

# The Art of Preaching

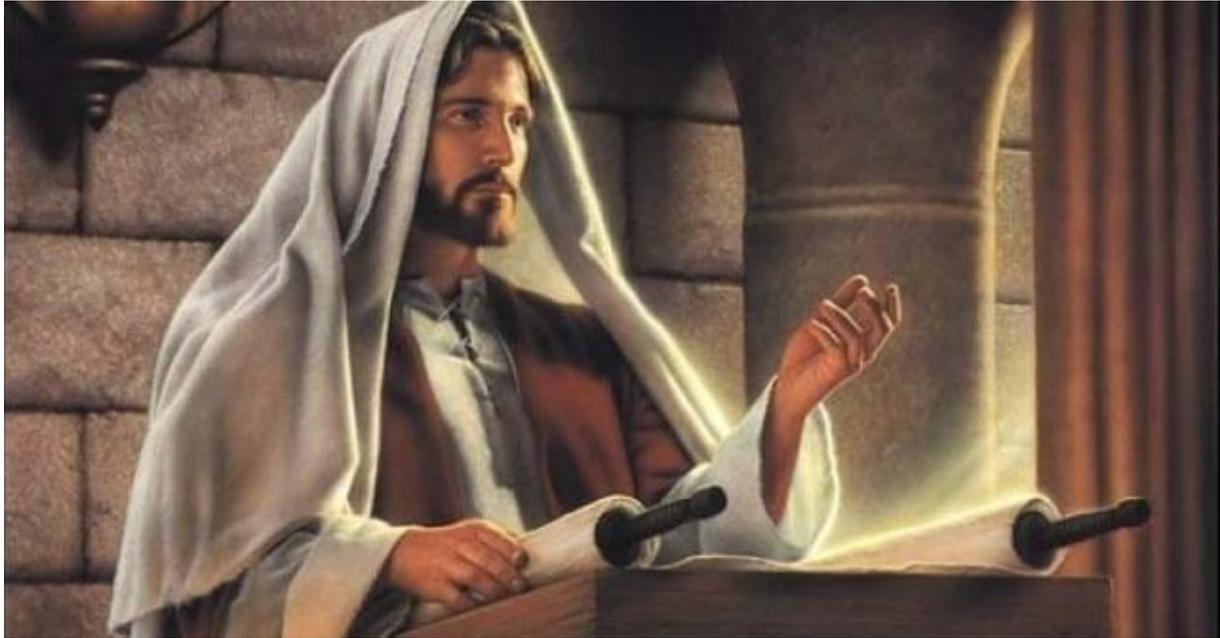
## Homiletics

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### **This course aims to develop:**

- A critical understanding of the liturgical, pastoral and public contexts of preaching, and of theologies of preaching.
- A critical understanding of the different approaches to preaching found in the New Homiletic, and of its emphasis on plot and structure.
- The ability to interpret specific genres of biblical texts appropriately for the varied contexts of contemporary preaching.
- The ability to evaluate preaching form, content and delivery.

Teaching methods will include introductory presentations on themes of the week by the course teacher and guest lecturers, sample video sermons, student presentations, and discussion of set texts and sermons and issues arising from them.



## Foreword

"The Greek word *homilia* signifies conversation, mutual talk, and so familiar discourse. The Latin word *sermo* (from which we get *sermon*) has the same sense, of conversation, talk, discussion. It is instructive to observe that the early Christians did not at first apply to their public teachings the names given to the orations of Demosthenes and Cicero, but called them *talks*, familiar discourses. Under the influence of rhetorical teaching and the popularizing of Christian worship, the talk soon became a more formal and extended discourse . . .

"**Homiletics** may be called a branch of rhetoric, or a kindred art. Those fundamental principles which have their basis in human nature are of course the same in both cases, and this being so it seems clear that we must regard homiletics as rhetoric applied to this particular kind of speaking. Still, preaching is properly very different from secular discourse, as to the primary source of its materials, as to the directness and simplicity of style which become the preacher, and the unworldly motives by which he ought to be influenced." (John A. Broadus, *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*, 1870)

## Medieval Preaching Manuals

"Thematic preaching was not directed at converting the audience. The congregation was assumed to believe in Christ, as the vast majority of people in medieval Europe did. The preacher instructs them about the meaning of the Bible, with emphasis on moral action. Just as "dictamen" combined features of rhetoric, social status, and law to meet a perceived need in writing letters, so the

preaching manuals drew on a variety of disciplines to outline their new technique. Biblical exegesis was one; scholastic logic was another--thematic preaching, with its succession of definitions, divisions, and syllogism can be regarded as a more popular form of scholastic disputation; and a third was rhetoric as known from Cicero and Boethius, seen in rules for arrangement and style. There was also some influence from grammar and other liberal arts in the amplification of divisions of the theme.

### **Homiletics From the 18th Century to the Present**

"**Homiletics** [in the 18th and 19th centuries] increasingly became a species of rhetoric, preaching became pulpit oratory, and sermons became moral discourses. Less bound to classical rhetorical models, zealous fundamentalist and 20th-century homileticians adapted various inductive, narrative-based sermon strategies derived, respectively, from biblical models (jeremiad, parable, Pauline exhortation, revelation) and theories of mass communication." (Gregory Kneidel, "Homiletics." *Encyclopedia of Rhetoric*, ed. by T.O. Sloane. Oxford University Press, 2001)

### **African-American Preaching**

"African American preaching, unlike some of the straitjacket preaching of traditional Eurocentric **homiletics**, is an oral and gestural activity. This does not mean that it is not an intellectual activity, but in the tradition of African American preaching and the language of the Black church, 'the activity of the limbs' contributes to the meaning of preaching by creating a dialogue with the self and the hearer. This is a critical, albeit ancillary, element of African American preaching and often helps to make the more substantive theological and hermeneutical ingredients more palatable because they become integrated into the whole preaching process."

### **The training of the disciples**

It is evident that the Lord regarded the teaching of the disciples as of primary importance. He gave particular attention to it during the three years they were with Him. He was the master teacher; but his method differed greatly from our modern method.

### **The Men He Chose**

The men He chose were drawn from the respectable working class. The majority of them had received small educational advantages and were not considered as

men of culture. The Scribes and Pharisees regarded them, even after Pentecost, as “unlearned and ignorant men” (Acts 4:13, cf. 1 Corinthians 1:27). They would be considered as undisciplined, prejudiced, narrow-minded, provincial, untrained to think or to cooperate with others. Their life had been lived under the influence of a decadent religion and a demoralised age.

Temperamentally, they were a cross-section of mankind. It is, indeed, to a great extent, the variety that existed amongst them in character, natural disposition and genius that makes their experiences so fascinating and instructive to all classes and types of men today.

### **A Practical Training**

It is instructive to note what our Lord did not do. He did not choose men of education, culture, wealth, influence or social standing. The power was to be wholly of God. He did not seek to prepare a large number of disciples: only twelve.

He did not establish a formal school for their training, a School of the Prophets, or a seminary. In fact He omitted many things that today would be regarded as essential and did many things that would be considered the wrong thing to do.

The method used by our Lord in the training of the disciples was intensely practical. It combined theory with practice, precept with example. He had said that He would make them fishers of men, so He took them out among men that they might learn to know men and their conditions and needs and thoughts and problems and sin, and discover the secret of the approach to the hearts of men. He took His pupils into the great laboratory of a sin-cursed world: into the street and market-place, the city and the open field, the rich man’s palace and the humble cottage of the poor. He brought them face to face daily with men, women and children in real life: with Pharisee and sinner, humble men and hypocrites, scoffers and persecutors, true seekers and seekers for personal gain, the sick and the dying, those who blessed and those who cursed, the ignorant and the learned, officers and servants, rich and poor, rulers and slaves.

He led them into direct contact with all the `isms of the day and showed them by actual demonstration how to meet the self-righteousness of the Pharisee, the materialism of the Sadducees and the worldliness of the Herodians. They saw how to deal with the Nicodemuses and the Mary Magdalenes. When the rich young ruler chose to keep his riches rather than to join our Lord's disciples, the great Teacher was careful afterwards to make sure that His pupils understood the

case and all its implications. The woman at the well of Samaria afforded the object of that great masterpiece of personal dealing, the lessons of which were used for the instruction of His disciples. To teach them how to work, He took them where the work was done, instructing them as a master-carpenter would initiate his apprentices into the secrets and skills of his trade — by practical demonstration and actual experience.

After they had been with Him for a time, He sent the Twelve forth two by two that they might have experience in carrying on alone the ministry in which they had seen Him engage. They had to go forth in faith taking no funds and only the simplest, most necessary equipment. When they returned, He went apart with them into a desert place to review with them the lessons derived from their practical experience. Later He sent out a larger number seventy under the same conditions. It was under these conditions they would have to go forth as church-planters after His departure, therefore this experience was necessary to them.

### **Study Periods**

While practical experience was the basis of the method used, a definite place was given to the study of the lessons learned in the work of the day. Frequently the Teacher took His disciples aside to instruct them more fully regarding the things that had taken place. It is clear that these times of private study with the Master apart from the multitude were essential and of the greatest value to the disciples. However, indispensable as they were, they were secondary to the practical instruction. The practical experience was not considered as an opportunity to put into practice the theories learned in class. On the contrary, the classes were for the purpose of considering the experience obtained in the practical work.

### **One Text Book**

There was only one text book used—the Scriptures. The philosophies of the day were not studied. It was not considered necessary by our Lord that the founders of the Church should have a theoretical knowledge of these philosophies, either to give them culture and polish or to enable them to refute error. Yet they did get a very practical knowledge of them and of how to meet them as they came into contact with them in daily experience.

They had no text-book on psychology, yet they did teach psychology — the greatest psychology the world has ever known. They learned to know men and

they learned to know themselves. They came to know what was in man's heart and mind. They received from God the knowledge of what is in man and came to understand men as God understands them.

They had no text book on psychology, but they learned the logic of divine wisdom as they met the error of human reasoning. Their Teacher spent no time on subjects that had only a remote bearing upon their work. He led His pupils immediately to foundational truths and principles in their practical application. After all, is practical truth not the only real truth?

### **Purpose of the Training**

The purpose of their training was to prepare them to be Evangelists, or church-planters. Our Lord did not prepare them to be Elders or Pastors of churches. Their work was to be like His work: they were to evangelise. They were trained for aggressive work, for going out to meet the foe and to storm him in his citadels. Such was to be the work of the leaders of the Church. They founded churches, but they never remained as Elders of local churches. As leaders they must lead forward — to conquest and extension. The immediate care of the local churches was to be the responsibility of local men with gifts for local ministry.

### **Ten Essentials**

In the preparation of the disciples our Lord evidently gave particular attention to the following •points:

1. He was continually seeking their spiritual development. He made full use of all their experiences to teach eternal values. We have but to think of the occasion when the mother of James and John came seeking the highest places for her two sons, and the manner in which He dealt with the individual difficulties of Peter, Thomas and Philip, to realise how careful and watchful He was regarding the spiritual condition and progress of each one. It was the happenings of every day experience, the temptations and faults and failures of the disciples, that He used as the basis for this instruction. And how wisely and lovingly He did so! Here also theory was learned in the practical school. He brought them to the place where they were willing to deny self and to take up the Cross and truly follow Him. Nothing less than that would have served His purpose.
2. He taught them to evangelise. The practical method which He used to train them to know how to meet men and deal with souls, how to preach and teach, has already been stated.
3. He taught them to know and use the Scriptures. He Himself was

continually using them. All His teaching was based upon them; all His reasoning and arguments were derived from them. Here again the same method is employed: they learned to know and use the Scriptures by using them.

