

## **Dr. Kevin E. Frederick, Waldensians, Session 3, The Role of Preaching Resources from NotebookLM**

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

### **1. Abstract of Frederick, Waldensians, Session 3, The Role of Preaching, Biblicalearning.org, BeL**

**Dr. Kevin Frederick's lecture explores the origins and impact of the Waldensian movement, which began in the 12th century with Valdez (Waldo) of Lyon. Convicted by scripture, Valdez renounced his wealth and emphasized preaching the gospel in the common language, directly challenging the Roman Catholic Church's practice of using Latin and limiting scriptural knowledge to the clergy. This commitment to vernacular preaching and lay involvement, including women, led to conflict and eventual excommunication, but the Waldensians persisted, significantly influencing the Catholic Church to eventually adopt preaching in the language of the people. The lecture highlights the Waldensians' dedication to a literal interpretation of Jesus' teachings and their lasting legacy in making the Word of God accessible.**

**2. 13 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Frederick, Waldensians, Session 3 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Church History → Waldensians).**



**Frederick\_Waldensi  
ans\_Session03.mp3**

### 3. Briefing Document: Frederick, Waldensians, Session 3, The Role of Preaching

#### Briefing Document: The Transformational Witness of Waldensian Preaching

**Executive Summary:** This briefing document summarizes the main themes and important ideas presented in Dr. Kevin Frederick's lecture on the Waldensians, specifically focusing on the transformative role of their preaching. The lecture highlights how Peter Waldo, a wealthy layman in 12th-century Lyon, was deeply moved by scripture to renounce his wealth and preach the Gospel in the common language. This act challenged the Roman Catholic Church's practices of restricting preaching to the clergy and conducting services in Latin, leading to the rise of the Waldensian movement, their excommunication, persecution, and ultimately, the transformation of preaching practices within the Catholic Church itself.

#### Main Themes and Important Ideas:

##### 1. The Centrality of the Great Commission:

- Dr. Frederick begins by emphasizing the enduring importance of Jesus' command in Matthew 28:16-20, the Great Commission, for Christians throughout history.
- He states that "No Christian group took this command to heart more than followers in the 12th century of the man named Valdez, Waldo, from the city of Lyon, France."

##### 2. Waldo's Conversion and Call to Preach:

- In 1172, Valdez (later known as Waldo) was a wealthy business and lay leader in Lyon who felt a "conviction by scripture to renounce his wealth and take up the calling to proclaim the word of God in the common language of the laity."
- Driven by a "desire to learn more about God by studying scripture in his own language," Waldo commissioned translations of the New Testament into his vernacular.
- His study of Matthew 19:16-21 and Matthew 28:18-20 led him to sell his possessions and begin preaching the Gospel to his neighbors in Lyon.

##### 3. The Religious Context of 12th-Century Europe:

- There was a growing desire among the laity to understand the Christian faith more deeply.

- However, the Roman Catholic Church did not prioritize teaching the faith to the laity. "In fact, the church hierarchy and its desire to control knowledge actively worked against addressing this identified need of the laity."
- Preaching was rare, typically only done by bishops, archbishops, and the Pope, and sermons were delivered in Latin, a language understood by only about 1% of the population.
- This obscurity maintained the "status quo" and the secrecy of the church hierarchy.
- Parish priests primarily focused on administering the seven sacraments, with limited explanation of their meaning in the vernacular. The Eucharist, for example, was received in bread form only by the laity, and the Latin liturgy was incomprehensible to them. The phrase "Hocus Pocus Dominocus" is presented as a derivative of the Latin used during the Mass ("Hocus Corpus Maum Domini," meaning "this is my body, my Lord"), highlighting the lack of understanding.

#### **4. Waldo's Challenge to the Church Hierarchy:**

- Waldo's ministry, characterized by a "vow of poverty and proclaiming the gospel to the public in the vernacular," resonated with the people of Lyon.
- He gathered a following, the "Societas Valdesiana," a group of poor itinerant preachers.
- The Bishop of Lyon opposed their preaching, leading Waldo to appeal to Pope Alexander III in 1179, who was initially impressed by Waldo's sincerity and gave a blessing but instructed him to preach only with the permission of local bishops.
- This permission was not granted by the Bishop of Lyon.

