



Dr. Mark L. Bailey

*Their biblical
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Producing a New Generation of Committed Bible Teachers

Senior Preaching Week is a great tradition at Dallas Theological Seminary, and I'm pleased to share the blessing of it with you!

Each May, our Pastoral Ministries faculty selects four students in the graduating class whose senior sermons are exemplary of the kind of dynamic, gifted, and deeply committed men who are being trained on our campus for pastoral ministry. It's tough to narrow the selection down to four preachers, but I trust you have been blessed by the choices.

These graduates are truly amazing young men. Their biblical messages came with a passion from their hearts, and as the Seminary family listened, there was a wonderful confirming sense of God's blessing on this ministry.

As a grandfather myself, I am encouraged to know that children like my granddaughter, Fiona, and my grandson, Gavin, will have godly pastors and teachers to guide them as they step out into the world to follow Christ.

My prayer for each of our senior preachers and for every student at Dallas Seminary is that they will serve Christ with such effectiveness that they can say, with the apostle Paul, "Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ" (1 Corinthians 11:1). I trust that the messages by these four outstanding Seminary graduates will encourage you to know that the next generation of God's people is in good hands!

The best part is that these are just 4 of more than 370 dedicated men and women who graduated from Dallas Seminary in 2007 and are already on their way to ministries in this country and around the world. Your prayers and financial support for Dallas Seminary are helping mold godly, effective leaders like these for a world that needs God's Word in all of its truth and power. Thank you for standing with us so faithfully in this important work.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Bailey". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Dr. Mark L. Bailey
President
Dallas Theological Seminary

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VERITAS

Equipping Christians to live by truth—veritas—from God.

The Best of
Dallas Seminary's
SENIOR
PREACHERS!

*Four Dynamic Messages
from God's Word*

DALLAS THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

SENIOR PREACHERS



Isaac Teng and his wife, Rebekah, quit their corporate banking jobs and came to Dallas Seminary from Singapore three years ago. Isaac came to know the Lord when he was lost in the jungle of Thailand during his military service days. After seeing how God changed him, Isaac wanted to do the same for those around him. They will return to Asia with the hope of impacting their generation for Christ.



Joshua Hess graduated from DTS in May and currently serves as pastor of Friendswood Baptist Church in Camby, Indiana. Josh is passionate about preaching God's Word and ministering to His people. He and his wife, Kristy, have been married for six years.



Paul Murphy is from Belfast, Northern Ireland, but he spent most of his childhood in Gran Canaria, a small Spanish island off the coast of Africa where his parents served as missionaries. Paul is the third Murphy brother to graduate from Dallas Seminary. He and his wife, Jennie, are going back to Belfast, where Paul will head a Christian alternative pub ministry—a great need in a country where the legal drinking age is just 18.



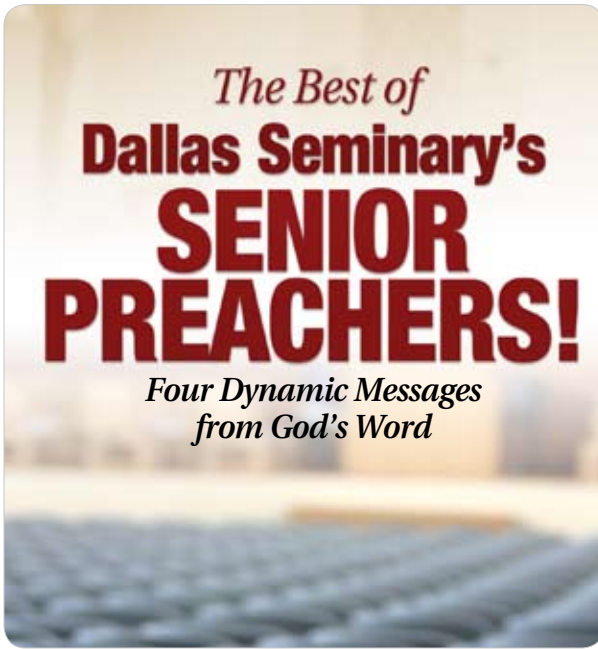
Kris Stire serves as Associate Pastor of Worship and Adult Ministries at Lakeside Bible Church in Montgomery, Texas. He and his wife, Michelle, have been married 13 years and have four children. They are being sent out as full-time missionaries to Tirana, Albania, in the summer of 2007, where Kris will teach and train pastors at Southeastern Europe Theological Seminary.

