveys those attending the pre-sermon Bible study had an overall average of more positive connections each

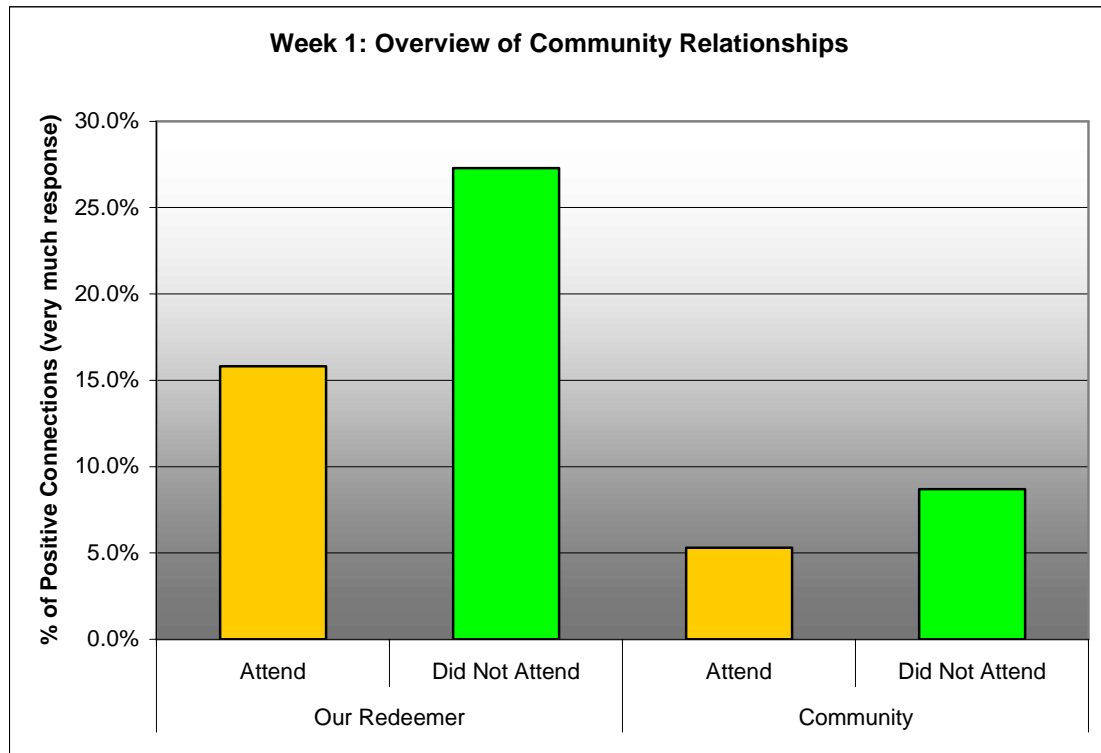
week. The positive connections were found in both Our Redeemer and the community overall. The only time those attending the pre-sermon Bible study had less positive connections with the category of community was the first week. The difference was 3%. All other weeks those attending the pre-sermon Bible study had more positive connections, and the greatest difference was between those attending and those not attending was 34.2% with Our Redeemer and 44.7% with community. The data shows that those who attended the pre-sermon Bible studies may have had the presuppositions set for hearing the sermon with a community filter.

### The Community Filter of Hearing Comparing Only the “Very Much” Responses

In order to get greater insight to the *ethos* filter, the Likert scale was again used to compare only the “very much” rating 4. This helps measure the intensity of the response.

Table 45 compares the data from week 1 of the project.

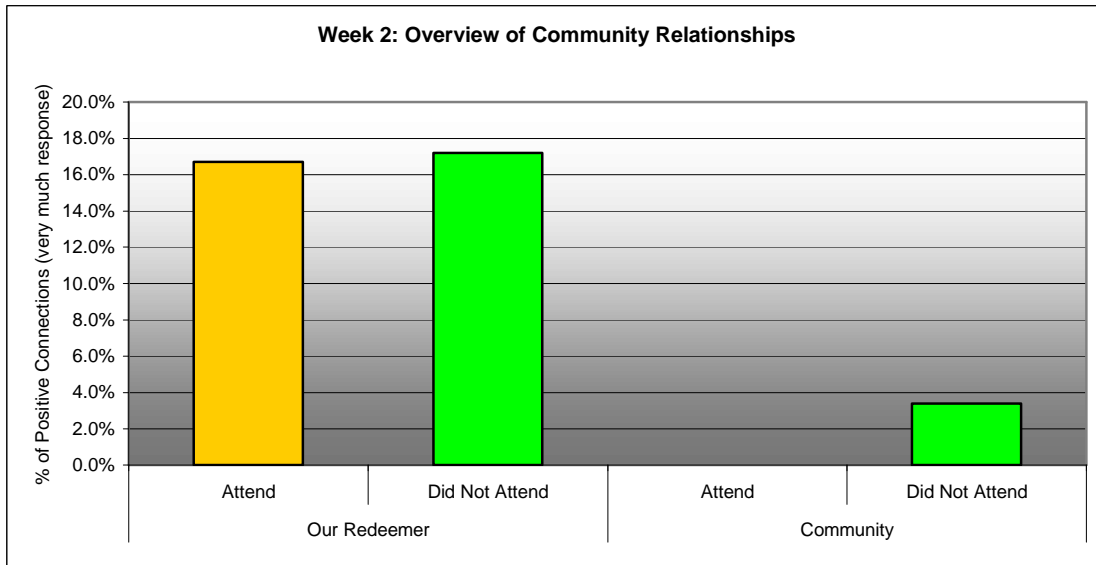
TABLE 45. WEEK 1  
THE CHURCH OF EPHESUS – THEME: CHRIST IS THE ONE WHO IS OUR JUDGE.  
OVERVIEW OF “VERY MUCH” RESPONSES OF THOSE ATTENDING AND NOT ATTENDING THE PRE-SERMON BIBLE STUDY



Those attending the pre-sermon Bible study had fewer “very much” responses in both categories which does not support the hypothesis. Those attending the pre-sermon Bible study had a difference of 11.5% with Our Redeemer and a difference of 3.4% with the community compared with those who did not attend.

Table 46 compares the attending and non-attending from week 2 of the project.

TABLE 46. WEEK 2  
THE CHURCH OF SMYRNA – THEME: CHRIST IS THE FIRST AND THE LAST.  
OVERVIEW OF “VERY MUCH” RESPONSES OF THOSE ATTENDING AND  
NOT ATTENDING THE PRE-SERMON BIBLE STUDY

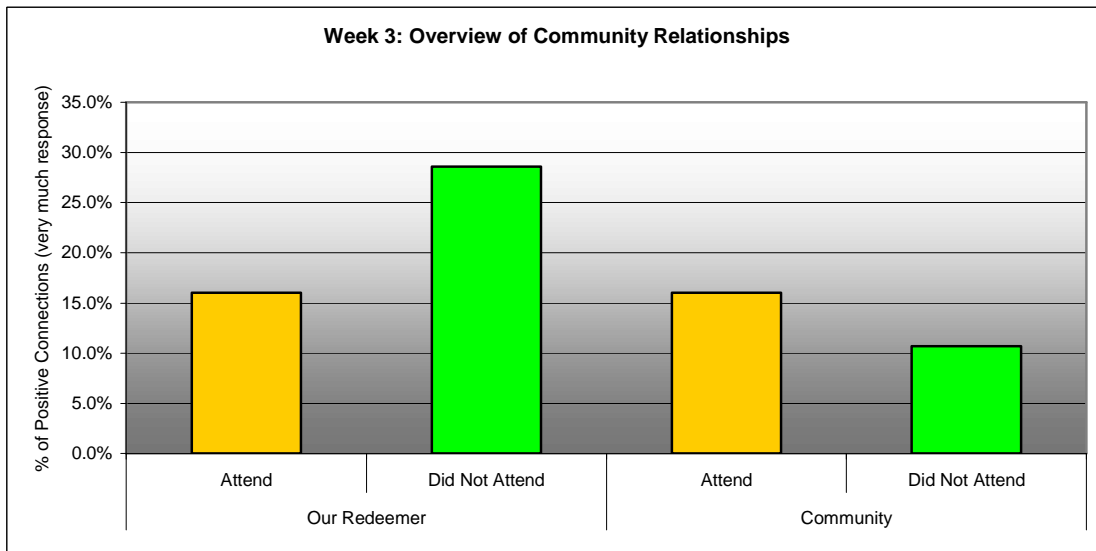


Those attending the pre-sermon Bible study had fewer “very much” responses in both categories which does not support the hypothesis. Those attending the pre-sermon Bible study had a difference of 0.5% with Our Redeemer and a difference of 3.4% with the community compared with those who did not attend.

The data for week 3 of the project is as follows:

TABLE 47. WEEK 3  
THE CHURCH OF THYATIRA – THEME: CHRIST IS THE ONE WHO HAS ALL  
AUTHORITY.

OVERVIEW OF “VERY MUCH” RESPONSES OF THOSE ATTENDING AND  
NOT ATTENDING THE PRE-SERMON BIBLE STUDY



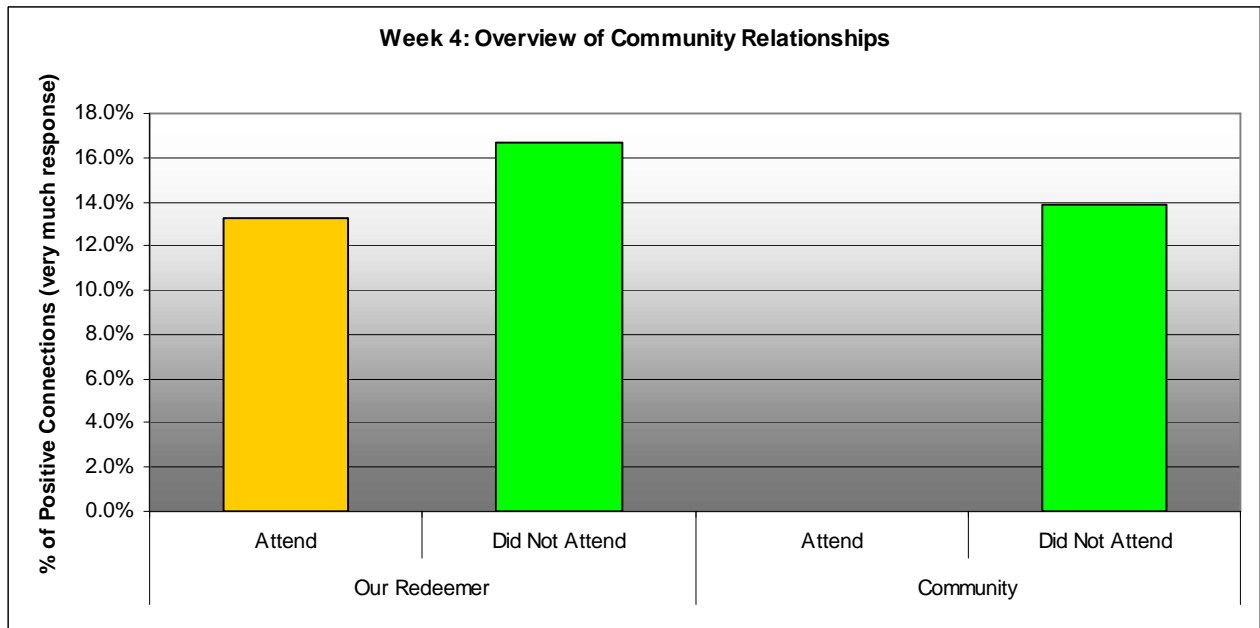
Those attending the pre-sermon Bible study had fewer “very much” responses in Our Redeemer but more “very much” responses in community which does not support the hypothesis. Those attending the pre-sermon Bible study had a difference of 12.6% with Our Redeemer and a difference of 5.3% with the community compared with those who did not attend.



The data of the responses for week 4 are as follows:

TABLE 48. WEEK 4  
 THE CHURCH OF PERGAMUM – THEME: CHRIST IS THE ONE WHO  
 HOLDS THE DOUBLE EDGED SWORD

OVERVIEW OF “VERY MUCH” RESPONSES OF THOSE ATTENDING AND  
 NOT ATTENDING THE PRE-SERMON BIBLE STUDY

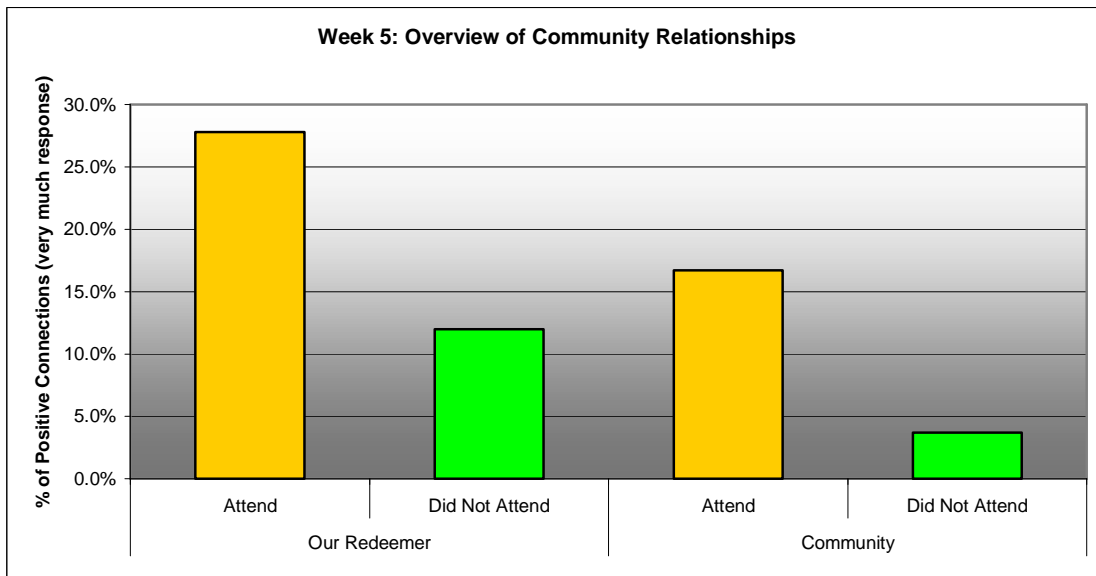


Those attending the pre-sermon Bible study had fewer “very much” responses in both categories which does not support the hypothesis. Those attending the pre-sermon Bible study had fewer “very much” responses in both categories which does not support the hypothesis. Those attending the pre-sermon Bible study had a difference of 0.5% with Our Redeemer and a difference of 3.4% with the community compared with those who did not attend.

The results from week 5 of the project are shown in Table 49.

TABLE 49. WEEK 5  
THE CHURCH OF SARDIS – THEME: CHRIST IS THE ONE WHO  
HOLDS THE SEVEN SPIRITS OF GOD

OVERVIEW OF “VERY MUCH” RESPONSES OF THOSE ATTENDING AND  
NOT ATTENDING THE PRE-SERMON BIBLE STUDY

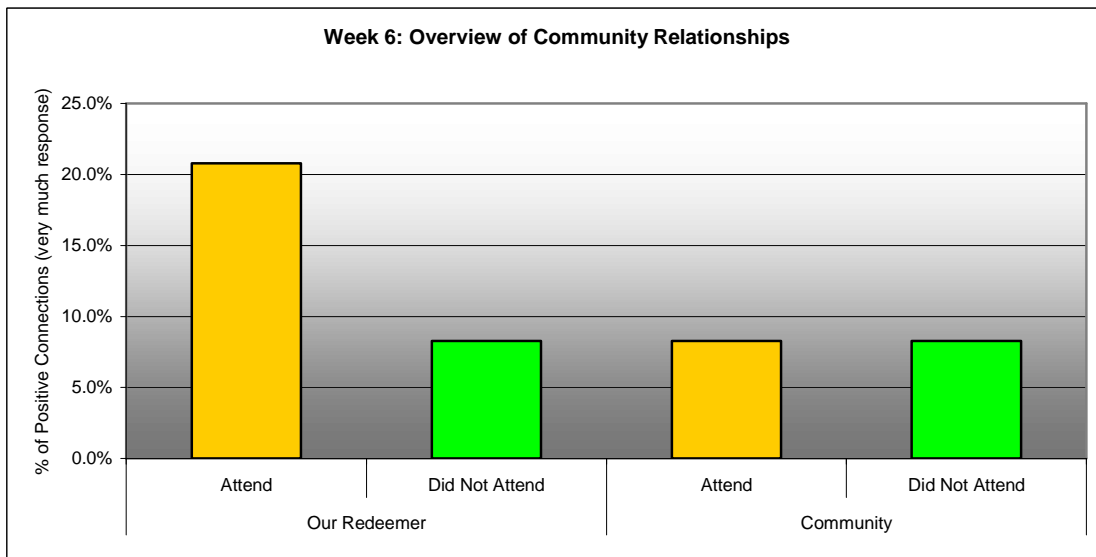


Those attending the pre-sermon Bible study had more “very much” responses in both categories which supports the hypothesis. Those attending the pre-sermon Bible study had a difference of 15.8% with Our Redeemer and a difference of 13% with the community compared with those who did not attend.

The data from week 6 of the project is shown in Table 50.

TABLE 50. WEEK 6  
CHURCH OF PHILADELPHIA – THEME: CHRIST IS THE ONE WHO  
HOLDS THE KEY OF DAVID

OVERVIEW “VERY MUCH” RESPONSES OF THOSE ATTENDING AND  
NOT ATTENDING THE PRE-SERMON BIBLE STUDY

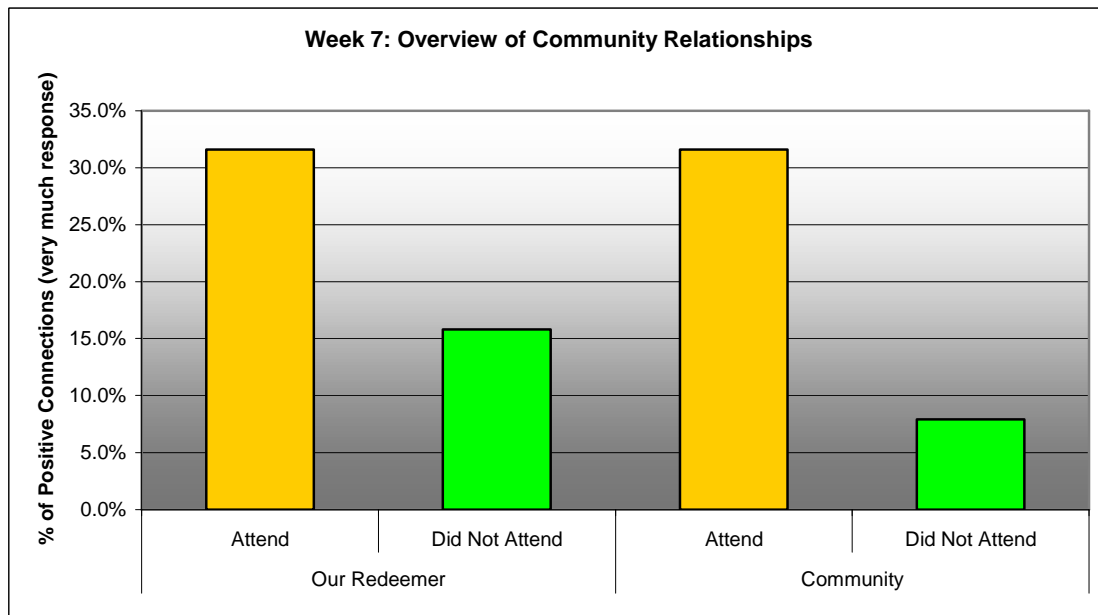


Those attending the pre-sermon Bible study had more “very much” responses in Our Redeemer but the same percentage of “very much” responses in community which does not support the hypothesis. Those attending the pre-sermon Bible study had a difference of 12.2% with Our Redeemer and no difference with the community compared with those who did not attend.