4. He taught them to have faith in God directly for the supply of all their material needs. He had left all to live among men and become the Saviour of the World; they left all to follow Him. He had not where to lay His head; and so it was with them. They left all and went forth with Him, possessing nothing and with no material resources, looking to God alone for the supply of all their needs, sharing together with the Master out of the common fund of God's supply, of which Judas was the Treasurer. This accomplished four important things: it detached them from the world; it made them exercise faith; it obliged them to walk near to God; it caused them to be living witnesses to God's power and faithfulness. These things were necessary to their witness.
5. He taught them to minister in the power of the Spirit alone and not to have recourse to ritual, ceremony, forms of service, programmes, emotionalism, sentimentalism or any other human means to attract or influence. He revealed to them that the power that would draw men was the power of His Cross.
6. He taught them the life and ministry of prayer in the Spirit, though they entered into it only after the Holy Spirit had come to dwell in them.
7. He taught them to live and minister in absolute obedience to the will of God, withholding nothing for self but placing themselves entirely upon the altar.
8. He taught them to exercise unwavering faith, to doubt not but to have absolute trust in God and confidence in His power and faithfulness.
9. He taught them absolute love to God and absolute love to their fellow men — the love that serves, seeking nothing for self and counting it all joy and all gain to give all.
10. He taught them to work together; to cooperate as a group directed by the Spirit of God, none seeking the preeminence and all serving each other.



## **Now let us get on with the Real Work**

### **Rules for Contemporary Preachers**

"Here . . . are the 'Rules' we've come up with for writing for the *ear*. . . . Adopt them or adapt them as you see fit. And with each sermon manuscript you write, pray the Lord will make you clear, concise, and directed toward the needs of your flock.

Active voice is more alive than passive.

Don't use a 50¢ word when a 5¢ word will do.

Remove unnecessary occurrences of *that* and *which*.

Remove unnecessary or assumable information and get to the point.

Use dialogue for added interest and life.

Don't waste words.

Use contractions where appropriate.

Verbs are more alive than nouns.

Accentuate the positive.

Avoid the 'literary' sound.

Avoid clichés.

Remove forms of the verb *to be* whenever possible."

## **How To Prepare A Sermon – A Quick Overview**

Generally speaking, most preachers learn **how to prepare a sermon** in seminary - that is the science of homiletics.

However, most preachers (myself included) fine-tuned their sermon preparation in the ministry.

When you have two or three sermons to prepare every week, you will quickly learn the art of sermon preparation - homiletics.

I have seen people deliver sermons in many different ways. However, technically there are only three ways to prepare a sermon, deductively, inductively and a bit of both.

### **1. Sermons Have Three Parts**

Grasp this truth and sermon preparation (Homiletics) will become a whole lot easier.

The three parts of a sermon are: the introduction, the body and the conclusion. The introduction introduces the body of your sermon or the main preaching point of your sermon. The body of your sermon is your sermon outline or what you are going to talk about in your sermon. The conclusion concludes the sermon and reinforces the main preaching point of your sermon.

I am absolutely amazed at how many preachers get this wrong.

### **2. Sermons Have Structure**

Once you have completed the study of the text of Scripture that you are going to preach, you will need to decide how you are going to structure your sermon.

Are you going structure your sermon deductively? Are you going to structure your sermon inductively? Are you going to structure your sermon with a bit of both - deduction and induction?

Once you have decided how you are going to structure your sermon, you will need to write a sermon outline.

### **3. Sermons Have Sermon Outlines**

The sermon outline is your road map for your sermon. The sermon outline will help you stick to the main preaching point of your sermon.

#### **A. A Deductive Sermon Outline**

A deductive sermon outline begins with the main preaching point followed by sub-points and incidental points.

#### **B. An Inductive Sermon Outline**

An inductive sermon outline begins with the sub-points and incidental points and moves toward the main preaching point. An inductive sermon is generally used to preach the narratives.

#### **C. Deductive and Inductive Sermon Outline - A Bit of Both**

The following sermon outline (Romans 10:14-21) is mainly an inductive sermon outline but there is also deduction in the sermon outline (see point 2 below). The inductive sermon outline uses Lowry's Loop paradigm.

1. The gospel of Jesus Christ is a message that no reasonable person could refuse (Romans 10:15b)
2. And yet, many people do refuse to heed the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ (Romans 10:16-21)

Why did Israel not obey the message of the gospel?

- A. It was not because they did not hear it (10:18)
- B. It was not because they did not understand it (10:19)
- C. It was not because God did not love them (10:21)
- D. It seems they simply refused to respond to the message of the gospel(10:16)
3. However, we must not give up preaching the gospel in spite of people refusing to respond to it
4. After all, it is through the preaching of the gospel that we give people an opportunity to respond to it in faith (Romans 10:14-15, 17)
5. You know, that same gospel message is available to you today.

6. Will you respond to the gospel of Jesus Christ in faith?

#### **4. Sermons Completion**

Once you complete your sermon outline, you will need to write content to your sermon outline, an introduction to your sermon outline and a conclusion to your sermon outline.

#### **Homiletics - How To Deliver A Sermon**

Some preachers deliver their sermon with no notes, some preachers deliver their sermon with brief notes and other preachers deliver their sermon with extensive notes.

However you deliver your sermon, it needs to be you. Don't copy other people!

Personally, I like extensive notes when it comes to preaching. Although I know my sermon outline intimately (I write my sermons from a grammatical and exegetical study of the text), nevertheless, I still take my extensive notes into the pulpit. It gives me freedom to preach knowing that my sermon road map is right there in front of me.

**Homiletics!** Learn it well and you will find sermon writing easier.

#### **Six Laws of Dynamic Bible Teaching**

##### **1. LEARNER-ORIENTED**

It is your responsibility to cause the audience to learn--not theirs. You must be willing to do whatever it takes to accomplish this. Be a servant of your audience. Focus on meeting their needs to grow, not on your need to be admired as a teacher.

##### **2. EXPECTATION-ORIENTED**

Your opinion of and your belief in your audience (whether stated or not) will radically affect their response. Believe in your audience and express that belief.

##### **3. APPLICATION-ORIENTED**

Explanation without application is truncation of truth. Explanation should be seen as the proper means to application. What is your audience going to leave the room convinced of, motivated, and determined to do?

#### **4. RETENTION-ORIENTED**

Distil your material to a form that can be easily remembered. Make use of simple charts, illustrations and key words.

#### **5. NEED-ORIENTED**

No matter how well presented your teaching was, if it didn't meet your audience's needs, it was a failure. Your content does not have a "need to be taught." Rather, your audience has needs to be met. Your job is not to impress your audience with how much you know. It's to discover what their needs are and gear your material to meet them. On the other hand, one need shared by all is the need to understand biblical theology and worldview.

#### **6. EQUIPPING-ORIENTED**

The final test of your teaching is not what takes place during the meeting--it's what takes place after the meeting. Your teaching should bear observable fruit in the their lives and in the lives of the people with whom they are working.

### **Correct and Clear Interpretation of the Bible**

#### **Interpret Grammatically, Historically and Critically**

The goal of biblical hermeneutics is to discover the meaning intended by the original author. While there may be many valid *applications* for a text, there is only one valid *interpretation*. The task of the interpreter is to ascertain the intended meaning, if possible, using the following tools.

#### **Interpreting Grammatically**

The historical-critical method assumes that words and expressions have a relatively stable meaning during given periods of history. Therefore, we begin by taking what we can determine as the normal, everyday meaning of the words, phrases, and sentences to the extent possible. In other words, our interpretation must correspond to the words and grammar in the text in a reasonable way. Otherwise, the interpreter could assign meaning of his own without objective control. The Bible would become a horoscope of vague sayings we try to plug into our lives however we're able.

1. Most of the Bible can be easily interpreted by simply taking the language (either in the original or in the translation) in the usual way (John 3:36; Acts 1:11). In other words, "if the plain sense makes sense, seek no other sense."

2. A plain sense reading should not be confused with a literalistic interpretation. We should allow for figures of speech (Mark 1:5; Luke 22:19).
3. If a passage contains symbols or a special literary genre, this should be indicated in the text, either by textual cues, or because symbolism is required in order to make sense of the text. Most symbols are explained by the Bible itself (Revelation 1:9-20).

### **Interpreting Historically**

Historical interpretation means that we take into account, as much as possible, the historical background of the author and the recipients. The Bible was written to ordinary people, and is understandable to anyone. However, it was written thousands of years ago to different cultures. Therefore, as modern readers, we have to try to recover a general sense of the meaning of words, phrases and concepts in the ancient cultures addressed in Scripture, primarily, Hebrew culture and Greco-Roman culture of the first century.

We are not interested, at first, in the question, "What does it mean to me?" but rather, "What did it mean to those to whom it was originally written?"

- Genesis 15:7-21 -- "Cutting a covenant" solemnized a contract between two parties. It was normally bilateral (both parties walked through), but in this case only God goes through.
- Revelation 2:12,13 -- Pergamum was the center of the worship of Aesclepius.
- 1 Corinthians 11:4-6 -- Shorn hair was typical of Aphrodite priestess-prostitutes; shaven heads were typical of convicted adulteresses (v. 5).

Use Bible dictionaries or other sources to discover customs, money, geography, etc. Then find a corresponding meaning in our culture.

- Good Samaritan (Luke 10); 2 Denarii (Mark 6:37); 50,000 Drachma (Acts 19:19).
- Pharisees' teaching on the relationship between illness and sin (Mark 2; John 9:1).

### **Interpreting Critically**

Your interpretation must make rational sense. If interpretation is permitted to contradict, there is no reason for hermeneutics, since we may make a passage say whatever we want.

The following six rules will enable you to arrive at a critically sound interpretation. Some of these rules are the outgrowth of a high view of scripture. In other words, the entire Bible is the product of one author (God) at the same time that it is the product of many authors (Prophets and Apostles). Therefore, it is not unreasonable to seek to find a consistent message throughout the Bible.

1. **Interpret in light of the context of the passage.** Follow the thought development in the book you are reading, and make sure your interpretation flows along with the general direction of argument. Sudden changes in subject are unusual. If you have the thought development of a book centring on one subject, suddenly switching to another, and then back to the first, then your interpretation is almost certainly wrong.

Consider the larger context as well: Which Testament? Which author? What time period? Never view a passage in isolation from its surroundings. The context should be considered the most important kind of evidence for the interpretation of a passage. Usually context supplies all we need to know in order to interpret a passage. We should turn to other explanations only when we can find no critically feasible interpretation based on the English text in its context.

- Matthew 16:28 -- Referring to the transfiguration (in context of passage).
- 1 Corinthians 14:34 -- Means to disrupt (see 1 Corinthians 11:5 and the context of the book and passage).
- 1 Corinthians 3:17 -- Thought development of the passage limits interpretation.

2. **Interpret in light of progressive revelation** (Hebrews 1:1,2). While God's purpose for man has never changed, His strategy in accomplishing that purpose has changed. He has dealt with man under different "covenants," or programs. Therefore, it is important to ask, "Under which program was this written?" Primary application of the passage will be to the people operating under the program, and not necessarily to others. There may be secondary applications for people in other programs based on principles which have universal application. (Note the special problems here in connection with the ministry of Christ before the cross.)

- Polygamy was permitted (never condoned) in the Old Testament, but taught against in the New Testament (1 Timothy 3:2).
- Theocracy was commanded in the Old Testament, but secular government is affirmed in the New Testament (Romans 13:1-7; Matthew 22:21; 2 Chronicles 7:14).
- Animal sacrifices, dietary laws, Sabbaths, holy days, religious festivals, priests and liturgy have all been fulfilled in Christ and are thus obsolete (Colossians 2:16,17; Hebrews 8).
- Malachi 3:7-12 -- In context of the testament (see Numbers 18:21-24; Deuteronomy 14:22-29).

3. **Interpret scripture in harmony with other scripture.** Since the Bible is inspired by God, it does not contradict itself. Therefore, never interpret scripture in such a way that your interpretation clearly contradicts other scriptures. First discover the allowable range of meaning for a passage, then choose the interpretation that doesn't contradict other scriptures.