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DALLAS THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
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Veritas is a publication of Dallas Seminary for our valued friends and partners, designed to provide biblical encouragement and instruction in keeping with our strong commitment to minister to those who stand with us in prayer and financial support. We are pleased to present the messages of outstanding leaders and Bible teachers who speak during chapels and at other events, as a way of bringing you "on campus" with us and giving you the benefit of their insights. *Veritas* is also available online at our website, www.dts.edu/veritas.



You're in for a special treat with this issue of Veritas! We are presenting excerpts from the messages of four members of the Class of 2007 who were selected by the Pastoral Ministries faculty to deliver messages during Senior Preaching Week. These messages were chosen for their dynamic impact and biblical teaching—as you will read! —Editor

ISAAC TENG: *The Demands of Discipleship*

The cold air was brushing against my cheeks as we drove up the hill. The Toyota pickup truck finally came to a stop. As I jumped off the back, I was shocked by the sight before me. Against the darkening sky, I saw an old bamboo hut and behind it, a hill full of more bamboo huts. This happened almost 10 years ago when I went with three other brothers for a short-term missions trip to northern Thailand.

No one told us where we would be spending those days, so when

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—ISAAC TENG



we arrived, I was taken aback by the primitive living conditions of that village. There was no running water or electricity, and this was the first time in my life I had seen a bamboo hut. By the fourth day, I remember saying to the others, “Brothers, please pray for me. I cannot imagine if God were to call me to this place! I don’t think I will be willing to obey!”

I say that with great sadness because I have always thought of myself as a fervent disciple of Christ and claimed Jesus as the Lord of my life. But when push came to shove, I realized that He was not really Lord of my life—I was! I believe we all face challenging decisions in our life and ministry. Whether we should give up our jobs to come to DTS! Whether we should continue and sacrifice the time with our families and the pay that comes with a secular job or even a higher-paying job in another seminary. For some of us, it could mean whether we should respond to God’s call to take up the pastorate of a small church or to go overseas for missions. Or even whether we should take up greater challenges for the Lord and stretch ourselves more. The truth is we face decisions daily whether to respond as disciples of Christ or not. This decision depends on who Jesus is in our lives! What does it mean to say Jesus is the Messiah? We will attempt to answer this from Luke 9:18–27.

On this occasion we read that Jesus questioned His disciples. “ ‘Who do the crowds say I am?’ They replied, ‘Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, that one of the prophets of long ago has come back to life’ ” (vv. 18–19). After He asked them what others thought of Him, Jesus put the question directly to the disciples. “ ‘But what about you?’ he asked. ‘Who do you say I am?’ Peter answered, ‘The Christ of God’ ” (v. 20).

Maybe some of us are wondering, “So what if He is the Messiah?” Well, that leads us to the second point in verses 21–27. The recognition of the Messiah demands that we carry our crosses. It means we must respond to His call of discipleship, to be obedient to God’s Word, to put Him first. “Then he said to them all: ‘If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me’ ” (v. 23).

The Thai village in which I stayed was very poor. Strangely, at the bottom of the hill there was another village that was relatively richer. They had a lot of crops, and their dogs and chickens were fat. They even had pigs. I found out from the missionary that when he first came to this area, there was only one village—the one at the bottom of the hill. As he shared the gospel, those who converted to Christianity were chased out of their families and homes. So they moved up the hill and started building a new village from scratch. These simple, uneducated villagers understood the meaning of discipleship, and they were willing to pay the price for their faith. May the Lord help us be willing to take up our crosses! ■

JOSHUA HESS: *How to Respond to Tragic Loss*

It was the morning of July 10. There was nothing unusual about that morning until the phone rang and my mom told me that a few hours earlier, my dad, Gordon Hess, had passed away. Suddenly, my world was turned upside down.

Tragic losses. They may come suddenly or

“Our hope is in that day when Christ returns and death is vanquished once and for all.”

—JOSHUA HESS



gradually, but they all hurt. As believers in Christ, how should we respond when we are stung by tragic loss in this fallen world? To answer this question, we will look at the story of Naomi and Ruth 1:19–22.

