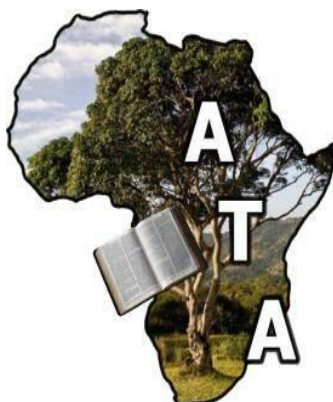


ATA Preaching Course



"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).

Compiled by Joster Jumbe from Preaching Notes by Robert Bolitho, Expository Preaching by Jonathan M. Menn, Preaching: Preachers Conference 15 August 2003 by Wouter Rijnveld and Practical Homiletics for Lay Preachers by Wouter Rijnveld. The Questions have been formed by the compiler.

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COURSE INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this course is for students to expand in their knowledge of the Preaching in Africa. It focuses on the successes and challenges of Preaching in Africa and steps that African preachers should take for Africa to have an authentic church.

COURSE CONTENT

The course is divided into 5 lessons. It presents preaching in God-centered manner.

COURSE MATERIALS

The lecture notes present the information for this course. The students are required to listen and read them thoroughly.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- a) To study *Preaching Course* with other students;

- b) To acquire a detailed knowledge of preaching using the lessons of this course;
- c) To develop a deeper understanding of some preaching problems in Africa;
- d) To master *Preaching Course* in order to use it in teaching, preaching; and
- e) To master *Preaching Course* to gain an understanding of the challenges of the church in Africa.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Participate in all hours of common teaching time.

COURSE EVALUATION

Student Attendance: The points will be given for the hours attended.

BENEFITS OF THIS COURSE

The course will ground students in preaching in Africa.

Introduction to Preaching

There are many types of preaching. In this course, we are going to look at some of them for examples expository preaching and topic preaching. These form the basic principles of preaching. Preachers and theologians have said and written a lot about preaching. There are a number of adages that clearly teach us that preaching is not just an explanation of passages from the Bible. It is a special presentation of what the Lord says to the people of all ages.

There are many duties for church leaders in the church such as preaching, teaching, ministering, counseling etc. Church leaders are active in these roles for the advancement of the Kingdom of God. They know by doing this they are fulfilling their biblical responsibilities. They need to be available and accessible to their people. They do this because they are accountable to God and the church. Any church leader who is passive on these duties is in the church for his personal gain. However, you need to bear in your mind that preaching is the center of these duties. Africa needs God-centered preaching. It is said:

When John Knox left Scotland, the country had deteriorated morally and spiritually. Finally, John Knox decided to return to Scotland. It is said that on every street corner the word was being spread, “Knox is coming! Knox is coming! Knox is coming!” The entire country was filled with electricity because the preacher was returning. Scotland needed Knox. England Spurgeon, America needed Moody and his old sin-cursed world needs preaching again! In Isaiah 61:1, Isaiah called himself a preacher. In Luke 4:18 Jesus was called a preacher. In II Peter 2:5 Noah was called “a preacher of righteousness.” In Ecclesiastes 1:1 Solomon was called “the Preacher.” In Timothy 2:7 Paul said that he was “ordained a preacher.” In Mark 1:14 we find that Jesus came to Galilee “preaching the Gospel.” In Mark 3:1a we find, “In those days came John preaching.” In Jonah 3:2, Jonah was admonished to preach to Nineveh the preaching that God

bade him to preach. Acts 8:4 says, “Therefore they “so spake” that multitudes believed. Oh, how we need some “so-speakers”! Preaching is exactly that. It is “so speaking.”

Africa needs to produce her own Calvin, Knox, Baxter, Latimer, Moody etc. Preaching what God wants, not what man wants is what Africa needs. There are many more adages made by men of God:

“I preached as never sure to preach again, as dying man to dying men,” (Richard Baxter).

“A strong and faithful pulpit is the safeguard to a nation’s life,” (John Hall).

“Actors speak of things imaginary as if they were real; preachers speak of things real as if they were imaginary,” (Thomas Betterton).

“Preaching is truth delivered through personality. Preaching is personal counseling on a group scale,” (Phillip Brooks).

“Preaching is the delivering of meat, not strawberries,” (Hugh Latimer).

“Preaching is breaking the hard heart and healing the broken one,” (John Newton).

“Of all vocations, the Christian ministry is the most sacred, the most exacting and the most humbling,” (William R. Nicoll).

“Preach not because you have to say something but because you have something to say,” (Richard Whitely).

“When I hear a man preaching, I like to see him act as if he were fighting bees,” (Abraham Lincoln).

“Preaching has but one aim that Christ may come to those who are assembled to listen. It is not just talk about a Christ of the past, but it is a mouth through which the Christ of the present offers us life today,” (John R.W. Stott).

Hyles further defines preaching as follows: Preaching is the answer. Let nothing take its place. Let no concert be given at preaching time. Let no cantata be given at preaching time. Let no movie substitute for preaching of the Gospel. Let no vespers take place of preaching. Let no play of dramatical presentation be given at preaching time. Preaching is the loftiest of the professions and the greatest of arts.

Preaching is truth set on fire. Preaching is demolition of error. Preaching is doubt’s healing balm. Preaching is Savior’s projector. Preaching is fact on fire and truth aflame. Preaching is worship’s entrée. Preaching is adornment of the Bible. Preaching is the power of God unto salvation. Preaching is revival’s forerunner. Preaching is the church’s heart. Preaching is doctrine clothed in excitement. Preaching is love’s smile.

Preaching is sin's greatest adversary. Preaching is frustration's funeral. Preaching is doubt's demise. Preaching is fear's failure. Preaching is depression's death. Preaching is disappointment's decline. Preaching is faith's food. Preaching is profundity delivered in simplicity. Preaching was the first thing done by the Mayflower pilgrims. Preaching is the mender of broken relationships. Preaching is the healer of broken hearts. Preaching is the revival of broken dreams. Preaching is Hell's greatest enemy. Preaching is the sinner's best friend. Preaching is the saint's dinner. Preaching is genius with a halo. Preaching is fire in the pulpit that melts the ice in the pew.

Preaching saved Nineveh, ignited Pentecost and turned the Judean Wilderness into a Baptist revival. When the man of God approaches the pulpit, let angels stop flying, let Heaven's hosannas hush, let adults hearken and children listen, let young people be alert, let Heaven respond, let Hell tremble, ... let the church wait in holy expectation, let all eternity tremble, let Satan and his angels be anointed with fear.

Questions

1. State some of the types of preaching.
2. List 3 duties of church leaders.
3. Give 3 adages about preaching.
4. How do you know that John Knox was a great preacher.
5. Discuss what preaching is about.
6. Mention four great preachers apart from Knox.
7. What are the characteristics of church leaders who are in the church for personal gain?
8. How is a nation safeguarded by faithful pulpit?
9. Why most preaching today is negatively affected?
10. Mention 3 people who were also called preachers in the Old Testament.

Preaching

Robert Bolitho

Introduction

This course explains in brief about preaching. It aims at teaching lay preachers and church elders involved in preaching in their local churches. The church in Africa is still struggling with a problem of well trained church leaders. There are many preachers especially in the rural areas who have never attended any Bible school or college. These preachers sometimes preach their own imaginations other than what the Bible teaches.

Preaching

Preaching is the proclamation of the Word of God to men by men called by God. It is one way God communicates His word to people. Preaching is absolutely necessary for the health of the church. The absence of true Bible preaching results in a weak, ineffective church.

What is preaching?

The New Testament mentions preaching over sixty times. There are four New Testament Greek words for preaching.

Kerusso which means to herald or proclaim the message of a king. This means that the preacher does not speak his own message and he speaks with the authority of the sender. The preacher must feel called by God and he has his authority from God.

Evangelizo which means to evangelize or bring good news. The angel in Luke 2:10 is evangelizing as he brings good news. It means to preach the gospel. Often both *kerusso* and *evangelizo* are used in the same passage. Look at Luke 4:18-19. Jesus uses *evangelizo* in the first part of verse 18 while later in verse 18 and 19 He uses *kerusso*. Luke 4:18-19 "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me. Because of this He anointed Me to proclaim (*evangelizo*) the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me" to heal the brokenhearted, "to proclaim (*kerusso*) remission to captives, and to the blind to see again," to send away the ones being crushed, in remission, Luke 4:19 "to preach (*kerusso*) an acceptable year of *the* Lord."

Martureo to bear witness to facts. The preacher reports facts from the Bible. *Didasko* means to teach in everyday understandable words what the message mean to his listeners. In other words the preacher is to explain what the Bible teaches and how the listener should use the lesson in his life, changing his life where necessary to conform to the Bible.

When a preacher is preaching he uses more than one of these words in one message. For example, in Acts 15:35, we read that Paul and Barnabas spent time 'teaching and preaching' the word of the Lord. Another example of the preacher using more than one word in the message is found in Acts 28:31. Here Paul used his home for 'preaching.... and teaching' (*kerusso* and *didasko*). Preaching is teaching.

What is good Bible preaching?

Exegetical accuracy which means bringing out the intended meaning of words and sentences. The preacher must report accurately what the Bible says. The writer of the Bible intended one meaning for his words and the preacher must faithfully report these words. **There is nothing more important in preaching than accurately reporting the Bible.** Prayer is a very necessary part of preaching. The time you spend praying is the most important time you spend preparing for preaching. Principles that govern good discovery of what the passage is actually saying. The most important time involved in a sermon is not the time spent preaching rather it is the time spent preparing the sermon such as praying.

- a) God expects the preacher to be respectful of the Bible after all it is God's word. God expects the preacher to believe every word. He expects the preacher to remember that the Bible has meaning and the meaning is God's meaning; not the meaning that the preacher wants.
- b) We must study every word and accept its meaning.
- c) We must know the literary style of our reading such as history or poetry, etc.
- d) We must know the context. An example is preaching 1 Corinthians 2:6-11. Most preachers speak about Heaven here but this is wrong because Heaven is not in the context of this passage. This passage is saying that the Lord's people can see and appreciate spiritual things which are hidden from the unsaved world.
- e) We must know the historical setting. An example is found in Acts 19:1-2 when Paul asks some religious men if they received the Holy Spirit when they believed. They said "no" which was an acceptable answer back in the time of Abraham. However, Acts 19 is after Pentecost which is after the church had been given The Holy Spirit. Their answer of no means they were not Christians so Paul talked to them as unconverted people which led to their conversion.
- f) What does other Scripture tell us about a passage? We use Scripture to interpret Scripture. For example, you should not preach on Melchizedek using only Genesis 14:18-24. You also need Hebrews 5:5-10 and 7:1-28.
- g) How does this passage point to Christ? The whole Bible points to Christ and every sermon must point to Christ. Sometimes it is hard to see this but careful examination; for example, of the book of Ecclesiastes, stirs up questions in our minds which make us hunger for God.
- h) How can we be better exegetes which means how can we do a better job of explaining the meaning of the Bible? How can we do a better job of accurately reporting what the Bible teaches? We can do this by really reading and studying the Bible and praying for better understanding.