- Acts 2:38 could either be referring to baptismal regeneration, or simply adding baptism as a desirable adjunct to the minimum requirement for salvation (i.e. faith). In view of the clear teaching on salvation by grace through faith alone, the latter interpretation is preferable.
- James 2:14-26 -- "Justify" can also mean "justify before men."
- 1 John 1:9 could refer to Christians getting God's (legal) forgiveness only as they continue to confess their sins. Since this contradicts the clear teaching on justification and eternal security, it is preferable to interpret this passage as either referring to non-Christians or perhaps to experiential forgiveness for Christians.

4. **Interpret the unclear in light of the clear.** Scripture teaches every major, essential truth clearly and repeatedly. Never build a doctrine on an unclear passage.

- Luke 16:9 is used by Roman Catholics to support indulgences.
- 1 Corinthians 15:29 mentions an obscure, unknown practice used in Corinth. Today the Mormons use this passage to elevate dead ancestors to a higher status in the afterlife.

- 1 John 5:16 -- The "sin unto death" is never defined. You can't build a doctrine of "falling away" on such a passage.

**5. Interpret the "spirit" of the passage, not necessarily the "letter," or the literalistic meaning, especially when the text is a literary genre prone to figures of speech or colourful statements.**

- Proverbs 22:6 -- The book of Proverbs contains many general maxims, but not all are absolute promises. Not every child will go right, but most will.
- Proverbs 15:1 -- Not every gentle word will turn away wrath, but in most cases it will.
- 1 Corinthians 11:1-18 -- In some New Testament passages, interpretation by the "letter" contradicts the "spirit" of the passage (c.f. 1 Corinthians 10:32, 33).

**6. Interpret with dependence upon the Holy Spirit, allowing Him to teach you. Mark T or F for each of the following:**

- Proverbs 3:5 -- "Lean not unto your own understanding" means we should avoid approaching the Bible on a primarily analytical level.
- Since the Bible is "living and active," the interpretation of a passage may be different for different people.
- Unless we approach God's word with a deep reverence for God and a passion to know His will for our lives, we may often get the wrong interpretation.
- If the rules of interpretation give one answer and the Holy Spirit shows another, we should choose the latter interpretation.
- We should pray, before studying, that God will enable us to understand the passage.

**God's Revelation through the Bible: *He has spoken!***

Christianity is a *revealed* faith—God has spoken directly to mankind, and has revealed His character, His purpose in history, and His plan for redeeming and restoring man to a relationship with Him. We don't have to imagine or surmise what God is like or what He asks of us. Instead we can have confidence in the

truth that God Himself has made known to us, because it comes directly from Him.

The Bible is one of God's primary vehicles of revealing Himself. Through it He will show us *statements of fact* (See Luke 1:1-4), *wisdom* (See Heb. 5:14, 1 Cor. 2:14, Ps. 1, 119), and even *personal insight*—God speaking to us and our situation through the Holy Spirit (Heb. 4:12; Deut. 8:3; 1 Pet. 2:2; Ps. 119:105, 169; 2 Tim. 3:16). Since the Bible represents God's communication to us, we have a sacred responsibility to guard it as a precious treasure (1 Tim. 6:20; 2 Tim 1:14). We are to accurately interpret and teach it (2 Tim. 2:15), protect it against those who distort its meaning (1 Tim. 6:20- 21; 2 Tim. 1:13-14), and regularly use it to encourage other members of the Body of Christ (Col. 3:16; Eph. 5:19; 2 Tim. 4:1-4).

The purpose of Biblical interpretation—hermeneutics—is to discover the author's intended meaning. This can be difficult because language can be ambiguous, but a student of Scripture is under obligation to work toward an accurate (though perhaps not exhaustive) understanding of the author's original intent.

Biblical interpretation is a skill that you can develop with practice over time. Just as with learning a musical instrument or a new sport, you may feel clumsy or ill-equipped at first. But with sound technique and practice, you'll become more proficient and capable. The reward of such effort is being able to see deeply into the mind of God, and fall more and more under His loving leadership.

The *inductive method* of Bible study offers a practical process for accurate interpretation. This method uses details of the text to arrive at the author's intended meaning. It's an approach used widely in both everyday problem solving and rigorous academic study, relying on common sense to give explanation for the observed data. The inductive method is in contrast with topical study—looking for answers to a particular doctrinal question—and with devotional study—looking at scripture for truth that speaks to current needs or interests.

The inductive method is rooted in two principles:

- Scripture interprets scripture: The inductive approach looks to draw meaning from the text itself, rather than imposing meaning upon it. It relies on information gleaned from text. A careful student of the Bible will find a wealth of such information, with repeated themes, terms, and direct quotes of other

scripture providing a commentary of sorts within the Bible itself. Such information includes:

Technical terms: Words used by numerous biblical authors to convey the same idea or a growing theme in the scripture (e.g. “branch,” “Son,” “servant,” “Day of the Lord,” “Christ,” “kingdom,” “temple,” and “grace”).

Event repetition. Reference to key events, especially in Israel’s history, that show a continuity and pattern of meaning over time (e.g. Exodus, creation, and wilderness wandering). This is called *motif*—the meaning of the present or future is defined in terms of a past event.

*Direct quotes or allusions.* Almost every biblical writer quotes or alludes to other biblical texts. Careful analysis will show how a later author understood earlier texts, thus shedding light on both the scripture cited and the passage in which the citation occurs.

Promises and covenants. No other point of repetition demonstrates the unity of the Bible more explicitly than promises and covenants. Key promises God makes are cited or alluded to in every book of the Bible.

- Your interpretation is held up to three standards of proof—sometimes called the “grammatical historical method”—which will either give you confidence or skepticism about your take on a passage.

Adequacy: Is your interpretation complete? Does it explain all of the details of the text? Are all subordinate points meaningfully related to the main point?

Consistency. Does your interpretation agree with external facts? Has the interpretation effectively considered current cultural customs? Is the interpretation consistent with historical events to which the text refers? What does the text state or imply about nature?

Coherence. Given the context and the rest of Scripture, does your interpretation make sense? Does it harmonise with other related scriptures? Does it include an appropriate understanding of literary context and genre, word meaning, and sentence structure? What is the basic argument of the text?

## Inductive Study on Philemon

<b>PARAGRAPH TITLES</b>	<b>AUTHOR: PAUL</b>	<b>AUDIENCE: PHILEMON</b>	<b>THIRD PARTY: ONESIMUS</b>

### Forming your sermon or Bible Study

For instance on Philemon 1:8-20 – Paragraph questions

Language

Historical

Theological

Strategic

Contemporary application

Personal application

### Problem Passage Interpretation Plan

1. Identify the problem(s) in the passage and show the opposing views which make it a problem.
2. List the realistic alternative interpretations (omitting the obviously unrealistic interpretations). Add alternatives, if you discover any later.
3. Write out the thought development of the entire book, if the book is short. With long books, trace the thought development from two chapters before the problem passage through two chapters after it.
4. Check the historical background of the book for any information which might shed light on the passage.
5. Identify key words and perform word studies on them, if necessary.

6. Find the definition of the word in *Vine's Expository Dictionary* or Colin Brown's *A Dictionary of New Testament Theology*.
7. Using an analytical concordance:
  - Check the uses of the word in the same book;
  - Check the uses of the word in other books by the same author (if any); and
  - Check the uses of the word in the rest of the New Testament;
8. Using the following resources, identify and examine helpful parallel passages:
  - Marginal references in your Bible;
  - Analytical concordances and/or Bible dictionaries; and
  - Special cross-referencing resources (*Nave's Topical Bible*, *Treasury of Bible Knowledge*, chain-reference Bibles, etc.).
9. List the pro and con evidence for each interpretation.
10. Evaluate the relative weight and value of each piece of evidence.
11. Decide which interpretation best fits the weightiest and most valuable evidence.
12. Spell out the application for the original audience.
13. Spell out the application for the universal audience.
14. Spell out the application for your personal life and ministry.

### **Application Restrictions**

When handling Scripture, application must follow interpretation. The following application restrictions should prevent "steer-wrestling." Steer-wrestling occurs when we don't let the passage communicate what it wants to, but instead wrestle it into our intended meaning.

Any application used must not necessitate a change in interpretation. In other words, application must depend upon interpretation, not vice versa. The following are examples of steer-wrestling:

Romans 14 and 1 Corinthians 8 applied to "stumbling" a non-Christian. 2 Corinthians 9:6-11; Galatians 6:6-10; and Colossians 3:25 applied to sinning in general. 1 Corinthians 3:16,17 used to support damnation for those who commit suicide.

If an application is adduced which is different from, or broader than, the application the author actually intended in that context, evidence must be given which shows that the new application is justified. Acceptable evidence would be: a) common sense--a reasonable link to the new application, or b) language indicating variable application. Which of the following applications are valid?

1 Corinthians 6:19 arguing against smoking cigarettes; 2 Corinthians 13:5 commanding introspection and 1 Corinthians 4:3 forbidding reflection; 1 Timothy 3:6 applying to a home group leader or worker; Colossians 3:22-4:1 applying to employer/employee relationships; 1 Corinthians 7:24 applying to moving out of town; Hebrews 10:26 applying to any wilful sin; or 2 Chronicles 7:14.

3. Narrative example cannot be imposed authoritatively unless backed up by precept or principle. Study the following examples. Which ones are legitimate uses of narrative?

Plurality of leadership is required in the church (Acts 14:23);  
We, too, must observe the Lord's day (Acts 20:7);  
Tongues are required as the sign of the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2; 8; 10; 19);  
People should "tarry" for the Spirit, awaiting the second blessing (Acts 1:4,13,14);  
Communal living is normative for the church (Acts 4:32); or  
The Crusades were okay because of the example of the conquest of Canaan (Joshua).

### **More on developing your teaching**

#### **Authoritative speaking - Introduction to Class**

"Homiletics" means "preaching"--explaining and applying God's Word to our world. Biblical passages were written to a specific setting which is separated from our world by an imposing chasm of language, culture, time, etc. Typically, the church has made one of two errors in this crucial task:

Some tend to focus only on the task of understanding and explaining the biblical text. This is the typical error of theological conservatives, and it results in the sense that the Bible is irrelevant to our world (or trying to create a ghetto that mimics the biblical world).

Others tend to focus on cultural relevance, but then reject or remake the biblical message to conform to contemporary perspectives. This is the typical error of theological liberalism, and it results in silencing the Bible's authority.

God wants preachers--Christian communicators who are students of both worlds, who stand "between two worlds" and demonstrate that God's Word is intelligible, relevant, and impactful to our world (prophetic).

## **Explain syllabus.**

NOTE: Your teachings should attempt to squeeze a home group teaching into 10 minutes (just as home group teachings should not attempt to squeeze a Central Teaching into 30 minutes). Use the tools and principles we give you to develop one main point from your passage.

Get the overview out of the way AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. Knock it out now so you can begin to think about your two passages.

TONIGHT is all about how to create your teachings, so you can get started now. NEXT WEEK is about delivery, spiritual preparation and other related matters (I may defer your questions tonight).

Cathy has tentative teaching schedules. Look it over at break and talk to her about date (not passage) changes.

You're not here to impress me or anyone else. The goal is not to see how well you stack up to others (we have different levels of gifting and experience). The goal is to develop your teaching ability to serve God and others!! God is pleased if you do your best. This is a great opportunity to practice ministering under grace.

Another great benefit of this class is learning the elements of a quality teaching makes you more effective in critiquing teachings. Use this class to help your fellow teachers, and to cultivate the ethic of teachers giving and receiving feedback.

## **Using the "Homiletic Work Sheet"**

You should also have four blank copies of this worksheet for working on your own teachings.

This is a practical framework that supplies you with the important ingredients and order for creating teachings. I don't always use it rigidly, but I have learned to think this way and cover these bases when I prepare.

I'll explain how it works step by step, and then we'll look at a couple of sample teachings.

The upper half is primarily analysis and interpretation that draws upon your inductive study of the passage. The lower half is the actual homiletical outline.

## **STEP #1: "Structural Context"**

This refers to the strategic question in inductive study. This keeps the immediate and book context in mind to ensure proper interpretation. Once you see the strategic purposes of the author, it should be relatively easy to adapt those purposes to your audience with appropriate modification.