#### **5. The Role of Women in the Early Waldensian Movement:**

- The Waldensians, through their study of the Gospels, recognized the role of women like Mary Magdalene as witnesses and proclaimers of the good news.
- The "preaching of the Waldensian Sorores, the sisters," was a significant challenge to canon law.
- The early Waldensian community embraced a degree of "sexual equality" in their mission, believing all were equal in their calling.

## **6. Excommunication and the Deepening Crisis:**

- In 1184, Waldo and his followers were excommunicated by Pope Lucius III for their unauthorized preaching and other perceived violations.
- The Waldensians created a "deep crisis of purpose and direction within the church" because they initially did not intend to break away from the Roman Catholic Church.
- They maintained core Catholic beliefs such as the Trinity, the authority of Scripture, the divinity and humanity of Christ, and adhered to the Apostles' Creed. They did not initially question the sacraments or the veneration of saints.
- Waldo sought the Roman Church's acknowledgment of preaching in the vernacular and the right of all laypersons (male and female) to proclaim the Word.

## **7. The Significance of Preaching in the Vernacular:**

- Dr. Frederick draws a parallel between the use of Hebrew and Arabic as sacred languages in Judaism and Islam, respectively, noting how this could "alienate the common people...from any type of personal relationship with God."
- He highlights Jesus' ministry in Aramaic, the common language, making faith accessible to all. "It seems ironic today that the Roman Catholic Church would overlook this essential component of the ministry of Jesus Christ."
- By reinstating Latin as the sacred language, the Roman Church "once again erected barriers to a personal relationship with God that Jesus had broken down."
- Waldo's use of Provençal, the language of the region, "opened the doors to understanding the Bible or the populace."

## **8. The Waldensian Emphasis on Literal Interpretation and Imitation of Christ:**

- The Waldensians emphasized the "literal interpretation of the teachings of Jesus," which they believed should be modeled by their preachers through a life of poverty and humble service.
- This contrasted sharply with the "wealthy clergy" of the Roman Catholic Church who were not inclined towards poverty or vernacular preaching.
- While bishops often preached allegorical sermons in Latin, the Waldensians stressed the "adoption of Jesus' teaching in the life of each disciple" and believed

the preacher's life should embody the message proclaimed. This created a stark contrast with the often "drunken and licentious behaviors" of some church leaders.

### **9. The Nature and Impact of Waldensian Preaching:**

- Waldo viewed preaching as a "holy call that came from God," setting the preacher apart for this duty.
- Unlike monastic evangelism, the Waldensians directed their preaching to the general public.
- The excommunication "emboldened Waldo's followers to adhere to their calling."
- Waldo defended their preaching by quoting Acts 5:27-30: "We must obey God rather than any human authority." This challenged papal authority.

### **10. Persecution and the Church's Response:**

- Following their banishment from Lyon, the Waldensians spread throughout Europe, continuing to preach.
- In 1215, the Fourth Lateran Council condemned all Waldensians as heretics, making them "enemies of the church" to be "rooted out and completely eliminated."
- Initially, bishops and Cistercian monks were tasked with addressing the "heresy," but they were deemed "soft."
- In 1231, the Dominican order ("Preaching Order") was established to debate and then persecute the Waldensians.
- Public debates proved ineffective as the laity perceived the Dominicans as lacking compassion, contrasting them with the "orthodoxy in faith and belief" combined with "basic human goodness and love" seen in the Waldensians.
- The Dominicans were then ordered to carry out the Inquisition, a "tragic and shameful persecution" that lasted for centuries.

### **11. The Unintended Transformation of the Catholic Church:**

- Despite the persecution, the Waldensian movement had a profound impact on the Roman Catholic Church.