Finally, presented is the project data from week 7.

TABLE 51. WEEK 7  
CHURCH OF LAODICEA – THEME: CHRIST IS THE ONE WHO  
IS THE AMEN, THE FAITHFUL AND TRUE WITNESS

OVERVIEW OF “VERY MUCH” RESPONSES OF THOSE ATTENDING AND  
NOT ATTENDING THE PRE-SERMON BIBLE STUDY



Those attending the pre-sermon Bible study had more “very much” responses in both categories which supports the hypothesis. Those attending the pre-sermon Bible study had a difference of 15.8% with Our Redeemer and a difference of 24.6% with the community compared with those who did not attend.

## Summary of the Community Filter of Hearing Comparing Only The “Very Much” Responses

Out of the seven weeks of post-sermon surveys those attending the pre-sermon Bible study had only three more “very much” responses out of the seven weeks in the category of Our Redeemer. They had only three more “very much” responses out of the seven in the category of community plus one that was the same as those not attending the pre-sermon Bible study. The greatest difference of those attending the pre-sermon Bible study was 15.8% greater with Our Redeemer and 24.6% greater with community than those not attending the pre-sermon Bible study. The greatest difference of those not attending the pre-sermon Bible study was 12.6% greater with Our Redeemer and 13.9% greater with community than those attending pre-sermon Bible study. The data does not show that those who attended the pre-sermon Bible studies had the pre-suppositions set for hearing the sermon with a community filter of “very much” responses. Also, the data shows that throughout the weekly progression that those who attended the pre-sermon Bible study were increasing in their “very much” responses.

### **Conclusion of Data**

The SID LCMS pastors very rarely offer any pre-sermon Bible studies that help the hearer hear the sermon by setting the presuppositions of the hearer using the four filters of hearing. Thirteen pastors out of 49 that did offer a pre-sermon Bible study did a Bible study on the lessons of the day. This type of Bible study lends itself to only reaching the *logos* filter if the Bible study is one of lecture only. This then would not engage the hearers who hear with a *pathos*, *ethos*, and community filter.

Overall out of the 63 questions which were asked throughout the seven week post-sermon survey, those attending the pre-sermon Bible studies had less incorrect answers on 59 of the 63 or 93.6% of the questions. The data supports the hypothesis that the pre-sermon Bible Study

helps set the presuppositions for the *logos* filter. One possibility for this may be that the recall of information was increased for the hearer as a result of having the data presented prior to the service.

Those attending the pre-sermon Bible study had an overall average of more emotional hits throughout the post-sermon surveys. This supports the hypothesis that a pre-sermon Bible study helps set the presuppositions for the *pathos* filter. One possibility for this may be that the emotions and feelings of the hearer were engaged as a result of having attended the pre-sermon Bible study prior to the service.

Those attending the pre-sermon Bible study had an overall average of more positive connections in the categories of personal story, logical manner, and personal connection throughout the post-sermon survey showing that a pre-sermon Bible study may help set the presuppositions for the *ethos* filter. One possibility for this may be that the relationship of the hearer and the pastor increased as a result of having attended the pre-sermon Bible study prior to the service.

The community filter was the only filter that did not show consistent evidence that a pre-sermon Bible study helps set the presuppositions for the hearer. There was consistent evidence that those who attended the pre-sermon Bible study responded more positively in the category of positive connections with Our Redeemer and with the community. However, in the category of “very much” responses that measures intensity there was not conclusive evidence that those who attended the pre-sermon Bible study had greater positive connections than those who did not attend. This data actually contradicts the proposed hypothesis. One possibility for this may be that this filter of hearing needed to be developed in the hearer by the preacher over a course of weeks.

In summary, most of the data supports a positive influence of a pre-sermon Bible study that sets the presuppositions of the hearer to hear the sermon through the filters of *logos*, *pathos*, *ethos* and community. However, the community filter did not support the hypothesis as consistently as the other three. Therefore, if a pastor wishes to deepen hearing the sermon in the relationship of these filters it would appear, on the basis of the conclusions of the research, that a pre-sermon Bible study would be a strategy to implement.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **THE FOUR FILTERS OF HEARING CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **Impact of the Project**

The project, “How a Hearer Hears a Sermon: Setting the Presuppositions of the Second Text,” has already influenced my ministry as well as the members of Our Redeemer Lutheran Church. As a result of the project, both the congregation and I have found many insights and benefits of using a pre-sermon Bible study to engage the four filters of hearing. This chapter will reveal those findings and will suggest some recommendations that could be helpful for future application among laity, congregations, and pastors.

#### **Implications and Content**

The implications of the information that was found in the previous chapter has given the members of Our Redeemer and myself new insight to how a hearer listens to a sermon. This insight has already affected the members of Our Redeemer and myself.

The SID (Southern Illinois District), LCMS(Lutheran Church Missouri Synod) pastors survey showed that there are not very many pastors teaching a Bible study to help the hearer prepare to listen to the sermon. The insights of this project can be valuable information for pastors and congregations.

#### **Contributions to the Members of Our Redeemer**

The ministry at Our Redeemer Lutheran Church has been influenced by the pre-sermon Bible study. The members of Our Redeemer have been influenced regarding how they listen to a sermon and by how they prepare for the sermon. The first noticeable outcome from the project is that Our Redeemer is continuing to have a pre-sermon Bible study that helps the hearer prepare for listening to the sermon by engaging the four filters of hearing throughout the study. This



study meets before the Saturday service at 4:30 pm. Before this Bible study was introduced, Our Redeemer only had Bible study on Sunday morning before service. At this time, attendance has not been as consistent as the Sunday morning Bible studies which were typically a topical Bible study. However, those who are attending the pre-sermon Bible study often are willing to express their gratitude for the study and share how the study prepares them to listen to the sermon.

A second obvious difference is that since the project was concluded there has been an increase of Bible study overall. For instance, during the seven week pre-sermon Bible study, three members who had never attended Bible study in the fifteen years I have served at Our Redeemer came for the first time.

The final observation that I have noticed is how much input of the members who attend the pre-sermon Bible study impacts my sermon. In almost every pre-sermon Bible study, a member has said something that actually changes the sermon that I was planning to proclaim. Sometimes it is a logical move that I had not noticed. Other times it may be an illustration that is actually better than what I was planning to use. But the greatest insight was the connection to community. Because I have only been at Greenville for fifteen years, I am also limited in my knowledge of its history. However, some of the members who attended the pre-sermon Bible study have lived in Greenville their whole lives and many times they are able to share new insights that I can use to help the other members of Our Redeemer listen to the sermon. An example of this is when I was preaching on the text “Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you a crown of life.”(Revelation 2:10). I had already determined to use the illustration of Miss America receiving her crown. However, when we were in the phase of the fourth filter of hearing, the community and beyond, in the pre-sermon Bible study, one of the life-time members of Our Redeemer started talking about the Bond County Queen contest, which is held in

Greenville. Instantly the rest of the members attending the pre-sermon Bible study had stories and recollections of the contests. Needless to say, I used the Bond County Queen contest illustration rather than the one of Miss America.

Another occasion which afforded this opportunity was a time when the sermon text was “Him who overcomes I will make a pillar in the temple of my God. Never again will he leave it. I will write on him the name of God.” (Revelation 3:10-12). A member gave me a meaningful illustration that was connected with all the members of Our Redeemer. The member said that the text reminded him of the time when the congregation came to the building site of our new church and we had a dedication service and then put our names and confirmation verses on the 2 x 4 studs before they were covered. After using that illustration, I had several members say to me “that day was only a foretaste of the day when God will place our names on his pillar in heaven.” These are only two examples of the many that I received. The insights from those attending the pre-sermon Bible study add to my sermon delivery and content weekly.

The implications of the pre-sermon Bible study are that it is not only worth continuing the study, but also it is beneficial to share the results and continue to expose the benefits of this type of Bible study. I began doing this in the monthly newsletter. In the first letter, I shared how the data supported having a pre-sermon Bible study. I also explained that in the following letters I would give specific facts and explanations of each of the four filters. I am also going to recommend some reading in each letter that can help educate the hearer about each filter.

### **Future Enrichment**

In light of the findings of this project, I believe there should be a continued enrichment of understanding of how a hearer hears the sermon at Our Redeemer. One way in which I plan to continue this enrichment is by developing and adding a curriculum that will be included in my

new member classes and both adult and youth confirmation classes. Another way I plan to continue this enrichment is by developing an outline and questionnaire that I can use for every member visits. I feel this would be a good opportunity for me to get personal feedback from the individual members about how they particularly hear a sermon and also ask them in what ways I can better help them listen to the sermon. By adding these two components to my ministry, I will be able to help the members of Our Redeemer understand the four filters of hearing.

### **Contributions to my Ministry**

The findings of the project have many implications to my ministry. First, I have become more aware of how each individual is special in every way God created them. It is absolutely fascinating that every week each member can hear the same sermon and yet have different logical conclusions, emotional feelings, and different attachments to the community of Our Redeemer and beyond. This gives new meaning to the words of the psalmist, “How you made me is amazing and wonderful. I praise you for that. What you have done is wonderful.” I know that very well.” (Psalm 139:14)

Second, because of this new insight, as I prepare for a sermon and read the text out loud, I now listen better with the four filters of hearing. This helps me prepare for my pre-sermon Bible study and sermon by asking questions that engage these four filters as shown on pages 121-122.

Third, as I teach a Bible study, be it a pre-sermon one or not, I am still listening and examining the text through the four filters of hearing. For example, I am asking what the logical questions are that are being asked. I am listening for emotions and feelings that may show as the discussion develops and I am asking myself “what kind of community insights are developing in the study?”

Fourthly, as I preach and deliver a sermon, I am aware that the congregation is listening with four filters. Even though I may be a *pathos* hearing person I need to engage and connect those who are hearing the sermon with *logos*, *ethos*, and community filters.

Finally, understanding how a hearer listens with four filters has shown me once again how powerful the Holy Spirit and the Word of God is. To think that God can take a sinful human being as myself, who particularly hears with a *pathos* filter, and yet can use my sermon to connect with many hearers of different filters is to know that the Word does its work. This is truly amazing. This however does not mean that every pastor should not do everything humanly possible to understand how the hearer listens to a sermon. Now that the hypotheses that were once in question have been answered and the data supports these answers, I recommend the following for ministry.

### **Recommendations for Congregations**

Congregations should be given the opportunity to have a pre-sermon Bible study that engages the four filters of hearing each week. By doing this, the members will have the option of being more prepared to listen to the sermon. They will also be able to give input and insight to the pastor that he may not know about the congregation. Along with this, congregations should be exposed and taught about the four filters of hearing. This way they can better understand how they hear a sermon, and see both how special each hearer is and how powerful God works through His proclaimed Word through the Holy Spirit.

### **Recommendations for Pastors**

The research shows that a pre-sermon Bible study may help the hearer set the presuppositions of the second text, by engaging the four filters of hearing. Because evidence

gathered in the SID pastors survey that showed there is no particular pastor using a Bible study that helps prepare the hearer to listen to the sermon with the four filters of hearing, I recommend that pastors gain as much information about the four filters of hearing as possible and then offer a Bible study that uses this methodology.

The following are examples of how a preacher may use these filters to preach so that his hearers hear the sermon.

*Ethos-The Relationship Between the Preacher  
and the Hearer of the Sermon.*

How does the text relate to the preacher and the congregation?  
How can the preacher use his relationship with the congregation to communicate the text?  
What illustrations can be used in the sermon that causes the hearer to recognize themselves?  
What are the positive qualities that are found in the text?  
What life experience, struggles and memories can be used to enhance what the text is saying?

*Logos- The Word of the Preacher that has a  
Logical Understanding to the Hearer.*

What data can the preacher use to solidify the text?  
What is the one point of the text that can be weaved throughout the sermon?  
What are examples of how the text has been misunderstood?  
What insight can the preacher share about the text that will be new knowledge to the hearer?  
What can the preacher say that gets to the central point of the text?

*Pathos – The Invoked Emotions and Feelings the Preacher Can  
Create with the Hearer based on the Text.*

How can the preacher stir up the emotions that emerge spontaneously from the text?  
What words and illustration can the preacher use to touch the hearts of the hearers?  
How can the preacher help the hearer name their emotions and feelings?  
How can the preacher spark a deep connection to the listener's deeper self?  
What real life story can the preacher use that generates emotion and illustrates what the text is saying?

*Community- The Individual's Relationship of Community  
within the Congregation and with in the Community.*

How can the preacher help the individual hearer of the sermon relate to the whole congregation?  
What events of the life of congregation can be used to illustrate what the preacher is saying in the sermon? What is the text saying to both the individual and the congregation?

What events of the community can be used to illustrate what the preacher is saying in the sermon?

How will the sermon shape the hearer individually and communally?

Certainly, any one pastor can engage one on one with individual members gathering this information. However, to use the information that has already been researched would be a much wiser use of their time. For this to happen, I recommend starting with a pilot program using the pastors in my own circuit winkle, Circuit 1 of the SID LCMS. This would consist of a simple introduction of each filter of hearing and sharing some of the data to support the research. I would then give an example of the questions that I use to engage each filter and how these questions can be used to develop a pre-sermon Bible study. Finally, I would show how to take a sermon that may have been developed with the pastor's own filter of hearing and reshape it so that it engages all four filters of hearing.

### **Personal Growth for Myself and Other Pastors**

One of the most consistent themes in the reading material and research of this project has been is that the listeners want the preacher to be real. They do not want a preacher who is trying to be something and saying something that he knows nothing about. What they want is a genuine, loving, Christ-centered, Law and Gospel proclaiming pastor. However, this does not give us pastors a license to say "this is the way God made me so this is how I preach." All of us who step in the pulpit should be the person God made us to be and yet do all we can so that the proclamation of God's Holy Word is heard without us becoming stumbling blocks to the Gospel. Therefore, I am recommending as a result of this study that pastors do everything they can to utilize all four filters so that they advance the proclamation of the Gospel of Christ. To do this, we need to educate ourselves to understand each of these filters as much as we can.

In his book, *Pastoral Theology*, John Fritz says, “The words of an old writer still hold true, that ‘a holy pastor has but three books to study – the Scriptures, himself, and his flock’.”<sup>1</sup> I recommend that by using a pre-sermon Bible study pastors can enhance all three of Fritz’s suggestions. When a pastor looks at a text with not only the theological presupposition that we need as pastors but also the presuppositions of the four filters of hearing, he is giving himself a better understanding of the text. When a pastor prepares a pre-sermon Bible study by not only asking questions that engage the four filters of hearing but also by answering each of those questions, the pastor is better understanding himself. And when he teaches a pre-sermon Bible study that engages the listener with the four filters of hearing, he better understands the flock.

### **Future Studies to Be Made**

The findings and research of this project have shown evidence that those who attended the pre-sermon Bible studies at Our Redeemer had significant results that helped them listen to the sermon better. One example of this was when a member said to me, “pastor ever since you have started the pre-sermon Bible studies the sermons are easier for me to follow.” However, there still needs to be more research to say that this is conclusive evidence for all congregations. The following suggestions for further projects are recommended.

The first recommendation is for a repeated project to be done to see if the conclusions are replicated. If, in fact, the project has similar results, this truly would give more support for the use of a pre-sermon Bible study to be employed in every congregation.

Another project would be to do the same project as this one but add one more category to be studied. This category would include a third group. This group would consist of those who have not been coming to any previous Bible study but will commit to attending the pre-sermon Bible studies. The reason for this third group to be added would be to answer the question. “Did

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<sup>1</sup> John H. C. Fritz, *Pastoral Theology* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1932), 8.

those who attended the pre-sermon Bible study have greater results because they attended the particular studies that were offered or did they have greater results because they were already attending Bible study even before the pre-sermon Bible studies were offered?"

Another project that could give insight to this project would be to analyze the amount of time used in each phase of the pre-sermon Bible study. I say this because the time you have to teach the Bible study is limited. Due to the nature of the *logos* hearer, I had to give almost half of the Bible study time to the *logos* filter of hearing. That left the rest of the time to be divided into the other three filters. As a result, I believe that it actually took a few pre-sermon Bible studies to engage those three filters. One supporting factor of this is that when one looks at the data from the community filter of hearing, at first those who did not attend actually had slightly better results than those who did. However, after the fourth week, there began a continuous increase of connection to the community filters for those attending the pre-sermon Bible study. This connection showed even greater results by the sixth and seventh week. Therefore, I believe that given the same time for each filter of hearing there would be even greater evidence of the value of having a pre-sermon Bible study.

The final project idea that I introduce as a result of the findings of this project is to use the data found in this project and create a series of classes that would introduce the members of congregations to the four filters of hearing. I believe that when the members are exposed to understanding how they actually hear, there are these filters of hearing that would begin the engagement of the four filters in the hearer.

## **Conclusion**

This project has made me more aware of how I can help my members hear a sermon better. By knowing that people listen through four filters of hearing and by knowing that those



filters can be engaged prior to the sermon has been beneficial to both the congregation and myself. There is no doubt that this project will have many benefits in the future of Our Redeemer and maybe even other pastors and congregations. The Word of God is so precious and life saving that the pastor should desire that his hearers listen to the sermon and do all he can humanly do.

After completing this project, I discovered that I now have a different insight into the Prayer for Blessing on the Word, which is found inside the front cover of the Lutheran Service Book under Prayers for Worship. As it states:

Lord God, bless Your Word wherever it is proclaimed. Make it a word of power and peace to convert those not yet Your own and confirm those who have come to saving faith. May Your Word pass from the ear to the heart, from the heart to the lip, and from the lip to the life that, as You have promised Your Word may achieve the purpose for which you send it; through Jesus Christ, my Lord. Amen.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The Commission on Worship of The Lutheran – Church Missouri Synod, Lutheran Service Book (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing, 2006) n.p.

## APPENDIX A\*

### OUTLINES FOR PREACHING ON THE SEVEN LETTERS TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES

Week # 1, October 5, 2008

#### **EPHESUS (Revelation 2:1-7)**

INTRODUCTION: When Adam and Eve ate the fruit from the tree in the middle of the garden, the whole world was cursed with sin and darkness.

Adam and Eve were driven from the garden to prevent them from eating from the tree of life. Left in the darkness, man would only have the judgment and wrath of God to look forward to. But God's love and mercy gave Adam and Eve a promise of everlasting life. Because Jesus Christ, who is the light of the world, fulfilled that promise, we have been brought out of darkness and will eat of the tree of life.

WHO IS JESUS CHRIST? (GOSPEL): Jesus Christ is the one who holds the seven stars in his right hand and walks among the seven golden lamp stands. This image shows that Christ has the authority over all things and that he is the light of the world.

WHAT ABOUT THE CITY AND THE CHURCH? (INFORMATION): Ephesus controlled all of the trade in that part of the world, which made the city large and prosperous. Much of the city's architecture was made of marble. The temple of the false god Diana was located there. (Acts 19:22ff) At the time this letter was written, the city even had hot and cold running water. Today the city lies in ruin.

WHAT DID CHRIST SEE? (MALADY): The congregation of Ephesus was very active. Revelation 2:4 says that this church had lost their first love. Christ saw their enthusiasm, their

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\* Although this paper made reference of Richard Cammerers book, *Preaching for the Church*, due to the nature of this particular pre-sermon Bible study, the author created his own outline.

willingness to refute false teachers, and their patience in suffering. But even with all their good works, they had lost their first love and were just going through the motions.

