

# Homiletics

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# Preaching and the preacher

## Lesson 1

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### A. Introduction

- We are now going to deal with one of the central activities of the church.
- One of the great instruments put in the hands of the church and its ministers is "to preach God's message". 1 Corinthians 1:21.
- It is a clear command from Jesus to His followers, Mark 16:15 "Go into all the world and preach"!
- Preaching is one of the greatest privileges entrusted to man, to be God's spokesman, God's ambassador. 2 Corinthians 5:18-21.
- Preaching is also one of the greatest responsibilities. Romans 10:14-15.

### B. What is preaching?

1. Homiletics = the art of preaching (a study of everything related to preaching).
2. Definition: "Preaching is the proclamation of God's message by a chosen personality to meet the needs of humanity".

Two elements:   a)   Personality (the preacher).  
                      b)   Message (the truth).

3. The message must be God's message – anything else is not preaching, but merely a humanistic, political, etc., talk.
4. Preaching must be personal proclamation, not reading or writing.

### C. The Preacher

Dr. Martyn Lloyd Jones said: "Preachers are born, not made, you will never teach a man to be a preacher if he is not really one, but a born preacher you can help and improve a little here and there".

The preacher is not the source of the message – it is from God – but he is **the channel**. The message flows through his personality. The message should flow freely from its source (God) to its destination (the people). Preaching is a product of two factors; the divine and the human, and both are very important. The message flows through the personality of the preacher and will be shaped by it.

Because of his high calling, the preacher must not spare any discipline of heart, mind, body and soul.

#### 1. Requirements for a preacher.

- a) **He must be truly born again and stay alive** and burning for the Lord.
- b) **He must have a clear divine call for this ministry.** The ministry is not just a

profession; it is a burning call. The impulse to preach comes from God! Paul is a shining example. Galatians 1:15-16; Romans 1:1. The Old Testament also has many strong examples: Moses, Joshua, Jeremiah, Gideon. The preacher must be sent forth from God. Romans 10:15.

## 2. The preacher should improve the channel (his personality).

### a) **An unbroken fellowship with God.**

- i) Prayer and meditation. Psalm 1.
- ii) Live up to your message. A holy life, keep time, gravity, etc.

### b) **Continually learning.**

#### i) **The Word of God, good books and commentaries.**

- Organised study time. (Learn off by heart.)
- Get "food" for yourself.
- Get "food" for others.
- Conferences and seminars.
- Listen to good preaching.

#### ii) **Learn from life around you.**

- See and read about how people live, the problems they face, etc.
- "Open your eyes everywhere".

### c) **Develop natural gifts.**

Every person has natural gifts, e.g. a good memory, music, song, "ability with words", to lead worship, to give an appeal, etc. All gifts can be developed by work, training and discipline.

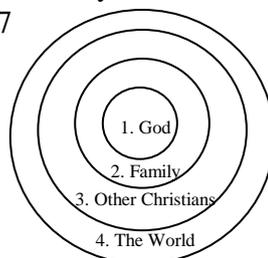
### d) **He must maintain bodily health and fitness.**

Physical health and fitness will add to mental acuteness and vitality. Good health promotes effective speech.

#### **Therefore:**

- i) Eat healthily and not too much.
- ii) Exercise, walk or run and enjoy nature that God has freely provided.
- iii) Take time off for family life, hobbies, etc. (a day, a week, holidays, etc.)  
1 Timothy 3:1-7

#### **Priorities:**



### e) **He must be completely dependant upon the Holy Spirit.**

"He shall take of mine, and give it to you".  
John 14:26; John 16:13-15.

**Learn to depend on Him:**

- i) In daily life.
- ii) In your study.
- iii) **In your preparation:**
  - Selection of text.
  - Choice and preparation of material.
  - In the delivery of the message.

With homiletic skills and intelligence alone, the congregation will be left cold and lifeless, or perhaps lifted on an emotional wave which afterwards will leave them empty and hollow.

Only the Holy Spirit can empower the preacher to reach spiritual victories. "You shall receive power.....", Acts 1:8.

Only the Holy Spirit can give life and warmth.

Only He can convert and consecrate. John 16:7-8.

The Holy Spirit can be the preacher's constant support, **but He is like a "dove"...**

Later we will see how the preacher should deliver the message, but for now we will consider the message.

# The message

## Lesson 2

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### **A. The preacher is proclaiming God's message!**

He is God's spokesman; he stands in God's stead and speaks for Him.

### **B. The Bible is the source of the message – the preacher's text book**

If preaching is to speak God's message, the preacher must go to the place where God has spoken most clearly: "THE WORD OF GOD".

In a way, preaching is giving the Bible a voice – it is letting God speak out of His word.

Why "only" the Bible? Why not something from a good Christian book, or headlines from the newspaper, or a statement from a great man?

1. The Bible is God's opinion on any given matter, which leaves the preacher free from personal criticism. (A preacher who was criticised for his sermon said: "I did not like it either, but I was not giving out my own ideas".) It makes the preacher a herald, proclaiming God's ideas. "The Bible says...", "God says...".
2. The Word is powerful and sharp. Hebrews 4:12.
3. The Word is like a seed.
4. The Bible gives variety in preaching. It mirrors almost every virtue and vice. Through the pages of the Bible walk all kinds of people with all kinds of needs and problems. The Bible helps the preacher to handle delicate topics in a tactful way (divorce, gossip, money, prejudice, etc.).
5. It pleases God – it is His inspired word. His command was, "Go, teach them all I have commanded you".
6. The Holy Spirit confirms God's Word.

### **C. How to handle the Bible text**

1. Receive the text from God. He knows the present need of the people.
2. The text is not just to be a mere motto for the sermon. The word "text" is from the Latin "textum" and signifies something woven or spun together, so the text is that out of which the sermon is woven – it is the basis of the sermon.

### **D. How to apply the text correctly**

To interpret and apply his text in accordance with its real meaning is one of the preacher's most holy duties.

1. Don't twist the text to suit your thoughts.
2. Don't take a short text and let it say something the context does not indicate as the meaning.
3. Study the text (grammar, rhetoric) carefully and meditate on the precise meaning of the words and phrases used in the text. Look for key words or words with a special importance (the blood, the cross, etc.). Pay attention to any figures of speech, i.e. parables, revelations, etc.
4. Study the text in its immediate context.
5. Study the text in its larger context. What is the theme of the whole epistle? Look at the history, geography, manners and customs of the biblical time, etc. This can often be helpful.

