

“What you eat, I eat and what you live on, I live on”: The beauty of the functioning of remembrance and the folly of preaching

Kruger, Ferdi

North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus, Potchefstroom, South Africa
ferdi.kruger@nwu.ac.za

Abstract

Research indicates that preachers and listeners contend with a process of remembrance, that is, among others, a particular form of recognition characterised by when they participate in listening to what has been labelled the folly of preaching. This article identifies two focal points in the listening process, namely listening as a predominant activity during participation as well as listening that leads to changes in perception which, in their turn, lead to a difference in actions. The research question is: Is it possible that cognizance of the concept of remembrance could enhance a homiletical praxeology of seeing and re-chewing of what is being heard? A listener's remembrance has to do with recollecting familiar things, events and words. Remembering brings new meaning and understanding. Recognition is the spark that ignites participants' ability to take part in the listening process. This investigation was conducted on the basis of a practical-theological vantage point and interdisciplinary engagement with social psychology and communication sciences. Anamnesis was examined from the perspective of recognition as viewed in terms of the Old and New Testament with emphasis on the sermon to the Hebrews. The article closes with perspectives on the creative functioning of recognition as a part of active listening and the importance of re-chewing of what is being heard.

Keywords

Augustine; remembrance; recognition; homiletical praxeology; folly of preaching; beauty; remembrance and active listening

1. Introduction

It is one thing to admit that preaching is folly, but another to say that this folly must communicate with a diversity of listeners week after week. This sounds like a homiletical nightmare. The dilemma is even more complicated, namely that individual participants in liturgy remember the good message regarding Christ's death and his resurrection – this message that has been coined as folly – but not in exact the same manner (Saliers 2010:8). All people, however, do have memories of their relationship with God, including memories of previous sermons about the same passage and the image of reality created by messages they have been exposed to. How does a preacher preach to people who are listening to the same message about Christ's death and resurrection, while different aspects thereof are remembered?

Furthermore, it is an illusion to think that what is heard by the listeners will necessarily bear resemblance to what preachers have said. Niebergall (1971:297-302) therefore rightly emphasizes that the scepticism or doubt about the meaning and the purpose of sermons should be addressed. Critical voices that have gone up about this situation, something that Runia (1983:16) has described as the sermon under attack, could be interpreted as an exposure of homiletic praxis to society, and the tremors of these words have been audible in the years since they were mentioned. It was as though key aspects in homiletical reflection were simultaneously brought under a magnifying glass. One example of this exposure has been when critical voices suddenly challenged the firm conviction of Maarten Luther, namely that preaching is at the heart of the being of the church (known as *cor ecclesiae*) and the conviction that the quality of preaching reflects the health of a faith community (Marty 2007:104). Luther's idea that preaching is not so much about *schreiben* as *schreien* inevitably comes under fire (Marty 2007:104). It is against this background that Johan Cilliers took his critical stance to articulate that not only faith communities but also the world needs the folly of preaching (cf. 2004:1).

After all, there is a difference between mere speaking and purposefulness in communication. To preach entails to communicate something in a creative manner for people to see its relevance. Smit (2008: 262) therefore indicates that people should be enabled to look in the right direction when they

participate in the act of listening to preaching. The homiletical challenge in the act of preaching is after all to cultivate the exchange of ownership of a sermon (cf. Kruger 2019:21). Campbell & Cilliers (2012:29) further embroider intriguingly on the challenge, namely that sermons should translate a theological claim into everyday experience, even if the gospel generally is regarded as foolishness and preaching as folly and the preacher as inevitably a fool. The rhetoric of folly that emerges from the mouths of preachers who have been fooled by the gospel because a liminal space between the ages had been entered indeed emphasises the vulnerability of preachers. This kind of vulnerability is further reflected in the seeming inability of preachers to control the in-between space that the listening process embodies.

The beauty of this liminal homiletical space resides in recognising that it actually reframes perspectives on reality (Cilliers 2017:5). Reflecting in a profound manner on the comic image and the idea of being a clown in one of his earlier articles, Cilliers (2008:2) relates that comic recognition to the fact that, strictly speaking, the church is too early for heaven and too late for the earth (cf. also Noordmans 1980:29). Like a clown, the church does not really fit in. Its position between dispensations remains precarious and, for some, hilarious (Cilliers 2008:3).

