

Sermon Preparation

X Diocesan Leadership Conference

Bible Study Track

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Types of Sermons

- Topical – not preaching on topic of the day. Rather, a systematic exposition of whole council of God. Theme only comes from Scripture. Example: Luke 7:42,43
- Textual – theme and main divisions come from text
- Expository – everything, including context, comes out of the text, deal in detail to whole passage
- Biographical – form of expository, character study, God of that character.
- Homely – conservative treatment of a passage without a leading idea. There is an outline, but no unifying idea.
- For starters, it is best to do textual sermons. It is also helpful to the congregation.

Identify

- Identify a text or theme you wish to do a sermon on.
- Textual sermons are preferable over topical.
- Use the church lectionary.

Getting Ready

- ***Read scripture*** – read the text repeatedly and prayerfully without taking notes. It is also helpful to read the entire book a few times as well if you are not familiar with it.
- Keep a journal of thoughts, sermons, illustrations, newspaper articles, etc.
- Read relevant doctrinal material.
- Be careful not to take things out of context.
- Carefully read commentaries for any added insight.
- Merge all that you gather seeking clarity.
- Find natural transitions.

Getting Set

- Aim at a particular point.
- The ultimate goal is to bring people to God through Christ.
- Acid test: Ask yourself what is the purpose of this sermon? What is the central truth? Can I write it down in one sentence?

Introduction

- Visualize a gathered congregation – who will be there.
- How is this going to come to them? Get rid of irrelevancies, etc.
- Keep in mental touch with congregation.
- Write the introduction.
- Expound on historical setting of the text.
- Enlighten or engage the congregation – meet them where they are:
 - Present day experiences.
 - Well drawn incident from life or literature.
 - Avoid long introduction.

Main Body

- Try to limit to three points.
- Avoid bondage to traditional sermon outlines. However, using traditional outlines is not a bad thing.
- Three points going up to a climax.
- Ending should be the great truth.

Guidelines

- Do not let illustrations drive the sermon. Rather, let the text be the driving force.
 - Illustrations are to supplement the text, not the text supplementing the illustration.
- If any of your points do not point to your aim, then change it.
 - Do not try to preach the text exhaustively.
- Do not use the text to be an introduction to your own “soap box” preaching.
- Do not force the text to say something it is not meant to say.
 - Do not have a personal agenda. Let the text speak.
- Be weary of using political applications or illustrations. It can cause an unnecessary distraction for the congregation.
- Try not to write out verbatim your sermon.
- Use personal pronouns like “we” or “you.” Do not speak abstractly. Make it personal.

Practice

- Practice giving your sermon many times out loud.
 - This helps in seeing how understandable and coherent your sermon is.
 - Make necessary edits and repeat until it is satisfactory.
- Memorizing will be valuable but not necessary. The less you have to look at your notes the better.
- Evaluate your sermon

Evaluation – Is it biblical?

- Points grow up out of the text.
- Exegesis sound but not belabored.
- Message based on meaning of the text.
- Context and genre adequately considered.
- Problems of the text were adequately addressed. (This should be done if you feel it absolutely necessary)

Evaluation – Is it properly centered?

- The message is God/Christ centered.
- The motivation offered is redemptive, not legal.

Evaluation – Does it nourish spiritually?

- This message is spiritually nourishing.
- This message is in touch with reality (hits me where I live).
- This message calls me to a response.
- The application grew naturally out of the text.

Evaluation – Is it clear?

- The sermon is well organized.
- The structure is plain, clear, simple.
- There is a unifying theme.

Evaluation – Is it persuasive?

- There is a demonstrated confidence in the power and authority of the Word of God.
- Enthusiasm and sincerity is communicated.
- Adequately reflect self-examination.

Evaluation – How does it “feel”?

- Illustrations are used appropriately and effectively.
- There is variety in voice, pace and language.

Prayer

- Before, during and after preparation, and before you actually give your sermon, pray:
 - That God will speak to the hearts of the congregation.
 - We will be convicted of our sin and repent.
 - We will be drawn to Christ.
 - The words that are spoken be preached in humility but in confidence in God's grace. It is not you that can change hearts, but God alone.
 - That your preparation is done in reverence and humility of the task at hand.
 - That your delivery is done in reverence and humility of the task at hand.

Go preach