Always remember that the teaching of scripture is consistent, it never contradicts itself. But the revelation is progressive, given bit by bit and more and more.

The teaching of the Old Testament must be interpreted in light of the New Testament. Failure to do so has produced many false teachings (e.g. keeping of certain days, food, recognised polygamy, etc.).

## 6. **Two false ideas about preaching!**

### a) **"Preparation is not necessary!"**

- i) "The Holy Spirit will give you what you need when you are standing in the pulpit".
- ii) Psalm 81:10 "Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it".
- iii) Jesus said: "Don't think about what to say, it will be given to you in the same hour..."

**But these Scripture passages have been taken out of context.** A sermon is like a spiritual building, which must be thoroughly planned and prepared under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

### b) **Placing too much confidence in preparation and human ability.**

The sermon can be very clever and right, but will move or touch no one. It is the Spirit who convinces – He must have full control in the pulpit.

## E. **Subject or theme for the sermon**

### 1. **Don't try to say everything in every sermon!**

"SAY ONE THING" and hammer it in with ten-inch nails because:

- a) It gives the sermon unity.
- b) It helps the preacher to aim and hit the goal of his sermon.
- c) It creates interest in the congregation.

2. The subject must be of interest to the man in the street – not just to ministers – something useful for daily life. (Not subjects such as: "Who wrote the book of Hebrews?")
3. The subject must not be too small and narrow. In that case the sermon can get too thin.
4. The subject must be important, clear and precise. Examples: "God's love for you", "The wages of sin", "Don't fear", "The tongue is a little fire", etc.

The subject may be announced as the title of the sermon, or a title that clearly points to the subject can also be used and announced to the congregation.

## F. The title

How does the title differ from the subject?

The title is the name of the sermon. The sermon can be advertised with title in the church magazine, on posters, in newspapers, etc., and also announced before the sermon is preached.

**Examples:** If the subject is healing, the title could be: "The great Physician".

If the subject is prayer, the title could be: "You have got the key to the problem".

1. **The title must be interesting; not dull and heavy.**

**Examples:** "The good Samaritan", or "The story of an ambush".

2. **The title must be honest.**

Do not give an exciting title and then preach about something else.

3. **The title should not be vulgar.**

**Bad examples:** "The man who lost his head in a dance" (John the Baptist), or "A haircut in the devil's barbershop" (Samson), etc.

## G. The objective of the sermon

1. **"The person who aims at nothing hits it every time".**

Let us aim at something God-given and get results for Him.

2. Ask yourself "What is the goal of this sermon?", "**What results do I expect?**"

The objective must be very clear to the preacher!

3. **General objectives:**

The objective varies from sermon to sermon, but there are some general objectives all sermons must have:

- a) To please and glorify the Lord.
- b) To move the people:
  - i) To salvation.
  - ii) To a closer walk with the Lord.
  - iii) To spiritual experiences and decisions.

4. **Expect results from your preaching!**

5. **There should not be too many objectives.**

Do not try to accomplish too much in one sermon. "When you want to reach the top of the mountain, you have stations on the way". You can divide a great subject over a series of services.

## H. Gathering of sermon material

A sermon is like a building: you gather your material before you start building.

**"Do not steal other people's sermons"** – you can get thoughts from others, but the sermon must be "born" in you. 1 Samuel 17:31-40 – In Saul's armour David would never have conquered Goliath, but when he used his own skill in the name of the Lord, he got great results.

**When you have your text, your subject and perhaps your title:**

1. **Bow your knee, pray over the text and meditate for a time.** Have a piece of paper ready and write down all that comes to you.
2. **Study the text in different translations, dictionaries and commentaries.** Write down what you discover.
3. **Ask yourself:** "What have I ever read about this subject?" Read again. Find new things in **all kinds** of books.
4. **What can throw light on this subject?** The preacher must have his eyes and ears wide open to ensure that he notices all that is going on around him; in nature, society, people, when driving, when walking through town, woods and fields, when sailing, reading books and newspapers. Impressions from anywhere may be useful as illustrations in a sermon. When a good thought, experience or inspiration comes to you, write it down in full so that you can reconstruct it. Many of our best thoughts have been lost because we have failed to write them down.
5. **Constantly gather and file material.** Decide upon a system whereby you can always find things you have gathered throughout the years. Divide the material into subjects like Faith, Prayer, Love, Victory, Boldness, Hell, Sin, Jesus the person, The Cross, etc.

**For sermon-preparation, pull out all the material you have on the subject and make notes on a piece of paper.**

## I. Arranging sermon material

Remember that out of the same material you can build a **stable** or a **mansion**, a **prison** or a **palace**. The preacher is the "architect". He cannot just throw the material together in a big heap and think that the people will enjoy it or benefit from it. He must construct and build the sermon in the right way.

## J. Why is arrangement so important?

### 1. It is important for the preacher himself.

- a) It helps him to remember and to find his way through his notes.
- b) It gives him confidence (takes away nervousness).
- c) It helps him with time planning.
- d) It helps him build the message up to a climax.

### 2. It is important for the audience.

- a) It helps them understand.
- b) It helps them follow where the preacher is leading.
- c) It helps them remember the important points and put them into practice.

### 3. It is important to the sermon itself.

- a) It is God's message (the preacher is an ambassador) and it must be presented in the best possible way.
- b) It is like a piece of music, which can be good or bad according to how it is arranged.

## K. How to arrange a sermon

A good sermon has four principal qualities: Unity, Order, Proportion and Progress.

- 1. **Unity:** One of the first lessons the preacher should learn is the importance of concentrating on one subject. The preacher should have only one theme in his sermon and should concentrate all his arguments, proof, testimony, illustrations and so forth towards enforcing his theme.
- 2. **Order:** In a jigsaw puzzle all the pieces are for the same picture but they must be put down in the right order.
- 3. **Proportion:** Too much time is often given to a less important point, so that there is not enough time for points of greater importance.
- 4. **Progress:** A sermon should not move around and around the subject, but forward towards a climax. The climax will be determined by what the preacher thinks he must accomplish with this sermon.

