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**THE IMPORTANCE OF BIBLICAL
PREACHING IN THE THOUGHT OF THE
GREAT REFORMER
MARTIN LUTHER**

PhD Thesis Summary

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Table of contents

Introduction.....	8
Definition and framing and the originality of the research topic.....	8
Relevance of the research topic.....	10
Objectives and methodology of the paper.....	11
1. Historical context of Martin Luther’s life and homiletical activity.....	14
1.1. Social context.....	14
1.2. Political context.....	17
1.3. Spiritual context.....	18
1.3.1. The decline and abuses of the Catholic Church.....	19
1.3.2. Pre-reformers.....	21
1.3.2.1. John Wycliffe.....	21
1.3.2.2. Jan Hus.....	22
1.3.2.3. Girolamo Savonarola.....	23
1.4. Cultural context – the Renaissance.....	24
1.4.1. Contribution of the humanist movement to the reform of preaching.....	24
1.4.2. The academic revolution and its impact on preaching.....	25
1.4.3. The impact of print technology on preaching in the Reformation era.....	28
1.5. Preaching in Luther’s time.....	31
1.6. Influences on Luther’s preaching and theology.....	39
1.6.1. Augustine of Hippo.....	39
1.6.1.1. Augustine’s influence on Martin Luther’s theology.....	42
1.6.1.2. Appeal to Augustine in supporting the authority of Scripture in Luther’s thought – between rhetoric and conviction.....	49
1.6.1.3. Augustine and the formation of hermeneutical principles in Luther’s theology.....	51
1.6.2. Bernard of Clairvaux.....	53
1.6.2.1. Bernard’s influence on Luther’s Christology.....	55
1.6.2.2. Bernard’s influence on Luther’s Christocentric preaching.....	59
1.7. Conclusions.....	64
2. Martin Luther: the man and the preacher.....	68
2.1. Overview of modern research on Martin Luther’s preaching.....	68

2.2. Biography of Martin Luther.....	74
2.2.1. Family and childhood.....	74
2.2.2. Educational path.....	75
2.2.3. Theological and spiritual formation.....	77
2.2.4. The evangelical experience.....	79
2.3. Martin Luther's homiletical activity.....	83
2.3.1. Theological and homiletical journey.....	84
2.3.2. Frequency of preaching.....	93
2.3.3. Typology of preaching.....	96
2.3.4. Analysis of the homiletical profile.....	100
2.3.5. Analysis of the process of transmitting and publishing Martin Luther's sermons.....	103
2.3.6. Martin Luther and the training of preachers.....	109
2.4. Conclusions.....	111
3. Martin Luther's perspective on the Bible.....	115
3.1. The translation of the Bible.....	115
3.2. Luther's theology about the Bible.....	119
3.2.1. The authority of Scripture.....	121
3.2.2. The incarnate Gospel: Christ as the revelatory center of the Bible.....	124
3.2.3. Applied Gospel: The role of the Holy Spirit in receiving the Word.....	127
3.2.4. Interpretation of the Bible.....	128
3.2.5. The canon of the Bible.....	130
3.3. Conclusions.....	134
4. Martin Luther's perspective on preaching.....	137
4.1. Defining preaching.....	138
4.1.1. Preaching represents the Word of God.....	139
4.1.2. Preaching is the living expression of God's voice.....	142
4.1.3. Preaching is the meeting space between divine revelation and the preacher's office.....	146
4.1.4. Preaching is the vehicle through which the Holy Spirit is manifested.....	148
4.1.5. Preaching is the active manifestation of God's work in the world.....	150
4.1.6. Preaching is a spiritual struggle.....	151

4.1.7. Theological synthesis on the significance of preaching in Martin Luther...	153
4.2. The preacher's profile.....	154
4.2.1. The preacher's calling (vocatio)	154
4.2.2. The preacher as a vector of Christ's kingdom in the world.....	158
4.2.3. The preacher as an instrument of the Word of God (servus verbi).....	160
4.2.4. The preacher empowered by the Holy Spirit.....	162
4.2.5. The importance of the preacher's office.....	164
4.2.6. The imperatives of the preaching vocation.....	166
4.2.6.1. Integrity.....	166
4.2.6.2. Humility.....	169
4.2.6.3. Deep academic cultivation.....	172
4.2.6.4. Confidence.....	174
4.2.6.5. Diligence.....	175
4.2.6.6. Reverence.....	177
4.2.6.7. Effectiveness.....	178
4.2.7. The preacher's priorities.....	181
4.2.8. The preacher's rewards.....	182
4.2.8.1. Eternal glory.....	182
4.2.8.2. Suffering and ingratitude from fellow humans.....	182
4.2.8.3. Respect received from the audience.	183
4.2.8.4. Financial and material support.....	183
4.2.8.5. Intercessory prayer from one's peers.....	184
4.2.9. Theological synthesis regarding the preacher's role in Martin Luther.....	184
4.3. Characteristics of preaching.....	185
4.3.1. Preaching must be biblical.....	186
4.3.2. Preaching must be Christocentric.....	188
4.3.3. Preaching must present the Gospel.....	192
4.3.4. Preaching must teach and motivate.....	197
4.3.5. Preaching must be clear.....	198
4.3.6. Theological synthesis on the essential characteristics of preaching in Martin Luther.....	201
4.4. Conclusions.....	202