The present article expands on the idea of the folly of preaching by underscoring that active listening during the act of preaching, certainly a form of rhetoric is indeed pivotal for meaningful communication. Active listening that includes the phase of remembering is important. Active listening consists of hearing, understanding, remembering, evaluating and responding to messages (Tyagi 2013:2). The present chapter connects with Dingemans' (1991:49) insight that the preacher is also present as a mediator and a listener among listeners in the act of preaching. The preacher who was enabled to remember during the preparation of the sermon now has to assist listeners to identify with the message. The concept of identifying also has to do with the process of recognizing and remembering (Dingemans 1991:45). Arising from this idea, one should take into account that listeners have memories about God, their own experiences and also about a particular passage. Listening is a participatory key in helping listeners to unlock the propellant of remembrances. Through the act of preaching listeners are in fact enabled to remember (Smit 1997:262). In remembering something that

was present before, it becomes present again. In the core of the folly of preaching, therefore, listeners are reminded of the foolishness of the gospel continuously and repeatedly.[briefly unpack this idea before moving on, not yet clear to reader] Augustine once described the inherent power of human memory as a stomach that holds both pleasant and less pleasant memories (Venter & Symington, 2007:45). He suggests that human senses convey memorable things to the storehouse of memory (Casey, 1987:11). His most striking metaphor for memory may be the “stomach of the mind” (*venter animi*), where food is stored without tasting, but later brought forth for rumination. Augustine is famous for the expression *what you eat, I eat and what you live on, I live on* (Sypert 2015:21). This expression reinforces the idea that the better the preparation of the preacher, the more solid and more delicious will be the bread he/ she can proffer to the faithful listeners.

The research problem could here could therefore be formulated as follows: Is it possible that cognizance of the concept of remembrance could enhance a homiletical praxeology of seeing and re-chewing of what is being heard?

What follows will be organized according to a qualitative literature study and in this process, acknowledgement will be given to existing knowledge in the field¹. The latter will be organised and critically interpreted in light of the research problem.

2. Descriptive perspectives on the practical theological situation of helping listeners to look in the right direction

The charting of the homiletical landscape could be regarded as important, because it highlights that homiletics could be described as a many-sided discipline. It is a theological discipline, but important aspects such as speech and communication are also part of the research-field. According to the author just mentioned, preaching is about disclosure and the offering of an awareness of God’s presence and therefore of a new way of (liturgical) being-in-the-world (Immink 2011:17). This idea emphasises the importance that of recognising that homiletics not only has to do with listening and doing, but also with seeing. Brueggemann (2005:21) confirms

1 Cf. Y. Bothma, M. Greeff, F.M. Mulaudzi and S.C.D Wright, Research in Health Sciences, Cape Town: Pearson.

this very idea and highlights the notion that preachers do not only describe a gospel-governed world but help listeners to imagine it. Imagination, one of Brueggemann's focal words, refers to the capacity to generate and enunciate images of reality that are not rooted in the world in front of us (cf. Akerlund 2014:86).

The rhetorical connection between the language of the Bible and seeing the perspective that it brings to the daily life that it addresses is of importance. Marty (2007: 101) refers to Ricoeur's interpretation of the three things that preachers should do with a text: treat the world behind the text, treat the world of the text and also treat the world in front of the text (the not-yet). Cilliers (2012:86) himself has contributed to this very thought and indicates that the preacher's task is *inter alia* to reframe daily experiences of listeners so as to enable them to recognise these seemingly mundane experiences as ones packed with profound meaning. This entails contact with the facts on the ground, especially that God is present (Brueggemann 2014:23). Once something that has remained unspoken becomes spoken, you have to face the consequence of what you have said about it, otherwise your words become untruthful and empty. This idea correlates with what Brueggemann (1989:10) describes as the desire to communicate in such a manner with the text that it keeps you turning around long after you have closed the Bible. It is striking that the metaphor of eating in this context is repeating itself. Bohren (1986:76) also refers to the challenge of eating and re-chewing the Word during the act of listening to the sermon.

Viewed from a homiletical angle, remembrance has to do with the memory of familiar aspects that forms the foundation for living memories and of vivid experiences (Welker 2000:126). In fact, in every worship service, participants in liturgy remember the good message regarding Christ's death and his resurrection (Saliers, 2010:8 and Smit, 2008:310). All people do have memories of their relationship with God, of previous sermons about the same passage and the image of reality created by messages they have been exposed to. It is important to remind oneself here that people are incapable of paying attention to all data they receive. This could also explain why they listen to the same message about Christ's death and resurrection, while different aspects thereof are remembered. After all, humans tend to harmonise and will go as far as to invent detail to make a memory harmonious with their current beliefs.