# The three main parts of a Sermon

## Lesson 3

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1. Introduction
2. Body (argument)
3. Conclusion

### A. The Introduction

We all know how much in everyday life depends on first impressions.

#### 1. A good introduction is very important.

- a) **The subject needs an introduction like:**
  - i) A park or building needs a nice entrance.
  - ii) A book needs a preface to introduce the reader to the subject.
  - iii) A piece of music needs an introduction.  
Yes, anything needs a good beginning.
- b) **The audience needs it:**
  - i) To awaken their interest. You cannot take it for granted that the people are ready for, or interested in, your subject.
  - ii) To show them where you are going.
  - iii) To help them settle down.
  - iv) To help them get used to the speaker.
- c) **The speaker himself needs it:**
  - i) To step nicely into his sermon, not plunge headlong into it.
  - ii) To make contact.

#### 2. How to find a good introduction.

- a) **A short story** – true or made up.
- b) **An actual happening** in the community or the world.
- c) **An object** – a branch, a candle, picture, gun, etc.
- d) **From the text** – Hebrews 6:19 "We have an anchor". Isaiah 6:1 "in the year King Uzziah died".
  - i) Give the background/custom/history.
  - ii) Explain the context.
- e) **A striking statement**, e.g.
  - i) A line from the hymn before the sermon.
  - ii) A famous statement: Augustine "God has created the heart of man too big", etc.
- f) **A Problem.**  
The problem/solution sermon – give the problem in the introduction and the answer in the body and/or conclusion of the sermon.

g) **A personal experience.**

**3. Some general rules for an introduction.**

a) **Do not promise too much in the introduction.**

There must be a balance between introduction and body. (Promises can be made at the end of the sermon.)

b) **Not too loud, sensational or emotional.**

It is too soon to make an appeal to the emotions. Speak slowly in a lower tone of voice, warming up to the subject gradually and then working up to a climax.

c) **Not too long.**

Do not let people wait too long at the gate, even if it is a nice gate. Do not lose precious time, which is needed for the body and conclusion.

**4. How to make an introduction.**

The introduction is as important as the message itself.

**Introduction examples:**

**Isaiah 6:1-8**

"In the year King Uzziah died".

2 Chronicles 26:1-22 Isaiah's relationship to Uzziah.

The change in his life after that. It made him seek God's face.

**2 Corinthians 3:3**

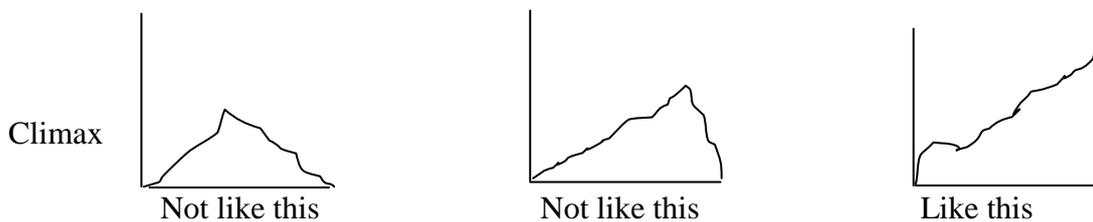
"The letter from Christ".

Would it not be nice if the Bible contained a letter from Christ?

Work on and elaborate that thought.

**B. The body of the Sermon**

The sermon must have a nice clearly defined form.



**1. Should a sermon be written out in full?**

Only if it is to be kept for filing purposes, but must never be taken to the pulpit. It would bind and confuse.

**2. It must be written in your heart.**

3. **Outline: Make a skeleton – and build on it.**

It is clear that a sermon needs an outline just as a body needs a skeleton.

- a) Composed of **headings and subheadings.**
- b) **Easy to follow with natural progression.**
- c) **Keep the points brief and make them easy to read.**
  - i) Use colour.
  - ii) Use pictures.
- d) **Sometimes the text will give you a natural division.** For example:

**Don't fear!** (Revelation 1:18)

- i) I am the first and the last.
- ii) I am the living one.
- iii) I was dead.
- iv) I have the keys.

**They devoted themselves** (Acts 2:42)

- i) To doctrine.
- ii) Fellowship.
- iii) Breaking of bread.
- iv) Prayer.

**Sometimes the very words can be used as a division** (Luke 23:33).

**"They crucified Him there".**

- i) "They" – Who crucified Him? Not "we" but "my sins".
- ii) "Crucified" – the cruellest death.
- iii) "Him" – Jesus the Son of God.
- iv) "There" – Where? On Calvary.

- e) With a good outline the sermon will flow like a stream of clean water between the well-built embankments.
- f) Some preachers make their outline begin with the same letter or the same sound.

**Theme: Coming to Jesus**  
**(Mark 10:17-22)**

"The young ruler"

- i) Right time.
- ii) Right spirit.
- iii) Right purpose.
- iv) Right place.

**Theme: He could not go in**  
**(Luke 15:29)**

"Why?"

- i) He did not understand his father's way.
- ii) He was angry with his brother.
- iii) He listened to other's reports.
- iv) He was too reluctant.

**Theme: Sowing and reaping**

"One soweth and another reapeth" (John 4:37)

- i) We are reaping what others have sown.
- ii) We are sowing what others will reap.
- iii) We are sowing what we ourselves will reap.

**God's greatness in His love (John 3:16)**

- i) When God loves – He loves the world.
- ii) When God gives – He gives His son.
- iii) When God saves – He saves for eternity.

- g) **The points must always go from negative to positive.**

Darkness – light.

Sin – salvation.

A sermon on hell must show the escape.

- h) **The outline headings must carefully work towards the goal.**

**4. Divisions must not chop the sermon into pieces.**

- a) You move smoothly from one point to the next.

- b) **Divisions can be announced:**

- i) **When you announce your subject and title.**

**Example:** The subject "Transfiguration", text Matthew 17:1-8, title "A great experience"

- Place – it happened.
- Purpose for going there.
- Persons involved.
- Power flowing from this experience.

- ii) **Announced along the way.**

To bring order to peoples' minds. To make it easier to remember.

- iii) But it is **often good not to show the skeleton.**

- c) **How many divisions should the sermon have?**

As many as are needed, but be careful of confusion.

