

Preaching 101

An Introductory Text and Workbook



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“And He said to them, “Go into the entire world and preach the gospel to all of creation.” – Mark 16:15

Restoration Movement Literature

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INTRODUCTION

This booklet is a basic how-to on preaching an expository sermon from the Bible.

This booklet is designed for an introductory course on preaching in the context of a local church. Worksheets are included for the purpose of learning how to take a text of Scripture and preach from it. For this reason, all the worksheets are practical, each helping build to a simple, complete, 10-15 minute long sermon.

This booklet and corresponding class can also be used to help prepare communion devotions or other kinds of “miniature sermons”. This booklet is for the aspiring preacher but also any man who simply desires to learn the basic craft behind preaching and teaching from the Bible. Its ultimate application could be used by any male leader or volunteer in the church, including an elder, deacon, teacher, or any other volunteer where public speaking in front of the congregation may be handy.

There are **TWO** cardinal rules of preaching that this study will follow:

1) We preach from a Scripture text; **even** topical sermons should have a base text from which the topic is discussed.

2) The Scripture text tells us how to structure our sermon; we do not force anything on the text, instead the text forces itself on us!

If the above two rules are followed, it is basically impossible to construct an ineffective sermon.

There are also TWO cardinal rules about preaching well that will be emphasized:

1) Getting comfortable in the pulpit and on stage is KEY to effective preaching. HOW we deliver a sermon is very important to whether or not our audience will not only hear truth, but truth in such a way they can understand and apply it.

For example, a steak dinner served hot and to the customer's liking will be eaten and remembered well. However, if that same steak dinner is served cold pureed in a cup, it will not be eaten at all, even though it is still a steak dinner! For the same reason, it is important not only to develop a solid, truthful sermon, but also how to "serve it up" in such a way that your audience receives real spiritual nourishment from it. Many preachers miss this point (sometimes for their whole careers!).

2) Preaching well is a life-long pursuit: few people preach well in the beginning, and even fewer learn how to preach well week after week. The beginning preaching student would do well to practice their sermon **dozens** of times before delivering it. The class this book is based on emphasizes A LOT of stage time for the above two reasons. The student would do well to keep in mind that practicing a sermon a lot not only benefits that sermon, but all future sermons given as well. Practice builds on itself each time.

PREACHING FROM A TEXT

The most important rule of effective preaching is that a sermon is always preached **FROM** a Bible text. Far too many preachers choose a topic, and then cherry-pick a plethora of verses to try to prove the preacher's point. If there is not a text of Scripture from which to base our sermon on (topical or not), then we should not preach it!

Likewise, a SERIES of sermons should be preached from a SERIES of Bible texts. This may be a Bible book, going verse by verse, or this may be a BIBLICAL topic, like the Parables or Miracles of Jesus. Either way, there will be a natural, from-Scripture approach to the sermon or sermon series, because each message will be based on a Scripture text, and not the preacher's imagination or agenda.

STEP #1:

1) CHOOSE A SCRIPTURE TEXT TO PREACH FROM

This step obviously has the most freedom to it. If this is the student's first time in developing a sermon, it is important to choose a Bible text that is both interesting to the student and has some length to it. Some examples:

- a) Bible stories (like David and Goliath, or one of Jesus' miracles)
- b) Bible sermons (like Peter's message in Acts 2, or Stephen's message in Acts 7)
- c) Bible circumstances (like preaching about one of the churches addressed in the book of Revelation)
- d) Bible doctrine (like discussing the Lord's Supper in detail from Matthew 26, Luke 22, or 1 Corinthians 10 or 11)

When first starting out preaching, it is important to pick a Bible text that the student is already passion about and then stay close to that text. What this means is if a new student picks a very short Bible text, it will be very tempting to say very little about that text, and instead wander into a dozen other texts. Instead, by choosing a first-time text that is

lengthier, there will be plenty of material to pull from for this first sermon that does not require or tempt the student to wander much into other, potentially unrelated texts.

