HOW TO PREPARE A MEANINGFUL SERMON

Lay Preaching
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Section 1:

Tools for the Speaker to Use
THE EXPERTS SAY...

- The experts say that for every minute of public speaking there should be one hour of preparation. That would make 30 hours of preparation for a 30 minute sermon.

- This is not practical for the average lay person.

- So how do you prepare a short and simple sermon?
TOOLS FOR THE PREACHER

The Bible:

- Read the passage through a few times
- Think about it and picture it in your mind
- Use various versions of the Bible
Bible Concordance:

- Lists every word in the Bible in alphabetical order and shows the texts where that word is used.

- If you are doing a study on “reverence”, it would list every text where that word is used.

- Many concordances also give you the original Hebrew or Greek word and its definition (Lexicon).
Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance:

Lev 19:30 “reverence my sanctuary” 3372
I Kgs 1:31 “and did reverence to the king” 7812
Eph 5:33 “wife see that she reverence her husband” 5399

3372 “yare”: to fear, to revere, to be afraid
7812 “shachah”: prostrate, bow, humbly beseech
Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance:

Gen 50:17: “Forgive, I pray thee now the trespass” 5375 (Hebrew)
Matt 6:12: “Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors” 863 (Greek)

5375 “nasa” or “nacah”: to carry away, pardon, to bear
863 “aphiemi”: lay aside, omit, send away
MAIN CONCORDANCE.

forgive  See also FORGAVE; FORGIVEN; FORGIVETH; FORGIVING.

Ge  50:17  F. I pray thee now the trespass.  5375
     17 f the trespass of the servants of the
Ex  10:17  Now therefore f. I pray thee, my
     32:32  Yet now, if thou wilt f their sin—;
Nu  30: 5  the Lord shall f her, because her 5545
     8 effect: and the Lord shall f her.  
     12 void; and the Lord shall f her.  
Jos  24:19  he will not f your transgressions 5375
1Sa  25:28  I pray thee, f the trespass of thine
1Ki  8:30  and when thou hearest, f.  5545
     34 and f the sin of thy people Israel, 
     36 and f the sin of thy servants, 
     39 heaven thy dwelling place, and f. 
     50 And f thy people that have sinned 
2Ch  6:21  heaven; and when thou hearest, f. 
     25 hear thou from the heavens, and f 
     27 hear thou from heaven, and f.
• Love my friends
• Love chocolate
• Love my wife

*We use the same word to describe three different kinds of love.

In the Greek, three different words are used for the English word “love.”
Bible Commentary:

- Excellent tool for explaining the meaning of a text and giving background info.

- Example: Why did Jesus tell Saul to stop kicking against the goads in Acts 9:5?

- Example: Why did Ruth lay down beside Boaz’s feet in Ruth 3:7?
Bible Dictionary or Encyclopedia:
Look up information about people, places, and things

- People (Jonah)
- Places (Nineveh)
- Customs (Ruth laying by Boaz’s feet)
- Tools (Yoke)
- Phrases (Kicking against the goads)
- Food (Unleavened bread)
- Plants or Flowers (Rose of Sharon)
Books written by Ellen White:

Excellent tools for helping a person to understand the Bible better

- **Patriarchs and Prophets:** Genesis-Kings
- **Prophets and Kings:** Kings-Malachi
- **Desire of Ages:** Matthew-John
- **Acts of the Apostles:** Acts-Revelation
Books written by Ellen White:

- *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*: The Sermon on the Mount

- *Christ’s Object Lessons*: The parables
Section 2:

How to Prepare For a Sermon
Choosing a subject:

- What have you learned or experienced recently?

- What are the needs of your church? (*family, faith, witnessing, unity*)

- Do not pick controversial subjects

- Do not pick your favorite hobby horse.
Studying the subject:

- Find a passage that talks about the subject. A topical Bible may be helpful.