Doctrinal substance is very important

- a) Preaching must be full of doctrines (teachings). By this we mean we must teach things such as creation, redemption, judgment, Heaven, Hell, and many other subjects.
- b) Our sermons must contribute to the understandings of the system of truths (doctrines) of the Bible (Romans 6:17).
- c) What happens when Bible doctrine is not taught or preached?
 - 1) God is not worshipped or loved as He should be because people do not understand Him. They do not know what a wonderful, powerful, and loving God they have. The people can't really appreciate God.
 - 2) People do not understand how wonderful our relationship with God is.
 - 3) Believers are unaware of their privileges as Christians.

People forget the blessings they have because they are justified which means that they are forgiven for their sins and we can look forward to heaven. People don't realize that they are adopted by God which gives them certain rights such as being children of God. People do not enjoy the full benefits of living as God's children. A society which has many Christians is a better society to live in than a society full of pagans.

- a) Believers are not sure how to live. We are supposed to obey God and to obey Him we need to know Him. It is the preacher's job to teach God's laws.
- b) Personal witness suffers. Believers don't know what to say to cause people to turn to God. Preachers need to teach their listeners all about evangelizing people.
- c) People don't know how to live properly.
- d) People don't know how to properly pray.

Preaching must have clear and easily understood structure. Sermons must have unity with a central message. Sermons must have order in which the different parts follow each other in a logical manner. They must have proportion which means each part is given its proper place. Unimportant points are not built up and important points are not played down. In other words sermons must be well organized.

Introduction

This is the opening statements which tell the people what you will be talking about and one of its purposes is to get people interested. Often this is done by telling a story.

- a) The introduction should not be overly long. It is not the main part of the sermon and is only to be long enough to introduce the main part of the sermon.

Discussion

After the introduction it is time to present the material that teaches the truth that you mean to teach.

- a) You must have a plan. Your thoughts must be presented in a way that the audience sees movement to a conclusion. Your plan must be as simple as possible so that everyone can understand it. After all, your purpose in preaching is that every listener can know the message.
- b) The helpfulness of divisions. Keep the number of points to no more than four; three is a good number. If necessary, preach several weeks on a subject rather than preach too long in one sermon.
- c) Proportionate. Balance the sermon by dividing the three or four points into mostly equal time segments. In other words if you are speaking for forty minutes, don't spend the first thirty minutes on point one.
- d) Persuasive. Use good arguments presented properly. In Matthew 6:1-18 our Lord teaches us about charitable deeds, prayer, and fasting. He first tells them what not to do and then what they should do. Present negatives before you present positives.
- e) Attractive. We can make our sermons more attractive by using simpler words. Work to make the sermon interesting.

Conclusion

- a) Definition of conclusion. Your concluding remarks should be designed to summarize your sermon and tie things together.
- b) Importance of the conclusion. A good conclusion needs to be short and challenging. A good conclusion summarizes the sermon and often issues a short challenge or reminder of the main point of the sermon. A good conclusion is often the only thing a person will remember of your sermon.
- c) Suggestions. Write down exactly what you want the listener to remember. Our conclusion should be in your mind before you finish the final version of your sermon. Your conclusion should be pointed and personal.

Vivid Illustration

By now everyone should know that preaching requires a lot of work. An illustration is a word picture which helps us understand something better. There is a saying that a picture is worth a thousand words. A word picture is when words are presented in a way that causes the listener to draw a picture in his mind and better understand what the speaker is saying.

- a) Often we form pictures in our mind from the words we hear from the radio when it is reporting a news story such as teargas being used to stop a riot.
- b) Word pictures can help explain the truth. Mathew 13 is full of word pictures, see verses 23, 31, 33, 44, 45, 47. The apostle Paul uses them in Romans 6 and 7 when he is saying that we Christians should not live in sin because we are no longer slaves to sin. He uses a picture of a slave market where you can easily identify who a slave belongs to; We Christians should live in a way that shows that Christ is our master.
- c) Word pictures help make your sermon more interesting so that people pay closer attention to the message. After listening to a speaker for a while, people's attention weakens and their minds turn to other thoughts. If you use a word illustration in the middle of a sermon you cause the person to again pay close attention.
- d) Illustrations or word pictures help a person remember the main point of your message. If you help a person draw a mental picture, it will help him remember much more than words alone will. An example is the story from Luke 15 about the prodigal son who realizes that he needs to return to his father. Verse 23 talks about how happy the father is that his son was returning and how he planned a party to celebrate. Once again help people to draw a mental picture. You can do this by talking about a joyous celebration that your audience has experienced such as a wedding party. These wedding pictures can help the people remember the point; that Jesus rejoices when one of His lost children turns to Him.

Pointed application

Your sermons must be designed for your audience. They must meet the spiritual needs and be at the level of the people so that they can use what they are taught in their everyday life. Keep your sermons simple.

- a) What is the definition of pointed application? Application is that part of the sermon which shows the listener how to apply the teaching from the Bible to his life; the application is pointed at the listener.
- b) Application is necessary or the sermon will not accomplish a purpose. A sermon which has no application is just reporting facts and teaches no lesson. Remember you are supposed to be teaching. Some preachers want to show how smart they are, and they don't care if the listener can learn anything useful. Application is when the sermon becomes useful to a listener.

- 1) An example of pointed application is discussing the teaching of a Bible passage such as Genesis 12:1-9. The preacher could explain what happens as God directs Abram to leave his home and he makes promises to Abram. He could explain that this is a story about faith and obedience. His application would be to challenge his listeners to trust and obey God.

How do we make pointed application?

- a) Be pointed or specific. Make sure the application of the sermon is presented so that the listener understands the point. An example is found in Matthew 19:21 where Jesus tells the rich young ruler exactly what he is to do. Jesus left no doubt about what the person was to do.
- b) Be persuasive. Don't just tell the people what to do, but also tell them how and why they should do what you are teaching them to do. A test of a great preacher is his heart; he must have a heart of love for the people he is preaching to. As you give an application, calling on the people to repent and believe in Jesus for their salvation, do it in a positive, convincing manner. Don't, during the application, talk about Hell, instead, tell the people how wonderful it is to belong to Jesus.
- c) The final test of effective preaching is when you can witness a change in the people you preach to.

Helpful delivery

Preparation for a sermon is very important but it is not a sermon until it is delivered, and equal care for delivery is important as preparation. Your spirit during delivery is important:

- a) The preacher must be courageous. He must boldly speak the message of the Bible and not worry if the message displeases people. He must seek to please God first. Do not preach to make people feel good.
- b) We must be humble remembering that we preachers are sinners and our only ability is from God.
- c) We must be sincere. Your message must be truthful; you must believe it.
- d) We must be very familiar with our material.
- e) We must be courteous even when we deliver hard messages.
- f) Often, and at the right time, we can use humor to better teach our lesson.

Our language

We must be careful in the words we use.

- a) Our language must be simple and easily understood.
 - 1) Make one point per sentence.
 - 2) Keep your sentences short.
 - 3) Use short words that are easily understood.
 - 4) Use only words that your listeners can easily understand. Explain words that some of your audience may not understand.

Grammatical

- a) Use the correct way of expressing yourself in the language you are using.
- b) Forceful. Pick the words that will best make the point that you are trying to get across.

Your voice

The best way to speak is to speak in your normal voice. You can occasionally change your pitch, your pace, your volume, your tone, your emphasis to make your talk more interesting. Occasionally pausing and not talking will keep your audience paying attention. Don't scream all the time.

Your non-verbal communication

We must be aware that we send messages without using words. Often we do this by the way we sit or stand; by our facial expressions, and how we use our hands.

Make eye contact.

Look at the people.

Don't look out the window or over the people's heads; make sure to make eye contact and let them know you are speaking to them.

Your appearance

You must dress in a manner that shows respect for the audience and God. Don't dress up so much that you draw attention to yourself and distract people from listening.

Your time

Don't speak so long that people quit paying attention. A good rule is to deliver your message and then quit. Start on time so you don't reward those who are late. People can only pay attention for a short time. Many good sermons are ruined because the preacher did not quit when he should have.

Supernatural authority means to speak with enthusiasm; with passion

If your goal is to see the word of God move and change people then you need the power of the Holy Spirit to accomplish this. It is the power of the Holy Spirit that moves men. 1 Thessalonians 1:5.

Spiritual urgency

You must believe that your message is important and needs to be delivered. 2 Corinthians 4:13 People are dying without Christ in their lives and they need to hear about Him before they die. You should believe so much in the urgency of your message that you can hardly wait till you can deliver it. As I said above, your message must be very important to you, and it must cause you to deliver it with emotion.

A Suggested Message of Sermon Preparation

Don't wait until the last minute. If you preach every week then your preparation should begin immediately after you finish your sermon. By this, I mean start organizing your thoughts.

Here are some steps to follow:

- a) Spend some quiet time thinking and praying, and waiting on God. Prayer is the most important thing you can do to deliver a good sermon. There have been times when I have picked my scripture and my preparations went nowhere. I could not organize my thoughts. So I would stop and pray and listen. I would then feel guided to go to different scripture and change my subject. Then the message would come together.
- b) Meditate on your text. Really study the Bible.
- c) Start writing. At this time don't try to organize your material, just write down your thoughts.
- d) Organize your material, using the thoughts that you have previously written down.
- e) Examine what you have done so far. Check it to see that it:
 - 1) Accurately reports the meaning the author intended, Make sure the message points forward to Jesus.