So how long should a first time text be? For a first time, 10-15 minute sermon, this preacher recommends a Bible text no less than six verses in length (i.e. Bible doctrine sermon), but no more than a chapter (i.e. Bible story sermon). Some chapters can be very long (like Psalm 119!), so caution needs to be taken here. The nature of the text also tells us about how long or short of a Scripture text we can handle:

a) Bible stories: these tend to be longer texts, giving lots of detail that may or may not end up in the final product of a sermon. So, for a Bible story, dozens of verses may be part of the text chosen, but again, it is not wise to stretch beyond a chapter for a first sermon.

b) Bible sermons: it is not really possible to preach a sermon in the Bible without covering the sermon as it is presented in Scripture, so the length of the sermon will be the length of your text. For a first-time sermon, however, this can be a very intimidating kind of text to conquer. If a Bible sermon is chosen as a text, it is recommended to choose a shorter one than a longer one for the first time student.

c) Bible circumstances: this kind of sermon will require background and cultural study of the text to preach from it. For the first time preaching student, this is not recommended: the first goal should always be to learn to preach faithfully from a text first, and then as the student's preaching matures, then take on additional burdens to the sermon development process.

d) Bible doctrine: this is probably the most common kind of sermon among conservative churches, so there is a lot of reference and

commentary readily available for the student. It is important, however, that a Bible doctrine sermon does not have too long of a text. These are by far the most “dense” sermons, in that much truth can be said in just a few words. Very skilled preachers can preach well from just part of one verse, if he knows how to handle the Scripture in context of its surrounding text!

However, for the first time preaching student who chooses a Bible doctrine text, it is wise to choose a doctrine that is covered by at least six verses, but probably no more than twelve to fifteen verses. This will give ample material to dig from the text itself without having to wander elsewhere, but not too much where the sermon far exceeds its allotted time.

It is also important to realize that in longer texts, not every verse may be read: for example, in telling a lengthy Bible story (like David and Goliath, which stretches in 50+ verses), there may be geographical or scenic information that can be skipped for the sake of telling the story itself for the purpose of the sermon given.

STUDENT ASSIGNMENT #1:

CHOOSE YOUR BIBLE TEXT TO PREACH FROM.

WRITE YOUR CHOSEN BIBLE TEXT: _____

STEP #2:

2) LET THE TEXT TELL YOU WHAT THE TOPIC/TITLE IS

To avoid bringing in a personal or cultural agenda into a text, we have to treat the Bible as the Living Word of God that it is! (Hebrews 4:12) This means that when we read Scripture, it is NOT about imposing our views on it, but rather letting Scripture inform and transform us. For this reason, do NOT enter sermon development with a topic already in mind: instead, read the Scripture text you have chosen, and let it tell you what the topic or title of your sermon should be.

For this reason, you will NOT be choosing the title to your sermon at the beginning: any good author will actually tell you that the title (or at least the final title) comes after the book is mostly written, and then the book tells its author what the actual title of the work should be.

You might have “a working title” in mind; that is fine; however, to be faithful to the text, the student must be willing to change the title, topic, or even the entire approach originally in mind if the text demands it. Often times, this preacher has began sermon preparation for the week, and by the end of the week, there is a completely different sermon in front of me than what I had in mind! This is because the text rules the preacher, not the other way around.

One final thought: avoid sermon titles that are not immediately descriptive or are overly creative. This preacher once fell into that trap, and every preacher at one point in time or another tries to get “mega-churchy” with his approach to sermon series and titles. This will backfire for two simple reasons: you are not likely preaching in a mega-church, and often times “creative” sermon titles really just mean “vague” sermon titles. Let this preacher give the student an example from his past:

BAD SERMON TITLE: Pre-Natal Eugenics (yes, I really used this once)

GOOD SERMON TITLE: What the Bible says about Abortion

The second sermon title is not necessarily catchy or creative, but it says clearly what the sermon is about (this is all your audience really cares about in a title anyway; only preachers tend to care about the creative end of sermon titles). The first sermon title is certainly creative, but unless you know what “eugenics” was in early 20th century history, the title is absolutely useless.

Another problem with trying to be creative with titles is it is often a big waste of time: a preacher can spend hours, even days, trying to dream up a witty sermon title. Interestingly, the Bible never discusses sermon titles one way or the other because the preachers in the Bible were busy preaching Gospel truth instead of trying to swoon with gimmicky catch-phrases. Take a hint from that.