5. Homiletical practice in Martin Luther.....	204
5.1. The exegesis of the biblical text in Martin Luther.....	205
5.1.1. Philological preparation.....	205
5.1.2. Grammatical exegesis.....	207
5.1.3. Theological exegesis.....	210
5.1.4. Improvised exegesis.....	211
5.2. Martin Luther's hermeneutics.....	212
5.2.1. Allegorical interpretation.....	212
5.2.2. Hermeneutical maturation.....	213
5.2.3. Evangelical cores.....	216
5.3. Structuring the sermon in Martin Luther.....	217
5.3.1. Structuring the sermon outline.....	217
5.3.1.1. The sermon introduction.....	218
5.3.1.2. The central idea/theme of the sermon.....	218
5.3.1.3. The sermon's structure.....	220
5.3.2. The use of illustrations.....	221
5.3.3. Making applications.....	223
5.3.4. Major theological themes in Martin Luther's preaching.....	227
5.3.4.1. The Lord Jesus Christ.....	227
5.3.4.2. Prayer.....	229
5.3.4.3. Grace.....	231
5.3.4.4. Faith.....	233
5.3.4.5. God's love.....	235
5.3.4.6. Righteousness.....	237
5.4. Rhetorical elements in Martin Luther's preaching.....	239
5.4.1. Use of antitheses.....	239
5.4.2. Imaginary dialogues.....	240
5.5. The reform of preaching in Martin Luther's practice.....	241
5.6. Conclusions.....	243
Final Conclusions	245

This doctoral thesis entitled “*The Importance of Biblical Preaching in the Thinking of the Great Reformer Martin Luther*” seeks to demonstrate how Luther restored preaching to the center of church life, emphasizing that the proclamation of the Word is the only means by which people receive the grace of God and grow in faith. The present research aims to outline a theology of biblical and Christocentric preaching, as it is reflected in Luther’s vision, for whom the proclamation of the Word constitutes the central act of ecclesial ministry and the privileged means through which God speaks to people.

The study highlights the historical and cultural context of the Reformation—marked by corruption within the medieval Church, socio-political changes, and the rise of the printing press—in order to explain why sermons became so influential and how they encouraged believers to access Scripture in their own language. Beyond the reform of ecclesiastical structures and the controversy surrounding papal authority, Luther insisted that the Bible must be the supreme norm in faith and practice, and that expository, Christ-centered preaching is the method by which the Gospel reaches the hearts of people.

The research brings to light the hermeneutical principles that grounded Luther’s theology: *Sola Scriptura*, the interpretation of the sacred text in the light of Christ, and the fundamental distinction between Law and Gospel. In his view, preaching is not limited to a simple exposition of a biblical passage, but becomes a sacred act through which the Holy Spirit works for the salvation and transformation of believers. The author analyzes, on the one hand, the factors that shaped the reformer’s homiletic style (his monastic life, patristic influences, scholastic formation, as well as the social contexts of the time), and on the other hand, identifies the key elements of Luther’s sermons: clear structure, faithful exegesis, accessible and applicable language, dynamic rhetoric, and pastoral engagement. The study also discusses the tensions created by the transition from oral preaching to printed form and the impact of this process on the widespread dissemination of Reformation ideas. Thus, an integrated picture emerges, linking major theological themes (justification by faith, the supremacy of Christ in the Church, the working of grace in the human heart) to the very practice of preaching.

Ultimately, the study underscores the relevance and urgency of Luther’s legacy for today’s Church: in a context where preaching often risks becoming either a

humanistic discourse or a lecture devoid of profound biblical content, a return to the authentic proclamation of Scripture and the redemptive message of Christ proves essential for the vitality and relevance of contemporary Christian communities.