- Use the study tools to learn more about the passage.
  - Various versions of the Bible
  - SDA Commentary
  - Ellen White books
  - Prayer and meditation
Studying the subject:

- Take notes. Write down what you learn
- This will take a few hours
- Summarize what lesson you want to teach in one sentence.
Sermon on faithfulness:

- You might choose the passage in Daniel 1:1-15 about Daniel’s faithfulness

- You would study this passage using the study tools and take notes

- Summarize what you want to teach in one sentence: *God calls His people to stand up for their convictions*
Sermon on witnessing:

- You would study this passage using the tools. Write down what strikes you.
- Summarize what you want to teach in one sentence: *Jesus calls us to build relationships with lost people.*
Section 3:

How to Construct a Sermon
Four Parts to a Sermon:

- Introduction: Story introducing subject
- Body: Describe the passage
- Conclusion: Bring out the lessons
- Appeal: Ask for a decision
1. Introduction:

- A story introducing the subject
- An interesting fact or statistic
- A question
- A current news item
- A life experience
2. Body:

- Explain the passage
- Describe it with feeling and emotion
- Describe what is happening in the passage and why. Make it interesting.
- Use the notes you took from your study time.
3. Conclusion:

- Share 1-2 lessons we can learn from the passage
- Explain how the lessons relate to life today

http://atabsh.files.wordpress.com/2012/01/lessons-learned.jpg
4. **Appeal:**

The whole point of a sermon is to influence people to make a decision or take an action.

- Ask the people to make a decision based on the lessons they’ve learned
- Ask them to take an action
Types of Appeals:

- Bowing heads in seat and praying
- Raising hands
- Standing
- Altar call having people come forward
- Decision cards
WHY MAKE APPEALS?

- **Expression Deepens Impression:** Taking an action strengthens the decision. It is important to take an outward action to deepen an inward decision.

- We do the same with baptisms + weddings.

- Jesus made the bleeding woman express her faith, even though He already knew who touched Him. (Mark 5)
Example of Faithfulness Sermon Using Daniel 1:1-15

Introduction:

*Story of how I compromised my convictions about the Sabbath
Example of Faithfulness Sermon
Using Daniel 1:1-15

Body:

- Read the passage of Daniel 1:1-15 and describe it
- Describe Babylon attacking Jerusalem
- Describe young men taken captive
- Describe adjusting to new environment
- Describe the pressure to fit in
- Describe Daniel’s dilemma with eating the food
- Describe Daniel’s steadfastness
Example of Faithfulness Sermon Using Daniel 1:1-15

Conclusion (Bring out the lesson):

- God calls us to be faithful even in the small matters of life

  - Expand on this lesson
  - Share an illustration
Example of Faithfulness Sermon Using Daniel 1:1-15

Appeal:

- Ask if there are areas of compromise in our life.

- “If you would like to say, ‘Yes Lord. I will stand for my convictions at all times. Please help me not to compromise my beliefs’-- then I invite you to raise your hand.”
Four Parts to the Sermon (Daniel 1:1-15):

- **Introduction:** Story of Sabbath compromise
- **Body:** Describe the passage in detail
- **Conclusion:** God calls His people to stand for their convictions even in the small matters.
- **Appeal:** Ask the people for a commitment to stand for their convictions when tested.
Example of Sermon on Witnessing Using Luke 5:27-32

Introduction:

- *Story of finding something lost
- Story of forming a friendship with a non-believer
- Statistic of how many people don’t know God
Example of Sermon on Witnessing

Body:

- Read the passage of Luke 5:27-32 and describe it.
- Describe Jesus calling Matthew.
- Describe Matthew’s response.
- Describe the party.
- Describe what tax collectors are like.
- Describe the Pharisees’ criticism.
- Describe Jesus’ response.
Conclusion (Bring out the lesson):

- Christ calls us to seek and save the lost.
- Christ calls us to build friendships with lost people.
Example of Sermon on Witnessing Using Luke 5:27-32

Appeal:

- Ask the people to make a commitment to building friendships with lost people

- “Christ calls us to be missionaries to the lost. Today, if you are willing to say, ‘Yes, Lord. I will be your missionary. I give you permission to bring a Matthew across my path.’ then I invite you to come forward as we sing. . .
Example of Sermon on Witnessing