STUDENT ASSIGNMENT #2:

READ YOUR CHOSEN TEXT. DEVELOP A WORKING, STARTER TITLE FROM THE TEXT:

WHAT DOES THE **TEXT** TELL YOU IS THE TITLE OR TOPIC OF YOUR SERMON? _____

STEP #3:

3) READ THE WHOLE TEXT, AND THEN READ THE SURROUNDING TEXT WITH IT (Context)

This step is making sure that any preacher is approaching the Scripture in context of who, when, what, where, how, and why it was written. The surrounding Scriptures to our chosen text can tell us all those things. The preacher may or may not address each of the above in the sermon itself, but with all of the above information, it helps keep the preacher faithful to the text chosen to preach from.

Some examples:

a) If preaching a Bible story, read the chapter before and after your chosen Bible story text (if the text you are preaching from is from a short Bible book, like Jonah, it is recommended to read the whole book). This may tell you where the characters in your story were coming from, what they were doing beforehand, what led to the story you are preaching from, etc. This approach will also tell you what happened to the characters in your story after the fact, what the consequences were of your story, etc. All of this is helpful to giving your sermon “meat” to fill your outline.

b) If preaching a sermon given in the Bible, read the chapter before and after your chosen text (again, if the text you are preaching from is from a short Bible book, then it is recommended to read the whole book). This will tell you the circumstances leading up to the sermon being given, what happened after the sermon was given (such as who responded to it), etc. Again, this will give your sermon outline additional, valuable “meat” to preach from.

c) If preaching a Bible circumstance, read the chapter before and after your chosen text. If the text you are preaching from is from a short Bible book, go ahead and read the whole book. This will inform you why this particular circumstance came about, what situations, churches, or other people surrounded or were involved in it, and why it matters to the Bible book it is presented in.

d) If preaching a Bible doctrine, read the chapter before and after your chosen text. If the text you are preaching from is a short Bible book, it is recommended to read the whole book. This will inform you as to why the author is talking about that particular doctrine, and where it fits in with the other Bible doctrines discussed in that same book or by that same author.

All of the above is designed to do ONE thing: keep your text faithful to the Bible!

STUDENT ASSIGNMENT #3:

READ THE CHAPTER BEFORE AND AFTER YOUR BIBLE TEXT. IF THE BOOK IS SHORT, READ THE WHOLE BOOK.

WRITE DOWN **TWO** FACTS FROM THE SURROUNDING TEXTS THAT TELLS YOU SOMETHING ABOUT YOUR TEXT:

a) _____

b) _____

STEP #4:

4) FROM THE PREVIOUS STEPS, LET THE TEXT AND CONTEXT (SURROUNDING TEXTS) DICTATE YOUR OUTLINE.

An outline should take the major points and keywords from your text and put it into a 1, 2, 3 format.

Outlines are best learned from example, so Matthew 26:26-29 will be used as a base text to take a basic outline from:

“²⁶ While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, “Take and eat; this is my body.” ²⁷ Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you. ²⁸ This is my blood of the ^[b] covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. ²⁹ I tell you, I will not drink from this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.”

Example Outline from the above Text and Context:

WORKING TITLE: Jesus introduces the Lord’s Supper

CONTEXT (from surrounding texts): Right before Jesus introduced the Lord’s Supper, the disciples had prepared the Passover meal that Jesus would then use to introduce communion (26:17-19). Jesus also confirmed that Judas would betray him (26:20-25), and therefore Jesus’ arrest was imminent (26:31-50). This story was a sacred, eternally-important moment amidst the chaos that was shortly coming!

Point 1 (From Verse 26): Jesus tells his disciples to eat the bread that represents His body.

Point 2 (From Verses 27+28): Jesus tells his disciples to drink from the cup, which represents His blood, and what that blood means.

Point 3 (From Verses 29): Jesus tells his disciples that this will not be the last time He participates in the Lord's Supper with them, but it will not be until after "the Kingdom of God" is established.

The above outline breaks down the story of Jesus establishing the Lord's Supper into its background information and each of the outline's points from three facts directly taken from the text. The rest of the "meat" of the sermon can be then researched and given its place in the outline the text has given us.