Martin Luther's preaching, considered the cornerstone of the Protestant Reformation, cannot be properly understood without careful historical contextualization. It was the product of an age marked by profound social, political, spiritual, and cultural transformations, which shaped not only the form of religious discourse but also the receptivity of the public to that discourse. The Reformer's homiletic activity emerged and developed in an environment of accumulated tensions, rising hopes, and deep questions about the meaning of life and humanity's relationship with God.

On a social level, 14th- and 15th-century Europe experienced a restructuring of traditional frameworks. Accelerated urbanization, the rise of artisans and merchants, and social crises caused by poverty and inequality led to changes in lifestyles and mentalities. Cities became centers of cultural and spiritual exchange, where ideas circulated rapidly and where preaching became a privileged means of education, information, and critique of the established order. The preacher, in this context, was more than a doctrinal spokesman: he was a public educator, a moral model, and a voice for the community.

In these conditions, German and Swiss cities developed preacher's offices funded by municipal authorities, independent of parochial clergy and dedicated exclusively to preaching. These institutions transformed preaching into a permanent, structured, and professional activity, paving the way for a new understanding of ecclesiastical ministry—one centered on the Word and on the active involvement of the community. Preaching began to be perceived not only as a liturgical act, but also as an exercise in public authority, becoming a means of ethical, spiritual, and even political formation.

The political context of the Holy Roman Empire amplified this dynamic. The fragmentation of central authority and the weakening of imperial power created a space in which reformist ideas could be expressed and propagated without systematic suppression. Tensions between the papacy and German princes, coupled with growing opposition to Rome's financial demands, transformed religious discourse into a platform for political protest. Luther benefited from the support of local leaders who, beyond their religious convictions, saw in the Reformation an opportunity to affirm their autonomy

and identity. Thus, Reformation preaching was not only a theological proclamation but also a symbolic form of resistance against centralized and often corrupt authority.

On a spiritual level, the crisis of the Catholic Church was obvious. Systemic abuses—simony, nepotism, pluralism, lack of episcopal supervision, and the sale of indulgences—eroded believers’ trust in the Church hierarchy. In this climate, concern for personal salvation and the desire for unmediated access to God’s Word gained unprecedented momentum. Popular religious practices, such as pilgrimages or devotions, no longer provided real inner peace in a society marked by uncertainty and fear of eternal damnation.

In this context, preaching became the channel through which people sought hope and clarity. Confronting an official religiosity that had become mechanical, Reformation preaching offered a simple yet radical message: salvation is by grace, not for sale; God demands faith, not performance; the Gospel brings freedom, not burden. Luther responded to the deep needs of his era by offering a biblical, personalized, Christ-centered discourse built around the theme of justification by faith. This message sparked a spiritual revolution not only through its content but also through its form—preaching becoming the place of encounter between sacred text and everyday life.

The Renaissance and humanism contributed decisively to this transformation. Encouraging the study of ancient texts and promoting reading in original languages, humanists such as Erasmus created the intellectual framework for a return to the sources of Scripture. Through philological method and emphasis on the literal meaning of the text, humanism offered the Reformer the necessary tools to move beyond allegorical readings and scholastic speculation. Inspired by this new approach, Reformation preaching was characterized by exegetical rigor, rhetorical clarity, and profound pastoral sensitivity. Not coincidentally, Luther assumed both the role of professor and preacher, combining academic authority with the spiritual experience of the pulpit.

Another key element in the success of Luther’s preaching was the invention of the printing press. This technology, emerging just decades before the Reformation, enabled the rapid dissemination of reformist ideas. Sermons, pamphlets, and theological treatises were printed in German in accessible, easy-to-distribute formats. Printing transformed preaching from a local event into a widespread message with regional and

continental impact. As a result, preaching became a public, mass phenomenon with a strong formative and mobilizing character.

The Reformers understood the strategic value of printing and used it to launch a true media campaign. Unlike previous eras, where preaching was ephemeral and dependent on the preacher's physical presence, now the spoken word became printed word—capable of traveling, persuading, and inspiring from afar. This democratization of access to theology encouraged not only literacy but also the emergence of a new religious consciousness in which the believer was encouraged to read and interpret Scripture independently.

Within this historical and theological equation, the influence of the Church Fathers—especially Augustine and Bernard of Clairvaux—on Luther is of paramount importance. Augustine provided the dogmatic framework of grace doctrine and a realistic vision of original sin and humanity's inability to contribute to its own salvation. From Augustine, Luther learned to articulate the theology of justification not as a reward for deeds but as a gift of God through Christ. Even though Luther later moved beyond Augustine's vision in some respects, he remained faithful to its spirit, frequently invoking Augustine's authority to support his own positions.