Remembrance therefore draws people into the reality of the fullness of life in Christ. In much-discussed words, Moltmann (2008:103) circumscribes this exact importance of remembrance: “without the memory of Christ’s passion there is no Christian meditation on the future life and conversely, without hope for the coming of Christ and therefore the remembrance of Christ loses its power.” In today’s popular parlance it could be said that this phrasing blows one’s mind. But one should acknowledge that all of this does not merely involve a movement back in time through memories in the vein of an “in memoriam” style, but rather that it involves a vivid movement of remembrance of the reality of God’s presence (Pakpahan 2012:118).

Arising from the importance of remembrance one should acknowledge that people do not actually listen with their ears only. They hear with their eyes (vivid remembrances) and with their sense of touch as they become aware of the feelings and emotions that arise from a particular message. Hauerwas (1989: 95) is therefore rightly well-known for the expression that worship actually amounts to enabling participants to look in the right direction for the meaningfulness of daily life. In this regard, Smit (2008:262) refers to Calvin’s view that, spiritually speaking, humans are blind. Therefore, God speaks to people and, based on people hearing God’s voice, they can see. The German concept of *Wiedererinnerung*, that is, for lack of an exact English translation, the re-turning of something to the world of inner experience, surfaces here with a force of its own, explaining this exact idea by denoting the concomitant idea of remembering things again, in effect re-remembering something.

These ideas and responses underscore that scholars are increasingly emphasizing the liturgical context of preaching. In this unique framework it must be emphasised again that listening to see, that is, being creative and imaginative in listening, is important. The folly of preaching is indeed something so powerful that it overarches people past, present and future experiences. The main aim of listening is not a mental understanding of words, but rather a new understanding, in other words, meaning-identification by participants that act as meaning seekers where, for example, listeners’ own stories enter into dialogue with the words uttered. The words utilized unveil and activate a remembrance of experiences. One word, even one concept, could unveil many things. According to Cilliers (2012:5) this art of re-visioning reality could also be called the reframing of

perspective. Reframing is about revisiting existing things of the old and the past. It is articulated in the prefix “re”. The prefix “re” has the connotation of again and again. It is both *re* and *creatio* at the same time (Cilliers, 2012: 6). Thus, it also has a connection of bringing things back together again as a living whole within the context of re-member.

3. Analysis of the importance of remembrance (anamnesis) as viewed from an interdisciplinary focus

Remembrance has to do with the understanding of reality of the past in such a way that the events of the past become a force in the present (Arthurs, 2017:13). It is true in more than one sense that remembrance equals intriguing participation in life, therefore igniting people’s remembrances in preaching and in liturgy to reunite them mentally, emotionally and volitionally to the God who is being proclaimed in the sermon.

3.1 Analysis of the concept of remembrance (recognition)[check] within an interdisciplinary framework

3.1.1 Perspectives on the act of listening and remembrance from the viewpoint of social psychology and of communication science

Remembrance renews and edits people’s memories. People’s memories about experiences and events could differ, because no one’s memories are an exact version of facts (cf. Smit 2008:17). Memories one should acknowledge fade like ink ageing on a handwritten letter (Arthurs 2017:32). Neuroscientists therefore often utilize the concept of engramming to describe the process of remembering. An engram is a pathway created in the brain when people receive information or enjoy new experiences. These pathways could be called memory traces (Arthurs 2017:32). Engramming harmonizes new information with old information. Swartz et al. (2004:241) for this very reason connects the concept of recognition with remembrance. Atkins (2004:15) confirms this idea and makes the intriguing point that recognition as a process of remembrance occurs within the framework of the ability to remember things with which one is familiar.

Language and especially active listening are indispensable tools of the engramming process (Kruger 2017:14). After all, language enables people to recall facts and has a definite trigger effect on people’s ability to remember.

It can be compared with the lines of the bar code on products. Words evoke memories and have a trigger effect. In the same vein, schemes are mental structures of preconceived ideas which people employ to organize their knowledge (Arthurs 2017:32). Whatever is happening in people's lives at the time of listening, including the way in which they are speaking to themselves at that moment, will not only have an influence on what they remember, but also on the way in which they are listening (Kruger 2018:22). Grant and Borchers (2009:3) point out that people do not actually listen with their ears only. They hear with their eyes] and with their sense of touch as they become aware of feelings and emotions that arise from the message. People listen with their minds and with their imagination. Ramey (2010:10) expands on this idea and highlights the deeper-seated challenges that listeners face. He describes people who have a listening-burnout. Week after week, seemingly good communication is heard, but without penetrating hearers' minds or transforming people lives. Ramey (2010:11) goes as far as to entertain the idea of a kind of expository listening as a process that discerns what to do with a sermon while listening to it.