First, we observe in verse 19 that tragedy creates an awkward environment for expressing grief. You can imagine the awkwardness for Naomi and Ruth as the women came out to see them. People have always been drawn to the “fascination” of a tragedy. And so, too often, when people grieve, others gawk. In times of tragic loss, that is frequently the context in which we will find ourselves, and we will be tempted to suppress our grief.

Second, we see in verses 20–21 that in times of tragic loss, we grieve because of our loss. Naomi grieved the loss of what she held so dear. And that’s our response too. As well it should be. Losing someone you love is like losing part of yourself. However, the pain is part of the healing process and is evidence that you truly loved the person you lost.

As Christians, we get this strange idea that death is good. While we can draw comfort from the fact that our loved one is with the Lord, we must not forget that death is bad. It is a curse that came from the Fall. Our hope as Christians is not death. Our hope is in that day when Christ returns and death is vanquished once and for all. So don’t be ashamed to grieve in times of loss.

Third, in verse 22, the author places qualifications on Naomi’s despair. First, Naomi had Ruth with her. Later we read how the Lord used Ruth to bless Naomi. So, too, we must not isolate ourselves in our grief, but rather, we must look for God’s agents of grace.

Next, we notice that Naomi returned during the barley harvest.

Later we read how the “fortuitous” timing of her return is the beginning of the process in which God created a “new” normal for her. If she will wait on God’s providence, she will find that this “new” normal is indeed good. We are wise to remember the same.

Finally, we can surmise that Naomi’s despair arose from a philosophy that too many of us live by every day. We measure God’s faithfulness by our circumstances. We must not do this, though, because God is always faithful.

Presently, I’m still grieving the loss of my dad. However, I am also waiting for God as He creates a “new” normal in my life. But more than that, I’m waiting for a time when Christ returns and this fallen world is fallen no more. In times of tragic loss, grieve well, but not without hope, for although we may not understand His ways, the God we serve is good. ■

PAUL MURPHY: *A Courageous Ministry*

Ministry can sometimes be like swimming in a pool full of alligators! It is a daunting calling with many difficulties and struggles. One of the things we are going to need in ministry is courage.

Here at Dallas Seminary we have enjoyed the delights of the “baby pool,” learning how to swim in ministry. But leaving seminary to enter full-time ministry can be a fearful experience. It can leave us at the edge of this swimming pool full of alligators, wondering whether to jump in. We wonder, “How on earth am I going to make it through? Do I have



“Godly convictions will help you stand fearlessly before overwhelming opposition.”

—PAUL MURPHY

what it takes to be a faithful minister for Christ in this dark world?” We need a courage that will help us through the struggles of ministry.

What does real courage look like in ministry? As our example, we are going to study Caleb, a forgotten hero in the Old Testament who faced many fears but didn't let them prevent him from following the Lord wholeheartedly. When Caleb comes to Joshua to claim his portion of the Promised Land, there are three things Caleb says and does that I believe can teach us how to have courage for ministry.

The first thing we learn is that a courageous ministry is fearless when rooted in godly convictions. Godly convictions will help you stand fearlessly before overwhelming opposition. Caleb experienced this when 10 of the 12 spies sent to check out the land came back with fearful reports about the inhabitants. But Caleb said, “We should go up and take possession of the land, for we can certainly do it” (Numbers 13:30). It was this conviction that allowed Caleb to stand fearlessly against the crowd and for the truth.

A second lesson is that a courageous ministry is ageless. The impressive thing about Caleb in Joshua 14:7 is not that he was 85 years old, but that he hadn't lost an ounce of his passion and vigor. He didn't take the easy way out and say, “I've played my part for God. It's time for me to stop. Give me some land I don't have to work for.” No, he keeps on going!

Age can be a crippling factor in ministry on both ends of the spectrum, whether you feel you're too old or not old enough. If you feel too old and you don't think you have what it takes anymore, take courage in Caleb's example. And if you feel too

young, take heart in Paul’s words to Timothy: “Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young” (1 Timothy 4:12).

A third lesson in courageous ministry we learn from Caleb is that courageous ministry is rewarding, regardless of the role you play. One of the striking features of the story of Caleb is his submission to Joshua as God’s leader.

