

*Dynamic Sermon  
Design & Delivery*

*Planned & Compiled  
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*A syllabus for: Sermon Preparation – LCL 106*

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# 1000 MISSIONARY MOVEMENT

## ***MISSIONARY TRAINING SYLLABUS***

### **COURSE: DYNAMIC SERMON DESIGN AND DELIVERY**

February 15 to March 16, 1998

Instructor: Dr. Gebre Worancha

Class Schedule: From Monday to Friday

Time: 8:00-8:45 A.M.

#### **I. COURSE OBJECTIVES**

During the process of learning of Sermon Design and Delivery the missionary will be able:

1. to learn the **principles and procedures** of how and why Christ's followers should participate in the gospel ministry and preach the Good News of our Lord Jesus Christ to the perishing mankind;
2. to study how to prepare Bible-based, Christ-centered, and simple but heart-touching sermons;
3. to make practical sermons to be preached in the missionary's respective mission field and
4. to pass in the course.

#### **II. LECTURES/TEXTBOOKS**

1. For number of quizzes and one major examination, the teacher will share his lecture notes with the missionaries. Each missionary is responsible for any exam question from the class lecture. Examination questions will be taken only from lecture notes and some obviously notified class discussions. Reference Textbooks: Cleave, Van. Handbook of Preaching. OMF Publishers-Manual; Preach 118 Sermon Outlines by Anzea Publishers Flemington Markets, NSW, Australia and Church Leader's Manual by Douglas E. Robertson.

2. Bible and Notebook should be with the missionary during the lecture session.

#### **III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS.**

1. Attend all classes without being tardy and participate in class discussions.

2. Each missionary will prepare and submit (a) two well planned sermon outlines and (b) one well prepared complete sermon. (c) The missionary will preach one sermon (the one mentioned in section b) at the presence of three or more persons/or missionaries. This sermon can be preached anywhere, outside the campus, inside the campus, under the tree, in the house or inside the church, etc.

3. Submission date for sermon outlines and a sermon: the teacher will announce.

#### IV. GRADE DISTRIBUTION

Class Attendance and Participation	(5X2)	10%
Three Short Quizzes	(5x3)	15%
Two Sermon Outlines	(5X2)	20%
One Complete Sermon		10%
One Sermon Delivery before three or more persons		10%
One Final examination		35%

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Total		100%
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#### Letter Grade

A  
B  
C  
D

#### Quality Points

90 - 100  
80 - 89  
70 - 79  
60 - 69

59 and below failure (F)

WISHING YOU GOD'S GUIDANCE AND HIS RICH BLESSINGS IN YOUR STUDY AND FUTURE MISSIONARY WORK! GOD CALLS, QUALIFIES, AND COMMISSIONS THOSE WHO RESPOND TO HIS ETERNAL CALL (Matt 28:18-20)!

## INTRODUCTION

### THE IMPORTANCE OF PUBLIC SPEAKING

The human voice is one of the most precious gifts that God has given to mankind. Through the voice we are able to tell others people how we feel, what we have seen, what we have done and what knowledge we hold in our minds. God also ask us to use the gift of speech to tell others about His great plan of salvation. God says, "Go ye therefore, and teach..."

Teaching is performed mainly through the use of our voices.

"We may have knowledge, but unless we know how to use the voice correctly, our work will be a failure... Knowledge will be of little advantage to us unless we cultivate the talent of speech." *Testimonies* vol.6, p.380.

#### 1. JESUS AS PUBLIC SPEAKER

John 7:46 -- People recognized Jesus as a great speaker. He was not like the other preachers of His time.

Matthew 7:28, 29 -- His authority came from God. He spoke clearly and in an interesting way.

"His language was pure, refined and clear as a running stream." *Desire of Ages* p. 253.

"The Savior's voice was a music to the ears of those who had been accustomed to the monotonous, spiritless preaching of the scribes and Pharisees. He spoke slowly and impressively, emphasizing those words to which He wished His hearers to give special heed." *Counsel to Teachers* pp. 239,240.

Study carefully the methods Jesus used to teach His hearers eternal truths. Notice and copy how He held their interest.

- His preaching was preceded by prayer (Luke 5:16)
- His preaching was based on Scripture
- He used many illustrations from nature
- He used simple parables to teach important truths
- His preaching was aimed at meeting the needs of the people
- He visited and talked with all kinds of people. This helped Him to understand what to preach about

#### 2. CHURCH LEADERS AS PUBLIC SPEAKERS

It is extremely important for church leaders to know how to prepare interesting material and

how to present that material in an interesting way. However, it is even more important for them to learn how to speak clearly so that they can present their carefully prepared material in words that can be heard and understood. Any church leader who neglects the development of his voice is doing discredit to the cause of God.

Titus 2:8 -- When Paul was writing to Titus, he encouraged him to develop his speaking voice. His sermons were to be of "sound speech". Church leaders today should be just as careful in developing their speaking voice.

Nehemiah 8:8 -- When church leaders preach, they should seek to make the meaning of God's Word clear so that the people can understand.

"Ministers of the gospel (including elders and church leaders [and missionaries]) should know how to speak with power and expression, making the words of eternal life so expressive and impressive that the hearers cannot but feel their weight. I am pained when I hear the defective voices of many of our ministers. Such ministers rob God of the glory He might have if they trained themselves to speak the word with power ... if he attempts to speak to the people without knowing how to use the talent of speech, half his influence is lost, for he has little power to hold the attention of the congregation." *Testimonies* vol. 6, p.381

"The culture and right use of the voice are greatly neglected ... There are many who read and speak in so low or so rapid a manner that they cannot be readily understood. Some have a thick indistinct utterance, others speak in a high key, in sharp, shrill tones that are painful to the hearers ... This is an evil that can and should be corrected ... By diligent effort all may acquire the power to read intelligibly, and speak in a full, clear, round tone, in a distinct and impressive manner. By doing this we may greatly increase our efficiency as workers for Christ." *Christ Object Lessons* pp.335,336.

# DEVELOPING YOUR SPEAKING VOICE

## 1. HOW SOUNDS AND SPEECH ARE MADE?

The sounds that come from our mouths as words are produced by three different actions.

**Abdominal, Diaphragm and Chest Muscles.** The diaphragm is a large muscle that stretches across the bottom of our rib-cage between our lungs and our stomach. The diaphragm is an important muscle in the production of sound. When it moves upwards, it pushes air from the lungs forcing it out through the vocal cords. The abdominal muscles are also very important for good speaking. These muscles assist the diaphragm to push air out of the lungs. By learning to control both the abdominal muscles and the diaphragm, a good speaker will be able to speak powerfully without his throat becoming sore. The chest muscles also assist in pushing air out through the vocal cords.

**Vocal Cords.** Vocal cords are very thin pieces of skin-like material stretched across the voice-box in our throats. When air from our lungs passes over them they vibrate and make a noise.

**Tongue, Mouth and Nasal Passages.** The sounds that are made by the vocal cords are turned into words by the movement of the tongue and lips. The quality of the words and their tone are produced as the sound passes through the mouth and nasal passages.

For good speech to be produced, the vocal cords, the diaphragm, abdominal muscles, chest muscles, tongue, mouth and nasal passages must all be used.

## 2. CORRECT BREATHING

Many speakers do not breathe correctly. Their breathing is far too shallow and they only use half of their lung space. When a person breathes in, his whole chest should fill with air. The diaphragm should move down drawing in air. The abdominal muscles will relax and be seen to move out a little. When a person breathes out, the abdominal muscles will tighten and the diaphragm will move upwards forcing out the air.

When a person is speaking in public, he must think about his breathing. If he is breathing correctly, using the diaphragm muscle to pull air in and out to force air out, then he will be able to speak forcefully. If he only takes in shallow breaths, then his throat will soon get sore from talking because it is not getting any help from his abdominal muscles and diaphragm.

**Breathing Exercises** Lie with your back on a flat surface i.e. bed, floor etc. Place a heavy object on your abdomen. A large book will do. Now breathe in deeply and hold your breath. Did the book on your abdomen rise? If you breathed in deeply, the book should have been raised two or three inches by your abdomen. Next, breathe out. Push the air out with your diaphragm muscles. Watch the book on your abdomen go down. Force all the air out. Practise

this exercise for five minutes every day until you are breathing correctly and naturally.

Develop your diaphragm muscle by standing up straight and breathing in and out quickly like a dog that has just been running fast. Force the air in and out with your diaphragm. Ha a ha a ha a ha a ha etc. Feel your diaphragm muscle working. You should be able to feel it getting a little bit sore. Stop the exercise. Try it again. Do this every day also. It will develop this muscle and give your voice more power when you speak.

"To ensure correct delivery in reading and speaking, see that the abdominal muscles have full play in breathing and that the respiratory organs are unrestricted. Let the strain come on the muscles of the abdomen, rather than on those of the throat. Great weariness and serious disease of the throat and lungs may thus be prevented." *Evangelism* p. 669.

### 3. SPEAKING CLEARLY

Many speakers have lazy mouths. Their tongues do not move enough to pronounce each word clearly. Their mouths do not open wide enough to let the words come out clearly. Often they speak far too quickly and their words get cut off short and tumble out of their mouths all mixed up. Unless you speak clearly and slowly, your listeners will soon grow tired of hearing you and the importance of your message will be lost.

By earnest effort we are to obtain a fitness for speaking. This fitness includes uttering every syllable clearly, placing the force and the emphasis where they belong. Speak slowly. Many speak rapidly, hurrying one word after another so fast that the effect of what they say is lost." *Counsels to Teachers* pp.234, 235.

**Speaking Exercises** Say the following sounds to practise opening your mouth wide. "Ba a, da a, la a, ma a, ta a." Say them over again. Open your mouth. Push the sound out with your diaphragm muscle. Practise this exercise often.

The following exercise will help you use your tongue to speak each word clearly. Put your first two fingers together. Now put the end of your two fingers between your front teeth. Now, while you are holding your teeth gently on your fingers, say the alphabet through. "a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h," etc. Move your tongue around to carefully form each of the letters. When you have finished this exercise, take your Bible and start reading aloud from it. As you read each word, pronounce each word clearly and distinctly. Speak slowly enough to say each word clearly. Every day, practise reading out loud in this way. Listen to yourself and make sure that each word is sounded clearly.

One final exercise is to record yourself speaking or preaching on a cassette recorder. Play back the cassette and listen to yourself. This will help you to hear yourself as others hear you. Try to correct the mistakes you hear yourself making



#### 4. USE GOOD LANGUAGE

As good leaders, we are often called on to preach and speak for God. Let us speak God's word correctly. Watch that no bad language or impure speech comes from our lips. Do not use expressions of speech that will offend your listeners. Do not be crude or rude in your speech or in your illustrations. Whatever language you are preaching in, use the correct language and the right words.

"The workman for God should make earnest efforts to become a representative of Christ, discarding all uncomely gestures and uncouth speech. He should endeavor to use correct language." *Counsels to Teachers* pp. 238, 239.

1 Corinthians 1:21 "... it please God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."  
(last part)

Many in the world may consider that preaching is foolishness. However, preaching is God's way of using people to reach others with His message of salvation. If God has chosen preaching as His way, let us do all we can to improve our speaking voices so that we will be fit channels for God to work through.

# HOW TO PREPARE A SERMON

What is a sermon? A sermon is:

- a speech or talk
- prepared in a ordered form
- prepared to meet the needs of the listeners
- prepared to help people make a decision to accept God's leading in their lives
- preached so that the Word of God becomes meaningful
- presented to uplift Jesus as Lord.

A sermon

- gives instructions
- gives understanding
- gives encouragement
- teaches responsibility
- gives information
- gives hope to sinners
- gives reproof
- inspires action.

## 1. PERSONAL PREPARATION

Good sermons come from speakers who have consecrated their lives to God. Unless the speaker's life is under control of the Holy Spirit, God will not be able to speak through him to others.

If you are regularly called upon to preach, then your life should include the following activities:

- time to study and meditate upon God's word in the Bible
- a strong prayer life in which you talk with God and He reveals His will to you.
- time to read the Bible and other books to increase your knowledge of both spiritual and secular subjects
- time spent in improving your speaking voice

## 2. CHOOSING THE SUBJECT

Before you decide on a topic for a sermon, think about the needs of your church members. Some of them may be careless about Sabbath keeping or tithing. There may be some of them who have become discouraged. Some may be new Christians and need instruction in Christian living. The needs of your church will guide in your choice of sermon topics.

Ideas for sermons may come from the following sources:

- from your Bible study
- from reading books and newspapers
- from personal expenses
- from current events; for example, floods, wars. etc.
- from dreams
- from nature

- from visits with church members.

Once you have decided what you are going to preach about, try to find as much information about your topic as you can. Here are some sources that will help you:

- Bible
- Bible concordance
- Bible commentary
- Bible dictionary
- books
- magazines
- E. G. White writings
- ask your pastor for help.

Once you have gathered information on your topic, write down on paper the title of your sermon. Under the title, write down your aim. Your aim should include **WHY** you are preaching this sermon and **WHAT** results you want to see from your preaching.

### 3. PREPARING A SERMON OUTLINE

A sermon outline is a way of recognizing a sermon in an orderly and progressive manner. An outline is written in note form and does **NOT** include all that the preacher wishes to say. A sermon outline is like the skeleton of an animal. A skeleton allows the animal to stand up and walk around. Without a skeleton, the animal would collapse in a heap on the ground. The preacher takes his outline or skeleton into the pulpit. It is his guide to all that he will say. Without it, his sermon will collapse.

What does the outline do?

- guides the thoughts of the preacher
- keeps the preacher on the track
- helps the hearers understand the meaning of the sermon
- helps the hearers remember what has been said.

**NOTE:** Whenever you are called to speak for God, prepare an outline to guide your thoughts. This includes all sermons, Bible studies, prayer meetings, morning and evening worships, Sabbath school lessons, etc.

### 4. THE THREE PARTS OF A SERMON OUTLINE

-Each sermon outline should have **THREE** parts:

- INTRODUCTION
- MAIN BODY
- CONCLUSION

## **THE INTRODUCTION**

The introduction of a sermon outline provides:

- a time for the congregation to settle down and be in a receptive mood for receiving what is to be said in the sermon
- a way to arouse the interest of the hearer
- opportunity for the speaker to tell the hearers what he is going to talk about and how he is going to present it.