WHAT DOES CHRIST SEE IN US? (MALADY): Because of our sinful nature, we are just like the congregation of Ephesus. We are always in danger of losing our first love. We do not always love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, and mind.

ILLUSTRATION: When a man and wife are first married, they are full of love and joy, but after many years because of the hectic lives they lead, they can lose the great joy and love that they once had for each other. Just as Christ can restore that first love we had for our spouse, by his Word and Sacraments He can restore our first love for Him.

WHAT DOES CHRIST CALL US TO DO?: As baptized children of God, we are to repent of our sins of selfishness and of losing our love for him. We are to serve Him, the church, and others in love.

WHERE IS THE HOPE?: Christ is the one who is our judge. He never lost His first love. His first love was to serve His Father faithfully, all the way to the cross. He loved us first so that we might love Him.

WHAT IS THE PROMISE?: As we repent of our sin for not loving God with all our heart, soul, and mind; we find comfort that Jesus Christ did. Because of His perfect love, which comes to us through His Word and Sacraments, we are given forgiveness of sins and will be able to eat of the tree of life in God's paradise.

## **OUTLINES FOR PREACHING ON THE SEVEN LETTERS TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES**

Week # 2, October 12, 2008

### **SMYRNA (Revelation 2:8-11)**

**INTRODUCTION:** Because of sin, the Bible tells us that we all will die. Romans 6:23 says, “For the wages of sin is death.” All we have to do is look at the list of obituaries in the newspaper or at the tombstones in a cemetery to see that this statement is true. For many people, death is their greatest fear. But through the grace of God, in our baptism we have died to sin and have been made alive in Christ. We do not have to fear the second death.

**WHO IS JESUS CHRIST? (GOSPEL):** Jesus Christ is First and the Last, who was dead and came back to life. This identification of Christ gives hope and comfort in all our fears and dangers. (John 11:25-26)

**WHAT ABOUT THE CITY AND THE CHURCH? (INFORMATION):** Smyrna was the center of Caesar worship. Once a year, everyone had to offer incense to him. Polycarp was martyred here because he would not burn incense to Caesar. Today, there is still a Christian Church in Smyrna.

**WHAT DID CHRIST SEE? (MALADY):** The congregation was known for their suffering and poverty. Yet, because they had lost their first love, fear was upon them.

WHAT DOES CHRIST SEE IN US? (MALADY): Because we do not like to suffer or deal with any kind of persecution, we too need to repent. Fear keeps us from witnessing. Fear keeps us from speaking up when someone is mocking our Lord and Savior.

ILLUSTRATION: Peter denied Jesus on Good Friday. In our confirmation vows, we are asked, “Do you intend faithfully to conform all your life to the divine Word...to remain true to God; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, even to death?” (LW pg. 206) Smyrna was famous for its games in which a crown of garland was placed on the victor’s head. Jesus said in Revelation 2:10, “Be faithful...and I will give you the crown of life.”

WHAT DOES CHRIST CALL US TO DO?: As baptized children of God, we are to repent of the way fear controls our life and how we have lost our first love.

WHERE IS THE HOPE?: Christ, the First and the Last, suffered death for us. He did not allow fear to turn him away from his mission of suffering for our sins on Calvary’s cross.

WHAT IS THE PROMISE?: As we repent of the sin of allowing fear to control us, we find peace in knowing that the last enemy, death, has been defeated. Because of Christ’s victory over death, we do not have to face the second death.

## OUTLINES FOR PREACHING ON THE SEVEN LETTERS TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES

Week # 3, October 19, 2008

### **THYATIRA (Revelation 2:18-29)**

INTRODUCTION: As Jesus was tempted in the desert, one of the promises that the devil made was that if Jesus would fall down and worship him, he had the authority to give Jesus all the kingdoms of the world. Jesus did not give in to this temptation or any other and now He has all authority to give us what we truly need – forgiveness of sins.

WHO IS JESUS CHRIST? (GOSPEL): Jesus Christ is the very Son of God who has been given all authority. His eyes can see the sinful hearts of man and He stands firm in all His promises.

WHAT ABOUT THE CITY AND THE CHURCH? (INFORMATION): Thyatira was known for its many resources: special wool for clothing, all kinds of trade, and business. With all of the trading going on, trade guilds formed. These guilds had very pagan practices.

WHAT DID CHRIST SEE? (MALADY): The Christians in Thyatira tolerated false teachers so that they could become successful in the city. They also joined trade guilds ignoring their pagan practices. The tolerance of “Jezebel,” who taught sexual immorality, was even allowed by the church. This may be why the smallest congregation of all seven churches received the longest letter. The only remembrance of this church today is a cross chiseled in marble.

WHAT DOES CHRIST SEE IN US? (MALADY): Thyatira had an apostate attitude. It listened to what its itching ears wanted to hear. This same attitude is just as strong today. The church that preaches that salvation can be found through Christ alone is considered insensitive. The church has taken the attitude that they don’t want to offend anyone’s feelings. For the sake

of unity, God's Holy Word has been watered down so that it will not offend the Muslim, Buddhist, or any other false teachings.

ILLUSTRATION: To illustrate this apostate attitude, we can point out the problems with joint services of many denominations, open communion, and the "I'm OK, You're OK" attitude. We should never put Jesus Christ on the same level as Gandhi, Mother Teresa, or Mohammed.

WHAT DOES CHRIST CALL US TO DO?: As people of God who have been given all authority to make disciples by baptizing and teaching, we should repent for allowing apostate teaching. We should repent for not speaking the truth in love and for tolerating immorality.

WHERE IS THE HOPE?: Christ, who never fell into sin even when promised all authority on earth, held fast to the authority of God and went to the cross for our sins.

WHAT IS THE PROMISE?: As we repent of our sins of tolerance, of false teaching, and of sexual immorality, we find comfort in knowing that Christ has the authority to forgive all of our sins. We too, will be given the authority to rule the nations and sit with the morning star (Christ).

## OUTLINES FOR PREACHING ON THE SEVEN LETTERS TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES

Week # 4, October 26, 2008

### **PERGAMUM (Revelation 2:12-17)**

INTRODUCTION: Just as God provided manna from heaven for the children of Israel as they crossed the desert, God provides for us . In God's grace, He has given us His Holy Word, which is a two-edged sword that provides for us both His Law of judgment and Gospel of grace.

WHO IS JESUS CHRIST? (GOSPEL): Jesus Christ is the one who with His Words, cuts us to the heart with His law so that we can be given the healing food: manna from heaven. John 6:1 says, "I am the bread of life."

WHAT ABOUT THE CITY AND THE CHURCH? (INFORMATION): Pergamum was known for its libraries of knowledge and hot springs for healing. The altar of Zeus was located in the city. Its great amphitheater was used for the pleasure of watching the lions kill Christians. Antipas was martyred in the city. Today there is no Christian church.

WHAT DID CHRIST SEE? (MALADY): At one time, the church had been faithful, but as a result of the society that they lived in, they had the attitude of Balaam and were greatly influenced by the false teachings of Nicolaitans.

WHAT DOES CHRIST SEE IN US? (MALADY): Because we live in a world that has many false teachings of prosperity and wealth, we too, get caught up in the things of the world instead of the things above.

ILLUSTRATION: A couple of good examples of this type of false teaching would be the Word of faith movement and listening to prosperity preaching. We cannot always remain faithful to the one Holy Word. We abuse our Christian liberty with sinful living.



WHAT DOES CHRIST CALL US TO DO?: As children of God who have been slain by the sword, we are called to repent of these false ways for we have lost our first love.

WHERE IS THE HOPE?: Christ, who has the two-edged sword, did not give in to the ways of the world and went to the cross for our sins. He took the wrath and judgment of God for us.

WHAT IS THE PROMISE?: As we repent of our sins of idolatry and immorality, we have the promise that we will be able to eat of the hidden manna. On the day of the final judgment, we will be given the white stone of innocence and Christ's blessed name.

**OUTLINES FOR PREACHING ON THE SEVEN  
LETTERS TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES**

Week # 5, November 2, 2008

**SARDIS (Revelation 3:1-6)**

INTRODUCTION: In the Baptism service we say, “Receive this white garment to show that Christ has taken away and borne your sin and put upon you his perfect righteousness. So shall you in faith ever stand before Him.” (LW pg. 203)

WHO IS JESUS CHRIST? (GOSPEL): Christ is the one who promised that he would send the Spirit to be with His disciples. He is the one who holds the seven Spirits of God and the seven angels. With His Word, the Spirit of God creates faith and life.

WHAT ABOUT THE CITY AND THE CHURCH? (INFORMATION): Sardis was the oldest of the seven cities. The Pactolus River ran through the city and was full of gold. Because of its wealth, the people were caught up in luxury and wealth. The people of Sardis had no real need to work because of its great resources. Unfortunately, the church of Sardis had the same lazy attitude. That is why Sardis was the only church out of the seven that was called dead.

WHAT DID CHRIST SEE? (MALADY): Christ saw that only a few people in the church had not given into the temptations of the world. Most of the congregation took no interest in the work of the church and were members by name only.

WHAT DOES CHRIST SEE IN US? (MALADY): Because it is so convenient to let someone else do the jobs of keeping up with the church, our sinful nature wants to do nothing. As long as there is a place of worship, and we can put our hour of time in with God, we are happy. Evangelism, visiting the sick, and taking care of the church is someone else’s job.

ILLUSTRATION: The funeral pall is white to symbolize the righteousness of Christ. Jesus took on the role of a servant when He washed the disciples’ feet.

WHAT DOES CHRIST CALL US TO DO?: As baptized children of God who have received Christ's righteousness, we are to repent of our lazy, self serving attitude. By the Spirit, God brings us His Word. We should pray to be moved by His Spirit to serve God and His kingdom.

WHERE IS THE HOPE?: Christ, the one who holds the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars, has given us His Word and Spirit which make us alive, for he was not lazy in any of his tasks. He took on the form of a servant all the way to the cross.

WHAT IS THE PROMISE?: As we repent of the sin of self-centeredness, we find peace knowing that we have been clothed in His righteousness. The one who has the seven Spirits of God confesses us before the Father and His angels.

**OUTLINES FOR PREACHING ON THE SEVEN  
LETTERS TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES**

Week # 6, November 9, 2008

**PHILADELPHIA (Revelation 3:7-13)**

INTRODUCTION: One of the great sites in South Dakota is the four stone faces of Mount Rushmore: Lincoln, Jefferson, Washington, and Theodore Roosevelt. With unbelievable patience and precision these four faces were carved out for the world to see. Most likely, because these presidents are on the face of the mountain, they have become some of the most popular presidents in history. Because God's Holy Word has enabled us to stand firm in faith, we too will be known as pillars in God's temple.

WHO IS JESUS CHRIST? (GOSPEL): Christ is the holy and true One, who has the key of David and opens and closes the gates of heaven. He will place our names in God's heavenly city.

WHAT ABOUT THE CITY AND THE CHURCH? (INFORMATION): Philadelphia was know as "the gateway to the East" and "the highway to Egypt." One of the great resources was its soil. The soil was excellent and produced wonderful vineyards. As much as the soil was a blessing to the city, it was also a curse because the city suffered frequent earthquakes. Because of its excellent location, the church had a vast opportunity for mission work.

WHAT DID CHRIST SEE? (MALADY): The church of Philadelphia had been faithful in holding fast to God's Word, and yet they did not use their full potential to spread the Gospel to all the travelers.

WHAT DOES CHRIST SEE IN US? (MALADY): Christ has given us the open door of His pure Holy Word and yet, because of our taking this treasure for granted, we do not share it with great zeal.

ILLUSTRATION: Luther told the Germans that if they did not treasure God's Holy Word, He would take it to some other country, maybe that one that had just been discovered. We should be more missionary-minded when we think of the many countries that still do not have the freedom of religion. Whenever a citizen in Philadelphia served the city well, the city would erect a pillar with their name on it and place it in a pagan temple. Christ promises that for all who conquer, He will place them as a pillar in His temple.

WHAT DOES CHRIST CALL US TO DO?: As children of God who have been given the treasure of God's Holy Word, we should repent for taking His Word for granted. Just as someone loved us enough to teach us the love and grace of God, we too ought to love and teach others.

WHERE IS THE HOPE?: Christ is the hope for us. He was the Word made flesh and by His death we have been given a word that is true.

WHAT IS THE PROMISE?: As we repent for taking His word for granted and not caring enough to share it with others, we are comforted in knowing that the Word made flesh shared His very life for our sins. Because He stood firm, He promises that we will have our place in God's temple and be given the name Christian forever.

**OUTLINES FOR PREACHING ON THE SEVEN  
LETTERS TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES**

Week # 7, November 16, 2008

**LAODICEA (Revelation 3:14-22)**

INTRODUCTION: Many people who visit the nation's capital every year. Many people also visit the White House. How many of those people, actually see, meet, shake hands, or take a picture with the president? It would be truly amazing to meet the President and then to be invited into the oval office to sit at his desk. We, too, are told just that. Christ tells us that we will sit with Him on His throne.

WHO IS JESUS CHRIST? (GOSPEL): Christ is the Amen, the faithful, and the true witness. He is also the source of all creation. He alone can give us the authority to sit with Him on His throne.

WHAT ABOUT THE CITY AND THE CHURCH? (INFORMATION): Laodicea was known for its banking system, special wool, and a mixture of powder made from their soil and oil that could give healing to the eyes. The wool and eye salve were known to many countries; therefore, Laodicea was the wealthiest of the seven churches. Because of their wealth, they wanted all the luxuries that other cities had. They built aqueducts so that they could have both hot and cold water. However, they failed, and all they had was lukewarm water. This was the same attitude in the church and the reason why Christ had nothing good to say about this church.

WHAT DID CHRIST SEE? (MALADY): Christ saw a congregation that was just as lukewarm as the water in their failed aqueducts. The church did not defend the gospel or proclaim it.

WHAT DOES CHRIST SEE IN US? (MALADY): Christ sees that by our very nature we too do not want to take a stand for the Word. Why rock the boat? Instead of standing up, we just go through the motions of being a “card-carrying” member.

ILLUSTRATION: The illustration of the failed aqueducts is a great visual picture of the lukewarm Christians. Lukewarm food is not enjoyable to eat. Laodicea was known for its eye salve that comforted the eye, but because of their sins, their eyes were not able to see. Christ promises that the eye salve that He gives will not only comfort, but will allow us to see His salvation.

WHAT DOES CHRIST CALL US TO DO?: As children of God who have not been spewed out of God’s grace, we are to repent of our indifferent attitude and let the Spirit of the Word give us a zeal for His Word.

WHERE IS THE HOPE?: Christ, who had zeal for the cross, allowed himself to be spewed out by God on Calvary’s cross.

WHAT IS THE PROMISE?: As we repent of our sin of indifference and are moved by His Word, we are given the pleasure of sitting with Christ on His throne.

## APPENDIX B

### Ephesus Pastor's Notes - *Logos*

The word of the preacher that has a logical understanding.

#### **What data can the preacher use to solidify the text?**

Give information about the city.

The first city that John is to write to is Ephesus. Ephesus was a large city of around 200,000 on the Aegean Sea full of trade and known as “the market of Asia.” Marble was found everywhere. The temple of Diana, Artemis (Greek) was there it was; 425 feet long, 220 feet wide and 60 feet high with 125 surrounding marble columns. The town even had hot and cold water. Black magic was widely practiced in the city, and it also became a harbor for fugitives. The Apostle Paul writes in Acts 19:22ff. that silversmiths made a living selling idols of Artemas. The church at Ephesus was founded by the Apostle Paul before the Apostle John became the bishop. Colin J. Hemer writes that “Ramsay characterized Ephesus as the ‘City of Change.’ The theme may be traced through the history of the city from Heraclitus onwards. Its fortunes had hinged upon the fluctuations of site and influence between the commerce of the harbor and the temple. The elaborate provisions decreed at the time of the Salutaris bequest in AD 104 illustrate the power of the Artemis cult with a few years of the Revelation”

The promise to Ephesus is that if they repent and continue to hate the works of the teaching of the Nicolaitans, they will be able to eat from the tree of life. According to Dr. Brighton, “The Nicolaitans were members of a sect founded by some unknown Nicolas. ....Irenaeus mentions that they were an antinomian sect which claimed license for sensual sins.”



**What is the one point of the text that can be weaved throughout the sermon?**

Jesus Christ is the one who never lost His first love.

**What are examples of how the text has been misunderstood?**

That if mankind tries really hard, they can eventually find the first love that they lost?

**What insights can the preacher share about the text that may be new knowledge to the hearer?**

That the seven golden lamp stands are mentioned in chapter Rev.1:13.

That the Lord removed Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden so they would not be able to eat from the tree of life. (Gen. 3:22-24), (1 Jn. 5:4).

### *Pathos*

The invoked emotions and feelings the preacher can create with the hearer based on the text.

**What emotions and feelings emerge from the text?**

Guilt and victory.

**How can the preacher help the hearer name their emotions?**

By using the Law to show how they lost of their first love.

By using the Gospel to show the Savior who has great love for them.

By asking do you feel when you see the dedication of the church of Ephesus?

By asking what emotions do you have when you hear Christ saying to this dedicated Church that

I have this against you?

**What real life story helps generate emotions and feelings of the text.**

The anger and disgust of Jonathan Edwards's wife and children as mentioned in the media.

The celebration of a 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary.

### *Ethos*

The Relationship between the preacher and the hearer of the sermon.

**How does this text relate to the preacher and the congregation?**

We all have lost a first love.  
We all our sinners and lost our first love for the Word.  
We all are saved by Christ the Light of the World.  
In Christ we all will eat from the tree of life.

**How can the preacher use his relationship with the congregation to communicate the text?**

I can tell of a lost love that I had.  
I can tell of the struggles I have with loving the things of the world.

**What illustrations can be used in the sermon that causes the hearer to recognize themselves?**

Tell a story of a married couple who lost their first love from the book, *Rekindled*.

Tell a time about singing Jesus has the whole world in His hand.

**What are the positive qualities that are found in the text?**

The church of Ephesus was working hard as far as it appeared to the world.  
The one who holds the seven stars and walks among the seven golden lampstands is our Saviour.

**What life experience, struggles, and memories can be used to enhance what the text is saying?**

Tell about a time I struggled with trying to be consistent in personal Bible Study to keep God first in life.

Share a story when you lost your first love for the Word of God.

**Community**

The individual's relationship of fellowship within the congregation and within the community.

**How can the preacher help the individual hearer see a relationship between themselves and the congregation based on the text?**

By explaining that the church is called the bride of Christ.

**What events of the community can be used to illustrate a picture of what the text is saying.**

Weddings of the community.

## **Smyrna Pastor's Notes- *Logos***

The word of the preacher that has a logical understanding.

### **What data can the preacher use to solidify the text?**

Give information about the city. The second city that John was told to write to was Smyrna. Smyrna was located about fifty miles north of Ephesus. It was a beautiful city and had been given the name “The Gem of the East,” “The Crown of Asia.” Located in Smyrna was a large harbor, which made Smyrna a wealth city due to all its trade. Because the government tried to unite the people, Caesar worship came to be practiced once a year. Each citizen was required to burn a pinch of incense to Caesar. As they were burning the incense, they were required to say “Caesar is Lord.” Not only did the Christians face persecution by the government, but due to the large Jewish population Christians were many times reported to the local government by the Jews. It is reported that the Jews were the ones responsible for one of the most famous martyrdoms in Smyrna the martyrdom of Polycarp. Polycarp was the bishop of Smyrna and a pupil of John the Apostle. Seiss wrote in his book Letters to the Seven Churches, that Polycarp was “dragged before the Roman proconsul, he was promised liberty if only he would abjure Christ, but his answer was, ‘Eighty-and-six years have I served Him, and He hath never wronged me; and how can I blaspheme My King, who hath saved me?’” (pg.80)

Seiss goes on to say that “when they were about to fasten him to the stake he bade them spare their nails—that God would keep him steadfast to the fires without the need of such fastenings; and counted it a blessedness to be thought worthy of a place among the martyrs of Jesus”(pg.80)

### **What is the one point of the text that can be weaved throughout the sermon?**

Jesus Christ is the one who is the First and the Last and defeated the second death for us.

