

Godward Teaching/Preaching Preparation

Introduction: There can be little argument regarding the deplorable condition of many sermons one hears/reads in our day. Lack of serious preparation is perhaps the main cause for such unbiblical, man-centered sermons. The Christian segment of Our Time does not place high value on sermon preparation. The Word of God is disregarded, and in its place are found marketing techniques, demographic studies, peer pressure, the fear of man, college and seminary classes on homiletics, etc. Consider Paul's imperatives to his apostolic representatives in 1st Timothy 4:11-12 and Titus 2:15.

Other causes for unbiblical sermons may include: hectic schedules, poorly maintained shepherding priorities, a lack of the Biblical requirement of being able to teach (1st Timothy 3:2; 2nd Timothy 2:24 [therefore, get out of the ministry!]), a lack of Biblical equipping in one's past, to name just a few.

It is not my intention to reproduce explanations of the entire hermeneutical-exegetical process. Other authors have explained that well already. Suffice it to say that the underlying assumption here is historical-grammatical-contextual exegesis.

This outline is aimed at directing our focus back to serious, deliberate, Godward sermon preparation. Too often in our sermon preparation we are tempted to be more concerned with the development of our own teaching/preaching outline. If we are to be making much of God in our sermons (and we should), let us make much of Him in our study!

Godward preparation of our HEARTS

- 1) Of the speaker
 - a) Prayer—Acts 6:4
 - i) Only God is able to open our eyes to understand His Word accurately—Psalm 119:18; Ephesians 1:15-23
 - ii) Only God is able to give us the grace to be diligent to handle accurately the Word of Truth—2nd Timothy 2:15
 - b) Reading—Acts 6:4; 1st Timothy 4:13; 2nd Timothy 4:13
 - i) Read the Scriptures, with a view toward God.
 - (1) Too often we read the Bible while focusing on salvation, the kingdom, sin, the church, etc. **God** is the focal point of the Word. Look for Him!
 - ii) Read Godward authors who direct your focus to God, not mankind.
 - (1) Previous generations—the Puritans, B. B. Warfield, John Calvin, Jonathan Edwards, Robert L. Dabney, Stephen Charnock, A. W. Pink, D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, etc.
 - (2) Current generation—John Piper, David Wells, Mark Dever, Albert Mohler, James R. White, J. I. Packer, Thomas Schreiner, Bruce Ware, Jerry Bridges, Jim Odens, John MacArthur, R. C. Sproul, Renald Showers, etc.
 - iii) Read systematic and Biblical theologies
 - c) Meditation/deliberately focused Godward thinking
 - i) Mark 8:33; Romans 8:5; 2nd Corinthians 3:5; Philippians 2:5-11; 3:7-8; 4:8; Colossians 3:1-4; Hebrews 11:26; 12:1-4

- d) Godward friendships
 - i) Encourage one another in God—1st Samuel 23:16; 2nd Timothy 1:16-18
- 2) Of the audience (Bryan Chapell (*Christ-Centered Preaching*) refers to this as the **Fallen Condition Focus**)
 - a) Regenerate
 - i) Prayer
 - Review *The Shepherd's Ministry of Prayer* from our April 29, 2005 gathering.
 - (2) Teach them how to pray for you as you minister God's Word to them.
 - (3) Remember 2nd Corinthians 1:11; Ephesians 6:18-20; 1st Thessalonians 5:25; 2nd Thessalonians 3:1-2; Hebrews 13:18
 - ii) Biblical in-shepherding
 - (1) Note the use of "among" in Acts 20:28; 1st Thessalonians 5:12; 1st Peter 5:1-2
 - (2) Get to know God's sheep: their spiritual habits, their failures, their struggles, their fears, their joys, etc.
 - (3) This demands:
 - (a) *prayerful observation* of all sheep by each shepherds
 - (b) *prayerful sensitivity* to both the Biblically detailed needs as well as the perceived needs of the individual sheep.
 - (c) *prayerfully sought wisdom* to distinguish perceived needs and genuine needs, and the grace to ascertain the wisest solution.
 - (d) *prayerful unity* among the shepherds.
 - (e) *a prayerful walking by the Spirit* by each individual shepherd.
 - b) Unregenerate
 - i) Don't forget 1st Corinthians 1:18; 2:14; 1st Peter 1:23, etc.
 - (1) Do you actually think that your clever outline is able to bring life to the spiritually dead? On whom does your faith rest, my friend?
 - ii) Only God can open the heart of the spiritually dead to believe the Truth—Acts 16:14
 - iii) Only God can cause the spiritually dead to obey the requirement to be born again—compare John 3:3, 7 [both passive]; 1st Peter 1:23 [passive]
 - iv) Only God can grant faith to the unbelieving—Ephesians 2:8-10; 2nd Peter 1:1

Godward preparation of our MINDS

- 1) Think **SITUATIONALLY**—how has God prepared the current circumstances for this teaching opportunity? Why are you planning to preach this passage to this audience at this time?
 - a) The speaker
 - The same teacher never teaches to the same audience twice. You have changed since the last time you taught them.
 - ii) What has God been doing in your personal life recently?
 - iii) It is not so much a matter of practicing what you preach, but preaching what you practice.