- 2) Make sure your interpretation accurately reflects the doctrine that should be taught from this text.
- 3) Make sure your message is logical and makes the points in a logical method which everyone can follow.
- 4) Do you have illustrations which will teach and help keep the people's interest?
- 5) Do you have pointed application in which you summarize the message and send the people out ready to change and apply what they have learned?
- f) Write your final draft exactly as you intend to deliver the sermon.
- g) Pray over your message; ask God to have you change it if necessary. Ask Him to bless both the delivery of the sermon and the hearing. Ask that the message would change lives including your own life. Ask God to speak through you and be sure to give God the credit if it is a good sermon.
- h) Deliver the sermon as carefully and enthusiastically as possible.
- i) Prayerfully examine the whole experience after the sermon is delivered and you can be alone. Learn from each sermon.

Conclusion

- a) Start sermon preparation as early as possible. As I write this, I am scheduled to preach in a little over a month and I am already preparing.
- b) It takes much time to prepare properly. Experienced pastors need less time than beginners. Expect to spend at least six hours preparing. Do not rush your preparation just to get the job done.
- c) Remember this is God's word you are sharing with your listener.

Questions

1. What are the meanings of the following words:
 - a) *Kerusso*
 - b) *Evangelizo*
 - c) *Martureo*
2. List some of the doctrines that need to be preached about in our sermons.

3. What are the results of not preaching the Bible doctrines?
4. Why a pagan society is dangerous?
5. Why making a plan is necessary when preparing a sermon?
6. What is an application?
7. What is a word picture?
8. How can we make our words simple and clear?
9. Why non-verbal communication is important when preaching?
10. What are the steps for sermon preparation?

Expository Preaching

Jonathan M. Menn

God is still speaking to us through the Bible, though thousands of years have gone since it was written. God is doing this through the Holy Spirit, the Wonderful counselor. The Scriptures use the present tense to indicate that the Holy Spirit is active during this present time. The following biblical references support this claim: (Heb. 3:7; 4:7; 10:15-17; 12:5-6; 1 Cor. 10:6, 11; Heb. 11:4). The apostles and writers of the Bible frequently use both the past and present tenses when referring to Scripture, indicating that what had been written in the past is still “a living word to living people from the living God” (Stott 1982: 100). John Stott explains the significance of this: “When once we have grasped the truth that God ‘still speaks through what he has spoken,’ we shall be well protected against two opposite errors.

- 1) The first is the belief that, though it was heard in ancient times, God’s voice is silent today.
- 2) The second is the claim that God is indeed speaking today, but that his Word has little or nothing to do with Scripture. . .

Safety and truth are found in the related convictions that God has spoken, that God speaks, and that his two messages are closely connected to one another, because it is through what he spoke that he speaks. Other Scripture references include: (Acts 4:31; 6:4; 11:14; Rom. 10:17; Phil. 1:14; 1 Thess. 2:13; Heb. 13:7; 1 Pet. 1:22-25; 4:11).

Expository preaching means “opening up the inspired text with such faithfulness and sensitivity that God’s voice is heard and God’s people obey him.” Bryan Chapell adds, “In order

to expound a passage a preacher must explain context, establish meaning, and demonstrate implications in a way that a specific group of listeners will find interesting, understandable, and applicable” (Chapell 1994: 127).

The term “expository” indicates that “exposing” what the Bible says, means, and implies, is at the heart of preaching. The pattern was established by the priests in Nehemiah, who “read from the book, from the law of God, translating [or “explaining”] the sense so that they understood the reading” (Neh. 8:8). Stott describes this: “To expound Scripture is to bring out of the text what is there and expose it to view. The expositor open[s] what appears to be closed, makes plain what is obscure, unravels what is knotted and unfolds what is tightly packed. The opposite of exposition is ‘imposition’, which is to impose on the text what is not there. But the ‘text’ in question could be a verse, or a sentence, or even a single word. It could equally be a paragraph, or a chapter, or a whole book. The size of the text is immaterial so long as it is biblical. What matters is what we do with it. Whether it is long or short, our responsibility as expositors is to open it up in such a way that it speaks its message clearly, plainly, accurately, relevantly, without addition, subtraction or falsification. In expository preaching the biblical text is neither a conventional introduction to a sermon on a largely different theme, nor a convenient peg on which to hang a ragbag of miscellaneous thoughts, but a master which dictates and controls what is said” (Stott 1982: 125-26).

Expository preaching deals with literary units. Pastor Mark Harris explains, “A literary unit can be understood as a line of thought, an argument, or a story. It may be a single verse, a paragraph or several chapters. In each literary unit, a single theme usually dominates, and all the surrounding material supports it. This is the ‘big idea’” (Harris 2004: 22) Chapell similarly calls the preaching portion of Scripture an “expository unit,” which he defines as “a large or small portion of Scripture from which the preacher can demonstrate a single spiritual truth with adequate supporting facts or concepts arising within the scope of the text” (Chapell 1994: 53). Looking at Scripture as literary or expository units encourages preachers to see scriptural passages as “collections of unified thought packets rather than as arrays of disconnected verses” (Ibid.: 52).

Expository preaching is more than simply teaching. The preacher is charged with the task of studying, understanding, and properly interpreting the Bible. Expository preaching then takes the next step of conveying that information to people who have not done the study in such a way that they will understand it as if they had done the study. But expository preaching does something more—it conveys the truths of the Bible in such a way that the listeners will be inspired to change their lives as a result of what they have heard and learned from the preacher. John Piper explains this: “When Paul says to Timothy in 2 Timothy 4:2, ‘Preach the word,’ the term he uses for ‘preach’ is a word for ‘herald’ or ‘announce’ or ‘proclaim’ (*kēruōn*). It is not a word for ‘teach’ or ‘explain.’ . . . I call this heralding exultation. Preaching is a public exultation over the truth it brings. It is not disinterested or cool or neutral. It is not mere explanation. It is manifestly and contagiously passionate about what it says.

Nevertheless this heralding contains teaching. You can see that as you look back to 2 Timothy 3:16—the Scripture (which gives rise to preaching) is profitable for teaching. And you can see it as you look ahead to the rest of 2 Timothy 4:2, ‘Preach the word . . . reprove, rebuke

and exhort, with complete patience and teaching.’ So preaching is expository. It deals with the Word of God. True preaching is not the opinions of mere man. It is the faithful exposition of God’s Word. So in a phrase, preaching is expository exultation” (Piper 2004: 10-11).

Expository preaching must engage not only the mind, but also the heart and life of the preacher. The reason is that the Holy Spirit first applies the passage to the preacher and then, through him, applies it to the people. In order to preach expositively the pastor is obligated to do a thorough study of the text, which feeds his own soul, strengthens him, and thereby makes him a better pastor and person. The pattern was set by Ezra who “set his heart to study the law of the Lord, and to practice it, and to teach His statutes and ordinances in Israel” (Ezra 7:10). “Study-Practice-Teach” should still be the pattern for preachers today.

Expository preaching likewise must engage the minds, hearts, and lives of the congregation. Piper says, “In true worship there is always understanding with the mind and there is always feeling with the heart. Understanding must always be the foundation of feeling, or all we have is baseless emotionalism. But understanding of God that doesn’t give rise to feeling for God becomes mere intellectualism and deadness” (Piper 2004: 10).

The purpose or goal of expository preaching is not simply to teach people what the Bible says and means, but to change lives. As Pastor Andy Stanley says, the goal is “to teach people how to live a life that reflects the values, principles, and truths of the Bible” (Stanley and Jones 2006: 95). The transformation of our lives (not just our thoughts or beliefs) is at the heart of what Christianity is all about (see, Rom 8:29; 12:1-2; Eph. 4:17-24; 5:8). James made this clear when he said “faith without works is useless” (Jas 2:20), and “prove yourselves doers of the word, not merely hearers who delude themselves” (Jas 1:22). Jesus gave one sign for how people would know that we are his disciples: “By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:35). Consequently, that was the goal of Paul’s instruction: “The goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith” (1 Tim 1:5). Notice how the goal of love affects one’s entire life: the heart is purified; the conscience is made good (because there is no longer a difference between what one says and what he does); and one’s faith is sincere (belief is combined with Godly works so that faith is no longer useless).

Because the goal of expository preaching is the transformation of lives, application of the word—TO the lives of the hearers, and IN their lives BY the hearers—is central. God’s Word always calls for a response: “When you commit to preach for life change, your preparation is not complete until you have answered two very important questions: So what? and Now what? Our preaching won’t make much difference if our people don’t understand what difference it is supposed to make. . . . The key to this approach is refusing to stand up and speak until you know the answer to two questions: What is the one thing I want my audience to know? [and] What do I want them to do about it?” (Stanley and Jones 2006: 97, 104)

Reasons for, and Benefits of Expository Preaching

Exposition “sets limits” in that it restricts us to expounding the scriptural text. The preacher is less likely to succumb to the temptation to simply teach his own “pet ideas” and interests. He is

also less likely to succumb to pressure from the congregation to only preach “what they want to hear.” The limitation of what to preach thereby frees the pastor to preach the whole counsel of God in a way that helps to insure both integrity (freedom from temptation and pressure regarding the subjects to preach) and balance (i.e., balance between different parts of the Bible, and balance within a book itself) in one’s preaching.

Sound exposition requires that the expositor not twist Scripture. An expository preacher must have the integrity to discern what the biblical authors meant, and say it. An expository preacher must “sit humbly under the authority of the Scriptures, instead of standing in judgment on them” (Stott 1982: 127-30). In fact, if you do not preach in an expository fashion you are misrepresenting God because, “you are saying in the name of God what God never said: you are making promises He never made; giving advice He never gave; and declaring warnings He never declared. In short, you are instructing [your audience] in a false view of God. In doing so, you become a false teacher and put yourself under the judgment of God.” (Harris 2004: 26)

The Word gives preachers their ultimate authority. “The authority of the Word enables us to say the most challenging things to any person without apology, but that same authority lets us speak tenderly without compromising strength” (Chapell 1994: 89). Similarly, exposition gives us confidence to preach because we are not merely stating our own views or those of some fallible fellow human being. Instead, “we are expounding God’s Word with integrity and honesty”; therefore, “we can be very bold” (Stott 1982: 132). In fact, a study of 263 lay people in 28 congregations (9 African-American; 16 of non-Hispanic, European origin; and 3 ethnically mixed) from 13 denominations in the American Midwest for Christian Theological Seminary [the CTS study] showed that, “by far the single most mentioned trait contributing to the authority of the sermon is the preacher’s use of the Bible,” particularly when the preacher has evidently studied and is not just stating his own opinions (Allen 2006: 65, 67-68). That finding was confirmed by another survey of 102 preachers and 479 listeners from throughout the United States, drawn from all age groups, denominations, locations, and ethnic groups [the GASS study], which found, “One of the most commonly identified characteristics of a good sermon, according to surveyed listeners, was that it be ‘Scripture based’; a primary characteristic of a bad sermon was an unclear relationship between the Scripture passage and the key point(s) of the sermon” (Carrell 2000: 27).

