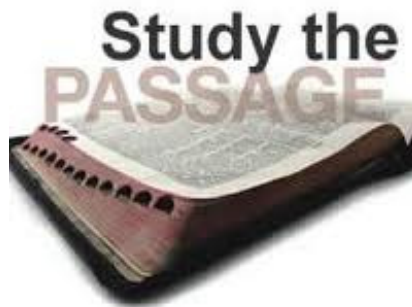


Footprints



CHRISTIAN RESOURCES

HOW TO PREPARE BIBLE MESSAGES



Footprints into Africa

HOW TO PREPARE BIBLE MESSAGES

PART ONE

THE PHILOSOPHY OF HOMILETICS

INTRODUCTION

1. **Homiletics** is that branch of theology that deals with the nature, classification, construction and delivery of sermons.
2. **A sermon** is a message which explains, illustrates and applies the teachings of God's Word.
3. **A preacher** is a person called by God to publically proclaim God's Word.
4. **Preaching** is the proclamation of God's Word.
 - a) to tell or announce thoroughly
 - b) to speak throughout
 - c) to tell good news
 - d) to tell thoroughly
 - e) to proclaim as a herald
 - f) to speak
 - g) The above are all translated "to preach"
5. **Preaching** is the God-ordained proclamation of God's Word

1. THE OBJECT OF TEACHING IS THREE-FOLD

1. To evangelise unbelievers
2. To edify believers
 - a) Instruct
 - b) Comfort
 - c) Rebuke
3. To encounter evil in society
4. D.L. Moody: The best way to heat a cold church is to light a fire in the pulpit

11. THE QUALITIES OF GOOD PREACHING

1. It is scriptural
2. It brings conviction of sin
3. It produces changed lives

111. THE QUALIFICATIONS OF A GOOD PREACHER

1. Ability to get on with others
2. Sound knowledge of God's Word
3. Spirit-filled and prayerfully dependent upon God
4. Ability to communicate
5. A good sense of humour
6. Personal neatness and cleanliness
7. A genuine love for people

1V. THE PEACHER'S REWARDS

1. The peace that comes from knowing you are in God's will
2. The joy that comes from seeing fruit in your ministry
3. The crown of glory that Jesus has prepared for you at His Second Coming (1 Pet. 5:4)

HOW TO PREPARE BIBLE MESSAGES

PART TWO

THE PREPARATION OF THE SERMON

I. TYPES OF SERMONS

1. The **topical** sermon

- a) Definition: The topical sermon is that type of sermon that is built around a scriptural topic or subject e.g. what the Bible says about “Russia”, “the Virgin Birth”, fact or fiction?, etc.
- b) Steps to organizing
 - (i) Select your topic
 - (ii) Select 3 or 4 main points that amplify, explain and illustrate your topic
 - (iii) Select Scripture references as “proof texts” to support each point
- c) Cautions:
 - (i) The comparative ease of preparing this type of sermon often results in your neglecting the other types
 - (ii) You may find yourself being tempted to quote verses slightly out of context to support your argument
 - (iii) Be careful of a subject too general in nature
 - (iv) Be careful to cover your Bible as a whole, and don’t just pick on the interesting and well-known sections to the detriment of the rest
 - (v) Unless you are constantly studying the Scriptures, you will soon exhaust your sermon resources

2. The **textual** sermon

- a) Definition: The textual sermon is that type of sermon that derives its theme and major points from a scriptural text, or one or more verses.
- b) Types of textual sermons

(i) **One-verse** type (e.g. Acts 16: 31)

- | | | |
|------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|
| - A simple proposition | - | “Believe on....” |
| - A sovereign person | - | “the Lord Jesus Christ....” |
| - A sublime promise | - | “and thou shalt be saved....” |

(ii) **Several-verse** type (e.g. Acts 17: 32-34)

- | | | |
|----------------|---|---|
| - Some derided | - | “some mocked” (v.32) |
| - Some delayed | - | “we will hear again of this matter” (v.33) |
| - Some decided | - | “certain men joined him and believed” (v.34) |

c) Steps in organizing the textual sermon

- (i) Read the passage through several times for your own spiritual profit and understanding
- (ii) Attempt to interpret the passage correctly according to sound hermeneutical procedures
- (iii) Select a title for your message
- (iv) Select your main points from the text and enlarge upon them with other verses and illustrations