- b) The audience
The same teacher never teaches to the same audience twice. [not a typo!] They have changed since the last time you taught them.
- ii) Regenerate
(1) What has God been doing in the life of the assembly recently?
(2) What trials/testings are they undergoing right now?
- iii) Unregenerate
(1) What has God been doing in the life of the community recently?
(2) What providential disruptions of their man-centered faith are they undergoing individually right now?
- 2) Think GRAMMATICALLY and SYNTACTICALLY—**WHAT** God is saying in this passage
- a) Context
i) Read, read, and re-read the passage.
(1) Did I mention the importance of reading the passage? ☺
ii) Most of the **narrative** portions of the Scriptures are outlined by identifying the main themes chosen by the author(s).
- b) Syntax
i) Avail yourself of the various tools (computer software and books) on the market.
(1) Rogers & Rogers *Linguistic and Exegetical Key* is a valuable resource for this.
- c) Verbs/participles
i) Many of the **didactic** portions of the Scriptures are outlined by identifying these parts of speech.
(1) Michael Magill's *New Testament Transline* is a valuable resource for this.
- 3) Think THEOLOGICALLY—**WHY** God is saying what He says in this passage
- a) Remember, everything God does and says is for His own glory.
i) Review *God's Passion for His Glory* by John Piper and Jonathan Edwards.
- b) Practically, ask yourself the following questions:
i) Who **is** God, as revealed in this passage? What are His *excellencies*?
(1) Compare 1st Peter 2:9
ii) What does God **do**, as revealed in this passage? What are His *exploits*?
(1) Compare Psalm 66:5; 71:17; 73:28; 78:4, 7; 111:2
iii) What does God **desire**, as revealed in this passage? What are His *expectations*?
(1) Compare the various commands and principles of Scripture.
iv) What does God **deserve**, as revealed in this passage? What are His *exaltations*?
(1) Compare the various ways in which God receives the glory, praise, fame, etc.
- 4) Think TELEOLOGICALLY—what was God's purpose in having this particular passage communicated by the writer of Scripture his particular audience? What is God's purpose in communicating this particular passage to this particular audience at this time?
Read Jay E. Adams' *Preaching With Purpose* to understand the importance of the passage's purpose
- b) Ultimately—God's glory
i) See the previous section.

- c) Immediately—the spiritual good of the audience
 - i) Look for the PURPOSE clauses, including:
 - (1) ἵνα + subjunctive—e.g. 1st Peter 3:18
 - (2) Infinitives—e.g. 1st Timothy 1:15
 - (3) Adverbial participles—e.g. 1st Corinthians 4:14
 - (4) Relative pronoun οἷτινες—e.g. Matthew 21:41
 - ii) Look for RESULT clauses, including:
 - (1) Infinitives—e.g. Galatians 5:7
 - (2) Adverbial participles—e.g. John 5:18
 - (3) ἵνα + subjunctive—e.g. Romans 11:11
 - (4) Relative adverb ὅθεν—e.g. Hebrews 8:3
 - iii) Look for conjunctions, including:
 - (1) Causal—γάρ διότι ἐπεὶ ἐπειδὴ ὅτι ὡς
 - (2) Purpose—ἵνα ὅπως ὡς
 - (3) Result—ἵνα ὥστε
 - (4) Inferential—ἄρα διό οὖν τοίνυν ὥστε

Godward preparation of our BODIES

- 1) Speaker
 - a) Of physical condition
 - i) Appropriate rest during the week and the night before
 - ii) Appropriate exercise during the week
 - b) Of vocal condition
 - i) Gradually warm up your voice before speaking
 - (1) Perhaps talk with a voice coach, or reading about vocal conditioning
 - ii) Drink warm (not cold) water while speaking
- 2) Audience
 - a) Falling asleep during a message is nothing new! (Acts 20:9)
 - i) Be alert in your shepherding to those who work outdoors, especially during the cooler times of the year. Warmth and sitting still make staying awake a difficult thing. It may not be your teaching at all!
 - b) Teach the flock of God among you the Biblical principles of listening to sermons outlined by Jay Adams in *A Consumer's Guide to Preaching*.

Recommended Resource list

Philosophically

Adams, Jay E. 1991. *A Consumer's Guide to Preaching*. Wheaton: Victor Books ISBN: 0-89693-398-9

Adams, Jay E. 1983. *Preaching to the Heart*. Stanley, NC: Timeless Texts ISBN: 1-889032-34-4

Adams, Jay E. 2002. *Preaching with Purpose*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan ISBN: 0-310-51091-0

Chapell, Bryan. 2005. *Christ-Centered Preaching*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic ISBN: 0-8010-2798-5

Kistler, Don, ed. 2002. *Feed My Sheep*. Morgan, PA: Soli Deo Gloria Publications ISBN: 1-57358-144-5

Lloyd-Jones, D. Martyn. 1971. *Preaching and Preachers*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan ISBN: 0-310-27870-8

Mayhue, Richard L., ed. 1992. *Rediscovering Expository Preaching*. Dallas: Word Publishing ISBN: 0-8499-0908-2

Perkins, William. 1617, 1996 reprint. *The Art of Prophecy*. Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust ISBN: 0-85151-689-0

Reymond, Robert L. 2003. *The God-centered Preacher*. Fearn, Ross-shire, Scotland: Christian Focus Publications ISBN: 1-89752-896-2

Robertson, Archibald T. 1977. *The Minister and His Greek New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House ISBN: 0-8010-7647-1

Piper, John. 1990. *The Supremacy of God in Preaching*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House ISBN: 0-8010-7112-7

Kaiser, Walter C. Jr. 1981. *Toward an Exegetical Theology*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House ISBN: 0-8010-5425-7

Practically

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Rogers, Cleon L. Jr. & Rogers, Cleon L. III. 1998. *The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key to the Greek New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan ISBN: 0-310-20175-6

Fee, Gordon D. 1983. *New Testament Exegesis*. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press: Philadelphia ISBN: 0-664-24469-6

Magill, Michael. 2002. *New Testament Transline*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan ISBN: 0-310-22803-4