Appeal:

- Today, if you want to say, “Lord, create in me a passion for the lost. Bring someone into my life that I can be a witness to”, then I invite you come forward as we sing. By coming forward, you are inviting God to use you to befriend someone for Christ.
Summary

Four Parts to the Sermon (Luke 5:27-32):

- **Introduction:** Story of finding something lost.
- **Body:** Describing the passage in detail.
- **Conclusion:** God calls us to build friendships with the lost.
- **Appeal:** Ask the people for commitment to be a missionary and spend time with lost people.
EXAMPLES OF SERMONS

- Take a look at examples of sermons on paper.
- Look at expository sermon and topical sermon
Topical Sermon

I. Introduction

- Story or something interesting to introduce the subject
- A recent news item
- An eye opening statistic
Topical Sermon

II. Body

• First text:
  • Describe what’s happening in the text
  • Talk about the lesson it teaches

• Second text:
  • Describe what’s happening in the text
  • Talk about the lesson it teaches

• Third text:
  • Describe what’s happening in the text
  • Talk about the lesson it teaches
Topical Sermon

III. Conclusion

• Summarize the lessons learned from the texts.
Topical Sermon

IV. Appeal

- Invite the congregation to make a decision or take on action on the lessons they’ve learned.

I. Introduction

- Story of Johnny coming into the house and accidentally seeing his parents watch something inappropriate on TV.
The Christian’s TV Guide

II. Body

- First text: Psalm 101:2-4
  - Describe what’s happening in the text
  - Being careful what we put before our eyes

- Second text: Matthew 15:18-20
  - Describe what’s happening in the text
  - What I watch goes into my heart and comes out in my life.

- Third text: Philippians 4:8
  - Describe what’s happening in the text
  - Focus on what is good and edifying.
III. Conclusion

- God wants me to walk with a perfect or righteous heart. I must be careful what I put before my eyes.

- What I put before my eyes will affect me. It goes into my heart and comes out again in my life.

- Watch those things which are good, pure, and uplifting.
IV. Appeal

- Invite the people to re-evaluate their viewing habits. Invite them to make good choices of what they put before their eyes.

- Are you willing to say... “Lord speak to me about what I put before my eyes. Show me if there’s something that needs to change. Help me to make good decisions on what I allow into my heart and mind.”
Section 4:

Principles of Public Speaking
• Spend time praying over your message
• Adequately prepare: whether you write a manuscript or make an outline
• Don’t read the sermon. Speak from the heart.

• Be passionate about your message.
• Keep it simple and easy to understand.

• Don’t use difficult language.
- Be positive and smile.
- If you must say something negative or challenging, use yourself as an example.
Do not apologize or say the sermon won’t be good.
• Make eye contact with people. It keeps them awake.

• Keep it short and to the point
• Get your audience involved.
  • Raising hands
  • Finish a sentence
  • Look up a text
  • Read with you
  • Invite “amens.”
  • Ask a question
• Make a strong appeal at the end.
“There is no limit to the usefulness of one who, putting self aside, makes room for the working of the Holy Spirit upon his heart, and lives a life wholly consecrated to God.”

The Desire of Ages, p 250
“Your success will not depend so much upon your knowledge and accomplishments, as upon your ability to find your way to the heart.”

Evangelism, p. 141
PROJECT

- Prepare and preach two sermons in your church over the next 3-4 months.