- Their "teaching combined with their Christ-like actions forced the Roman Catholics to adopt major changes in the way they functioned."
- This included a "newly heightened attention to preaching in the language of the people," leading to the authorization of the Dominicans, Franciscans, and Benedictines to preach in the vernacular.
- This response "created a new standard for the whole Roman Catholic Church in its relationship with the laity, thereby transforming the Roman Catholic Church."
- Dr. Frederick concludes by stating that the ability to hear and understand the Word of God in one's own language today is something for which "we owe much to the Waldensians and their clear message and faithful witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ," who integrated the call to proclaim faith into the discipleship of every believer.

#### **Quotes:**

- "No Christian group took this command to heart more than followers in the 12th century of the man named Valdez, Waldo, from the city of Lyon, France."
- "Sensing a desire to learn more about God by studying scripture in his own language, Waldo paid two church officials to translate whole sections of the New Testament for him."
- "In fact, the church hierarchy and its desire to control knowledge actively worked against addressing this identified need of the laity."
- "We must obey God rather than any human authority."
- "Today, we take for granted the opportunity to hear and understand the Word of God preached in our own language, but we owe much to the Waldensians and their clear message and faithful witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ."

#### **Conclusion:**

Dr. Frederick's lecture compellingly argues that the Waldensian movement, sparked by Waldo's commitment to the Great Commission and his insistence on preaching the Gospel in the vernacular, served as a transformative witness within medieval Christianity. Despite facing intense opposition and persecution, their unwavering dedication to sharing the Scriptures in a comprehensible way ultimately compelled the Roman Catholic Church to reform its own preaching practices, leaving a lasting legacy on Christian worship and the accessibility of God's Word.

## 4. Study Guide: Frederick, Waldensians, Session 3, The Role of Preaching

### A Transformational Witness: The Role of Preaching in the Waldensian Movement

#### Quiz

Answer the following questions in 2-3 sentences each.

1. What was the Great Commission, and why was it significant to Valdez (Waldo)?
2. Describe the state of preaching in the Roman Catholic Church during the late 12th century.
3. What were the two key aspects of ministry that Valdez emphasized, leading to conflict with the Church?
4. How did the Waldensians' view on scripture and language differ from that of the Roman Catholic Church?
5. What role did women play in the early Waldensian movement, and why was this controversial?
6. Initially, what was the primary reason for the Roman Catholic Church's concern regarding Valdez and his followers?
7. How did the excommunication in 1184 affect the Waldensians' activities?
8. What was the purpose of the Dominican order in relation to the Waldensians?
9. Why did the public generally favor the Waldensians over the Dominican preachers?
10. What long-term impact did the Waldensian movement have on the Roman Catholic Church?

#### Quiz Answer Key

1. The Great Commission, found in Matthew 28:18-20, is Jesus' command to his followers to "go therefore and make disciples of all nations." Valdez took this command very seriously, feeling personally convicted to renounce his wealth and preach the gospel in the common language, believing it was a direct call to action.
2. In the late 12th century, preaching in the Roman Catholic Church was rare, with sermons primarily delivered by bishops, archbishops, and the Pope. Furthermore,

these sermons were conducted in Latin, a language understood by only a small percentage of the population, effectively limiting access to the Word of God for the laity.

3. Valdez emphasized two key aspects of ministry that clashed with the Roman Catholic Church: preaching the gospel in the vernacular language (the common language of the people) and the belief that every lay person, both male and female, had the right and responsibility to proclaim the word of God.
4. The Waldensians believed that scripture should be accessible and understood by everyone, advocating for its translation and preaching in the common language. This contrasted with the Roman Catholic Church's use of Latin as a sacred language, which kept the scriptures and their interpretation largely within the control of the clergy.
5. Women, known as Waldensian Sorores, played a significant role in the early Waldensian movement by preaching the gospel alongside men. This challenged the canon law of the time and highlighted the Waldensians' belief in the equality of all in the mission to spread the Christian message.
6. Initially, the Roman Catholic Church's concern regarding Valdez and his followers was primarily pastoral, focusing on the conflict between Valdez's intense calling to missionary poverty and preaching and the hierarchical authority and established procedures of the institutional church.
7. The excommunication in 1184, rather than stopping the Waldensians, emboldened them in their calling. Banished from Lyon, they began to travel and preach throughout a wider region of Europe, further disseminating their message despite the Church's condemnation.
8. The Dominican order, established by the Roman Catholic Church, was initially tasked with engaging the Waldensians in public debate and preaching. The goal was to use theological reasoning to persuade the "heretics" to return to the Catholic fold.
9. The public generally favored the Waldensians because they perceived them as having genuine faith and embodying Christ-like qualities such as goodness, love, humility, and compassion, which they felt were lacking in the wealthy bishops and punitive Dominican preachers. The Waldensians' actions aligned with their message.