The Introduction may take the form of:

- a story. Everybody enjoys stories. A story gets the attention of the listeners. This may be a Bible story or any other story that will help lead your hearers to the main topic.
- a Bible text or passage
- a parable
- a newspaper article
- a question.

**NOTE:** The introduction must be short (3-4 minutes only). It is only the beginning of your talk.

## **THE MAIN BODY**

The Main Body of your sermon is the part in which you will discuss your topic. In the Main Body you should:

- have from two to six main points.
- state clearly the main points of your outline
- support your main points with Bible evidence
- make clear the meaning of each main point
- illustrate your points with stories or examples
- move step-by-step from one point to the next
- make bridging statements between each main point so that your hearers will know you are moving on to the next point
- ask questions to keep your hearers thinking. This will help you to know if they are understanding what you are saying.

## **THE CONCLUSION**

The Conclusion is used to bring the sermon to a close. Your conclusion should:

- be short and to the point
- do not introduce any new ideas in your conclusion. This will only distract your hearers

- from what has already been said
- summarize quickly the main points of your sermon.
  - apply the truths presented in your sermon to the lives of your listeners.
  - help each of your listeners to make a positive response to the truth presented; for example, tell a short, short story, ask a question, read an appealing text, etc.
  - finish in a positive way  
sit down.

## Sample Sermon Outline

### **Abraham: God has chosen us**

**AIM:** to show how God calls his co-workers as assistants and messengers to help him in the jobs in which he also is engaged, and how we can respond to his call.

#### **PREACHER'S BACKGROUND STUDY**

Abraham had been brought up in heathen surroundings, but God had spoken to him and given him some promises. He entered into blessing because of his faith in and obedience to the Word of God that was revealed to him.

The New Testament shows how Abraham is an illustration and an example for us today -- See Romans 4, Galatians 3, and James 2.

Notice particularly how this process continued throughout his life as each step of obedience led him into a new place of blessing.

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Describe God as a big landlord who engages servants like an African farmer. Compare the call of Abraham with that of some of the other Biblical characters such as Moses, Samuel, Isaiah or Paul. Is there one method by which God calls us? Recount the calls of local Christians you may know. Can you tell how you were called? Why does God call? Jesus called the 12 disciples so that he might use them as messengers and errand boys. Show the difference between particular calls which come to specific people at special times and the universal call of God to everyone at all times from which no man escapes.

#### **MAIN POINTS**

##### **1. God called (Genesis 12:1)**

Who would have imagined, as Abraham packed up his belongings and the caravan of animals started off, that the greatest adventure of human history was just beginning? God saw it all from the beginning: the growth of the Jewish nation and the Jewish religion; finally his own coming, in Christ, to pay the price of sin. But in his great wisdom God chose to work through

men. So he called one individual. Still today, when God wants to do any great thing, he starts by calling an individual. Are you ready for His call?

## **2. Abraham believed**

Abraham's extended family lived among heathen people who worship many gods, a situation similar to many of our communities in Asia. But unlike his neighbors, Abraham believed in one God, the Supreme Being. Abraham was not a Christian but his faith in one God singled him out as outstanding. He blazed the path for many others and became the father of all believers.

## **3. Abraham obeyed**

When God spoke, Abraham listened and followed. Notice the words, "So Abraham went" (Genesis 12:4, 10; 13:1). When God said "Go," he went not really knowing where. Obedience is hearing a command and doing it. We often hear what God is saying to us, but we lack the courage and the will to put into what we hear. Disobedience has been mankind's cardinal sin from the beginning and has since persisted. Refer to the story of Adam and Eve.

## **4. Others benefited**

Abraham shared his faith and obedience with his family. He did not travel alone but with his wife, children, nephew, and perhaps others. When God blesses he does not only enrich you personally but to enlarge your influence on others. No man is blessed for his own sake. Divine grace begins with the individual, but does not end with him. We reap what others have sown through obedience. What has our country gained from Christian influence? What is our legacy to the future?

## **5. Our heritage**

What have we inherited from our Christian parents? from the church which gave us nurture? What do we share with others? our faith? our education? our culture? our money? Our heritage is not only confined to this world, it goes beyond into the ocean. We share in Christ's obedience here in tribulation, we share in his glory as citizens of heaven. We share in his work here as co-workers; we shall share in his triumph as we continue to serve him around the throne (Revelation 7:15). (see the sermons of the Pentecost).

## **CONCLUSION**

Our call to faith, like Abraham's, must lead first to response and then to responsibility. Sadly, most people hear the call of God but fail to respond: "Many are called, but few are chosen" (Matt 22:14). Even those who respond sometimes neglect their responsibility for family, community and national enrichment. Have you responded? Have you accepted the responsibilities for which God called you?

# How To Select a Theme

A sermon needs a theme for the same reason that a building needs a blueprint, or a story needs a plot, for the same reason that a picture needs a center of interest, of a sales talk needs a proposition. Yet it is a lamentable fact that many sermons lack a clear theme which can be intelligently followed. A themeless sermon is like a flood, which spreads in every direction; a sermon with a theme is like a river flowing within its banks in a certain direction. Rivers are of great value to man; floods are spectacular but seldom of any value. A train cannot go anywhere, no matter how much power the engine has, unless it stays on the track; a sermon may make a great display of steam, but it does not reach home unless it follows with theme.

A sermon is not a thing merely to be displayed, it is a means to an end. So, one cannot take the first step in preparation until he intelligently discerns the goal to be reached. A good hunter does not fire in all directions hoping to hit something, he first sights his game and then he takes aim. A preacher who aims at nothing is sure to hit it. Choose a target and then take a careful aim. The choice of a worthy theme is a very large step toward successful sermon construction.

Now, one must not confuse a theme with a subject or topic. a topic should accurately suggest the theme, but the theme is nearly always longer and more complete than a topic. The topic is for the bulletin board or newspaper; the theme is the preacher's own statement of the purpose of the sermon. The topic is announced at the beginning before the text is read or immediately afterward; the theme is stated more fully somewhere in the introduction. Of course the theme need not be stated at all if the divisions make it sufficiently clear, in which case the theme serves simply to guide the preacher in making his divisions. A theme is sometimes called the proposition. The following will serve as an illustration of the difference between the theme and the topic. From the text 2 Tim. 4:6-8, we may take this theme, "The insignificance which Paul's last message has to every Christian." Obviously, this is too cumbersome for the bulletin board. The topic may be, "Paul's Swan Song," or Paul's Bon Voyage."

The above theme suggests the following outline:

## PAUL'S SWAN SONG\*

II Tim. 4:6-8

- I. Its significance in Life's Battles -- "I have fought a god fight."
- II. Its significance in Life's Race -- "I have finished my course."
- III. Its significance in Life's Doubts -- "I have kept the faith."
- IV. Its significance at Life's End -- "There is laid up for me a crown."

That the words of Paul have significance for all Christians is seen in the phrase, "and not to me only, but unto all them also who love his appearing."

## TWO KINDS OF THEMES

There are, generally speaking, two kinds of themes as regards their grammatical structure, the rhetorical and the logical. These terms are used with a specific technical meaning.

A *rhetorical theme* or proposition is a subject with its modifiers, such as: "The Blessings of God's People," or "The Perils of Life's Journey," or "the Sinner's Need of Repentance." Single words like "Repentance," or "Faith" are too general for themes; they need modifiers such as adjectives or prepositional phrases to make them sufficiently specific for themes.

A *logical theme* consists of a subject and a predicate, such as: "Faith in Christ is the Only Means to Salvation," or "Happiness is not Found in Possessions Only." The logical theme may be in question form, as: "Why is Faith in Christ Necessary to Salvation?" The logical theme suggests divisions which are proofs of the theme; or in the question form, the divisions are answers to the question. Note that the above themes have a verb as well as a subject.

### The right theme for each occasion

The important thing is to select the proper theme for the occasion. Henry Ward Beecher insisted that the sermon be preached *to meet the present needs of the people*, and that may account partly for his success. The first question the good preacher asks himself upon entering his study is, "What do my people need supremely at this time?" And not, "Where can I find a clever outline?" A doctor does not give all his patients the same medicine, nor does he give medicine at all without a diagnosis, unless he is a quack. A preacher who preaches sermons without a diagnosis of his people's needs is a ministerial quack and will do people about as much good as a quack doctor.

The people's needs are discovered in several ways. They may be revealed to the preacher in prayer, for many needs are secret needs. Visitation in the people's homes will usually solve the problem of what to preach, for during such visits, people often voice their needs, and make confessions of the weaknesses if the preacher is a sympathetic hearer. Frequently some general condition in the community such as an epidemic, a calamity, or a general moral trend will suggest the proper theme.

The special holidays of the year usually call for a related theme for one of the



services, preferably for Sunday evening. The stores and the newspapers make people conscious of the sentiment of holidays of which fact preachers should take advantage when there is an appropriately related Bible truth. For instance, near the 12th of June the theme might be, "The Believer's Declaration of Independence" or near Thanksgiving Day it might be, "In Everything Give Thanks."

The evangelist or special speaker will find it more difficult to discern people's needs than the pastor, though the pastor may help him, but by all means the evangelist ought to pray definitely about the choice of his theme. Where he repeats repertoire sermons, he should after prayer and diagnosis, revise them to fit the present situation. To succeed, a preacher must preach to the people who are present.

Sermon themes should exhibit the following qualities: they should be comprehensive, biblical, dynamic and specific.

- a) The theme should express the whole aim of the sermon, nothing more or less.
- b) The good proposition is biblical, otherwise its elaboration can hardly be called a sermon. Secular themes may rarely be chosen by a preacher, but they should indeed be rare.
- c) The proper theme is dynamic, it starts the hearer's mind thinking to a certain direction. The theme which does not arouse interest and stir mental activity is not the right proposition to fit the occasion.
- d) Finally the theme ought to be specific. People are not intensely interested in the general subject "Faith," but many are interested in "Faith that Overcomes the World," or "Faith that Obtains Salvation."

When one has chosen a proper theme he is ready to proceed to the next step.

# How to Choose and Interpret a Text

It is the business of the preacher to preach the gospel, if the gospel is found only in the Bible, if the Bible is the divinely inspired revelation of God's will; then a sermon ought to be based on a text of Scripture. If it is argued that one could preach divine authority, unless the preacher cares to give the impression that he is authority enough. If it is important that men know the Bible thoroughly then the preacher must use every opportunity to quote, teach, and honor the Scriptures.

The selection of a text will depend upon the preacher's approach to the sermon. If the theme is chosen first, then the text must be selected which will best support the theme without distorting or accommodating the text. This can be done by tracing in a concordance the words which are synonymous with the principal word in the theme and then by applying the process of elimination. Or a satisfactory text may occur to the preacher's mind, with a little meditation or prayer, which harmonizes with the theme.

When a theme is chosen first, its exact wording should await the selection of a text so that they may be harmonized. For instance, the preacher feels that the present need is for personal evangelism. He tentatively words the theme, "Our Responsibility in Personal Evangelism. Selecting the first Chapter of John, verses 40-51, as a text concerning Andrew and Philip finding Peter and Nathaniel, the preacher revises the theme to read, "The Example of the First Disciples in Personal Evangelism.

this outline may follow:

## **John 1:40-51**

- I. They Personally Learned About Jesus.
- II. They Preached Jesus to Another.
- III. They Invited Another to Meet Jesus.

The following week, the preacher desires to follow with another sermon on the best methods of personal evangelism. The tentative theme is, "How To Become a Successful Personal Evangelist." After selecting the text in Acts 8 about Philip and the Eunuch, the theme is revised to read, "A Successful Revivalist Shows the Way to Personal Evangelism."

This outline might result:

- I. The Guide is the Holy Spirit
- II. The Starting Point is the Prospect's Interest.
- III. The Approach is Through the Scripture.
- IV. The Aim is a Full Surrender

Quite frequently the text will be chosen before the theme. Then the text will come to him during prayer, or while the preacher is studying his Bible, and he will be strongly impressed with its practical application to the people. Ideally, it is best to begin with a text, but when the need of the people gives rise to the sermon, a theme will often occur to the mind of the preacher. However, if the mind of the preacher is saturated with Scripture and he is accustomed to thinking of people's problems in the light of biblical solutions, he may nearly always think of a text when a need is suggested, even as a physician thinks of sicknesses in the terms of specific remedies and specific kinds of operations. If the preacher is following a series of course of sermons through a book of the Bible, then, of course, the text will come before the theme, though there will be a general theme for the whole book chosen at the beginning of the series.

### **FIVE SUGGESTED RULES FOR SELECTING A TEXT**

**1) Select a real text.** A Real Text is one which is a complete statement, precept, or narrative used with the sense intended by the author. Single words or fragment texts are to be avoided. Any legitimate theme can be based on a real text. Texts which are isolated from the context and accommodated to an application foreign to the purpose of the author are not proper texts. The words of Scripture cease to be Scripture when they are accommodated. "Let us do evil that good may come" is a sentence from the Bible, but when isolated from the context it is contrary to the teaching of the sacred author, and, as such, is not Scripture.

**2) Select the great doctrinal and ethical texts of the Bible.** Do not fear that these have been exhausted because they are frequently used. They are often used because they are great preaching texts. One need not fear that he will be thought naive or a beginner because he uses a familiar text; the great preachers of every age have used these great texts. The people are interested in them, because they have used them for comfort and light in dark places.

**3) Avoid texts which are known to be interpolations,** that is, portions which have crept into the later manuscripts through scribes' errors or additions from marginal notes, which are not to be

found in the oldest and most reliable manuscripts. These spurious\* texts can be avoided by using the *Revised Version* for comparison in study. Let it be said that they are not numerous. However, the few which are found in the *Authorized Version* have often been used as texts. None of them contain false teaching, but many educated hearers know them, and a sermon based on a spurious text would have not authority with such persons.

**4) Avoid the sayings of uninspired men** when choosing a text. These sayings have their place in the Bible, but they are not proper texts, because they lack divine authority. Many texts have been selected from the book of Job which are the words of Job's three friends. Some of these sound good when isolated, but all three of these speakers were in error and were rebuked by God. Others are Pharaoh, Satan, Balaam, Pilate, and any men whose words are reported, but who are not inspired apostles or prophets.

**5) Do not choose texts simply because they are odd or queer.** The serious minister has no time for novelties and curiosities. The preacher ought to be joyful, but not frivolous. Humor is not forbidden in the pulpit when it is in good taste, but one should not be funny at the expense of the Holy Word. Texts which seem queer appear so only because they are oriental or Old English idioms. A preacher once selected the text from Hosea, "Ephraim is a Cake not Turned," with the topic, "Half Baked." The only thing "half baked" in the modern sense of the term was that preacher's sermon.

