

IMPROVING OUR SERVICE

Lesson 8 Sermon Preparation

I. INTRODUCTION.

A. Sermon Preparation.

1. There are two basic aspects to preaching: preparing the sermon and delivering the sermon. This lesson will focus on sermon preparation.
2. For those interested in a detailed study of both sermon preparation and delivery, I would suggest John A. Broadus' work *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*.

B. Preaching Is Important Because It Saves (1 Cor. 1:21).

II. FIVE SERMON MISTAKES.

A. Topic Too Broad.

B. Good Material, But Poor Organization.

C. No Aim or Goal to the Lesson, or Nothing Substantial to Say.

D. No Certain Beginning or End to the Lesson, or Unrelated Beginning or End.

E. Not Understandable.

III. BETTER SERMONS.

A. Be Heard (see Supplement 1).

B. Be Prepared.

1. Select carefully.

- a) You - What are you interested in and what subject are you capable of handling?
- b) Audience - What does the audience need to hear?
- c) Occasion - What is it about the occasion that would demand a certain lesson?
- d) Sermon Type - Do you want to arouse interest, inform, convince, correct, or stimulate? Do you want to preach an expository, textual, or topical sermon?
- e) Time - Will you have enough time to adequately discuss the material you plan to present?

2. Study thoroughly.

- a) Think - Think through the subject as much as you can. If you are preaching on a Sunday morning, for example, start early in the week preparing your lesson. Each day you think about your lesson, you can add to or take away from your outline.
- b) Notes - Write down all ideas, then "boil them down" to your main points. Write out a preliminary outline that will guide you to further reading and study.
- c) Research - Use several Bible versions, a concordance, a commentary, a dictionary, etc. Good Bible study helps can be found on the following websites: 1)

biblehub.com; 2) biblegateway.com; and 3) blueletterbible.org. My personal website (thegoodteacher.com) also has good Bible study helps for sermon preparation.

- d) Extras – Your lesson should focus on the scriptures (what they say, what they mean, and how they apply to us today). However, you can also fill the lesson with some explanation, analogy, quotes, illustrations, interesting examples, stats, striking facts, etc. “Extras” for the sermon come from your daily observations, reading, and conversations with others. You may want to start a simple filing system to preserve your “extras” material for future sermon preparation.

3. Organize clearly.

- a) Purpose - Write out a “subject statement,” “thesis statement,” or “purpose statement” that summarizes all the information that you plan to present. What is your main aim or goal in this lesson? Any material introduced in the lesson must first answer this question: “Does it aid any in reaching my main goal?”
- b) Outline - Make a simple, easy to follow “skeleton” outline which contains a summary of the thoughts you plan to present in a logical arrangement (see Supplement 4).
 - (1) Title. (Keep the title short.)
 - (2) Text. (Pick a specific scripture that focuses on the lesson.)
 - (3) Thesis Statement. (Make sure the thesis statement reflects all the main points of the sermon in one sentence.)
 - (4) Introduction - Your opening remarks should introduce the aim, goal, or purpose of the lesson (“proposition”), in a way that gets the attention, interest, good will, and respect from the audience. A good introduction will make use of quotation, illustration, question, analogy, references to the subject, reference to the occasion, reference to self, or a startling statement.
 - (5) Body (discussion) - Select a few main points (about 3) to establish, clarify, reinforce, and support the main thought of the lesson. The main points provide the “proof” of the “proposition” (aim or goal of the lesson).
 - (a) Sub-points - Minor points are listed under each main point to support the main points.
 - (b) Transitional statements - These statements give the audience a smooth transition between all the points of the lesson from beginning to end.
 - (6) Conclusion - Conclude the lesson with a brief summary of the whole lesson or the central theme and application of the material with an appeal for action. A good conclusion will make use of the same elements found in a good introduction (see above). Conclude without re-preaching the whole sermon again.

(7) Outline Suggestions:

- (a) Divide your outline into three major parts: Introduction, Body (discussion), and Conclusion.
- (b) Include only one item per point.
- (c) When beginning to preach for the first time, use complete sentences in your outline and phrase the statements as they will be spoken to the audience. Later on, as you get more experience, you can turn your complete sentences into shorter summary statements.

4. Practice repeatedly.

- a) Practice out loud at home before you come to the worship service. This builds confidence.
- b) Read you outline over and over again before you preach it. This will allow you to look at the audience, move around, and not simply “read” the sermon.

C. Be Relevant (see III. B. 1. above).

D. Be Concise (see III. B. 3. above).

E. Be Confident and Convicted.

1. Be confident that the gospel, not you, will convert the audience. Don't begin the sermon with an excuse like “I'm not a good speaker,” or “This lesson is not all that good.”
2. Be convicted that God's word is true, living, active, and powerful. Believe in what you say, so others will believe it too.

F. Be Natural and Enthusiastic.

IV. CONCLUSION.

A. Let's Go Out Now and Prepare Good Sermons to Preach.

B. Class Motto: “I Will Try To Do Better!”