

Conquered by the Text: Make Sure God's Voice is Heard

I don't know how many times it's happened. I pick a text as the basis for a sermon. I think I know what the text is going to say, but as I study I find out that the text isn't interested in conforming to my ideas. The wrestling match begins.

There are only three outcomes to this wrestling match.

First, I can try to pin the text down and control it. This has simply never worked. The text is simply too powerful for me, and I'm always overmatched. (A lot of sermons are preached that don't say what the text says, but never because the preacher has conquered the text. The preacher can only slither away from the fight and pose as the winner, but we all know the truth.)

Second, I can look for a new text. I've done this, but the new text confronts me with the same problem. I just end up in a new wrestling match, but with less time. You can spend the entire week looking for a text you can control, and still end up in the fight of your life.

Third, the text wins. I'll wrestle the text. I'll stick with it long enough and maybe even think I'm winning. But eventually the text will overpower me and pin me down. I'll stand up and preach that Sunday a bit battered, as one who has been conquered by the text.

The third outcome is the only one that produces sermons worth preaching, or sermons worth hearing. We must be conquered by the text.

My prayer every week is this: **Let the text win.**

Read more from Darryl [here](#).