Words, sermons or a particular passage from Scripture are excitable and often lead to a memory of another preacher, another sermon or a previous experience. Memories evoked by listening could differ even during participation in the act of listening. The rhetorical approach to preaching, therefore rightly holds that preachers should acknowledge the fact that listeners eventually act dialogically as speakers themselves when they submit to listening to sermons. The active nature of listening therefore involves an exchange of listening and speaking roles to which scholars refer as an exchange of ownership of sermons.

3.1.2 Perspectives from the discipline of church history on the views of Augustine on eating and re-remembering

Augustine uses Cicero's famous dictum to point out that there are different ways of communicating truth and an eloquent man has to speak so as to teach, to delight and to persuade (Sypert 2015:26). Augustine's ability to use words in provocative and evocative ways was carried over into his preaching ministry. He employed a variety of rhetorical devices in his preaching, using analogies, word pictures, similes and metaphors in his explaining and application of the Scriptures (cf. Sypert 2015:31). In the

fourth book of *De Doctrina Christiana*, which Augustine wrote towards the end of his life, he elaborates on how one should preach. He emphasises that the content of the sermon should be thoroughly biblical, because God is speaking through it to us. It is necessary to have a detailed knowledge of the Bible before setting out to present one's findings (cf. Van Oort 2009:4). Auxiliary fields of knowledge are indispensable that is, in the first-place languages, since these are essential for one's own exegesis and for the correct use of existing Bible translations. Furthermore, a good general understanding is required of mathematics, music, history, geography, botany, geology, astronomy and, among other areas, dialectics and rhetoric (*eloquentia*). Augustine further emphasizes that eventually the fire blazing in the Word of God is the glow of the Holy Spirit. If the preacher does not glow as he preaches, he cannot fire up the one to whom he is preaching (Van Oort 2009:5).

For Augustine; as spiritual food God's word was humanity's daily bread. In sermons on the Lord's Prayer he tells us that the words "Give us this day our daily bread" refer to natural bread, to the bread of the Eucharist and to the Word. "What I explain (*tracto*) to you is also daily bread, just as the Scriptural readings you hear daily are daily bread. And the hymns you hear, and sing are also daily bread" (Rebillard 1999:33). "The Word of God that is preached daily is also bread" (Mohrmann 1974: 21). For Augustine, preaching is the breaking of bread:

When we explain the Scriptures to you, we are, as it were, breaking the loaves. What I hand out is not mine. What you eat, I eat. What you live on, I live on. We have together our storeroom in heaven. For that is where the Word (*verbum*) of God comes from. (Mohrmann 1974:22).

It is striking that he uses the same terminology for the preaching of the Word as for the celebration of Holy Communion. He speaks of a "banquet of the Scriptures" that is being prepared at "the table of the Lord" (Rebillard 1999: 34) and of "food" as well as of spiritual "bread" (cf. Van Oort 2009:7). Augustine thus elaborates on a particular aspect of the interpersonal participation of listeners by saying "I came into the fields and spacious palaces of my memory, where are treasures of countless images of things of every manner" (Casey, 1987:2). It is against this background that he

describes human memory as a stomach that holds both pleasant and less pleasant memories (Venter & Symington, 2007:45). He suggests that human senses convey memorable things to the storehouse of memory (Casey, 1987:11) As mentioned, his most striking metaphor for memory may be the “stomach of the mind” (*venter animi*), where food is stored without tasting, but later brought forth for rumination. This metaphor strikes the ear as odd and even repulsive, but the brilliance of the image resides in the notion that memories are held and digested, eventually to nourish the whole body.

Food is deeply intertwined with the core tenets of Christian identity in numerous ways (Conradie 2016: 1). Biblical themes such as the fruit in the Garden of Eden, the Passover meal, the provision of manna in the desert, the food regulations in the Torah, the notorious meals that Jesus enjoyed with outcasts, the declaration of Jesus that he is the Bread of Life, the celebration of the Holy Communion and the coming wedding feast of the “Lamb that was slain” are examples of how central the idea of food is. Conradie (2016:5-7) convincingly elaborates on the idea of *kenosis* and of eating for enjoyment and connects this idea with the glorifying God Himself. It is therefore striking that, so long ago in history already, Augustine connected preaching with such a central theme in the Bible. The elements of joy and of celebration that are important within a liturgical context are therefore highlighted. Applied to preaching and the metaphor of eating, it seems like the attitude of celebration should be evident, mainly because joy in a present God that is no monument but a living God, should be celebrated.

