

Homiletics Course – Effective Preaching For Today - Lesson 1

Son, the world doesn't need to hear what you think. What it needs is to hear what God thinks. Go home and get down on you knees with your Bible and stay there until you know what God thinks. And the next time you stand up to preach, tell the people what God thinks. Otto Reidberg, as spoken to Dennis Kinlaw, Preaching In The Spirit, p. 10

It is the living Word of God that _____ the kingdom of God. You and I are not going to build the kingdom; the living Word will do it. When that written Word is quickened by the Holy Spirit and becomes alive within us, we become instruments of the Spirit to do the work of proclamation and evangelism.

Before you or I will be able to preach effectively, the Word of God must come alive for us. We must not only present the Bible as the Word of truth, but as the Word of truth about us and for us. In order for our preaching to be effective, the scripture must be presented in such a way that it speaks to the _____ of the person hearing it. This can only happen through the enlightening power of the Holy Spirit. When the Spirit's internal revelation breaks into the preachers mind and attend his or her preaching, it has the potential for radically transforming people lives.

As the Word of God comes alive in preachers like you and me, we become effective instruments of God's revelatory grace. In order for this to happen, something _____ must happen in me and to me.

The greatest problem in preaching is not the preparation of the sermon . . .
but the preparation of the preacher. Dennis Kinlaw, p 17

There is no such thing as great preaching unless the preacher partakes of the divine holiness in some measure. Worldliness can make a preacher clever, but it cannot make him or her powerful, only God's Spirit can do that.

It is the Spirit who gives eternal life. Human effort accomplishes nothing. And the very words I have spoken to you are spirit and life.

John 6:63 (NLT)

The Spirit of the Lord within us can reach someone else with the gospel far more effectively than we can reach that person in our own persuasive eloquence.

Our ministry must come out of our walk with God.

Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to him those he wanted, and they came to him.

¹⁴ *He appointed twelve that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach*

¹⁵ *and to have authority to drive out demons.*

Mark 3:13-15 (NIV2011)

Note the reasons why Jesus called the 12 into ministry:

- He called them first of all . . . “*that they might be with him.*”
- He called them second . . . “*that he might send them out to preach .*”
- He called them thirdly . . . *to have authority to drive out demons.* To do works of mercy, epitomized by the act of delivering those who were oppressed by the demonic.

The first call of Jesus is **not** for us to be preachers of the Word. Rather it is to be _____ of Christ and to _____ with Him. Everything else they were to do was to come out of that close communion with Jesus. The chief purpose of this time with Jesus was so that they might get to know Him, and in knowing Him they were then better able to know themselves.

Once the disciples began to know Jesus, He then began to introduce them to the mystery of His mission and His passion. Their later ability to be involved in God’s plan of redemption would grow out of their new understanding from having been with Jesus.

The literal meaning of the word *apostles* is, “those who are sent.” This concept of sentness involves **two vital relationships**: a relationship to people to whom they were being sent and a relationship to the one who was sending them out. P. 19

¹⁹ So Jesus explained, “I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself. He does only what he sees the Father doing. Whatever the Father does, the Son also does. . . . ³⁰ I can do nothing on my own. John 5:19 (NLT)

If Jesus as the eternal Son of God, the second person of the Trinity, says, “By myself I can do nothing.” What implications does that have for you and I as preachers of the Word? If Jesus cannot do the work He was sent to do apart from an intimate relationship to and in dependence upon the Father, it is certain that our only significant fruit will come as we walk with and lean upon the Spirit of the same God.

²¹ Again he said, “Peace be with you. As **the Father has sent me, so I am sending you.**” **John 20:21 (NLT)**

What Christ is to us, we in return are to be to the world. Might this be why Jesus said:

²⁰ I tell you the truth, anyone who welcomes my messenger is welcoming me, and anyone who welcomes me is welcoming the Father who sent me.” **John 13:20 (NLT)**

Your First Priority: Spending Time With Christ

The Problem of Spiritual _____ -

Our perpetual temptation in ministry is to let the ministry take _____ over our personal walk with Christ. We are constantly under pressure to put our work as well as everything that is urgent at the top of our priority list. But the reality of pastoral ministry is that we always move from intimacy with God, to ministry that arises from our strength alone. Our only security against such drift is the development and consistent practice of daily devotional _____ that keep Christ central and that make it possible for us to receive His life and power so that we might serve out of the overflow.

Ask yourself this question: “What is Jesus saying to me and doing in my life?” If the answer is “nothing,” then our preaching will be empty. The best messages you and I will preach are those that come to our heart straight from the heart of God.

Great preachers for God are great listeners to God!

Our devotional life and are preaching preparation are and should be two separate things. However, they are somehow _____. Strong preaching, anointed preaching, can only come from a strong and consistent devotional life and relationship with the Father.

Three B's to Help You Fill Up Spiritually

1. Be _____ - Honesty shrinks the gap between us and our people. It also shrinks the gap between our people and God. When we are dishonest with ourselves, with God, or with our people, it is hypocrisy. It is a form of pride and it removes our ability to hear from, be with, or speak for God.
2. _____ - Most great sermons are birthed out of pain. There is a price to pay in order to preach a great sermon message. That is why it is so important for people who wish to preach effectively and powerfully to fill up both spiritually and emotionally. This also includes being physically prepared and well rested. Sometimes the most spiritual thing you can do is to take a nap or to take a day off from work (Sabbath).
3. _____ - with God. Be a child of God. Be in His presence. Being anchors doing. You will never preach any better than who you are.

A common mistake many pastors make is to turn to their work to relieve pressure rather than to seek out Christ's presence for restoration and needed grace. The main reason we should learn how to walk with the Lord should never be utilitarian. The truth is that Christ wants to teach us the pure joy of that fellowship with Him. He wants us to know that He is to be desired more than all of His gifts or blessing He can give to us.

He called them first of all . . . *“that they might **be** with him.*

Structuring The Message - Doing the work

The five parts of a sermon:

1. **The _____** - Your introduction is the first and best chance you have to win the attention of the people who would not otherwise care anything about what you have to say. (Dr. Martin Lloyd Jones)

Ingredients to a great introduction:

- A. _____ - Connection, not transferring information, is the difference between a message that soars or a message that sours. People do not believe you just because you are the pastor. People will not listen to you just because you are up in front and are the one with the microphone. People connect with you before they connect with what you say. We need to assume the worst, i.e. they are totally disinterested and must be won over. Our goal is to convince them that what we have to say is helpful and relevant to them to the extent that they are glad they came here today. The goal is to capture their attention, to draw them in, and to make them want to hear your story. An important question for every introduction is: How will I connect with my audience?
- B. _____ - This is the single most important characteristic of the pastor/preacher. People do not care how much you know until they know how much you care. They want to know: Can I trust this person? Is this person real and genuine? Are they someone I can relate too? Do they like me? People will not automatically like you or listen to you just because you use the Bible. People tend to believe people that they like. The goal here is to develop rapport. An important question to ask is: How will I establish rapport with my audience?
- C. _____ **and Authenticity**. People listen to speakers who are genuine and authentic and who do not try to be something other than what they really are. How can I let them know that I am a real person with

real life problems and face real life situations just like they do? The apostle Paul addresses this in 2 Corinthians 2:17.

¹⁷ *Unlike so many, we do not peddle **the word** of God for profit. On the contrary, in Christ we speak before God with sincerity, as those sent from God.* **2 Corinthians 2:17 (NIV2011)**

Paul here uses the word translated as “peddle”. He is saying, “We are not like those peddlers . . .” A peddler was a person who sells diluted or watered down wine. He is saying what we are offering to you, we are really offering. It is the real thing, not diluted or watered down.

Authenticity is being who you really are and not pretending to be something or someone other than who you are.

- D. _____ - People want to know if you live in the same world they live in. Do you have shared experiences. Is your topic relevant to them and are you addressing issues and questions that they care about and are seeking answers or a solution for? It is very important to not tell people a lot of information in the first five minutes that they do not care to hear. It is connection we are looking for, not information.
 - E. _____ - Present a problem that people can relate to so that they are joining you in the process of looking for an answer. The introduction is like the take off. It is a tease, a set up. It asks the question: “Will you go with me?” Remember this: great preachers are more interested in helping people than impressing people.
2. **The** _____ - This is where we answer the questions: What do I want them to know and feel. This is where we address the tension presented in the introduction, seek an answer to our common dilemma. This is also where we introduce the Biblical text and from that text draw out the answers or solutions that we together are looking for. In this section you unpack scripture, give an explanation of what it means for you and me today, allowing us to make personal application. This is where the main point of the key take home is to be found. It requires clarity and needs to be stated in a memorable fashion.

3. **The _____** - What stories or anecdotes can I share to help people understand the main point? Is there an analogy that will be helpful in getting this point across? People seldom remember messages, but they frequently remember stories.
4. **The _____** - This is where we answer the question: "What do I want the people to do?" Shepherds lead the sheep. People do not always understand what to do with what we have just shared, therefore it ***is usually necessary to show them what step or steps would be appropriate for them*** to take or what they should do in response to what they have just heard or the promptings of the Spirit which they are feeling.
5. **The _____** - This is where we offer a summation of the main point or the bottom line. What is it we want them to remember? We also offer up prayer on their behalf asking for God's grace to be given to them as they act upon the Word of God and do what it says.