It is very important to realize that each text has its own unique number of points and context: in fact, the student may discover that he has chosen a text that is too short or too long depending on how many points and keywords the student finds the text has! This is the step where modifying how many verses of the chosen text the student should preach from is finalized.

STUDENT ASSIGNMENT #4:

WHAT OUTLINE DOES THE TEXT GIVE YOU? SEPARATE KEY POINTS AND KEY WORDS INTO A 1, 2, 3, FORMAT. START WITH WRITING 2-3 SHORT SENTENCES ABOUT THE SURROUNDING TEXTS (CONTEXT):

CONTEXT: _____

KEY POINTS AND KEY WORDS OUTLINE:

STEP #5:

5) FIND OTHER SCRIPTURES THAT RELATE YOUR TEXT AND READ FAITHFUL RESOURCES ABOUT YOUR TEXT.

This step will be broken down into two distinct sub-steps:

a) Using a concordance, in print or electronic, to find other Scriptures relating to your text.

b) Using good commentaries and other resources to learn more about your text.

Using a concordance of any kind is very easy: major key words can be looked up in any concordance like a dictionary and other Scriptures using those same keywords will be listed. This makes finding relevant other Scriptures easy and quick!

However, there are two very important rules in using a concordance:

a) The farther away a newly discovered verse is from your chosen text, the better chances it has of having a completely different context. For this reason, is important not only to read the new verses that you discover, but also to read the verses surrounding those verses as well (context). If the context fits, the verse is useable as alliteration to your chosen text. If the context is different, the verse should not be used. Verses that are not even in the same Testament bear special caution.

b) English words are sometimes the same when the original Greek word is not. Without an interlinear (a book or electronic tool that gives you the Greek right along with the English in any given Bible

passage), there is no way to know if the English and Greek words match from text to text. Therefore, again, studying the surrounding texts (context) is very important to being sure other verses will be appropriately used.

A very useful, free, multi-translation concordance available free on the Internet is www.biblegateway.com. Your preacher uses this incredibly useful resource daily.

As well, www.biblehub.com's free interlinear can be accessed by Googling a Bible verse with the word "interlinear" behind it. For example, type the following into www.google.com's search bar:

"Matthew 26:26 interlinear" (without the quotes) and then press ENTER on your keyboard.

The first entry will be www.biblehub.com's interlinear (Greek/English) on that particular verse. Click on that entry, and then you can click on individual Greek words below each word printed in English to learn more about what those words mean and where else those words are used in Scripture. The above method works for Old Testament verses and therefore for Hebrew words. For basic word studies, this free resource is unbeatable.

Secondly, using good commentaries and other resources is all about getting another preacher or scholar's opinion on what your text means.

For this reason – especially for the beginning preacher – it is very important to read only like-minded authors. This means sticking with authors and scholars that only present Biblical, New Testament ideas, not denominational or liberal ones. If the student is unsure about a particular author, it is very wise to ask your preacher or an elder

regarding a particular author before studying their resource. If the student quotes a questionable author in his sermon, that quote can literally ruin the credibility of your sermon, and possibly even harm your personal credibility. For this reason, it is important to check all resources in advance! Even a quick Google search on the author's background can be immediately helpful.

FINAL TIP: Digging into commentaries and other resources should come LAST in your sermon development. By then, your sermon has its working title/topic, outline, and background informed by the text itself, the surrounding text, and other Scriptures informing it as well.

Therefore, any information found in commentaries or elsewhere can be directly compared to what you have already discovered on solid ground. If the research you find complements (agrees with, helps, aids) your present information, then use it. If the research you find contradicts the Bible study you have done so far, discard it and move on. It is outside the realm of sermon development to get on a rabbit trail and chase every potential falsehood.

STUDENT ASSIGNMENT #5

USING A CONCORDANCE (PRINT OR ELECTRONIC), FIND TWO VERSES THAT FIT YOUR CHOSEN TEXT. BE SURE TO READ THOSE VERSES' SURROUNDING TEXTS (CONTEXT) IN ORDER TO MAKE SURE THAT THEY FIT YOUR WORKING TEXT'S TITLE, OUTLINE, AND OVERALL MEANING.