Augustine is adamant about the fact that the preached Word generated its own eloquence, an eloquence parallel with Scripture itself. Preaching is a wisdom proceeding out of her own home (Long 2009:40). What does the role of the preacher entail in this respect? In conjunction with Augustine’s view, the phrase “The Lord’s Remembrancers” was coined by Lancelot Andrewes, chaplain to Queen Elizabeth and King James I (Arthurs, 2017:29 and Casey, 1987:12). Andrewes drew his metaphor from the royal court. The king’s (or queen’s) Remembrancer is the oldest judicial position in continual existence in Great Britain, having been created in 1154 by Henry II. Today it amounts to a ceremonial position, but for centuries the Remembrancer’s job was to put the lord’s treasurer and barons of court in remembrance of pending business, taxes paid and unpaid and other matters

pertaining to the benefit of the crown. This historical situation reminds liturgists (preachers) of their responsibility to enable participants to see the old and the new of remembrances in order to enjoy new perspectives for the future. The storehouse of listeners' memories is invaluable. By enabling listeners to remember valuable aspects of God's treasury, treasures are offered and, as explained earlier on, editing or engramming of memories eventually takes place.

Preachers are therefore Remembrancers. They stir memories of listeners in utilizing words. Style is important, because careful utilization of style enables listeners to see. Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca's theory focusses on the minds and feelings of listeners as well as on what the preacher, the persuader, expects from them (cf. Arthurs 2018:67). This theory elaborates on more compelling and less compelling argumentation. The building blocks in this process are direct sensory experience, memories and imagination (Arthurs 2018:67). Words and the style of sermons should evoke attention and concrete events for memories to be evoked. In this way the preacher enables listeners to remember things that they have forgotten or enables them to taste the memories anew. Vivid language use, that is, one important aspect of sermon style, cannot be over-emphasized, since memory enjoys a passive and active aspect. When we are confronted in the present time with an emotion, or persons, places and times from the past, the passive kind of memory becomes an active kind of memory (Ricoeur 2000: 183-186.). We recall those experiences of the past and it comes to the fore, especially by means of images (Ricoeur 2000:63). Religious language, when it reflects the Biblical message, opens up a new horizon for people to see a problem in a new light. It can turn things upside down in an unexpected, surprising way, as in the parables of Jesus for instance. It disorients the listener, because it confronts the listener with something paradoxical, something not to be expected, that functions as a breaking point to orient him/ her in new way (cf. Ricoeur 1998:36 and Ricoeur 1974:381-467).

After all, stirring of memories is one of the primary responsibilities of preachers (Arthurs 2018:48). In proclaiming well-known facts from the Bible, preachers have to realize that the Word has performative power. The Remembrancer stirs the memories of listeners in bringing the past within the realm of present. The power of remembrance is in that telling

or stirring of familiar things (Arthurs 2018:55). The aim of stirring memories through remembrance is targeted at one's heart, leading to a context where the dichotomy between mind and emotion can no longer be upheld. Arthurs (2018:57) even describes one's heart as a motivational structure where thinking, feeling and doing are integral parts. Preaching to listeners in the manner of preachers acting as Remembrancers has to do with cutting one's heart, where "heart" enjoys the meaning of "the whole person." This exposition shows that preaching according to Augustine is indeed a purposeful act of persuasion. In the listening process, listeners are therefore connected to the heavenly store-room. It is the preacher's responsibility to help listeners see old and new things in order to re-chew and celebrate the new perspectives that are created.

3.1.3 Remembrance and memory in the Bible

3.1.3.1 Perspectives from the Old Testament

Wiersbe (2006:24) is well-known for the expression that people think in pictures even though they are speaking and writing with words. People's minds are not mere debating halls, but rather picture galleries. Imagination could be defined as the capacity to see old and familiar things in new associations from new perspectives (Wiersbe 2006:25). Imagination is also described as a womb that is impregnated with the old so that it might give birth to the new (Arthurs 2018:12). Wiersbe (2006:25) concurs and mentions that imagination is the bridge that links the world around people with the world within people (Merrill 2000:27). Viewed from a Biblical vantage-point, remembering not only touches the past, it articulates the present and the future.