Before You Start To Write - Making Preparation

1. **What type of message will I preach?**
 - A. **Verse by verse expository message** - Begin with the text and make observations and interpretation, expounding on each verse. Asking what did it mean originally, what does it mean for today, and what are the implications and applications for my life today?
 - B. **Topical expository message** - Where we look at what scriptures has to say about a particular topic and seeking new understanding and new behaviors in response to the text.
 - C. **Biographical Expository Message** - Examining the biographical account of a particular Biblical personality seeking life lessons, principles, and insight that can be gleaned and make personal application resulting in spiritual growth and maturity.

2. **Answer the Four Questions:** The goal here is to write your thoughts and to get ideas and concepts on paper.

Ques 1. What does my audience currently think about the topic or subject matter or issue? Hear is where we need to be great students of our contemporary culture. The goal for us is to shrink the gap in the room between where they are coming from and where we are seeking to go. Our goal in answering this question is to make it possible for the people to feel as if you are speaking right to them personally. Great preaching requires great observation of life and culture.

Ques 2. What do I want my audience to think? In order to answer this question we must be thoroughly acquainted with the Biblical text and God's perspective. The goal here is to write things down and to let them flow. Then take the answers from question one and compare and contrast them with the answers to question two.

Ques 3. What is my single most persuasive idea? We no longer live in an information age. If I am to listen to you, you must first capture my attention. The brain loves visuals. How can I communicate this truth in a memorable fashion? Is there a way I can make it stick?

Quote: *"A wealth of information creates a poverty of attention."*

More information does not mean more impact! We want a clear and concise statement of the bottom line. The target is memorability and shareability resulting in transformation.

What we are looking for is:

- the BIG idea of the message
- the sermon in a single sentence
- What the people will remember 5 days from now

Ques 4. What do I want these people to do? Every message is a destination or a journey. At the end of the journey is a call to action or a call to commitment. I must know where I am headed and where I desire to take the people. I must anticipate what steps they need to take and write them out clearly so that it becomes obvious to each person what they must do in response to the message. If you do not know what the next step or the call to action is, neither will they. People do not know what to remember or to do. Remember, they are sheep. They need a Shepherd to lead them. The goal of preaching is not to fill up the time, but rather to leverage the time.

Preaching Preparation Work Sheet

Answer What type of message will I preach?

Next, Answer the Four Questions: The goal here is to write your thoughts and to get ideas and concepts on paper.

Ques 1. What does my audience currently think about the topic or subject matter or issue?

Ques 2. What do I want my audience to think?

Ques 3. What is my single most persuasive idea?

Ques 4. What do I want these people to do?

Effective Preaching For Today - Lesson 2

Our Calling As Preachers of the Word

Our calling as preachers of the Word of God is _____ calling to work for God. Instead, we have a calling to work **with** God, as His _____ as well as servants.

¹⁵ I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.

John 15:15 (NIV2011)

Working for God means that we try to _____ what He wants done and then go and do it for Him; when we finish, we expect to have His approval and reward. The emphasis of such thinking is upon the _____. It is all about how well he or she is or has done; it is about competency. This is a mindset that allows the focus of the work to be on carrying out an assignment, rather than partnering or co-laboring with Christ in His redemptive work for the kingdom of God.

*⁶ I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. ⁷ So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. ⁸ The one who plants and the one who waters have one purpose, and they will each be rewarded according to their own labor. ⁹ For **we are co-workers in God's service**; you are God's field, God's building.*

1 Corinthians 3:6-9 (NIV2011)

Preachers of the Word have a great deal in common with women of the Bible such as Sarah, Rebecca, Hannah, Manoah, and Elizabeth. Each of them was barren until "God opened the womb" bringing forth new life. The Bible tells us that "The flesh profits nothing." What **we** do is _____. It may appear to be successful to the world around us, but it profits nothing or no one unless the Lord is in it.

¹ "Sing, O childless woman, you who have never given birth! Break into loud and joyful song, O Jerusalem, you who have never been in labor. For the desolate woman now has more children than the woman who lives with her husband," says the LORD.

Isaiah 54:1 (NLT)

We, as preachers, are like the dry and arid places in the wilderness. We have

everything we need to bear fruit except what is most essential, _____. Moisture alone does not produce fruit, but neither can soil without the necessary moisture.

*Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers, ² but whose delight is in the law of the LORD, and who meditates on his law day and night. ³ **That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither— whatever they do prospers.***

Psalm 1:1-3 (NIV2011)

¹ The man brought me back to the entrance to the temple, and I saw water coming out from under the threshold of the temple toward the east (for the temple faced east). The water was coming down from under the south side of the temple, south of the altar. . . ¹² Fruit trees of all kinds will grow on both banks of the river. Their leaves will not wither, nor will their fruit fail. Every month they will bear fruit, because the water from the sanctuary flows to them. Their fruit will serve for food and their leaves for healing.

Ezekiel 47:1,12 (NIV2011)

If you and I are to have any spiritual fruit, it will be because of what God is doing in and through us, not because of what we do.

Another Biblical analogy is that of the _____ in the hands of God.

¹⁵ But can the ax boast greater power than the person who uses it? Is the saw greater than the person who saws? Can a rod strike unless a hand moves it? Can a wooden cane walk by itself?

Isaiah 10:15 (NLT)

The axe does not do the work. The axe can be sharp or dull. But someone has to wield the axe. The axe receives no credit for the work that is done. It is the one who wields the axe that deserves the credit. When the minister become the pivot around which the ministry revolves, the results are deadly. God will not _____ or show up in any ministry where the minister or preacher gets the glory.

Nothing shuts down the work of God in His church like taking credit for what He has done. Godliness and arrogance cannot exist in the same church. When we take credit, God takes His hand off of what He has been blessing. He refuses to share His glory with anyone.

Dan Sutherland, *Transitioning*, p. 165

The Holy Spirit comes to exalt Christ, not to exalt you or me. _____ that draws

attention to our cleverness, our brightness, or our competence is ultimately sterilizing. This is why we must remember we are called to work ***with Him***. You and I can count upon the Holy Spirit to quicken our understanding and enable us to see the difference between working for God and working with God. One way that we are able to see if we are working in the flesh is when we say to God or to others, “*See what I did for Him.*” When we desire recognition or acknowledgement, it reveals that we have fallen into the trap of working for God rather than with Him.

Ministry done under the leading and anointing of the Holy Spirit reveals a state of constant dependance and reliance upon God that precludes any idea of what we may have done. It is all Him. The Spirit helps the surrendered minister realize that God alone gives the increase. *“I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase.”*

1 Corinthians 3:6 (NKJV)

The call to preach comes to us, not because we are worthy, but because Christ has a world to save and He has no one else to help Him in the task but those who respond to His call upon their life. As we preach, it is always good to remember that we are standing there by virtue of Christ’s saving power and His call to join him in His ministry, not by any virtue or giftedness of our own.

. . . there is great comfort in knowing Christ is effectively at work in the preaching event, whether you feel you are effective or not. You have the opportunity to work with Him. As a preacher, you have the privilege of getting close enough to Him to find out where He is and what He is doing, and then meshing in His work. That is when preaching is fruitful. That is when lives are transformed through preaching. **Dennis Kinlaw, *Preaching in the Spirit*, p. 48**

Kinlaw’s How To Prepare For Spirit Filled Worship

1. _____ **comes first** - “I have never known a real work of grace in which someone had not prayed beforehand.” Wesley said: “*No one is ever saved unless someone has prayed.*”
2. **Secondly, the preacher must _____ by making sure he or she is filled with God’s Spirit.** God’s work is done, “Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit”, say the Lord God Almighty. As A.B. Simpson said, “We are empty possibilities until God gets us.”

Gifts, knowledge, and oratorical skills will never be sufficient to do the work of proclamation. Only preaching in the power of the Spirit will do.

Preaching is not about a well-oiled structure or a smooth delivery or a nicely exegeted framework. It is not even about a theologically solid foundation. Preaching is about effect. I don't mean manipulated outcomes or emotional responses or intellectual assent – I am talking about an internal effect that occurs in the souls of people and that draws them deeper in their walks with Jesus. At times it may be through intellect. At other times through emotion. At others, through deep reflection. And at others through spontaneous action.

Preaching is designed to bring a breath of energy from God through God's Word and Spirit into the lives of hearers in a way that yields response.

Effective pastors communicate God's Word in ways that connect with the daily questions and needs of people. They grasp equally the condition of the listeners, the creativity of communication and the transforming power of the scriptures.

Preaching, as a characteristic of effective pastors, is not to be confused with teaching. Whereas teaching is focused primarily on the cognitive dimension of the hearer's life, preaching must be targeted at the hearer's will by means of the cognitive, emotional and behavioral dimensions of a person. ***It is a call to be different or to take steps of obedience to God.***

Whether your preaching is topical, exegetical or expository is immaterial. Go with your preference and whichever will meet the urgent needs in your congregation. In any case, be sure you rightly handle the Scriptures: Expose God's Word; don't force or impose your agenda on it. God has communicated all we need for truth and life through the Word – finding context and structure is up to you through study and reflection.