- i) **The most common number is three.** (Like the famous saying: "Three points as in a good sermon".)

- ii) Three is one of the great numbers in scripture, i.e.

Holy – Holy – Holy

Ask – Seek – Knock, etc.

## C. How to get your main points to build your skeleton (frame) for your sermon

### 1. Make your subject clear and precise.

Don't try to cover every theme in every sermon.

### 2. Decide what kind of sermon you want it to be.

- a) What will suit the subject?
- b) What will suit the text?

### 3. Now consider your text – what is the natural division and what is the text highlighting? (See the five texts below as examples.)

#### **Isaiah 6:1-8**

- a) He saw the Lord.
- b) He saw himself.
- c) He saw the world (need).

#### **Isaiah 40:26-31**

- a) A mighty God.
- b) A miserable man.
- c) A wonderful union.

#### **Isaiah 48:17-19**

Listen to His voice.

- a) Peace.
- b) Righteousness.
- c) You will multiply.

#### **Jeremiah 18:1-6**

In the hand of the Lord.

- a) Something about God.
- b) Something about us.
- c) Something about God's plan for us.

or

#### **Philippians 2:12-15**

Light in the darkness.

- a) A wild depraved generation.
- b) A willing devoted group.
- c) A working directing God.
- d) A wonderful diamond goal.

- a) God created man.
- b) Man was spoiled.
- c) God recreated him.

## D. The sub-headings in sermon construction

The sub-headings divide a main point – just like the main points divide the body of the text.

### Isaiah 6:1-8 ← Text

#### 1. He saw the Lord (Verses 1-4). ← Main Point

- a) A Holy God. ← Sub Heading
- b) Almighty God.
- c) His glory is everywhere.

#### 2. He saw himself (Verse 5).

- a) His sinfulness.
- b) His lost state.
- c) He cried for mercy.

3. **He saw the atonement** (Verses 6-7).
  - a) The altar.
  - b) The effect on him.
4. **He saw the world** (Verse 8).
  - a) He heard God's call.
  - b) He saw the need.
  - c) He committed himself completely.

### **Jeremiah 18:1-6.**

1. **Something about God** (The master potter).
  - a) He is interested in working in our lives.
  - b) He does not get tired.
  - c) He has wonderful plans.
2. **Something about us** (We are the clay).
  - a) Worth nothing in ourselves.
  - b) The place we were taken from. Psalm 40:2-4.
  - c) My shape – clay and sticky.
  - d) We must commit ourselves to His hand.
3. **Something about God's plan for us.**
  - a) He will mould us.
  - b) He will cleanse us.
  - c) He will form us.
  - d) He will fill us.

Ensure that the sermon builds in strength and power, and do not let the framework be clearly seen. It can sometimes be useful to list the main points, but let your sermon be a complete piece – don't cut it into small sections.

## **E. The conclusion of the Sermon**

1. **The importance of a good conclusion.**
  - a) It is not an exaggeration to say that the last 5 minutes of the sermon are the most important. Most often the conclusion is the **climax** of the sermon.
  - b) The conclusion is a "take it or leave it" situation in which the preacher commits vital and eternal truth **to the decision of those who have heard him**. He leaves the **responsibility of action** to them and he cannot do that too carefully.
  - c) The conclusion should move like a river, growing in volume and power, and then come to an end.
2. **Guiding principles for the conclusion.**
  - a) **The conclusion must be prepared carefully and well.**

- b) **It is a natural part of the sermon.**
  - i) It may not be wise to let it be known that you are bringing your sermon to a close.
  - ii) It is better to close whilst the people still want more.
- c) **The conclusion must be very personal in its aim.**
  - i) In the conclusion the preacher must be very conscious of his hearers and speak very directly: e.g. "I remind you"; "I beseech you"; "I plead with you"; "I challenge you", etc.
  - ii) If your sermon has no points to challenge the hearers with, it is strongly suspected that your talk is not a sermon, but a lecture.
- d) **The conclusion must be definite and clear.**
  - i) If there is any place in your sermon where you must be clear and definite, it is here. Give clear and carefully chosen statements, so that the people know what to do.
  - ii) Leave them in no confusion about your subject and aim.

e) **The conclusion must be alive and touching.**

Don't just stop, but bring people to a place of response. If you want your sermon to have a lasting effect you must conclude strongly. Not always with a powerful voice, but with something that touches the inner being of the hearer.

<b>Example:</b> The sermon of Jesus:	Matthew 7:24-26
The sermon of Joshua:	Joshua 24:14-16
The sermon of Peter:	Acts 2:36

It is the mistake of some energetic preachers that they exhaust themselves before they reach the conclusion.

f) **The conclusion must be brief (short).**

5 minutes – sometimes shorter – but long enough to round off the sermon nicely and effectively.

3. **What form can a conclusion take?**

- a) **Recapitulation** – But not a repetition of the sermon. "A grand resume", which draws the whole message together and will support the preacher's final word.
- b) **A striking story or illustration**, which draws the whole thing together.
- c) **A hymn or a poem** – But it must be exactly to the point.
- d) **The text itself** – Read it slowly and clearly and people will see it in the new light.
- e) **An appeal** – Always in a gospel service where people are called to respond right there in the church. Let the appeal be in accordance with the message.

Spurgeon used to ask his students when returning from practical:  
Any converted? No.  
Any angry? No.  
Then you are no good as a preacher.

f) **Let us look at some conclusions in scripture.**

**Acts 2:14-41**

The sermon appeals to the whole man: His **mind**, his **heart** and **soul**, his **will**.  
Peter brought them right through.

**Acts 17:22-31**

See how Paul appeals to their **mind**, **heart** and **will**. He calls for reaction.

**John 8:58**

These words call for reaction.

**Joshua 24:14-27**

A very strong and forceful conclusion. Forced people to take a stand.

g) **Let the conclusion end on a positive note.**

Don't leave people in a hole, but show them the way out. Like Peter, bring them to the point of saying, "What must we do?" and then tell them.