10. The Waldensian movement significantly impacted the Roman Catholic Church by forcing it to re-evaluate its approach to preaching. The rise of the Waldensians and their effective communication of the gospel in the vernacular ultimately led to the establishment of preaching orders like the Dominicans and Franciscans who were also authorized to preach in the common languages.

## **Essay Format Questions**

1. Analyze the social and religious context of 12th-century Europe that contributed to the rise and appeal of the Waldensian movement. Consider the role of lay piety, the authority of the Church, and the desire for accessible religious knowledge.
2. Compare and contrast the Waldensian approach to interpreting and communicating scripture with that of the Roman Catholic Church in the 12th and 13th centuries. Discuss the implications of these differing approaches for the laity and the Church hierarchy.
3. Evaluate the significance of preaching in the Waldensian movement. How did their emphasis on preaching in the vernacular and the role of lay preachers challenge the established religious norms and contribute to the movement's growth and impact?
4. Discuss the Roman Catholic Church's response to the Waldensian movement, tracing the shift from initial pastoral concerns to excommunication, condemnation as heresy, and ultimately, persecution through the Inquisition. Analyze the motivations and effectiveness of these responses.
5. Assess the long-term legacy and impact of the Waldensian movement on the history of Christianity. Consider their contributions to the accessibility of scripture, the role of the laity, and the evolution of preaching practices within the Western Church.

## Glossary of Key Terms

- **Great Commission:** Jesus Christ's command to his disciples after his resurrection to spread the gospel and make disciples of all nations, as recorded in Matthew 28:18-20.
- **Laity:** The ordinary members of a religious community as distinguished from the clergy.
- **Vernacular:** The language or dialect spoken by the ordinary people in a particular country or region.
- **Hierarchy:** A system or organization in which people or groups are ranked one above the other according to status or authority, particularly within the Church.
- **Sacraments:** Religious ceremonies or acts regarded as outward and visible signs of inward and spiritual grace, especially those ordained by Christ and central to Christian worship (in the 12th century, the Roman Catholic Church recognized seven).
- **Eucharist (Lord's Supper):** The Christian ceremony commemorating the Last Supper, in which bread and wine are consecrated and consumed as memorials of Christ's death.
- **Liturgy:** A form of public worship; the customary repertoire of religious practices, readings, and prayers.
- **Apostolic Poverty:** The renunciation of wealth and material possessions in imitation of the apostles of Jesus Christ.
- **Canon Law:** The body of laws and regulations made by or adopted by ecclesiastical authority for the government of the Christian organization and its members.
- **Excommunication:** The action of officially excluding someone from participation in the sacraments and services of the Christian Church.
- **Heresy:** Belief or opinion contrary to orthodox religious (especially Christian) doctrine.
- **Inquisition:** A group of institutions within the judicial system of the Roman Catholic Church whose aim was to combat heresies.

- **Dominican Order (Ordo Predicatorum):** A Roman Catholic religious order founded by Saint Dominic, known for its emphasis on preaching and intellectual pursuits.
- **Allegorical Interpretation:** A method of interpreting scripture that finds a secondary, symbolic meaning in addition to the literal one.
- **Precepts of the Lord:** The teachings and commandments of Jesus Christ.
- **Monastic Evangelism:** The practice of monks spreading the Christian faith, often within their own communities or through outreach connected to monasteries.
- **Fourth Lateran Council (1215):** The twelfth ecumenical council of the Catholic Church, which addressed various doctrinal and disciplinary matters, including the condemnation of Waldensian beliefs.