Expository preaching presents and applies the power of the Word, and the authority of the Word, which is the work of the Holy Spirit (Isa 55:10-11; Jer. 23:29; Acts 18:28; Eph. 4:17; 1 Thess. 2:13; Heb. 4:12; Jas 1:18; 1 Pet 1:23). The pastor can confidently expect to see spiritual transformation occur in his congregation as a result of his preaching, because “when we proclaim the Word we bring the work of the Holy Spirit to bear on others’ lives. No truth grants greater encouragement in our preaching and gives us more cause to expect results from our efforts.” (Chapell 1994: 24)

Topical Preaching

A topical sermon is a sermon on some topic chosen by the preacher or others. Often topical sermons are not expository. Preachers choose the topics and then develop them according to their own ideas, not according to what God says in the Bible. A few “proof texts” from the Bible may

be thrown in, but in such sermons the themes or main points are “organized according to the subject’s nature rather than according to the text’s distinctions,” and “the development of [the sermon’s] main ideas comes from sources outside the immediate text” (Chapell 1994:127-28).

Topical sermons themselves may be expository. In “topical expository” preaching “the sermon begins with a theme, doctrine, person, sin, felt need, etc., and then goes to Scripture to determine what God says about this specific topic” (Harris 2004: 30). For example, in preaching on abortion you will have to look at verses from different passages in the Bible since there is no passage that explicitly deals with that subject. One who preaches a “topical expository” sermon should still be committed to expounding what the Bible says or implies about an issue; the Bible should still be one’s primary reference and authority, and the preacher will “be committed to never using a verse outside its originally intended meaning” (Ibid.). A topical expository sermon may also use one passage of Scripture as a primary “anchor” for the message, but then use other passages to elaborate a more comprehensive view of what the Bible says about a particular subject. The difference between “topical exposition” and “textual exposition” is that in textual exposition the preacher “begins with the text and lets it determine the ‘big idea’ of the message. Attention to careful exegesis and proper hermeneutics will determine the direction of the message” (Ibid., emphasis added).

Topical Sermons certainly have their Place:

- a) They help to provide breaks between (or even within) a series of sermons on one book or theme, so that the people can hear other things.
- b) They deal with particular issues that arise in the lives of the congregation or in the culture which need to be addressed at a particular time.
- c) They may deal with issues that arise based on the calendar (e.g., Christmas, Easter, an important national holiday) which should be dealt with.
- d) Topical sermons may themselves result in a series of sermons based on a common biblical theme (e.g., “stewardship” or “the attributes of God”). In such a case, the preacher might elect to expound particular passages of Scripture, each of which are relevant to the theme of the series even though they are all from different books of the Bible. Indeed, the preacher may elect to do a series bases on a particular theme within a book (e.g., the “glory of God” from Isaiah)—in that case, the book still sets the agenda, but not every passage in the book will be expounded.

Preaching through Biblical Books

Many traditions draw their sermons from passages found in a lectionary. The lectionary is a three-year cycle of passages, consisting of passages drawn from the OT, Psalms, Gospels, and Epistles, for each week of the year. The lectionary has the advantage of having the passages pre-selected, so that the pastor knows in advance what passage he will be preaching on. Further, the passages are relatively comprehensive so that, over the course of twelve years, much of the Bible can be expounded. In putting together the lectionary, an effort was also made to tie the weekly passages to the church calendar. Even though it is possible to preach expository sermons from

passages chosen by a lectionary, week-by-week the passages are, to a large extent, disconnected from each other.

Expounding Disconnected Passages from Week to Week Neglects the Context of the Passages

The great disadvantage of expounding disconnected verses or passages each week, even when the passages have been selected from the lectionary, is that doing so neglects the context within which the verse or passage arises. That prevents the congregation from seeing the connections between the passage being expounded and the passages immediately before and after, which would be expounded if the preacher were preaching through an entire book. Consequently, the congregation will not be able to grasp the overall theme of the book in which the verse or passage is found.

One Expository Approach is to Preach through Books of the Bible

Expository preaching typically will be a series of sermons on a particular book of the Bible. That is because the vast majority of biblical books are too long to be adequately expounded in only one sermon. The books need not be taken in order from Genesis to Revelation. Long books ordinarily should be alternated with short ones, or books by one author with books by another author, or NT books interspersed with OT books, or a book series may be interrupted or alternated with topical messages to provide variety. Even if you do not preach a series of sermons through an entire book, you might consider preaching series' of sermons through important parts of books (e.g., a series on the life of Joseph [Genesis 37, 39-50] or a series on the Sermon on the Mount [Matthew 5-7]). Such series provide benefits similar to preaching through entire books (see below).

There are a Number of Reasons for, and Benefits of, Preaching through Books

In giving us the Bible, God did not choose to give us his Word in the form of disconnected verses, but in the form of books. In those books the verses all work together to form coherent arguments and lines of thought. Consequently, “the whole [the book] is greater than the sum of its parts [the verses and passages].” In preaching through books of the Bible, the preacher properly places high emphasis on the Word of God, honors the nature of Scripture itself, and helps us to think in terms of the larger units of Scripture than simply the individual verses.

Preaching expository sermons through books of the Bible creates a broad—and deep—knowledge of the Word of God for both the preacher and the congregation. As the preacher preaches through a book, sermons expounding passages both before and after the passage in question may refer back to the passage in question, thus reinforcing the recollection by, and understanding of, the congregation of the passage in question.

Expository preaching follows the example and pattern used in the Old Testament, and by Christ and the Apostles in the New Testament. Ezra expounded the Scriptures in the Old Testament (Neh. 8:5-8). Jesus explained what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself (Luke 24:27, 32). Both Jesus, Paul, and Apollos read, explained, and then made clear the implications or exhorted from the Scriptures (see, Luke 4:14-27; Acts 17:1-4; 18:4-5, 24-28; 1 Tim 4:13; 2 Tim 4:2).

The congregation is more likely to understand today's text in the context of other recent sermons. Thus, the preacher will not have to spend as much time in introducing the context of each sermon.

People's understanding will easily grow. Since it tends to take more than one message for people to really "get the point," the natural use of repetition that comes with preaching through a book helps to solidify the themes that the book is aiming at. One message will reinforce others.

The preacher's preparation is simplified. By committing to preaching through biblical books, the pastor will not have the anxiety of wondering (or have to waste time trying to figure out) what to preach each week.

The people will see how to interpret the Bible for themselves. In addition to learning the substance of the Word of God, the congregation will learn week-by-week how to interpret Scripture, in its context, for themselves.

Expository preaching lends itself readily to congregational involvement in the sermons. Questions can be handed out a week in advance to help get the congregation into the text and thinking about it; small group studies can be arranged for members of the congregation to discuss and study the book on their own, with the sermon providing a good resource.

Difficult subjects can be dealt with in a natural way. By preaching through entire books, the pastor is both forced and enabled to study and preach "the whole counsel of God." People will see that the pastor is dealing with sensitive topics because he naturally has come to that topic in the book he is expounding. Consequently, the people will not wonder "why is the pastor dealing with this?" or "who is the pastor aiming his message at?"

Preaching through books of the Bible helps to insure that the basic needs of the congregation will be met. "All Scripture is redemptive revelation inspired to address humanity's fallen condition (or incompleteness)" (Chapell 1994: 270-71). Preaching through books means that the Bible will be opened up to the congregation in a comprehensive way. As the Westminster Confession of Faith, Ch. 1, art. 6, puts it: "The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for His own glory, man's salvation, faith and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit, or traditions of men."

Questions

1. How do the Scriptures indicate that the Holy Spirit is active during this present time?

2. How is God speaking to us today?
3. What is expository preaching?
4. What are the benefits of expository preaching?
5. What is topic preaching?
6. What are the benefits of preaching through the Bible?
7. What are the characteristics of topical preaching?
8. What are the two opposite errors made by preachers?
9. What does expository preaching mean?
10. What does to “sit under the authority of the Scripture” mean?

Preaching

Preachers' Conference August 15, 2003

Wouter Rijnveld

Preaching is a painful thing. Passion means suffering (Jer. 20: 9). "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."

Passion is the life of a sermon. Preaching is meeting Almighty God and never allow sleeping! Either stop or wake them up. Preach with Spiritual Power. Presence of Spirit is more important than all other.

Our own spirit must be broken.

- a) Pride is stumbling block
- b) Well prepared sometimes mess

Affliction/suffering is a main course in Jesus' seminary.

- a) Trials? God must be preparing you for something great

It brings:

- a) Humility
- b) Boldness – no more fear for men

Our self must be on the cross with Christ.

- a) Confession of sin. Sins block working of the Spirit

Example: An unsolved quarrel with your wife may block your preaching
Keep short accounts of sins with God

- a) Communion with God

Preach to yourself – not like the carpenter with the leaking roof
Pray from beginning to end.

- a) Commissioning of the Spirit

"I have a message from God for you." (Jdg. 3:20). Pharisees had knowledge, had studied, were balanced etc. but Jesus preached with authority. (Mk. 1:22). Whenever the church calls you to preach, God commissions you.

- a) Power of Spirit is uncontrollable. You cannot command. Unpredictable. But highly needed.

Preach with urgency

- a) Have strong conviction about what you are saying

Jeremiah could not hold the fire of the Word of God within Him. It must be preached!

The apostles said: "For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:20)
Preaching is acting as a herald, proclaiming a message from the King. Can you die for what you preach?

Do you really have a message or are you just repeating others?

- a) Feel the urgency of the message.

If the house is on fire, you'll shout to those inside. But with sinners, it is worse than that. Preach as one who is dying to others who are dying. Always keep judgment day in view. This may be the last time for people to hear the way of salvation. Do not stay at home: it may be somebody's last offer of salvation before his death. Remember Ezk 33: 8. Don't feel that you are too strong or too emotional. They called Jesus a madman (Jn 10:20) and also Paul (Acts 26:24).