4. **Some good rules for your conclusion.**

- a) Don't close your Bible, or gather your notes, or take off your glasses or look at your watch before you have finished.
- b) **Prepare it.**
- c) **Don't announce that you are concluding** by saying "finally", "lastly", or "in conclusion". This is even worse if you are not about to conclude at all. It can be a signal for people to stop listening.
- d) **Use no new ideas or distractions – let it conclude the whole sermon.**
- e) **Let it be short, to the point and positive.**
- f) **Having come to an end – stop!**

Use different types of conclusions.

# Illustrations in a sermon

## Lesson 4

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### A. The importance of illustrations

1. The greatest preachers have been masters in the art of illustrations. **Jesus Himself** set an **example** for us of the great value of illustrations in preaching. (Each student should find 3 illustrations that Jesus used.)
2. Illustrations help the congregation **understand** and **remember** a sermon. How often do we hear of people who would have forgotten the text and the sermon, but who remember the illustrations that were used well and, because of that, they recall the full sermon.
3. **God often used illustrations in the Old Testament** (through the prophets) e.g. "Israel is like an unfaithful woman (wife) who has fallen in love with another". The prophets even illustrated by acting something out, or by using objects, to illustrate what God was saying. (Each student to find 5 Old Testament illustrations and read them out.)
4. **In Paul's letters we find many illustrations.** (Let each student find 3 illustrations.)

### B. The purpose of illustrations

1. **To illuminate – to throw light upon the subject.**  
They are like windows in a building. They should be used to throw light onto each part of the sermon. A building without windows is not nice to be in; the same is true for a sermon that does not have illustrations.
2. **Illustrations are an excellent means of capturing the attention of the audience.**  
They are therefore good in the introduction, but also throughout the sermon, especially if the attention drops. Who has not noted the effect of an illustration upon an audience, which was sleepy and listless? How quickly they look up and start to listen when the preacher begins to illustrate.
3. **They explain.**  
Points become clearer and easier to understand. Spiritual matters are brought down to earth, to the human level.

#### **Examples:**

- a) "God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble", and "Two men went up to the temple, the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican". (Luke 18:9-14).
  - b) Who can explain the unseen power of the Holy Spirit? – It's like electricity.
4. **They can even prove a point.**  
When people have heard the illustration they will say, "Of course, that must be right".  
**Examples:**
    - a) The prophet Nathan used an illustration when speaking to David. 2 Samuel 12:1-8
    - b) Teaching: "Don't be joined together with an unbeliever": One word illustration

**Yoked**, and other illustrations. 2 Corinthians 6:14-16.

- c) "A man whose fields had yielded well said 'I will build my barns bigger'".

**5. Different kinds of illustrations.**

a) **One-word illustrations:**

Shining like a **star**  
Flowing like a **river**  
A **bloody** revolution  
The time is **sailing** by  
Quick as **lightning**  
The problem was like a **mountain**  
You are **vipers**  
Whitewashed tombs  
**Living** water  
(Find more one-word illustrations)

b) **Combination of words:**

"Salt of the earth"  
"A city on a hill"  
"Like a roaring lion"  
"Mount up like an eagle"  
"A house of prayer"  
"A den of robbers"  
(Find more combination illustrations)

c) **Objects as illustrations:**

A picture, candle, flower, globe, branch, seed, empty book, key, bankbook, the body, ... (Find more)

d) **Use personal experiences to illustrate.**

e) **Make up stories to illustrate:**

Do not tell fictional illustrations as if they were true. "Let us imagine", "It is as if", "Let us suppose" ....

**6. Detailed examples from all areas of life.**

- "The sower went out to sow his seed".
- Happenings in life: The man who had his tongue cut out. The doctor said, "Please speak your last words".
- The process in the factory: "From scrap to steel beams".
- Facts about nature: animals, plants, the universe, etc. (but the facts must be correct).

**Where can we find illustrations?**

Everywhere! But let us look at some specific places:

a) **From the Word of God** (Old Testament illustrates New Testament).

- i) "Abraham sacrificing Isaac".
- ii) "The deliverance from Egypt".
- iii) "The copper snake", etc.

- b) **From newspapers.**
- c) **From history.**
- d) **From biographies.**
- e) **From books** (about revivals, etc.).
- f) **From science or the arts.**
  - i) Astronomy / the universe.
  - ii) Geography / mountains / oceans, etc.
  - iii) Art: "Picture of peace".
- g) **"The Three Kingdoms"** (Jesus used three kingdoms).
  - i) **Animals** (wolf, sheep, goat, camel, insect, bird).
  - ii) **Vegetables** (vine, vegetables, grain, seed, corn, wheat, lilies).
  - iii) **Minerals** (pearls, gold, salt, stone).
- h) **Proverbs.**
  - i) From the Bible.
  - ii) Modern proverbs:  
"You cannot put clean water into a dirty cup", etc.

So you see, a preacher must be alert, keep his eyes wide-open, read books and obtain knowledge about all areas of life.

## 7. Some guidelines about the use of illustrations.

- a) **Be careful of old "dusty" books of standard illustrations.** Use illustrations that are fresh, new and up to date. **Don't repeat** a good illustration too much.
- b) **Illustrations must really illustrate.** An illustration, which needs an explanation, is worthless. It must be clear.
- c) **Illustrations must not be too complicated, but simple and brief.** Like the illustrations that Jesus used.
- d) **They should be within the comprehension of the people.** For farmers: don't use mathematics. For bush people: don't use city illustrations, etc.
- e) **Be careful with the truth** (get your facts right). Don't say "In 1930" when it was in 1830. Don't get your facts wrong like "A caterpillar, which has four legs". Don't say, "I had a great experience" when it was not you.
- f) **Know the illustrations and how to tell them.** Poor telling has spoilt good illustrations. Let the situation be felt in your tone and action.
- g) **Don't use too many illustrations.** The one can neutralise the other. "A building must not be all windows".
- h) **File your illustrations.** Keep a record as to when and where the illustrations have been used.

# Different types of sermons and sermon outlines

## Lesson 5

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### A. Different types of sermons

1. **The topical sermon:**  
In which the theme or topic is very prominent.
2. **The textual sermon:**  
In which the very words of the text are dealt with and built upon.
3. **The expository sermon:**  
Where a longer passage of scripture is illuminated and interpreted to the people.

### B. Different kinds of sermon outlines

1. **The diamond outline.**  
One idea – seen from different angles.  
  
