*Lesson 18*

*How to Prepare a Sermon*

1. Purpose of a sermon
2. Proclamation of what people should know and what they should do.
3. Bringing people face to face with God.
4. Hearing the voice of God and not the preacher’s voice
5. Required: the fellowship of the preacher with God
6. **Key Point to Remember**: *All Christian preaching must point to the gospel of Jesus Christ*
7. **Suggestions for Long Term Preparation**:
8. Study the Bible every day. Record your ideas in a journal.
9. Develop a file system of stories, illustrations, quotations.
10. Write down ideas when they come to your mind.
11. Major **types:**
12. **Passage** based:
13. Textual: based on just a few verses
14. Expository: broader themes of a passage
15. Common sermon structure: 1) the passage explained, 2) the main points illustrated, 3) the message of the passage applied to the audience.
16. **Subject** based: a theme that addresses a need of the audience
17. Major Styles:
18. **Deductive**: It starts with a major theme and uses main points to support or develop this theme. The development of the sermon is logical or sequential. This is most common sermon style.
19. **Inductive**: It begins with various ideas and brings the audience along to the main point and conclusion. The main theme is only hinted at until towards the end of the sermon. The audience is moved along until they understand and accept the idea.
20. **Narrative**: This is a story told as a parable or illustration of the key theme. An entire sermon can be a story. Or a subject can be explained (may follow textual or expository sermon above), preceded or followed by a story. A story may be told and then the application made clear to the audience. Danger in this type: adding details to a story in the Bible that are not clearly there.
21. **Some Strategies for Sermon Preparation**
    1. **Be Shaped by the Word:**
22. Pray
23. Read
24. Revised Common Lectionary and Church calendar
25. Expositional Preaching through a Book
26. Topical Preaching in a sermon series
27. Do careful exegesis
28. Understand your target audience
29. Language (their metaphors of life)
30. Spiritual needs
31. Economic and/or social status
32. Attitudes and personalities
33. Remember, you are not writing a term paper, so much of what you study will only serve to help you as a preacher understand the text. You must move from informational study to formational application.
34. Decide what type of sermon you will be preaching:
35. Inductive
36. Deductive
37. Expositional/exegetical
38. Topical
39. Narrative
    1. Prepare the Sermon
    2. Give the **main idea in one sentence** that is easy to remember. All sermons should have one major point that is being communicated. This should be put in one sentence that is easy to remember. State how you hope the people will respond to the message.
    3. Choose what **type of sermon** from the list above. Each has its place and use. Using a variety and the occasional surprise in style can keep the congregation more attentive. I recommend a simple deductive sermon for beginners. The following will show how to do this.
    4. Start with the **skeleton**: Develop a simple and clear outline that is easy for the people to remember. Two to four main points should be adequate. It is useful to make the outline of your message match the outline of your passage.
    5. Put **flesh** on the skeleton: Illustrate each major and some minor points of your outline. Use personal stories, quotations, or illustrations gathered from the news or various books and magazines. Use Illustrations that are appropriate to the text and audience. Look at other passages in the Bible that support or illustrate the point you are making. Do outside reading to supplement your Bible study to gather ideas from other people.
    6. **Introduction**: Gain the attention of the audience with a story, quotation, question, or illustration about a theme related to your passage. Bring the audience with you to the text.
    7. Bring the message to a **conclusion** by challenging the people to make a decision or response to the message of the text. A closing illustration may help.
    8. Prepare **good notes** to be used in the pulpit. Use language creatively to communicate the truths of the text to the target audience. Some people use full manuscripts. Advantage: keeps the preacher focused with the right words; disadvantage: lower eye contact with the audience. Others use a detailed outline. Advantage: more eye contact; disadvantage: you have to be able to think on your feet the words to say. Minimally, use very detailed notes. Finish writing your sermon with enough time to digest it. Have time to reflect on what you have studied and prepared so that you can internalize it.
    9. Fred Craddock suggests that a good sermon has six qualities:

* Unity—it is specific, clear, and simple—it hangs together as one message
* Memory—it knows who is listening to this sermon
* Recognition—it says what we already know
* Identification—it draws the listeners into the plot/story—it causes them to identify with the characters
* Anticipation—it sustains interest and delays resolution
* Intimacy—it cares, loves, respects, and trusts

1. Sermon Preparation Template:

Use the following as a guide when you are done studying and are ready to construct your sermon. Remember, the goal is not to write a sermon, but to preach it. Use this guide only as it helps you preach. You are not writing a paper to be read but a message to be orally preached. Careful study and preparation will help you focus and be ready to speak with conviction, authority, and accuracy.