Caleb could have said, “I’m the one who addressed the angry mob that day 45 years ago at Kadesh Barnea. I should be Israel’s leader.” But Caleb’s goal was not to be the next big name in Israel. The truth is that most of us will be unknowns—but all of us will be heroes in God’s eyes. So don’t be afraid to play a supporting role. ■

KRIS STIRE: *God’s Markers for Ministry*

If you and I are to have an effective teaching ministry that is grounded in God’s Word, we must be wholeheartedly committed to following three ministerial markers that we find in Ezra 7:10.

The background to Ezra’s ministry is that Israel’s rebellion against God had landed them in Babylonian slavery. Seventy years later, God began to restore them to the land of promise, and in 458 B.C., Ezra led a second group of about 5,000 Jews back to Jerusalem.

Ezra’s God-given task was to lead the Israelites by restoring the Word of God to its rightful place in their hearts and lives. Ezra 7:10 says, “For Ezra had devoted himself to the study and observance of the Law of the LORD, and to teaching its decrees and laws in Israel.”



“We should be dedicated to knowing God through His Word and renewing our minds daily.”

—KRIS STIRE

Verses 8–9 tell us that Ezra completed the dangerous journey from Babylon to Jerusalem because “the gracious hand of his God” was upon him. Verse 10 gives the reason God’s sovereignly good hand was protecting and blessing Ezra. He had “devoted himself” to his teaching ministry. This phrase conveys the idea of being firmly committed to a course of action with unwavering resolve. Ezra was highly disciplined and wholeheartedly committed to following all three of these ministerial markers.

The first marker of a passionate teacher is the discipline of Bible study. Ezra didn’t merely study God’s law when it was convenient; he was wholeheartedly committed to knowing it, which involved long and intense hours of disciplined study.

We must guard against the temptation of a shrinking study time, for it will surely result in shrinking power in our personal life and in the pulpit. We as teachers should be dedicated to knowing God through His Word and renewing our minds daily. Do you delight in the Word of God? If so, Scripture will renew your mind, be on your heart, and flow from your lips.

The second marker of a passionate teacher is the discipline of Bible application. Ezra had also set his heart to practice the Word. For Ezra, it was not enough to be a diligent student of God’s Word. Ezra disciplined himself to passionately apply the law of the Lord in his own life.

Why would anyone want to follow a teacher who doesn’t practice what he teaches? We are good at applying God’s truth to other people, especially our spouses, but it’s much more difficult to apply God’s truth to our own life.

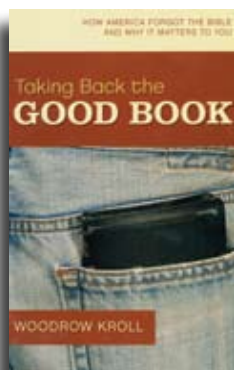
The third marker of a passionate teacher is the discipline of Bible teaching. We read that “Ezra had devoted himself . . . to teaching [God’s] decrees and laws in Israel.” One day, our journey will come to an end. What path will you have traveled? Where will you lead those who follow you in ministry?

Apply what you teach. If you do this, your teaching ministry will stay grounded in the Word and the Lord will use you as He used Ezra to accomplish great things for His name and His glory. ■

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Taking Back the Good Book

How America Forgot the Bible and Why it Matters to You



Dr. Woodrow Kroll, Bible teacher on the venerable radio program *Back to the Bible*, is not only one of America's most gifted and passionate teachers of God's Word. He also has a great desire to see our nation's growing "Bible illiteracy" reversed so that lives all across this country will be revolutionized by the truths of Scripture.

That's the passion behind Dr. Kroll's new book, *Taking Back the Good Book: How America Forgot the Bible and Why It Matters to You*. He says that America faces a great crisis in this matter because we are losing our collective knowledge of the Book that has played an integral role in developing and forming our great nation.

Taking Back the Good Book explores how America has developed an apathetic—sometimes hostile—attitude toward biblical principles. Dr. Kroll also offers solid ideas to counter this troubling trend. His book is full of suggestions to help Christians develop a personal strategy to fuel their passion for and understanding of God's Word . . . which in turn will energize us to impact our nation—and the world—for Christ!

TO RECEIVE THIS RESOURCE AS OUR THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT OF DALLAS SEMINARY, USE THE ENCLOSED REPLY CARD (FOR SUBSCRIBERS) OR CALL 800-387-9673 x3722. THANK YOU!