**Examples:**
  - a) "God is love", "Love never fails", "Love, the perfect band", "Do everything in love".
  - b) The effect of praise: inward, outward, on God, on the devil.

2. **The ladder outline.**  
To move up a ladder, one step at a time, but the next step depends on the previous.

**Example: Romans 3:23**

- a) All have sinned.
- b) Christ suffered, paid the price for sin.
- c) Through Christ you can receive forgiveness.

3. **The contrast outline.**

Wrong – right (end with the positive)  
Negative – positive  
Divorce – loving marriage  
Greediness – giving  
Hate – love

4. **The question and answer outline.** (One of the oldest sermon patterns.)  
The preacher raises a question and will give several answers.

**Examples:**

Question: "Who is Jesus?" Answers: ....

Question: "Will the dead be raised again?" Answers: ...

5. **A dialogue sermon.**

Ask a question and let the audience give an answer. Don't go against their answer. Enlarge and turn.

6. **The diagnosis – remedy outline.**

Present a difficult problem and provide the answer.

**Examples:** Lawlessness, drunkenness, gossip, loneliness, lack of boldness for witnessing.

7. **The "Hegelian" (Philosopher Hegel) outline.** (Not like contrast.)

Thesis – antithesis – synthesis

**Example:**

- a) The Gospel is:
  - i) personal
  - ii) social
  - iii) personal and social
- b) God is:
  - i) full of love and kindness
  - ii) full of wrath and revenge
  - iii) both

8. **The analogy outline.**

**Examples:**

- a) "Jesus the good shepherd"
- b) "Jesus the door"
- c) "He is the potter we are the clay"
- d) "I am the tree you are the branches"
- e) "Your body is a temple"

9. **The proof outline.**

"This is true because ..."

**Examples:**

- a) "Tomorrow may be dangerous"      Reasons: ....
- b) "There is life after death"      Reasons: ....

10. **The tear down outline.**

Give a false doctrinal statement, and then prove why it is wrong.

**Example:**

"It is not wrong for a Christian to smoke". Then prove it wrong.

11. **The "dog fight" sermon.** (Or "judgement" sermon.)

"Grab" the subject and "shake" it before the eyes of the people.

**Examples:** Any sin or bad attitude.

**12. The interpretation – application outline.**

A portion of scripture is interpreted and applied to present life.

**Examples:**

- a) "The parables of Jesus"
- b) "The miracles of Jesus" : Food for the 5000; The sick through the roof.

**13. Bible reading method.**

First read the full text. Then go back and work your way through the text, verse by verse. You just read and give your comments, then read the next verse and give your comments and so forth.

**Example: Philippians 2:5-15**

**14. The expanding preaching method.**

Read your text in full, then pick out one of the main thoughts of the text and enlarge on it.

**Examples:**

- a) Text: Luke 2:1-14  
Title: "Room for Jesus"  
Thought: verse 7, "There was no room for Him".
- b) Text: John 2:1-11  
Title: Obey the Lord  
Thought: verse 5, "Whatever He says to you do it".

**15. The methods of combining texts.**

You follow a certain line.

**Examples:**

- a) Title: At the feet of Jesus  
Text: Luke 10:39; John 11:32; John 12:3
  - i) For fellowship Luke 10:39.
  - ii) In problems John 11:32.
  - iii) To worship John 12:3.
- b) Title: The three confessions of Peter
  - i) The confession of being a sinner: "I am a sinful man", Luke 5:8.
  - ii) The confession of his Saviour: "Thou art the Christ", Matthew 16:13-18.
  - iii) The confession of the sufficiency of Christ: "Thou hast the words of eternal life", John 6:67-69.
- c)
  - i) Sufficiency.  
Jesus "took the five loaves", Luke 9:16.
  - ii) Simplicity.  
Jesus "took a child", Mark 9:36.
  - iii) Service.  
Jesus "took a towel", John 13:4.
  - iv) Sacrifice.  
Jesus "took the cup", Matthew 26:27.

# Other ways of preaching

## Lesson 6

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### A. Dialogue preaching

Two types of dialogue preaching:

#### 1. Dialogue with the congregation.

The minister introduces a provoking statement, e.g. "Is life really worth living?", "What happens the day you die?" Try to get a response from the congregation. Ask questions.

#### 2. The planned dialogue.

Two people in the pulpit discussing a subject after a certain plan. (For example: The minister and an authority in a certain field – a doctor, an engineer, etc.)

Advantages:

- It produces a high interest – nobody sleeps.
- People are forced to take a stand on the questions asked.
- People are involved.

Disadvantages:

- The answers can throw the preacher off track.
- Some people do not respond.
- It can block the flow of the sermon.

### B. Object preaching

Not just an illustration in a sermon but let the whole sermon revolve around the object. This is often good for children and young people but can also be used for adults.

Possible objects: a candle, vegetables, fruit, map, pots and clay, time glass, ...  
Or use the black board or overhead.

### C. Dramatic preaching

Biblical plays, biblical and modern version of a sketch.

#### 1. Drama groups.

Examples: "The man fallen among robbers", "The prodigal son", "Abraham – Isaac – and the offering", "The Pharisee and the publican at prayer", "Ananias and Sapphira", "Paul and Silas in prison", etc.

#### 2. One man drama.

Examples:

- a) "The blind man on the road" (Put on dark sunglasses and take a white stick).  
Portray: The thoughts of the blind man as people give him offerings, when the boys make a fool of him and when he meets Jesus.

- b) Jonah's disobedience.
- c) Judas' betrayal of Jesus, etc.

**3. Combination of drama and preaching.**

Where the preacher comments and explains while the drama is going on.

Advantages:

- a) Drama makes the old stories come alive and more real.
- b) Drama really keeps people's attention from the oldest to the youngest.
- c) Drama can be remembered far better. (You are using both the ear and eye gate.)

**D. Parable Sermon**

**1. Jesus did this again and again.** (There are 38 parables given by Jesus in the gospels.)

- a) "A certain man had two sons", Luke 15:11-32.
- b) "The rich man and Lazarus", Luke 16:19-31.
- c) "The seed and the sower", Matthew 13:3-9.

**2. Old Testament parables can be used.**

- a) "The trees anointing a king over them", Judges 9:7-15.
- b) "The rich man and the poor man's sheep", 2 Samuel 12:1-5.