3. The **expository** sermon

- a) Definition: The expository sermon is that type of sermon which seeks primarily an intense exegesis and application of a passage of Scripture
- b) Distinctive features:
 - (i) The text is usually longer than that of a textual sermon
 - (ii) The entire outline, including the sub-points, is derived from the text
 - (iii) The basic objective is an intense exegesis

c) Example: an expository sermon of **Joel 2**

(i) ***Desolation wrought (v. 1-11)***

- Darkened skies (**v.2**)
- Desolate scenes (**v.3**)
- Deafening sounds (**v.5**)

(ii) ***Dedication sought (v.12-17)***

- Sound an alarm (**v.12**)
- Summon the assembly (**v.15**)
- Sanctify the congregation (**v.17**)

(iii) ***Deliverance brought (v. 18-32)***

- I will send - food (**v.19**)
- I will remove - the foe (**v.20**)
- I will restore – the years (**v.25**)

II. SERMON CONSTRUCTION

1. Prayer – preaching affects men; prayer affects God

2. Knowledge of your audience

3. Actual construction

a) **Sources** for sermon material

(i) The Bible – have several versions available

(ii) A couple of good theology books

(iii) A Bible encyclopedia, a Bible dictionary etc

Hint: Steer clear of too many commentaries

- (iv) Christian magazines, books and biographies
- (v) Your own personal experience
- (vi) Notes from other sermons – be careful though, of plagiarism
- (vii) Current newspaper and magazines

Hint: Keep a good library and file of your sermon material

b) Select your ***subject or text***

Remember to keep in mind to whom you will be speaking and the nature of the meeting

c) Select a ***title*** for your message

- (i) The title should stimulate interest, yet not be too sensitive
- (ii) The title must be in keeping with the subject of the sermon, the character of the audience, and the nature of the occasion
- (iii) Don't make your title too long

4. Outlining your message

a) The importance of the outline

- (i) It helps the speaker plan, think, write and speak logically and intelligently
- (ii) It helps the audience to follow, understand and remember

b) Qualities of a good outline

- (i) Unity
- (ii) Order
 - Ideas should be clearly distinguished from one another
 - Ideas should follow one another in true sequence
 - The order of thought should move towards a climax
- (iii) Proportion

c) Elements of an outline

(I) ***Introduction***

- Definition: That part of the message which seeks to gain the attention of the audience and which introduces them to your message
- Purpose of the introduction
 - To gain attention
 - To establish rapport
 - To arouse interest
 - To introduce the content
- Qualities of a good introduction
 - Brief
 - Clear
 - Related
 - Varied
 - Audience-related
 - Modest
- Types of introductions
 - Startling statement or quotation
 - Statistics
 - Amusing illustration
 - Question
 - Demonstration
 - Object lesson

- Paradox
- Word picture of text
- Reference to a contemporary event
- Hypothetical situation

(ii) ***Content or body***

- Definition: That part of the message which seeks to summarise what has been said and to motivate the audience to decision and action
- Three vital elements
 - recapitulation
 - application
 - motivation
- Hints
 - Make it brief and to the point
 - Make it relevant – never humorous after a serious message

d) Rules for outlining

- (i) Follow standard symbols and indentations
- (ii) Use only 3 or 4 main points – seek ***alliteration***
- (iii) Main points must represent the most important items in the text
- (iv) At least 2 sub-points under each main point
- (v) Don't repeat material under another point
- (vi) Include all your supporting material in your outline

5. Illustrations

- a) Definition: A distinctive part of the message that helps the listener better understand a truth by comparing it to a concept already familiar to him

b) Importance of illustrations:

- (i) They explain
- (ii) They arouse attention
- (iii) They lend proof
- (iv) They afford mental rest-periods
- (v) They are an aid to memory

c) Types of illustrations

- (i) Visual- filmstrips, blackboard, overhead projector etc
- (ii) Verbal – humorous incident, stories, poems etc

d) General suggestions in using illustrations

- (i) Don't use too many
- (ii) Make them brief
- (iii) Tell them accurately
- (iv) Make sure they **really** illustrate your point
- (v) Use a variety of illustrations
- (vi) Never illustrate the obvious