The Scriptures will not fail to accomplish what God intends for them to accomplish – they are inspired by God and confirmed by millennia of wise and prayerful Christians as the prime source of authority for truth and life. Don't assume that you can improve or alter the Scriptures by shaping them to suit your priorities.

Your ability to preach in a fresh, invigorating way will be a marker both of your own vibrancy as an instrument of God and of your effectiveness in leading your people to be God's people. This is a task you must treat with great humility and surrender, and approach with boldness and passion.

Excerpted from 15 Characteristics of Effective Pastors, by Kevin Mannoia and Larry Walkemeyer

Characteristic 10: Inspired Preaching, page 133-139

Introduction Evaluation Form

Evaluate by rating from a 1 (low) to 5 (high)

1. **Connectivity** - How well does the speaker capture your attention, drawing you in and causing you to want to hear their story?

2. **Likeability** - How well does the speaker establish rapport with you and the audience?

3. **Transparency and Authenticity** -
 How effective was the speaker in conveying authenticity and transparency?

4. **Common Ground** - How well did the speaker do in establishing common ground and making you feel that you could relate to them and their situation?

5. **Tension** - How effective was the speaker in establishing tension or framing a question which drew your attention?

Do Your Own Study

Study is essentially bombarding the text with questions. I tend to go too quickly to the commentaries. Maybe you do too. If you want to be an Effective Bible Teacher you ought to say, “I noticed as I meditated on this text. . .” more often than you say, “The commentaries say. . .”

In the writing world, we like to speak of the six writer’s friends. These are also the friends of Effective Bible Teachers:

- Who?
- What?
- Where?
- When?
- Why?
- How?

You might read through the text six times with these questions in mind. First read with the “Who?” question in mind. Notice all the people in the passage. Ask, “What are they doing? What are they feeling? Why are they doing it? Where is this? When was this? How long ago?” Bombard the text with questions. Look for answers yourself before you depend on the commentaries.

This is not to say you shouldn’t consult the commentaries. Dr. Curtis Vaughn taught me Greek. I remember him talking about a preacher he heard once who said, “I have consulted no man’s books. I have looked at no man’s commentaries. I have not depended on the words of man. I have only consulted the Word of God in prayer for today’s sermon.” Sounds spiritual, doesn’t it?

He might as well have said, “I don’t really care what God has revealed to others about this text. I only care about what God has revealed to me.”

Here is an insight: you are not the smartest person, nor the most spiritual person to ever have studied the Word. To cut yourself off from the insights of spiritual giants down through the ages is just plain dumb. Your teaching and your people will suffer for it. Again, we come to the word balance. Effective Bible Teachers prepare with a Bible in one hand and a commentary in the other.

Do your own study. Ask your own questions. Look for your own answers. Pray for your own insights. Then, read the best insights from others. What a wonderful word: both.

Josh Hunt - www.joshhunt.com

The Crucial First Five Minutes

It is not enough to present the truth . . .
We must present it in a way that captures peoples attention. **Andy Stanley**

A good introduction peaks the _____ of the listener. The introduction is very much like the front porch of a house, in that the introduction welcomes people to the message. The introduction is offered in order to _____ to the listeners that what you about to say is both relevant to their lives and is also extremely important. Dr. Jerry Vines, author of *Power in the Pulpit*, says the communicator is primarily responsible for the audience level of interest. In other words, it is up to us to connect with the audience.

If people believe that what you have to say is important to them they will listen. If they do not believe it to be important, they we see it as being irrelevant. Our job is to use the first five minutes of our message, or the introduction, to create _____.

A sermon introduction serves two purposes: First, it creates interest and stimulates curiosity. Secondly, it introduces the theme or the main idea. _____ Between Two Worlds, John Stott

The introduction is almost the equivalent of yelling, “Hey, You.” You shout “Hey” to get the attention of a distracted audience. And you say “You” because you’ve got to connect on a personal level.

Two Thing That Should Happen In Your Introduction

1. **Find _____ ground** - We need to keep in mind that just because a topic or a message is important to us doesn’t mean it is important to your audience. (*See Handout - Differences between people who work at a church and people who attend church*).

How To Build Common Ground in Your Introduction:

- A. Talk to the people about _____ experiences.
- B. Talk about common _____.

Last time, we spoke about likeability being an important trait for the speaker to have and demonstrate during the introduction. If people do not like you, it doesn't matter how good you preach or communicate. Finding common ground helps people to think, "Hey, you're like me . . . you are describing me perfectly. Now I am relating to you and I want to hear what you have to say."

2. **Create _____** - Many people seek to avoid creating tension, but in communication creating tension is a good thing. Creating tension causes people to lean in, to actually want to hear what you have to say. Where there is tension, people pay attention because they want to know the resolution.

Sample questions that create tension:

- Have you ever wondered why God seems to answer some prayers but not others?
- Are you confused when the Bible talks about womens issues or slavery?
- When God said we were to love our enemies, was He really talking about . . . ?

Personal struggles and admissions of doubt create tension:

- I know you have come to church today with a lot of questions because you don't know if this is all true. You know . . . I'm the pastor and I still don't have everything about God and life all figured out.
- There's a passage in the Bible that, when I read it, I am not sure I really understand it.
- When I was growing up, I believed in God, but I wasn't sure if he loved me or if he was angry with me.

Tension involves asking unresolved questions or presenting a predicament that doesn't have an immediately recognizable solution. It makes people want to discover the answers to the question or resolve the problem.

Good Introductions and Bad Introductions

Three Good Introductions

1. Ask a powerful question from the start.
2. Tell an interesting story.
3. Set clear expectations.

Three Bad Introductions

1. Begin by apologizing.
2. Begin with small talk
3. Beginning based on a previous assumption that people agree with you.

Most communicators understand that their message opener must capture the attention of the congregation, or half of them will be asleep by the first point on the outline. However, the best openers not only get attention, they get people _____ differently—opening the path to transformed living. Powerful communicators don't _____ for the conclusion to issue a challenge; they set the stage for changed lives from the first words.

Here are three powerful ways to start your message this week:

1. _____ **expectations.** As communicators, we tend to think defensively about countering the objections of people who disagree with our thesis. Yet often, the greater danger is that people will think that they agree with you. If the congregation imagines that they already know what you are going to say, they will tune you out, and your message will fail to challenge them with new thinking.

“You probably expect this message on ‘anger’ to be about being less angry. Good Christian boys and girls don’t get angry, right? Actually, no: today, I need to tell you why you’re not angry enough.”

2. _____ **the stakes.** We're all motivated by two things: fear of loss, and desire for gain. But counteracting those motivations is our intrinsic laziness; we aren't willing to change unless the risk of loss or the opportunity for reward is high. To be powerful, your opening must awaken your congregation to the realization that there's more at stake than they had previously thought.

"I know that you know it's important to say kind words. But I'm not sure that you realize what the Bible is saying here: death and life are in the power of the tongue. Your marriage, your children, everyone you care about, can literally live or die depending on how you learn to speak to them. Nothing could be more important to your future than the seemingly insignificant words that are coming out of your mouth today."

3. **Cast** _____. People care about a story only if they identify with the hero, because ultimately we're all asking the question, 'what's this got to do with me?' Too often, though, communicators wait until the "application section" of their message to draw the parallels between a biblical narrative and modern life. By "casting" the audience as the hero of the story, you make the story both compelling and transformative.

"The story I'm going to tell today isn't about Samson; it's about you. You've been given uniquely powerful strengths. You were called by God before you were even born. But at the end of your life, you're either going to be celebrating what God has done through you—or you're going to be standing there shaved, chained, and defeated, your strength wasted and your eyes put out. Let's find out today from Samson how you can keep that from happening."

In your message this week, think about the life-change that you want people to walk away with after the closing prayer. Then, don't just put it in your conclusion: build it into the way you open, from the very first sentence. That's powerful.

Effective Preaching For Today - Lesson 3

The Power Source for the Preacher

Have you ever felt as if you were spiritually dry? Has message preparation ever become dull and boring? Do you sometimes have a feeling of dread rather than delight when you step up to preach? Has preaching ever seemed like it was more of a chore than a high calling from God? If so, you are normal, but in need of a fresh source of spiritual power.

Spiritual dryness can be the result of sin, disobedience or even busyness. Many times we are aware of the dangers of sin and disobedience and guard ourselves against such obvious dangers. But the problem of busyness can sneak up on you and before you know it you have been wrapped up in so many things that you find that busyness has drained you of your spiritual power leaving you feeling dry and empty. Ever been there?

Many pastor, especially those who pastor a smaller church or are the only pastor serving a church are subject to enormous demands upon their time. People have expectations for them, there are many things needing to be done and there is always a shortage of volunteers, so the pastor steps up and begins to do all those things that seemingly need to be done. We find ourselves doing those things that cry out the loudest for our attention, which results in the amount of time set aside for prayer, study off the word, and preparation being whittled down to almost nothing.