## EIGHT RULES OF INTERPRETATION

Before a text can be expressed in an intelligent theme and divided, it must be properly interpreted. Observe the following rules of interpretation.

**1) Interpret the text in the light of the context.** A verse of Scripture which seems to have one meaning may be seen to mean something else when the context is read. **I Cor 2:9** seems to refer to heaven's future glory, but the context reveals it to be a quotation from the Old Testament predicting the fuller revelations of the age of grace which believers may enjoy in this present world. Hebrews 12:1 appears to be an admonition to believers to live carefully before their unsaved neighbors, but the context (Chapter eleven) shows that it refers to the believer's race as encompassed about by the great heroes of faith (the great cloud of martyrs of chapter eleven). Colossians 2:21, "Touch not, taste not, handle not," seems to be a good prohibition text, but it is useless as such because it is quotation of some negative precepts that legalistic teachers were using. However, there are some good texts against beverage alcohol. Texts like the above are so numerous that one is never safe in the interpretation of a text until the context has been studied.

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\*Spurious = not genuine

**2) Interpret a text in harmony with the teaching of the whole Bible.** The Bible does not contradict itself, therefore when the text can have two meanings, the one is to be taken which is in harmony with the teaching of the body of Scripture. Luke 14:26 seems to assert that a disciple of Jesus must hate his near relatives, but since this would be contrary to the great body of Scripture which teaches love, the word "hate" must be taken figuratively as hyperbole. It really means that a disciple must be willing to utterly give up home ties to heed the call to service.

**3) The text must be interpreted in harmony with sound, systematic doctrine.** Doctrines are formed after consulting the Bible's teaching on a subject. Therefore a single text which seems contrary must not be used against the well established Bible doctrine. The orthodox tenets of the fundamental church have been subjected to two millenniums of scholarly interpretation. This does not guarantee their infallibility, but one should proceed with great fundamental consensus.

**4) A text should be taken literally** unless it is obviously figurative, or unless a literal interpretation would lead to absurdity or an impossibility. The Bible was written in the common people's language and for average readers. Unrestricted spiritualizing and allegorizing do violence to the Bible and make it a little more than a playground for metaphysical minds. The spiritualizing done by Origen and a few other early fathers has had a bad influence on some later preachers, and some modern preachers. That spiritualizing is vain is seen by the fact that no two such interpreters get the same result. There are indeed some figures of speech in the Bible, but they are in nearly every case where a Bible narrative is allegorized, the force application is inferior to the real and literal application.

**5) If possible, consult the original languages as help to interpretation.** But first a few lines of caution are needed. One should not try to make independent translations of words or passages of the Greek and Hebrew texts unless one has studied the grammar of these languages. Some preachers with a doctrinal axe to grind quote Greek and Hebrew with a great show of authority when they have merely consulted a lexicon or an interlinear diglot.\* This is an unsafe procedure, if not at times a dishonest one. There are preachers too, who quote the original words from hearsay, trusting the accuracy of another's research. The author has known of absurd renderings of Greek passages which he has traced through several persons all of whom quoted from hearsay. Furthermore, it is not good taste to quote Greek and Hebrew in the pulpit, for hardly anyone in the average congregation will appreciate the quotations. Give the people the benefits of thorough research, but do not display methods. Everyone knows that an artist uses a brush to paint his pictures, but they do not expect to see brush marked on the finished painting. These warnings need not discourage the Greek student; he can profit immeasurably by his studies. There are literally scores of passages the full depth of which cannot be seen in any English translation. There are also any number of homiletical hints which are discovered in the study of the original languages. Greek and Hebrew will greatly aid the minister to interpret his texts correctly, but let him keep these aids in his study where they belong.

\*diglot = bilingual, translation and original side by side

**6) Make use of the scholar of other translators.** If the minister does not have a thorough knowledge of the original languages, he will be helped in interpreting the texts by comparing several literal and modern speech translations of the Bible, such as: **The Emphasized Bible**, by Rotherham; **Weymouth's New Testament**; **Helen Montgomery's Centenary Translation**; **Moffatt's Translation**; **Young's Literal Translation**. By comparing some of these with the **King James Version**, misinterpretations based upon archaic words will be avoided. For instance, "Study" in 2 Tim. 2:15 will be seen to mean "strive earnestly," not study books; "Charity" in 1 Cor. 13, will be replaced by "love"; "let" in 2 Thes. 2:7, will give way to "hinder"; "prevent" in 1 Thes. 4:15, will be found to mean "precede"; "conversation" in Gal. 1:3, will be seen rather to mean "behavior," and these are only a few of the many which could be listed of space permitted. These are enough to show the need for consulting either the original languages or several translations.

**7) Furthermore, consult parallel passages.** Scripture is best interpreted by Scripture. If the same idea is expressed several places, but in somewhat different words, it is made clearer by comparison. If an ethical principle is applied to several different cases, it is seen to be general in application and not simply a local emergency measure. Some commands and prohibitions are of only local and temporary significance and others are meant for the whole church for all time. This problem of application can usually be solved by comparing parallel passages.

**8) Finally, consult one of some good commentaries of the critical, exegetical type.** Devotional commentaries seldom give much attention to interpretation, although they are helpful in suggesting points for elaboration, but here we are interested only in the interpretation of the text which must come before elaboration. (Some recommended commentaries of both types are listed at the back of this book.) The writers of the good exegetical commentaries were careful Biblical scholars conversant with theology and the original languages, and while they are not infallible, of course, their opinions are worth considering along with one's own in the process of interpreting the text. Do not be slavish follower of commentaries, but do not either reject their explanations without good reason and careful study.

# How to Organize a Sermon

**S**tones, wood, steel, and glass do not make a building; paints, easel, and brushes do not make a painting; stone, hammer, and chisels do not make an automobile; likewise facts, illustrations, proofs, and application do not make a sermon; the only difference in each case between the materials and the finished product is organization. Not all preachers preach organized sermons; in some cases because the value of the organization is not appreciated, in other cases because the methods of organization are not known.

## SOME REASONS FOR ORGANIZATION IN THE SERMON

**1) Organization facilitates the preacher's delivery.** It is easier to remember the sermon thoughts if they are arranged so that logically related thoughts follow one another. It is easier to keep the whole body of material in mind if it has a plan. An untrained preacher may suppose that he has more liberty of delivery if he is free to say whatever comes to his mind on any subject, but such talk would have to be labeled, "Miscellaneous Thoughts on Religion." With any mental discipline a preacher will find that the organized discourse is easier to deliver; furthermore, what he delivers will deserve the name "sermon."

**2) The organized sermon is more pleasing to the hearer;** it has more beauty. If it is argued that one should not strive for beauty in preaching, we answer, "Why not?" Jesus on the mount preached the most beautiful sermon of all, and it was certainly well organized. We precede our sermons with beautiful music to make the service more attractive, why would the sermon lack attractiveness? No one admires chaos, nor can hearers be expected to listen attentively to chaotic sermons. Neither will sensational stories, humor, and pulpit antics make up for poorly planned material.

**3) The organized sermon is easier to remember.** A sermon has permanent value only if it can be remembered. The layman does not face his problems during the service hours on Sunday, but during the week when at work, while transacting business, or in the company of worldly men. His ability to solve his problems as they arise depends upon his ability to call to mind admonitions and counsel given by his pastor in church. If he fails in the time of trial, his pastor who cares only for temporary impressions is to some degree responsible. Let any one who is in doubt about the above psychological principle test it for himself. Let him look at a pile of stones on a hillside and see if he can remember the location of each thirty minutes later, but let him pick out the white stones from among them which are of a uniform size and arrange them in a circle around a flower bed and he can remember their design, order, and purpose almost indefinitely. Or let him all to mind the sermons he remembers and see if they did not have design. Now, of course, we strive to get immediate results from preaching, but we should strive just as much for permanent results.

Compare the two following outlines and judge which would be remembered:

- I. God Saves Mankind.**
- II. Men Ought to Love One Another.**
- III. Faith is Necessary to Salvation.**
- IV. Sin Will Bring Eternal Condemnation.**
- VI. There are Many Signs of Christ's Soon Return.**

Text: John 3:16 (Alex McClaren)

- I. The Great Lake**-- God So Loved the World.
- II. The River** -- That He Gave His Son.
- III. The Pitcher** -- Whosoever Believeth on Him.
- IV. The Drink** -- Should Have Everlasting Life.

The second outline by McClaren creates a picture of a lake of which flows a river into which a pitcher is dipped and from which a drink is taken. Such a picture the mind can grasp and hold. Everytime afterward that one sees a lake, river, or pitcher the sermon is likely to come to mind.

**4) The organized sermon can be more easily understood.** A well organized sermon will seldom be vague, for organization dispels ambiguity. One of the best ways to determine whether one really understands a subject is to attempt to organize the subject. A person could never learn to play musical instrument and read notes without learning one thing at time in an organized fashion. It is known by educators that no body of truth can be transferred from one person to another in bulk. The parts must imparted one by one in systematic order. A sermon is a short course of instruction on a specific religious subject followed by an appeal. The lessons must be separated and given one at a time in their logical order if the hearer is to clearly understand the contents and purpose of the sermon.

**5) Finally, organization increases the effectiveness of the sermon.** Let the preacher learn this from the salesman and the lawyer. The salesman knows how to approach his client and just when to make his appeal. It is needless to say he stays on his subject and presents the merits of his product one by one until he conveys to the prospective buyer a mental picture of himself as a delighted owner of the product. The lawyer carefully builds an appeal for his client step by step until the jury cannot picture him other than an innocent man. An unorganized appeal would be just so much talk which would fall on deaf ears. Now, it is not being overlooked that the Holy Spirit is the largest power in the sermon and commit it to God; but if man has any part in the sermon, he should make his part as effective as possible. Doing the human part poorly does not make the divine part more effective.

Now that we have seen the advantage of organization, let us look further to the qualities which the organization should exhibit.



## FIVE QUALITIES OF GOOD SERMON ORGANIZATION

**1) First and foremost, the sermon structure should have unity.** By unity we mean that one theme prevails throughout all the divisions. We mean that each division is related to the theme, that there is something common to each division. One might call it having a common denominator, to borrow terminology from the mathematics; for when a sermon has unity, some common idea will go into each division. A sermon which does not have unity is not truly a sermon, but several little talks strung together. One cannot expect to be sufficiently forceful to alter men's conduct in a thirty-minute sermon unless he stays on one idea or duty. The prayerless are not going to be turned to a prayerful life just because the preacher makes several remarks about prayer in his sermon along with a good many other assorted ideas. On the other hand, if the preacher devotes his whole half hour to enforcing prayer as a Christian duty, he is likely to get some results. He may find that he will need to preach a series of sermons on prayer before he sees real results. If a carpenter wants to drive a nail, he must pound in one place. The quickest way to "go to town" is to stay on one street.

The following outline illustrates unity.

Topic: "The Throne of Grace"

Text: Hebrews 4:16

**Theme: "Approaching the Throne of Grace"**

- I. How We Approach the Throne of Grace**  
"With Boldness."
- II. Why We Approach the Throne of Grace**  
"To obtain mercy and receive help."
- III. When We Approach the Throne of Grace**  
"In the time of need" at all times.

Notice that something is common to each division and that the theme follows throughout. To introduce an appeal for tithing into the above outline would be a violation of unity. If the people need to hear about tithing, devote a whole sermon to it.

**2) In addition to unity, the divisions should have coherence.** Not only should the parts be related to a common theme, but they would adhere one to the other.

In the following outline, there is unity but not much coherence:

- I. God Is the Author of Faith.
- II. Without Faith a Christian Will Fail.
- III. Faith Is Necessary to Salvation.

Faith is common to all the above divisions, but the divisions have little relation one to the other.

The following outline has unity and coherence:

Topic: "Paul's Three I Am's"

Text: Romans 1:14-16

Theme: Paul's state of the mind regarding the preaching of the gospel of Christ

- I. I Am a Debtor to Preach --v. 14
- II. I Am Not Ashame to Preach -- v. 16
- III. I Am Ready to Preach -- v. 15

3) Another necessary quality of organization is progress. This quality assures that the hearer's attention will be carried along to the goal. Listening to a sermon is like riding a bicycle, as soon as the progress stops, one falls off. Progress is achieved by the arrangement of the divisions so that each rises a little nearer to the goal. Progress is hindered by digressions from the theme. Side trips do not take one nearer home. Hearers do not care to wait at junctions while the preacher explores bypaths. It is further hindered by too much needless elaboration of a single division. If there are only two of three main divisions, there should be several sub-divisions under each to keep the discourse moving. It may help to make the progress apparent if the preacher announces his goal and the main mile posts at the beginning.

The following outline illustrated progress:

Text: Mark 1:14-15

- I. Jesus came -- His advent.
- II. Jesus came Preaching -- His mission.
- III. Jesus came Preaching Repentance -- His message.

Note that each division rises a little above the preceding one, reaching a climax. Such an outline properly handled would be sure to sustain interest because it progresses.

4) Further, the structure of the sermon should have symmetry. Symmetry or proportion is

necessary to all works of art. One's sense of taste is offended by that which is out of proportion. A house with a porch as big as the building would be an architectural curiosity, and impractical as well. Not infrequently are sermons lacking in symmetry. Too much time is spent in the introduction and in the first points, so that the latter divisions must be skimmed. Sometimes, a subdivision is enlarged far out of proportion to its importance, in which cases both symmetry and progress are violated. If the subdivision were really that important, another should have been chosen, and the subdivision should have been made a main division. It is not contended that all the divisions should be of equal length, but that an amount of time should be devoted to each in proportion to its importance. If all the divisions are of equal importance, then each should receive the same amount of treatment. But this is seldom a fact. It would not be possible to illustrate symmetry with an outline, because it is achieved very largely in the delivery. The sermon may be symmetrical on paper but when it is preached, it may look like something seen in a curved mirror.