**EXAMPLE: Colossians was written to address spiritual fervor that uncritically accepts pluralistic and syncretistic spirituality. This has an obvious parallel in our own culture today.**

**You need this for your sake in preparation, not necessarily to give to your audience.**

## **STEP #2: "Passage Outline"**

This means a bare bones diagram of the thought development of the paragraph/passage.

**Look especially for the main claim and how the other statements are related to it. (This is where the new inductive method is more helpful.)**

**EXAMPLE: In Col. 2:9-15, 2:9,10a is the main claim. Paul then unpacks this claim that we have been made complete in Christ in three ways: we have been freed from demonic bondage (2:10b,15), we have been released from bondage to our sin-natures (2:11,12), and we have been released from the guilt of our sins (2:13,14).**

## **STEP #3: "Theses-Antitheses"**

This section is for summarizing the theological truths in the passage, and for identifying contemporary opposites to those truths.

**You should have theses in the "Theology" section of the old inductive method, and in the "Key theological concepts" of the new method.**

**In Col. 2:9-15, 2:10a is the main theological thesis, and the other statements serve to expound it.**

**You should have the antitheses in the "Contemporary Application" section of your inductive study. Here we are beginning to build the bridge between the biblical and contemporary worlds. Antitheses both help define the *meaning* of the thesis and reveal its *significance/relevance*.**

**In Col. 2:9-15, contemporary antitheses include: Jesus is only one of many avatars (2:9), Christian salvation is only a rudimentary form of spirituality (2:10a), all spirits are essentially benevolent (2:10b,15), our main problem is psychological guilt (2:13,14), humans are essentially good and capable of self-reform (2:11,12).**

From the theses discerned in the text, select those theses that best apply to the needs of your audience.

**You do not have to deal with everything in your passage. Especially in a ten-minute teaching, you can only develop one or at most two theses. (Try to develop the main one.)**

Select those antitheses that are most relevant to your audience. For example, if your thesis is "Salvation is by grace apart from works," your antithesis could be "Salvation is by works apart from grace," or, "Salvation is by grace plus works." The second antithesis would be likely to be held by our audience or by people they know, whereas the first is implausible for most people.

**In Col. 1:15-23, where the main claim is that Jesus is supreme over everything and everyone else in the universe (1:18b), an older antithesis would be "Christ is only a good man or great teacher." A more relevant antithesis would be "Christ is only one of many ways to God/salvation/spirituality."**

**The "Audience Analysis Worksheet" helps you to focus in on your own audience.**

**Check TV, BOOKS, MAGAZINES, MOVIES, MUSIC, INTERNET, DISCUSSIONS WITH NON-CHRISTIANS, etc. for suitable antitheses examples.**

#### **STEP #4: Developing a Burden (not on the worksheet)**

"Burden" refers to your *attitude* toward the theses you are advancing. When you are personally convinced of the significance and practical importance of that truth for human life, you have a "burden." When you are burdened, you are emotionally wrought up about this issue because you see how important it is. *This attitude is absolutely essential for effective biblical preaching.*

**"But if I say, 'I will not mention him or speak any more in his name,' his word is in my heart like a fire, a fire shut up in my bones. I am weary of holding it in; indeed, I cannot." (Jer. 20:9)**

**"So possess the truth that it possesses you."**

**A burdened preacher is like a charcoal briquette soaked with lighter fluid:  
"Light a match and watch me burn!"**

**"Preaching is theology coming through a man who is on fire."**

**NOTE: Good teachings have both "heat" and "light." "Heat" comes from burden and application; "light" comes from solid study and knowing what your audience does and does not understand. "Light" without heat is boring; "heat" without light is manipulation/intimidation. Know your tendency and check each teaching for your weakness. (MORE NEXT WEEK ON DELIVERY)**

The burden for the teaching comes primarily from the "thesis/antithesis" section of the work sheet. The commonly or popularly expressed antitheses provide the "fortresses" in your audience's thinking that can be "destroyed" by the scriptural theses (see 2 Cor. 10:4,5; 6:7). *This is why teachings without antitheses are usually boring.*

**"Preaching is argument made red-hot."**

**Especially in a relativistic culture, beware of getting backed away from this! Using antithesis in teachings also helps your people learn biblical discernment--a crucial aspect of the mind of Christ.**

How to develop a "burden":

Prayerfully focus first on *your own life*: "How has God changed my life through understanding and following this truth? When did I first learn this truth? How did I first apply it? How did my life suffer because I was ignorant of it? How have I re-learned and re-applied it since? What has happened when I have chosen to respond to this truth? What has happened when I have refused to follow it?" Often, you will need to come under fresh conviction of the truth before you can become burdened to preach it.

**"Get *into* the Word, get *under* the Word—then go *forth* with the Word!"**

**You may use some of this in your teaching—but not necessarily.**

Next, prayerfully ask the same kinds of questions of *specific people likely* to be in your audience. Ask God for a vision of what could happen to them if they learn and follow this truth--and what will happen if they don't.

Next, prayerfully think about how *people in our culture* have been damaged and deceived by the antitheses.

### **STEP #5: "Goal"**

Your selection of theses and burden for those theses should yield a clear goal for your teaching. Unless you can state this goal in one or two concise phrases, you lack the clarity and focus needed for your teaching to be effective. If both Christians and non-Christians will be present, you should have a specific goal for each group.

**Powerful teachings have one main theme! Don't try to include everything you know. The fact that you know much more about the passage than what you teach will give you intangible authority ("ICE-BERG" PRINCIPLE: 10% ABOVE THE SURFACE; 90% BELOW). Ruthlessly edit, leaving only what *illuminates* and *reinforces* your main theme. This is the difference between ONE SHARP, FINELY HONED ARROW and MANY BLUNT & SCATTERED ARROWS.**

### **STEP #6: "Major Points" & "Illustrations & Applications"**

This is where you should spend most of your time--reflecting, adjusting, etc. This is also the creative part--there is no formula or recipe for creating your outline.

Arrange your material into a reasonable thought development in the "*Major Points*" section. Often the theses or antitheses are the main points. At other times, explanatory material may have to precede the statement of the theses or antitheses. This section should supply as many of the following as needed (not necessarily in this order):

**DECLARE THE THESIS:** Strive for a concise, interesting statement that defines the thesis.

**JUSTIFY THE THESIS** (if necessary)

Sometimes, you need to clarify the thesis because it is unclear in the text. This is a practical way of staying under the authority of the Word. Otherwise, your audience will be resistant to further persuasion--or you are asking them to take your word for it. You can do this by:

- defining key words in the text (*apekduasis* for "**disarming**" in Col. 2:11--**see its usage that way in 2:15**)

- pointing out the context (**Col. 1:15a & 2:9 to show that "first-born" in 1:15b does not imply creaturehood**)
- explaining relevant historical background (**circumcision's symbolic meaning in the Old Testament; "certificate of debt" in Col. 2:14**)
- alluding to other parallel passages (**Eph. 6:12 to clarify identity of "rulers and authorities" in Col. 2:15; Rom. 6:5,6 to clarify connection to slavery to sin in Col. 2:11,12**)

Sometimes, you need to justify the thesis, not because it is unclear, but because it is *unpopular* in our culture (e.g. **hell, church discipline, sexual ethics, soteriological exclusivism**). The original author usually doesn't defend the thesis because his audience was already convinced of it, but you may need to "back up" and give an apologetical basis before you can go on in your teaching. Especially when non-Christians are present, effective persuasion cannot occur until you provide a reasonable defense. This also equips your Christian audience to do the same in their conversations with non-Christians.

**SUPPLY THE APPROPRIATE ANTITHESIS:** Popularly expressed antitheses help to further define the thesis and bring out its significance to life (see above). They also often suggest certain obvious applications.

**It is sometimes more effective to introduce the antithesis *before* contrasting it to the thesis.**

**Sometimes the antithesis makes an effective introduction. In my teaching on Col. 1:15-23, I began by asking which Jesus we should consult--quoting several different views of Jesus. This makes it relevant and raises tension, drawing people in.**

**ILLUSTRATE THE THESIS and ANTITHESIS (if necessary):** Most theses benefit from illustrations. Illustrations not only help explain spiritual truths, but also stimulate interest in and bring home the significance of the thesis. Be sure to recognize the limitations of the illustration. Consider these forms of illustration:

- Metaphors & analogies (**Vine & Branches; Running a race; Wedding ring & marriage for circumcision/baptism**)
- Historical stories (**D-Day and VE-Day to illustrate the 2 advents and the struggle between; EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION for Rom. 6:6**)
- Parables (**IRS agent; Niagara Falls tight-rope walker**)
- Quotes/Interviews (**Sartre on the real reason for his atheism**)

- Song lyrics ("**Hello-Good-bye**" for relationship between medium & message; "**Break in the Cup**" for horizontal love relationships; "**Language of the Heart**" for sexual immorality) Either pass them out or read them carefully.
- Video clips ("**The Mission**" or "**Scrooge**" for gratitude for forgiveness; "**Private Ryan**" for the motivating power of sacrifice; "**Contact**" for the role of faith; Joseph Campbell interview for Satan's lie in Gen. 3)
- Props (**Log in eye for Matt. 7; 2 pieces of paper glued together for sexual damage**)

Keep a list of ideas on illustrations as you read, watch movies, listen to music, see examples in teachings, etc.

**MAKE THE APPLICATION:** This is the most important part of biblical preaching: to convince the audience of the need to *act* on the truth they've just learned and been convinced of. What is your audience going to leave the room convinced of, motivated, and determined to *do*?

**This should come from the "GOAL" section of your Homiletic Worksheet.**

**See Jas. 1:22-25. Doing is a non-optional component of real learning. "Explanation without application is a miscarriage of the truth."**

In many passages, the imperatives provide obvious lines of application that you need to flesh out ("**set your mind on the things above**"). In passages without imperatives, you will need to supply them from other passages.

Application should be clear and practical (**not humanly visible actions only--also attitudes and as a faith-response to God**). You should find a way to communicate that you also need this application (and do not always follow it!).

**STEP #7: Method(s) of Presentation (not in worksheet)**

You will be thinking about this simultaneously while developing your main points and illustrations/applications. Choose the method(s) of presentation best designed to persuade your audience. More than one method is often appropriate in the same teaching. Possible methods include:

**ARGUMENT:** Anticipate and verbalize typical objections to your thesis, and then refute them. Paul uses this approach in Rom. 1-11 and 2 Cor. 10-13 (diatribe).

**This should go on in almost every teaching. It is basic "thesis-antithesis" communication.**

ADMONITION: Warn of the consequences of neglecting this truth. Many prophetic books (e.g., Amos) and portions of epistles (e.g., 1 Thes. 4 and 1 Cor. 6 on SEXUAL IMMORALITY; 1 Cor. 10 on syncretism; Heb. 6,10,12 on apostasy) use this approach.

**Sprinkle this in instead of using it for an entire teaching, and speak with humility/compassion--otherwise it comes off self-righteously.**

INDIRECT CONVICTION: Arouse moral indignation in your audience, and then turn it on them (e.g., Nathan with David; **The callousness of the rich--we are the rich!**)

**This is very effective, but difficult to do.**

EXHORTATION/APPEAL: Appeal to God's love, concern for their well being, and the needs of others. This is the normal pattern for the "exhortation" sections of the New Testament epistles.

**This is basically indicatives leading to imperatives--and should also be used a lot (e.g., FORGIVENESS). Often for conclusion.**

VISION-CASTING: Paint a picture of what is possible if we respond to God in this area (e.g., John 7:37,38).

**Martin Luther King: "I have a dream."**

**Couple admonition with this as the "replacement" (e.g., Matt. 7's houses on sand/rock; Servant Team Retreat: Do you want to be Sardis or Caleb?) Otherwise admonition can come across legalistic.**

**Make sure your vision is realistic and appropriately qualified or you lose credibility (MARRIAGE TALK: "This marriage will not be perfect because in a fallen world there are no perfect relationships . . .").**

DILEMMA-RESOLUTION: Pose a problem (ethical, textual, etc.) and then resolve the problem in the main body of your teaching.