Stuart Briscoe recalls an old adage he was taught as a young pastor:

"Never put your head on the pillow at night if you haven't had your nose in the Book during the day."

He told his son as he began his first ministry position as a pastor:

This is how it will be. There are so many good things to do and so many things you will be expected to do that you will struggle to preserve your own spiritual vitality, without which, your ministry [and preaching] will dry up.

Paul the Apostle on Preaching and The Spirit's Power (Powerful)

⁴ *My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, ⁵ so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom, but on God's power.* **1 Corinthians 2:4-5 (NIV2011)**

In spite of the Apostle Paul's great training, giftedness and experience, he knew that in order to be effective he needed much more than those things, he needed a demonstration of the Spirit's power. This is also true for you and me.

So how do we recognize the presence or absence of the Spirit's power as we preach? Stuart Briscoe says: *"Whatever our differences, I think all preachers agree that minimally there should be evidence that the Word is taking root, that hearts are being changed, that minds are being renewed, that lifestyles are being revolutionized, that hearers have become doers, and people can see the difference."*

So we see, in order for the preacher to be fully effective, he or she must be plugged into a spiritual source through the power of the Holy Spirit. It is always better to have more of the Spirit's power than skill or training, yet skill or training in the hands of one empowered by the Spirit accomplishes much for God's kingdom and glory.

¹⁶ *I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being. . .* **Ephesians 3:16 (NIV2011)**

Stuart Briscoe continues: "Reading these verses, I came to the conclusion that if I was a Christian, I, too, had been sealed with the Spirit; he had entered my life to strengthen me with power, **and I should begin to live as if this were true.** I read further that I should not "grieve" the Holy the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:30). The surrounding verses gave me plenty of instructions concerning this, and I was also aware that in the same way men get drunk with wine, I was to go on allowing myself to be filled in God's Spirit (Ephesians 5:18). *Preach It*, Stuart Briscoe, p. 26

He continues: "I will never forget the sense of exhilaration that filled me as I began to preach, expecting the indwelling Spirit to be at work in and through the preaching. He who had inspired the Word I was trying to preach and who promised to be present among the people to whom I was trying to preach could be counted on to

bring to fruition that which was being sown. As I began to reckon with these truths, I became less self-conscious, less uptight, less concerned about how I was coming across, and even less interested in trying to produce results that would reduce my own insecurities. At the same time I became more relaxed, more reliant, more responsible, and more responsive in my own heart to what the Lord was saying to me long before I ever said it to anyone else.”

Sometimes we can be so busy preaching we lose our cutting edge. When this happens, it is very beneficial for us to ask: “Where did it go? At what point did I become disobedient, slothful, or busy that I lost my connection with the Spirit and his power?” Like all cutting edges, our spiritual power can be blunted and dulled. It requires constant attention through personal devotion. So before we look to new methods and techniques, or the newest preaching trend, we need to check out what Paul proclaimed, when he told us:

⁴ *My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit’s power, . . .* **1 Corinthians 2:4 (NIV2011)**

Then we need to ask ourselves this searching question: “How closely does my experience parallel that of the apostle?”

I have not exhausted the resources of the indwelling Spirit by whom I was sealed for the day of redemption.

Taking Care in Preaching (Careful)

Billy Graham was asked: “What is it like to preach before the Queen?” Dr. Graham answered, “It’s a great privilege, but you must remember, every time I preach I do so before the King of kings.” Wallace Fisher, Who Dares to Preach?

You and I as preachers of the Word of God have a need to be careful about our preaching but even more so about the way we live. Paul stated it this way:

¹⁰ *By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as a wise builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should build with care.* **1 Corinthians 3:10 (NIV2011)**

Paul's point here seems to be that because Christ is the foundation that he (Paul) laid, any further ministry of the gospel must be related to Christ Himself. He is the foundation upon which we must build.

The greatest care must be taken to ensure that nothing in the preaching detracts from the person of Christ or does damage to the message of the gospel.

How We Build

Philips Brooks, in his famous lectures to Yale Divinity School students in 1877, said, "Let us rejoice with one another that in a world where there are a great many good and happy things for men to do, God has given us the best and happiest, and made us preachers of His truth." Brooks here speaks of a great sense of excitement, delight and joy in the ministry of preaching. We must be careful to preserve this sense of joy.

A counselor once told me, "Beware of placing your happiness in the hands of the people of the church were you serve." Beware of depending on outward affirmation for your joy, and be careful to preserve your joy by remembering, *God has given us the best and happiest, and made us preachers of His truth.*

Another danger in preaching that we must be careful to avoid is settling into the rut of dull routine. Preaching was not meant to be something that could be reduced to something seen as a little more than a job or a task to be done. We do well when we are careful to preserve the unique sense of the real significance of the proclamation of the gospel as the word of Truth.

**The preacher who grips and audience
is the preacher who is obviously
gripped by the message.**

What We Build

Paul reminds the Corinthians that they should also be careful to examine what they build on the foundation he laid.

¹² *If anyone builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw,*
¹³ *their work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each person's work.* **1 Corinthians 3:12-13**

Isaiah made a call for priestly ceremonial purity in Isaiah 52 which still applies in our context today:

¹¹ *Depart, depart, go out from there! Touch no unclean thing! Come out from it and be pure, you who carry the articles of the LORD's house.* **Isaiah 52:11 (NIV2011)**

The words of the apostle Paul as well needs to burn fiercely in the hearts of today's preachers:

² *Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God. . . .¹¹ Since, then, we know what it is to fear the Lord, we try to persuade others. What we are is plain to God, and I hope it is also plain to your conscience.* **2 Corinthians 4:2, 5:11 (NIV2011)**

O brethren, watch therefore over your own hearts; keep out lusts and passions, and worldly inclinations; keep up the life of faith, and love and zeal . . . Above all, be much in secret prayer and meditation. Thence you must fetch the heavenly fire that must kindle your sacrifices.
Richard Baxter, *The Reformed Pastor*, p.62

Where We Build

Finally, great care must be taken where we build. Remember Paul's assumption: "I laid the foundation and someone else is building on it." Christ is still the foundation of all that God is doing in our world today. The Galatians were chided for "so quickly deserting the one who called them" (Galatians 1:6). Paul also found it necessary to remind Timothy to "continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of . . ." (2 Timothy 3:14). To the Colossians he wrote, "So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in Him, rooted and built up in Him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught and overflowing with thankfulness" (Colossians 2:6-7).

It is not uncommon for preachers of the Word to become so casual in the ministry that they fail to recognize their own drift away from their basic commitment to Christ in their spiritual lives and their diminishing trust in Christ in ministry.

It is much more likely that preachers who are concerned about preaching problems will turn to a book on the techniques of preaching or attend the latest seminar before they turn inward to see if there is any deficiency in their relationship with the One who is the foundation of all they know and have. In other words, It is not unusual for modern preachers to give insufficient attention to the possibility that they are building some distance from their foundation.

Our concern is to derive from Christ the spiritual power to live holy lives and to preach powerful sermons. The one is the support, pillar, and foundation of the other. This power can only be enjoyed as we abide in Christ. This means maintaining an intimate sharing partnership with the person of Christ continually.

Errol Hulse in Samuel T. Logan's, *The Preacher and Preaching*. P. 87

Effective Preaching For Today - Lesson 4

Lessons from the feeding of the 5000 and the 4000 -

Matthew 14:13-21 (NIV2011)

¹³ When Jesus heard what had happened, he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place. Hearing of this, the crowds followed him on foot from the towns.

¹⁴ When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick.

¹⁵ As evening approached, the disciples came to him and said, “This is a remote place, and it’s already getting late. Send the crowds away, so they can go to the villages and buy themselves some food.” ¹⁶ Jesus replied, “They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat.”

¹⁷ “We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish,” they answered.

¹⁸ “Bring them here to me,” he said. ¹⁹ And he directed the people to sit down on the grass.

Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people.

²⁰ They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. ²¹ The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children.

Matthew 15:29-38 (NIV2011)

²⁹ Jesus left there and went along the Sea of Galilee. Then he went up on a mountainside and sat down. ³⁰ Great crowds came to him, bringing the lame, the blind, the crippled, the mute and many others, and laid them at his feet; and he healed them.

³¹ The people were amazed when they saw the mute speaking, the crippled made well, the lame walking and the blind seeing. And they praised the God of Israel. ³² Jesus called his disciples to him and said, “I have compassion for these people; they have already been with me three days and have nothing to eat. I do not want to send them away hungry, or they may collapse on the way.”

³³ His disciples answered, “Where could we get enough bread in this remote place to feed such a crowd?” ³⁴ “How many loaves do you have?” Jesus asked. “Seven,” they replied, “and a few small fish.” ³⁵ He told the crowd to sit down on the ground.

³⁶ Then he took the seven loaves and the fish, and when he had given thanks, he broke them and gave them to the disciples, and they in turn to the people.

³⁷ They all ate and were satisfied. Afterward the disciples picked up seven basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. ³⁸ The number of those who ate was four thousand men, besides women and children.