**What are examples of how the text has been misunderstood?**

That mankind will automatically receive a crown in heaven by being good.

That by becoming a Christian one will have only good things in life.

**What insights can the preacher share about the text that may be new knowledge to the hearer?**

That the synagogue of Satan refers to the Jews who said they had faith because of their heritage of Moses. (Gal. 3:1-14)

That the first death for Christians is their baptism and that because of Christ they do not need to fear the second death.

*Pathos*

That the invoked emotions and feelings the preacher can create with the hearer based on the text.

**What emotions and feelings emerge from the text?**

Fear and Confidence.

**How can the preacher help the hearer name their emotions?**

By using the Law to show the sin of fearing the world more than God.

By using the Gospel to show the Savior who has defeated our greatest enemy – death itself.

**What real life story helps generate emotions and feelings of the text?**

Going to a funeral.

Talking about Christian persecution around the world.

Telling the story about the girl who was killed when she said she believed in God at the Columbine shooting.

*Ethos*

The Relationship between the preacher and the hearer of the sermon.

**How does this text relate to the preacher and the congregation?**

We all must face death.

We all are sinners and our flesh fears death.

We all are saved by Christ who suffered our second death.

In Christ we will receive a crown of life.

**How can the preacher use his relationship with the congregation to communicate the text?**

I can tell of a unexpected death.

I can tell of my own near death experiences.

**What illustrations can be used in the sermon that causes the hearer to recognize themselves?**

In the morning they look through the obituaries.

They visit the cemeteries on Memorial Day.

Asking them to recall a time when they saw a crowning a king or queen.

**What are the positive qualities that are found in the text?**

The church of Smyrna was rich in Christ.

The one who was dead and came back to life is our Saviour.

**What life experience, struggles, and memories can be used to enhance what the text is saying?**

My own struggling with issues of death.

My felling of comfort in my baptism.

**Community**

The individual's relationship of fellowship within the congregation and within the community.

**How can the preacher help the individual hearer see a relationship between themselves and the congregation based on the text?**

By explaining that through the waters of baptism we have all experienced our first death.

By pointing out how each of us were confirmed we said “Yes with the help of God.”

**What events of the community can be used to illustrate a picture of what the text is saying?**

Memorial Day

### **Thyatira Pastor's Notes - *Logos***

The word of the preacher that has a logical understanding.

#### **What data can the preacher use to solidify the text?**

Give information about the city.

The fourth city that John wrote to was Thyatira. Thyatira was located about thirty-five miles east of Pergamum. It was considered to be the smallest of the seven cities in the book of Revelation. This is where Lydia of the New Testament, who was a seller of purple, came from. Because of its great trade many trade-guilds were formed. Not only were these guilds used for trade, but they became mixed with the idea of business and pleasure. Many guilds included worshiping idols and eating food that was sacrificed to idols. To refuse to participate in any of these activities and guild feasts would mean loss of income and even poverty. Colin Hemer says, "Presumably Jezebel argued that a Christian might join a guild and participate in its feasts without thereby compromising his faith. He was initiated into a superior wisdom. He knew the idol was nothing and he could not be defiled by that which did not exist." (pg 123) The problem with that idea was that it was a human conclusion and not a word from God. A quotation from the videocassette *What a Revelation*, explains it this way: "Could a Christian eat meat which was offered to the gods? So often, these feasts would deteriorate into revelry at which drunkenness and immorality were the order of the day."

The fourth church that John was told to write to was the church at Thyatira. Jesus identifies himself as "the Son of God, whose eyes are like a flaming fire and whose feet are like burnished bronze" (2:18). Dr. Brighton says, "The flashing, fire-like eyes suggest the Lord's righteous anger against the agents of darkness, the enemies of the truth, whether inside or outside the

visible church. The brass-like feet demonstrate his firmness and determination to trample under foot these same enemies” (cf. Dan 2:33, 40-41).

Jesus Christ knew that this church was full of service. He made the point that not only had they served, but also they continued to serve more than they did at first as the Word of God moved them. Lenski makes the point that the word “thy” (KJV) was used to show that Thyatira was in constant service. “The pronoun ‘thy’ makes a division; first, ‘thy works,’ namely all the good evidence of deeds; next, ‘the love, the faith, the service, the endurance,’ a second ‘thy’ with these four; finally, a third ‘thy’ with the increase of the works.”

Even though this church was full of service, they were told to repent for they had allowed a “Jezebel” to teach and seduce the people. There is no historical evidence that this was a real woman, only that “Jezebel” was part of the church. Most believe that Jezebel represents the kind of sin that Thyatira was allowing. False teaching and sexual immorality was being tolerated even within the church. Luther Poellot says, “The treat extends and hangs also over her followers. It is true that she seduced them, but it is also true that they yielded to her temptations. Therefore they cannot shift the entire blame on her (Gen 3:12-19). Sin is and remains an individual, personal thing” (Ezek. 18:4, 20).

Because Thyatira had lost her first love, she was told to repent of her Jezebel ways. This is the only church, of the seven churches, that has in its letter a chastisement stating that they are suffering and have heavy burdens because of their sins. However, in repentance they too are given a promise. Their promise is that they will be given the authority to rule the nations with an iron scepter and they will be given the morning star. Just as the sheep and the goats are separated with a staff, so it will be when God separates the faithful from the unfaithful. Those who hold to the promises of God will be given the authority to rule over the nations.



**What is the one point of the text that can be weaved throughout the sermon?**

Jesus Christ is the one who did not give in to sin even when He was promised the authority of the world.

**What are examples of how the text has been misunderstood?**

Many think that mankind can do the will of God if they really try hard. Many think that they can overcome with their own power.

**What insights can the preacher share about the text that may be new knowledge to the hearer?**

Jezebel was the queen who put a price on God's prophet Elijah and is also referenced in Revelation 2:20

*Pathos*

The invoked emotions and feelings the preacher can create with the hearer based on the text.

**What emotions and feelings emerge from the text?**

Guilt and victory. Joy and peace.

**How can the preacher help the hearer name their emotions?**

By using the Law to show the sin of following what our itching ears want to hear.

By using the Gospel to show the Savior, who has great love, listened to the authority of His father.

By asking how do you feel when you see how Christ saw this church of Thyatira?

By asking what emotions do you have when you hear Christ saying to this Church "Nevertheless, I have this against you?"

**What real life story helps generate emotions and feelings of the text.**

Churches that support abortion as choice? The false teachers on tv.

**Ethos**

The Relationship between the preacher and the hearer of the sermon.

**How does this text relate to the preacher and the congregation?**

We all have Jezebels in our lives.  
We all our sinners and have not listened to God's authority alone.  
We all are saved by Christ the Light of the World.  
In Christ, we all will be given the authority and Morning star of Christ.

**How can the preacher use his relationship with the congregation to communicate the text?**

I can tell I have followed what my itching ears wanted to hear.  
I can tell of the struggles I have had with my own Jezebel's of this world.

**What illustrations can be used in the sermon that causes the hearer to recognize themselves?**

Tell a the story of Jim Jones or David Currish.

**What are the positive qualities that are found in the text?**

The church of Thyatira doing good deeds.  
The one whose eyes are like blazing fire going to the cross for the people of Thyatira and us.

**What life experience, struggles, and memories can be used to enhance what the text is saying?**

The time I struggled with letting God's Word be the ultimate authority in my life.

**Community**

The individual's relationship of fellowship within the congregation and within the community.

**How can the preacher help the individual hearer see a relationship between themselves and the congregation based on the text?**

By explaining that even some churches in Greenville teach false doctrine.

**What events of the community can be used to illustrate a picture of what the text is saying.**

The ministerial alliance.

### **Pergamum Pastor's Notes-Logos**

The word of the preacher that has a logical understanding.

#### **What data can the preacher use to solidify the text?**

Give information about the city.

Pergamum was the next city of the church to which John wrote. Pergamum was located about fifty-five miles north of Ephesus located on a high hill. It was famous for having a great library and many of the great Greek philosophers would come visit because of the library's many resources. One of the natural resources that became popular to Pergamum was its natural hot springs. These springs were thought to cure the sufferings of many illnesses, and the god of Asklepios was worshiped here. The symbol of this god was a snake. Because of this supposed power many different cults and religions were practiced. Pergamum also had many Greek gods. One of the most famous was Zeus. Colin Hemer said, "The character of the city was much influenced by its central political role. It was also a great religious center, partly because religion became a major instrument of policy. Ramasay has described the principal cults of Attalid times, Zeus and Athena, the protectors of the city, and the more Anatolian rites of Dionysus and Asklepios, where the Greek names mask the bull-god and the serpent-god." (pg.81)

Just as in Smyrna there was a known martyr, so there is one in Pergamum but he is written in the book of life. Rev. Samuel wills says, "Antipas is chronicled with the faithful martyrs in heaven, of whom the world is not worthy, and whose names stand as such in the Lamb's book of Life. No earthly warrior, exclusively as such, can boast of these honors which the faithful Antipas receives from the Lord Jesus Christ."(pg.130)

Jesus identifies himself to the church as "the one who has the sharp two-edged sword."

The two-edged sword is an image of both judgment and protection. In the Old Testament the

judgment of the sword is shown (1 Ki. 3:16-28) and (Is. 27:1) “In that day the Lord will punish with his sword.” In the New Testament we see the image of the sword used in judgment (Mt.10:34, and Rom.13:4). Christ speaks of the faithfulness of the people holding fast to his name and then gives an example of their faithfulness. This is the only time the book of Revelation gives the name of a martyr. The martyr that is spoken about is Anitpas. Pergamum is told not to hold to the teaching of Balaam or the Nicolaitans. Many of these false worship services involved eating food scarified to idols and sexual orgies. This made the temptation twofold destroy faith giving in to the flesh or be destroyed by persecution of the body. The church is told to repent so that they would not come under the judgment of God. If they repented, they would be given the hidden manna the whit stone and a secret name.

**What is the one point of the text that can be weaved throughout the sermon?**

Jesus Christ served only one master and He declares us innocent.

**What are examples of how the text has been misunderstood?**

That mankind can serve only one master by his own will.

**What insights can the preacher share about the text that may be new knowledge to the hearer?**

Relating the story of Balaam and Balak.  
Explaining who the Nicolaitans are.

*Pathos*

The invoked emotions and feelings the preacher can create with the hearer based on the text.

**What emotions and feelings emerge from the text?**

Guilt and Victory. Joy and Delight.

**How can the preacher help the hearer name their emotions?**

By using the Law to show the sin of serving two masters.

By using the Gospel to show the Savior only served His Heavenly father.

By asking how do they feel when they see how Christ saw this church?

By asking what emotions do they have when they hear Christ saying to him who overcomes will get to eat the hidden manna?

**What real life story helps generate emotions and feelings of the text.**

A very comforting time of going to the Lord's Supper.

### *Ethos*

The Relationship between the preacher and the hearer of the sermon.

**How does this text relate to the preacher and the congregation?**

We all have Balaks in our lives.

We all our sinners and have severed two masters.

We all are saved by Christ the one who has the double-edged sword.

In Christ, we all will be given the hidden manna.

**How can the preacher use his relationship with the congregation to communicate the text?**

I can tell I have followed my own Balak.

I can tell of the struggles I have with serving two masters.

**What illustrations can be used in the sermon that causes the hearer to recognize themselves?**

The story of my devotions and the two quarters.

**What are the positive qualities that are found in the text?**

The church of Pergamum had some faithful people.

The one who has the double-edged sword is the one who drops the white stone.

**What life experience, struggles, and memories can be used to enhance what the text is saying?**

The time I struggled with letting God's Word be the ultimate authority in my life.

### **Community**

The individual's relationship of fellowship within the congregation and within the community.

**How can the preacher help the individual hearer see a relationship between themselves and the congregation based on the text?**

By explaining that even some churches in Greenville teach false doctrine.

**What events of the community can be used to illustrate a picture of what the text is saying.**

The ministerial alliance.

## **Sardis Pastor's Notes**

The word of the preacher that has a logical understanding.

### **What data can the preacher use to solidify the text?**

Give information about the city.

Sardis was the oldest city of Asia Minor thirty-five miles southeast of Thyatira. Because it was apart of the Hermus Valley, it became a world trade center. Sardis had been blessed with an abundance of resources. One of its vast resources was gold, which was found in the Pactolus River. Because of this the first gold market was started in Sardis. Because of its wealth the people of Sardis lost their need to work and became lazy, and the people did not work. This same lazy attitude that was the atmosphere of the city also infected the church. R.C Lenski, in his commentary on Revelation says, "The church of Sardis is selected to be the recipient of a letter only because of its own condition. Neither pagan opposition nor heretical and libertinistic excesses threatened this church; it suffered from spiritual dry rot and deadness." (pg. 126)

Christ identifies himself as "him who holds the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars" (3:1) Throughout the scriptures, God uses angels to proclaim His Word to His people. In this text, it is clear that Christ is the one who is in control of sending the Spirit along with the angels' message. Christ says in John 4:16-17, "And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever—the Spirit of truth." Paul Kretzmann says, "The Lord places due emphasis upon the fact that the sevenfold Spirit of God is His, Is 61:1-6, that the various gifts and spiritual blessings of the Spirit come upon the believers by virtue of the atoning work of Christ."

The only thing that Christ could commend this church for was that there were still a few who had not yet polluted their garments. The very fact that Christ calls them dead shows the

spiritual decay and ruin in this church. Even though the church of Sardis claimed to be a Christian church, their worship practices and associations proved otherwise. They were a Christian church in name only. Ramsay says, “the church of Sardis is not merely in the city of Sardis, it is in a sense the city; and the Christians are the people of the city.”

Because Sardis had lost their first love and the Spirit of Christ, they were called to repent and to be prepared for the day that the Lord would come. If they were found ready with a repentant heart in the Spirit of God, they would be given a white garment that would cover their polluted one.

**What is the one point of the text that can be weaved throughout the sermon?**

Jesus Christ is the one who did not give into sin by being spiritual lazy.

**What are examples of how the text has been misunderstood?**

That mankind can wake up and live with his own power.

**What insights can the preacher share about the text that may be new knowledge to the hearer?**

Christ is the one who covers us with His righteousness. Rom. 3.

### *Pathos*

The invoked emotions and feelings the preacher can create with the hearer based on the text.

**What emotions and feelings emerge from the text?**

Fear shame and comfort and joy.

**How can the preacher help the hearer name their emotions?**

By using the Law to show how we are spiritual lazy by our very nature.

By using the Gospel to show the Savior who covers us with His righteousness.

How do you feel when you see the righteousness of Christ?



What emotions do you have when you hear Christ saying to this church, “I will come as a thief”?

**What real life story helps generate emotions and feelings of the text.**

Remembering that I was baptized and confirmed in Christ.

### *Ethos*

The Relationship between the preacher and the hearer of the sermon.

**How does this text relate to the preacher and the congregation?**

We all have need of repentance.

We all our sinners and have become spiritual lazy at times in our lives.

We all are saved by Christ’ righteousness.

In Christ, we all will be dressed in white in heaven.

**How can the preacher use his relationship with the congregation to communicate the text?**

I can tell how remembering my own baptism and confirmation gives me comfort.

I can tell how I struggles with spiritual laziness in my own life.

**What illustrations can be used in the sermon that causes the hearer to recognize themselves?**

Tell a time when I saw a funeral pall that covered the casket of a loved one.

**What are the positive qualities that are found in the text?**

The church of Sardis was called to repentance by God’s grace.

The one who holds the seven spirits is the one who clothes us with His white garment.

**What life experience, struggles, and memories can be used to enhance what the text is saying?**

Tell about a time I struggled with letting God’s Word be the ultimate authority in my life.

### **Community**

The individual’s relationship of fellowship within the congregation and with in the community.

**How can the preacher help the individual hearer see a relationship between themselves and the congregation based on the text?**

Every time we welcome a baptized member into the church after a part of the baptism service.

**What events of the community can be used to illustrate a picture of what the text is saying.**

Any time we hear the obituaries on the radio or read them in the papers.

### **Philadelphia Pastor's Notes- *Logos***

The word of the preacher that has a logical understanding.

#### **What data can the preacher use to solidify the text?**

The city of Philadelphia was the next John was to write to. It is located 28 miles southwest of Sardis and was the youngest of the cities in Asia. It became quite a commercial city because it bordered between Mysia, Lydia, and Phrygia. Because of its location it was known as the gateway to the East and the highway to Europe. One of the great recourses for the region was the silt. This ground was rich and fertile and was good ground for vineyards. What made the soil so fertile was the volcanic deposits. The land was so rich and a blessing but also was a curse because the city was affected by earthquakes and tremors throughout the life of the city. Colin Hemer writes, "The great earthquake of AD17 evidently had so profound an effect upon Philadelphia that the context of the apocalyptic letter must be closely related to it. The disaster made a remarkable impact on the contemporary world as the greatest in human memory." (156) Because of these earthquakes the citizens were constantly running in and out of the city for safety.

Along with the fertile soil and earthquakes, Philadelphia was know for it missionary work. At first it was know for its reaching out to educate the people of Lydia and Phrygia in the Greek culture and Hellenized monarchy. However, when John was writing to the church of Philadelphia they were already reaching out with the message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Because of its location and previous missionary work W.M. Ramsay says, Philadelphia, therefore, was the keeper of the gateway to the plateau; but the door had now been permanently opened before the Church, and the work of Philadelphia had been to go forth through the door and carry the gospel to the cities of the Phrygian land.(pg.405)

One of the many pagan gods that were worshiped by the heathen in Philadelphia was the god of the grape, Dionysius. The streets were full of such gods and pillars of men who served the city well for whenever a citizen served their city well they would erect a pillar with their name on it a place it in one of the temples.

Christ identified himself as “him who is holy and true, who holds the key of David. What he opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open” (3:7). This is the longest identification given by Christ of himself in all of the seven letters. There are three identifications that come with this address. Christ first identifies himself as the “Holy one.” This is what Peter meant when he said, “We believe and know that you are the Holy one of God” (John 6:69). Secondly, Christ identifies himself as the “true one.” This is what Jesus meant when he said, “I am one who testifies for myself; my other witness is the Father, who sent me” (John 8:18). Finally, Christ identifies himself as “the one who holds the key of David.” This is what Isaiah meant when he said, “I will place on his shoulder the key to the house of David; what he opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open: (Is. 22:22). These three identifications of Christ are to give full assurance to the church at Philadelphia that the Lord was with them.