It seems likely that remembrance supposes participation (Le Roux 2002:1001). When God remembers, for example, He also blesses. In the act of remembrance, listeners are re-remembering disconnected things (Arthurs 2018:14). Preaching within the framework of imagination, remembrance of God's powerful deeds in the past, His presence in the present and His promises for the future provide impetus for daily life (Arthurs 2018:14 and Loader 2012:585). As stated, memories reunite people mentally, emotionally and volitionally to the God who watches over them (Arthurs 2018:14). Childers (1998:112) articulates the importance of remembrance as an *activity* that occurs while listening to sermons. This idea connects

with liturgical awareness. If one remembers one's sin, it results in shame and repentance. If one remembers God, it results in praise or obedience (cf. Arthurs 2018:16). One of the towering peaks in the Bible is the fact that God remembers. As Cilliers rightly points out (2019:5), God recalls our sins, sees our transgressions and brings to light the misdeeds we try to hide. He further indicates that God is not fooled by people's pretence. God indeed remembers. However, sin is not all that God remembers. He looks further back, beyond people's sinful past, to a compassionate history God created especially remembering that, as in the case of Israel in Egypt, the place of slavery. Israel's disobedience and rebelliousness towards God landed them in their situation. But Israel's groans and cries for help also went up to God (Ex 2:23). He remembered their saddening transgressions, but also heard their groaning, and He remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob. God thinks of this covenant (Cilliers 2019:95). God also recalls his mercy.

According to the Old Testament, in time Moses appointed men, priests, whose main task was to see that the people never forgot what happened on the night they ate the Paschal lamb. The lamb kept alive Israel's faith in God. And the Lord told them that the first-born of their sons should be given to him and that they should do the same with their sheep. The first-born of the beasts was to be sacrificed and the first-born sons were to be redeemed with a sacrificial lamb (Le Roux 2006:1012). The importance of carrying across remembrance from one generation to another should therefore be recognized. After all, children (and even adults) learn best by what they see and experience, for instance when something is demonstrated ritually or when it is symbolically experienced, with the result that real learning takes place. In the Old Testament, people were encouraged not only to remember God's acts, but also to remember God himself (Pakpahan 2012:118). In view of God's relationship with Israel through his covenant and the relationship between the two covenant partners, listening to God and remembrance of him receive priority.

Baxter (2010:7) indicates that the Old Testament points to various aspects of what should be remembered, including that God himself makes clear what he wants people to remember. He even requests Israel to establish memorial stones, twelve of them, when they enter the Promised Land (Joshua 4). Whenever they look at the Jordan River, they should remember the fact

that it was God's gracious and almighty acts that enabled them to enter the land of Canaan. These memorial stones provided parents with a teaching tool: they were able to instruct the next generation in accordance with their memories. However, Baxter regards it as important to recognize that the memorial stones were important so that all people could understand that the hand of God is mighty (Joshua 4:24) (Baxter 2010:9).

At the very least, this remembering within the covenant seems to imply that the God, who performed past mighty deeds, is the same God who is present with his people as they remember those deeds. He is present as the living God, bound to them in election and covenant, as He was to their ancestors in days past, for He is Yahweh, "I am who I am." In fact, the act of remembrance is grounded in the assurance that God himself is a remembering God. Remembrance of past events and of God's acts in the past create new memories and turn encounters with him into meaningful events. An encounter with the person of God as a way of remembering him is therefore not complete without an understanding of and response to his mighty works (Baxter 2010:10).

3.1.3.2 Perspectives from the New Testament

From the perspective of the New Testament, remembrance is closely related to the idea of God in the sense that God that remembers and is taken to fulfilment in and through Jesus Christ's suffering and victorious resurrection (Pakpahan 2012:139). Through the act of remembrance, the person or the deeds that are being remembered are brought into the realm of the here and now with a close connection to celebration (Brouwer 2009:25). The relevance of the message being proclaimed is that it is a good and joyful message about what it entails to be one in Christ's suffering and His victory. The power of anamnesis therefore lies in reliving the saving acts of God in such a powerful manner that it enables us to appropriate all God's promises. Remembrance as a means of acknowledging the past in a way that is inspirational for the present and life-giving for the future is pivotal in the New Testament.