Bernard of Clairvaux, on the other hand, inspired Luther in the homiletic and spiritual spheres. Admired for his Christ-centered style, pastoral sensitivity, and ability to preach the Gospel accessibly and profoundly, Bernard became for Luther a living model of preacher and theologian. Luther acknowledged that Bernard, more than other Church Fathers, had managed "to preach Christ in the most delightful way." This acknowledgment reveals Luther's preference for a living theology—one that touches the believer's heart, not merely informs the mind.

Therefore, Martin Luther's preaching did not emerge in a vacuum, but as the expression of an era undergoing accelerated transformation. It synthesized social tensions, spiritual aspirations, ecclesiastical crisis, and the cultural dynamism of the 15th–16th centuries. At the same time, it remained deeply rooted in the tradition of the early Church, yet knew how to speak to its own generation in an accessible, compelling, and transformative language. In this sense, Lutheran preaching became not only an instrument of the Reformation but also one of the most powerful ways of proclaiming the Gospel in a changing world.

The second chapter, dedicated to Martin Luther—viewed both as a man and as a preacher—aimed to offer an integrated image of his personality, articulating biographical, theological, and homiletic aspects in a coherent narrative that explains the force with which this Reformer marked the history of Western Christianity. Far from being just an “intellectual project” or a mere product of his historical context, Luther was a preacher formed through a profound existential journey marked by fear, spiritual searching, theological labor, and revelatory insight. Therefore, his preaching cannot be understood without knowing the man Luther—with his wounds, his questions, and his passions.

At the forefront of this portrait is the biographical context of Luther’s childhood and youth, shaped by strict parenting, academic discipline, and the social aspirations of his father, Hans. Though originally destined for a legal career, Martin was overwhelmed by deep inner unrest and dramatically chose monastic life. His entry into the Augustinian Order—often seen as an impulsive act—was in reality the outcome of a long internal struggle. This moment marked not only the beginning of a life of renunciation, but also the start of an intense quest for a God whom Luther could not love but only fear. Instead of consolation, monastic experience deepened his spiritual frustration. However, under the guidance of Johann von Staupitz, Luther began to discover in Scripture a different image of God—one that would redefine his entire theological and pastoral vision.

The turning point—known in historiography as the “tower experience”—occurred during his study of the Epistle to the Romans, especially verse 1:17. The rediscovery of justification by faith (*sola fide*), understood as God’s grace freely given to the sinner, was the founding event that transformed his personal crisis into a theological revolution. For Luther, the Gospel was no longer a new Law demanding moral performance, but good news of salvation offered without merit, in Christ. This revelation became the center of his preaching and the point of convergence for all his activity.

It has been demonstrated that preaching was not a secondary role in Luther’s biography but an essential component of his theological identity. As early as 1512, upon his appointment in the Wittenberg monastery, Luther began preaching regularly. Though initially reluctant and overwhelmed by the responsibility, he quickly became a preacher

with a powerful voice, able to articulate profound theological content in accessible language. The transformation of his homiletic style—from scholastic, abstract, moralistic preaching to expository, Christocentric, and pastoral preaching—reflects both his theological evolution and his conviction that only the Word of God has the power to change lives.

Luther preached intensively and regularly, at a pace that is almost unmatched: over 4,000 sermons in his lifetime, sometimes delivering as many as four in one day, especially during Lent. The year 1528 is particularly notable, with 195 sermons delivered in 145 days. This extraordinary commitment should not be seen merely as discipline, but as the expression of a deep conviction: that the sermon is the privileged place of encounter between humanity and God.

One of the essential traits of Luther's preaching is his understanding of the sermon as an act of proclamation, not merely instruction. Preaching, in his view, was a form of "living exegesis"—not just the explanation of a text, but a direct, relevant, and vital application of the Word to the life of the listener. In this sense, Luther made no strict distinction between the pulpit and the university lectern: both were spaces for proclaiming Scripture. To preach was not to recite ideas but to transmit the grace of God, with the preacher serving as an instrument of the Spirit, not simply a teacher of religion.

Luther's homiletic work was also supported by the technological advancement of printing, which allowed his sermons to spread beyond Wittenberg. Still, the process of transcribing, editing, and publishing his sermons was not without challenges. The stenographers who recorded the sermons, the editors who revised them, and the unauthorized re-publications created a heterogeneous textual corpus. Despite these limitations, the impact of Luther's sermons was substantial. They circulated widely, were translated, reproduced, and became training material for other preachers.