Verse 1 (write the verse out): _____

Verse 2: (write this verse out): _____

USING GOOD COMMENTARIES FROM LIKE-MINDED,
NEW TESTAMENT AUTHORS, WRITE DOWN TWO USEFUL
FACTS YOU HAVE LEARNED ABOUT YOUR TEXT:

Fact 1: _____

Fact 2: _____

STEP #6:

6) IF THEY FIT, USE ILLUSTRATIONS FROM LIFE TO HELP EXPLAIN YOUR TEXT.

Often times, illustrations are “forced” upon sermons. Many professors who teach preaching in Bible Colleges will say that all sermons “need” an opening illustration and many other illustrations throughout the sermon.

This preacher disagrees. I only use illustrations if it really “fits” the text, and the illustration is not canned (and therefore likely already heard many times before). As much as possible, this preacher recommends the student use illustrations from their own life or illustrations from real events in the world, but again – only if it fits your chosen Bible text.

The above is also why illustrations need to be the last part of a student’s sermon study. This preacher has witnessed entire sermons given that were really just an excuse to tell a good story. As well, some preachers never really “preach much” because they have so many illustrations (i.e. stories), so they never really get around to saying much about what the Bible says on a particular subject. Don’t end up preaching “sermonettes” because your sermon is ultimately more story than Bible.

Illustrations also do not have necessary minimum lengths. A simple outside fact that supports your sermon’s message may be a single sentence. A story might only be a few sentences if it is only those facts about the story that pertain to your sermon.

Do not get hung up on illustrations. Either they fit, or they do not fit. On occasion, an entire sermon may not have a single illustration, if it

is otherwise full of interesting, useful, and imminently practical and helpful Bible material.

An example, helpful illustration for our Matthew 26:26-29 outline above helps describe the purpose behind the Lord’s Supper:

“Jesus says in Matthew 26:27+28 to drink from the cup in the Lord’s Supper because it represents His blood. Why does His blood matter? All the way back in Leviticus 17:11+14, God told us a medical fact that to this day stands: “in the blood is life.” Red Cross today has a slogan to encourage people to give blood, and that slogan is, “Give life.” Why? Because life is in the blood!, just as God has always said!”

The above illustration is a single paragraph, a total of six sentences long. It takes less than 30 seconds to read aloud. It supports the text by giving both a Biblical and corresponding “real life” example. The above illustration is a good example of future illustrations the preaching student may decide to use in their sermons.

STUDENT ASSIGNMENT #6

THINK OR READ ABOUT ONE ILLUSTRATION FROM LIFE AND/OR SCRIPTURE THAT HELPS EXPLAIN YOUR TEXT:

STEP #7 AND STUDENT ASSIGNMENT #7:

7) COMBINE ALL OF THE ABOVE INTO ONE, MORE COMPLETE OUTLINE.

On separate paper, either write out or type out your outline from the above, including as sub-points your extra research: 1) surrounding verses to your text, 2) other Scripture references discovered with a concordance or interlinear, and 3) other research learned from commentaries and other resources.

An example, filled-out outline from Matthew 26:26-29:

TEXT: Matthew 26:26-29

WORKING TITLE: Jesus introduces the Lord's Supper

BACKGROUND (from context): Right before Jesus introduced the Lord's Supper, the disciples had prepared the Passover meal that Jesus would then use to introduce communion (26:17-19). The Passover was originally established as a regular reminder to Israel how God rescued them from Egypt (Exodus 12). Now, the Lord's Supper would serve as a weekly reminder to all of God's people everywhere how God has rescued us from our sin!

Jesus also confirmed that Judas would betray him (26:20-25), and therefore Jesus' arrest was imminent (26:31-50). Betrayal is unique among sins, because only a friend can betray (from George L. Faull's commentary on the whole Bible, *The Eternal Struggle*): Jesus had trained up Judas for three years along with the others, but Judas would sell his potential Apostleship and sacred education away for thirty pieces of silver! (26:15)

So this story of Jesus establishing the Lord's Supper was a sacred, eternally-important moment amidst the chaos that was shortly coming!