Christ knew their works and how they had been faithful and true to the proclamation of his Word. Even through persecution and difficulties they had held fast to his Word. This is why Christ gave them the great opportunity to proclaim the one Holy, True, Word. Dr. Franzmann says, “He knows the ‘works’ of Philadelphia, and He has provided for the church of Philadelphia ‘an open door which no one is able to shut.’ What are the ‘works’ that are to have so high a reward? There is nothing mightily heroic to report on this church that has but little power.’ The faithful of Philadelphia are blessed because they come under Jesus’ benediction: ‘Blesses...are those who hear the word of God and keep it!’ (Luke 11:28)”

Although the church had been faithful to its witness, the words “little power” may suggest that they had not taken full advantage of the missionary field. They could have been hindered in their work because of things they had no control over, such as the many earthquakes. However, there was evidence that the church of Philadelphia did not take full advantage of the God-given possibilities they had. Dr. Brighton says, “Though they had kept his Word and not denied their Lord’s name, they were weak in their mission activities, to the extent that the Lord’s desire for all to hear of God’s grace was hindered.” Even though the church of Philadelphia was never told to repent, they were warned that the door could be closed.

The church at Philadelphia was not only met with an extra long address as mentioned above, they were given extra blessings. First, they were promised that the people who were part of the synagogue of Satan would fall before their feet. Then, they were promised that they would be protected in their trials. Finally, they were told that they would be pillars in the temple of God. All of these blessings were a result of their faithfulness to the Holy and True word of God.

**What is the one point of the text that can be weaved throughout the sermon?**

Jesus Christ is the one who opens the door.

**What are examples of how the text has been misunderstood?**

That mankind can come to God and knock on His door with out the power of the Holy Spirit.

That God will give us a pillar by our good deeds.

**What insights can the preacher share about the text that may be new knowledge to the hearer?**

The synagogue of Satan refers to the Jews who said they had faith because of their heritage of Moses. (Gal. 3:1-14)

Tell them about the office of the keys

### *Pathos*

The invoked emotions and feelings the preacher can create with the hearer based on the text.

#### **What emotions and feelings emerge from the text?**

Guilt and confidence.

#### **How can the preacher help the hearer name their emotions?**

By using the Law to show the sin of not witnessing for the Lord.

By using the Gospel to show the Savior places his name on us. **What real life story helps generate emotions and feelings of the text.**

The time I went to a witness workshop.

Christian persecution around the world.

### *Ethos*

The Relationship between the preacher and the hearer of the sermon.

How does this text relate to the preacher and the congregation?

We all must face death.

We all our sinners and many times miss opportunities to witness.

We all are saved by Christ who was the faithful witness.

In Christ we will receive a crown of life.

#### **How can the preacher use his relationship with the congregation to communicate the text?**

Tell of a time I shared Christ with a stranger.

Tell of my own repentance using the gift of private confession and absolution.

#### **What illustrations can be used in the sermon that causes the hearer to recognize themselves?**

Make a list of the people who you know who may not know Christ.

Talk about the pocket cross.

**What are the positive qualities that are found in the text?**

The church of Philadelphia did not deny Christ.

The one who holds the key of David has placed His name on us.

**What life experience, struggles, and memories can be used to enhance what the text is saying?**

Tell about a time I struggled with witnessing.

Tell about a time I really felt the comfort of having Christ' name on me.

### **Community**

The individual's relationship of fellowship within the congregation and within the community.

**How can the preacher help the individual hearer see a relationship between themselves and the congregation based on the text?**

By explaining that through the waters of baptism we have all been given a new name.

**What events of the community can be used to illustrate a picture of what the text is saying?**

Give the demographics of the un-churched in Bond county.

### **Laodicea Pastor's Notes-Logos**

The word of the preacher that has a logical understanding.

#### **What data can the preacher use to solidify the text?**

Laodicea was located about forty-five miles south of Philadelphia. Because it was the center of banking in all Asia Minor it was a very rich city. Along with their banking abilities Laodicea was know for their special breed of sheep that had a special type of wool. With the wool being used for special clothing, it became know for a great clothing industry. Due to the type of soil, Laodicea had a special powder that was had the ability to bring comfort to the eye. This powder was called Phrygian powder and was also used for other ointments. Probably the greatest landmark of Laodicea was the different degree of water temperature. North of Laodicea was hot boiling water, and South of the city was a mountain range covered with snow. Because it was known that the city of Ephesus had both hot and cold running water, the people of Laodicea felt that they should have it also. So they used dams and aqueducts to allow the hot boiling water and the cold water to get to the city. However, by the time the cold water traveled the six miles from the mountain, it was no longer cold; and by the time the hot water got to the city, it was no longer hot. The city became known for its aqueducts that were failures and the lukewarm water that they produced. The people also found that the hot water contained high amounts of calcium and lime and that when it was drunk, it could produce vomiting.

Christ identifies Himself to this church as the “Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God’s creation” (3:14). In this address, Christ was pointing out that in Him alone there is life. He alone is the creator of life. Sweet says, “The Amen, the Head of the whole Creation, bears witness to the condition of the last of the Seven Churches. The solemnity of the title prepares for a searching and severe criticism...No Nicolaitans, no Jezebel, infested



Laodicea...the church was neither wholly indifferent, nor on the other hand 'fervent in spirit' but held an intermediate position between the two extremes.

After Christ identifies himself, He gives the church no words of praise. Christ only chastised them for their lack of zeal. Their sins were apathy and living for the things of this world. The church appeared to have wealth and prosperity, but Christ saw their nakedness and poverty. This is why he advised them not to seek after the gold of this world. Christ offered them gold that had been refined by fire, one not tainted with the sin of being lukewarm.

Because the church of Laodicea had lost their first love, Christ called them to repent of their lukewarm service. In this letter, Christ brought the fullest of His law upon the church. The reason Christ came down so hard on this church was so that if any would hear his voice, they would repent and He would enter them and dine with them. Dr. Brighton says, "The Lord is serious when he calls his people to come in repentance to his Gospel; he will go out of his way to do so. He seeks the lost; he comes to the very door of the heart and knocks for entrance.

This letter ends with the proclamation of victory for all who conquer their sin. They will be given the right to sit down with the Father on his throne. This victory is for all of God's people who live daily lives of repentance and who "listen to what the Spirit says to the churches."

**What is the one point of the text that can be weaved throughout the sermon?**

Jesus Christ is the one who is the final AMEN.

**What are examples of how the text has been misunderstood?**

That mankind can just do their best and God will be pleased.

**What insights can the preacher share about the text that may be new knowledge to the hearer?**

Amen means it shall be so. That Christ was the one who was naked on the cross for us.

### *Pathos*

The invoked emotions and feelings the preacher can create with the hearer based on the text.

#### **What emotions and feelings emerge from the text?**

Shame and guilt and joy.

#### **How can the preacher help the hearer name their emotions?**

By using the Law to show how we all deserved to be spued out by God for being lukewarm.

By asking how do you feel when you see how Christ so striped and suffered for your sins?

By asking what emotions do you have when you hear Christ saying to this Church I know your deeds?

#### **What real life story helps generate emotions and feelings of the text.**

Remembering eating something that made me sick.

### *Ethos*

The Relationship between the preacher and the hearer of the sermon.

#### **How does this text relate to the preacher and the congregation?**

We all have need of repentance.

We all our sinners and have been lukewarm.

We all are saved by Christ' faithfulness.

In Christ, we all sit in heaven with God.

#### **How can the preacher use his relationship with the congregation to communicate the text?**

I can tell how I have struggled with being lukewarm.

#### **What illustrations can be used in the sermon that causes the hearer to recognize themselves?**

Tell a time when they were ashamed by what they were wearing.

**What are the positive qualities that are found in the text?**

The church of Laodicea was told that Christ overcame all sin.

The one who is called the faithful one is faithful even when we are not.

**What life experience, struggles, and memories can be used to enhance what the text is saying?**

The time I struggled with being afraid to tell the group I was with that I was a Christian.

### **Community**

The individual's relationship of fellowship within the congregation and with in the community.

**How can the preacher help the individual hearer see a relationship between themselves and the congregation based on the text?**

Talk about our church potlucks and gathering at the Lord's table.

**What events of the community can be used to illustrate a picture of what the text is saying.**

Bond County resources and how blessed we are.

## **APPENDIX C**

### Ephesus Week 1

In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen

Dear Christian friends, today will be the first of seven sermons on St. John's letters to the seven churches of Asia Minor, recorded in the book of Revelation. Each of these letters were written to churches, in cities that we can actually locate today. Each of these churches were told, "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." Each of these churches struggled with particular sin. Most importantly, each of these churches were given a particular description of Christ and a promise and picture of salvation.

I imagine many of you already know that the Apostle John who also wrote the Gospel of John and 1<sup>st</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> John, was put on the island of Patmos as punishment for proclaiming Christ. Some of you may even know that while on the island John wrote the book of Revelation. But some of you may not know that our Lord Jesus Christ, Himself spoke these words to the seven churches of Asia Minor. If you were to come up and see the Bible that I am reading from, you would see that the words that are written to the seven churches are all in red ink. This gives us a visual picture that Christ spoke these words Himself. So with great joy and expectation listen to what Christ says to the church of Ephesus and to you and me.

The first church that St John wrote to was Ephesus. Ephesus was located at the center of trade routes and the city had many modern advances, such as hot and cold running water. The Christian's of Ephesus served the Lord with great devotion. Christ even told them that he knew their deeds and proceed to list them. He said they were hard workers and persevered under hardship. Many of you such as myself know how much work takes to make a church

function. Many of you know all that is involved in keeping up with a growing church. It takes many of you and a lot of work. Now try to imagine what it would be like, when at any moment someone could turn you into the government for proclaiming Christ. This was the way it was for the church of Ephesus.

Christ also said He knew that the Church of Ephesus did not tolerate wicked men and that they would test those who were claiming to be apostles and would call them out if they were false teachers. He said that they preserved and endured hardship for His name and they did not grow weary.

We all know how things can make us weary. Anyone who is in the people-business knows people can make you weary. Everyone has their own ideas, and everyone thinks their idea is right. Think about it, just the daily grind can make you weary. But Christ says with all the hardships and with all the false teachers the church of Ephesus did not grow weary. What a persevering church.

Yet, with all their perseverance Christ still had something against them. Ephesus had lost its' first love. And they were warned if they did not repent that their lampstand would be removed. This is a warning with grave consequences. For the removal of their golden lampstand is the removal of the presence of Christ.

The book that I have in my hand is a commentary on the book of Revelation written by Dr. Louis Brighten, a professor at Concordia Seminary. Many of you may remember when we had Dr. Brighten at our church for a weekend. In his commentary, he says this about the golden lampstands. "The exalted Christ identifies himself as the author of this letter by referring to himself as the one who holds the seven stars and walks about in the midst of the golden lampstands. ... The Lord Christ holds the seven stars and is in the midst of the

golden lampstands. The stars are the angels of the seven churches and the lampstands are the churches. Christ is the Lord of the angels and of the Churches.”

What Christ is saying to this persevering faithful church is the same thing He is saying to us today. Our actions and devotion are only words and we are just going through the motions when God is not our first love. Christ warns Ephesus and warns us if we do not repent the golden lampstand will be removed and His presence will be gone.

What difficult words for the church of Ephesus to hear and what difficult words for us to hear today. Even though we are doing the things that God desires His church to do, the fact is, with a heart that does not keep God as their first love, it is sin. God’s word is clear you are to have no other gods. He wants to be our first love each and every day of our lives and all the time, but because the world draws us away from Him we sin daily and daily we need to repent.

We can see how this happens in our own lives. Each of us who are married, may remember when our spouse was our first love, before the work place, before the children, before the hectic day-to-day life.

I remember when I first realized that Rebecca was my first love. I thought of her first thing in the morning I could not wait to see her at night and I wanted to spend as much time with her as I could. I remember how my heart beat as I ordered her engagement ring. I remember how I felt the night I gave her the ring, and when she smiled with tear filled eyes and she said “yes I will marry you.” That first love was burning and we were in love. But after we were married over the years that love is interrupted with the day and day of life, taking care of the children and providing for your family, and eventually you find out that first love can easily be replaced with the things of the world.

Pat Williams who was the General Manager of the Orlando Magic professional basketball team wrote in his book *Rekindled*, about how this happened to his marriage. He tells about how his career became his first love and eventually his wife said she would live with him but she did not love him anymore. With great desperation to keep his loving relationship with his wife he knew he had to change. Pat knew that his wife loved fresh squeezed orange juice. So for many months he would get up and make his wife fresh squeezed orange juice. He said did this day after day for many months but it was a long before she would even taste it. However, as she saw that her husband was committed and persistent her love was eventually rekindled.

Fortunately for us, as the introit says, our Lord has “a steadfast love that endures forever”. As the Word of God came Ephesus and called for repentance, by God’s grace it calls out to us to repent. For we too, have lost our first love. In this world it is so easy to loose it. When I was out of college and I thought I would make personal bible study a daily part of my life, I would start it and the something would happen and my schedule would be interrupted. When I went to the seminary I thought, “now surrounded by all this theology and sacred life I will be consistent,” but I still had interruptions. On August 8, 1993 I was installed as the pastor of Our Redeemer and many of you saw the fellow pastors place their hands on me and bless me. Now, Now, I thought I would be consistent in my prayer life. Well it has been over fifteen years and I can tell you that I am still struggling to keep my first love with the Word of God.

Yes dear Christian friends, keeping our first love is something we struggle with everyday and that is why we need to repent and find comfort in the one who holds the seven stars and walks among the seven lampstands, Jesus Christ, Himself, For it is only Christ who

never lost His first love from the time he entered this world Christ never lost His first love. Each and every day he kept his first love. Not once did he not do his Bible study. Not once did He not love the lord with all His heart soul and life. He kept His first love all the way to the cross. And there he placed His love in His father's hands and suffered and died, so that we would have forgiveness for all the times when we have lost our first love.

You see the one who holds that seven stars and walks among the golden lampstands is the same one who bares the marks of the cross. This why Christ tells the church of Ephesus, and us, that we will be able to eat from the tree of life. When Adam and Eve ate the fruit from the forbidden tree they were cast out of heaven not as a form of punishment. No, God placed an angle with his flaming sword so they would not eat from the tree of life and live in eternal sin and death. God's love for us was so great that he sent his son to be our savior and bare our guilt and punishment on the cross. In Christ, God sees us as children who have always kept Him as our first love. Because of Christ, we will be able to eat from the tree of life and live in paradise with God.



## Smyrna Week 2

Dear Christian friends,

NBC used to have a show called Fear Factor that had one particular mindset. That mindset was that everyone has some kind of fear. And all the television producers had to do was find out what that particular fear was, and use that fear to overcome the contestant, and eventually they would lose out. The reality is that each of us human beings have some kind of fear, some have a fear of the dark, some have a fear of spiders, and some have a fear of closed places. But irregardless of what the fear is, each of us have some kind of fear. Even though we may individually have different types of fears, in today's society we're finding out that there is a fear that is quite common. Two weeks ago, the paper said, "Fear Rushes In." The picture is a picture of a man looking at the stock market as the bottom starts to drop out. A week later, on the internet site foxnews.com, I saw this report: European and Asian markets plunge—Crisis Causes Fear. The atmosphere of fear was not just in the United States, but it was around the world. And finally today, the big headline is, "Fear: Worry about the Economy is Making Things Worse." There's no doubt about it my Christian Friends, our society is living in an atmosphere of fear. And even if you don't play the stock market, because of the relationship of what happens with our stock market and the economy, fear plays a part of who we are as a society. This is exactly the atmosphere we see in the second church that John writes to: the church at Smyrna. The church at Smyrna has the atmosphere of fear not because financial crisis and a destruction of wealth in the city. Even though they are a church in poverty, even though they do not have a wealth of human riches, the church of Smyrna has a greater fear. And that fear is the fear of suffering, the fear of being imprisoned, and ultimately the fear of death. Smyrna is known as the crown of Asia. It's a

beautiful city. The emperor wanted everyone to burn a pinch of incense and say, "Caesar is Lord." The Jews in Smyrna were against the Christians, so if the Christians would not do this the Jews would turn them in and the Christians would be persecuted, thrown in prison, and even suffer death. One person who suffered this in his life was Polycarp. Polycarp was the bishop of Smyrna. Because Polycarp would not burn incense to Caesar, it cost him his life. Historians tell us that Polycarp was brought before the Roman council and he was asked to burn incense to Caesar and he replied, "Eighty-six years the Lord has served me, and has not failed me once, how can I abandon Him at this time." When Polycarp went to his death, they went to bind him to the stake and he said, "You do not need to use the ropes, I will stand here on my own and be a martyr for Jesus Christ." Polycarp understood what the church at Smyrna was being told. Even though this fear was with them, they had been given a promise. The One who goes in front of them, He was the one who was the first and the last. The One who was dead, rose from the grave, Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ understood their fear of death. Jesus Christ said, "I am the One who has destroyed death." He was the One who was the first and the last, the One who was dead and rose from the grave." There was no need to fear death because Jesus had already experienced it and defeated death. And yet part of being human is dealing with trials and tribulations that cause us to fear. There's a difference between being afraid and the fear of dying. When I was a kid, I remember a particular time when my sister came in late. However, I thought I was by myself. She had been out for the evening and I was watching TV. All of a sudden, I heard a noise. My heart started beating faster and I thought I heard the door open as if someone was trying to get in. Not knowing what to do, I ran and jumped toward the door, thinking I had to do something, and then I realized it was my sister. I was afraid but I did not fear for my life. I did not fear death.

However, a second time, it was quite different. I was coming home from a meeting, and I was driving on the interstate. There was a Semi-truck that was in ahead of me. As I got closer and closer to the truck I noticed that all of the cars were slowing down ahead of me and behind the truck. The truck was going about 40 MPH. When anyone tried to pass, the truck would move over into their lane. This happened for several miles. Once I saw what was happening, I decided that I was going to try to pass him. As I started to pass the truck with as much speed as I could, the truck let me get half way pass and then he moved into my lane. I got further and further off the road I looked ahead of me I saw there was a bridge coming up. As I got closer and closer to the bridge, I knew I was either going to have to pass the truck or slow down. So I kept passing and I barely got passed him before I got to the bridge. My legs and my arms were shaking because as I saw that bridge, I knew I was going to die. I finally pulled over and with my hands shaking as I called 911 to report the truck driver. I don't know what happened, but I do know what it felt like to be close to death. Can you imagine what it would be like if you knew you were going to prison because you were proclaiming Christ? Not only that you were going to prison, but you have already heard and seen what had happened to other people who have proclaimed Christ—the kind of suffering, the kind of death that would cause them to question their faith. This is why Jesus Christ comes to Smyrna and says, “You don't have to worry about it, I have defeated death.” And yet, each and every one of us even though we are not persecuted as they were in Smyrna, because of our own fears, we keep our mouths silent--at the locker rooms, in the classrooms, at the work place, on the playground when there is time to proclaim Jesus Christ, or when someone makes fun of God; at the drinking fountain or the water cooler at the office or sometimes with your family or friends, someone makes a comment and we don't stand up for

Christ because of the fear of persecution our mouths are silent. We deserve judgment and condemnation for being faithless. Dr. Brighton in his class said that when one is quiet and they do not speak up for God, when they fear anything but God first, it is a sin. It is a sin because you have lost your first love. Our sinful flesh desires not to be bothered. Our sinful flesh desires not to be made fun of. Our sinful flesh desires in a quiet and peaceful place and instead of speaking up for God, we are silent. This is the same problem for the church of Smyrna. The good news is that Jesus Christ was not silent. Jesus Christ, the one that spoke to the church at Smyrna was the one that went to the cross, even to His death so that we would have forgiveness and salvation. That's why Jesus Christ tells the church at Smyrna that they are rich even though they are in poverty. Rich in the fact, that they have been given the promise of everlasting life. Rich in the fact, that they have won the victory over sin, death, and the devil. Rich, because of what Jesus Christ, the one that was first, the one that is last, the one who was dead and rose from the grave. The city of Smyrna was known to be the jewel of Asia, the crown of Asia. I think it is quite ironic that Jesus gives them this wonderful proclamation to be faithful unto death and you will receive the crown of life. Jesus Christ can make this statement because He wore the crown. His crown was not made of fine jewels, but made of thorns. His crown did not give Him the authority of the throne of the world, but death on the cross. He wore the crown for you and for me—for all the times we have been silent when we did not speak up for Christ; in our sin of being quiet, in our sin for not speaking for God, in our sin of fearing the world instead of the Holy One of God. Jesus took those sins Himself, went to the cross so that we would be given the crown of life. Picture it: we are in Heaven. Each and every one of us who are believers are called up one by one and Christ places a crown upon our heads. Bill Densmore walks up and He places the

crown upon his head. Each and everyone of us receiving the crown of life. That's a picture we have been given because of Jesus. You see Jesus defeated death, Jesus suffered for our sins, and because He speaks these words, we have the promise of life everlasting. As I was preparing for this sermon, I attended a Pastor's Conference and one of the evening songs we sang was "Abide With Me." As I listened to the words of the last verse of the song, I thought, what a wonderful picture that we believers have in Christ Jesus. Hear these words, "I fear no foe, with Thee at hand to bless. Ills have no weight and tears no bitterness. Where is death's sting? Where grave thy victory? I triumph still if Thou abide with me. Hold Thou Thy cross before my closing eyes. Shine through the gloom and point me to the skies. Heaven's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee. In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me." Dear Christian friends, in our baptism, we suffered the first death, we died to ourselves so that that we can be raised to live with Christ. The church of Smyrna was told that if they were faithful, they would not suffer the second death--that death of judgment. Because Christ has suffered the second death for us, each and every one of us in our baptism can live with that wonderful promise of grace, mercy, and salvation.