- Invite someone (or your pastor) to evaluate your sermon based on these principles. Listen to a tape or watch a video of your sermon.
Section 5:

Types of Appeals
Types of Appeals For Getting Decisions
Raising Hands or Standing

- This is very general appeal
- Helps people become comfortable with responding.
- Good appeal to start with in a series of if you’re not used to making appeals
- Most people respond to this
Time of Silent Prayer in Pew

- This is very general appeal
- More of a private decision. Requires little action.
- Could be used for sensitive subjects. *Ex: unforgiveness, sexual purity, etc.*
- Music could be playing softly during this time
Altar Call

- Requires a major step of action
- This really deepens the decision
- Encourages others to respond when they see people coming forward
- Don’t worry if no comes forward
- People can come forward during closing song
Decision Cards

- This requires a major step of action
- This really deepens the impression
- Gives people who wouldn’t go forward a chance to respond
- A little more private
- Gives you a chance to respond with a personal visit. This is very important.
- Go over the card with them
Making Your Own Decision Cards

- 1\textsuperscript{st} Line: is it clear (intellectual)
- 2\textsuperscript{nd} Line: half step in the decision
- 3\textsuperscript{rd} Line: ask for commitment
- 4\textsuperscript{th} Line: request material or visit or ask a question
Sabbath Decision Card

____  It is clear to me that the seventh-day Sabbath in an important Bible truth

____  I want to follow Jesus in my life

____  I choose to follow Jesus by honoring His seventh day Sabbath

____  I have some questions and would like a visit
General Decision Card

____  The subject we studied today is clear to me

____  I am choosing to follow Jesus in this matter

____  I would like prayer concerning this matter

____  There are some obstacles in my life and I would like to talk to someone.

____  I would like to prepare for baptism
Language of the Appeal

- Be specific in your appeal
- Be positive, not negative or belittling.
- Make sure they understand what you are asking them to do.
- If they come forward, when and where?
- Repeat the appeal
Would you like to others to see the character of Jesus in you? Would you like to be more patient and kind with people?

This morning are you willing to say, “Lord, make me more like You. Create in me a loving heart. Come into my life and enable me to be more patient and kind to others”?
Example of Appeal for character of Jesus

• If you would like Jesus to do this in your life, then I invite you to come forward when we sing the closing song and stand with me here at the altar.

• By coming forward you are saying, “Lord, make me more like You.” You may starting coming forward when we begin singing the first verse of the closing song.
Example of Appeal for Tithing

- God is asking you to submit the financial side of your life to Him. He is asking you to step out and trust Him.

- Today, if you would like to say, “Lord, I want to be a faithful steward. I want to submit all my life to you. I choose to return a faithful tithe and trust you to take care of me....”
Example of Appeal for Tithing

- Then I invite you to come forward as we sing our closing song. You may come forward as we sing the first verse.

- Or..... Then I invite you to raise your hand as we pray.

- Begin praying. During the prayer repeat the appeal and ask for raised hands.
Example of Appeal to be a Witness

- God is looking for people who will say, "Here I am Lord, you can use me." Would you like to be used by Jesus this week to touch someone's heart? Would you like to tell God that you're available for service?

- Are you willing to say, "Lord, if there's someone who needs to feel the love of Jesus this week, then bring them across my path. I'm available if you want to use me this week."
Example of Appeal to be Witness

It might be someone in your family, someone at work, someone at school, some in your neighborhood. It might even be a total stranger.

But if you want to say, “Lord Jesus, if someone needs your love this week, then I give you permission to use me......”

Then I invite you to stand with me as we pray.
Example of Appeal with Decision Card

- We’ve heard God’s Word today. Perhaps the Holy Spirit is speaking to your heart. Perhaps there are some decisions you need to make.

- I’d like to give you the opportunity to respond to the Lord’s Spirit. Please take out the yellow card in your pew....... 

- Review the card and tell them where to put it.
Combining Personal and Public Appeals
Altar Call and Group Prayer

- Make an altar call and have people come forward
- Invite people to join you in a corner of the sanctuary or another room after the service
- Have special prayer with those who came forward. Invite others to pray.
- Let anyone who wants share a testimony.
Have a Special Prayer Room

- Make a public appeal (example: raising of hands)
- But let people know there is a special prayer room where they can go for someone to pray with them.
- This gives them opportunity for personal interaction
REMEMBER THE MAIN POINT

TO GET DECISIONS,

YOU MUST ASK FOR THEM
ccosda.org/evangelismtraining