**This works well for passages that contain problems (1 Cor. 11:5ff.; 14:34,35; 1 Tim. 2:11,12).**

**You can also throw this in as one short part of a teaching.**

QUESTIONS: Verbalize the important questions concerning this truth and make the answers to these questions the main points of your teaching.

**John 3 – "Who needs the new birth?" "What is the new birth?" "How do you get the new birth?" "Why do people reject the new birth?"**

**Lk. 9:18-26 - "Who is Jesus?" "What does Jesus' messianic mission require?" "What is the cost of following Jesus?" "What is the reward of following Jesus?"**

### **STEP #8: "Introduction"**

After you have constructed the main outline, you should be able to create an effective introduction without too much difficulty. Effective introductions point to the direction of the teaching, and provide a mandate for listening to the main points. Avoid long introductions--get into your text as quickly as possible.

**If you turn to the passage and then do a long introduction, they will start reading ahead without you. If you must have a longer introduction, don't tell people what text you're in until the end of it.**

### **STEP #9: "Conclusion"**

The conclusion will often call for a response from your audience. It may also summarize the content of the outline. **Home group teachers should be ready with related questions to redirect the group into discussion.** Avoid trailing off without a definite end.

### **Tips on Teaching Narrative (if time)**

You may need to supply more historical background to make it come alive.

Avoid "moralizing" the text--stopping constantly to make little application points. This "string of pearls" teaching style obscures the main point(s) of the narrative. Instead, determine the main point(s) of the narrative section and build your outline around it/them.

Identify the "tension" in the narrative--the conflict between two parties, the discrepancy between promise and fulfillment, etc. Tell the story in a way that highlights this "tension." This unleashes the inherent power of narrative and will draw people in.

## **Abraham & God; Jacob & Esau; Joseph & brothers**

In long narrative sections (e.g., Joseph), condense the story and tell it in an interesting way without reading most of the text. Read only key portions of the text. Then distill your theology and/or application afterwards.

### **Homiletic Worksheet**

Passage: Date:

Structural Context:

Passage Outline: Theses:

Antitheses: Goal:

Introduction:

Major Points:

Conclusion:

### **Typical Teaching Format**

**NOTE:** The order of these elements should be varied according to the passage and the judgment of the teacher.

#### **Introduction**

- The introduction should be brief. Avoid taking a long time to get into the text. The introduction should serve to arouse interest in the thesis. You can do this by stating the thesis in an arresting way, stating an antithesis, posing a dilemma, using an example or illustration, or whatever gives a mandate for learning and applying this truth.

#### **Read the text**

- Depending on how long your passage is, decide whether to read the entire text or the first section.
- Read in a clear and interesting way, emphasizing key words or phrases.

#### **Relevant background (if necessary)**

- It is sometimes necessary to supply some historical background information about the text in order to make its meaning more understandable to the audience. Avoid overdoing this.

### **State the thesis**

- Declare the main thesis of the text, or the thesis you have chosen from the text. Strive for a concise, interesting statement that defines the thesis.

### **Justify the thesis (if necessary)**

- The thesis is usually obvious to your audience. When, however, the thesis isn't readily apparent, you should demonstrate that the text actually *does* teach this thesis. Otherwise, your audience will be resistant to further persuasion. You can justify the thesis by defining key words in the text, pointing out the context, explaining relevant historical background, or alluding to other parallel passages.
- Sometimes, you need to justify the thesis, not because it is unclear, but because it is unpopular in our culture (e.g. hell). The original author usually doesn't defend the thesis because his audience was already convinced of it, but you may need to "back up" and give an apologetical basis before you can go on in your teaching. Especially when non-Christians are present, effective persuasion cannot occur until you provide a reasonable defense.

### **Illustrate the thesis (if necessary)**

- Many theses are sufficiently clear and require no illustration. But theses that are abstract or unfamiliar to the audience often benefit from illustrations (e.g., Rom. 6:6). Illustrations can also stimulate interest in and bring home the significance of the thesis. Be sure that the illustration is simple and to the point; otherwise, you'll only make the thesis more confusing!

### **Supply the antithesis**

- Popularly expressed antitheses help to further define the thesis and bring out its significance to life. They also often suggest certain obvious applications.

- It is sometimes more effective to introduce the antithesis *before* contrasting it to the thesis.

### **Make the application**

- This is the most important part of biblical preaching: to convince the audience of the need to *act* on the truth they've just learned and been convinced of. Application should be clear and practical.
- You should find a way to communicate that you also need this application (and do not always follow it!).
- In some cases (like problem passages), the explanation of the text *is* the application since it resolves the audience's problem with the text (i.e. Rom. 9; 1 Tim. 2:12-15).

### **Conclusion**

- Many times the application *is* the conclusion. At other times, it's helpful to summarize the main points of the sermon. Avoid trailing off.

### **Preparing your first few teachings**

#### **At least one month before teaching:**

If you've never carefully studied the passage, perform an inductive study (an inductive overview of the entire book and a specific study of your passage). Identify primary interpretive questions about the passage and attempt to answer them. Remember the "iceberg" principle--understand the passage to a much greater extent than you actually teach it. Listen to a Central Teaching audio tape of your passage (use the most recent series) and make an outline of the teaching. Identify sections of the tape to omit for a shorter teaching format. Develop a burden. Focus on the topic's effect on your own life and visualize its effect in the lives of specific individuals in the audience, especially those in your own ministry. Prepare a preliminary teaching outline. Identify personal examples and illustrations you want to include. If the tape has more effective illustrations than you can create, use the tape's. But don't use the teacher's personal examples--come up with your own! At least two to three weeks before teaching: Meet with an experienced teacher to get feedback on the steps listed above. Iron out any rough spots in your preparation thus far.

#### **At least one week before teaching:**

Completely write out your teaching. This will reinforce the coherence of the thought development and expose weak transitions and development. Begin

preparing your teaching notes. These notes should be much shorter than your teaching outline--one side of a 5.5 x 8 inch sheet. Meet again with an experienced teacher and give them your teaching. Talking it through once might be sufficient if you've already written out your teaching. Give it to others if you need more practice.

### **In the final week:**

Resist the temptation to make significant changes in your outline. Whittle down your teaching notes as much as possible--your goal should be one small page. Memorize the text of most of your cross-references so you won't have to turn to them during the teaching. Pray through the teaching, pray for the people coming, and trust God to fulfil his role.

### **After the teaching:**

Listen to an audio tape of your teaching and prepare a written self-critique. Seek feedback from other experienced teachers. Feedback should include both positive and critical observations. Pray against Satan's accusations.

## **Typical Teaching Format**

### **Romans 12: 3-8**

#### **Introduction**

Review vs 2 thesis: transformation results from mental renewal. This means learning about every key area of life from the perspective of God's Word, and then choosing to act consistently with this new perspective.

**EXAMPLE:** Most of us thought knowing God was either a matter of earning his acceptance through good works, or realizing we were already God or one with God. But when we learn from God's Word that we are alienated from God because of our sins and that Christ's death paid the full price for our sins, and choose to act on that truth, God reconciles us to himself once for all.

But this is only the beginning. In the following verses, Paul unpacks some other areas we need mental renewal if we want spiritual transformation. Look at what he puts first on his list . . .

## **How we think about ourselves in relation to other Christians**

Read vs 3a. Literally, Paul says we should think about ourselves "sanely" ("sound judgment" - see Mark 5:15) rather than as "megalomaniacs."

What does it mean to think about ourselves with "sound judgment?" Read vs 3b--to think about ourselves "as God has allotted to each a measure of faith." What is this "measure of faith?" The cardinal rule of interpretation is context, so let's read on . . .

Read vs 4-6. "Measure" or "proportion" of faith refers to the roles we play in "the body of Christ." In other words, those who have received Christ need to begin to view themselves as members of Christ's body. Paul is saying we need to undergo a fundamental change in the way we think about ourselves in relation to other Christians. We need to start seeing ourselves as connected to Jesus Christ and to other Christians in the same way that our physical organs are connected to the whole body and to other organs.

### **"I have no need of you"**

What if your kidney suddenly became a conscious, thinking, choosing entity? And what if it said to you tomorrow morning: "Hey, I'm tired of being connected to all these other organs. The idea that I need them is offensive to my self-worth. I want to be free to be me!! From now on, I'm on my own! I'll get together with the rest of these organs once a week, but that's it." Let me ask you a couple of questions:

How is your kidney thinking about itself--with "sound judgment" or "more highly than it ought to think?" It is speaking like a megalomaniac! Why? Because it is an organ of your body, no matter what it may think about itself. And as an organ, it needs the support of the other organs.

What's going to happen if your kidney begins to act according to this megalomaniacal thinking? It's going to be in real trouble very quickly--and the rest of your body would suffer also . . .

Now I have another question. What is the difference between your kidney saying the above, and you as a Christian saying: "Hey, I have received Christ, I have the Holy Spirit indwelling me. I don't need involvement with other Christians."

You see, what we instantly understand and affirm about our own physical bodies, we often neither understand nor affirm about our relationship with Christ

and other Christians. This is why Paul says 1 Cor. 12:21 (read). This runs directly counter to AMERICAN AUTONOMOUS INDIVIDUALISM . . .

Yes, we each have our own individual relationships with Christ, and we experience much of his life and truth and love directly from him in that relationship. But much of what Christ wants to give to us in these same areas he has chosen to make available only through other Christians. Therefore, it is impossible to mature past a relatively primitive point unless we are willing to get involved consistently and in-depth with other Christians.

This is why the early Christians would have been aghast at the American idea of "going to church." We don't go to church--we are the church!!

This is why they "continuously devoted themselves" to fellowship. This is why they met not only in large groups, but also in homes--to facilitate this kind of involvement. That's why we have this meeting, and study groups, and ministry houses, etc. This meeting is only the APPETIZER--not the MAIN COURSE!

This is why so much New Testament emphasis is placed on how to develop and maintain personal, Christ-centred love relationships with other Christians. If you want to really take off spiritually, you need to get involved with other Christians in this way!

For some of you, this is the thing holding you back. I know it was for me (1970-1971). God is not going to capitulate to your autonomy--he's going to hold back and call on you to "think sanely" and take your place as a member of his Body!

### **"I have nothing to contribute"**

So far, we've only talked about the receiving side of Body-life. But there is also a contributing side as well . . .

Go back to your talking kidney. It has changed its mind about not needing the other organs, but its thinking is still problematic: "I'm only a kidney, so I have nothing significant to contribute to this body. Now if I was a brain/heart/hand, that would be different. But since I am a mere kidney and since I don't feel important, it doesn't really matter whether I function or not."

How would you counsel your kidney? You'd say, "Look here--you're thinking insanely again. It doesn't matter how you feel about this. You are in fact a kidney, you do in fact have a significant contribution to make. This body will be impacted by whether you contribute or not. So start affirming your significance and play your part!"

This is megalomania too, isn't it? Your kidney would have to think quite a lot of itself to decide it was the only organ in your body that had nothing to contribute.

Again, how easily we recognize this about our own physical bodies--while rejecting it about our involvement in the church! Yet Paul insists in this same passage that just as we need the contribution of the other members, so we need to make our own contribution. Read vs 6-8. We all have unique spiritual gifts which enable us to make unique spiritual contributions to one another. This why "fellowship" isn't a hall in back of the sanctuary--it means "sharing" the life of Christ with one another.

This is why "ministry" is not something only a few professionals do in highly visible ways--but rather something that each and every one of us is supposed to be involved in as a lifestyle (often in non-visible ways--see most of the gifts mentioned in vs 6-8).

This is why we discover what our spiritual gifts are primarily by consistently practicing biblical love in the context of Christian fellowship--not waiting until we know how we're gifted before we get involved.

Just as we make a critical step when we choose to regularly receive from other Christians, we also make a critical step when we choose to regularly give to other Christians.

## **Conclusion**

What other factors hinder involvement in Body-life?