Some Observations

1. The focal point in both accounts is _____ (Matt 14:13;15:1) – and His encounter with the hungry crowd and their many needs. The people as well as the disciples, were drawn to Jesus.

Application:

The focal point in preaching is the same, both for the preacher as well as for the people. _____ **was the drawing point.** It was all about Him and what He brought (brings) to the people. What we proclaim is still the same, we proclaim Jesus and the coming of the His Kingdom, the Kingdom of God.

2. Jesus response when He saw the crowds was _____.
: a feeling of **wanting to help** someone who is sick, hungry, in trouble, etc. :
sympathetic consciousness of others' distress together with a desire to alleviate it. **The result of Jesus compassion for the people was a _____ of Kingdom power** on behalf of those who were lame, blind, crippled, and mute. These were people suffering oppression as a result of mankind's sin and being under the dominion of the prince of the world. Jesus announced what was happening in these two passages while at the Nazareth Synagogue, in **Luke 4**

¹⁴ Jesus returned to Galilee ***in the power of the Spirit***, and news about him spread through the whole countryside. ¹⁵ He was teaching in their synagogues, and everyone praised him.

¹⁶ He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, ¹⁷ and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: ¹⁸

“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, ¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” ²⁰

Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. ²¹ He began by saying to them, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”

Luke 4:14-21 (NIV2011)

Application:

Jesus still (today) has a heart of _____ for those who hear the words of proclamation through the preaching of the Word. He still desires to help those who are sick, hungry, suffering, in trouble, etc. Jesus is still sympathetic towards the people in distress and His desire, as we preach, is to use you and me (those proclaiming the good news) to alleviate their suffering and distress just as in Matthew 14 and 15. Only now, His desire is to _____ compassion and kingdom power _____ us as we join Him in His ministry under the anointing and filling of His Holy Spirit.

3. Jesus gave the disciples an instruction in Matthew 14:18;15:32

¹⁸“*Bring them here to me,*” he said because “*I do not want to send them away hungry*” Jesus is aware that what we have to offer is never _____. Like the disciples who came up with five loaves of bread and two fish, and then in the next chapter seven loaves of bread and a few small fish, what we have is never enough ***until*** we bring it to Jesus.

Application:

What compassion we have, and what giftedness we have, what education we have, or what experience we have, or what study and preparation we have done, is never enough, until it is _____ to Jesus. His desire is still to feed them from His Word because He does not want to send them away hungry.

Paul addresses this in **Romans 12:1**:

¹*And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him.* **Romans 12:1**

It is not only our bodies that we bring to God, but _____ we have and everything we are. This too is essential preparation for effective preaching.

4. As the food was _____ to Jesus He took it, gave thanks, and broke it.

It was in the giving and the _____ that the few loaves and fishes became many and the little became much.

Application:

Each of us has our _____ places—our disappointments, wounds, pain, sadness, grief. We are human beings, and we all have our sufferings. In many ways the church is a community of the broken. We gather to support one another, to confide in one another, to be honest about our brokenness, and to allow our wounds to become a source of healing for others. We are to be, as Henri Nouwen says, “wounded healers.” We might try to deny our wounds, but the way to health comes by allowing the pain to deepen until our pain is not an enemy but a friend. Then our brokenness becomes a way we connect with other people. We are broken. But our brokenness is miraculously made into something that God can use. Our brokenness, along with the grace of God, somehow becomes not only enough, but more than enough. God’s grace is given to us in a way that is sufficient for the work he has called us to. **As Paul says:**

¹⁰ That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

5. **Jesus response to us, like to the disciples, is: _____ give them something to eat.** Once we offer ourselves, as well as what ever inadequacies we have to God, having been blessed and broken by Him, Jesus then, takes that which was broken, with thanksgiving, and gives it back to the disciples, so that the disciples may give it to the people.

Application:

Even though we are broken and inadequate in ourselves, as we offer _____ to God in worship and dedication, self-denial and faith; He then, in turn, says to us: “*Now take what I have given to you, and share it with the people*”. Ultimately, we have _____ to share **except that which we have received back from Jesus**, after it has been broken, blessed, and multiplied.

6. The result is that the people have been cared for, with compassion, and they have been _____, by the food blessed in the hands of God.

Application:

It is only when we offer what has been broken, blessed, and multiplied in the hands of Jesus, that our people will be truly _____ by our preaching and by the word of God. But, when we are faithful to offer all to Christ, before presenting it to the people, what we offer them is spiritual _____ and is more than enough for every need, hunger, desire or longing of the heart. The end result is each person knows and understands that Jesus, **our focal point**, has done something wonderful in our midst, and we are all witnesses to what He has done for us all. When preaching is honestly and humbly offered to God, He can do things through it as with nothing else.

Offering Ourselves to Jesus Through Obedience and sacrifice

Obedience to God and His word _____ our intimacy with Jesus. In fact, Jesus tells us: ²¹ *Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show (reveal) myself to them.*” **John 14:21 (NIV2011)**

If we want to know the Father, we must not only love Him, but also _____ Him. Scripture is clear that it is important to know the Father, through His Word; and if we want to be a part of what the Father is doing, and be able to see where He is moving, then it is clear, that you and I must be _____ to His commands.

Obedience to Christ shows that we know He is God, and we are not.
It shows we understand that God knows what is best for us in all things.
John Wimber, *Everyone Gets To Play*, p. 17.

Obedience also _____ the blessings of the kingdom. **Mark 10:28-31**

²⁸ Then Peter spoke up, “We have left everything to follow you!” ²⁹ “Truly I tell you,” Jesus replied, “no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel ³⁰ will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age: homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields—along with persecutions—and in the age to come eternal life. ³¹ But many who are first will be last, and the last first.”

Mark 10:28-31 (NIV2011)

Obedience is not just to be outward, rather, it is to be much _____ than that. Outward obedience focuses on what we _____ as acts of service. In fact, sometimes as Christians, it is possible to substitute our service to God and others in place of offering ourselves up completely to God. Obedience to God is not only measured by how much we do for our Savior, but by how much we love and obey Him when nobody is looking. Discipleship requires obedience.

²¹ “Not everyone who calls out to me, ‘Lord! Lord!’ will enter the Kingdom of Heaven. **Only those who actually do the will of my Father in heaven will enter.** **Matthew 7:21 (NLT)**

Sacrifice and Power

Most often people think of sacrifice in a negative fashion, but it should not be thought of in that way. Instead, it can and should be viewed positively. I have been taught, and have come to believe, that the definition of true “God-like,” agape’ love, is defined as **“self denial for the benefit of others”**. The greatest of all Christian virtues is love (1 Corinthians 13:13).

¹³ *And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.*

1 Corinthians 13:13 (NIV2011)

The purpose of the greatest sacrifice ever made was to _____ the love of God on all of mankind. Our sacrifice is not meant to be an end in itself; we take up our cross in order to follow Jesus more fully. Sacrifice also _____ power. ***The greater the sacrifice, the greater the power that is released.*** Do you desire to be used of God to accomplish something great? If so, you must count the _____. A great example of this would be the death of Stephen in **Acts 6**. The death of Stephen precipitated a _____ of heavenly power, that led to a great spreading of the Word of God, with many new converts, and the conversion of Paul, as well as the beginning of the gospel being preached and believed throughout the known world. Martyrdom is a powerful form of sacrifice.

Another type of sacrifice is prayer and _____.

¹⁶ Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective. ¹⁷ Elijah was a human being, even as we are. **He prayed earnestly** that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. ¹⁸ Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops.

James 5:16-18 (NIV2011)

When prayer is combined with fasting, whole armies can be defeated.

1 Samuel 7:6-13 (NIV2011)

⁶ When they had assembled at Mizpah, they drew water and poured it out before the LORD. **On that day they fasted** and there they confessed, “We have sinned against the LORD.” Now Samuel was serving as leader of Israel at Mizpah. ⁷ When the Philistines heard that Israel had assembled at Mizpah, the rulers of the Philistines came up to attack them. When the Israelites heard of it, they were afraid because of the Philistines. ⁸ They said to Samuel, “Do not stop crying out to the LORD our God for us, that he may rescue us from the hand of the Philistines.” ⁹ Then Samuel took a suckling lamb and sacrificed it as a whole burnt offering to the LORD. He cried out to the LORD on Israel’s behalf, and the LORD answered him. ¹⁰ While Samuel was sacrificing the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to engage Israel in battle. But that day the LORD thundered with loud thunder against the Philistines and threw them into such a panic that they were routed before the Israelites. ¹¹ The men of Israel rushed out of Mizpah and pursued the Philistines, slaughtering them along the way to a point below Beth Kar. ¹² Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen. He named it Ebenezer, saying, “Thus far the LORD has helped us.” ¹³ So the Philistines were subdued and they stopped invading Israel’s territory. Throughout Samuel’s lifetime, the hand of the LORD was against the Philistines.

God has the _____ to call us to make _____ sacrifice He wants. After all, He has purchased us at the price of His own blood. We are not our own.