5) Finally, the organization should have climax. The older meaning of the word "climax" is the same as progress. It is from a Greek word which means "Ladder." The word, however, has come to mean the final highest point of development. A sermon may have progress, but it may not leave the impression that a goal has been reached. A sermon may steadily rise, yet fail to arrive at any point which could be called a proper goal. Therefore a sermon must not only move, it must finally reach an adequate goal indicated by the theme. A merry-go-round has movement, but it never arrives anywhere. An arrow shot into the air makes progress upward but it does not reach a goal; it falls to the ground when its momentum stops. An arrow shot at a target hits the mark. It then has both progress and climax and the archer is satisfied. Some sermons simply stop from a loss of momentum, others hit a mark and leave people satisfied. Climax is achieved in the construction by the arrangement of the points so that a goal is reached at the end of the sermon which is worthy of a sermon. Climax is achieved in the delivery by starting in a deliberate, but unimpassioned voice, and then gradually increasing the emphasis and gestures as the sermon progresses to that the most intense point is at the appeal. A preacher who shouts in the introduction can never have climax of delivery.

The following topical sermon outline lacks climax

"Three Reasons for Believing in Immortality"

- I. The Bible Promises It.
- II. Nature Illustrates It.
- III. All Men Expect or Desire It.

Such a sermon lacks climax because any number of other reasons could well have been added to the three given. It makes, but it does not arrive.

Note the following illustration of climax.

Topic: "Christian Attainment"

Text: Philippians 3:13-15

Theme: The Christian's Attitude Toward attainment

- I. His attitude toward past attainment -- Humble forgetfulness.
- II. His attitude toward present attainment -- Earnest reaching forth.
- III. His attitude toward future attainment -- Confident expectation of Perfection.

Though the above is not a perfect sermon, it does reach a goal to which nothing can be added; it has a climax.

To recapitulate, the qualities of good sermon organization are:

- 1) Unity
- 2) Coherence
- 3) Progress
- 4) Symmetry
- 5) Climax

# How Sermons are Classified

We have seen how to select a theme, how to choose and interpret a text, and how to organize a sermon. Let us now see what kinds of sermons there are and what the function of each kind is. Not all authorities classify sermons in the same way, but sermons are most commonly classified as, Topical, Textual, and Expository. We will follow this classification which is based upon the USE made of the TEXT in the construction of the sermon.

## THE TOPICAL SERMON

The topical sermon takes from the text only a topic or subject. The divisions are invented by the preacher in accordance with the rhetorical possibilities of the subject and the preacher's knowledge of the subject as it is treated in the whole Bible.

Example:

### REDEMPTION

- I. The Meaning of Redemption.
- II. The Necessity of Redemption.
- III. The Method of Redemption.
- IV. The Results of Redemption.

### EVIDENCES OF GOD'S LOVE

- I. As Seen in the Bible.
- II. As Seen in Nature.
- III. As Seen in Providence.

This method permits full liberty of composition and a full treatment of any subject. It gives unlimited rein to the preacher's inventive genius, and opens a wide door to rhetorical eloquence. However, the topical sermon nearly always is colored more than other types of sermons by the preacher's personal views and prejudices. It is usually too general in its scope, and there is tendency for topical preaching to become too secular. Another objection to the topical method is that it develops a sermon merely by extension so that the divisions are like links in a chain instead of parts of a designed structure; and that the number of these chain divisions is arbitrary, there being not reason why in most cases that there could not be more or fewer divisions without doing serious violence to the sermon. For instance, in the second example given above there is no good reason, except the limitation of time, why other "Evidences of God's Love" might not be included.

Though the disadvantages seem to outweigh the advantages of topical preaching, there are several uses of the method, and there are some subjects which are better handled topically. Topical sermons are recommended in the following conditions: (a) When the subject is not adequately treated by any one passage of Scripture; (b) When one desires to treat a subject in a very general way, such as presenting a doctrine to an audience to which it is entirely unfamiliar; (c) When one desires to present general evangelistic truth to an audience of unsaved persons who are not too familiar with the Bible; (d) When treating social or moral problems not existing in the Bible times or not treated by Bible writers.

## THE TEXTUAL SERMON

The textual sermon takes from the text a subject and the main divisions. The main points of the sermon are only those stated or clearly inferred by the passage of Scripture upon which the sermon is based. However, the subdivisions are invented in the same way that all the divisions are invented in the topical sermon.

Example:

### THE MINSTER: AN EXAMPLE

1 Timothy 4:12

"Become an example of believers, in word, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity."  
(Revised Version)

- I. An Example in Word.
- II. An Example in Conduct.
- III. An Example in Love.
- IV. An Example in Faith.
- V. An Example in Purity.

The text simply mentions the exemplary qualities of word, conduct, love, faith, and purity: no more information is available without drawing upon several other parts of the Bible or upon one's own personal experience. The sermon is textual because the text provides the main divisions, while the subdivisions or the elaboration is drawing from other sources. The King James Version was not used for this text, because the words "conversation" and "charity" and "love" and the word "spirit" do not appear in the old Greek manuscripts and so do not belong in the text. This illustrates the need for consulting other translations in text interpretation.

Textual sermons have the advantage that they are more scriptural in design than the

topical variety, they do not disappoint the hearers who expect something from the text which is announced. The textual method permits great variety in construction and selection. The textual sermon seems to the hearer more like a finished discourse, because the number of the divisions determined by the material in the text; and when each division has been treated no one expects anything more. In most cases the textual sermon will be remembered longer, for where the hearer follows the sermon with his bible, a connection is fixed in his mind between the passage and the preacher's admonitions, so that he can recall the message whenever he rereads the passage.

It is objected to the textual method that it restricts the preacher's originality, which is not necessarily true; that it does not permit a sufficiently broad treatment of a subject, but most sermons are too broad; and that textual preachers too often accommodate their texts and do violence to the true meaning. The last objection is a real one, but texts need not be accommodated for the real application is nearly always richer than one which is forced. The reason some preachers accommodate their texts is that they are following an outmoded practice which was followed for several generations on Europe and America from which period a great many printed sermons have been narrowed. Very few of the better preachers today who are well-trained and who accept the Bible as the divine revelation are guilty of purposely forcing their texts.

Textual sermons are recommended: (a) Whenever a single passage of Scripture will provide the principal points to meet the needs of the people; (b) When preaching ethical sermons, because a text carries more authority when one is preaching specific evangelistic truth. A strong text bears conviction when it is fully treated, while passing quotations are not so effective; (When dealing with specific doctrinal truths.

## THE EXPOSITORY SERMON

The expository sermon not only takes a subject and main divisions from the text, but all the subdivisions as well. It is usually based on a longer passage than the topical or textual sermon. Often the text is a whole paragraph, whole chapter, or even a whole book. No idea can be introduced into the expository sermon which does not come from the passage of Scripture upon which it is based. It is an exposition of the given passage and that only.

Example:

## TEMPTATION

James 1:12-15

- I. The Origin of Temptation, verses 13-14.
  - A. Not From God, verse 13.
  - B. From inward desire, verse 14.
- II. The Results of Yielding to Temptation, verse 15.
  - A. First sin, verse 15.
  - B. Then death, verse 15.
- III. The Reward for Enduring Temptation, verse 12.
  - A. Blessedness, verse 12.
  - B. A Crown of Life, verse 12.

The text of the above example consists of four verses, a complete paragraph, and it should be clear that every heading and sub-heading is taken from the passage of Scripture used for the text.

In the opinion of the author, expository preaching has many noteworthy advantages. They are as follows:

- a) It is most like the preaching of the Apostles and early preachers.
- b) It leads both the preacher and his hearers to a wider and deeper knowledge of the Scripture.
- c) It promotes a greater respect for the Bible on the part of laity.
- d) It restrains the tendency to loose interpretation and to accommodation.
- e) It restrains any tendency to ride a hobby or to preach only pet doctrines.
- f) It prevents voice monotony in preaching in that the variety of materials is likely to demand a flexibility in volume and pitch.
- g) It is recommended where exposition is used in a series, for it makes easier the choice of a text.
- h) It makes easier the introduction of unwelcome admonition, and the preacher is less likely to be accused of preaching to individuals; for if the offensive injunction falls within the text, no one can blame the preacher for making several remarks about it.

Several objections to the expository method of preaching are commonly made:

- a) It is objected that it is not conducive to unity in the sermon. But expository sermons can and should have unity like other types.
- b) Some contend that it is not adaptable to meeting up-to-date problems. Nearly all human problems treated in the Scriptures if not specifically, at least in principle. Good expository preachers are no less interested in application than others.
- c) It is further objected that it is not sufficiently sensational for modern times. Truth is said to be stranger than fiction, and certainly the Bible equals any source for human interest and mighty deeds. If one has any dramatic ability whatever, he can make the Bible scenes and Bible



people live again in a fascinating manner. Furthermore, the preacher is not interested in sensation for sensation's sake. Cheap journalistic preaching sows only in shallow and thorny soil, it gets quick results, but not lasting results.

Most of the objectors to expository preaching either do not understand the method, or the expository sermons they have heard have been poor examples. Expository preaching is often confused with running commentary to the Sunday School lesson variety, or the exegetical Bible lecture such as one would deliver at the prayer meeting service. The true expository sermon has its organization, its goal, and reaches a climax like any other sermon.

Expository preaching is recommended in the following cases:

- a) Whenever the need of the occasion can be met with a consecutive passage containing all the points necessary to the need;
- b) When preaching a series or course of sermons;
- c) When treating a narrative, parable or psalm;
- d) Whenever one desires to give a treatment of any passage longer than one or two verses;
- e) When preaching on a book of the Bible;
- f) When preaching on Bible characters where the materials is not too far scattered;
- g) Evangelistic preaching when the sermon is based on a story, parable or incident.

We have studied the theme, the text, the sermon organization and the sermon classifications with their uses. We have selected a theme and a text, we know what qualities the organization must have, and we have selected the type of sermon which is best for the occasion.

# How to Construct a Topical Sermon

The ways of constructing a topical sermon might be multiplied indefinitely depending upon one's ability to distinguish minute variation. For the sake of convenience in classification, we will list five; (1) By aspects; (2) By proofs; (3) By illustrations; (4) By order of materials; (5) By analogy.

1) A topical sermon may be composed by displaying one by one its aspects; either by simply noting the aspects, or by asking questions which will bring out the aspects. By aspects we mean point of view, or ways of looking at a subject.

Examples:

## PRAYER

- I. Its Meaning
- II. Its Necessity
- IV. III. Its Method
- Its Results

## FAITH

- I. What is Faith?
- II. Why is Faith Needed?
- III. How is it Received?
- IV. What will it Accomplish?

## THE GOSPEL

- I. The origin of the Gospel.
- II. The Purpose of the Gospel.
- III. The Power of the Gospel.

2) A topical sermon may be constructed also by stating its proofs. This method is best for controversial themes or where the theme is a statement of fact. (A logical theme.)

## WE BELIEVE IN THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

- I. The Argument of Faith--the Bible declares it.
- II. The Argument from Testimony--there are many competent witnesses.
- III. The Argument from History--a successful church

## CHRIST, THE MESSIAH

- I. Proof from Old Testament Prophecy.
- II. Proof from Christ's Works.
- III. Proof from Christ's Claims.
- IV. Proof from the Power of His Gospel.

3) A topical sermon may be constructed, in addition, by advancing illustrations of the

theme taken from Bible incidents and biographies or even by illustration from church history.

Example:

### THE DISCIPLINARY VALUE OF DELAY

- I. As seen in the case of Moses.
- II. As seen in the case of Elijah.
- III. As seen in the case of Paul.

### THE INFLUENCE OF A GODLY MOTHER

- I. Observe it in Moses.
- II. Observe it in Samuel.
- III. Observe it in Timothy.

4) Furthermore, a topical sermon may be developed from the order of the kinds of material used in a sermon, which are: explanation, argument, illustration, and application. This is not a very high order of construction, but it is convenient when one needs to make a hasty preparation, and it is better than wandering aimlessly. Something like this method is used often by public speakers for short speeches or sales talks.

Example:

### CHRISTIAN TITHING

- I. Explain It--what it means.
- II. Prove it--quote Scriptures.
- III. Illustrate it--give examples of benefitted tithers.
- IV. Apply it--urge hearers to adopt it.

5) Finally, a topical sermon may be constructed by analogy. Some familiar object or process may be chosen and treated part by part or step by step where such an analogy can be given spiritual significance.

Examples:

**HUSBANDRY\* OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE**

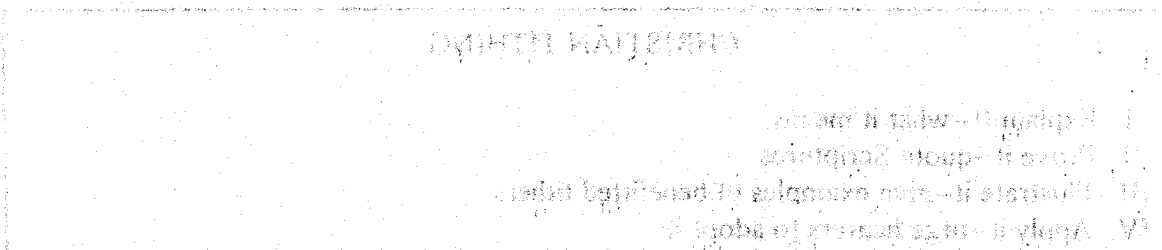
- I. The Sowing--Working for God.
- II. The Cultivating--Prayer, Bible Study.
- III. The Reaping--Blessing, life eternal.

**THE COURTROOM OF LIFE**

- I. The Judge--God, the Father.
- II. The Accuser--Satan.
- III. The Advocate--Jesus.
- IV. The Verdict--Not Guilty.

There is almost an unlimited number of sermon analogies which can be used and analogical form is one of the most attractive forms which can be given to a topical sermon.

**\*husbandry - in agriculture, cultivation**



# How to Construct a Textual Sermon

As it has already been pointed out, the textual sermon draws its main divisions from the text. Obviously then, the making of the divisions of a textual sermon requires a different technique from that of making a topical divisions. Here the subject is not divided to suit the preacher's fancy, but as the text indicates or permits by the scope of its material. The textual differs from the expository sermon; deriving from the text only a skeleton which is filled in any way that the preacher desires or what the subject requires; while the expository sermon derives from the text both the skeleton and flesh.

For the sake of convenience, two methods of making textual divisions will be considered: The first method is analysis, the second os synthesis.

## I. ANALYSIS

Analysis is the easiest and the most natural way of dividing a text. The ideas, the duties, the arguments, the classifications, the conditions, the doctrines, the questions, or the admonitions of the text are simply taken in the order that they occur in the text. One requires only the ability to discover the parts and to find their relationship one to another. This type of treatment should not be used, however, where no unity exists between the parts or where the order of the parts is not suitable for the purpose of the sermon.