**3. Make up parables yourself.**

- a) "How rotten wood turns to diamonds".
- b) "From scrap to steel beams", etc.

**4. Turn a Biblical parable 'right'.**

"The parable of a rich fool" – Let him act wisely instead of foolishly.

**E. Audio visual aids in preaching**

1. Preaching with slides. (Build up your whole sermon with picture slides.)
2. Preaching with overhead projector. (Make illustrations to the text.)
3. Power-point Presentation.
4. Film and preaching combined.
5. Sound effects:
  - a) CD player or Tape recorder.
  - b) Song: a solo at the right point in the sermon.
  - c) Choir.
  - d) Music playing quietly in the background.

**F. Find your own form**

You can also mix and combine the different methods.

# Getting the message across

## Lesson 7

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A sermon is not a sermon until it is preached. That is the moment when it is formed out of the prepared material under the power and inspiration of the Spirit.

### A. There are different methods of delivery

#### 1. Extemporaneous preaching.

This is when a sermon is delivered without previous study or preparation, on the inspiration of the moment.

Some, just minutes before going up to preach, pick a certain idea or subject and then go into the pulpit. This preaching form has been effective but only for a very few gifted speakers.

Very few important speeches can be delivered well, without previous preparation, while the speaker is on his feet before the audience. A young preacher said, referring to Ephesians 6:19, "I will speak what the Lord gives me at that moment", but he spoke with a lot of stammering. After the sermon an old preacher asked, "What did the Lord say?" His answer was "My son, you have been lazy!"

#### 2. The opposite: Reading the full sermon from a manuscript.

Certain advantages:

- a) It calms the nerves of the preacher.
- b) He is passing on the message, exactly as prepared.
- c) You can file your full sermon.

But the negative sides are great:

- a) Reading is far less effective than speaking.
- b) It is very difficult to keep people's attention.
- c) You hinder the inspiration of the moment.

#### 3. Recitation: To repeat from memory.

To learn the sermon by heart, but:

- a) It is not natural speaking.
- b) Your mind is bound.
- c) This method requires even more time in preparation.
- d) The people have a feeling that somebody is performing before them and not really bringing a burning message from the heart.

#### 4. Free preaching: prepared but spoken without notes.

These sermons have been carefully prepared with regard to structure, framework and content, but the actual wording is up to the inspiration of the moment.

5. **The composition method of delivery.**

Free preaching – but with some guideline before you. The average minister is likely to work out a method of delivery composed of some aspects of each of these methods. The whole personality of the preacher must be involved in preaching. The preacher in Westminster Cathedral (which has a large elevated pulpit that allows only the head of the preacher to be visible) asked for a new pulpit to be placed for his use, which allowed the congregation to see him in full as he preached.

**B. The frame of mind of the preacher**

1. **A sense of authority and control.**

He must never apologise. He must never give the impression that he is speaking with their permission. However, he stands there as God's ambassador (not in self confidence).

2. **He must be free in the pulpit.**

- a) Not bound by the **people**, even if important people are present, nor by **preparation**, nor by **notes**. Prepare carefully and yet be free.
- b) He must be open to inspiration. **Regard preaching as an activity under the influence and power of the Holy Spirit.**
- c) He must be able to respond to the feedback and inspiration from the congregation.

3. **An element of seriousness.**

The preacher must be a "serious" man. Never give the impression that preaching is something light or superficial or trivial. You are dealing with the most serious matter that men can ever consider. Seriousness does not mean solemnity or sadness. The preacher must be lively and serious at the same time, never dull and heavy.

Richard Baxter: "I preached as never sure to preach again – as a dying man to dying men".

Robert Murray: When he appeared in the pulpit, before he even started to speak, people began to weep silently. The very sight of the man gave the impression that he had come from the presence of God to deliver a message from God to them.

4. **The preacher must have zeal.**

He himself must be gripped by what he is saying. If he is not gripped by what he is saying, nobody else will be.

A journalist who wrote an account of two speakers speaking on the same subject wrote: "The difference between them was that the one spoke like an advocate, the other like a witness".

A preacher must be like a burning witness – He is not just handling a case.

5. **The preacher must speak with warmth.**

You are not just imparting information; you are dealing with eternal souls – pilgrims on the way to eternity.

- R. Cecil: "To love to preach is one thing, to love those to whom you preach is another thing".
- Paul preached with tears (Acts 20:31).
- G. Whitefield often preached with tears streaming down his face.
- Lloyd Jones: "A man who is not moved by these things I maintain, has never understood them".

6. **The preacher must be persuasive.**

"We beseech you in Christ, be ...". Not the attitude: "Take it or leave it".

He desires to **persuade** – he wants them **to see**. He wants them **to move** and **act** accordingly.

7. **Preaching is the Word of power.**

- a) Preaching is God using a man who is under the influence of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 2).
- b) Preaching is the demonstration of the power. "Our gospel came not unto you in word only but also in power and in the Holy Ghost" (1 Thessalonians 1:5). (Acts 1:8 is necessary before preaching.)

**C. The voice in delivery**

The voice is of course the preacher's greatest instrument. Like any other instrument, vocal skills can be improved.

1. **Understand and use the range of sounds the voice can produce.** (Like a singer!).

"Exceedingly precious truths may be greatly marred by being delivered in monotonous tones". The Lord has given us a full instrument; let us not just play **one string**.

"The holy tone" – This artificial language and false tone is only tolerated in the church because, unfortunately, it is so common there. However, the ear is not made for that, it gets tired. A monotonous voice is like the clock in the bedroom which you don't hear ticking after a while.

2. **The volume and penetrating power of the voice.**

Always speak so as to be heard. Don't scream, but let your voice have volume. Don't let the words overlap each other. Clarity is far more important for understanding than volume. Even "strong" whispering can be heard if it is distinct.

Vary the strength and volume of your voice. Speak softly or loudly as the emotion of the moment may suggest.

Picture: "Ink is necessary to write with, but if you spill the bottle all over the paper

you spoil the meaning".

**3. Vary your speed.**

Slowness gives emphasis; speed adds excitement.

Don't start at the highest pitch and power for then you will not be able to build up to it when you have become excited with the message. Always adapt your voice to the situation.