A detailed analysis was also provided on the types of sermons Luther preached: thematic, expository, doctrinal, catechetical, polemical, or occasional. This variety demonstrates his impressive ability to adapt to context while maintaining a unified vision in which all forms of preaching had a single goal: proclaiming Christ as Savior and strengthening faith in the heart of the listener.

Another valuable aspect analyzed was Luther's contribution to the formation of preachers. Although he did not write a formal homiletic manual, his sermons, postils,

and collaboration with Melancthon provided a solid foundation for a model of evangelical preaching. Luther was not only a prolific preacher but also a shaper of consciences—a model of how Scripture should be preached in a biblical, accessible, and grace-centered manner.

In conclusion, the chapter showed that Luther cannot be understood without his sermons, and the sermons cannot be understood without his life and theology. Between the tormented man in the monastery of Erfurt and the convinced preacher in the pulpit of Wittenberg lies a line of theological and existential continuity: the Gospel freed his conscience, and the sermon became his vocation to bring freedom to others. Preaching, for Luther, was not merely a duty, but an act of faith, a form of service, and a prophetic calling. Through the power of the spoken Word, Luther transformed the pulpit into a place of grace proclamation, and the preacher into a herald of freedom in Christ. This, perhaps, is the greatest gift Luther offered the Church: the recovery of preaching as the center of Christian life and the reaffirmation of the Gospel as the power of God for salvation.

The chapter dedicated to Martin Luther's view of the Bible highlighted a fundamental dimension of the Reformer's theology: the conviction that Scripture is the sole and absolute authority in matters of faith, life, and salvation. Luther conceived the entire Reformation as a return to the Word of God—accessible, translated, proclaimed, and lived out within the community. He did not regard the Bible as a mere sacred text, but as the living revelation of God, possessing the power to transform lives and restore the Church.

One of his most revolutionary acts was translating the Bible into German in three stages: the New Testament (1522), the Old Testament (1522–1534, with a team of collaborators), and the complete revision of the Bible by 1546. Luther did not pursue a mere philological transfer, but a theological proclamation. He wanted the people to have direct access to the sacred text, in a living language, where the message of salvation could be understood and internalized. The translation was accompanied by an extensive hermeneutical framework: prefaces, glosses, and a theological ranking of books based on the clarity of their message regarding salvation.

Doctrinally, Luther strongly upheld the principle of *sola Scriptura*, according to which only Scripture (*norma normans*) has supreme authority over the Church and the

believer's life. The Church, councils, and tradition hold only a secondary role, one that is derivative and conditioned by their fidelity to Scripture. During his disputes with Rome, Luther asserted unequivocally that neither papal authority nor church councils could override or correct the Word of God. On the contrary, all teaching must be subject to the judgment of Scripture.

A distinctive feature of Luther's hermeneutics is the centrality of Christ in Scripture. The entire Bible—from Genesis to Revelation—must be read Christocentrically, with Christ as its theme, center, and fulfillment. He formulated this principle by stating, "All of Scripture points to Christ." This view led to a clear distinction between Law and Gospel, both of which are parts of Scripture but with different theological functions: the Law condemns sin and reveals the need for salvation, while the Gospel offers God's grace through Christ. The Law is thus a tutor leading to Christ, and the Gospel is the proclamation of God's gift of forgiveness and eternal life.

Another important aspect is Luther's understanding of preaching. For him, a sermon is not just an exposition of a text but the very place where Christ becomes present through the Holy Spirit. The preached Word is not merely heard—it becomes the "sacrament of hearing," an epiphany of grace. To preach means to bring the living Word that saves into the present moment, for the community. Thus, Christ is present not only in the sacraments but also in the proclamation of the Gospel—in a real and saving way.

The work of the Holy Spirit plays a crucial role in this vision: without the Spirit, the Word remains external; but through the Spirit, the Word becomes alive and transformative. Luther rejected both Roman authoritarianism (which placed tradition above Scripture) and mystical spiritualism (which sought revelation outside of the written text). He insisted that the Spirit always works through external means: the written, preached, and heard Word.

Another notable contribution of Luther was his reevaluation of the biblical canon. He preserved the traditional canon but made a theological distinction between books. He considered certain writings—such as Romans, John, and 1 Peter—as more clearly expressing the Gospel and the doctrine of justification by faith, while books like James and Revelation were viewed with some hesitation, due to their lesser emphasis, in his view, on the message of salvation through Christ. Luther referred to the Epistle to the

Romans as “the purest Gospel,” recommending its reading and memorization as a daily spiritual exercise.