"Not enough time"

Moral problems (fear of exposure)

Tribalism

Bad experience with family, authority, etc.

## **Preparing Your Sermon**

### ***I. Choose your text***

**A.**It is best to rely on expository book studies for the steady diet of your people, because this ensures they will get "the whole counsel of God."

**B.** However, the following may be occasions for special sermons:

1. Special calendar occasions: Christmas, Easter, etc.
2. Special external circumstances which are in the public mind.

3. Special needs discerned by the preacher or others.
4. Truths which have specially inspired the preacher.

**C.** Keep a notebook to scribble down ideas for sermons, insights, burdens, illustrations, etc. Record them immediately wherever they come to mind, because you will usually forget them later.

## ***II. Meditate on the text***

**A.** Whenever possible, plan out texts weeks or months in advance. This gives the benefit of "subconscious incubation".

**B.** Concentrated "incubation" should begin at least one week before preaching. It should involve the following:

1. Read, re-read, and re-re-read the text.
2. Be sure you understand what it means. Do your own interpretive work. Don't use commentaries until you have formulated specific interpretive questions which you have been unable to answer, or until you have completed your interpretive work.
3. Brood longer over how it applies to your people, to the culture, to you, etc.
4. Pray for God to illuminate the text, especially its application.
5. Scribble down notes of thoughts, ideas, etc.
6. Solicit the insights of others through tapes, talking with other preachers, etc.

## ***III. Isolate the dominant thought***

*(This is the purpose of section II.)*

**A.** Your sermon should convey only one major message. All of the details of your sermon should be marshaled to help your people grasp that message and feel its power.

**B.** You should be able to express the dominant thought in one short, clear, vivid sentence.

## ***IV. Arrange your material to serve the dominant thought***

**A.** Chisel and shape your material. Ruthlessly discard all material which is irrelevant to the dominant thought. Subordinate the remaining material to the

dominant thought by using that material to *illuminate* and *reinforce* the dominant thought.

**B.** Your sermon structure should be suited to the text, not artificially imposed. Avoid structure which is too clever, prominent or complex.

**C.** Decide on your method of preaching for this text: argumentation, faceting, categorizing, analogy, etc.

**D.** Carefully choose words that are precise, simple, clear, vivid and honest. Write out the key sections, phrases, and sentences to help you in your word choice. Stick to short declarative and interrogative sentences with few, if any, subordinate clauses.

**E.** Come up with illustrations and examples which will explain and convict. Employ a wide variety: figures of speech, images, retelling biblical stories in contemporary language, inventing fresh parables, retelling true historical and/or biographical events, etc. Keep a file of these, especially if they do not come easily to you. Avoid making illustrations and examples so prominent that they detract from the dominant thought. Also, avoid applying them inappropriately or overusing them.

#### ***V. Add the introduction and conclusion***

**A.** The introduction should not be elaborate, but enough to arouse their curiosity, wet their appetites and introduce the dominant thought. This can be done by a variety of means: explaining the setting of the passage, story, current event or issue, etc.

**B.** The conclusion should not merely recapitulate your sermon--it should apply it. Obviously, you should be applying all along, but you should keep something for the end which will prevail upon your people to take action. "No summons, no sermon." Preach though the head to the heart (i.e. the will). The goal of the sermon should be to "storm the citadel of the will and capture it for Jesus Christ." What do you want them to *do*? Employ a variety of methods to do this:

1. *Argument*: anticipate objections and refute them
2. *Admonition*: warn of the consequences of disobedience
3. *Indirect Conviction*: arouse moral indignation and then turn it on them (Nathan with David)
4. *Pleading*: apply the gentle pressure of God's love, concern for their well-being, and the needs of others

5. *Vision*: paint a picture of what is possible through obedience to God in this area

## ***VI. Write down and pray over your message***

**A.** Writing out your sermon forces you to think straight and sufficiently. It exposes lazy thinking and cures it. After you are thoroughly familiar with your outline, reduce it to small notes.

**B.** Pray the God will enable you to "so possess the message that the message possesses you."

### **What you should do, or avoid**

- In every teaching, you should speak both as a fellow-learner/sinner and as a prophet. Somehow, you should communicate that you have much to learn and a long way to go in your own walk with God. This helps people to identify with you and is a way of communicating God's grace. But having done this, you also need to boldly proclaim God's Word and call on people (as God's mouthpiece) to respond to it. Your use of personal pronouns is important in achieving this balance. "We" and "I" are usually appropriate in speaking as a fellow-learner. "You" is often most appropriate in speaking as God's spokesperson. Also, you should normally speak as a fellow-learner before speaking as a prophet.
- Every teaching should include both indicative and imperative points. Indicative-only teachings tend to be theoretical and lack punch. Imperative-only teachings tend to be legalistic because they aren't sufficiently grounded in God's part. If your passage contains only indicatives or imperatives, you will need to supply the complementary portion either by simply explaining it or by reading another passage.
- Be sensitive to non-Christians and new people. Keep them in mind throughout your preparation primarily in the terms and examples you use. This doesn't mean you can't talk about truths or issues that pertain primarily to Christians; it means you should be understandable and relevant to new people in the way you communicate your points.
- Anticipate qualifications that need to be made in your teaching. One-sentence qualifications are often needed when making a strong point. It is usually best to make the point strongly first and then qualify it, rather than vice-versa. Beware of over-qualifying which dilutes impact ("death by a thousand qualifications").

- If you lose your train of thought during a teaching, it is usually better to go on to the next point instead of backtracking.
- Anticipate common secular objections, verbalize them and respond to them. These make good antitheses. (EXAMPLE: "victimology" versus Rom. 8:28; 1 Cor. 10:13; Gen. 50:20)
- Use personal applications. This projects warmth and draws people in. But beware of using them exclusively or even predominantly, because your teaching will come across as self-focused. Mix personal applications with illustrations, contemporary antitheses, etc.
- Use good illustrations, especially for abstract points. If you can't come up with an effective original illustration, use one that is proven.
- You may use technical terms (theological, psychological, scientific, etc.), but be sure to define them immediately.
- Be yourself! God recognizes individual gifting and styles. For example, use your own sense of humor—not someone else's. On the other hand, lean against your temperamental tendency in delivery. For example, if you are passive, you will need to animate to the point that you feel like you are being too extroverted.
- Have good, clear thought development. Good transitions make it easier to follow your train of thought. The best transitions are brief and tie the next point back into the main theme.
- If you do have a gospel message, explain *how* to become a Christian. During this section, resist the tendency to fear boring the Christians present. Also resist the tendency to look only at the new people.
- Smile, use humor, and warm up to your audience. This helps them relax and relate to you.
- Explain the subject of your teaching early on—within the first minute.
- The proper use of slang (i.e., slang that they know and relate to) relaxes your audience. However, the use of slang that they don't know or relate to alienates them.
- When giving the gospel, power comes from the Word. Therefore, try to include a verse like Revelation 3:20; John 1:12; Ephesians 2:8,9; etc.
- Make use of vivid imagery and graphic description. Why say "bad" when you can say "unacceptable" or "despicable?" Practice this when talking with people in normal conversations.
- Throughout your preparation, keep asking yourself, "What is the goal of my teaching? What one thing do I want people to understand and *do*?"
- When you teach Christian ethics, remember to communicate that God gives us both the power and the motivation to do his moral will (Phil. 2:13), and that his moral will is for our own good (Deut. 10:12,13; Rom. 12:2b). These truths enable us to teach ethics/imperatives strongly

and confidently—which is how they should be taught—without putting people under the law.

- Have a *concise* introduction, and get into your text quickly. Once people have already turned to the passage, they will start to read it on their own if you don't guide them into it quickly.
- Use rhetorical questions when possible.
- Pause briefly after humor or important statements. This increases impact.
- Try to work from the text. Arrange your points so that you can refer them back to the text frequently. This is a practical way of standing on the authority of the Word. Also, it is strange to say you are teaching a certain passage, and then not really get into that passage seriously. If you are going to work primarily from other passages, say this in the beginning.

### **The avoids**

- Unless you are a very experienced teacher, don't tinker with your main outline 24 hours prior to teaching. You'll only get more confused and less confident.
- Don't say "second Cor" or "first Thes;" say "second Corinthians," etc. Don't refer to temperaments and other Xenos "slang." This has the effect of alienating the new person by making them feel they are outside an inner circle.
- Don't bore people with the gospel. Be excited!
- Don't have nebulous applications. They should be specific enough that people can see clearly what it looks like to put the concept into practice. It is better to give a very specific application and say, "There are other ways to apply this truth," than to be overly general.
- Don't have too much material. A few points that are well developed and applied are far better than many points. Resist the urge to tell everything you know about the passage.
- Don't over use hand gestures.
- Don't narrate what you went through as you prepared your teaching: "So I wondered what this word was in the Greek . . ." Tell your audience what you discovered, *not* what you went through in the process.
- Don't say, "An example/illustration of this is . . ." Just give your example/illustration.
- Don't feel compelled to give the whole plan and logic of salvation every teaching, or every time you make an evangelistic point.
- Avoid using too many biblical references. This dilutes impact and focus. It is usually better to simply refer to a passage and quote it, than to have them turn to that passage—which takes time and distracts people's attention. If you decide it's necessary to turn to another text, be sure to

give clear directions on how to get there, and then graciously give people the time to find it. Wait for the pages to stop turning.

- Avoid doing a verse-by-verse commentary. This dilutes impact because there is no clear thesis with application.
- Avoid overuse of application points. Don't make them the whole teaching. You must ground your application in the theology of the text, or it will come across legalistic.
- Don't express as a personal opinion what God says in the Word—state it as a fact. In the same way, don't declare as authoritative what is only your opinion—say it is your opinion.
- Don't act timidly about touchy subjects (e.g., financial giving). Be confident with God's Word in these areas.
- Don't end declarative statements with a questioning tone in your voice. This dilutes impact.
- Don't mix corniness with a serious point. Comic relief may be used *after* making a serious point to give people a breather, but if you get corny while making a serious point, you dilute impact.
- Don't always address the non-Christian at the end; this is too predictable. Christians (wrongly) will tend to lose interest at this point, knowing that you're winding up, and thus distract the non-Christians.
- Don't say, "I'm sure you're all familiar with this passage/doctrine . . ." New people are usually unfamiliar with the Bible, and this comment will make them feel even more aware of and intimidated by their ignorance.
- Don't apologize for your inexperience, lack of full knowledge on a subject, etc. This needlessly erodes your authority. Stand on the authority of God's Word and trust it to move your audience.
- Don't turn to another passage but say, "You don't need to turn there." Either quote the passage from memory, or let them turn to it with you. Saying "You don't need to turn there" sounds like you have something to hide.

## **To Remember for Effective Teaching**

**He who has accepted spirituality in the truest sense of the term has first to feel that God is the sole reality in Christ Jesus. Then he will see that God's creation can never be separated from God Himself. A Christian who is crying for God, who is constantly shedding soulful tears, trying to live in oneness with God and His Divine Plan and salvation through Jesus Christ, feels that Their Presence is in the inmost recesses of the heart.**

**Before**

*Pray!* We are trying to do something that is not humanly possible: convict people of sin so they repent, transfer people from Satan's domain to God's kingdom, enable them to understand spiritual truths, impart vision for a life of service to God, etc. Truly, "who is adequate for these things?" If we only want to entertain, impart a few knowledge nuggets, teach a little moral philosophy, etc.--we need not pray. But since we are trying to accomplish that which requires the power of God, our teaching must be birthed and bathed in prayer. I pray mainly for:

- Illumination: that God will grant me insight into his truth, build a burden within me, show me how to arrange the teaching, give me application and illustration, etc.
- Utterance: that God will empower what I say and the way I say it so that people are deeply affected, and that he would grant me extemporaneous utterance (on-the-spot insight and expression).
- Your audience: that God will draw the hungry people (Christians and non-Christians) to the meeting, that his Spirit will arrest their attention and convict them of their need to respond to him, that he will use this teaching far beyond the teaching itself through tapes, use by others, etc.
- Protection: from excessive distraction and accusation, from disrupting the meeting itself--but see next point . . .