Through remembrance, the active God of the past is remembered as active in the present. This very idea provides dynamic hope for the future. It is like a wheel that is able to move backwards and also forwards. A much-cited Dutch scholar, Gerrit Immink (2014:53-55), hits the nail on the head

when he avers that Christ is expected in the worship service, while He is not simply there at people's command. Preachers are servants and not mere magicians. Therefore, the idea of epiclesis, the invocation of the Holy Spirit, is important. It is the Holy Spirit who opens people's minds and provides receptivity in people's hearts.

The author will now further elucidate this idea in referring to the sermon to the Hebrews in the New Testament. In the letter to the Hebrews, also regarded as a three-dimensional sermon, believers are reminded of their uncertainty about understanding difficult circumstances that prompted them to question whether it was still worth being Christian in their contemporary world (Kistemaker 1984:5). The listeners were longing for the good old days and their nostalgic memories. The writer of this sermon does not, however, communicate with emphasis on the good old days, because God can simply not be kept captivated in a temple in Jerusalem. The memory of God is not a memory of a static God, but rather about a dynamic God who is present in the listeners' contemporary circumstances. The emphasis of the preacher is to underline what it takes to live in the last days and the importance of the here and now (Kruger & Venter 2006:65). The emphasis on the here and now, or what Cilliers (2019:23) describes as the synchronization of times, is evident in this sermon. He proceeds by saying that God is not a monument, but rather a God on the move, so that preaching from a particular passage delineates a certain movement from God's movement.

Words or language in this process are functional and aimed at linking people's memories with remembrance. This is what Wiersbe (2006:42) describes as the purposeful process of turning listeners' ears into eyes to realize what is expected from them. Careful planning of words and of the sermon should connect dis-amputated things in listeners' lives. As part of the preacher's approach to introducing an important focal point gradually and in a structured way, in the Hebrews sermon he/ she utilizes Old Testament quotations at least on 35 occasions (cf. Ellingworth 1993:37). The emphasis on Christ that is bigger than prominent leaders from the old dispensation is striking. Vivid memories of the past provide dynamic perspectives for the present. For instance, this author enumerates various figures from the Israelite tradition to encourage first listeners or readers to remain loyal themselves (Cromhout 2010:1). Hebrews 2:1 emphasises that

listeners should take heed to things that they have heard, due to the fact that it is linked to salvation in Christ.

The message is clear, namely that God's communication has to do with the fact that he himself is speaking. Listening to God's voice today means to listen decisively. Long (1997:102) rightly explains the stark contrast between something that should have happened regularly in the past and the message that Christ did something of significance, namely once and for all. Johnstone (1994:133) therefore rightly connects the idea of Christ's reconciliation with daily and frequent remembrance. Listening to the communication of a sermon requires reaction.

4. Perspectives on the beauty of remembrance when it comes to the folly of preaching

In this chapter Augustine's view on "what you eat, I eat and what you live on, I live on" has been discussed. It has also been debated that the folly of preaching indeed holds a deeper lying tension field included in the act of listening to sermons. Incorporated in this participatory act is the propellant of remembrance. The author wants to conclude with a few homiletical perspectives on how the idea of remembrance could enrich the homiletical praxis.

4.1 Homiletics in need of an outlook on re-chewing to negotiate meaning identification

These notions make it clear that the delivering of sermons as well as listening to sermons is a matter that moves through one's intestines and it bears witness to spiritual digestion. They indicate that the homiletical challenge entails unavoidable exchange of ownership in a sermon. When listening to the folly of preaching, the listener should be able to admit that this sermon is now exchanged, an exchange of *aha*: it is my sermon that has occurred. Listening and re-chewing what is heard should be cultivated for vivid remembrances to connect listeners' memories with new perspectives provided. However, homiletical instruction has traditionally centred on sermon-building that entails restriction to a merely cognitive approach. The preacher has been trained to construct logical outlines and to write a logical sermon before constructively delivering the sermon according to

sound communicative principles. Such training has commonly produced sermonizers rather than preachers. Preachers are normally instructed to prepare sermons that are logical in structure and polished in the execution, but utterly harmless when it comes to touching the lives of the people.

To preach, as demonstrated here, however has to do with a particular kind of communication that is aimed at the participation of the listener by means of effective listening that also includes an organic process of memories that will be edited according to the functioning of remembrance. This is exactly where the optical lens of remembrance offers a helpful mechanism for participatory involvement in the act of preaching. Participants are indeed taking part in the act of listening and remembering memories about Christ.² Memories are part of stories that people tell themselves and each other about the past. People are constantly in the process of writing and rewriting the stories of their lives to make sense of the world around them. Listeners' memories become part of their sense-making efforts (Rosenwalt & Rochberg 1992:22). Re-chewing during the listening process as well as during the week of what is being communicated, could further enhance a participatory experience of vivid remembrances that should enable listeners to see new perspectives on daily life.