Therefore, Martin Luther’s vision of Scripture had a tremendous theological, pastoral, and cultural impact. He reopened access to the Bible for the whole Church, reoriented biblical interpretation around Christ, reaffirmed the exclusive authority of God’s Word, and made preaching a privileged channel of grace. His biblical legacy was not merely a textual reform but a renewal of the Church’s heart, called to live by faith, in obedience to Scripture, and in living fellowship with the preached Christ.

The following chapter of the thesis presents Martin Luther’s theological thinking on preaching. In Luther’s pastoral and theological vision, preaching is not merely a supplementary religious act or a simple liturgical practice, but the vital center of the Church and the primary channel through which God Himself addresses humanity. The Reformer from Wittenberg did not conceive of preaching as a human exposition about God, but as the active, saving speech of Christ directed at every believer. In this sense, preaching is, for Luther, “salvation in action,” for through the proclamation of the Word, God intervenes in history to transform lives and bring about salvation. Preaching is thus a theological event, not merely a religious discourse, and its power lies not in the rhetorical abilities of the preacher but in faithfulness to the inspired Scripture.

This theology of preaching is founded on the deep conviction that the Word of God is not merely a text, but a living, active, revealing force. When the preacher speaks the Word of Scripture, God is present and effectively works through it. For this reason, Luther insisted there is no distinction between the preached Word and the Word of God, so long as the preaching is in conformity with Scripture. When a preacher faithfully proclaims biblical truth—even if he is weak or sinful—Christ speaks through him. Thus, preaching becomes the act through which God reveals Himself, saves, and renews the believer, and the role of the preacher is to be a vessel through whom God works—not the originator of the message. In this sense, Luther affirmed that authentic preaching cannot be separated from Scripture, because only the Word of God has the power to generate faith.

For Luther, preaching is inseparably tied to the work of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit does not operate independently, but always in tandem with the spoken Word, acting in the hearts of listeners to create and strengthen faith. This vision rejects all forms of

spiritual enthusiasm that claim direct revelations outside of Scripture. Only through the proclamation of the Gospel does the Spirit come and dwell in the believer, generating real transformation and a new life in Christ. Preaching is, therefore, the divinely ordained means for the Spirit's work in the Church.

At the same time, the sermon is not a neutral event—it is a profoundly spiritual conflict. Luther saw preaching as a direct confrontation between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan. The proclaimed Word becomes a spiritual sword that divides, judges, and provokes a decisive response: faith or rejection. Every authentic sermon carries eschatological implications—it is a place where eternal destiny is on the line.

In this framework, the preacher is more than an educator or church servant—he is a messenger of Christ, a *servus verbi* (servant of the Word), a bearer of the living Word. The call to preach is not a personal choice, but a divine appointment. For Luther, the office of the preacher is the highest in the Church—surpassing even sacramental functions—because only through preaching is the Gospel transmitted in its living, saving form. The preacher is a channel through which grace is poured out, a voice through which God is heard, a shepherd who feeds Christ's sheep with the bread of the Word. He does not declare his own thoughts, but the message revealed in Scripture. In this ministry, the preacher's authority derives not from himself but from his fidelity to Scripture and his valid calling from the Church. Only those who are both called and affirmed by the community may preach legitimately.

For his ministry to be effective, the preacher must meet a series of essential qualities. First, moral integrity is fundamental. Luther emphasized that there must be no contradiction between the preacher's life and his message. The truth proclaimed must be reflected in personal conduct. Secondly, humility is another defining characteristic, since the preacher is not the author of the work, but merely an instrument. Luther insisted on prayer before preaching, as an acknowledgment of personal weakness and dependence on divine grace. The preacher must also be diligent—devoted to studying Scripture and to continuous preparation—because preaching is not an improvised act, but the fruit of intense labor and deep meditation on the biblical text.

Preaching must be clear, concise, and adapted to the listeners' understanding. Luther rejected sophisticated rhetoric or the use of inaccessible language, advocating instead for a simple, accessible, and vivid style. Christ Himself spoke in parables, using

images from daily life precisely to be understood by everyone. In the same way, the sermon must be an instrument of the Word for all—not a theological show for elites.

The essence of preaching in Luther's theology is the Gospel of Christ. Every sermon must place at its center the person and work of Jesus—not merely as a moral model, but as a gift of salvation, as the concrete forgiveness of sins. Preaching is evangelization: not merely the presentation of a truth, but a direct call to faith, hope, and new life. This presupposes a clear distinction between Law and Gospel—Law condemns by revealing sin, but the Gospel liberates by offering forgiveness and grace.