- a) Preach with freshness
- b) Preach with your whole being.
- c) With your heart and emotions

Jesus shed tears for his hearers. Paul did the same. Do we? Your body will follow your heart. With your body. Don't hide behind a big pulpit. You have nothing to hide. Show you are alive.

- a) Use your arms as is natural for you.
- b) With your eyes
- c) Your eyes can show many emotions
- d) Keep contact with your listeners. Do not continue when they have stopped.
- e) With your voice
- f) Monotony causes people to sleep.
- g) Preach with imagination

Make people see, hear, touch, smell and taste what's happening. "Turn people's ears into eyes" Never preach to show off your academic knowledge. Use fresh illustrations. Examples from daily life as Jesus did: "the hairs on our head", "the birds in the air", and so on. Paul says in 1 Cor. 1:21 "God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe".

The status of preaching in many African churches is poor. Up to upper level we hear complaints about unfaithfulness and poor preaching. Let us pray with Isaiah: "Oh, that you would rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains would tremble before you! As when fire sets twigs ablaze and causes water to boil, come down to make your name known."

Questions

- 1) What does passion mean?
- 2) Why sleeping is never allowed during preaching?
- 3) What is the stumbling block of preaching?
- 4) What is the main course in Jesus ministry?
- 5) What blocks the working of the Holy Spirit?
- 6) Can the Holy Spirit be controlled?
- 7) Why do preachers need to preach as if it is the Judgment Day?
- 8) What should a preacher do during preaching to show he is alive?

- 9) How does God commission you?
- 10) What is most important in preaching?

Practical Homiletics for Lay Preachers

Wouter Rijnveld

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Session 1

“Preaching has but one aim, that Christ may come to those who are assembled to listen. It is not just talk about a Christ of the past, but it is a mouth through which the Christ of the present offers us life today” (John R.W. Stott).

Introduction

In this course we are focusing on the process of preparing a sermon. However, there is no single way to prepare sermons. Every preacher has to work out his own method. Nevertheless, there seem to be six steps that, in one way or another, most of the preachers find it necessary to take. In this course we will be dealing with those steps.

The purpose of this course is that participants:

- a) Will know a proved method for preparing a sermon.
- b) Will be able to put this method into practice.

Introduction

Before we can preach we have to find a text first. As we shall see in the following session, there are a number of ways to find one.

But it will be very hard to preach, if we are not familiar with the Bible's main messages, even when we have already found a text.

To discover those main messages we need regular Bible study, whereby we shall go through the NT and the OT as well.

Regular Study of the Bible

"If I had only ten more years to live, I would spend nine to study and pray and one to preach"
James Durham (Puritan).

Two Descriptions

In this session we are dealing with our regular Bible study in relation to the preparation of our sermon. Before we can continue we need to give a description of both.

Regular Bible Study

Reading, thinking and praying about a chapter, or part of it, if possible with the help of a commentary, making notes of what we would like to remember, for about half an hour, at least four times a week.

Preparing a Sermon

Reading, thinking, digging as deep as possible and praying about (often) a part of a chapter, with the help of study books as commentaries, for a multiple of the time we spend to regular Bible study. Because it does not take that much time, Bible study enables us in quit a short period to go through large parts of the Bible. This will help us to get a clear picture of the main messages the Bible, which we ought to know if we want to prepare a sermon.

Text as Part of a Bigger Entirety

The Reformers (Calvin, Luther) spoke much of comparing Scripture with Scripture. Just as the one body is made up of many limbs, so the Bible is made up of many passages. And as the limbs need one another, so it is with the passages.

The passages need one another in order to explain their message to their readers. The idea is that one passage throws light upon the other. So, if we are studying a text from the Bible and the meaning is not quite clear to us, it will be very helpful to consider other passages.

Two examples:

- a) In 1 Tim. 1:15 we read that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners". We are able to preach about this text because we know from other passages who Christ Jesus is, who send Him into our world and for what reason, what it cost Jesus in order to be able to save sinners etc.

- b) In the Gospels Jesus is explaining about Himself with the help of OT passages. After his resurrection, on the road to Emmaus, He walks along with two of his followers. They are very confused because of all what has happened in Jerusalem the last few days. They do not know what to believe about Jesus.

Then we read in Luke 24:27, "And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, He explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning Himself." These OT passages Jesus is referring to, throw light upon Jesus and the way He was to go.

Three Characteristics of our Bible Study

Our Bible study must be broad.

Just because we want to find the main messages, we have to go through the whole Bible, even the passages we do not like to read. We have to study, for example, Romans and Ecclesiastes, Luke and Habakkuk.

To help us not being selective, we could use a Bible reading calendar. Especially those with a short commentary on the passage may be useful.

It must be open minded.

That is, we must genuinely desire through our Bible reading to hear the Word of God, without distorting its meaning or avoiding its challenge.

For this reason it is important to be aware of the fact that we never approach the Bible "empty", but that we always are full of thoughts, ideas, concepts, opinions, prejudices. And this directs what we prefer to read and how we interpret it.

Moreover we hope that our Bible reading will comfort us; we have no wish to be disturbed. Therefore, we tend to come to it with our minds made up, anxious to hear only what will confirm our thoughts. In fact, we do not like to risk hearing what we do not want to hear.

Samuel's prayer was, "Speak, Lord, your servant is listening". We really have to pray that the Holy Spirit will open us, so that indeed we listen to God and not to ourselves. Let Scripture say what it wants to say, and let it not say what we think it should say. It must be expectant. If we read the Bible daily, then after some time we feel we know it fairly well. The temptation is to become without further interest and to come to our reading with no very lively expectation that God is going to speak to us through it.

Therefore we need to pray for the refreshment of the Holy Spirit so that, if our appetite is blunt He will sharpen it, and if our heart is cold He will again light the fires of expectancy within us.

Storing your Notes

Any time when you read the bible and you see something that could be useful for a sermon, try to write it somewhere at that very time. Later you will forget it. Sometimes you may read a text and you see immediately a very good application, or you see three headings: write it down.

In order not to lose these notes, it is best to have a special notebook for this with separate pages for each book of the bible. Another option, maybe even better is to have a box with separate pieces of paper, one for every book of the bible, put in order. Any time you read something else or when you hear a good sermon, you may write it down as well. After some time, you will have a supply of notes (with hardly any costs) that you can always use for preparation of sermons.

Session 2

Step 2 – Choosing your Text

Introduction

Many a preacher finds it difficult to choose a convenient text every time again. The reason is not that the choice is so limited. It is just the other way around. There is an abundance of texts. But some factors may help us to make our choice. We will deal with them in this session.

However, first we want to think about preaching itself. What is preaching? What are we doing when exposing our text. Before we can continue we need a concept of preaching.

God Wants Preaching

Behind all preaching is God Himself. He wants to communicate with people. And he wants it to be done through the exposition of his Word. According to 1 John 1:5, "God is light and in Him is no darkness at all". The meaning of this text is that God wants to make Himself known. He wants to shine his light into the darkness of people. And many believers can witness that He did it through the preaching of the Word. Romans 10:14-15 makes clear that preaching is essential step in the process of helping people to get to know the Lord.

The Nature of Preaching

What exactly is preaching? Preaching is "to proclaim as a herald". The word is the translation of a Greek verb that reminds us to a herald. In previous days a herald was sent, on behalf of (often) a Head of State, to proclaim the message that he had received from that Head of State. For that purpose he went in the market square or some other public place, without fear or favor, where he lifted up his voice and proclaimed his message.

In Luke 2 we read of the Emperor Augustus who had ordered a census to be taken throughout the Roman Empire. Probably Joseph knew about it through a herald who had come to his town Nazareth. Although brought by a herald, Joseph could not ignore the order, because it was the Emperor's.

What Preaching is not:

- 1) Lecturing. This is the word used to describe what a teacher in a university or college says to his students. He wants to pass on knowledge on a certain subject to them. It is to the students whether they accept or reject the lecture.
- 2) Addressing. This is the word used to describe what one says when he is speaking publicly to a group of people. If the people want to discuss the address afterwards, they are free to do so. An address is not beyond discussion.
- 3) Discussing. This is the word used to describe what people do when debating a certain topic. So, a Bible study group can discuss the question whether a Christian is allowed to smoke.

It is different with preaching. The preacher does not invite the congregation to discuss the sermon, but as a herald he proclaims the message from God to them. And the congregation is supposed to listen to that message and to obey it. (Just as Joseph obeyed the Emperor Augustus).

God Speaks through Preachers

In Mark 1:38 Jesus describes preaching as his task on earth. He has come from the Father to men in order to proclaim the message concerning the Kingdom of God. This is his mission. After his exaltation Christ does not stop preaching, but He continues through his disciples. He is present in the word of his messengers. Therefore, true proclamation is not just speaking about Christ. It is Christ's own speaking. He Himself is the preacher in the word of man. It is He who is heard in preaching. As it is said in Luke 10:16: "Whoever listens to you, listens to me."

Just because a preacher is a herald, he is not going to preach his own message, but what God has told him. He is not going to proclaim his own discoveries or insights, nor is he going to report his own experiences, but he is going to preach Jesus Christ.

Choosing your Text

In this course we are talking about "the text". The text could be a verse, or a sentence, or even a single word. But it also could be a paragraph, or a chapter.

How shall we choose our text for a particular sermon? Very often the choice will be determined by six main factors.

1) Time of the Year

At certain times of the year we naturally speak on certain themes. At Christmas time we base our sermons on the birth of Christ. And would not choose to preach on Christ's death at this time of the year. Taking these certain times of the year as fixed points, often each has a natural preparation leading up to it and a natural sequel following it.

2) Public Life

By this is meant some event in the life of our nation, e.g. an election; some issue of public debate, e.g. unemployment; a natural disaster, e.g. flood, etc. Be aware that people coming to church, they cannot shut out of their minds such matters as these which are being given wide radio and newspaper coverage. On the contrary, they bring these anxieties with them to worship, and are asking "is there any word from the Lord?" and "how should Christian people react to such things?". Preacher's need to be sensitive to the big public questions in people's mind.

3) Special Occasions

When we have special services in our church, we will have to choose our text to suit the occasion. For example, if it is a special youth service then we need to choose a text which will be relevant to the young people who are attending.

4) Pastoral Reasons

This is some discovered need in the congregation's spiritual life. Maybe some from a different denomination have suggested that what we believe is wrong, for example, in the practice of baptism.