Observe the following examples:

### THE CHRISTIAN: AN EXAMPLE

I Timothy 4:12. (Related Admonitions)

"Be thou an example to the believers, in words, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity."

- I. An Example in Word.
- II. An Example in Conduct. (Conversation -- See Greek)
- III. An Example in Love. (Charity -- See Greek)
- IV. An Example in Spirit.
- V. An Example in Faith.
- VI. An Example in Purity.

**THREE DUTIES OF A YOUNG MINISTER**  
1 Timothy 4:13 (Related Duties)

- I. Reading
- II. Exhorting
- III. Teaching (Doctrine)

**THREE THINGS TO BE AVOIDED**  
Psalm 1:1 (Related Admonitions)

- I. The Counsel of the Ungodly.
- II. The Way of Sinners.
- III. The Seat of the Scornful.

**THE PRICE OF A NATION'S HEALING**  
11 Chronicles 7:14 (Related Conditions)

- I. A Humbling of Self.
- II. A Return to Prayer.
- III. A Seeking After God.
- IV. A Turning from Sin.

**THE BELIEVER'S RELATION TO THE TRIUNE GOD**  
John 14:16 (Related Doctrines)

- I. The Son Prays for the Believer.
- II. The Father Gives to the Believer.
- III. The Holy Spirit Abides with the Believer.

**THE SON AND THE FATHER**  
John 14:6-9 (Related Doctrines)

- I. The Son is the Way to the Father. Verse 6
- II. The Son is the Revelation of the Father. verse 7
- III. The Son is One with the Father. verse 9

**THE CONDITIONS FOR ANSWERED PRAYER**  
John 15:7 (Related Conditions)

- I. That WE Abide in Christ.
- II. That Christ's Word Abides in Us.

**APOSTOLIC WORK**  
Acts 5:42 (Related Ideas)

- I. The Regularity of Apostolic Work--Daily.
- II. The Sphere of Apostolic work--In the temple and in every house
- III. The Methods of Apostolic Work--Teaching and preaching.
- IV. The Theme of Apostolic Work--Jesus Christ.

From an examination of these examples along with the texts, three things will be noted:

(a) the divisions are derived from the text;

(b) the points in the outline are arranged in the same order that they occur in the text;

(c) the only change made, if any, is in the wording of the divisions, and this is done only when it is needed to make the unity which exists between the parts more evident and easier to remember.

The word analysis means "taking a part," and this is exactly the meaning given to the word in its application to text division. To analyze a text is simply to separate its parts so as to note and examine them separately. In this type the whole is exactly the sum of the parts. In some texts the lines of separation are not so clear and must be diligently sought as in Acts 5:42 where such relationships as time, place, method, and theme must be perceived. Sometimes a difficult text will reveal its hidden parts when a series of questions is applied such as: Who is the speaker? Why is this said? Who is addressed? What is required? What are the conditions of success? What lessons are taught? What promises are made? What ideas are expressed? What doctrines are taught? What qualities are displayed? There are many possible questions which can be used in analysis; there are a few by way of illustration. The text itself will often suggest its own questions. In most cases, however, the texts suitable for analytic division will be quite easy to treat due to the fact that no change is made in the order of the points.

## II. SYNTHESIS

The word synthesis means "putting together." The synthetic treatment, as the name implies, has to do with rearrangement of points, or the constructions of an outline from the points supplied by a text, but arranged to suit the purpose of the sermon or the pattern of the sermon composition without thought of the order of the points in the text. Here the whole is more than the sum of the parts, as a building is more than a pile of stones; because the building in addition to the material has a design. In the analytic sermon the text is the source of material, but the sermon includes a design as well as the material. Analysis is like classifying the strata of marble in a quarry, synthesis is like building an edifice out of that same marble. Classifying a rubber tree as to roots, trunk, branches, and leaves would be analysis; making an automobile inner tube would be synthesis.

Often the aim of a sermon or the rules of sermon organization make expedient the arrangement of material in the text. The last clause of the text may be made the first point and the first clause the last point in the outline in order to have progress and climax in the sermon. Sometimes a minor theme in a text may be made the major theme in the sermon and then some of the materials in the text are ignored. Here no evidence is done to the true meaning of the text, but only that part of the text which is relevant to the aim of the sermon, is utilized. Then sometimes a design is superimposed upon the material of the text. the Biblical material for the outline is from the text, but the total design is invented.

Three kinds of synthetical textual sermon outline have been described:

- a) inverted order outlines
- b) minor theme outlines
- c) superimposed design outlines

The following example is one in which the order of the points in the text is changed in the outline.

**"PERFECT MANHOOD IN CHRIST"**  
Ephesians 4:13 (inverted order)

- I. Perfect Manhood is the Christians's Aim.
- II. Perfect Manhood is Seen in Christ.
- III. Perfect Manhood is Achieved by Unity with and Knowledge of Christ.

In the text of the above example, there are three points: A, B, and C. In the outline they are arranged: B, C, A,--because this order is homiletically expedient. The *ways of achieving* anything should not be treated until *what one is to achieve* has been proposed. So the first division (B) treats the aim; the second (C) the pattern, and the third (A) the method of achievement; the order of the points in the text though, was different.

The examples to follow are outlines in which a minor theme of the text is made the theme of the outline.

**RECONCILIATION**  
Colossians 1:20-21 (Minor Theme)

- I. The Instrument of Reconciliation--the blood of His Cross.
- II. The Scope of Reconciliation--things on earth or things in heaven.
- III. The Power of Reconciliation--enmity of mind and wicked works.



The real theme of the above text and its context is the "pre-eminence of Christ," but "reconciliation," is a minor theme which suits the purpose of the present sermon. In the following example the real theme of the text is "Victory over Worry," but without doing injustice to the truth or the author's purpose, one might make an outline of the minor theme:

### THREE WAYS TO TALK TO GOD

Philippians 4:6 (Minor Theme)

- I. Conversation (Prayer).
- II. Supplication (Request).
- III. Adoration (Thanksgiving).

Here a further synthesis is accomplished by the alliteration (each word in the outline ends with the same suffix "tion").

The following outline is synthetic by the superimposed design.

### "THE LADDER OF GOD'S ABILITY"

Ephesians 3:20

Introduction: God's working is according to the power that worketh in us. That working power in us is faith. As faith climbs to each succeeding rung in the ladder of God's power, a fuller view is seen.

- I. God is Able to Do What We Ask.
- II. What We Think
- III. All we Ask or Think.
- IV. Above All We Ask of Think
- V. Abundantly Above All We Ask or Think
- VI. Exceeding Abundantly Above All We Ask or Think

Here, the idea of a ladder is superimposed upon the text to make the sermon more vivid. No violence is done to the meaning of the text whatsoever. The truths are the same except that they are given a new framework and rearranged to make an ascending scale. the value of such a treatment should be clearly manifest.

**THE CHRISTIAN'S ATTIRE**  
**Colossians 3:12-14**

- I. The Turban of Humility--humbleness of mind, meekness
- II. the Tunic of Kindness--kindness, compassion.
- III. The Sandals of Longsuffering--longsuffering.
- IV. The Cloak of Forgiveness.
- V. The Sash of Love

Here the greater vividness is achieved by the use of articles of clothing to represent the qualities of Christian character. The superimposed design is suggested by the words of the text, "put on". The articles of attire are arbitrary but the treatment is textual nevertheless, and perfectly true to the meaning of the author.

Many texts must of necessity be treated synthetically, because there is in them no ready order and arrangement of the points. So by analysis the points of the text are discovered and stated on paper just as they occur to the preacher, then they are studied until some relationship is seen between them. Finally, the points are studied in ranged. The synthetic sermon begins with analysis in order to separate all the points, but the analysis is only in the first stage of preparation; before the sermon is ready for delivery the points have to be built into a suitable design or arrangement.

# How to Construct an Expository Sermon

An expository sermon is a discourse based on a portion of Scripture, occupied mainly with exposition, wholly restricted in the outline to the chosen passage, and delivered with a view to persuasion.

There are four features which characterize an expository sermon.

- (1) As it has already been briefly explained, the text of an expository sermon provides the material for all the divisions and subdivisions. But, not only is the division structure provided by the text; the elaboration, or exposition, is also mainly derived from the passage of Scripture chosen for the text.
- (2) The text of an expository sermon is usually longer than the text of a textual or a topical sermon. In fact, the text will usually be a paragraph or a chapter, and sometimes, it will be a whole book of the Bible. However, occasional one will find a single verse so full and meaningful that it will be sufficient to provide all the material for a sermon. McClaren's texts very frequently consisted of a single verse, but it must be admitted that many of these sermons' were textual.
- (3) Furthermore, the expository sermon is a treatment of the passage of Scripture, while the topical and textual sermons are treatments of the subject. though the textual sermon gets its main headings from the text, it is really a treatment of a subject as suggested by a text and the subject is the principal thing. An expository sermon will have a subject, but the subject is subordinate to the text; the text is the principal thing.
- (4) Finally, in expository sermon, the Scripture passage is chosen first, and the subject is derived afterward, while in the other sermon types the subject usually selected first, and the Scripture text is found afterward. The reason for this is that expository sermons are most frequently preached in series of courses and consequently the individual sermon is selected because it develops a pre-selected subject. Of course, expository sermons may be preached as occasional sermons as well as in series, but even when this is the case, the Scripture passage is selected because it contains a noteworthy story, parable, conversation, incident or biographical sketch or it is one of the more familiar chapters which are well known for their appeal or practical application

## Questions about the expository sermon

*1) Is it necessary for the exposition to follow the order of the verses in the text?*

No, it is not necessary to follow the order of the text. This natural order may be followed if it is the logical order already. This would be the method of analysis. But, if the text order is not the logical order for discourse, the order may be changed to suit the purpose of the sermon. This would be the method of synthesis. On this point, a number of the textbooks in error, inferring that the natural order of the verses must be followed.

(*Analysis and Synthesis* were described in the first chapter under "textual sermon construction", analysis and synthesis may also be applied to expository sermon construction.)

2) *Will the expository sermon always be of the nature of a lecture seeking only to explain and instruct, or does exhortation and application have a place?*

A sermon and a lecture are two different things. A lecture instructs or entertains, a sermon should instruct and it may entertain, but its main object is to persuade. An expository lecture is delivered for the purpose of teaching the Word. An expository sermon, like any true sermon, is delivered with persuasion for its principal aim. The expository sermon, then, has room for dramatization, vivid illustration, and forceful delivery.

3) *Is unity necessary in an expository sermon?*

Yes, unity is essential to any type of sermon. Discourses of the running comment type are frequently mistaken for expository sermons, but a discourse without unity is not really a sermon, because unity and climax are necessary for the best success in the persuasion. Therefore, for expository sermons, texts should be selected which have unity of thought.

4) *Is it necessary to treat all the material in a long text?*

No, only the material in the text which is related, or which is deemed appropriated to the occasion need be treated. It is better for the sermon if the unrelated portions of the Scripture passage be omitted from the discussion.

5) *Is it permissible to quote parallel passages from other parts of the Bible in an expository sermon?*

Yes, it is permissible to quote parallel passages to support any point in the sermon provided that the point is based in some statement or inference found in the regular text of the sermon. Obviously, there must not be too many of these quotations or the text will be lost from sight. Furthermore, quotations must not be expounded; they are merely to be quoted, because the exposition is of the text, not of the parallel passages.

6) *Can illustrations of any type be used in an expository sermon, or must they, too, be derived*

One may use any illustrations whatever, but if they can be drawn from the text, context, historical background, or author's experience, the discourse will be more compact and instructive; but success is more important than compactness, so the preacher is to be guided by his taste.

The remainder of this chapter will be devoted to explaining the several ways of constructing the expository sermon outline, the ways of building the elaboration or exposition, and the method of preparing the whole sermon step by step.

### Varieties of Expository Sermons

From the viewpoint of the author, there are six varieties of expository sermons:

- 1) **doctrinal**
- 2) **ethical**
- 3) **inferential**
- 4) **biographical**
- 5) **propositional**

The terms *topical*, *textual*, and *expository* describe the methods of constructing a sermon as related to the text; these latter terms described the kinds of subject matter with which the text deals. A sermon is "expository" because it expounds and is limited to a consecutive passage of Scripture, but its subject matter may be "doctrinal," "ethical," or "biographical," etc. These terms will be defined and explained in order that the reader may clearly perceive what the author means by them. When they are used by other writers, they may mean something different. Once these terms are defined, they will be used consistently throughout this book to refer to the same things. Hardly any two writers use technical terms are used consistently by the same author; they serve to describe genera, species, and varieties of sermons more directly than one could without the use of technical terms.

1) The *doctrinal expository sermon* is one, the aim of which is to expound the doctrinal teaching of a text, one in which the unity of the sermon is based upon related doctrines or related aspects of a single doctrine as the text permits. Paul devotes most of the first part of all his epistles to doctrinal matters. When one preaches upon a text taken from the doctrinal part of an epistle, he nearly always will have as his aim to teach and enforce Bible doctrine; so, the sermon would be classified as "doctrinal". But in this book the term "doctrinal" will be used only to describe sermons which point out, explain, and apply doctrines, not to describe sermons which have as their principal aim to prove a proposition. Such proof sermons will be called "propositional" even where the subject matter is doctrinal.

The following will illustrate the nature of a doctrinal expository sermon:

## JUSTIFICATION

Romans 5: 1-9

- I. The Need of Justification
  - A. Man is without strength--verse 6
  - B. Man is sinner--verse 8
  
- II. The Provision for Justification
  - A. God's love--verse 8
  - B. Christ's death--verse 6
  
- III. The Appropriation of Justification--verses 1-2
 

--by faith
  
- IV. The Results of Justification
  - A. Access to Grace--verse 2
  - B. Peace with God--verse 1
  - C. Salvation from Wrath--verse 9
  - D. Victory in Tribulation--verse 3
  - E. Development of Character--verses 3-5
    1. Patience to experience.
    2. Experience of hope.
    3. Hope to shamelessness.

The above example is expository because it is taken entirely from one passage of Scripture; it is synthetic in its construction because the points are not arranged in the same order in which they occur in the text; and it is doctrinal because its aim is to explain and enforce the doctrine of justification. When one sees how easily modern day church members are used into false cults and persuaded to dabble with religious fads, one becomes convinced that there ought to be more doctrinal expository preaching from our pulpits.