John Wimber puts it this way:

The economy of the Kingdom of God is quite simple. Every new step into the Kingdom cost us everything we have gained to date. Every new step may cost us all the reputation and security we have accumulated up to that point. It costs us our life. But remember, the greater the sacrifice, the greater the power that is released.

John Wimber, Everyone Gets To Play, p 43

Ambition _____ The Spirits Power

A lesson that often takes a long time to learn, for pastors, both young and old, is if we take any other path than taking up our cross, and laying down our life, it usually leads to the path of personal _____. Actually, our American culture makes it very easy for us to fall into this trap. We all are faced with the desire or want to be successful, at any cost. Ambition is a form of self-love and self-service, rather than loving others and laying down (sacrificing) our lives for them. Ambition, is clear evidence, that one has not yet come to grips with the call to die to self. Ambition seeks rewards in this life, is short sighted, and lacking in the _____ required to proclaim the gospel with great power and effectiveness.

_____ personal ambition with the Good Shepherd.

⁷ Therefore Jesus said again, “Very truly I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep.

⁸ All who have come before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep have not listened to them. ⁹ I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out, and find pasture. ¹⁰ The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

¹¹ ***“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.***

¹² The hired hand is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. ¹³ The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. ¹⁴ “I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me— ¹⁵ just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and ***I lay down my life for the sheep.*** ¹⁶ I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd. ¹⁷ ***The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life — only to take it up again.*** ¹⁸ ***No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord.*** I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father.”

John 10:7-18 (NIV2011)

Power In Preaching

Preaching is meant to be an occasion when, so to speak, God happens; when that strange and yet familiar moment comes upon us, and we know we have been addressed, healed, confronted and kindled by the One who made us and loves us.

N.T. Wright

From its New Testament beginning, preaching has had certain key factors, that combine to make preaching powerful. Simply put, a sermon works only when God _____ it. John Stott says our task is to enable God's revealed truth to flow out of the Scriptures into the lives of men and women today (John Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, p. 138).

Factors That make Preaching Powerful

1. The message must be rooted in the _____.
2. _____ selection of words makes the message more effective.
3. The speaker must truly _____ what they are sharing and saying.
4. A personal _____ with the audience through appropriate stories and illustrations.
5. An _____ of the Holy Spirit by both the speaker and the listener.

No genuine encounter with God in preaching can occur except through the gracious revelation of the Father, Christ's interceding presence, and the empowering of the Holy Spirit, who enabled Scripture to be inspired and now enables it to be interpreted, shared, and lived out in faith. Preaching is a Father event, a Christ event, and a Spirit event, or else it is merely resounding gongs or clanging cymbals.

Michael J Quicke, *360 Degree Preaching*, p. 50

The Power of The Scripture

Apart from proclaiming and interacting with _____, there can be no power in preaching.

2 Timothy 3:16 reminds us:

¹⁶ *All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, ¹⁷ so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

We see from this passage that scripture has four functions – it is useful for teaching, reproof, correcting, and training in righteousness. The purpose of scripture is to help the hearers live life differently.

_____ - leads to a right understanding of truth.

_____ (rebuking) - sheds light on wrong thinking or wrong actions.

_____ - Illuminates and holds out the possibility of a new life.

_____ **in righteousness** - emphasizes the ongoing disciplines of living in relationship with God as well as others.

The most important claim about scripture is that it is effective.

¹⁰ *As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, ¹¹ so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.*

Isaiah 55:10-11 (NIV2011)

The Power of Words

The way in which we use words makes a difference and will _____ our preaching. Words derive their power from the foundational truth that God reveals and creates through words (Genesis 1:3). Words have always had the capacity to persuade. Our words must be carefully selected and guided by the Holy Spirit, being careful not to speak carelessly or without thought.

The Power of The Father

Effective preaching begins with the Father and returns to Him because His Word will not return empty (Isaiah 55:11). God's words are never mere sounds or syllables to communicate; they are also _____ to perform.

⁶ *By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, their starry host by the breath of his mouth. . . . For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm. Psalm 33:6,9 (NIV2011)*

The Power of Christ

Jesus gave us an incredible promise "Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them (**Matthew 18:20**). Jesus _____ over the preaching event. The Word (person of Christ) is proclaimed as we preach. Preaching itself does not cause Christ to be present. It is possible, because He is already present, and to speak in Christ' name, is to claim His promise, "**The one who hears you, hears me** (Jesus) (**Luke 10:16**).

The Power of The Holy Spirit

Of all the Persons of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit is the one _____ associated with preaching with power.

The deskwork has been done. The prayers have gone up. The gestation period is over. The hour of delivery has arrived. A company sits waiting, expectant, watching God's [person] in the pulpit. . . We need that strange condition which used to be called unction – a word so little used today. . . It is a quality that pervades the person and his or her teaching – the anointing of the Holy One.

Humphry Vellacott

The Holy Spirit is vital for _____ aspects of preaching, not just delivery. When true preaching takes place, the main actor is **not** the preacher, nor the congregation, but the Holy Spirit. Nothing happens without the Spirit's blessing. The Spirit's blessing is especially associated with anointing.

James Forbes says: “Anointed preaching _____ that the God of creation will be present to transform spoken words into deeds of liberation and massive reorientation of life for the sake of the Kingdom”.

³⁷ You know what has happened throughout the province of Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached—³⁸ how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him. **Acts 10:38**

The proclamation of the Kingdom, in the New Testament, is always accompanied with a _____ of the Spirit’s power. Can this be said of preaching today? More specifically, can this be said of our preaching, or my preaching today? If not, why not?

- Is it a matter of a lack of obedience?
- Is it a matter of a lack of our an unwillingness to count the cost and make the sacrifice that God is calling for?
- Is it a lack of compassion?
- Is it a lack of faith and full reliance upon Jesus?

Consider the following passage in the context of preaching with power.

¹² My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.

¹³ Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.

¹⁴ You are my friends if you do what I command.

¹⁵ I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.

¹⁶ You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you.

¹⁷ This is my command: Love each other.

Effective Preaching For Today - Lesson 5

Preaching to the Unchurched - Part 1

2 Corinthians 4:1-7 (NIV2011)

¹ Therefore, since through God's mercy we have this ministry, we do not lose heart.

² Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the ¹ contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God. ³ And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing.

⁴ The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

⁵ For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. ⁶ For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ. ⁷ But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.

1. The ministry of preaching and proclaiming the Word of God and the Good News of the Kingdom, has been _____ to each of us.

Paul says:

Therefore, since through God's mercy we have this ministry, we do not lose heart.

The ministry referred to is found in **Chapter 3:6**

⁶ He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant — not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. **2 Corinthians 3:6 (NIV2011)**

2. This ministry of proclaiming the truth of the gospel to worldly individuals who are not yet believers, is not _____ its challenges and difficulties.

In fact in the face of the challenges, Paul asserts that we are not without hope (we do not lose heart). Paul continues on to say that this hope we have results in great boldness.

¹² *Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold.*

2 Corinthians 3:12 (NIV2011)

So, even though this work can be challenging and sometimes difficult, we do not back away from it or use unusual means, (or the flesh), to accomplish the task.

Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God.

2 Corinthians 4:2 (NIV2011)

Engaging unchurched people with the weekend message does not necessitate watering down, skipping over, or treading lightly with the text. Andy Stanley

Andy Stanley also adds, you and I are not “mistakers” in need of correction. We are sinners in need of a Savior. We need more than a second chance, we need a second _____. Look at John 1:14,17

¹⁴ *The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, **full of grace and truth.***

John 1:14 (NIV2011)

¹⁷ *For the law was given through Moses; **grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.***

John 1:17 (NIV2011)

The casualty in Fundamental (sometimes referred to as legalistic) and ultra conservative churches is often grace. The casualty in Liberal churches is often truth.

Jesus never tried to balance grace and truth, or choose one at the expense of the other. He never watered down the law. He did not put any condition on grace. He gave a full dose of both. For Jesus, there was no conflict between grace and truth. Grace does not dumb down sin to make it more palatable. The purpose of truth is not to isolate people from God or His people. In the gospels, Jesus acknowledges the full implications of sin and yet He does not condemn the sinner (John 8:11). As preachers of the Word, we are also to proclaim _____ grace as well as truth.

3. Facing the _____ of proclaiming the truth of the gospel to worldly individuals who are not yet believers.

³ And even if our gospel is veiled, ***it is veiled to those who are perishing.*** ⁴ The god of this age has ***blinded the minds of unbelievers,*** so that they ***cannot see*** the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

Effective proclamation of the gospel requires the _____ of God the Holy Spirit in both the life of the one speaking as well as the life of the listener. Jesus made it clear that:

³⁷ All those ***the Father gives me*** will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away. **John 6:37 (NIV2011)**

⁴⁴ “***No one*** can come to me ***unless*** the Father who sent me ***draws them,*** and I will raise them up at the last day. **John 6:44 (NIV2011)**

²⁷ Let me illustrate this further. ***Who is powerful enough to enter the house of a strong man like Satan and plunder his goods?*** Only someone even stronger — someone who could tie him up and then plunder his house. **Mark 3:27 (NLT)**

⁵ For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus’ sake. ⁶ For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” ***made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God’s glory*** displayed in the face of Christ.