Be natural. Do not try to imitate other people's voices and ways.

**4. How can the voice be improved?**

- a) Good health and fitness improve the voice. (Open your mouth.)
- b) Singing develops the voice in every way.
- c) Reading aloud: changing your voice for the different people in the narrative helps.
- d) Listen to a tape of your own speech and try to correct mistakes. Let friends 'criticise' (evaluate) you.
- e) Take vocal lessons and/or speech classes.

**5. Management of the voice in preaching – a few simple rules to be remembered.**

- a) Don't start on a high key.
- b) Vary speed and power.
- c) Do not drop your voice on the last word in the sentence.
- d) Breathe.
- e) Be careful of developing bad habits, like:
  - i) "hem-hem"
  - ii) "It is good-**da**- to come here today -**a**- and speak the word-**da** of God-**da**".
  - iii) "Sniffing" & "snuffing" are excusable when a man has got a cold, but they are extremely unpleasant. Do not let it become a bad habit.
- f) Pauses can have a great effect.

**D. Posture, actions, gestures in the pulpit.**

- 1. Actions and gestures speak more than words ("the pantomime theatre"). In many cases a gesture is much more expressive than any number of words.**

**For example:**

- a) "Leave the room" – point to the door.
- b) "Don't speak" – place a finger on the lips.
- c) "Come here" – a movement of the hand.
- d) "I don't know" – lift the shoulders and hands.

Sign language has an almost magical power.

**Listeners are also spectators** and need to see the preacher in order to understand his message. They actually **listen with their eyes**. If they cannot see the preacher a large part of the effect is lost.

When people express themselves naturally, **as much of the message comes through the facial expressions and bodily movements as through the words**.

When people are expressing themselves **naturally** and in a **relaxed** manner their actions nearly always **suit** their words. Children have this wonderful ability because they completely forget themselves. Adults become too self-conscious and often stressed and nervous.

## 2. Always be aware of bad habits.

In the pulpit you are in a vulnerable position – standing in front of a big congregation, because of nervousness or intimidation, you can develop bad habits. Ask a friend or your wife to give you an honest report of your conduct in the pulpit.

## 3. Facial expressions have great power.

### a) **Use your facial muscles:**

- i) Don't stand with a "stone face".
- ii) Eyebrows – forehead – lifted or curled.
- iii) No nervous fixed movement.

### b) **Use your mouth:**

- i) Speak with an open mouth.
- ii) Smile – laugh (not too much).

### c) **Use your eyes:**

- i) Eyes are very expressive. They show the full range of passion and emotions of the human heart (Eyes full of tears, soft eyes – hard angry eyes).
- ii) Look at the hearers. Be careful not to always look in the same direction. Don't look over the people. Don't just look at the front people. Do not be shifty eyed as if you were afraid to reveal your true feelings.

## 4. Gestures with hands and arms.

Next to face and eyes, the hands and arms are the most expressive.

- a) Don't swing them too wildly or stand with them in the air all the time.
- b) Don't put them in your pockets.
- c) Don't fold them on your chest or behind your back.
- d) Don't hold onto your jacket.
- e) Don't fumble with anything.
- f) Never prepare any gesture beforehand. It must be the spontaneous product of the present feeling, or it will look unnatural.
- g) Do not act over the top: When saying "He stabbed him in the heart" you might do a little movement with your hand towards your breast, but don't try to imitate the action. It would be ridiculous!

5. **Posture** (walking, standing, sitting).

Develop good habits:

- a) Don't slouch in your chair before going up to speak.
- b) Stand freely – don't lean on the pulpit.
- c) Move freely, but don't walk like a lion in a cage. Be free but not restless.
- d) Avoid monotony (with your hands, with your feet).

6. **Conclusion.**

Every sermon delivery must have life, freedom and power. Look out for faults and correct them.

**Always try to be natural in voice and actions.**

# Attention

## Lesson 8

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### A. How to obtain and keep the attention of the listeners

An officer in the army calls out "Attention", but the preacher has to earn the attention of his hearers. It is important for him to be able to present his message so that everybody listens. A good preacher is able to keep even the children's attention.

H.C. Spurgeon: "We want all eyes fixed upon us and all ears open to us. To me it is an annoyance if even a blind man does not look at me with his face. If I see anybody turning around, whispering, nodding, or looking at his watch, I judge I am not up to the mark and must by some means win these minds".

We have no right to attention, except we know how to command it. The golden rule for attention is to "always say something worth hearing".

#### 1. **"You must give them something to eat"**.

Give them manna fresh from the skies, a word received from God for that occasion. It is possible to heap up a lot of good things in one big muddle. The message has to be well prepared and well arranged.

"If food is not well prepared and well arranged nobody is going to eat it".

#### 2. **Do not be long.**

An old preacher said to a younger one "I don't care what you preach about, but I wish you would always preach about forty minutes".

It is difficult to keep the mind and the ears of the average man attentive for longer than half an hour, not to speak of that of a child. If you cannot say in half an hour what you want to say, then you will never say it.

Spurgeon: "Spend more time in your study that you may need less time in the pulpit: We are generally longest when we have little to say".

#### 3. **The place and the atmosphere can distract people.**

- a) Late-comers must be placed at the back.
- b) The pulpit must be in the best place (not against a window).
- c) The entrance must be in the right place.
- d) Provide a solution for mothers with very small children.
- e) Good light and fresh air are very important.

Spurgeon: "The best thing the preacher needs next to God's grace is oxygen. Pray that the windows of heaven may be opened, but start by opening the windows of the meeting house".

4. **Be alive.**

- a) In your voice (use the whole instrument).
- b) In your actions (let the Spirit grip you, inspire you and guide you right through the sermon).
- c) Come fresh from the prayer room clothed with the Spirit of God. "When God speaks, man must listen".

5. **Be interested yourself – and you have a chance to interest others.**

You must have a burden for your subject, so that you will use all your heart to deliver it. People will listen with all their attention when a man speaks with all his heart.

Have something to say and say it earnestly and your congregation will listen earnestly.

Use Illustrations.

6. **Preach on practical subjects.**

What is beneficial for the salvation and growth of the hearers? Touch their lives and problems and help them find God's solution and you will have their attention. (No sermons on "The seven horns of the beast"!)