2) *the ethical expository sermon* is one whose aim is to discover, explain and enforce rules of right Christian conduct. In the latter chapters of Paul's epistles and in some parts of the Gospels, the material pertains to the conduct of the believer's life. Sermons built upon texts dealing with the Christian's morals and behavior are called ethical sermons. The divisions of ethical sermons consist of related rules of behavior or related aspects of one ethical ideal.

Note the following examples:

## PERSONAL HABITS

Romans 14:12-21

- I. Personal Habits Are Accountable to God--verse 12
- II. Personal Habits Are Not to be Judged by Men--verse 13
- III. Personal Habits Must not Offend the Weak-- verses 15,20,21
- IV. Personal Habits Are subordinate to Kingdom Interests--verses 17,19

## A CHRISTIAN'S RESPONSIBILITY AS A CITIZEN

Romans 13:1-10

- I. Reading Civil Obedience--verses 1-5
  - A. Implicit obedience--verse 2
  - B. Fearless obedience--verses 3,4
- II. Regarding Financial Obligation--verses 6-8
  - A. To the State--verses 6-7
  - B. To every Creditor--verse 8
- III. Regarding Social Morals--verses 9-10
  - A. In accordance with Bible ethics--verse 9
  - B. In accordance with Love's law--verse 10

If there is a tendency for some preachers to neglect ethical preaching, let them notice that a large place is given in the New Testament to the regulation of Christian conduct. To neglect ethical preaching is to overlook much of the Holy Word. If the neglect is due to a fear that ethical sermons will be poorly received, that fear is unfounded. Ethics in a topical sermon might be made offensive, because it might be thought to be personal, but in an expository sermon suspicion of personal, but in an expository sermon suspicion of personal antagonism is very unlikely. In addition, the expository sermon which is fully based upon the Scripture has more weight of divine authority and is more likely to be effective.

3) *The inferential sermon* is one, the division of which are derived from inferences drawn from the fact and details of a narrative text. A narrative text is one which tells a story such as history or parable. In a story, text ideas or facts are not directly stated, but must be inferred from the conduct of the characters in the narrative, their conversations, and their success or failure. The inferences may be of a doctrinal or ethical nature, but the inference from a narrative text instead of by direct statement by the author of the Bible book. Inferences when they are carefully made are almost binding as direct statements and they are often more vivid to the hearer. Note the following illustrative examples.

### "A YOUNG MAN'S RUIN"

2 Kings 5:20-27

- I. Sin Begins with Covetousness. verse 26
- II. Sin Leads to Other Sins. verse 25.
- III. Sin Cannot be Kept Secret. verse 26
- IV. Sin's Allurement is Deceptive. verses 20,27
- V. Sin Receives Sure Punishment. verse 27

Notice that none of these facts about sin are directly stated by the author of Second Kings but they are inferred from the details of the story and from the conversations between the characters in the story and from the conversations between the characters in the story, such as, Gehazi, Naaman, and Elisha. Nearly all expository preaching from texts in historical sections of the Bible will be treated by related inferences. Paul says about Israelitish history (1 Cor. 10:11), "Now all these things happened unto them for examples." Therefore, we are given liberty to construct inferential sermons. Care must be taken, however, not to make hasty inferences which do not harmonize with the teaching of the Scriptures as a whole. Wild spiritualizing, likewise, must be avoided. Inferential sermons are sometimes called "observational".

4) *The biographical expository sermon* concentrates on the successes or failures, the good or bad characteristics of a Bible character. These are discovered, discussed, and presented for the hearer to imitate or avoid. Again the facts deduced may be doctrinal or ethical in nature but of the facts are drawn from an appraisal of a biography instead of being directly enjoined, the sermon will be called "biographical". Observe the following example from the biographical sketch of Cornelius in Acts, the tenth chapter.

### "WHY GOD USED CORNELIUS"

Acts 10:1-8

- I. He was a Man of Character --verse 1-2
  - A. He was a strong man. Moral--though a soldier.
  - B. He was a devout man.
  - C. He was a generous man.
  - D. He was an influential man --"with all his house".
- II. He was a Man of Prayer -- verses 2, 3 & 4
  - A. He prayed always.
  - B. He prayed with faith.
  - C. He prayed with yieldedness.
- III. He was a Man of Action -- verses 5-8
  - A. He immediately obeyed God.



Biographical sermons are quite effective, because the greatest interest next to self-interest is human interest. All of us are interested in the successes and even the failures of others. Biographical sermons are splendid for preaching to young people, for they can be made very vivid and dramatic. Care must be taken in the preparation of the biographical sermon that, it is not simply an array of facts about an ancient person which lacks application to real present day problems and conditions.

5) *An analogical expository sermon* is one, the divisions of which are related parts of an analogy. "An analogy is a relation or likeness between two things or of one thing to another, consisting in the remembrance not of the things themselves, but of two or more attributes, circumstances or effects." Life is said to be analogous to a sea voyage, not because there is outward similarity between them, but because they have similar characteristics, such as, a start, peaceful and turbulent experiences, a purpose, and an end. Note the following illustration.

### "THE CHRISTIANS' RACE OF LIFE"

Hebrews 12:1-2

- I. The Spectators at the Race.  
The martyrs of Ch. 11. those who have run before us.
- II. The Training for the Race.  
Putting off the heavy garments of sin.
- III. The Gait of the Race.  
Patient Striving.
- IV. The Judge of the Race.  
Jesus the Starter and Finisher.
- V. The Reward for the Race.  
Sharing with Christ His exaltation.

The actual activities of a Christian life do not outwardly resemble the running of a race, but there are characteristics of each which resemble, such as: spectators, training, patient striving, a judge, and a reward. This type of sermon can be made very vivid and usually is easy to remember. There are many such analogies in the Bible, nearly all of which make excellent sermon texts. Analogical sermons are very good for children and young people.

6) *The propositional expository sermon.* Here the divisions of the sermon are the arguments in proof of a proposition. The New Testament writers who wrote to instruct and encourage

members of an infant church in the midst of a hostile world devoted a considerable portion of their epistles and Gospel to argument against pagan and false Judaistic teaching. Many of those same controversies are still raging today and many of the arguments are as valid today as they were when they first were written. Permanent results in preaching depend upon moving the will as such as upon moving the emotions. Therefore there is a large place for argument in the preaching of this day of science and reason. Not all argument is a large part of the human element in successful preaching.

For some purposes and to some audiences, the preacher can well make the whole sermon a proof of a clearly stated proposition. A sermon is not propositional just because it has a proposition (theme) or because it contains arguments, but it is propositional when all the divisions are parts of the proof of a single proposition.

Example:

### THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

I Corinthians 15:3-23

Proposition: That Jesus Christ arose from the Dead.

- I. There are Many Witnesses to the Fact.
  - A. Peter
  - B. The Twelve
  - C. Five Hundred brethren at once.
  - D. Paul by Revelation
  
- II. The Opposite Conclusion is Absurd.
  - A. Preaching would be vain.
  - B. Faith would be vain.
  - C. Holy Men would be false witnesses
  - D. Faithful believers would be deluded sinners
  - E. All the righteous dead would have perished
  
- III. Christ's resurrection is a Theological Necessity
  - A. There must be a second Adam to nullify the sin and death imputed through the transgression of the first Adam.

A sermon without a skeleton is like a man without a backbone or like an edifice without a framework. But just as a man must be more than bones and a building more than rafters, so must a sermon be more than skeleton. The sermon skeleton must be clothed with living flesh. There must be an elaboration of the skeletal ideas which constitute the sermon divisions. There are six methods of elaboration which many homiletical writers recognize.

## METHODS OF ELABORATION

1) One form is *verbal* elaboration which consists of defining the words of the text that are not completely clear, or of explaining the idioms and syntax of the grammar. There are two reasons for the need of this kind of elaboration. Our English Bible is a translation from other languages and while it is quite reliable for all matters of doctrine, its teachings are much clearer when read in the original languages. Furthermore, our King James Version is nearly four hundred years old and contains many archaic words which need to be explained to modern readers. For instance, Philippians 1:27 is made clearer and more interesting by explaining that the word "conversation" means "citizenship". It is then seen that the following verses contain instructions regarding good Christian citizenship which applied quite appropriately to the people of Philippi who lived in a Roman Colony and who had more than average interest in citizenship. In Mark 11:24 one finds the words, "Believe that ye receive," but in elaboration it should be explained that the verb "receive" is past tense (aorist) and should read "believe that ye have received," for the latter reading indicated a clearer act of faith. Thus, grammar may be seen to aid elaboration. Verbal elaboration need not always be concerned with the original languages, but may be concerned also with the meanings and grammar of English words.

2) Another form of elaboration is called *contextual* which consists of using portions of the context to throw light in the text. Usually these explanations will come from immediate context, but occasionally a verse from another part of the same book will be valuable for solving a doubtful meaning. In Hebrew 12:1 the phrase, "cloud of witnesses," may be misleading if it is not interpreted in the light of the preceding eleventh chapter. This reference to the context is made not alone as a matter of interpretation, but as a matter of elaboration, for it is interesting to the hearer to have familiar Scripture passages connected in a way which is not obvious on the surface.

3) A further form of elaboration is called *historical*. This consist of relating historical events or conditions pertaining to the people addressed, or to the author. And elaboration of the second chapter of Colossians should include and explanation of the gnostic heresy with which certain teachers were confusing the Christians of Colosse. Philippians 1:20-25 may be partly elaborated by explaining some details of Paul's imprisonment at Rome and his impending martyrdom. Such historical and biographical data can be learned from good commentaries or Bible dictionaries.

4) Yet another form of elaboration consists of the *quotation of parallel passages*. Scripture is very frequently explained by Scripture. A meager statement may be strengthened or made more lucid by the quotation of a more detailed statement of the same fact from another part of the Scriptures. Passages of doubtful import are often solved by a parallel passage which is not ambiguous. Here a word of caution is needful. Parallel passages in an expository sermon must not be more than quotations; for the exposition is of the text, not the parallel passages. One quotation can easily lead to another until the discussion is far removed from the original text.

5) The text may be elaborated also by the use of *illustrations*. These illustrations may come from the Bible, history, experience, or modern life. By all means let there be illustrations in the expository sermon, because they make the sermon both clear and interesting. Illustrations help to avoid dryness which might characterize an expository sermon which is too largely explanation. The success of Beecher, Spurgeon, and Moody was in no small degree due to an ability to use apt illustrations. A preacher is making a mistake who does not study some good book on the art of illustrating sermons. The important thing in illustrating the expository sermon is that the illustrations be appropriated, that is, that they actually illuminate some point in the text.

6) Finally, and considerably important, is *application* as a form of elaboration. Somebody has said, "Where the application begins, the sermon begins." The whole propose of preaching is to influence men's lives and decisions by divide truth, That preachers produce Christian conversion, godly living, and brotherly love is far more important than that they make admirers. That some pulpit idols will fail to gain entrance to eternal life is not entirely improbable if it is lamentable. Let us "beseech men to be reconciled to God," that we may be the worthy successors of those who "ceased not to warn everyone night and day with tears." Let it be remembered that expository sermon can be adapted to modern needs an problems and not simply a discussion of ancient people and conditions. There are two ways of making applications. They may be made along with each point in the sermon. It seems better in most cases to make the applications after each point as the sermon progresses and then to recapitulate the principal applications at the end.

### **Stages in the preparation of a sermon.**

Books on Homiletics which give all the needed facts, classifications, and general information regarding scientific preaching too often fail to demonstrate the actual steps in the sermon preparation. This is especially true of treaties on expository preaching. Let us here follow the actual states in the preparation in their natural order. Not all workers follow the same order in preparation, but the steps given here may easily be changed in order to suit the individual preacher's personal preference.

- 1) Select an appropriate passage of Scripture for a text. The selection may be made because it is the next portion of Scripture in a series, because it is the leading of the Holy Spirit, or because it is the obvious text to meet a known need of the people.
- 2) Read the text through carefully several times in the King James or RSV; then read it in the original language or in several modern translations.
- 3) Next write on paper every thought which occurs to the mind regardless of order or relevance. This will include explanations, proofs, illustrations, or applications.
- 4) Consult a good commentary of the exegetical type. This should not be done, however, until

one has exhausted his own ability to find original thoughts.

5) Examine the material until one theme stands out above the rest or until one theme is detected which is common to all or most of the thoughts. This may be done by listing all the possible themes and then trying each until all but one are removed by the process of elimination. It will help to interrogate the material in the following manner. Are there here related doctrines? -- related ethical instructions? -- related inferences or observations? -- related biographical traits? -- related parts of an analogy? -- related arguments in the proof of a proposition?

6) Next eliminate all the material which does not relate to the theme in some special way.

7) Arrange the remaining material in an outline of main divisions and subdivisions so that they have coherence, progress, climax. The main divisions are the big related ideas; the divisions are the lesser ideas which are related closely to one or another of the main heads.

8) Prepare an introduction and conclusion for the sermon.

9) Invent a name for the sermon which may or may not be the same as the theme. The subject may be shorter than the theme, but it should accurately convey the nature of the sermon theme. By all means let it be striking though not cheap.

10) Finally, study the outline until it can be delivered without the use of notes.

If all this seems to require too much time and study, let the preacher be reminded of the many hours the lawyer, architect, teacher, or almost any professional man must devote to his work. Some may reason that God can get the preacher sermons without study or effort, but we will reason that the Bible represents God as being pleased with the diligent labors of His servants. God will give His servants strength, wisdom and inspiration for their work.

# How to Gather and Use Materials

Some materials are most frequently classified as four, namely:

- Explanation
- Argument
- Illustration
- Application

## I. EXPLANATION

All sermons, whether topical, textual, or expository, should contain some explanation. A proposition can be more successfully enforced if the hearers have first been shown what the proposition means and that it is reasonable and Scriptural. If our hearers are trained to accept propositions without explanation, they will come to be easy dupes for preachers of false doctrines. Some sermons require more explanation than others and some types of sermons will be naturally more explanatory than other types; for instance, the expository sermon will usually contain more explanation than a topical sermon. Paul said the Timothy, "Until I come give attention to the reasoning, to the exhortation, to the teaching" (Revised Version). Teaching is not possible without explanation. There has been no lack of exhortation from the pulpit, so many are becoming very eager to be taught in the Scriptures.