2 Corinthians 4:5,6 (NIV2011)

Prevenient grace is a Christian theological concept rooted in Augustinian theology. It is divine grace that precedes human decision. It exists prior to and without reference to anything humans may have done. As humans are corrupted by the effects of sin, prevenient grace allows persons to engage their God-given free will to choose the salvation offered by God in Jesus Christ or to reject that salvific offer. Wesleyan Arminians believe that it enables, but does not ensure, personal acceptance of the gift of salvation. **Individualistic prevenient grace** says that the extent to which this grace is given is limited to only those who come under the intelligent hearing of the gospel message. Those who support this view often say that ***the gospel [through the Holy Spirit] inherently has the power to enable someone to believe when it is heard.***

4. **Preaching to the unchurch, in order to be done effectively, resulting in new spiritual life and regeneration, requires God's _____.**

⁷But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. **2 Corinthians 4:7 (NIV2011)**

As we saw in Lesson #2

. . . there is great comfort in knowing Christ is effectively at work in the preaching event, whether you feel you are effective or not. You have the opportunity to work with Him. As a preacher, you have the privilege of getting close enough to Him to find out where He is and what He is doing, and then meshing in His work. That is when preaching is fruitful. That is when lives are transformed through preaching. **Dennis Kinlaw, *Preaching in the Spirit*, p. 48**

Look again at Kinlaw's How To Prepare For Spirit Filled Worship

1. _____ **comes first** - "I have never known a real work of grace in which someone had not prayed beforehand." Wesley said: "*No one is ever saved unless someone has prayed.*"
2. **Secondly, the preacher must _____ by making sure he or she is filled with God's Spirit.** God's work is done, "Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit", say the Lord God Almighty. As A.B. Simpson said, "We are empty possibilities until God gets us."

Gifts, knowledge, and oratorical skills will never be sufficient to do the work of proclamation. Only preaching in the power of the Spirit will do.

Preaching to the Unchurched - Part 2

One of the challenges we face in preaching the Word effectively is "***How do I engage both church and unchurch people with the same message?***"

The even bigger challenge is to _____ how to preach and engage people who do not agree with your premise, or your source of authority. How do you preach from the Bible to those ***who do not accept the Bible*** as the Word of God which is sufficient for all matters pertaining to life and salvation?

Andy Stanley says that the key to successfully engaging unchurched people has more to do with your _____ and presentation, than with your _____. He continues to say that our presentation is what determines a person's level of interest. Content, he says, is often secondary. Regardless of what we intend to accomplish, ***how we go about it determines the outcome.***

If you have been called to reach this generation of unchurched people, then, if you truly desire to be effective, you and I must be willing to adopt an approach to ministry, communicating the truth of the gospel in particular, that will advance our calling. Remember, content is not everything. It's the _____ that makes the difference.

Here are some questions to help us assess where we are:

1. Does my approach to preaching facilitate my desire to see unchurched people attend, return for a second visit, and then come back again with a friend?
2. Are my key leaders willing to invite their unchurched friends, family, or coworkers?
3. If not, am I willing to change my approach?

Andy Stanley gives his goal for the weekend service at North Point Community Church, in Atlanta:

My goal on the weekend is to present the scriptures in a way that is so helpful and compelling that everybody in the audience is glad to have attended and drives away with every intention to return the following week. Deep and Wide, p. 234

“I want the audience to be so happy about being there that they come back the following week. I want them to walk away intrigued by the fact that they just heard someone teach from the Bible and it was . . . *helpful*. I want skeptics to doubt their disbelief. I want believers to believe deeper. I want people who do not own a Bible to leave committed to finding one. I want cultural Christians to dust theirs off and start reading them again. That is my goal. That is my win as a communicator. Ultimately, I want people to fall in love with the author of the Scriptures and His Son”

A basic principle Andy lives by as a communicator to both churched as well as unchurched individuals is:

When people are convinced you want something _____ them rather than something FROM them, they are less likely to be offended if you challenge them.

Have you taken the time to prayerfully consider and write out your goal for the weekend service, or more particularly, the preaching event?

My challenge to you this week, is to begin to take some time to decide what your goal is, what you are really trying to accomplish on the weekends. If you do not clarify what the goal is, you will never be able to identify what the best approach is.

Andy Stanley's Approach (As described in Chapter 11, *Deep and Wide*, pp 227-259).

"My approach is to _____ the audience to follow me into one passage of Scripture with the promise that the text is either going to answer a question they've been asking or solve a mystery they've been puzzled over, or resolve a tension they've been carrying. Once we are in the text, I do my best to let it speak for itself. I go slowly. I highlight words. I leverage the drama. I roll 'em around in the text till it gets all over them. I bring my energy to a text and I do my best to uncover the energy in the text. Once they are thoroughly embroiled with the passage, I take one carefully crafted statement that emerges from the point of the text and do everything in my power to make it stick.

Then I let them out on time. That's my approach. What yours?"

Seven Guidelines For Preaching to Unchurched People

1. **Let them know that you know they are out there . . .and that you are _____ about it.** The key to engaging unchurched people is to include them. But for them to feel included, they have got to know that you know they are out there and that you are happy about it. Andy recommends that you reference them in your message, as early as possible. Check out the sample statements listed below.

"If you are here for the first time and you don't consider yourself a religious person, we are so glad you are here. Hang around here long enough and you will discover that we are not all that religious either."

"If you don't consider yourself a Christian, or maybe you aren't sure, you could not have picked a better weekend to join us."

"If you've got questions about faith, the Bible, Jesus, maybe even the existence of God, you need to know that we built this place for you. Our goal from the beginning was to create a church unchurched people would love to attend."

“If the only reason you are here today is because you are visiting relatives and they said they wouldn’t feed you if you wouldn’t attend church with them, my apologies. We all still have a long way to go.”

“You may be here because someone bribed you with lunch or told you that you would meet somebody cute. Whatever the reason, we are so glad you are here.”

“If this is your first time in church or your first time in a long time, and you feel a little uncomfortable, relax. We don’t want anything from you. But we do want something for you. We want you to know the peace that comes from making peace with your Heavenly Father.”

“If this is your first time in church, or your first time in a long time, and you feel out of place because you think we are all good people and you are not so good, you need to know you are surrounded by people who have out-sinned you ten to one. Don’t let all these pretty faces fool you.”

“We may not all believe the same, but we all struggle with the same temptations, fears, insecurities, and doubts. You have more in common with us than you might imagine. And we are so glad you took the risk and came to church today.”

2. **Begin your message with the _____ in mind. . . not your message.** Great communicators take people on journeys. Where you begin the journey will determine who will follow you. If the desire is for unchurched attendees to follow you, you may need to back up several steps from where you might normally begin. Look where Jesus began as he spoke in Luke 15.

How do we get people to take the journey with us? Remember the goal is for the audience to be so happy about being there that they come back the following week. We want them to think: ***“I am so glad I came today”***.

We do that by creating tension. Tension is usually found in the text by asking one or more of these questions:

- What _____ does this text answer?
- What _____ does this text resolve?
- What _____ does this text resolve?
- What _____ does this text address?

Before we draw people attention to the text, we want to make sure they are emotionally _____ with the problem. I do not go to the text until I am certain everybody in the audience really wants to know the answer. There are no uniquely Christian problems. There are just problems. That is where we begin.

- 3. Pick _____ passage and stick with it . . . everyone will be glad you did.** People unfamiliar with the Bible are intimidated by it. Anything we can say to make the Bible more approachable and less intimidating is a win. So, pick a passage and stick with it. Five passages makes a series, not a sermon. Choose one passage and stay with it until everybody gets it.
- 4. Give the people permission _____ to believe . . . or obey.** The imperatives of the Scriptures are addressed to Christians.

¹² What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside? ¹³ God will judge those outside. **1 Corinthians 5:12-13 (NIV2011)**

Few things discredit the church more than when the church holds unbelievers accountable to a standard they never acknowledged to begin with. Nothing says

hypocrite faster than Christians expecting non-Christians to behave like Christians when half of the Christians do not act like they should half of the time. The apostle Paul writes:

⁵ *Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity.*

⁶ *Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.* **Colossians 4:5-6 (NIV2011)**

Give them an out. Remember, only _____ judges. The Holy Spirit is the one who convinces and convicts. Our role is to _____ and be gracious. Offer both truth and grace. Andy Stanley says: “My experience is that when you give non-Christians an out, they respond by leaning in. Especially if you **invite** them rather than **expect** them. There is a big difference between being expected to do something and being invited to try something.

If you tell me I have to, I assume you want something from me. If you offer me an opportunity to, I’ll be more inclined to believe you have my best interest at heart. Inviting unchurched people to take small steps is the same as inviting them to take first steps.”

5. Avoid saying “The Bible says” . . . because it _____. Andy believes that phrase creates an unnecessary obstacle to faith, i.e. belief in the infallibility of the Scriptures. Most people assume the Bible was written by men and is, therefore, full of errors. Remember, people do not have to believe the Scriptures are God breathed to become followers of Christ. Don’t place unnecessary _____ in their path as they come to Christ. Instead of saying “the Bible says”, cite the author.