READ MATTHEW 26:26-29

Point 1 (From Verse 26): Jesus tells his disciples to eat the bread that represents His body.

Sub-point 1: Jesus' death was necessary for salvation (1 John 2:2). We cannot be saved any other way (Acts 4:12).

Sub-point 2: The very first sacrifice that covered man's shame (Genesis 3:21) would now be fulfilled in the very last sacrifice that can cover any man's sin (1 John 4:10).

Point 2 (From Verses 27+28): Jesus tells His disciples to drink from the cup, which represents His blood, and what that blood means.

Sub-point 1: All the way back in Leviticus 17:11+14 (and confirmed again in John 6:53-56), God tells us a fact about blood that medicine to this day confirms: that life is in the blood. In fact, even Red Cross' slogan today is, "Give life", and what do they mean by that? To give blood!

Sub-point 2: Some people will say that Christianity is such a "bloody" religion. A good counter is to say, "You mean that Christianity is a religion full of life!" Truly, life is in the blood, both by God's testimony and modern medical knowledge. (Illustration)

Point 3 (From Verses 29): Jesus tells his disciples that this will not be the last time He participates in the Lord's Supper with them, but it will not be until after "the Kingdom of God" is established.

Sub-point 1: The Kingdom of God was established when the first new believers were baptized in Acts 2:41. Immediately, then, they began to participate in the Lord's Supper in Acts 2:42. Jesus joined them, as He said, and therefore, He joins us every week around His table!

Sub point 2: The early church met on the first day of the week for the primary purpose of having the Lord's supper (Acts 20:7). This is why we should not miss church, as Paul says (Hebrews 10:25).

STEP #8:

8) DEVELOP AN INVITATION BASED ON YOUR SERMON.

Just as Peter did in Acts 2, the preacher will give an opportunity for people to respond to his message as a conclusion to it.

An invitation may be short (a few sentences) or a few paragraphs. It may be given with the invitation song quietly played in the background, or given without musical accompaniment:

The most important thing is that your invitation concludes your message to what singular point: how can your audience respond to what has been preached from the Word of God? If your sermon cannot answer that question, your sermon needs some rework to make sure that it can.

A sermon is by-nature good if it elicits any of the following responses: 1) a decision to follow Christ in repentance and baptism, 2) a rededication of an existing Christian to follow Christ more carefully again, 3) a commitment to serve the Church or enter ministry, or 4) (this was one is not necessarily seen) people leave the church ready to apply what they have learned.

Regardless if anyone “walks down the aisle” or not during the invitation song, the preacher’s job is to make the plea to respond based on what he has been preached from God’s Word.

An example invitation for the Matthew 26:26-29 sermon outline above is the following:

“When Jesus introduced the Lord’s Supper, He was introducing more than a memorial – although the Lord’s Supper is a memorial. He was introducing a concept that would then echo throughout the rest of the New Testament and even today, and that is His body and blood were given for us because that is the only way we can be saved (Acts 4:12).

Jesus died on a cross, represented by this memorial, for your sins and mine. He told us how in Matthew 28:18-20 and Mark 16:16 how to receive that forgiveness. Peter repeats the same things in Acts 2:38, and so we say the same: “repent and be baptized, for the forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit.” Friend, you are invited today to that same forgiveness and that same hope. Do not delay; during the invitation song, respond to Jesus’ love today.”

The above invitation is two paragraphs, about eleven sentences. It takes about a minute to read aloud. It could be read to or without background music. It sums up the sermon given and gives a plea for the audience to respond based on the sermon given. This is the basic goal of any sermon’s invitation.

STUDENT ASSIGNMENT #8

WRITE OUT AN INVITATION BASED ON YOUR
SERMON’S TEXT AND DEVELOPED OUTLINE:

STEP #9:

9) BEGIN PRACTICING/REHEARSING YOUR SERMON OUT LOUD. (This is NOT an optional step!!)

Take your developed outline from step #7, add your invitation at the end, and begin reading it aloud.

Reading aloud various points, sub-points, illustrations, and other parts of your sermon will help you “hear” what you have been writing down this whole time. When we hear things, we find out if 1) they make sense as they are written, and 2) if the message is flowing as a whole.