*Anticipate and prayerfully reject Satan's accusations.* This is the most oppressive thing about teaching. Those who teach seem to get this more regularly than others. You should pray for protection, but God has not promised to shield you from all attack, so learn how to handle it!

- Satan will accuse *you* ("You can't teach;" "You don't understand this passage;" "You're a hypocrite;" "You are disqualified because of your fear;" etc.). Rely on God's grace instead of your own righteousness or native ability (2 Cor. 12:9,10). If you are afraid, remember that it is not a sin to be afraid (1 Cor. 2:3,4)--it is only a sin to let fear dictate your choices.
- Satan will accuse *God's Word* ("They already know this;" "This doesn't make sense;" "This is irrelevant/stupid;" etc.). Choose to trust the power of his Word (Isa. 55:10,11; Heb. 4:12).
- Satan will accuse *your audience* ("They don't care;" "They aren't interested in Christ," etc.). Pray that Christ will be exalted, and think especially of those who are relatively new and spiritually responsive.

I have found no clear correlation between how I feel before I teach and how effective the teaching is.

Realize that the attack will often not lift until you actually open your mouth.

*Back up all important points with scripture.* Otherwise, you will appear to be speaking from your own authority. However:

- Don't plan on turning to other passages unless they are crucial to your teaching, because this disrupts flow and causes confusion for new listeners.
- Don't say, "You don't need to turn there." This arouses needless suspicion. Simply quote or paraphrase the passage with reference.

*Be sure you have both "heat" (burden and sufficient application) and "light" (adequate interpretation and explanation).*

- Teachings without "heat" are boring; teachings without "light" are propagandistic and manipulative.
- Identify which of these you tend to neglect and correct for this.

*Include humor.* Humor is an important feature of good teachings--Jesus was a master of it (see Matt. 7:3-5). Why? It is insightful. It makes difficult learning easier to digest. It relieves tension after a super-convicting point. It destroys the stereotype that the Bible and Christianity are stuffy. It engages the audience and establishes the humanness of the speaker. However, consider these qualifications:

- Use humour as "spice," but never for the main course (SANGUINES BEWARE!).
- Remember not to substitute humor for refutation (simply mocking the opposing view). You can poke fun along with refutation, but not instead of it (e.g., MOCKING PANTHEISM IN BASIC DOCTRINE CLASS).
- Use humour that is conducive to your personality. Apply this to working from tapes: imitate the content more than the style.

*Plan on a good level of content per minute.* Do you have too much on one subject? If you are repetitive or slow, you will lose your audience's interest and even arouse aversion for patronizing them. Neither should you overestimate the

theological knowledge of your audience. Be simple and concise. Good planning will enable you to be easy to understand even though you move at a brisk pace.

*Write out your entire teaching in outline form.* This ensures that you have thought through each point in detail, including transitions (**Col. 2:8-15 NOTES**). The goal is not to memorize your teaching, but to be thorough in your preparation. Be thoroughly prepared--but leave room for extemporaneous utterance.

- Do sections at a time. Dive down and develop a section in detail, then move back to get the big picture, then dive down somewhere else, etc.
- Get your outline down far enough ahead of time that you aren't making changes under the wire. This produces a vicious circle of anxiety, decreased concentration, more anxiety, etc.

*Rehearse alone and with another experienced person.*

- All new teachers should give their teachings to an experienced teacher if possible. Remember: the goal is not to preserve your ego, but to serve the people!
- I like to walk, pray and preach through sections at a time.

*Keep your teaching notes to a minimum!* One side of an 8 x 5-inch sheet is enough (**Col. 2:8-15 NOTES**). If you aren't sufficiently prepared, your notes won't help you. If, however, you are prepared, excessive notes can still hurt you because they distract you from communicating to your audience (**EXAMPLES**).

- The most they can do is jog your memory if you blank out (**SAFETY NET**).
- I usually write them out as a final run-through of the content.
- **Try your section teaching without notes, or at least stick them in the back of your Bible!**

**HOW LONG?** 30 minutes is plenty for inexperienced teachers! Remember Eutychus (Acts 20:9)--unless you can raise them from the dead, stop before they drop over! "The mind can only absorb what the seat can endure."

- You can go longer if you are gifted, or if you use discussion.

## **During**

*Eye contact*

- Look directly into the eyes of several people around the room. Find responsive listeners, but don't focus exclusively on them. Don't dodge the resistant faces.
- Ignore unresponsive body language, but respond to looks of confusion, excitement, etc.

### ***Voice* ("VOICE" THROUGH "DRESS" ARE "PICTURE FRAME" ISSUES)**

- Your voice should be loud enough for the person farthest away to hear comfortably.
- You should practice **variation** in *tone* (sharp or mellow), *pitch* (high or low), *rate* (fast or slow), and *volume* (loud and soft). Uniformity bores people or wears them down.
- Use vivid words, and find effective ways to emphasize key words. Use pause, repetition or special gestures for emphasis of important statements. Listen to other effective teachers and imitate them, without losing your own personality.

NOTE: *Practice* these things in normal conversations. This will make you a better teacher, and you'll be a more interesting conversationalist as well!

### ***Gestures & Posture***

- Don't slump or cower. Come across relaxed, but take authority.
- Your gestures should be varied, appropriately aggressive, and undistracting (enhancing your content, not distracting from it)--not showy or over-dramatic. **Avoid drinking unless necessary.**
- Your facial expressions should express the full range of emotion: anger, surprise, delight, irony, pathos, compassion, etc.
- Lecterns, coffee tables, etc. should be avoided in home group teachings. They introduce more formality and distance between you and your audience, and they encourage more notes.

NOTE: Identify your tendency in this area and correct for it. Those who tend to be passive communicators should push to the point of feeling uncomfortably aggressive. Those who tend to be aggressive should be sure they include appropriate grace, qualifications, encouragement, etc.

*Dress* should be undistracting to the audience--avoid excessive sloppiness or formality.

*Never disqualify yourself as a teacher or your content.* Statements like, "I'm not very good at this," or "This is not a very good outline" needlessly compromise the opportunity to impact your audience, and deflate your own confidence. You are teaching God's Word and you are God's spokesman!

- However, you should be careful to distinguish between your own opinion and God's Word. You should also acknowledge the complexity of certain issues.

*Speak both as a fellow-learner/sinner and as a prophet.* Somehow, you should communicate that you have much to learn and a long way to go in your own walk with God. This helps people to identify with you and is a way of communicating God's grace. But having done this, you also need to boldly proclaim God's Word and call on people (as God's mouthpiece) to respond to it.

- Your use of personal pronouns is important in achieving this balance. "We" and "I" are usually appropriate in speaking as a fellow-learner. "You" is often most appropriate in speaking as God's spokesperson.
- Normally, you should speak *more* as a fellow-learner/sinner than as a prophet. Also, you should normally speak as a fellow-learner *before* speaking as a prophet. And when you use yourself as an illustration, it should often be of your errors and sins rather than of your victories.

*Be sensitive to the non-Christian and the new Christian.* Keep them in mind in every part of your teaching preparation.

- Avoid saying things like "I'm sure you all know that passage . . ." They do *not* know it and will feel intimidated by this statement.
- Avoid undefined "Christianese"—Christian jargon or biblical terms with which new people are unfamiliar. If you use these terms, define them immediately. Otherwise, they alienate new people.
- Don't turn to other passages unless necessary. When turning to another passage, tell your audience how to find it and allow time for them to find the passage before you read it.
- Stay grace-oriented. Non-Christians and new Christians usually view the Christian life without proper understanding of or emphasis on God's grace, so unless you emphasize this, they will usually hear you through a legalistic grid. When teaching biblical ethics, stress God's acceptance apart from our works, the Holy Spirit's role in

sanctification and ministry, biblical ethical priorities (e.g., love over ritual; sexual purity over no cussing) and the fact that God's moral will is for our welfare and fulfillment. Having done this, be *strong* and *unashamed* in your ethical imperatives.

*Use slang only if it is familiar and appropriate to your audience.* Otherwise it will reduce your credibility.

*Avoid verbal "fat."*

- Avoid extraneous material and redundancy.
- Don't narrate what you went through as you prepared your teaching: "So I wondered what this word was in the Greek . . ." Tell your audience what you discovered, *not* what you went through in the process.
- Don't say, "An example/illustration of this is . . ." Just give your example/illustration.

If you blank out or goof up, go on to the next point. Resist the urge to go back over the part you messed up unless it is crucial to the teaching. You usually just make the mess worse.

## **After**

*Stay alert during the questions and sharing.* Give appropriate responses to questions or added points. Be ready with additional questions to pose to the group if there are no questions or sharing.

*Look for individuals who want to talk further about the teaching.* This is spiritual opportunism. God often uses the teacher to powerfully affect people. Make yourself available to talk after the meeting, answer their questions, and advise additional steps.

*Have your teaching taped so you can listen to it afterwards.* "If others have to listen to you, you should have to listen to yourself." This will often reveal things that you don't get from others' feedback. Be careful about over-reacting to what you hear—positively or negatively. You probably weren't as good or as bad as you think!

*Solicit feedback, especially from experienced teachers.* Ask them for both positive and critical observations. Model the ethic of receiving and giving feedback—this is crucial for high quality teaching in your group.

Also, resist the "seniority system" tendency in home groups that has all the leaders taking turns regardless of gifting. Teaching is not a perk for years of service; it is a ministry for those who are gifted and want to teach. We need to have the most gifted teachers teaching! **(But hold out for character and personal ministry before including in personal rotation.)**. Try new teachers out at retreats, cell groups, communion, etc.

**Explain "Teaching Feedback" form. When listening to other teachers, note positive (+) and negative (-) points as you hear them. Then arrange into proper category on the front.**

**Explain "Do's and Avoids" handout. Look this over. There is some overlap with tonight's material, but also some important additional points. You'll be reminded of some of these in the next three weeks!**

### **Three Stages of Teacher Development:**

STAGE #1: See "Preparing Your First Few Teachings" for normal prep sequence for newer teachers. Rely primarily on tapes during this stage.

- Some new teachers feel they must do "their own material" even when they aren't gifted or experienced enough to do this. The goal is not to be unique; it is to reach and instruct people! The burden is on you why you shouldn't use existing tapes by proven effective teachers. You "make it your own" by doing the research, getting the same burden and adding your own personal examples. Don't sacrifice the group on the altar of your creativity!

STAGE #2: Work up your own outline first, using the "Homiletic Worksheet." Use the tape as a supplement &/or stimulus.

- This is usually for teachers who demonstrate gifting in originality and have a fair amount of teaching experience. If you can get to this point, you have really accomplished something.

STAGE #3: Create teachings regularly (not always) without relying on tapes.

- Most people do not get to this stage. This takes a high level of gifting, and the time needed for this kind of prep.

- Even highly gifted teachers tend to re-teach their material, adapting and improving it each time.

### **Final Reminders**

- Remember where your group meets next week, and show up on time! If you are first, come a little early to get your camera ready.
- Do your best as unto the Lord--and leave it at that.

Preaching is helping people hear from God. Romans 10, reminds us that there are plenty of people in the world in need of someone who will have enough courage to help them hear. This can happen anywhere and can take many forms. Women and men both need to hear this call.

## **Handbooks on Your Bookshelf**

The life of a preacher must be focused on God, the Bible and the congregation. The preacher must have a close, personal relationship with God, based on obedience and faith, before he can share that relationship with others. He must also have a deep understanding of the Bible before he can explain God's message to others. And, He must have the respect and trust of the people before he can motivate them to respond to God's word.

To be effective, the preacher must draw on a wide variety of skills. He functions as an interpreter, advisor and teacher. As he moves back and forth between the biblical text and the modern world, he employs skills in hermeneutics, counselling and speech communication to develop a message that is engaging, relevant and effective; but preachers are not equally careful or successful in this task. Using a disciplined and methodical approach, a preacher can consistently produce a compelling and biblically sound message. Preaching is a skill, and like all other skills, it can be developed and maintained through conscious and sustained effort in each of its several facets. The process of biblical preaching includes selecting a text, studying the text, developing proper applications, organizing the sermon and preparing for sermon delivery. The purpose of this paper is to describe each of the steps necessary for effective sermon preparation.