From this perspective, the preacher must be not only a proclaimer but also a spiritual guide. Luther gave great importance to doctrinal teaching, as well as to exhortation for living the faith. Good works are not the condition for salvation, but the inevitable fruit of a living faith. Thus, preaching must instruct, motivate, correct, and encourage. It is a means for building up the Church, preserving unity, and promoting peace. The preacher's priorities are clear: the proclamation of the Gospel, shepherding the flock, forming consciences, and shaping character. In the face of hardship and ingratitude, the preacher is called to continue his ministry faithfully, seeking not human approval, but divine calling and heavenly reward. Suffering is not a sign of failure but part of Gospel ministry. The final reward is eternal glory, and the fruit of the ministry is the transformed life of those who have believed through the preaching.

Through his theology of preaching, Martin Luther reformed not only the content but also the very essence of the homiletic act. He restored to the sermon its original power: to be the channel through which God imparts grace, transforms hearts, and saves souls. Preaching is not merely a religious discourse but the living presence of Christ among His people. Luther re-centered liturgical and theological life around the pulpit, returned Scripture to its absolute centrality, elevated the preacher to a co-worker with God, and reaffirmed that the Church's entire mission is grounded in the clear, faithful, and living proclamation of the Gospel. In a world marked by constant change and growing challenges, this vision remains a timely call for deep, courageous, biblical, and grace-filled preaching.

The final chapter of this doctoral thesis deals with Martin Luther's homiletical practice. This represents one of the most significant reforms of theological discourse in the history of Christianity. For Luther, preaching was not merely a moralizing exposition

or a meditation on the sacred text, but a living event—a form of communication through which God Himself addresses humanity. In this vision, the preacher is called to be an instrument through which the divine Word works directly in the hearts of the listeners. He emphasizes that true preaching does not mean conveying personal opinions or general ideas extracted from the Bible, but the faithful proclamation of what God has done for humanity in Christ. If, after descending from the pulpit, the preacher cannot say with conviction that God has spoken through him, then, Luther says, he should renounce this ministry.

One of Luther's central innovations was his insistence on the rigorous exegesis of Scripture, with a clear emphasis on the literal meaning of the text. Unlike the medieval tradition, which often relied on allegorical and mystical interpretations, Luther advocated a return to the original meaning, as expressed in the sacred languages—Hebrew and Greek. He considered the knowledge of biblical languages not a luxury but an essential theological necessity. Stating that "languages are the sheath in which the sword of the Spirit is kept," Luther emphasized the idea that only a faithful preservation of the original form of the text can safeguard the truth of the Gospel. This conviction stood at the foundation of his German translation of the Bible—a monumental work that influenced not only theology but also German culture.

In his exegetical approach, Luther insisted on detailed grammatical analysis, paying attention to every word and syntactic structure. He believed that the meaning of Scripture must not be sought outside the text—in symbols or abstract tropes—but in its clear, accessible meaning, illuminated by the Holy Spirit. His exegesis was coupled with a deep theological orientation in which every text was related to Christ—the core of divine revelation. Thus, every passage, whether from the Old or New Testament, was interpreted in the light of Christ's saving work, identifying what Luther called the "evangelical cores," the central points through which God addresses the sinner with grace and truth.

Despite his insistence on the literal meaning, Luther did not completely abandon allegorical interpretations, but limited them to a strictly illustrative role. He vehemently criticized the abuses of allegory in the patristic tradition, often considering it a form of theological laziness and a source of confusion. However, in certain contexts, he used allegories to beautify the discourse or to make the meaning more accessible—always

without compromising the literal sense of the text. He warned against rhetorical fantasies unanchored in Scripture, proclaiming: *“Noli te speculari!”*—*“Do not give in to speculation!”*

Luther paid special attention to how the sermon is composed and delivered. Although he did not impose a rigid structure, his sermons often follow a clear logical thread, including an introduction (either applicative or thematic), development of the main idea, and a section of practical application. He insisted that the preacher focus on a clear central idea, expressed in simple and direct language, so that each listener could say at the end: *“That’s what the sermon was about.”* Moreover, Luther frequently used antitheses—Law vs. Gospel, sin vs. grace, death vs. life—to clarify the tensions in the text and provoke spiritual reflection. Imaginary dialogue was also a frequently employed technique in his sermons, staging conversations between biblical characters, between sin and faith, between man and God, thereby giving the message a dramatic and vivid dimension.