It is often and rightly said that the best preachers are always good pastors, for they know the needs and problems, fears and hopes of their people. A conscientious pastor can never preach "regardless of his hearers' requirements."

5) Teaching Purposes

It may be necessary for a preacher to take up parts of the Bible which are not well understood and explain those parts to the congregation. There are many doctrines in the Bible and these need to be taught to Christians.

6) Personal Factor

Without doubt the best sermons we ever preach to others are those we have first preached to ourselves. For example, a preacher is having his quiet time. Then he is attracted to a particular verse. He may see new meaning in it which he has never seen before. He might be blessed and feel that God would have him pass on this blessing to the congregation.

When Choosing the Text

Certainly Sunday's text should, at the latest, be chosen by the preceding Monday, so that there is enough time to meditate on it. The longer this period, the better. As somebody said, "I sit a long while silent on my eggs".

Session 3

Step 3 – Meditation: Message of the Text

Introduction

After we have chosen the text about which we are going to preach, the time for more concentrated preparation has come. This time is the heart of the whole process. During the first two steps preparatory work has been done, while during the following steps we only elaborate what we have found as a result of our meditation in this third step.

In this step 3 we first will look for the message of the text. Next we will look for the application to our congregation. We prefer the word "meditation" rather than "studying". The reason for this is that Christian meditation is a combination of study and prayer. In this it differs from all other kinds of meditation. Throughout the process of preparing we shall be praying to God for illumination by his Spirit.

The Message of the Book

Paul's Letter to the Galatians

Certain Jewish Christians believed, among other things, that a number of the ceremonial practices of the OT were still binding on the NT church, especially circumcision. They argued that Paul had removed these practices out of a desire to make the message more appealing to the Gentiles. Paul responded by clearly saying that the introduction of additional requirements for justification by his opponents had perverted the gospel of grace and, unless prevented, would bring the believers into the bondage of legalism. It is by grace through faith alone that man is justified.

What is clear from this example?

The books of the Bible do have:

- 1) a writer, (sometimes more than one), e.g., Paul,
- 2) an addressee, e.g., the Churches in Galatia, and
- 3) a message, e.g., justification by grace through faith alone.

Through his writing, the Bible writer communicates a message to his addressee. Whatever message it may be, it is always the message they need. In other words, the message is relevant. This message is best understood when we know the situation of the writer and that of the people to whom he writes. Just like a house consists of a number of parts, e.g., walls, windows, roof, foundation, the overall message of a book of the Bible is made up of a number of messages: the messages of the texts.

The purpose of our meditation on the text is to find the message that the writer is communicating to the people. In order to do this we have to answer the question what the writer wanted to make clear to his addressee.

Six Key Questions

Many preachers have made a fruitful use of some questions when meditating on a text in order to find its message. The questions are just like a key that we use to open a house and then we can enter it and see how it is inside.

The six questions can be divided into three groups.

Persons

- 1) WHO are the people mentioned in the text? What things have been said about them? Is there relevant information about them to get from other passages.

Content

- 2) WHAT happens in the text?
- 3) WHY does it happen?
- 4) HOW does it happen?

Circumstances

- 5) WHERE does it happen?
- 6) WHEN does it happen?

Some Remarks for the Use of the Questions:

- 1) It takes time before we can handle these questions in a satisfying way. So let us not be discouraged when it does not work well the first time.
- 2) It often is not possible to answer all the questions without the help of, e.g., a Handbook. If we do not have an answer, we leave that question and continue with the next one.
- 3) Usually the 'What', 'Why' and 'How' questions will result in a long list of answers. Not always all those answers are relevant. If we do a lot of practice with the questions, gradually we will learn to distinguish between relevant and less relevant answers.
- 4) After we have finished a question, we will consider whether already conclusions can be drawn.
- 5) Always when working with the questions, we have paper with us to write the answers. Let us store our notes so that they are available every time we need them.

Looking for the Main Message

As we are meditating by prayer and study, and make notes of course, we are looking for the message. Better to say, for the main message. This is because every text has a main message. Although there may be several different lessons to learn from the text, every text has an overriding thrust.

For example, it would be possible to preach several truths from Rom. 5:8. We could preach on the sin of man or the death of Christ. Yet the text's dominant thought is that Christ's for sinners like us is "God's own proof of his love towards us".

The Use of Study Books

As we are studying the text to find its message, we may need a lexicon, concordance or commentary for help. The study books can save us from misinterpreting the passage, illumine it and stimulate our thinking about it. But they can never be more than aids. They cannot replace our own direct and personal encounter with the text as we search it for its message.

An Example of the Use of the 6 Questions

Luke 8:22-25 (NIV).

22. One day Jesus said to his disciples, "Let's go over to the other side of the lake." So they got into a boat and set out.

23. As they sailed, he fell asleep. A squall came down on the lake, so that the boat was being swamped, and they were in great danger.

24. The disciples went and woke him, saying, "Master, Master, we're going to drown!"

He got up and rebuked the wind and the raging waters; the storm subsided, and all was calm.

25. "Where is your faith?" he asked his disciples. In fear and amazement they asked one another, "Who is this? He commands even the winds and the water, and they obey him.

- 1) WHO Jesus, 22,23, another name: Master 24, 25; Disciples, 22,24,25; Jesus and the disciples, 22,23,24

In this passage there are two groups of people, Jesus and the disciples. But they both also can be considered as one group: they all are subject to the storm.

- 2) WHAT Jesus tells his disciples to go with him to the other side of the lake. And they do. When crossing the lake, suddenly a heavy storm rises. The boat is being swamped and Jesus and the disciples are in great danger.

But Jesus is sleeping. Not so the disciples. They are very anxious (note the repeated "Master"), and they wake him. Jesus wakes up and rebukes the wind and the raging waters. As a result of it, it becomes all calm. Jesus then asks the disciples where their faith was and the disciples are fully amazed. Note the question "Who is this?" The disciples are still in the process of finding out who Jesus is. Through this experience they have discovered a new aspect of him: even the winds and the water obey him.

- 3) WHY - Why did they go to the other side?
 - a) Why did Jesus fall asleep?
 - b) Why did the disciples wake up Jesus?
 - c) Why did Jesus rebuke the wind?
 - d) Why did Jesus ask for the faith of the disciples?
 - e) Why were the disciples amazed?

When we use the why, how and what questions, often there are many questions to ask. We do not need to answer all the questions, but only those who are relevant. It is difficult to say which questions are relevant. But while we are studying, we will discover that some questions are more relevant than others.

I chose three questions. To me they seem to be relevant.

- Why did the disciples wake up Jesus?

- 1) The disciples woke Jesus because they were so desperate. They are fighting against the dead, and they feel that they are losing.
- 2) They call upon Jesus, but it does not seem that they expect any help from him. They are amazed that his authority even goes beyond the wind and waters.

- Why did Jesus ask for their faith?

- 1) Jesus asked for their faith because It is a difficult question to answer, but this is clear that the cry of the disciples has to do with their faith. Where is your faith, implies that at that particular moment their faith was very weak, if not gone at all.

- Why were the disciples amazed?

- 2) The disciples were amazed because they are still in the process to find out who Jesus is. Will a believer ever fully know who Jesus is? Note that the disciples learn about Jesus through going with him. "Let us go over to the other side of the lake", said Jesus. And the disciples went with him.

1. HOW Jesus rebuked the wind and the raging waters. It is through the power of his word
2. WHERE The lake, probably of Galilee, see vs. 26
3. WHEN One day. It does not seem that this passage is related to a particular event. It seems to be quit on its own.

Message

What is the message of this passage? What does Luke want to express here? What does he want to make clear to the readers of his writing?

1. A disciple goes along with Jesus, vs. 22
2. Going along with Jesus can bring us into a difficult situation, vs. 23
3. A disciple is a learner. He is always on the way to learn more about Jesus, vs. 25
4. A believer can trust Jesus in all circumstances, because he is in control, vs. 24 and 25.
5. There is a relation between how a believer reacts at a certain situation and his belief, vs. 25.

Session 4

Step 3 – Meditation: an Exercise

Introduction

In the last session we have dealt with the six key questions. Those questions are important for finding the message of the text. But handling these questions is not always that easy, it requires some exercise. Therefore, this whole session will be spend to that.

An Assignment

Session 5

Step 3 – Meditation: A Message for Today

Introduction

In the last two sessions we focused on the Bible text only. We were trying to find its message. What is it that the writer is communicating to the people. We found that whatever it was, it was relevant.

In this session we will see that we should not merely consider our text but also our congregation. In other words, preaching is both meditating on the text and meditating on the congregation.

A Relevant Message

The content of Paul's preaching can be summarized in "Christ, crucified and risen". But depending his audience the elaboration of this content is different.

- 1) In Thessalonica Paul is discussing with Jewish people. And "he reasoned with them from the Scriptures (=OT), explaining and proving that the Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead. "This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Christ", he said." See Acts 17:1 4. Paul could reason from the Scriptures and he could talk about the Christ, because these Jewish people were familiar with that. It is completely different with the Greeks.
- 2) In Athens Paul speaks at the Areopagus. He tells the Greeks that "the God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by hands". And this God "has set a day apart when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising Him from the dead." See Acts 17:16 34. The Greeks would not have understood the discussion about Jesus who is the Christ. That is a typical Jewish issue. But they could easily follow what Paul told them at the Areopagus. They were familiar with it.

Paul preached relevant sermons. His messages entered people's life. Although they often did not agree with him, they understood him. They knew very well what he was talking about, because he touched issues that were theirs.

A Message for Today

"Relevant" is the key word in this session. It does not mean that we should adapt the Biblical message. Then we are removing parts from the Bible in order to make it suitable for the congregation. That is "changing the gospel of Christ", and "if anyone preaches to you a gospel that is different from the one you accepted, may he be condemned to hell", Gal. 1:6-10. But if preaching is to be relevant, the message of the text must enter people's life, so that it will touch and move them.

In our sermons we have to deal with real issues; we have to enter the world in which people live and love, work and play, laugh and weep, struggle and suffer, grow old and die. We have to provoke them to think about their life in all its moods and challenge them to make Jesus Christ Lord of every area of it.