### **An Idea of Books**

Have plenty of Bible versions for reading and reference:

Mervyn A. Warren, *King Came Preaching: The Pulpit Power of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.* Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2001. Hardcover, 223 pages. ISBN 0-8308-2658-0

Few preachers have made the kind of impact on their society as did Martin Luther King, Jr. Known to most Americans primarily as a social activist and civil rights leader, it is important to recall that King's own primary identity was as a preacher and pastor.

Warren provides a "homiletical biography" of King in this excellent new book, which features a foreword by Gardner C. Taylor. Though at times it is clear the book grew out of a dissertation and still carries some of that academic style, it is nevertheless well-written and insightful in providing a significant treatment of King's preaching: his themes and content, his use of language, his preparation and delivery of sermons. The book also contains several of King's sermons.

Warren is professor of preaching at Oakwood College in Huntsville, AL.

Bonnie Bowman Thurston, *Preaching Mark*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002. Paper, 218 pages. ISBN 0-8006-3428-4

The newest contribution to the "Fortress Resources for Preaching" series seeks to examine Mark's gospel from the perspective of the preacher engaged in sermon preparation. The text divisions are drawn from the lectionary passages, and frequent references are made to ideas or approaches for preaching particular textual insights.

Unlike a typical commentary, Thurston deals with material in larger units of thought rather than verse-by-verse. She provides helpful bibliographical references scattered through the book, in order to assist the preacher who wants to dig deeper on a particular point. This will be a useful volume for preachers who are preparing to preach from Mark.

Thurston is William F. Orr Professor of New Testament at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary.

John H. Armstrong, editor. *Reforming Pastoral Ministry*. Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2001. Paper, 286 pages. ISBN 1-58134-179-2

Much of what has been published on preaching in recent years has emphasized ways to adapt the proclamation of the gospel to the changing attitudes and styles of a postmodern generation. In the face of that trend, Armstrong and a series of pastor/authors argue that preaching will only achieve ultimate effectiveness when it is once again centred on Christ.

This is an excellent book filled with insightful essays by a host of pastors who write out of their own Reformed perspective including Kent Hughes (his chapter is included in this issue of *Preaching*), Mark Dever, and others. In addition to the Hughes chapter, among several fine essays are "From Faith to Faith: What makes preaching so vital for Reformation?" and "The Pastor and Church Growth: How to deal with the modern problem of pragmatism."

Robert C. Dykstra, *Discovering a Sermon: Personal Pastoral Preaching*. St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2001. Paper, 154 pages. ISBN 0-8272-0627-5

In his introduction to this brief volume, the author asks, "how does one discern that an image, text or event might 'preach,' and not only might preach but that, like the message of a powerful dream, insists on being preached, must be preached?"

Dykstra seeks to answer that question in the context of pastoral preaching by introducing "a model of sermon preparation that concentrates especially on connecting biblical texts with contemporary life and, foremost, with the preacher's own experiences in life." The model he proposes makes heavy use of developing parables which connect the textual insight to life experience.

The author is associate professor of pastoral theology at Princeton Theological Seminary.

*A Bright Tomorrow*. Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2001. Hardcover, 175 pages. \$12.99. ISBN 1-58134-233-0

Although packaged primarily as a gift book (with its tell-tale padded front cover), this book will also be well-used by preachers looking for appropriate quotes from contemporary Christian leaders. It will prove valuable not only for sermon preparation but for those frequent times when pastors must provide a few comments for some group, or even offer some thoughts for a published newsletter or web site.

Topics run from Christian living to spiritual disciplines to success and service. Quotes are drawn from the Bible and from an array of books (all published by Crossway), representing authors like Tony Evans, Os Guinness, Kent Hughes, Martyn Lloyd-Jones, John F. MacArthur, Stephen F. Olford, John Piper, Adrian Rogers, Edith Schaeffer, and many more. Longer illustrations are scattered through the book amidst many shorter quotes and biblical passages.

One of my favourite quotes (and one whose lesson I am still trying to learn) is from F.B. Meyer: "Wait for God! We are too feverish, too hasty, too impatient. It is a great mistake. Everything comes only to those who can wait."

## **A few study books the preacher should have on his bookshelves**

**Life Application Study Bible NKJV**, by Tyndale House Publishers Staff.

### **Overview**

This best-selling study Bible is now available in the New King James Version. It contains thousands of Life Application Notes to help readers apply the truths of God's Word to everyday life. Includes book introductions, in-text maps and charts, personality profiles, and more.

### **Features**

Words of Jesus featured in red lettering

Dictionary/concordance  
Daily reading plan  
Blueprint and Megathemes for each book  
Topical index  
Tyndale House Publishers

**Hebrew-Greek Key Word Study Bible-KJV**, AMG Publishers, 1-jun.-2008 -  
2284 pages

This Bible is beautiful. Excellent quality. I purchased the KJV. I love the notes and Strong's numbers throughout the text. This Bible can stand alone with the Strong's reference in the back and is helpful with my more comprehensive Strong's concordance. The only negative, in my opinion, are the occasional statements "this word or phrase was not in the original Hebrew/Greek". Good example is in Ephesians where the note states that the original text didn't say that the book was addressed to the saints which are at Ephesus. To me, that discredits the text instead of helping me understand it more. However, as previously stated, I really do appreciate this work. True Value. I would highly recommend. From what I've read so far, 99.9% of the notes offer excellent insights and are solid in doctrine.

This is probably the best study Bible out, for many reasons. I bought this Bible (KJV AMG) in early 2013 and read through it in a few months. After I finished it, I put it on my shelf and moved on to other study Bibles. I have many study Bibles, but it is hard to find one that has everything a serious student of the Bible wants when studying God's Word (I will list what I mean at the bottom of this review). So, I often buy different study Bibles to compliment each other because each one usually excels in a few categories, but fails in others. I recently (early 2014) took this Bible off my shelf to compare it to my interlinear Bible, and as I took another look at it, I realized I had purchased a gem of a Bible! This is truly a complete study Bible with all the necessary study material under one cover; it is truly amazing if you actually use the material it provides you with.

**The New Strong's Exhaustive Concordance**, by James Strong, LL.D, S.T.D.  
(Nelson Reference & Electronic)

The Strong's Exhaustive Concordance is the most complete, easy-to-use, and understandable concordance for studying the original languages of the Bible. Combining the text of the King James Bible with the power of the

Greek and Hebrew Lexicons, any student or pastor can gain a clear understanding of the Word to enrich their study.

Due to the helpful nature of the Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, we have incorporated this tool into our Online Study Bible search engine, enhancing its usefulness.

You can access Strong's Concordance by searching in the search box below and choosing the King James Version or New American Standard Bible. Once you are within a Bible reference, check the "Strong's Numbers" at the top right of your reading pane to view the Hebrew and Greek lexicons using Strong's Concordance numbers.

You can also browse through Strong's concordance numbers by navigating to the King James Version translation or New American Standard Bible translation and checking "Strong's Numbers".

**New Bible Commentary**, Consulting Editors: D.A. Carson, R.T. France, J.A. Motyer & G.J. Wenham (Reference Collection).

A completely new edition of this well-established one-volume commentary on the whole Bible from a team of international contributors. Based on the New International Version. New features include a wide range of maps, diagrams and further-reading lists. Hardcover 1455 Pages

**Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible, Complete and Unabridged.**(Hendrikson Publishers).

**Matthew Henry** (1662–1714) has been known and loved for three centuries for his devotional commentary on the Bible. It has not been generally known that he was also a distinguished preacher. He began preaching at twenty-four years old and held pastorates until his death. The greatness of his sermons consists in their scriptural content, lucid presentation, practical application, and Christ-centeredness.

This is the only complete and unabridged one-volume edition of Matthew Henry's famous work.

Now, this classic volume has been re-typset and features a slimmer and handier trim size and an attractive new cover.

“First among the mighty (commentaries) for general usefulness we are bound to mention the man whose name is a household word, Matthew

Henry. He is the most pious and pithy, sound and sensible, suggestive and sober, terse and trustworthy . . . he is deeply spiritual, heavenly, profitable; finding good matter in every text, and from all deducting the most practical and judicious lessons . . . It is the Christian's companion, suitable to everybody, instructive to all.” (Charles H. Spurgeon).

From Genesis to Revelation, Matthew Henry successfully combines practical application, devotional insight, and scholarship on the entire Bible. Henry has profound insights on the content, message and nature of God's divine revelation. Perfect for all readers of the Bible who want a convenient, comprehensive commentary.

**Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament**, by W.E. Vine. Old Testament edited by F.F.Bruce. (Fleming H. Revell Company, Old Tappan, New Jersey, U.S.A

This convenient one volume combines Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words and Unger and White's Expository Dictionary of the Old Testament. This book allows you to easily access the alphabetized English equivalents of the Greek or Hebrew words from which they are translated. Throughout the text the most significant biblical words are illustrated by Scripture passages, comments, cross-references, ancient and modern meanings, precise etymologies, historical notes, and clearly defined technical information. Each original language is indexed, and the addition of a topical index allows you to access all the dictionary entries pertinent to specific New Testament ideas and teachings. Keyed to Strong's.

**The Zondervan “Parallel New Testament** in Greek and English, the interlinear Greek-English New Testament (NIV and KJV).

The NIV Greek and English New Testament is a parallel Bible, with the Greek New Testament on the left-hand page (using the text that underlies the NIV 2011) and the NIV 2011 on the right-hand page. The Greek text includes footnotes that relate to other Greek New Testaments, and the NIV has the footnotes readers have come to expect and rely on. Section headings are identical in both editions for easy reference. Additional features of the NIV Greek and English New Testament include: Side-by-side format (Greek text on one page with NIV on the facing page) Greek text formatted to match the NIV text Single column format Words of Christ in black Presentation page Ribbon marker (leather edition only) Maps

**Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties**, by Gleason L. Archer (Regency Reference Library, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

*(Surfing on Internet, I saw that the book can be downloaded.)*

Clear, scholarly answers to apparent discrepancies in the Bible, confirming that the Bible is the inerrant Word of God. Over the centuries and still at the present time, Christians—from scholars and students to people in the pew—have been troubled by vexing questions and apparent contradictions in the Bible. In this encyclopedia of Bible difficulties, Dr. Gleason Archer offers carefully thought-out arguments for the unity and integrity of the Bible that should convince the skeptic and reassure the person who may be confused by the seeming discrepancies in Scripture. Dr. Archer's answers are sometimes simple insights that seem afterward to have been obvious all along. But more often his answers are based on a careful study of the meaning of words, the cultural context of Bible eras, knowledge of the Hebrew numbering system, and many other details not readily known to the average Bible reader.

**New Dictionary of Theology**, Editors: Sinclair B. Ferguson, David F. Wright, and Consulting editor: J.L.Packer. (IVP)

Since its publication, the *New Dictionary of Theology* has rapidly established itself as a standard, authoritative reference work in systematic and historical theology. More than 630 articles cover a variety of theological themes, thinkers and movements: From creation to the millennium; from Abelard to Zwingli; from Third World liberation theology to South African Dutch Reformed theology. Firmly anchored in the evangelical tradition, the *NDOT* is nevertheless wide-ranging in its scope. Over 200 contributors, experts in their individual fields, offer both Western and international perspective. Concise and comprehensive, biblically grounded and historically informed, even-handed and free from unduly technical language, this dictionary has been praised by general readers, pastors and scholars.

*New Dictionary of Theology*

- **Editors:** Sinclair B. Ferguson, David F. Wright
- **Consulting Editor:** J. I. Packer
- **Publisher:** InterVarsity Press (1988)

*(With the above choice one can make a profitable start preparing his preaching and teaching ministry. I possess all these books for study and reference.)*

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