For preachers to provide food that listeners can re-chew, they need re-chewing. Self-nutrition and nutrition of a community of believers are intrinsically related (Guthrie 1994:106). Fee (1995:105) even mentions the idea of training (such as exercise in the gym) that is needed for preachers to grow in their abilities to provide something to listeners that they can re-chew.

4.2 Listeners' remembrances are functioning on various levels

In the previous section a new kind of internalized (re-chewed) sermon has been discussed. As integral to active listening, remembrance is a dynamic, renewed and creative kind of participation by listeners in the act of preaching. Remembrance as reminding, the stirring of memory and the editing of memories needs to be scrutinized increasingly within research. Gaarden (2014:28) is convinced that remembrance is not merely about a

2 Rudolf Bohren (1974:159) refers to this idea as "Die Geistesgegenwart umfasst die Zeiten".

mental understanding of words, but rather about a new understanding and of meaning-identification where listeners' own stories could enter into dialogue with what is being communicated in the sermon. The preacher, who must uphold an attitude of being a listener among listeners, should first of all wade into the waters of remembering (Arthurs 2017:116). Each word and section of his or her formulation of the message has to be carefully scrutinized and formulated to enrich people's memories (Arthurs 2017:126).

A memorable participation or listening to sermons as such invites people to look and see that new perspectives on daily life are indeed necessary. The beauty of this resides in offering new perspectives on reality as well as stirring memory, and not simply repeating threadbare platitudes (Arthurs 2017: 7). Preachers are aware of the fact that the words utilized will connect with previous experiences (schemata) in listeners' lives. Listeners often refer to this connection when they talk about sermons afterwards. Moreover, they are not always able to remember the exact formulation or the words the preacher used in the sermon, but they are able to link the sermon with a concrete situation in their lives (De Leede & Stark 2016:141). An associative interaction takes place when listening results in remembrance of a new set of questions and challenges in the listeners' minds. This new understanding does not necessarily always stem from the exact intent of the preacher, which is why what is remembered could differ from what has been communicated.

An additional aspect of the kind of involvement that remembrance offers to listeners could further be called critical interaction with the content. This critical interaction would occur, for instance when a preacher's understanding and exposition of a text are not consistent with the listener's interpretation (Gaarden 2014:22). This clash between what is preached and what is true according to people's inner speech could nonetheless pave the way for a new kind of understanding to arise. Gaarden (2014:25) proceeds to indicate that there is a further kind of participation in the listening process, namely a kind that is beyond human words. This could be called contemplative participation, where listeners know they have listened, but afterwards cannot recall the relevant information. Listeners are convinced of the fact that the liturgy means a lot to them, but they cannot retrieve that information. Listeners are nonetheless adamant about what the worship

service has meant. They feel relaxed and silenced in their state of being. It is clear that participation is more mysterious than what the naked eye believes.

The folly of preaching lies in the discovery that the communicated message of the sermon has a scope that includes listeners' hearts, their ears, their eyes, their stomach, their memories as well as their participation. The folly of preaching actually deals with the beauty that remembrance is functioning in a unique way in each listener's life. To preach, even if it is called folly, has to do with helping people to see and to remember. One has to acknowledge that the foolishness of God to use vulnerable preachers week after week is after all wiser than human wisdom.

5. Conclusion

In this chapter it was debated that preaching could be described as folly. This is one side of the coin. The other side of the coin is that the folly of preaching is that preachers, listeners and the proclaimed Word are merged into a powerful interrelationship. A multi-coloured manifestation of activities is evident within the act of listening. Words are being heard but the words are reminding people of their memories. Remembrance helps people to edit their memories about God's Word and their own experiences in order to create a framework of meaning-identification. The folly of preaching, after all has to do with enabling listeners to see and to remember. Therefore, this chapter has indicated that preaching that helps listeners to remember also offers the opportunity to listeners to become participants in the act of preaching. Through listening and through remembrance an exchange of ownership of a sermon become a strong possibility. The folly of preaching after all, has to do with the beauty of a deeper relationship between preacher and listeners that is related to what you eat, I will eat and what you live on, I live on.

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