A preacher is a man of the Word. But he also is a man of the world. In that sense that he does not only know Scripture, but he knows life as well. Maybe the best way of discovering the needs of people is being with them, at the market, on the street and everywhere where people meet and discuss daily matters, and listening to them. This will help us to transfer the message of the text into our people's life. And so it will become a message for today. *Someone asked a well-known pastor, "What do you do to prepare your Sunday sermon?". The man answered, "First I study my bible, second, I listen to my people"*

The Final Question

When meditating on the text we are trying to answer the question, "What is the message of the text?"

After we have thought about our congregation, we now come to the final question,

What is the meaning of this message for them?

What does it mean for John, who buried his wife last week, and for Mbam, who lost his job, and for Felicia, who gave birth to her first child? And what is the message for all those parents who cannot afford the school fees for their children?. And how can this text be relevant for our young people?

Session 6

Step 4 –The Sermon Outline

Introduction

Every sermon has a content and a form. Comparing a sermon to a human body then the form might be thought of as the skeleton while the content would be the flesh on the bones of the skeleton. Both together make a sermon. The outline is the skeleton of the sermon. It is the structure around which the content material is arranged. The outline then consists of the main points of the sermon.

The Purpose of the Outline

So far in the process of sermon preparation we first have looked for the main message of the text, thereafter we have thought about the meaning of that message for our congregation.

Moreover we have gathered from our text a lot of miscellaneous ideas, which we have written on a sheet of paper. At this stage our main concern is how to communicate the message to our congregation, so that they will grasp it.

In order to do so we have to put the material in such a shape as will best serve the message for the people. To do this it will be very helpful to have some main points around which the material can be arranged. It may be clear that each main point must be related to the message for the congregation.

The congregation should be able to see the connection between one main point and the next main point. Each one should be like a sign which points the listener further along the road to seeing the message of the sermon.

How to Prepare an Outline

There is the danger of artificiality when structuring our sermon. Some preachers impose an outline on their text which neither fits nor illumines it, but rather hides the message.

Golden rule: *"Let every text supply its own structure"*

Meditating on the text is as touching it with a silver hammer, so that it will break up into natural and memorable divisions.

Moreover, there also should not be too many main points. Then they cease to be main points and the sermon will become confusing for the listeners.

Many preachers have two, three or four main points, although there can be no strict rule about this.

The text should be divided into natural points. Often this is easy, but sometimes one of the following divisions can be helpful:

- 1) Law □ gospel

Examples: Col. 2:14; Rom. 6:23

- 2) Father □ Son □ Holy Spirit

Example: Eph. 1:4

- 3) Misery □ Redemption □ Gratefulness or: Sin □ Salvation □ Service

Examples: Rom. 7:14; Ps. 50:15

- 4) God's people □ Worldly people

Examples: 1 Sam. 25:29; Ps. 73: 27,28

- 5) Our weakness □ God's strength

Example: Ps. 40: 2; 1Kings 19: 3,4,7,8

- 6) Why □ What □ When, or any other questions

Example: Zech. 8: 23

However, let the division be as natural as possible

Session 7

Step 4 –The Sermon Outline: Additions

In Addition to the Outline Words

After we have found the outline we are ready to arrange the relevant material that we have already collected. We need to remember that in order to communicate clearly, we have to clothe our thoughts in words. It is impossible to convey a precise message without choosing precise words. Therefore it is really worth taking trouble over our words.

Our words need to be:

- 1) Simple and clear

Let us choose the familiar and the precise words and let us use short sentences.

2) Lively

Instead of telling people a thing was "terrible", describe it so that they will be terrified

3) Honest

We have to beware of exaggerations and be sparing in our use of superlatives. Do not use words too big for the subject. According to a proverb, *"he is the eloquent man, who turns his hearers' ears into eyes, and makes them to see what he speaks off."*

In Addition to the Outline Illustrations

When we look at the New Testament we see that Jesus when preaching used events from everyday life to illustrate his message to those listening. So when Jesus told the people that He was the "Good Shepherd" it had meaning for them, because they knew shepherds and sheep from daily life. Through this illustration they realized that Jesus had come to care for and look after people just as the shepherd looks after his sheep. *An illustration is a saying, a poem, a story, in fact anything which helps to bring out the meaning of the sermon which is being preached. It helps to make the message clear.*

Sermon illustrations have sometimes been likened to the windows of a house. They are there to let in light. Sayings, poems, stories, etc. have that effect; and therefore, we use them to "brighten our subject with light".

Moreover, stories attract the attention of the people and through them they will remember the message of the sermon better. So, make sure you find some little stories for every sermon.

Types of Illustrations

1) Story

The most common type of illustration is a story. It may be a true story or an imaginary one.

2) Sayings

There are many sayings in our culture which can be used to bring out the meaning of a point the preacher is trying to make. In this way the preacher can also relate the teaching of the Bible to our culture.

3) Hymns and songs

Using well known lines of a song can be a very powerful way of bringing out the meaning of the sermon. There are many psalms and songs that illustrate the theme of a sermon very nice.

Session 8

Step 5 – Introduction and Conclusion

Introduction

It seems essential to prepare the body of the sermon first. If we were to begin with a predetermined introduction or conclusion, we would be almost bound to twist the text to fit. So instead, we start with the body. Only then shall we "top and tail" the body, that is, supply it with an introduction and a conclusion.

In this session we will be dealing with both.

The Purpose of the Introduction

An introduction is more than important. If we fail to grasp the attention of the listeners with our first sentences then it will be hard to do so at a later stage in the sermon. Often the first sentences make people to decide to sleep.

A good introduction,

- 1) Arouses interest, stimulates curiosity, and whets the appetite for more.
- 2) Genuinely "introduces" the message by leading the hearers into it. The introduction has to be well linked to the content.

When people come to Church they often are occupied with many things. For example, one of their relatives may be ill.

There are many ways in which people's mind wander from what the person in the pulpit is doing. Through the introduction we want them to help to pay attention to the sermon.

People are more likely to listen to a sermon of which they are convinced that it will be helpful to them. Therefore through the introduction the congregation should get the idea that listening to this sermon will benefit them.

The Content of the Introduction

There are many different types of introduction which can be used. All are equally good as long as they fulfill the purpose stated in the section above. Some types are,

- 1) Question

"The story of Daniel in the Lion's den is one which is well known. Why did the author include this story in the book of Daniel? What is he trying to teach us from this story?"

By making people curious to know why this story is included we will encourage them to listen. Through asking questions we provoke people to think, and so we can involve them in the event of preaching.

2) Link the subject to everyday life

"Addiction to alcohol is increasingly becoming a problem. What should be the Christian attitude to the use of alcohol?"

In this introduction we have taken up something which is related to the problems of everyday life. We are trying to give the Christian answer to this problem. The introduction gives the congregation the impression that we are going to say something that could help to solve it. This will encourage them to listen.

3) Tell a story

"A man owned a large farm. He was married and had a family of three boys and a girl. The children were doing well at school and he was making much money from his farm. Unfortunately he started to drink alcohol. At the same time he got problems in his marriage and instead of trying to solve them he tried to forget about them by drinking more alcohol. Eventually he could not do without drink every day. He neglected his work with the result that he had to sell his farm. Moreover his wife divorced him and the family was broken up."

A story from life is often a very good way of catching the congregation's attention. It makes people thinking.

4) Contradict the text.

"We are told in the Bible to pray at all times. But it is impossible to pray all time, 24 hours a day. We have to sleep, we have to work and many other things. There must be a mistake."

By beginning with a contradiction of the text like this, we immediately arouse the attention of the congregation. Some will be concerned that we should be questioning the Bible and so listen to hear what else we will say. Some will be struck by the truth of the preacher's conclusion that you cannot pray all the time, and be curious to know what the text is really saying.

Characteristics of an Introduction

An introduction should be,

1) Brief

So that it not takes away from the impact of the main part of the sermon. The shorter an introduction is, while remaining effective, the better it is.

2) Simple

so that it catches the attention of all the congregation. "It is impossible to love our enemies" is easily to understand both by adults and children.

3) Carefully worded

Not: "We must give more money to the work of the Church"

But: "They say the church is always asking for money. We need to have a look at what the Bible has to teach about giving to God's work"

Session 9

Step 5 – Introduction and conclusion

The Purpose of the Conclusion

The whole purpose of a sermon is to bring people to respond in some way to the message of the sermon. Therefore the sermon should finish by challenging people.

Our expectation as the sermon comes to an end, is not merely that people will understand or remember or enjoy our teaching, but that they will do something about it. In other words, that they apply the message to their daily life with the help of the Spirit.

The biblical authors were quite clear that this was the purpose of their preaching. *If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them* (John 13:17). See also Ez. 33: 30-33; John 3: 18-21; Rom. 1: 18-23; 2 Thess. 2: 10-12; 1 John 1: 6,8; 2John 4; 3John 3,4.

From these and many others passages it is clear that God wants his Word to be obeyed and be done. So people are expected to apply the Word to their daily life. Because of this the message has to penetrate through the head to the heart, that is, to the decision making center of the human personality. When the Spirit of God works, he always empys the man himself. Therefore it is really important to touch his heart.

The Preacher and the Conclusion

Somebody likened the preacher to a fisherman, who by his preaching is determined to "catch men", Luke 5:10. He refuses to be like the angler who, responding to an enquiry, confessed that he had not caught any fish, though he thought he had "influenced" a good many.

"The preacher is not merely asking a congregation to discuss a situation, and consider a proposition, or give attention to a theory. We are to storm the strong house of the will, and capture it for Jesus Christ. The appeal is the final thing".

In the conclusion we may well need to turn to "persuasion". We may seek to persuade by,

- 1) Argument, anticipating and answering people's objections

"You may object that we do not need to read the Bible very regularly. But how will you grow if you do not eat?"

- 2) Admonition, warning them of the consequences of disobedience

"If we continue to be a divided and quarrelling congregation we will never be able to be a blessing for our area."

- 3) Indirect conviction, first arousing a moral judgment in them and then turning it upon themselves, as Nathan did with David.

- 4) Pleading, applying the gentle pressure of God's love

"Look at Jesus, see Him hanging at the cross. It is the prove of God's love for us. Can we resist that love. No, we cannot. My brothers and sisters, let us commit again to the work of God." In the next session, we will deal with the application separately.

Dangers to Avoid

When preparing a conclusion we should be careful not to,

- 1) Choose a conclusion which suits only the last main point.

The purpose of the conclusion is to bring the sermon to a climax. Therefore it should be linked to the whole sermon.