A defining feature of Lutheran preaching is its applicative dimension. Luther was not content with an intellectual exposition of the text; he sought to reach the listener’s heart, offering comfort, rebuke, guidance, and hope. His applications are direct—sometimes challenging, other times full of pastoral gentleness. He encourages the sorrowful, confronts the hardened, and calls for a living faith oriented toward Christ. Examples from daily life, parables, comparisons—all help bring the Word close to people’s concrete reality. In the sermon on the lost and found child Jesus, for instance, Luther builds applications for parents, children, preachers, and believers in general, showing how the Word must penetrate every dimension of life.

The central themes of Luther’s preaching are deeply anchored in Reformation theology: the person and work of Christ, justification by faith, the free grace of God, the “alien” righteousness imputed to the sinner, prayer as an expression of faith, and love as its natural fruit. Christ is the center of all sermons—not as a moral model, but as a real Savior. Grace is defined as full forgiveness offered by God in Christ, without human merit. Faith, in Luther’s view, is not merely the acceptance of truths but total abandonment into God’s hands—a trust that gives birth to hope and love. Divine righteousness is not something man earns but receives through faith in Christ in the act of justification.

Luther held that preaching must be alive, dynamic, and nourishing—not a string of concepts or a theatrical dramatization of Christ’s sufferings. He therefore harshly criticized external forms of excessive ritualism, such as Passion dramatizations, and proposed a liturgy centered on the Word and the Sacraments. Instead of symbolic imitation of Christ’s fasting or sufferings, Luther called on preachers to clearly proclaim the theological significance of these events and to bring authentic comfort to those who hear the Word.

Ultimately, Martin Luther’s homiletical practice restored to Christian preaching its original power: that of being the meeting place between God and man through the Word. Faithful to Scripture, centered on Christ, anchored in the spiritual needs of listeners, Luther’s discourse transformed not only preaching but also the community that hears it. By combining exegetical rigor with pastoral sensitivity, doctrinal clarity with simplicity of communication, Luther completely reconfigured the function and form of preaching in the Christian Church. Thus, he placed the sermon at the center of church life—not as a religious spectacle, but as a means of grace and spiritual renewal for God’s people.

This paper has aimed to outline a theology of biblical and Christocentric preaching in the vision of Martin Luther, demonstrating that for the Reformer, the proclamation of the Word is not a mere religious act, but the very work through which God makes His voice heard in the midst of His people. Preaching, in Luther’s conception, is the central act of ecclesial ministry in which the Word becomes living and saving, calls to repentance, awakens faith, and offers comfort. In this sense, his entire homiletic activity reflects a return to the biblical model of preaching, in which Christ is the beginning, center, and finality of every message.

The analysis of the historical, social, and theological context has shown that Luther was not an isolated reformer but a representative of an era marked by religious unrest, ecclesiastical abuses, and moral crises. From this background emerged the urgent need for a new preaching—anchored in the truth of Scripture, capable of speaking directly to the conscience and bringing man into a personal relationship with God. Social, political, and cultural factors—such as the influence of humanism, the advent of the printing press, and the support of the nobility—created a favorable framework for the spread of Luther’s ideas. However, the essence of his reform was deeply theological: a return to Scripture and the radical proclamation of God’s grace.

By focusing on justification by faith and the centrality of Scripture, Luther reformed preaching not only in content but also in form. Rigorous grammatical and theological exegesis, clarity of message, and constant orientation toward Christ became defining features of Lutheran homiletics. For Luther, the sermon is not a moralizing discourse but a spiritual event in which the Holy Spirit works through the spoken Word. This Word does not merely inform—it transforms; it does not merely instruct—it saves.

In all this, the preacher is not an orator but a servant of the Word, called to faithfully proclaim what Scripture says and to be transparent to the work of the Spirit. For this reason, Luther emphasized the necessity of rooting preaching in the Bible, formulating it in simple language, and addressing it to the entire community. His homiletic impact consisted precisely in the ability to bring the deep truths of faith into an accessible, emotional, and concrete form that responds to the real needs of the listeners.

The homiletic reform initiated by Luther became the cornerstone of Protestant preaching. He highlighted that the sermon is not merely a component of liturgy but the center of ecclesial life—the place where the Word becomes food, light, and life for the people of God. Through clarity, simplicity, and theological depth, Lutheran preaching contributed decisively to the formation of an authentic spirituality rooted in the Word and lived in the freedom of grace.

Thus, Martin Luther's contribution to homiletics remains a benchmark. He demonstrated that faithful preaching, nourished by Scripture and centered on Christ, is the means through which God builds, reforms, and guides the Church. His legacy continues to inspire those who, in any age, wish to proclaim the Gospel with passion, integrity, and the power that comes from God.