### Thyatira week 3

Dear Christian Friends,

If you can think back about six months ago, you probably heard both John McCain and Barack Obama say, “We will not drill for oil.” They would give all sorts of reasons why they will not drill for oil, and now all of the sudden, with the gas prices going higher, we are hearing people saying, “Drill, baby drill.” Now we hear both Barack Obama and John McCain saying, “I believe we can drill for oil without hurting the environment. What they have done is compromised. Both Obama and McCain compromised their word. They took a look at the situation, and they said maybe instead of not drilling, we should drill.

Compromise is what we do when a two people or groups have different opinions. We work through the situation by compromising. We all do it. You can watch your movie tonight, and tomorrow night I can watch the football game. We compromise. Or maybe this compromise: Dad can I borrow the car tonight? Sure, son, if you wash the car first. If that happens, it’s called a compromise. Compromise happens so that we can work through different situations. When you work together and share your different opinions, you compromise, and then come to a conclusion, it is a good thing. But dear Christian friends, when it comes to the Word of God, when it comes to trusting Jesus Christ as your one and only Savior, there is no compromise. That’s what we find at the church at Thyatira. Jesus Christ comes to the church at Thyatira, and tells them all the works that they are doing. He says, “I know your good works, I know your good deeds; the way you persevere, the way you have faith, the way you have love. I know you are doing all these positive things, but I have a few things against you, the way you allow Jezebel to be a part of your life. Jesus says that they have compromised. You see, dear Christian friends, the One who speaks to

Thyatira is described as the very Son of God who has blazing eyes of fire. A picture of Jesus Christ who does not look at your actions, but looks straight to your heart and sees all your sins of compromise. The scripture tells us that these eyes were able to see the heart and the soul of the people of Thyatira. Christ is also described as having feet of polished brass. This symbolizes standing firm; with God there is no compromise. One of the things I remember as a child, is that we would take different trips. One of the trips we took, we ended up at Mackanaw Island. We parked our camper at a campground before we crossed over to the island. As we played on the beach, I remember standing in water about ankle deep. As I talked to my parents and to my brothers and sisters, I realized that as the waves came in and went out, I was now standing in water that was knee deep. The longer I stood there, the water took the sand that I was standing on away and I was getting deeper and deeper in the water. That's exactly what we have to understand happens when we compromise the Word of God. When we compromise the Word of God, we lose our foundation. That's exactly what the church at Thyatira was being told. The church was being told that Christ could see their actions. On the positive side, they were doing acts of love and acts of service, they were persevering in things that they did, but unfortunately, Thyatira was a place of trade. And because it was a place of trade, there were many deals that got started. To be involved in these deals often meant that you were also involved in pagan practices. They would have to go to meals, and at these meals there would be food that had been sacrificed to idols. There would also be all kinds of promiscuity going on. Now if you were a Christian, and you wanted to make money, and you wanted to have an income, one of the things you could do is be a part of the deal. By being a part of the deal, you were assured a job, you were assured a trade, and you were assured financial wellbeing. Unfortunately, you were also connected

with all the pagan idolatry and revelry that was going on. This is what happened at Thyatira. They would go through their practice and worship of the Lord, and then they get involved in these deals. The word of Christ said to them, “You are a Jezebel.” They were following the practices of Jezebel and sacrificing to idols. Christ could see through their actions, into their hearts, into minds, and into their souls. Their hearts and minds had hardened and compromised. That, dear Christian friends, is not just true of Thyatira; but it’s true of each and every one of us in our own lives. God knows how many times we compromise. We compromise His Holy Word by not speaking the truth. We compromise His Holy Word when we see something that is wrong and we do not speak up because we do not want to be made fun of or we do not want our income to be effected. We lie just to get along. Dear Christian friends, Christ knows each and everyone of us and what compromises we have made in our lives—just as Thyatira compromised. That’s why He comes to us with these words that if we do not compromise, if we follow His Word there is a wonderful promise—a promise that we will be over all the nations and we will be given the glory of the morning star. The morning star is a picture of His glory. Christ said if we trust Him instead of our worldly ideas, that we will have a wonderful part of Christ’s glory because of His righteousness. Christ, the one who had the flaming eyes and the feet of bronze, did not compromise. There were many times that He could have, but He did not compromise and He did not compromise to the point of going to the cross. When Jesus Christ said to His father, “Is there any other way to drink this cup, yet not my will but Thy will be done.” Jesus accepted that there is no compromise. That is why we have the promise that we will be as the Morning Star. Jesus Christ has taken our sins of compromise—taken every time that we have compromised His Word, every time we have compromised the life we should be living



as Christians. He took those sins to the cross so that we would have everlasting life and salvation. Because Christ went to the cross, we will live in His glory—a glory not of pride, but a glory of His righteousness. He suffered for our sins. He rose for our victory so that we will live with Him in glory. That is a wonderful joy that everyone of us have been given in Christ Jesus. If you would travel to Thyatira today, all that is left is a cross made of marble. The church is no longer there. Unfortunately, the compromise of God's Word cost the church. But for each of us that trust in Christ for our salvation, there is no compromise and we too will live with Him in glory.

#### Pergamum week 4

Dear Christian Friends,

As I was working through this series—preaching through the seven churches in Asia Minor, one of the thoughts that came to me was, “What about Reformation?” We’ve got to have a Reformation service. How can we celebrate Reformation and still preach on one of the seven churches of Asia Minor? My first instinct was maybe we should skip a week. But as I looked at the text of Pergamum and thought about Martin Luther’s stance on the Word of God, it became evident that Pergamum was the perfect text for Reformation. Listen to the words of this article that I found in this month’s Lutheran Witness. It’s an article written about Martin Luther. These are the words that Luther was thinking about. “Who is God when you really get to know him? Who are we as human creatures? Those are two questions that Luther is pondering. Martin Luther spent agonizing hours over several years wrestling with these two questions. He never commented on his state of mind during the time he was struggling with the dilemma of God’s identity and his own. Two things are certain, he saw God as the angry judge depicted on many of the altars he had stood before in emotion and fear; he saw Christ as the one who comes on the clouds with a much bigger sword of judgment in His left hand and a lily of peace in His right. He also saw himself as a sinner who had to earn God’s favor through his own efforts. He had to become a self-made man if he were to escape the fires of God’s eternal wrath.” Their dear Christian friends, we see the struggle that Luther had. How can anyone stand before a Holy God who has a sword of judgment that could cut through to the heart and see every sin. In our text today we see the sword of judgment coming to the church of Pergamum. The church of Pergamum is met with Christ who has a double-edged sword. The church of Pergamum had much to be condemned

for. They fell into two particular sins. One of Balaam and the other of the Nicolaitans. Now Balaam goes back to the Old Testament. The Old Testament story tells of how God used Balaam to speak words for Him. But because Balaam wanted wealth, he wanted to serve two masters—listen to God on one hand and have treasures on the other. This became a great temptation when Balak, the King, wanted to hire Balaam for his own purpose. Even though Balaam knew he shouldn't do it, he went to God and he said, "Can I give what this man wants?" God said, "No." So Balaam told him, "I cannot do it." That didn't stop Balak. He came back with another request to have Balaam serve him and he promised him great wealth. These were words Balaam wanted to hear and so he went back to God a second time and he asked if he could follow Balak's words. God spoke to Balaam and said, "Yes, but you can only say what I tell you to say." So Balaam went to Balak. As he was traveling, on his donkey, on this small road in the rugged hill country his donkey saw an angel, and the angel had this sword in his hand. The donkey was smart enough to stop. But Balaam started smacking the donkey and hitting the donkey. Finally the donkey started pushing up against the edge of the rough rocks and scraped Balaam's leg. He started beating the donkey, and then God gave the donkey the ability to speak. The donkey said, "Why are you beating me? Haven't I been faithful for all these years?" Balaam was surprised and he looked up and God gave Balaam the ability to see the angel. In the angel's hand was a sword. The angel said to Balaam, "It's a good thing the donkey stopped, because I would have let the donkey live, but you I would have slain." You see the problem for Balaam was he wanted to serve two masters. And this is the problem that Pergamum had also. They wanted to serve two masters. They wanted to be faithful to God on one hand, and serving self in the other. This also involved the Nicolaitans. The Nicolaitans followed Nicolas, who had convinced people

that because they were Christians, because they had a greater knowledge, they could actually sin with the flesh, but be okay with God in the spirit. These two sins were working on Pergamum, and yet Pergamum had some faithful people. As a matter of fact, Pergamum was the only church, out of all the churches of Asia Minor that actually names a man who was martyred because he would not give into pagan worship. Antipas would not give into pagan worship and he was the first martyr in the area of Asia. This shows us that some of the people in the church were quite faithful, while others in the church struggled with the sin of serving two masters. We love to serve two masters also. When I started thinking about this text, it reminded me of when I was a child and we used to read My Devotions. My Devotions had many little stories in them, and after the story there were questions. One of my favorite stories was the girl that had two quarters. One quarter was to put in the Sunday School basket, the other quarter was to stop and get an ice cream cone after church. As the little girl was going down her street to go to church, she slipped and fell and one of the quarters went down into a drain. That day in Sunday School, when the collection basket went by, she would have loved to put a quarter in, but the one that fell in the drain was the one for Sunday School. The one she had in her hand was for the ice cream cone. I always remembered that story because it is the way we are. It is our human nature to want to serve ourselves rather than serve God. And this is the struggle that Martin Luther had. He saw that there was a God, who was a judging God, a God that was a condemning God. The God that he knew was the one with the sword, and this sword was to cut him down because he was a sinner. A second identity that Luther saw was that he wanted to serve himself. He was always caught up in the flesh. How could one serve a God, a judging God, a God of condemnation properly if one was always serving himself. You can see his dilemma. In our

own natural state, we are so caught up in ourselves and it happens so quickly. The other day, I was going to work out and before I began my workout, I began a conversation with one of the ladies that owns the establishment. She asked about a gentleman that I knew that was sick. In the conversation we were talking about how he needed blood transfusions and how costly that could be. Another gentleman that was standing there just innocently said, "You know hospice can help pay for that." And for some reason, instantly, all I could think of was, "Hospice can't help with blood transfusions, they only help with people that are going through the process of dying." And instead of saying to this gentleman, "Thank you, that was a very good idea." The first comment that came out of my mouth was, "Hospice cannot give you blood." See our sinful nature always wants to raise its ugly head. It always wants to be right. It makes serving only one master not only difficult, but totally impossible-- impossible for the church at Pergamum and impossible for you and me. This was the dilemma that Luther had. Luther thought that God had a sword and was ready to strike him down because he could not meet the demands of the law. When he understood who Christ was and what Christ did, everything changed. And so it is at Pergamum. As we look at this church and we look to ourselves, we see that none of us can stand the demands of law. Everyone wants to serve two masters. How can we serve one master when we are sinful flesh? We look to the One who did, Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ never served two masters. Jesus Christ only served one, His heavenly Father, and He served Him completely. When Martin Luther understood that it was Jesus' works of serves not his he could see God as a God of love. So Jesus Christ came on this earth, not as a judge, but as a Savior. And as Jesus Christ took on the sins for the times when we are caught up with the mindset that we have a license to sin like the Nicolaitans, or our mindset of serving two masters, Jesus Christ took

those sins upon himself, and went to Calvary's cross, and suffered our judgment. In Christ our judgment has been served. Jesus Christ said to the church at Pergamum, "If you repent, and are faithful, you will receive three things. The first thing that you will receive is the hidden manna. The hidden manna is the Lord's Supper, the great final feast in heaven. For us who know Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, He gives us the promise of eating the banquet feast in heaven, the hidden manna is ours. We get a little taste of it as we come here. We here those words, "Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins, given and shed for the remission of your sins." We receive a taste of heaven from the one who is the Bread of Life, Jesus Christ. The second thing that Jesus Christ says is you will be given a white stone. In this place of judgment that Pergamum stands, those are very, very joyful words. In Pergamum, they had a court system. The court system had a jury. And as the jury made its verdict, if the person was innocent, they would take a white stone and place it in the jar. Jesus Christ tells us that we have been given a white stone. We have been declared innocent amongst God's judgment. And finally he says you will be given a new name. As we are brought to the waters of Holy Baptism, we were given a new name. The new name we were given is Christian—ones who carry the name of Christ. Isn't it ironic that we would receive a new name and in the church letter to Pergamum, it is the only church that has a name attached to its martyr, Antipas. There will a time of judgment. But for those who are in Christ Jesus, that judgment has been placed on our Lord and Savior. When Martin Luther knew this about Jesus Christ he saw God as a God of love. Luther knew that Jesus Christ suffered Luther's judgment. The article that I was reading earlier concludes with these words. Luther discovered he was God's child. Martin Luther knew he belonged to God through

Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ will come with a sword of judgment, but for you and me and for all in Christ, the judgment has already been given. **AMEN**

## Sardis week 5

Dear Christian friends,

When I was a young lad going to church, one of the texts that really caught my attention was when the pastor spoke about the valley of the dry bones. The text from Ezekiel that talks about how Ezekiel was taken by the Spirit to a valley where there are bones and those bones are very, very dry. As a child, I remember how the pastor would talk about how the Word of God spoke and all of a sudden those dry bones came to life and all of the sudden those dry bones would have flesh on them. And in my mind, little by little I saw this happening. The point is that these very dry bones, by the Word of God, had life. This was a picture of what God can do with His holy Word. As we are celebrating this day of remembering the faithfully departed, what a picture of hope and comfort this is to us. We know that those who have died in Christ Jesus, will be brought back to life. We know that it's true, because God has shown us through His Word. The church at Sardis was dealing with a real problem of death within its own church. And the only comfort that comes to the church at Sardis, is that the one who has the seven spirits and the seven stars can speak a word of life into this dead church and because of that word of life and their repentant hearts, there is a promise that there too will be life. Just as we sang about in our last hymn, there will be those dressed in white walking around with the righteousness of Christ because of Christ's great love for His church. Sardis was a city that was blessed; it was a church that was blessed. When Sardis found out that there was a great resource of gold in their city, they decided that they didn't have to work. And because they did not have to work, they became very, very lazy. This was the whole attitude of the city. Why work, we have all this wealth. The problem was that this same attitude was the attitude of the congregation of the church of Sardis. Sardis was the



oldest of all the cities. And yet, when Christ comes to this church, He does not say like He has said to the past churches, “You guys are following Nicolaitans, stop following them or you are going to perish.” “You guys are following idolatry practices, stop doing that or you are going to perish.” No, Sardis does not have anything held against them as the other churches did, Sardis hears a word that says, “You think you are alive, but you are really dead.” This is a very striking word of God. And the only life that can come to this dead church comes from the one who has seven spirits. Each church throughout this series has received a particular visual picture of what that church needs. What Sardis needed was to be brought back to life. The visual picture of Christ is that He holds the seven spirits and the seven stars—a picture of His fullness that can only bring life to this dead church. The fullness of the Spirit gives life as we see in the story of Ezekiel and the dry bones. That same life can be brought to this church also if there is repentance and an understanding of their sins. You see, dear Christian friends, Sardis was soiled. It was soiled by unbelief. Not so much by actions, but by their lazy attitudes, thinking that they did not have to do anything and everything was given to them. Scripture tells us that faith causes us to respond with great joy and to use our gifts to serve the church. None of this was happening at Sardis. They were soiled. I can remember a particular time, I was told we were going to go to church. My brother and I were told to go out to the car. For some reason, I felt like I needed to climb on the bean tree. And as I was climbing on the bean tree, my knee scraped the tree and there was a worn spot on my pants. As I sat in the church pew, I wanted to put my hand over the worn spot so that people could not see how I had ruined my pants. I wanted to cover it up. That’s what God sees in our lives when we have a lazy attitude toward Him. An attitude toward Him that we want to cover up our mistakes and not let people see how it really is.

That's the attitude that Sardis had. And God said to them, "You think you are alive." If you walked into Sardis everything looked like it was fine and there is nothing wrong. But God saw the soiled garments of laziness that they were wearing and said, "You are dead." He said there are a few of you that are still wearing the white garment, and for those of you who do repent, you will also be able to wear a white garment. That was a great warning for that church of Sardis. And so it is with each of us. In our sinful nature that has a lazy attitude, thinking that just because we are in Christ, we don't have to worry about others who do not have Christ. The Scripture tells us that this is a gift that should be shared. God has blessed us here at Our Redeemer abundantly. Not so that we can sit around and say what a nice place we have here, but so that we can be a servant in God's kingdom. But God wants us all to understand that we need a repentant heart because our sinful nature doesn't want to do anything. Our sinful nature would just like to see everybody else do it for us, just like in Sardis. Dear Christian friends, there is hope. There is hope for Sardis, there is hope for all people who repent. And the hope comes to us by the one who holds the seven spirits—the fullness of God. That fullness of God came to us in the waters of Baptism. As we were brought to the waters of Holy Baptism, the words were spoken and we were recipients of a white garment. This white garment that we received, represents the white righteousness of Jesus Christ. At the time of our baptism, that white garment was placed upon us, the white righteousness of Christ that says, "We are His." That same spirit comes to us with gifts—gifts to use in the service of His kingdom. The comfort that is given to Sardis, is the same comfort that comes to us. Even though our sinful nature is soiled, there is one who is not soiled, Jesus Christ. It is Jesus Christ who served us. It is Jesus Christ who speaks to Sardis and He is the greatest servant. Scriptures tell us that when Jesus Christ left His place of

glory, He became a servant for you and for me and for all the world. Jesus Christ came to this world to serve us the best way He knew how. He took our soiled, sinful garments to Calvary's cross and there at the cross, the sins of Sardis, the sins of the entire world, the sins of you and me and our lazy attitude and sinful flesh were placed on Christ. He took our judgment, He took our punishment. Christ did not once have a lazy attitude. His attitude was always to serve. That is a great comfort to Sardis. That is a great comfort to us. Because we have the gift of Christ and His righteousness, we too will wear a white garment of righteousness. The comfort that comes to us this day as we remember the faithfully departed is that they already are wearing those white garments. Those who are in Christ Jesus were given that white garment of Christ's righteousness to walk around in the kingdom of God. They are not soiled, but are covered by Jesus Christ. In the Lutheran church, when there is a funeral, families are offered this white pall to cover the casket. The white pall represents the righteousness of Christ given to each person in their Baptism. The white pall is a picture of God's grace that even in death, as soiled as our sins may have been, the righteousness of Christ covers us and gives us life.