6. Application

- a) Be alert throughout the outline for opportunities to apply
- b) Be specific – how does it apply to each listener?
- c) Maintain a certain humility when making application
- d) Offer practical suggestions as to how the listener can make applications
- e) Consider giving an invitation – beware of emotionalism and sensations

HOW TO PREPARE BIBLE MESSAGES

PART THREE

DELIVERING YOUR MESSAGE

I. METHODS OF DELIVERY

1. Extemporaneous preaching
2. Reading from a prepared manuscript
3. Reciting sermons from memory

II. MECHANICS OF DELIVERY

1. Posture

- a) Don't stand all the way through like a "wooden soldier"
- b) Don't continually lean on the pulpit
- c) Stand erect, with your main weight on the front of your feet
- d) Don't rock back and forth, or constantly shift from one foot to another

2. Voice

a) The three basic objects of using voice are

- (i) To be heard
- (ii) To be understood
- (iii) To hold attention

b) Volume

- (i) Usually either too loud, too soft or too monotonous
- (ii) Keep watching the folk in the back row

- (iii) Increase or decrease volume when emphasizing truths
 - (iv) Learn to whisper, so that all can hear
- c) Pitch
 - (i) Usually too high, too low or too monotonous
 - (ii) Ask the Lord to grip your heart with the urgency of your message
 - (iii) Don't let your voice drop at the end of a sentence
- d) Rate or speed
 - (i) Usually too fast, too slow or too monotonous
 - (ii) Vary your speed according to the content of what you are saying
 - (iii) Make use of the "pause" for emphasis
- e) Pronunciation
 - (i) This is usually caused by speaking too fast or too lazily, or due to ignorance of correct pronunciation
 - (ii) Buy a Bible dictionary and check for correct pronunciation

3. Eye-contact

- a) Talk as if you were talking with your friends
- b) Look individuals in your audience in the eye
- c) If the audience is large, look from section to section so as to cover everyone

4. Gestures

- a) General suggestions
 - (i) They should not draw attention to themselves
 - (ii) They should be varied
 - (iii) They should not be used excessively
 - (iv) They should be appropriate

- (v) They should be well-timed
- (vi) They should fit the audience and occasion
- (vii) They should not be irritating to the audience

b) Basic types of gestures

- | | | | |
|-------|--------------------------|---|----------------------------------|
| (i) | Contrast | - | hands spread |
| (ii) | Revulsion | - | palms outward |
| (iii) | Invitation | - | palms up |
| (iv) | Emphasis | - | fist |
| (v) | Scolding or rebuke | - | index finger |
| (vi) | Resignation/indifference | - | shrug your shoulders |
| (vii) | Fear | - | palms outward covering your head |

5. Overcoming fear and tension

- a) Be thoroughly prepared
- b) Pray and ask for the Spirit's guidance and power
- c) Experience reduces nervousness
- d) Ask the Lord to give you His message for the people
- e) Think about your audience as people with real needs
- f) Take a few, good, deep breaths before speaking

III. ADDITIONAL MEANS FOR IMPROVING DELIVERY

1. Public reading of Scripture

a) Common faults of Bible reading

- (i) No enthusiasm

- (ii) Failure to identify the location adequately
- (iii) Poor pronunciation
- (iv) Reading too fast
- (v) Losing your place

b) Suggestions for improving Bible reading

- (i) Handle the Bible reverently
- (ii) Use a Bible with clear, distinct type
- (iii) Identify the version you are using
- (iv) Read with proper emphasis and expression
- (v) Don't preach little sermons between each verse

2. Public prayers

- a) Invocation
- b) Pastoral, supplicatory prayer
- c) Offertory prayer
- d) Benedictory prayer
- e) Suggestions regarding public prayers

- (i) Be sure whoever takes the prayer has a good testimony among the people
- (ii) Try to remember you are talking to God, not the people
- (iii) Maintain an attitude of reverence
- (iv) Keep your head up, face the majority of the people and speak so all can hear you
- (v) Try to avoid repetitious phrases
- (vi) Do not make announcements or preach in your prayers
- (vii) Do not constantly parade your own sins and weaknesses before the people
- (viii) Do not read your prayers, but have a list of itemized requests before you.