## 5. FAQs on Frederick, Waldensians, Session 3, The Role of Preaching, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

### Frequently Asked Questions about the Early Waldensians

**1. Who was Valdez (Waldo) and what motivated him to start the Waldensian movement?** Valdez, later known as Waldo, was a wealthy lay leader and businessman in 12th-century Lyon, France, within the Roman Catholic Church. He was deeply moved by scripture, particularly Matthew 19:16-21 and Matthew 28:18-20, which led him to renounce his wealth and dedicate his life to preaching the Gospel in the common language of the people. He felt a strong conviction to follow the Great Commission more seriously.

**2. What was the prevailing situation regarding preaching and access to scripture for the laity in the 12th century Roman Catholic Church?** In the 12th century, sermons were rare events for most Christians, often occurring only when a bishop visited a parish. Even when preached, sermons were delivered in Latin, a language understood by only a small, educated elite (around 1% of the population). The Roman Catholic Church hierarchy did not prioritize teaching the faith to the laity, believing the deeper meaning of scripture was intended for church leaders and scholars. Consequently, the laity had little personal understanding of the Word of God.

**3. What were the key practices and beliefs of Waldo and his early followers, known as the Poor of Lyon?** The Poor of Lyon emphasized a life of poverty and the literal interpretation of Jesus' teachings, which they believed should be modeled by their preachers. They prioritized preaching the Gospel in the vernacular languages (like Provençal) so that ordinary people could understand it. They also believed that every lay person, both men and women, had the right to proclaim the Word of God. Initially, they maintained allegiance to core Roman Catholic beliefs such as the Trinity, the authority of scripture, the divinity of Christ, and the seven sacraments, but their emphasis on lay preaching and vernacular scripture created conflict.

**4. How did the Roman Catholic Church initially respond to Waldo and his followers' activities?** Initially, Waldo sought permission from the Pope, who was impressed by his sincerity. However, the Pope stipulated that Waldo and his followers could only preach with the explicit permission of local bishops, which was largely withheld, particularly by the Bishop of Lyon. The preaching of lay individuals, especially women (the Waldensian Sorores), and their independence from hierarchical control were seen as violations of church law.

**5. What led to the excommunication of the Waldensians and their subsequent condemnation as heretics?** Due to their continued preaching without episcopal authorization and their challenge to the established roles within the church, Waldo and his followers were excommunicated in 1184. Despite maintaining many traditional Catholic beliefs, their insistence on vernacular preaching and lay participation, particularly by women, was deemed a threat to the authority and structure of the Roman Catholic Church. In 1215, the Fourth Lateran Council officially condemned all Waldensians as heretics, making them enemies of the church to be eradicated.

**6. How did the Waldensians defend their actions against the accusations of the Roman Catholic Church?** When confronted by church authorities, Waldo defended the preaching of the Poor of Lyon by quoting scripture, specifically Acts 5:27-30, which states, "We must obey God rather than any human authority." This appeal to a higher authority, scripture itself, was seen by the Roman Catholic Church as a direct challenge to the Pope's authority as Christ's vicar and further solidified their condemnation.

**7. What was the impact of the Waldensian movement on the Roman Catholic Church in the Middle Ages?** Despite facing severe persecution, the Waldensian movement significantly impacted the Roman Catholic Church. The effectiveness and perceived authenticity of the Waldensians' preaching and lifestyle, contrasted with the practices of some Catholic clergy, compelled the Church to re-evaluate its approach to the laity. This ultimately led to a greater emphasis on preaching in the vernacular and the establishment of mendicant orders like the Dominicans and Franciscans, who were authorized to preach in the common languages, marking a transformation in the Church's relationship with its members.

**8. What is the lasting significance of the Waldensians' actions, according to the source?** The Waldensians' courageous commitment to making the Word of God accessible to all people in their own language and their belief in the importance of living out the teachings of Jesus through humility and service left a lasting legacy. Their efforts challenged the established norms of the medieval church and ultimately contributed to the broader availability of scripture and vernacular preaching within Christianity. Today, the widespread access to and understanding of the Bible in our own languages is something we owe, in part, to the pioneering efforts and faithful witness of the Waldensians.