## Philadelphia week 6

Dear Christian friends,

When I was on vicarage, one of the opportunities I took with my family was to go to South Dakota. When we traveled in South Dakota, one of the places we wanted to see was that wonderful picture of Mount Rushmore. Raise your hand if any of you have ever been to Mount Rushmore. You've experienced that picture of driving when all of a sudden; there huge on the mountainside, are those four faces: the faces of Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln, and Roosevelt. Those four huge faces are carved into the mountain: stone, huge pictures of glory. Well as much as those are wonderful visible pictures of what these men of done for our country, because this world is full of sin, and because the scriptures tell us that this world will come to be destroyed, so will come crumbling down those carved out images of the presidents on that Mount Rushmore. But, Jesus tells Philadelphia, and He tells us today, that because of His faithful witness, and because He gives us Jesus Christ to guide us and direct us, and give us salvation and forgiveness that we will have a pillar erected in God's temple, with God's name on it. Not because we are so good, but because Jesus is. This is a wonderful picture Philadelphia is given as Christ comes to speak with them. At other churches that He has spoken about, Philadelphia too has Christ coming to them to bring them a message. The message He brings to them is that He is the true one, He is the faithful one, He is the holy one, and that He holds the key of David. A key that opens the door that no one can close, and shuts the door that no one can open. You see dear Christian friends, the problem that Philadelphia has is God has given them many golden opportunities. Because of their location, they're commercial importance is so powerful, people are drawn to them, they know about them, and many cities surround the city of Philadelphia. And because there is so

much opportunity there, they are known as the gateway to East—a gateway to bring this wonderful opportunity of commercial importance throughout the whole region. At one time, Philadelphia was a congregation that reached out with the message of Jesus Christ. But as things became more difficult, as they became more self-centered, it became evident that Philadelphia no longer had the desire to be a missionary church as they once were. That is why Christ comes to them and says, “You have little strength.” You should take the opportunity and share this wonderful word because you have the key of David with you: Jesus Christ Himself. Jesus Christ is the only one that can open the door to a heart that is closed because of sin, death, and the power of the devil. Jesus Christ is the only one who can take and give strength to one who can open their mouth and tell the Good News of salvation. Many times in our lives, we get focused on our own interests and our own concerns or our own abilities and we forget to witness. We give ourselves excuses. Excuses that say, “I don’t have the right words.” Excuses that say, “We’ve never been trained for this.” I can remember one particular time at the seminary I went on a retreat to this church. The people of the community that came to the retreat wanted to learn about evangelism. And after we all through with the training, we decided to go out and use our training to witness and spread the Good News of Christ to the other people around the community where this church was. One particular lady who was at that event said she wasn’t going to go. She had just lost her husband and she didn’t think that she would have anything to say. With a little bit of encouragement, this woman was coaxed to go with us but she decided that she was not going to say anything. We said that would be okay, she was just going to see what was going on. We came to one particular door, and we knocked on the door and we started to ask the normal questions similar to “We’re taking a survey for this church in the community, and we

would like to ask you some questions.” A lady opened the door and she said that she wasn’t interested in answering the questions because she had just lost her husband. Without saying anything, this woman stepped forward and said, “I just lost my husband too.” And there is the connection that God used to draw this woman who had just lost her husband into a nurturing, caring church because she was there. Philadelphia did not know the opportunities God had for them. They were so caught up in themselves they did not always go out and witness. Something else you need to know about this particular city at Philadelphia, it was really known for its dirt and its soil; it was so rich that it produced wonderful vineyards, but because the soil was the type of soil that it was, it was very easy for earthquakes and tremors to destroy the foundation of the home. So the people of Philadelphia were known to be leaving the city quickly whenever there was a tremor or earthquake. They would go out of the city and then they would come back into the city. They go out of the city and they would come back. It’s interesting that people would go out of the city because they would fear for their lives but yet they were hesitant to go out in the city to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ. So many times we miss the opportunity to be a witness for Christ because we just look at what we are doing and not about the one who is with us and will be working with His Word. As the song we sang so clearly said, “You can just tell of Jesus, tell that He died for all the sins of the world.” That’s what a witness is, a person that brings Jesus to people who are suffering, a person who brings Jesus to the people who may not of His salvation. This is so important and something each and every one of us can do. Because Jesus has given us opportunity that I cannot know, and I cannot be a part of; but you are. Each and everyone of you have been given a voice to speak the love of Christ to your neighbor, to your friend, to someone that God has place as an opportunity for you to speak to. You don’t have to have

all kinds of knowledge, you don't have to have special training, all you have to do is be willing to say, "I know One who cares for you—His name is Jesus Christ." Out of all the letters, this is the longest address that comes to any of the churches. In the Greek it's broken down into three specifics: the Holy One, the True One, the One Who Holds the Key to David. The Holy One—this is the same Holy One that Peter makes his confession to, "You are the Holy One of God." It's the same one who is the faithful one who says, "There is no need of any other witness, I am a faithful witness, I am the True One, and the one who holds the Key of David." In our children's sermon we talked about doors that are open and doors that are closed. Jesus is the key. The faithful witness Jesus did not miss any opportunity to die for the sins of the world—for the times when we are silent, for the times when we are fearful of what someone might say. Those sins are known as sins of omission, sins that maybe we don't even know that we aren't doing because we're not allowing the Holy Spirit to work in our lives and say, "Use me as your servant, help me be aware of those golden opportunities that you place around me each and every day." Jesus Christ in His gift of salvation is the key to open the door to salvation to all people. This threefold address was given so that the congregation of Philadelphia would understand that they were not standing alone. When I was in the Amway business, one of the things that would happen to me, was that I could get what was called fear of the phone. Because we would pick up the phone and call people and ask them, if you can come over and you hear a no and you hear a no and then all of the sudden start getting a fear of the phone. So one of the tricks that we used is we got motivational tapes. You would listen to a tape and people that were more successful and got to places that we wanted to go, we would take name cards and place them around us: Bill Britt, Dexter Yegar, Jay Van Andle, and Rich Devoss. They would surround me and I would

start looking at these cards and listening to my tapes and then I would sit at my phone and I would start calling, waiting for someone to say yes. And once I would get a yes, I would yell, "All right guys, we did it, we did it." As fictitious as that might seem, it motivated me to make the next call. What this text tells each and everyone of us is that we are not in this alone. We have the whole power of God, we have the faithful one, the True One, the One Who holds the Key of David. And there are so many people that need to know about Jesus Christ. Here in our own community of Greenville, people do not know Jesus Christ and if Christ does not come into their lives they are going to face judgment and condemnation. God gives us great opportunities to speak those precious words, those words that can heal. Those words can say that we have Jesus Christ who is with us. Christ gives a promise that when we step out in faith, we too will receive a pillar. In Philadelphia, even in a secular, pagan culture, when somebody did something for city, there was a pillar erected at the pagan temple and their name was placed on it. Christ tells us that because of His faithfulness, that in Christ, we too will receive a pillar, a pillar placed in the temple of God, a pillar that says that we have salvation and forgiveness. Not for a short time as the pillars in Philadelphia have been destroyed, not for a short time as one day Mount Rushmore will be destroyed, but for all eternity. Many of you will remember when these walls were built, before the drywall, we came in this church and we placed our names on the 2 X 4's: our Bible verses, our Confirmation verses. And they are there right now if we would take the drywall off, there would be a name on the 2 X 4. But someday, these 2 X 4's will also be destroyed. Someday this whole world is going to be destroyed. But the pillars in the temple of God will last forever. This promise is for everyone that knows Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. And this is a precious treasure not just for you and for me, but it is a precious treasure that God wants



for the entire world. As you make your way out into the community this week, remember that you too can be used as a faithful witness. Speak a word of love, a word of grace, a word of mercy, Jesus Christ died for people's sins. Jesus Christ died so that they too can have a pillar in heaven.

## Laodicea week 7

Dear Christian Friends,

As I was on vicarage in Yuma, Colorado, one of the trips that I had to make with my bishop was to a Pastor's conference. The Pastor's Conference was in Golden, Colorado. As I was getting close to Golden, Colorado, we saw big billboards that talked about panning for gold. Apparently Golden, Colorado was one of the spots during the gold rush that many people came to find their riches, to find their wealth, to find all the things that they were looking for. Unfortunately, people that made that journey to Golden, Colorado for all the tragedies and all the disasters that took place they found only trials and tribulations and many of them ended up dying because of all the catastrophes that they faced. Although they were going to Golden, Colorado for riches, for the gold rush, and for all agony offered there, many of them found death. This, dear Christian friends, is what it was like at the church of Laodicea. Laodicea had great wealth. Laodicea had great riches and yet Christ comes to them with a warning. He says, "You are lukewarm, neither hot nor cold, and I am about to spew you out of my mouth." This was a picture of rejection. To be rejected by God, to be rejected by Christ is truly a disaster. It truly means death. A spiritual death that is everlasting. Therefore the Christ that comes to this church in Laodicea is the one that comes with the title of Amen. The Hebrew word Amen says it all. The Hebrew word Amen is a word in the Old Testament that meant that this is the final word. In our Catechism, Luther explains the Amen in the Lord's Prayer says, "Amen, Amen, it shall be so." These are the words that The Amen speaks to this church at Laodicea. Because they think they have got it all. They think they found it all in their wealth. You see Laodicea was blessed with great resources. They were blessed with sheep that had a special wool. This wool had kind of a black tint, and the color

made others yearn for the wool of Laodicea for clothing and textiles. The city became rich by selling this wool. And yet, the scriptures tell us that Christ saw this church as naked. When I was a kid, I can remember when it came time to shear the sheep. We would gather all the sheep up into the pen, and dad one by one would take a sheep hold it around the neck and flip it over. He would take the shears, and quickly cut the wool off the sheep. We were not shearing the sheep for the wool but we were shearing so that the sheep would not get hot during the summer. But at Laodicea, every time a sheep was sheared, the wool was collected because it was a special wool and a source of their riches. Yet the Lord says that they are naked. He gives them a picture of how He views their wealth and the wealth of the city. Also, Laodicea was blessed with a wonderful soil. They found that they could mix this soil and it would bring comfort to the eye. Because of this wonderful product, people all over the world wanted this ointment. Because they had so much soil, they could have sold it for very little cost, but because of their greed, and their desire for more wealth, Laodicea chose to sell the ointment at a very high cost. In this text, the church at Laodicea is told that they are blind. With all the special salve that they used for healing of the eyes, Christ tells them that they are blind. Laodicea was blessed with so many resources that they started the banking system. The banking system in Asia Minor created more wealth and yet when Christ comes to them, He says that they are poor and they are broken. Laodicea was deceived. They were deceived with the wealth and the riches of this world. And that is what Satan wants to do. He wants to get us caught up in the things of this world rather than the things of God. Probably the greatest achievement of the city of Laodicea was their aqueducts. Because of all their wealth and all their resources, Laodicea wanted to have everything everybody else had. It was kind of like trying to keep up with the Jones'. Ephesus was known because they

had hot and cold running water. Well Laodicea had mountain regions that had snow. They also had areas that had boiling springs. So they decided to build aqueducts that would bring the cold water from the north down to the city and would bring the hot water up to the city. The problem was that as the cold water traveled over six miles through the aqueducts, by the time it got to the city it was not longer cold it was lukewarm. And likewise, by the time the hot water traveled to the city, it was no longer hot it was lukewarm. The Amen speaks to them and says, "You are neither hot nor cold, you are lukewarm and I will spew you out of my mouth." Probably the most visual picture of the church at Laodicea is a result of the lukewarm water. Because of the deposits of calcium that built up in the aqueducts as the water passed through, when people would drink the water, it made them vomit. The failed aqueducts was a picture of the failure in the heart and minds of the church of Laodicea. Dear Christian friends, it is so easy to allow this world to draw us into what it thinks is important. In this particular time that we are in with the uncertainty of the stock market and job loss it is so easy to get caught up in worrying about how am I going to take care of myself and my family and how can I provide for my luxuries, because I do not want to do without anything rather than have a vision for the will and the word of God. We need to have a zeal for God's word to be proclaimed in its truth and purity to all people. That dear Christian friends is what the Amen wants to see happen in not just Laodicea but in every church, the Amen, the true and faithful witness, the One who comes to them and says that He alone is the creator of life. Laodicea thought that because of their riches and wealth they had everything. But the reality is that they were headed for death and disaster. They needed to understand what the Amen said. They needed to repent of their sins. They needed to turn back and trust in Christ, the one who provides for all their needs. He alone is the one that can bring true

wealth. He alone is the one that can give them garments that are white. Jesus Christ comes to them and knocks at the door wanting them to repent and receive Him as the one true Lord and Savior. It is very easy for us these days to look at our bank accounts to look at our 401K's to get caught up with the things of the world, rather than get caught up in the mission of God's church—the mission and the zeal for spreading the Gospel. Think back to the beginning of our own church. In 1932, Our Redeemer, during the depression, began this congregation. Even in the midst of the depression, some people stepped out and declared that they would not be lukewarm. We want to be zealous for the Lord, we are going to have a desire to serve the Lord, and now we can give thanks for their zeal and all they accomplished. We are the recipients of their zeal and desire that the Word of God be spread in its truth and purity. They were not lukewarm, but they were hot for the Lord in 1932. That is what we as Christians should be about. Because the Amen has taken care of all of our needs, we do not need to worry about the future, because He holds the future. He is the one who created this world, He is the one who controls it. The reward for those who repent, for those who understand and trust that Jesus Christ is the Amen, will be that they will sit at the throne and dine with God. This is not because we are so great and do such great things, it is because Christ was great for us. You see, the Scriptures tell us that the church at Laodicea was about to be spewed out of the mouth of God—a picture of rejection. But Jesus Christ, the Amen was the one that was spewed out. At Calvary, there was full rejection of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ took the sins of our lukewarm hearts, our lukewarm minds, our lukewarm actions and God rejected Him as Christ spoke, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me.” Jesus Christ had no lukewarm actions. His full desire was to serve His father. His desire is that not one soul would perish, that no one would suffer eternal death and be spewed

out by God. This is what motivates us. As we look forward to the 2008 Annual meeting and analyze what we will do in 2009 to serve our community and our God, will we be content and say what a wonderful place we have here, or are we going to say in these economic times, we don't have the resources to minister to others, or will we ask that we will not be found lukewarm. As we look at Jesus Christ, The Amen, as we find our confidence and our faith in the true and faithful witness, the creator of all things, we cannot but respond with joy and wonderful excitement that we are in the hands of the Lord, Jesus Christ and He has given us the gift to sit in His throne and eat in His kingdom.

## APPENDIX D

I have attended \_\_\_ pre-sermon Bible studies.

Please circle the **best** answer. Circle only **one**.

I went to the Ephesus pre-sermon Bible study for this survey. (Yes) (No)

The main idea of the sermon was:

- (A) Christ never lost His first love, and we too can persevere.
- (B) Love as God loves us.
- (C) Christ always kept His first love even though we don't.
- (D) Because Christ never lost His first love, in Christ we are loved by God.

In the sermon Ephesus was:

- (A) the name of the city
- (B) the name of the church that John was told to write to.
- (C) the name of the angel who spoke to John.
- (D) Both A and B

The people of the congregation of Ephesus were:

- (A) people who practiced sensual worship.
- (B) people who persevered and were hard workers.
- (C) people who followed Nicolaitcia
- (D) Both A and C

Even though the people of the church of Ephesus served the Lord with perseverance the one thing the Lord had against the Church was:

- A) They did not love as Christ did.
- (B) They did not love their neighbor.
- (C) They had lost their first love.
- (D) Both A and B

According to the text the reward for keeping our first love was:

- (A) A home in heaven.
- (B) That Christ would love us.
- (C) We will be able to eat for the tree of life.
- (D) Both A and B

In the book *Rekindled* the author's illustration showed his:

- (A) Love of the church.
- (B) Love of a marriage.
- (C) Love of a neighbor.
- (D) Love of children.

In the book *Rekindled* the author:

- (A) Made coffee for his wife.
- (B) Stayed home more.
- (C) Made her fresh squeezed orange juice.
- (D) Told her she was his first love.

The example of the struggle that the preacher had in the sermon was:

- (A) Not being home enough.
- (B) Not preparing enough.
- (C) Not being consistent with Bible study.
- (D) Not loving his family.

The hands of Christ that bore the marks of the cross also held the:

- (A) Seven stars.
- (B) Seven churches.
- (C) Seven lampstands.
- (D) Seven angels.

-----  
Check the feelings you felt during the sermon.

- \_\_\_ Pride
  - \_\_\_ Shame
  - \_\_\_ Hope
  - \_\_\_ Guilt
  - \_\_\_ Anger
  - \_\_\_ Peace
  - \_\_\_ Love
  - \_\_\_ Joy
  - \_\_\_ Hope
  - \_\_\_ None of the above
  - \_\_\_ Other
- 

Rate how the personal story of the preacher's first love helped you relate better to the sermon:  
(not at all), (neither more or less), (some ), (very much)

Rate how the preacher proclaimed the sermon in a logical manner :  
(not at all), (neither more or less), (some ), (very much)

Rate how the preacher made you feel that he was speaking directly to you.  
(not at all), (neither more or less), (some ), (very much)

Throughout the sermon I felt connected to the other members of Our Redeemer.  
(not at all), (neither more or less), (some ), (very much)

Throughout the sermon I felt connected to the community of Greenville.  
(not at all), (neither more or less), (some ), (very much)

Additional comments: \_\_\_\_\_.



I have attended \_\_\_ pre-sermon Bible studies.

Please circle the **best** answer. Circle only **one**.

I went to the Smyrna **pre-sermon Bible study** for this survey. (Yes) (No)

The main idea of the sermon was:

- (A) Christ never lost His first love, and we too will rise.
- (B) Love God, as God loves us.
- (C) In Christ, Christians need not fear the second death.
- (D) Christ has defeated death.

In the sermon, the government of Smyrna required the people:

- (A) To worship Caesar only.
- (B) To trust God.
- (C) To burn incense to Caesar once a year.
- (D) Both A and B

The people of the congregation of Smyrna were:

- (A) People who practiced idolatry.
- (B) Were people who feared the second death.
- (C) Were people who were afraid of suffering.
- (D) Both A and B

Even though the people of the church of Smyrna served the Lord some of them were about to :

- (A) Be thrown in prison.
- (B) Suffer the second death.
- (C) Lose their first love.
- (D) Both A and B

According to the sermon, the reward for being faithful was:

- (A) To have wealth in heaven.
- (B) To know Christ would love us.
- (C) To receive a crown of life.
- (D) Both A and B

In the sermon, the relationship between the world today and the people of Smyrna was:

- (A) The fear of poverty.
- (B) The atmosphere of fear.
- (C) Idolatry.
- (D) The fear of death.

In the sermon, the pastor gave a personal story of his:

- (A) Love for Christ.
- (B) His own fears.
- (C) His near death experiences.
- (D) His own times of suffering.

In the sermon, baptism was called a Christian's:

- (A) Time of poverty.
- (B) Time of worship.
- (C) Time of dying the first death.
- (D) Time of committing to the Lord.