This is when adjustments are made to how something in a sermon outline sounds, and thus, it is a very important step. Again, if a sermon is served well, it will be received well! If a sermon sounds awkward or has out of place information or illustration, it will fail to be received by the audience, regardless of the good information otherwise contained in it.

STUDENT ASSIGNMENT #9

READ ALOUD YOUR COMPLETED SERMON OUTLINE AT LEAST TWICE, CHANGING WORDING AS NECESSARY TO MAKE YOUR MESSAGE MAKE SENSE, SOUND CLEAR, AND READ WELL.

THEN, READ YOUR FINISHED PRODUCT IN FRONT OF A FRIEND OR THE CLASS. TAKE THEIR CRITICISMS WELL!! THIS IS NOT A COMPETITION, BUT DO WHAT IS NECESSARY TO MAKE YOUR SERMONS BETTER. YOU DO NOT HAVE TO TAKE ALL THE ADVICE GIVEN, BUT IF YOU REFUSE ALL ADVICE GIVEN, CHECK YOUR PRIDE. NOBODY IS PERFECT.

STEP #10:

10) CHOOSE WHETHER YOU WILL PREACH FROM YOUR COMPLETED OUTLINE OR YOU WILL WRITE OUT YOUR SERMON WORD FOR WORD AS A TRANSCRIPT.

Some sermons benefit from a transcript. Others benefit more from being preached more freely from an outline. Here are some guidelines how you can tell:

1) Does your sermon need to fit into a tight time frame? If yes, then write out your sermon word for word as you will preach it (a transcript).

2) Are you comfortable preaching from an outline, or do you need to know every word you will say before you say it?

3) Is your sermon very information packed? If so, a word for word transcript will allow you to be as specific as you want to be instead of relying on memory.

For example, this preacher transcribes his morning sermons while using an outline for evening sermons. This is because the morning services are tight for time, and it is important to deliver the same sermon in both services as much as possible. However, at night, there is only one service, the time requirements are more relaxed, and the sermons benefit from a “free” approach with the specific crowd that is present.

Sometimes, the latter is called, “Spirit-led preaching”, but I reject this label. A sermon meticulously prepared in advance can be just as “Spirit-led” as one given more freely.

STUDENT ASSIGNMENT #10

IF YOU WILL BE PREACHING FROM AN OUTLINE, YOU MUST PRACTICE YOUR SERMON **MORE** THAN IF DELIVERING FROM A TRANSCRIPT.

IF YOU WILL BE PREACHING FROM A TRANSCRIPT, YOU MUST TYPE OUT YOUR SERMON EXACTLY AS YOU WILL PREACH IT AND THEN READ AND PREACH IT OVER TO CORRECT ANY SPELLING/GRAMMAR/FLOW ERRORS.

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT!! Just like muscle memory in any sport, practicing preaching over and over again – in different venues and in front of different people as well – will develop “preaching memory” in your brain going forward. The student can ask any preacher – learning preaching is an art form that never ends.

FINAL ASSIGNMENT

PRACTICE YOUR SERMON AT LEAST ONCE IN FRONT OF THE CLASS ITSELF OR IN A CHURCH PULPIT SOMEWHERE, EVEN WITHOUT AN AUDIENCE, IF NECESSARY.

You must have at least one actual-environment practice session before giving a prepared sermon (either from transcript or an outline). This is necessary so that when the day of delivery comes in front of an actual church body, you are NOT focused on how you feel, or nerves, or anything other than one thing: **PREACHING TO THE GLORY OF GOD!**

CONCLUSION

This booklet attempts to layout a very basic, standardized approach to preaching a standard, expository, 10-15 minute sermon. Future classes and booklets will focus on developing individual parts of the sermon (especially research and delivery) more specifically.

The student is encouraged to study their Bible in advance of being asked to preach. Any preacher knows to have a sermon in his pocket, ready to go, because the call of God does not always come with advance warning! Practicing regularly, preparing sermons even before a venue is scheduled, and developing a deep, regular prayer life will all help prepare any preacher for any calling God has in mind, or any challenge Satan throws at us.