1. Sermon Text: (the passage you have studied this week)
2. Sermon Title: (optional but can help focus the sermon)
3. Sermon Sentence: (sermon in one sentence; make this the key message of your passage)
4. Intended Audience and Occasion: (describe what you know about the audience and situation)
5. Sermon Form: (choose the type of sermon you will preach; see #6 above; the following is one example)
6. Introduction: (Start the sermon with a story that grabs the attention of the audience)
7. Describe the passage and its message: (give an overview of the passage, retell the story, give historical background)
8. Main Points: (create the skeleton of the sermon; these can be the main points from the outline of the passage you make during your study; these main points should support the theme you identified)
9. Illustrations: (use stories with which the audience will identify)
10. Conclusion: (a story or summary that calls people to decision)

The length of sermon notes will vary. For beginning preachers, it will be especially helpful to be very detailed in your sermon notes for when you actually get up before people and preach. Many preachers will have a minimum of 4-6 pages when they preach. Some preachers will use full manuscripts and others smaller outlines.

1. **Model the Word** in your own life
2. What change is God asking you to make based on this passage?
3. The primary question to ask: “What is the text doing ***to me***?” You cannot answer this question if you rush to prepare a sermon on Saturday night. Work ahead and live with the passage.
4. Knowledge must become obedience for it to be wisdom.
5. Your preaching will have more authority if it comes from conviction and what God is doing in your own life.
6. **Connect the Word**
   1. Live with people. Know your audience. Be a pastor before being a preacher.
   2. Key question: What need of your people does this sermon answer? “What can the text do to my audience?” What difference in the lives of your people could this passage make? Decide what is most important to communicate.
   3. Remember that words have power. Choose them carefully.
   4. Develop effective communication and delivery skills.
   5. Be creative in the use of technology and symbols.
   6. **Effective and Ineffective Public Speaking**

Allen Monroe has discovered six characteristics of an ineffective speaker:

* + - * + Monotonous voice
        + Stiffness
        + Lack of eye contact
        + Fidgeting
        + Lack of enthusiasm
        + Weak voice

The five characteristics of an effective speaker are:

* + - * + Direct eye contact
        + Alertness
        + Enthusiasm
        + Pleasant voice
        + Physical activity

In using the body to speak, there are six effective traits:

* Be relaxed
* Be definite
* Be appropriate
* Be yourself
* Use variety
* Adapt your movement to the audience

The ineffective use of the body is seen in these traits:

* Random movement
* Nervous pacing
* Shifting weight
* Adjusting clothes
* Playing with keys, wallet, money, glasses, etc.

Being nervous at the thought of public speaking is common. The best ways to control nervousness are slowing the rate of your speech, rotating your shoulders to remove stress before you begin, taking deep breaths, and stretching your upper body. Nervousness is a physical reaction that can be helped by consciously slowing down and relaxing your body.

Some of the common voice problems are listed below with suggestions for improvement:

* Too high pitch—slow down
* Too low pitch—speed up
* Monotone—intentionally vary the pitch
* Too harsh/tense—breathe more and pause longer
* Boring—increase your rate and pitch
* Nervousness—pause, breathe deeply, stretch muscles
* Mumbling—slow down, be intentional
  1. **Delivery**: Remember some important issues related to your delivery:
     1. Come to the delivery relaxed. If you are prepared, you will be more relaxed. Everyone gets nervous but being prepared will lower your nervousness.
     2. Practice your message ahead of time so you can use voice inflections and appropriate hand gestures. For beginners, it is helpful to practice your sermon beforehand. Speak in front of a mirror to see how you look.
     3. Deliver your sermon with conviction. The sermon should be in you before it comes out of you.
     4. Use presentation notes that you can read and follow. Don’t get into the pulpit with poor notes. It will make your deliver much more difficult.
     5. Pray as you prepare and as you preach. Speak from your heart because you have spent time listening to God and God’s word.
     6. Speak to your chosen audience. Notice who is present. What is their background, economic status, family situation, education level, and so on? The more you know about your audience ahead of time, the more you can prepare to speak to their needs.
     7. Be aware of the time allotted and stick to this (shorter is often better than longer).

1. Remember that the Holy Spirit is the key player in the drama of preaching. Be sensitive to the leading of the Spirit in the study, preparation, and finally speaking.

**Big Ideas**

* 1. The purpose of a sermon is to bring people face to face with God through Jesus Christ.
  2. Prayer, careful preparation, and study will lead to more effective communication. Poor exegesis will lead to poor sermons.
  3. A sermon should communicate the message of a passage in such a way that people will respond by growing closer to God.
  4. There are many ways to construct a sermon. The easiest for beginners is to develop an outline from the passage.
  5. Delivering a sermon takes practice and skill that can be learned.