The one who spoke to the church of Smyrna was :

- (A) The one who was dead and came back to life.
- (B) The one who suffered poverty.
- (C) The one who loved Caesar.
- (D) One of the Seven angels.

-----  
Check the feelings you felt during the sermon.

- \_\_\_ Pride
- \_\_\_ Shame
- \_\_\_ Guilt
- \_\_\_ Anger
- \_\_\_ Peace
- \_\_\_ Love
- \_\_\_ Joy
- \_\_\_ Hope
- \_\_\_ None of the Above
- \_\_\_ Other feelings

Please describe. \_\_\_\_\_

Rate how the personal story of the preacher's near death experience helped you relate better to the sermon: (not at all), (neither more or less), (some ), (very much)

Rate how the preacher proclaimed the sermon in a logical manner :  
(not at all), (neither more or less), (some ), (very much)

Rate how the preacher made you feel that he was speaking directly to you.  
(not at all), (neither more or less), (some ), (very much)

Throughout the sermon I felt a relationship with the other members of Our Redeemer.  
(not at all), (neither more or less), (some ), (very much)

Throughout the sermon I felt a relationship with the community of Greenville.  
(not at all), (neither more or less), (some ), (very much)

Additional comments: \_\_\_\_\_.

I have attended \_\_\_ pre-sermon Bible studies.

Please circle the **best** answer. Circle only **one**.

I went to the **Thyatira pre-sermon Bible study** for this survey. (Yes) (No)

The main idea of the sermon was:

- (A) Christ stands firm and so will we.
- (B) God loves us.
- (C) Christ never compromised and in Christ, we will share in His glory
- (D) Christ has defeated death.

The sin of the congregation of Thyatira was that they:

- (A) Worshiped Jezebel.
- (B) Loved the pleasures of the world.
- (C) Compromised their trust in God.
- (D) Both A and B

The congregation of Thyatira were:

- (A) People who did many good deeds and works.
- (B) People who feared the second death.
- (C) People who were afraid of suffering.
- (D) People who practiced adultery.

The blazing eyes of the Son of God were a symbol of His:

- (A) Love for them.
- (B) Seeing their sins of a compromising life.
- (C) Wisdom
- (D) Both A and B

The illustration used by the pastor to begin the sermon was:

- (A) He read an article about Marriage.
- (B) He read articles about both Senator Obama and Mc Cain.
- (C) He read an article about the morning star.
- (D) Both A and C

In the sermon, the relationship between the world today and the people of Thyatira was:

- (A) The fear of poverty.
- (B) The atmosphere of fear.
- (C) The Compromise of God's Holy Word.
- (D) The fear of death.

In the sermon, the pastor gave a personal story of his:

- (A) Standing on sand.
- (B) His own fears.
- (C) His eyes.
- (D) His own times of suffering.

In the sermon, the morning star was symbol of Christ's:

- (A) Victory.
- (B) Authority.
- (C) Power.
- (D) Glory.

The one who spoke to the church of Thyatira was :

- (A) The one who loves glory.
- (B) The one who suffered poverty.
- (C) The one who defeated Jezebel.
- (D) The one who rules all nations.

-----  
Check the feelings you felt during the sermon.

- \_\_\_ Pride
- \_\_\_ Shame
- \_\_\_ Guilt
- \_\_\_ Anger
- \_\_\_ Peace
- \_\_\_ Love
- \_\_\_ Joy
- \_\_\_ Hope
- \_\_\_ None of the Above
- \_\_\_ Other feelings

Please describe. \_\_\_\_\_

Rate how the personal story of the preacher helped you relate to the sermon better:  
(not at all), (neither more or less), (some ), (very much)

Rate how the preacher proclaimed the sermon in a logical manner :  
(not at all), (neither more or less), (some ), (very much)

Rate how the preacher made you feel that he was speaking directly to you.  
(not at all), (neither more or less), (some ), (very much)

Throughout the sermon I felt a relationship with the other members of Our Redeemer.  
(not at all), (neither more or less), (some ), (very much)

Throughout the sermon I felt a relationship with the community of Greenville.  
(not at all), (neither more or less), (some ), (very much)

Additional comments: \_\_\_\_\_.

I have attended \_\_\_ pre-sermon Bible studies.

Please circle the **best** answer. Circle only **one**.

I went to the **PERGAMUM pre-sermon Bible study** for this survey. (Yes) (No)

The main idea of the sermon was:

- (A) Christ stands with the sword and gives us His name.
- (B) God is our master.
- (C) Christ will share in His glory
- (D) Christ served only one master and He declares us innocent, even though we have served two masters.

The sin of the congregation of Pergamum was that they:

- (A) Worshipped Antipas.
- (B) Served two masters and followed the teachings of Nicolaitans.
- (C) Compromised their trust in God.
- (D) Both A and B

The congregation of Pergamum were:

- (A) People who did many good deeds and works.
- (B) People who followed Antipas.
- (C) People who had not denied the faith.
- (D) People who practiced idolatry.

The sharp two-edged sword was a symbol of :

- (A) Strength.
- (B) Judgment.
- (C) Death.
- (D) Power

The illustration used by the pastor to begin the sermon was:

- (A) He read an article about swords.
- (B) He read articles about Reformation.
- (C) He read an article about Luther and the sword of judgment.
- (D) Both A and C

In the sermon, the relationship between the world today and the people of Pergamum was:

- (A) We have a fear of death.
- (B) We have an atmosphere of fear.
- (C) We serve two masters.
- (D) The fear of the government.

In the sermon, the pastor gave a personal story of his:

- (A) Collection of swords.
- (B) Own fears.
- (C) Own struggle with serving two masters.
- (D) Own suffering.

In the sermon, pastor told a story about :

- (A) The man with two swords.
- (B) The boy with one stone.
- (C) The woman with a new name.
- (D) The girl with two quarters.

The one who spoke to the church of Pergamum promised if they would repent they would receive a:

- (A) New name.
- (B) A white stone.
- (C) The hidden manna.
- (D) All the above.

-----  
Check the feelings you felt during the sermon.

- \_\_\_ Pride
- \_\_\_ Shame
- \_\_\_ Guilt
- \_\_\_ Anger
- \_\_\_ Peace
- \_\_\_ Love
- \_\_\_ Joy
- \_\_\_ Hope
- \_\_\_ None of the Above
- \_\_\_ Other feelings

Please describe. \_\_\_\_\_

Rate how the personal story of the preacher helped you relate to the sermon better:  
(not at all), (neither more or less), (some ), (very much)

Rate how the preacher proclaimed the sermon in a logical manner :  
(not at all), (neither more or less), (some ), (very much)

Rate how the preacher made you feel that he was speaking directly to you.  
(not at all), (neither more or less), (some ), (very much)

Throughout the sermon I felt a relationship with the other members of Our Redeemer.  
(not at all), (neither more or less), (some ), (very much)

Throughout the sermon I felt a relationship with the community of Greenville.  
(not at all), (neither more or less), (some ), (very much)

Additional comments: \_\_\_\_\_.

I have attended \_\_\_ pre-sermon Bible studies.

Please circle the **best** answer. Circle only **one**.

I went to the **SARDIS pre-sermon Bible study** for this survey. (Yes) (No)

The main idea of the sermon was:

- (A) The one who has the seven Spirits and stars makes the dead alive.
- (B) God raises the dead.
- (C) Christ is the victor over death.
- (D) Christ served us in His death and resurrection.

The sin of the congregation of Sardis was that they were:

- (A) Proud.
- (B) Lazy.
- (C) Rich.
- (D) Both A and C.

The congregation of Sardis were:

- (A) People who did many good works.
- (B) People who followed Zeus.
- (C) People who were spiritually dead.
- (D) People who practiced idolatry.

The seven Spirits of Christ were a symbol of :

- (A) The fullness of the Holy Spirit.
- (B) The gifts of the Holy Spirit.
- (C) The love of the Holy Spirit.
- (D) The power of the Holy Spirit.

The Bible story used by the pastor to begin the sermon was:

- (A) Nicodemus visits with Jesus.
- (B) Ezekiel's valley of dried bones.
- (C) The Spirit and Elijah.
- (D) Jesus giving up His Spirit.

In the sermon, the relationship between our sinful nature and the people of Sardis is that:

- (A) We too are rebellious to Christ.
- (B) We are prideful.
- (C) We serve two masters.
- (D) We are spiritually lazy.

In the sermon, the pastor gave a personal story of his:

- (A) Struggle with death.
- (B) Soiled clothes.
- (C) Own hunger for wealth.
- (D) Own suffering.

In the sermon, the gift of baptism was represented by:

- (A) The sevenfold Spirit.
- (B) A funeral pall.
- (C) A white garment.
- (D) Both B and C.

The one who spoke to the church of Sardis promised if they would repent they would:

- (A) Have their name written in the Book of Life.
- (B) Wear a white garment.
- (C) Be strengthened for service.
- (D) Both A and B.

-----  
Check the feelings you felt during the sermon.

- \_\_\_ Pride
- \_\_\_ Shame
- \_\_\_ Guilt
- \_\_\_ Anger
- \_\_\_ Peace
- \_\_\_ Love
- \_\_\_ Joy
- \_\_\_ Hope
- \_\_\_ None of the Above
- \_\_\_ Other feelings

Please describe. \_\_\_\_\_

Rate how the personal story of the preacher helped you relate to the sermon better:  
(not at all), (neither more or less), (some ), (very much)

Rate how the preacher proclaimed the sermon in a logical manner :  
(not at all), (neither more or less), (some ), (very much)

Rate how the preacher made you feel that he was speaking directly to you.  
(not at all), (neither more or less), (some ), (very much)

Throughout the sermon I felt a relationship with the other members of Our Redeemer.  
(not at all), (neither more or less), (some ), (very much)

Throughout the sermon I felt a relationship with the community of Greenville.  
(not at all), (neither more or less), (some ), (very much)

Additional comments: \_\_\_\_\_.



I have attended \_\_\_ pre-sermon Bible studies.

Please circle the **best** answer. Circle only **one**.

I went to the **PHILADELPHIA pre-sermon Bible study** for this survey. (Yes) (No)

Christ came to the church of Philadelphia having the:

- (A) Key of Zion.
- (B) Key to the closed door.
- (C) Key of David.
- (D) Crown of Life.

The sins the congregation of Philadelphia struggled with was that they :

- (A) Were proud.
- (B) Loved money.
- (C) Were content.
- (D) Missed golden opportunities to witness.

The city of Philadelphia struggled with:

- (A) Famine.
- (B) Poverty.
- (C) Drought.
- (D) Earthquakes.

The open door that God had given the congregation of Philadelphia was:

- (A) The cities commercial importance.
- (B) Gift of the Holy Spirit.
- (C) The love of God.
- (D) There vast recourses.

The Illustration used by the pastor was:

- (A) Mount Rushmore.
- (B) The Jefferson Monument.
- (C) The Lincoln Memorial.
- (D) Luther's statue.

In the sermon, the relationship between our sinful nature and the people of Philadelphia is that:

- (A) We too, are rebellious to Christ.
- (B) We are prideful.
- (C) We choose not to witness.
- (D) We are spiritually lazy.

In the sermon, the pastor told about an experience of:

- (A) Preaching.
- (B) Witnessing.
- (C) Studying.
- (D) Praying.

The hope for Philadelphia was that Christ is:

- (A) The Solid Rock..
- (B) The One who lives.
- (C) The Lamb of God.
- (D) The Faithful Witness.

The one who spoke to the church of Philadelphia promised if they would repent they would:

- (A) Have their name written in the Book of Life.
- (B) Wear a white garment.
- (C) Become a pillar in God's temple.
- (D) Both A and B.

-----  
Check the feelings you felt during the sermon.

- \_\_\_ Pride
- \_\_\_ Shame
- \_\_\_ Guilt
- \_\_\_ Anger
- \_\_\_ Peace
- \_\_\_ Love
- \_\_\_ Joy
- \_\_\_ Hope
- \_\_\_ None of the Above
- \_\_\_ Other feelings

Please describe. \_\_\_\_\_

Rate how the personal story of the preacher helped you relate to the sermon better:  
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(not at all), (neither more or less), (some ), (very much)

Additional comments: \_\_\_\_\_.

I have attended \_\_\_\_ pre-sermon Bible studies.

Please circle the **best** answer. Circle only **one**.

I went to the **LAODICEA pre-sermon Bible study** for this survey. (Yes) (No)

Christ came to the church of Laodicea as the:

- (A) Halleluiah.
- (B) Amen.
- (C) Praise of Kings.
- (D) Alpha and Omega.

The sins the congregation of Laodicea struggled with was that they:

- (A) Were rich and wealthy.
- (B) Practiced idolatry.
- (C) Were proud.
- (D) Missed golden opportunities to witness.

The city of Laodicea built:

- (A) Bridges.
- (B) Temples.
- (C) Amphitheaters..
- (D) Aqueducts.

Christ said that the congregation of Laodicea was:

- (A) Filled with the Holy Spirit.
- (B) Mission minded.
- (C) Lukewarm.
- (D) Fearful.

The Illustration used by the pastor to introduce the sermon was:

- (A) The silver mines.
- (B) The diamonds of Africa.
- (C) The riches of the world.
- (D) The gold in Colorado.

In the sermon, the relationship between our sinful nature and the people of Laodicea is that:

- (A) We too, focus on the riches of this world.
- (B) We are proud.
- (C) We choose not to witness.
- (D) We are spiritually lazy.

In the sermon, the pastor told about an experience of:

- (A) Preaching to those in prison.
- (B) Witnessing.
- (C) Sheering sheep.
- (D) Praying for the lost

The hope for Philadelphia was that Christ is:

- (A) The Solid Rock..
- (B) The One who lives.
- (C) The Lamb of God.
- (D) The Faithful Witness.

The one who spoke to the church of Laodicea promised if they would repent they would:

- (A) Have their name written in the Book of Life.
- (B) Wear a white crown.
- (C) Sit with God on His throne.
- (D) Both A and B.

-----  
Check the feelings you felt during the sermon.

- \_\_\_ Pride
- \_\_\_ Shame
- \_\_\_ Guilt
- \_\_\_ Anger
- \_\_\_ Peace
- \_\_\_ Love
- \_\_\_ Joy
- \_\_\_ Hope
- \_\_\_ None of the Above
- \_\_\_ Other feelings

Please describe. \_\_\_\_\_

Rate how the personal story of the preacher helped you relate to the sermon better:  
(not at all), (neither more or less), (some ), (very much)

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(not at all), (neither more or less), (some ), (very much)

Additional comments: \_\_\_\_\_.

**APPENDIX E**

**PRE-SERMON NOTES**

**Texts:**

**O.T. –**

**Epistle –**

**Gospel –**

**What is the logical data of the texts:**

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**What emotions do I have as I read the texts.**

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Law: \_\_\_\_\_

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Gospel: \_\_\_\_\_

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**How do I apply these texts to the priesthood of believers?**

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**How do I apply these texts to the community of Greenville and beyond?**

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**What do I see in these texts that connect me to the pastor?**

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## APPENDIX F

# THE PRIESTHOOD CONNECTION

OCTOBER 2008



***He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.  
To him who overcomes, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life,  
which is in the paradise of God.  
(Revelation 2:7)***

Greetings in the name of Jesus Christ,

Dear Christian friends, for many years you have been hearing that you will be able to participate in my Major Applied Project that is the final step of my Doctor of Ministry Degree . Throughout the years, you have been patient and very supportive, as I have been going to school to prepare for this project. For this, I thank you. It is with humility and excitement that I am now able to present this project to you as my final phase of my Doctorate program. My project is called, *How a Hearer Hears a Sermon*.

Research proves that every individual hears through different filters: Logos (Logical), Ethos (Credibility of the preacher), Pathos (Emotions), Community (surrounding environment), Embodiment (how the preacher engages and enhances all filters of the hearer ). As the above text says, we should “hear what the Spirit says to the church.” With this in mind, for my project I will give seven sermons on the book of Revelation, specifically on what Christ said to the Seven Churches of Asia Minor. After each sermon, there will be a test that will give me information on how well individuals recall certain information. Please note, the only identification to each individual of the test will be if you attended one of the pre-sermon studies that will be offered four out of the seven sermons. The pre-sermon studies will be offered before four sermons and will study the Revelation text for the day, and will ask for insights on how this text relates to you based on one of the five filters mentioned above.

The Seven Churches of Asia Minor relate to us in many ways. First, they are real cities that can be seen today. Secondly, the sins that they were warned about are the same sins that we face each day of our life. Finally, the same hope and victory that the Seven Churches were given, is the same hope and victory that we are given in this day and age.

So come hear the Good News of Christ! I thank you, and I am looking forward to studying with you, as we, hear “what the Spirit says to the churches” and explore how a hearer hears a sermon.

# THE PRIESTHOOD CONNECTION



FEBRUARY 2009

***He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.  
To him who overcomes, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life,  
which is in the paradise of God.  
(Revelation 2:7)***

Greetings in the name of our beloved Savior, Jesus Christ.

Dear Christian Friends,

If this was a normal newsletter article, I would be writing to you about the love of Christ, as we our about to begin the season of Lent. However, for this month's newsletter and the following newsletters I have decided to share with you some to the information that I have found as I unpack all the data from the surveys that you so joyfully filled out for seven weeks.

Yes, I did not forget that you were so helpful with sharing your insights on those seven Sundays and Saturday nights. Once again I thank you, and I truly appreciate your information. Unlike the times when you are asked to give input and then never hear about the information, this time you are going to get the results in this and the following news letters.

The overall results were astounding. In all areas there was conclusive evidence that those who attended the pre-sermon Bible Study had the pre-suppositions set for hearing the sermon with all four filters of hearing. Those filters were logos, pathos, ethos and community. Each of these filters will be individually explained in the following newsletters.

THE  
PRIESTHOOD  
CONNECTION



MARCH 2009

*He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.  
(Revelation 2:7)*

Greetings in the name of our beloved Savior, Jesus Christ.

Dear Christian friends, as promised here is the hard data for a logos hearer.

Logos hearers are those who hear the sermon by gathering as much data and information as they can. The more they can use their rational human reason and logic the better they hear.

The following tables are just two of the fourteen logos tables that were made. These tables show the difference between those who did and did not attend the pre-sermon Bible-Study the first week.

The overall results were astounding. In all areas there was conclusive evidence that those who attended the pre-sermon Bible Study have the pre-suppositions set for hearing the sermon with all four filters of hearing. Those filters were logos, pathos, ethos and community. The other three filters will be individually explained in the future newsletters.

Week # 1 Attended Pre-Sermon Bible Study						
Question	Total Respond	Total Correct	Total Incorrect	% Correct	% Incorrect	
1	19	15	4	78.9%	21.1%	
2	19	18	1	94.7%	5.3%	
3	19	12	7	63.2%	36.8%	
4	19	17	2	89.5%	10.5%	
5	19	15	4	78.9%	21.1%	
6	19	18	1	94.7%	5.3%	
7	19	18	1	94.7%	5.3%	
8	18	17	1	94.4%	5.6%	
9	19	17	2	89.5%	10.5%	

Week # 1 Did Not Attend Pre-sermon Bible Study						
Question	Total Respond	Total Correct	Total Incorrect	% Correct	% Incorrect	
1	24	14	10	58.3%	41.7%	
2	24	14	10	58.3%	41.7%	
3	23	7	16	30.4%	69.6%	
4	24	18	6	75.0%	25.0%	
5	24	13	11	54.2%	45.8%	
6	24	19	5	79.2%	20.8%	
7	23	22	1	95.7%	4.3%	
8	23	18	5	78.3%	21.7%	
9	24	17	7	70.8%	29.2%	



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