The principal source of explanation is the Bible itself. Little, however, need be said here, because the user of the Bible as explanation has been treated in chapter seven on expository preaching under the heading, *Methods of Elaboration*. Another source of explanation is Christian literature such as, commentaries, concordances, dictionaries and books on Bible subjects. If it is objection as commentaries, because it would have to be reasoned that the people ought to get all their facts from the Bible only instead of giving heed to sermons which are manmade. If it is argued that sermons can be God-given, why should it be denied that written works by Spirit-filled men can be motivated and directed by God? Preachers, above all men, who expect to be heeded by others ought to be willing to respect the sermons and writings of other Christian preachers and teachers. Of course, the Bible should always have first place and should always be consulted first in prayer and

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meditation before other sources are consulted.

## II. ARGUMENT

A second kind of material is argument, a process by which it is proved, demonstrated, or inferred that a certain proposition is true or false. The epistles of the New Testament are filled with argument by which some propositions are shown to be true and some to be false. From this it can at least be strongly inferred that argument has a place in Christian preaching. Preaching ought to appeal to the human will as well as to the intellect or to the emotions. Did not Jehovah say by the mouth of Isaiah, "Come, let us reason together"? Luke said about Paul when the Apostle was before Felix, "And he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgement to come."

The following are some of the most practical forms of argument:

**A) Deduction.** This is reasoning from the general to the specific, that is from a law or an authoritative premise to a specific case. It is accepted that the premise, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap," is authoritative because it is revealed in the Holy Scriptures which were divinely inspired. John Dope is known to be sowing evil violence, so it is reasoned from the accepted premise that John Doe will reap evil and violence. This reasoning can be used only where all persons accept the major premise as true.

**B) Induction.** This is reasoning from the specific to the general, the opposite of deduction. In a circumstance where an opponent does not accept the bible statement about sowing and reaping, one must gather wide evidence that the axiom is true because it is known to be true in a sufficient number of specific cases. If every person who is known to have sown violence has reaped the same, then a general rule or law is established. This reasoning is inductive. This is the method of Physical science. The danger of this argument is that a law will be formulated on insufficient evidence and experimentation. This has often happened in science so that most premises of science are now called theories or hypotheses.

**C) Cause to effect (a priori).** In this manner we reason that God who is loving, an



all-powerful and an all-wise cause will effect the working together for good in the lives of His people who are yielded to Him. In this reasoning the cause must be known and admitted by all concerned. For the Christian who has faith, God is accepted as the only infinite cause whose attributes are those revealed in the Bible. This argument has little value in argument with non-Christians.

**D) Effect to cause (a posteriori).** When we reason from design in nature that there must be a powerful and all-wise Providence, we are reasoning from effect to cause. If we reason that because there have been conversion in a Christian service, God's Spirit has been present to convict, it is "a posteriori" argument. On the contrary, if we reason that because God's Spirit is present; there will be conviction of sin, this is "priori" argument.

**E) "A fortiori" -- from the lesser to the greater.** By this we reason that something which is valid in an unlikely situation will be much more valid in a likely situation. Jesus argued "a fortiori" when He said, "Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is and Tamar is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?" By this method we may reason that if the heathen make great personal sacrifices for heathen deities, how much more should Christians who serve the true God give themselves wholly to His service.

**F) Analogy.** This is arguing that what is true in one realm is probably true in another realm. Because the lily bulb which is put in the ground is able after dying to come forth to new life, it is reasoned by analogy that man likewise in a higher realm will probably come forth from the grave with new life. This is never a conclusive form of proof, but it can be used to strengthen a proposition which has other forms of argument in its favor. For almost every spiritual law or fact there is an analogy in the physical realm.

**G) Tradition).** This is arguing that there is presumption in favor of an established institution, tradition, or practice. This does not mean that all old and traditional things are true, but that they are to be respected until something demonstrably superior can be found to take the place of the old and traditional. We reason from tradition that the doctrines of the orthodox historic church are to be accepted as valid until it can be shown from the Bible to the satisfaction of the majority of

spiritual and thinking Christians that they are false and that there are more satisfactory doctrines to replace the old. Likewise, the Christian may insist that those who would overthrow the church must produce something better, and that he who attacks Christian doctrines has the burden of proof. It is not the responsibility of the Christian to prove the bible to be a divine revelation, but the responsibility of the Bible's enemies to prove that it is not. Of course, if the Christian assumes a proposition, then he has the burden of proof.

**H) Testimony.** This is one of the most common kinds of argument. It is used in all courts of law and is a strong form of proof under controlled conditions. For the testimony of a witness to be valid, he must be examined as to character, competence, and familiarity with the facts. A witness of deceitful character is of no value. A witness must also be competent to judge concerning the facts, that is, he must be intelligent, and he is better if he is an expert in the matter of which he testifies. Furthermore, the witness must have first-hand testimony; it must not be hearsay. Finally, there must be a sufficient number of witnesses to make sure that there is no delusion or mistake due to the unreliability of the senses.

**I) Experience.** This argument is used by a great many persons, but it does not have great value, because almost anything can be proved by somebody's experience. Experience is of value to the person who had the experience, but not of much value to others unless the experience is not shared by so many persons as to be a common human phenomenon; then we refer to it as the argument from *consensus*.

**J) Authority.** Argument from authority is also common and has weight when the authorities are accepted as such by all parties. The Bible is a final authority for true Christians when it is rightly interpreted.

**K) Reducto ad absurdum.** This is reducing the opponent's proposition to the absurd. When the Pharisees insisted that Jesus was a sinner because He healed on the Sabbath, He reduced their premise to the absurd by showing them that they helped even their animals which fell into a ditch on the Sabbath, which mercy they were not willing to extend on Sabbath to human sufferers.

**L) Process of elimination.** This consists of listing every possible alternative and

disposing of them one by one until only one is left. Suppose we have three possible statements about God relative to love: God loves to men; God loves only some men; God loves all men. The first is eliminated by the Scripture, "God is love"; the second is eliminated by the Scripture, "God is no respecter of persons," so the last only is possible in the light of the Scriptures. There are other forms of argument used in logic, but these are deemed sufficient for this treatise; if a full treatment is desired let the reader consult a textbook.

### III. ILLUSTRATIONS

Someone has said, "illustrations are the windows of sermons." The analogy is a good one, for through illustrations, needed light is let into the sermon. It is not enough that men hear sermons, they must see them also if the sermon is stick. Illustrations make it possible for abstract truth to be vivid. Jesus constantly spoke in parables and used such words as salt, light, bread, sheep, vine, king, house, water, and mountain to give imagery to His spiritual ideas. A preacher who neglects to illustrate will invariably be dry and hard to understand. It has been said that there should be one illustration for every abstract idea in the sermon. There are several kinds of illustrations all of which should be used with variety in the sermon.

**A) The One Word Illustration.** To say that the Bible is "bread" is such an illustration; or that a Christian is "salt," or that the Gospel is "light," or that God is a "judge." There are hundreds of words which make apt illustrations.

**B) Analogy.** Besides being a form of proof, it is an excellent kind of illustration. Likening the various duties of a farmer to the work of the ministry, or the growth of a plant to a Christian's growth, or an ocean voyage to the course of human life, would be using analogy in illustration.

**C) Anecdote.** This is the use of a true incident in one's own experience or the reported experience of another as an illustration. This is the commonest kind of illustration used by many preachers, but should not be overdone, because too much time is required for an anecdote leaving insufficient time for other necessary materials when too many are told. Many points will be better illustrated by word pictures or brief analogies.

**D) The Story** differs from the anecdote in that it is not an actual incident, but fiction, or at least not sufficiently verified to be told as truth. However, stories are more effective when they are true to life. Stories should not be told as anecdotes and certainly not as real experience of the preacher himself. A preacher may invent his stories or take them from fiction. Stories should not be told merely to entertain, but to illustrate in apt manner, doctrines or applications in the sermon. The story often differs very little from a parable.

There are many sources of illustrations the commonest of which are as follows:

i) *THE BIBLE*. This is one of the best sources of illustration, because it is most adaptable to the sermon, being of like nature with the other materials; ii) *SCIENCE*. Many scientific laws and facts may be used with great advantage as sermon illustrations. The opposite magnetic poles may be used to illustrate the conflict between the flesh and Spirit; iii) *NATURE*. All around us in nature are facts which declare the glory of God; iv) *FICTION*. The great works of classic literature are filled with stories which can be used in sermons; v) *POETRY*. All know how a well-chosen poem can enhance the interest and appeal of the sermon; vi) *HISTORY*. The historic deeds of men and fates of nations make some of the commonest illustrations found in the great sermons of the world's successful preachers; vii) *CURRENT EVENTS*. Of great interest are the latest happenings from the pages of the newspaper and news magazine, and when they are used, they must be appropriated and relevant.

#### IV. APPLICATION OR PERSUASION

It is this material which distinguishes a sermon from a talk or a lecture. A sermon should instruct and inspire, but whatever else it does, it should persuade. The preacher seeks not for simple approval, but for action. He deals not with intellectual and cultural luxury as such, but in life and death decisions and consequences. So, let a preacher when he goes to the pulpit go prayerfully determined to turn sinners to the righteousness and believers to higher planes of faith and service; then will he truly be an ambassador of God.

The ideal sermon will contain some of each of these four kinds of material. If

the sermon is all explanation, it will be too dry; if it is all argument, it will be too contentious; if it is illustration, it will be too hortatory. If the sermon has a balance of all four materials it will instruct the mind, impress the will, hold the attention, stir the emotion and move to action, provided that it is delivered under the anointing of the Spirit.

### **Filing the sermon material.**

The following system is suggested for granting sermon material. Let the preacher secure a card file such as can be secured inexpensively at variety stores, which has an alphabetical index. Whenever an idea for a sermon occurs, let it be written on one of the cards along with a text and a tentative subject. After several months, dozens of these germinal sermon ideas will have been entered and arranged by subjects in alphabetical order. Whenever illustrations are read or occur to the mind which could be used with any of the sermon ideas, let them be filled with the cards. Let this be done with all facts, arguments, and applications likewise, so that week by week the sermons are growing. When one of the developing sermons seems to fit the need and occasion, it can be taken from the file, organized and brought to completion. It will be found that many of these sermons after it has been preached should be dated and put in another file in the order of the time it was preached so that the preacher can keep the subjects of his past sermons in mind, and in this manner secure a variety of subjects. There should be a separate file also for illustrations which do not fit any of the sermons in the first file, for sooner or later they will be found useful. The illustration file should be alphabetically indexed and the illustrations listed under topics like *Atonement, Salvation, Decision, Death, Faith, Consecration*, etc. Among these illustrations should be filed all personal observations and experiences which at the same time seem to have illustrative value, for these personal matters are very quickly forgotten unless they are immediately jotted down and filed, but they are among the most valuable illustrations one uses.

The sermons may be arranged in loose-leaf notebook instead of card files, or a card file may be used for the developing sermons and a notebook for the past sermons. It is unfortunate that so many preachers are unsystematic in their work and find sermon preparation burdensome, a task which they leave until Saturday night.

# How to Prepare an Introduction and Conclusion

There seems to be a common tendency to underestimate the value of small things. The introduction and conclusion of a sermon are small parts, but they are extremely vital to the success of the sermon. However, because they are small parts, many preachers overlook their importance. Preachers who quite carefully prepare the body of the sermon leave the introduction and conclusion for the inspiration of the moment of speaking, not realizing that the introduction is little likely to come by inspiration no matter how much spontaneity the rest of the sermon may have; and while the conclusion may borrow inspiration from the climax it will, without forethought, lack other desirable qualities. Some writers on homiletics insist that the introduction and conclusion should be given more preparation than any other part of the sermon; however, this may be going too far in the other direction, but not much. When the desirable qualities of the introduction and conclusion are considered, it will be quite clear to the reader why these parts of the sermon need careful preparation.

## THE QUALITIES OF A GOOD INTRODUCTION

1) First and among the most important of the qualities a sermon introduction should exhibit is that it should be **Striking**. First impressions are usually lasting and not easy to change. If the preacher is uninteresting in his first few sentences he will find it difficult than it would be to maintain interest where the sermon begins with a striking approach. An introduction is striking when it goes straight to a point of interest to the hearer, and when the idea is expressed in an original manner. Or it might be said that anything is striking which strikes one so as to attract his interest. When the first sentences of a sermon strike the hearers' interest, the preacher gains an attentive audience and a better hearing. If the sermon begins in a dull manner the hearers say, "Just another sermon." Then, too, the preacher has a much more friendly audience if he gives the impression at the outset that he has something of value for the people rather than that he seeks an audience to hear his speech. One writer on "Public Speaking" has a good formula for an introduction which is, "*Start a Fire!*"

2) In addition to being striking, the introduction should be **Clear**. The minds of the hearers are not at first sufficiently alert to apprehend abstract or involved concepts. Not only that, thoughts must be transparent in order that interest may be aroused in the theme. It is hardly possible to be interested in a proposition which one does not quite understand. Then, an obscure introduction will invariably give the impression that the whole sermon is to be obscure or over the heads of the people. If a sermon is really quite deep in content, it needs a clear introduction just so much more, because quite abstruse ideas can be made clear if they are built on a lucid foundation and approached gradually. It makes for clarity in the introduction to give the introduction careful study and meditation.

3) Closely related to clarity and equally necessary to the introduction is **Unity**. The prelude to the sermon should have only one idea, because a multiplicity of ideas is inconsistent with both clarity and interest. Having several ideas in the introduction is like having a speaker introduced by several persons, either the first does not make a proper introduction or the others are unnecessary waste of time.

4) One of the most important requisites of an introduction is **Brevity**. Everyone resents the person who takes thirty minutes to introduce a speaker. So, too, they are annoyed when that speaker takes half his time approaching the subject. Every Bible reader wonders why the children of Israel took forty years to enter the land of Canaan and many modern laymen wonder why the preacher who wanders so long around the margin of his text does not "go over and possess the land." In almost every case, the sermon which is too long, is too long in the introduction. In these days of rush and competition, the hearers appreciate the preacher's going straight to the point with as little delay as possible.

5) Furthermore, the introduction should be delivered in a conversational tone of voice and should not be too pretentious or eloquent, that is, it should be **Modest**. When the introduction is too impassioned in tone, the sermon proper is likely to seem dull by comparison; or if the intensity and volume are maintained uniformly throughout, the passion loses its power to impress and monotony finally becomes annoying. When the prelude is too eloquent, the sermon will seem commonplace; or if the sermon is equally eloquent, it becomes too saccharine after a while. An introduction can be striking without thunderous volume or unduly eloquent and

pretentious language.