- 2) Include new material.

The conclusion is meant to help people remember what has already been said. Therefore it should not introduce any new material.

- 3) Be too long.

If it is too long then it will take away from the main part of the sermon. It is meant to be a brief application of what has been said in the main part of the sermon.

Session 10

Step 5 – Application

Introduction

The application is a really important aspect of the sermon. When there is no application at all, the sermon is almost worthless. The bible is not something interesting to learn about or to tell stories about, but is to touch our lives, our souls, our spirits, our behavior.

The bible itself stresses that everything is written for us: For everything that was written in the past, was written to teach us so that (...) we might have hope John 13:17

These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us 1Cor. 10: 11. Jesus to the Pharisees: 'Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites, ... ' Mark 7: 6

When to Preach the Application?

This is not really important. There are three options, all of which are good:

- 1) As the conclusion at the end of the sermon
- 2) At the end of each point
- 3) Throughout the whole sermon

For Whom is the Application?

This question seems simple to answer: For everybody of course! But the point is: not everybody is the same. Let us see what are the different groups to speak to during the application:

- 1) Those who know God and follow Jesus in their life
- 2) Those who say they are God's children, while they are living in sin (hypocrites)
- 3) Worldly people

For most of our churches it will be true that we have some people of all the three groups. Therefore, we need to keep these groups in mind.

What Should be the Contents of the Application?

All scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness ... 2 Tim. 3: 16. Before we list some aspects of the application, one principle must be very clear: The application must be based on the text. For the people it must be clear, that these are really the words of the Lord, not of the preacher who adds some extra's to the bible.

Let us now see the aspects:

1) Self-examination.

'My friends, do you now this in your life?', 'Do you really follow Jesus?', 'Maybe, you also want to serve both God and Mammon?', 'Have you ever really seen that you cannot do without Jesus?'

Being saved is never automatically. To be a child of God, you must really know Him.

2) Encouragement/strengthening/comfort

God's children need to be encouraged to go on fighting against sin. We may point out the beauties of heaven, 'where everlasting joy will crown their heads. Gladness and joy will overtake them and sorrow and sighing will flee away'.

3) Warning

'My brother, if you go on to think you are God's child while you keep your secret sins, you will go to hellfire', 'When you don't flee to the Saviour, you will go to a place where you will burn forever, how terrible. Therefore, repent!'

4) Invitation

'Now is the time to repent, Jesus asks you to flee to himself. Tomorrow may be too late', 'Do you really choose to have some pleasure now? Why not choose eternal gladness and joy? That is far better. It is the devil that tries to catch you, but only God's Spirit can set you free'.

How to Preach the Application?

1) Serious

This is the most important. God himself is speaking to the people. You act as the voice of the almighty Lord. Woe unto you if you don't preach faithful.

When I tell wicked people they will die because of their sins, you must warn them to turn from their sinful ways. But if you refuse to warn them, you are responsible for their death. If you do warn them, and they keep sinning, they will die because of their sins, and you will be innocent Ezek. 33: 8, 9 (CEV)

1) With love

2) When Jesus spoke about Jerusalem's coming judgment, he wept over them.

... and now I repeat it with tears: there are many whose lives make them enemies of Christ's death on the cross Phil. 3: 18 (TEV)

1) Humble

Remember that you are not an inch better than the worst sinner and the greatest hypocrite in the congregation. In fact, you also need the warnings.

Before you preach the sermon to the people, preach it to yourself

Session 11

STEP 6 – Writing the Sermon

Introduction

We now have come to the writing of the sermon, the last step in the process of preparing. In the previous sessions we have made the "bricks" and collected everything that is needed to build our house. Now we are that far that we are able to build the house.

Because we have already dealt with the different parts of the sermon, introduction, main body, and conclusion, we now mainly will consider the question whether we have to write the sermon in full, or preparing notes only.

Writing Sermons

A general rule is, that it is good for a starting preacher to write the sermons in full. Also for preachers, who are already preaching longer, it is useful to sometimes write out a sermon in full.

The advantages are:

- 1) It helps us to avoid slipping into the same old clichés, and it provokes us to develop new ways of expressing old truths.
- 2) It will make it easier for us what we want to say. It is not easy to stand up in front of a group people and say something to them. If we have written out our sermon and have read over it a number of times, it will be easier to present what we want to say in an organized and helpful way.

Preaching Notes

Whether we have written our sermon in full or not, when we deliver our sermon, we can never take our written sermon to the pulpit to read it. If we read the sermon we will have to look down at the written page for most of the time. While it is important when trying to communicate with other people to look at them.

To solve this problem many preachers find it helpful to reduce their sermon to a number of preaching notes. On paper the preacher sets down the main points and sub points. By quickly

looking down at these notes he can remind himself of what he intended to say, while he also will be able to look at the congregation.

A well elaborated outline, including a introduction and a conclusion, could be used as preaching notes.

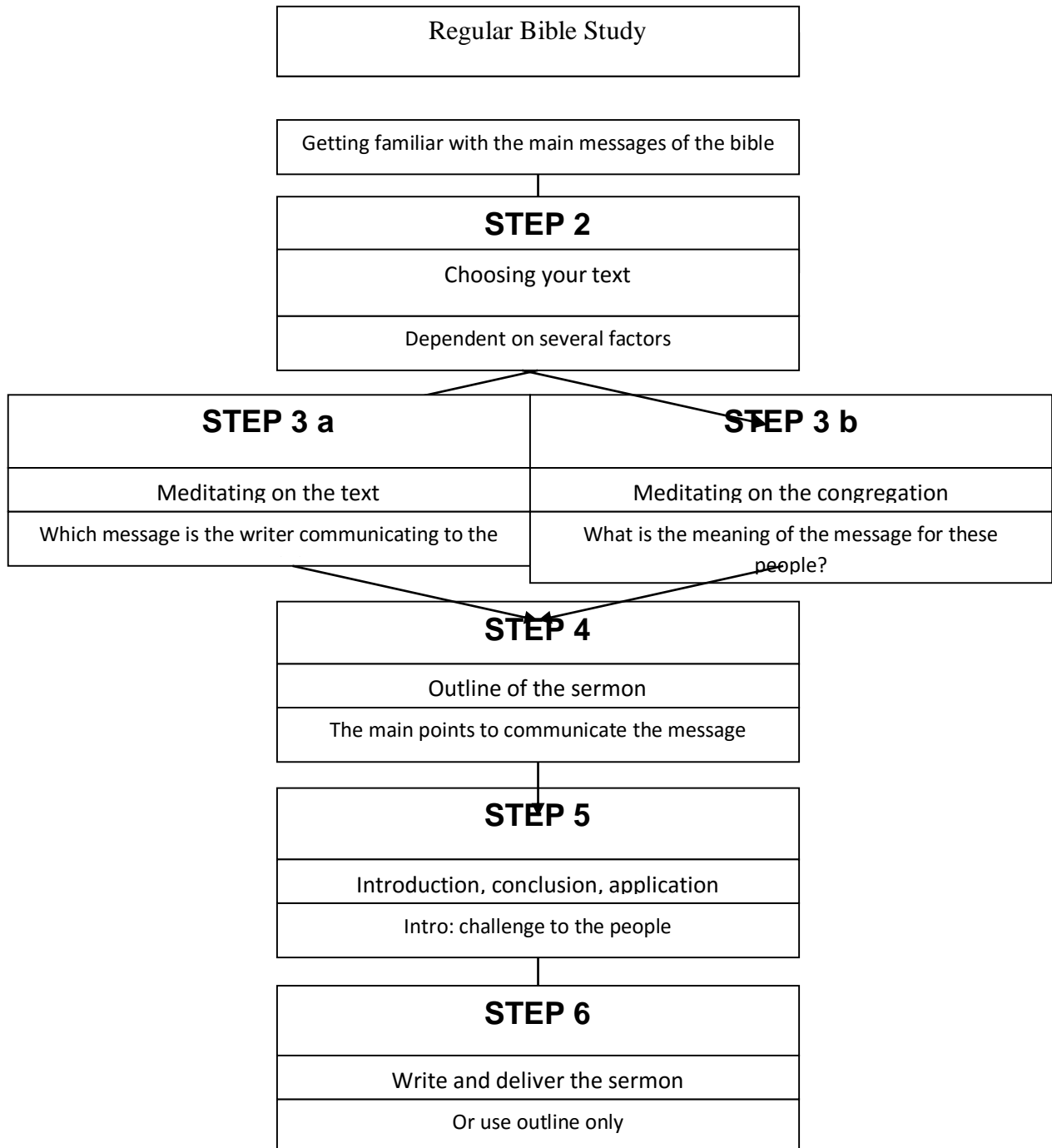
A Matter of Prayer

As we have already said in the introduction we prefer the word "meditation" rather than "studying", because Christian meditation consist of both study and prayer.

All the time we shall be praying, crying humbly to God for illumination by the Spirit of truth. We shall repeat Moses' petition "I pray You, show me your glory", Ex. 33:18, and Samuel's "Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening", 1 Sam. 3:9 10.

"Speaking personally, I have always found it helpful to do as much of my sermon preparation as possible on my knees, with the Bible open before me, in prayerful study. This is not because I am a bibliolater (worshiper of books, JB) and worship the Bible; but because I worship the God of the Bible and desire to humble myself before Him and his revelation, and, even while I am giving my mind to the study of the text, to pray earnestly that the eyes of my heart may be enlightened, Eph. 1:18. John R.W. Stott.

We are not only praying while preparing, but will continue now the sermon is finished. We need to pray over the sermon. The best time for this is the half hour before we leave for church on Sunday. It is on our knees before the Lord that we can make the message our own, possess or repossess it until it possesses us. Then, when we preach it, it will come neither from our notes, nor from our memory, but out of the depths of our personal conviction, as an authentic utterance of our heart. *"First, I reads myself full, next I thinks myself clear, next I prays myself hot, and then I lets go", an American.*



Questions

1. What does comparing Scriptures with Scriptures mean?
2. State three characteristics of Bible study.
3. Why storing your sermon notes is important?
4. Describe three things that do not make up preaching.
5. List six main factors for choosing a text from the Bible.
6. List six key questions used for finding the meaning of the passage.
7. Where are the best places to find the needs of the people?
8. Prepare an outline of a sermon.
9. Mention the types of illustrations used in the sermons.
10. What are the dangers we need to avoid when preparing a sermon?