6) While the sermon introduction should indeed, be modest, it is equally important that it be **Unapologetic**. It is safe to advise that one should never make any kind of apology in the introduction. Anything for which one feels called upon to apologize should be avoided or omitted. Unavoidable states of health and voice or accidents are only more greatly accented by an apology. If one has had insufficient time to prepare, he should simply ask God's help and go ahead, because an apology does not make the hastily prepared sermon any better. Very prayerful preacher has preached effective sermons by God's help in spite of physical weakness or lack of preparation when not due to laziness.

7) Finally, the introduction should be **Specific**. That is, it should be prepared for the one specific sermon. Some of the older preachers used a stock of stereotyped introductions which were used with most any sermon with a little adaptation. But, an introduction which is also general that it can introduce any sermon is not really suitable to adequately introduce any sermon. A good introduction will contain a clear statement of the theme of the sermon and its purpose. Obviously, then, the proper introduction must be specifically prepared. However, while it is related to the specific sermon it should not be a part of the body, nor should it anticipate the material of any of the divisions; it is simply an approach to the theme which briefly lays the foundation in such a way as to prepare the listeners for the sermon and arouse their interest.

## HOW TO FIND THE PROPER INTRODUCTION

### *1) What has his text to do with the context?*

It will often be the best to introduce a sermon by showing the relation of the text to the context, especially when one has chosen a narrative text which will not be clear without a little historic background to set the scene. The story of Naaman the leper is clearer when one knows something about the preceding events and the state of affairs between Israel and Syria. Most of the texts in the book of Revelation are meaningless until surrounding verses or chapters are summarized. This might be true of any text from any part of the Bible.



2) *What relation has this sermon to a preceding sermon in a series?*

Sermon is a course or series can often be best introduced by a brief synopsis or summary of the preceding sermon of the week.

3) *What has this sermon to do with the special day or occasion?*

If the sermon theme is derived from the sentiment or tradition of a special day or occasion, it will often be introduced best by an explanation of that sentiment or tradition.

4) *What has this sermon to do with some special need of the congregation?*

The introduction often will consist of a statement of the need or needs of the congregation especially when the sermon has been prepared to meet this need or condition. This type is especially valid when the needs are generally recognized by the people who are eager to have the need supplied. If the need is not recognized or admitted, it is best to approach the treatment in another manner. Suppose, for instance, that there is a general prayerlessness and coldness among the people, the preacher may approach his sermon by pointing to the condition and then hopefully proposing a sermon which he trusts will show the way to a higher spiritual plane. One should not fall into the habit of despairingly bewailing the condition of the people, which habit only leads to hopelessness.

5) *What personal experience has suggested this sermon?*

If the sermon has been suggested to the preacher's mind by a personal experience, he may introduce the sermon by briefly telling of the experience and how it suggested the sermon. Such experiences should be told modestly and without uninteresting details. This type of introduction should not be used too frequently.

6) *Why is this sermon of special importance?*

When one is treating a truly important subject, it may suffice as an introduction to call the attention to its importance to the hearers. The layman becomes interested at

once when he perceives that the preacher's subject is of considerable import, but he will not be impressed by such introductions after a while if the sermons prove to be disappointing. So, while this type of introduction is effective, it should be used only when the sermon is of special importance. However, there certainly are great many momentous themes in the Holy Scriptures which, if properly treated, are worth the time and attention of any hearers.

7) *What story or anecdote will introduce this sermon?*

When a truly apt story can be found, it makes one of the most attractive types of introduction. One must make sure that the story clearly suggests the sermon theme and he must omit distracting details which prevent clarity and brevity. It is important, too, that the story or anecdote be fresh, for hackneyed anecdotes arouse no interest. Story approaches are used widely with success by public speakers.

8) *What current event will introduce this sermon?*

Current events are usually quite striking and they make excellent introductions to sermons when they are relevant to the theme. There is one caution: it is best not to refer to news events which agitate people's minds too greatly or cause too much distress, because the people will continue to think on the news and will not follow the sermon.

Finally, one may approach a sermon simply by appealing for the attention of the people when there is only a limited time for the sermon. Usually, however, a sermon should have a proper introduction, because the mind has natural aversion to abruptness and is not usually ready to concentrate on an idea without preparation. In rare cases one may dispense with an introduction when all the time is needed for the treatment.

## THE QUALITIES OF A GOOD CONCLUSION

1) Like the introduction, the conclusion ought to have *CLARITY*. The conclusion is the part of the sermon in which the preacher calls for action or decision; it is the most vital part of the sermon, so there just must not be any obscurity of thought. "If the trumpeter blows an uncertain sound who will prepare himself for the battle?" A

lawyer would never win a case if his appeal to the jury were in ambiguous or equivocal language. Even the deep sermon must be crystal clear in the conclusion or it can have no practical success. The great soul winners without exception in the conclusion of their sermons have made it perfectly clear what they wanted their hearers to do and what decisions they wanted them to make.

2) Another quality of a good conclusion is *UNITY*. If we call on our hearers to do too many things, they are not likely to do any of them, but if we put before them just one exhortation, or one decision, with clearness and earnestness there is good chance of success. The reason some sermons lack unity as well as clarity in the conclusion is that the preacher has no clear conception of the result he expects the sermon to accomplish. Paul reveals to us one of the elements of his success in the words, "This ONE THING I do." If the first rule for the conclusion is, *be clear*, the second is, *be specific*.

3) In addition to these qualities the conclusion should have *BREVITY*. If the sermon has been properly constructed and God is dealing with the hearers, the conclusion need not be long; and if the sermon has been weak a long conclusion will be futile. There is no ironclad rule for the length of a conclusion, because "circumstances alter cases," but if there is any doubt it should be decided on the side of brevity.

4) Finally and emphatically the good conclusion should be marked by *INTENSITY*. This is not necessarily intensity of volume; more important are moral and spiritual intensity, sincere earnestness or godly zeal. The preacher should be ashamed for his eyes to fill with tears when he is beseeching men to be reconciled to God, though there is no merit in "crocodile tears". If preachers were as earnest before their audiences as lawyers are before the jury, our country would have a great revival. We could learn, too, from the salesman's manner of closing a sale of goods which "perish with the using". A preacher who cannot be intense in his appeal for decisions which have eternal consequences is not "fit for the kingdom of God". If Peter the Hermit could arouse a whole continent to leave all for the futile Crusade, why cannot modern preachers provoke their hearers to give up a few carnal pleasures in exchange for a higher spiritual life and peace?

## THREE TYPES OF CONCLUSIONS

1) **The lesson conclusion.** This type of conclusion consists of stating the lesson which the sermon teaches. In most sermons the applications are made within the body of the sermon, but sometimes in doctrinal or propositional sermons the doctrines are explained or the proposition is proved in the body and the practical lesson is saved for the conclusion. This will most often be true with sermons of the teaching type which call for no immediate decision at the close, but suggest a final lesson for the departing to contemplate. For instance, in a sermon on the "Deity of Christ," the body of the sermon may be entirely devoted to proof. But not wishing the sermon to be closed without a clear practical application, the preacher may conclude by pointing to the fact that truly divine Christ is sufficiently able to keep all His promises and sustain His people at all times. Thus a lesson of confidence is taught by what would otherwise be merely a lecture. One should avoid concluding the sermon with a whole list of lessons as some of the older preachers did, for this violates unity and is not effective.

2) **The summary conclusion.** This type is also used to terminate the sermon where no immediate decision is sought, nor altar call given. This consists of briefly repeating the salient points of a sermon in order to aid the hearers in remembering the sermon. If possible, the applications which are repeated should be stated in different language to avoid monotony. By all means, the summary should be brief. This makes a splendid conclusion for a teaching sermon, because there can be no learning without repetition. The summary conclusion is also called recapitulation.

3) **The appeal type of conclusion.** This consists simply of making a direct appeal for immediate decision, action or obedience, such as the altar, or invitation to the inquiry room as was the practice of D. L. Moody. Certainly every preacher should preach at least one sermon per week which is followed with an appeal to men to decide for Christ. Even when men make such decisions in their hearts during a service or alone at home, there should be a public confession of Christ before men. It should be made clear that an altar call is a proper conclusion, and when one is given, there need be no other conclusion between the sermon and the appeal. A decision call is more effective when it is given before the hearer has anticipated. Nothing spoils a sermon's effect more than the hackneyed apologetic clause, "one

more story and I'll close," or "this is my last point." As soon as men are warned that the sermon is about to conclude, their thoughts wander to other things and some begin to leave or prepare to leave. There is no reason why one should say that a point or story is the last unless he wishes to assure the patient hearers that the tribulation is nearly over. Let the sermon be of reasonable length and omit any anticipatory references to the end. Then let the appeal follow the final point of the body without a break. One of the worst things about promises to close is that too frequently, the promises are not kept. If one has not promised, he is not obligated. If the Bible is true, even evangelists ought to be truthful.

# HOW TO PREACH A SERMON

## 1. BE PREPARED TO PREACH

1 Samuel 10:26 Be spiritually prepared. Feel God's touch in your life.

Make right:

- known sins that have not been confessed
- dishonest practices
- careless speech
- refusal to follow God's commands
- unresolved disagreement with other people.

The preacher should:

- spend time everyday in Bible study and prayer
- have earnest desire to overcome sin
- be careful to follow God's standards of behavior both in public and in private
- live at peace with others.

Luke 24:32 When we enter the pulpit, there must be a fire in our hearts.

That fire comes from:

- a heart made right with God
- the conviction that our message comes from God
- the assurance of the Holy Spirit
- the confidence of knowing our topic well

## 2. SPEAK CORRECTLY

Because the voice is very important in preaching, we should be very careful to use it in the best way possible. Take care of the following things:

**Volume** Always speak loud enough so that all may hear you. However, do not shout for you will offend people. Do not speak too quietly for people will not hear you. The easiest speaking voice to listen is the one that varies the volume. You may speak loudly at times, and sometimes you may speak quietly. Change the volume to fit what you are saying. Use your diaphragm muscle to change your volume.

**Tone and Pitch.** Someone who speaks through their nose or in a high pitched, squeaky voice, is very hard to listen to. Practise speaking in your own house. Practise so that your voice comes out round and full. Listen to yourself on a tape-recorder. Push from your diaphragm and open your mouth so that the sound will come out clearly.

**Speak Clearly.** Many speakers have lazy tongues. Form each word carefully and speak it clearly. Open your mouth and let the words come out. Do not mumble with your mouth half closed. If you do not speak clearly, God's truth will not be clearly understood. Practise to pronounce each word correctly and distinctly.

**Speak Slowly.** Often, carefully prepared sermons are not understood by the listeners because the preacher speaks too quickly. Slow down your speaking so that you can clearly pronounce each word. This will help your listeners to understand what you are saying. Listen to yourself on a tape-recorder. Ask your wife or a friend to tell you if you are speaking too quickly. The practise speaking more slowly.

### 3. SPEAK POSITIVELY

- be positive, do not express doubts in the pulpit
- be truthful and accurate in all that you say
- be respectful of the feelings and opinions of others. Never condemn or speak disrespectfully of another person or church
- be humble. Do not give the impression that you know everything.
- be earnest. Preach to the hearts of the people. Preach for decisions for Jesus
- uplift Jesus, not yourself (John 12:32; John 3:30)

#### 4. HOLD THE ATTENTION OF YOUR HEARERS

- look your listeners in the eye. Do not stare out the window or at the ceiling as you talk. Let your eyes move around to each of the listeners. Let them know that you are talking to them
- smile as you preach. Be careful not to look angry. Do not condemn or speak harshly to your listeners. This will make it much easier for them to accept your sermon
- ask questions. Make them think. By their answers you will know whether or not they understand what you are saying
- ask them to open their Bibles and turn to the texts. Ask church members to help those who are having trouble finding the text. Involve them in the Scripture readings.
- show them pictures that illustrate your point
- hold up objects; for example, a stone, lamp, knife
- act out character in your sermon; for example, Zacchaeus - bend down to show how short he was
- have the children guess who you are describing
- use hand gestures
- speak like you imagine the person in your story might have spoken.

#### 5. USE ILLUSTRATIONS AND STORIES.

Perhaps the best way to hold the interest of your listeners is to tell stories. Stories are like windows in a house. They let in light and fresh air. Most people can concentrate on something for about ten to fifteen minutes. Then they lose interest. If you plan to tell a story or use an illustration every ten minutes during your sermon, then you will hold your listener's attention and interest right to the end of the sermon.

Illustrations and stories come from:

- Bible
- books, newspapers
- traditional stories



- other preachers
- people's live
- incidents that take place around us everyday.

Different types of stories and illustrations are:

- personal experiences
- Bible stories
- parables
- poems
- current events.

## **6. USE THE BLACKBOARD**

By using the blackboard, your message will enter the minds of you listeners through their eyes as well as their ears. The action of writing on the blackboard will capture their interest.

On the blackboard you can:

- write words
- list Bible texts
- list your main points
- draw pictures and charts

Even though you may not be able to write neatly or draw well, still use the blackboard. Whatever you write or draw will strengthen what you have said in your listener's thinking.

## **7. DEVELOP YOUR THEME LOGICALLY**

Your sermon should contain three parts:

The **INTRODUCTION** in which you will gain the attention of the congregation and prepare them for what you are going to talk about.

### The MAIN BODY

The main body is the sermon in which you will develop your theme. You will take the congregation step-by-step from one point to the next, helping them to understand the truth you are presenting.

The CONCLUSION in which you will summarize quickly the main points of your sermon. the conclusion will include some device (question, story, text etc) to help each listener make a decision for Christ.

As you preach, develop your theme. Make your point, then carefully explain it. Be alert to the reactions of your listeners. Ask them if what you have said is clear. Then move on to your next point. State each main point clearly. Repeat your main points in different ways so that your listeners will understand where you are heading in your talk. Part way through your sermon, summarize the main points you have already covered. Move step-by-step through the sermon joining together your main points.

## 9. READ BIBLE VERSES CAREFULLY

Often the power of God's word is lost by poor reading. While reading the Bible, many preachers stumble over some words and pronounce others incorrectly.

While you are preparing your sermon, practise reading the Bible texts. Read them out loud using the right expression and pronunciation. In the pulpit, do not look down as you read. Hold the Bible up in your hands and read clearly. You are handling God's word. Read it carefully and correctly.

John 12:21            As we stand up to preach, the people listening are saying to us, "Sir, we would see Jesus". Let us not disappoint them. Let us uphold the Master before them that they may experience His saving grace in their lives.