And while we are talking about this, don’t assume they know anything about the Bible or Bible characters. Our culture is Biblically illiterate. Don’t _____. Bring people along with you. Define what words mean. That is how you make sure everybody is able to take the journey with you.

6. **Acknowledge the _____ . . . it would be odd not to.** We do ourselves and the unbelievers in our congregations a disservice when we forget to pause and consider how _____ some of what's in the Bible must sound to someone who is unfamiliar with it or wasn't raised in church. As a general rule, say what you _____ unbelievers are thinking. When you do, it gives you credibility. Let people know it is okay to read it before they believe it. When it comes to dealing with miracles, Satan, hell, and even certain aspects of heaven, acknowledge that these are _____ things for the modern mind to accept. Here is a sample script:

For those of us raised in church, it's easy to believe these things took place. But if you are new to Bible study, I can understand why you may have questions or even doubts. You may be interested to know that some of Jesus' own followers had a difficult time believing some of this stuff. You've probably heard the phrase 'Doubting Thomas.' Thomas was one of Jesus' followers who didn't believe that Jesus rose from the dead. Thus the nickname. Apparently Jesus' own brother, James, didn't believe for a long time either. So you are in good company. No pressure.

The primary issue is what a person believes about Jesus. Not every miracle in the Old and New Testaments.

7. **Stay away from the mystical . . . it just puts _____ between you and the audience.** By mystical, I mean giving people the impression that you somehow have the inside track with God and that you are closer to God than the people in your congregation could ever be. Saying things like, "God told me . . ." How can you argue with that? Mystery creates mystery, and with that comes fear. And that puts you in the drivers seat.

Effective Preaching For Today - Lesson 6

Before You Preach -

1. **God is a God who hides Himself from the world and all that is of the world.** His desire is for us to come away from _____ and busyness in order that we might be with Him. Earlier, in Lesson 1, we reflected on Mark 3:13, and we observed:

He called them first of all . . . *“that they might be with him.”* The first call of Jesus is **not** for us to be preachers of the Word. Rather it is to be followers of Christ and to be with Him. Everything else they were to do was to come out of that close communion with Jesus. The chief purpose of this time with Jesus was so that they might get to know Him, and in knowing Him they were then better able to know themselves.

*“The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught.”³¹ Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, **“Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.”**³² So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place.*

Mark 6:30-32 (NIV2011)

The preacher must, by prayer, move God toward the people before he can move the people toward God with his words. The preacher must have had audience and ready access to God before he can have access to the people. Preachers who are mightiest in their closets are the mightiest in pulpits with men.

E.M. Bounds, Prayer, The Great Essential

2. **God's call for those who preach His Word is still a call to come away, by yourself, to a quiet place, to get some rest.**

⁶ But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

Matthew 6:6 (NIV2011)

So, what is so special about a closet? Look at the definition:

1. a : an apartment or small room **for privacy**
b : a monarch's or official's **private chamber**
- 2 : a **place of retreat or privacy**

A closet is a place with no windows, no view, no distractions. It affords one a solitary place to be alone or to be alone with God. It is a place with no crowds. It allows a praying individual the best possible environment for an _____ focus upon God the Father. It is a meeting place for God and the one He has called.

3. **Once we have taken the time** to go to our “prayer closet”, we need to guard ourselves against the danger of seeking to know God and Christ in the power of our _____ or our _____ alone. We are reminded in **John 4:24**

*²⁴ God is spirit, and his worshipers **must worship in the Spirit and in truth.**”*

The Holy Spirit was given to us for a _____. That purpose is revealed to us in **Ephesians 2:18**. ¹⁸ *For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.* The Holy Spirit, according to Andrew Murray, was given to us for the sole purpose that “**Through Him, we might have access to the Father.**”

Murray adds:

- Take hold of the truth that the Holy Spirit was given for the purpose of teaching us to pray.
- Be strong in the faith that He makes fellowship with the Father and the Son a blessed reality and that He is working secretly in you.
- As you enter into the inner chamber, give yourself wholly to His guidance as your teacher in all your intercession and adoration.

Andrew Murray adds:

When Christ said to the disciples on the evening of the resurrection, “*Receive the Holy Spirit.*” (John 20:22), it was, for one thing, to _____ and _____ them for the ten days of prayer and for their receiving the fullness of the Holy Spirit. He continues on to say: This suggests to us three things we ought to remember as we draw near to God in prayer.

Three things we ought to remember as we draw near to God in prayer.

1. We must pray in the _____ that the Holy Spirit dwells in us. And we must _____ ourselves definitely, in stillness of soul, to His leading. Be sure to take time for this.
2. We must believe that the “Greater works” of the Spirit that Jesus spoke about in John 5:20 will be _____ **to us** in answer to prayer. Such works bring us toward the enlightening and strengthening of spiritual life, towards the fullness of the Spirit.
3. We must believe that through the _____, in unity with all God’s children, we may expect the mighty workings of that Spirit on His Church and People.

³⁸ *Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them.*” **John 7:38 (NIV2011)**

²⁶ *... Do you believe this?*” **John 11:26 (NIV2011)**

Preaching which kills is prayerless preaching. Without prayer the preacher creates death, and not life. The preacher who is feeble in prayer is feeble in life-giving forces. **The Complete Works of E. M. Bounds .**

Study universal holiness of life. Your whole usefulness depends on this, for your sermons last but an hour or two; your life preaches all the week. If Satan can only make a covetous minister a lover of praise, of pleasure, of good eating, he has ruined your ministry. *Give yourself to prayer, and get your texts, your thoughts, your words from God.* Luther spent his best three hours in prayer.—Robert Murray Mccheyne

The Complete Works of E. M. Bounds .

A Call to Preach is a call to Intercession -

- 1. It is through intercession that a person comes boldly before God to say what is desired for _____.** Through intercession, the preacher seeks to bring down upon the souls of his or her listeners, the _____ of eternal life with all of its blessings. Intercession is the highest privilege and enjoyment connected with our communion with God. Intercession is the channel through which the power of God begins to flow through you and I, so that, we might be used as instruments for his great work of bringing people out the kingdom of darkness and into the kingdom of Heaven.
- 2. Two prayers on behalf of those we serve.**

¹⁷ *And Elisha prayed, "Open his eyes, LORD, so that he may see." Then the LORD opened the servant's eyes, and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.* **2 Kings 6:17 (NIV2011)**

²⁰ *After they entered the city, Elisha said, "LORD, open the eyes of these men so they can see." Then the LORD opened their eyes and they looked, and there they were, inside Samaria.* **2 Kings 6:20 (NIV2011)**

- 1) We should first ask God** to open our eyes so that we may see His wonderful _____ for His church in the baptism and in filling of His Holy Spirit. All the powers of heaven are at our disposal in the service of the heavenly kingdom.

- 2) **But we will find that we need a second prayer also**, so that God may open the eyes of His children who do not yet see the _____ that the world and sin have upon His people. They are still unaware of the feebleness that marks the church, making it powerless to do the work of winning souls for Christ and building up believers for a life of holiness and fruitfulness. Lets us pray especially that God may open all eyes to see what the great and fundamental need of the church is – *to bring down His blessing in intercession*, so that the power of His Spirit may be known unceasingly in its divine effectiveness and blessing.

Christians need to realize this as their true nobility and their only power with God, *the right to claim and expect that God will hear prayer*. Only as God's children begin to see what intercession means in regard to God's kingdom will they realize how solemn their responsibility is.

Andrew Murray

3. **Christ, as the Head of the Church, is the Intercessor in heaven**; we, as the members of His body, are partners with Him here on earth.

Will you not offer yourself to God for this blessed work of intercession and learn to consider it the highest privilege of your life to be a channel through whose prayers God's blessings can be brought down to earth?

Andrew Murray

"Prayer is an unnatural activity."

Bill Hybels

³ *For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.* **Colossians 3:3 (NIV2011)**

4. **To be a person of prayer**, to go to your prayer closet and to stay there until you have heard from God is _____ to do. The urge, the tendency, the desire is to move on to other things. Staying in the place of prayer makes us restless and often uncomfortable.
5. **Dying to self _____ in the prayer closet.** If we can not put aside our own desires here in the place of prayer, we will not be able to put them aside in the other areas of our life.

We are constantly on a stretch, if not on a strain, to devise new methods, new plans, new organizations to advance the Church and secure enlargement and efficiency for the gospel. This trend of the day has a tendency to lose sight of the man or sink the man in the plan or organization. God's plan is to make much of the man, far more of him than of anything else. Men are God's method. The Church is looking for better methods; *God is looking for better men.*

What the Church needs to-day is not more machinery or better, not new organizations or more and novel methods, but men whom the Holy Ghost can use—men of prayer, men mighty in prayer. The Holy Ghost does not flow through methods, but through men. He does not come on machinery, but on men. He does not anoint plans, but men—men of prayer.

The character as well as the fortunes of the gospel is committed to the preacher. He makes or mars the message from God to man. The preacher is the golden pipe through which the divine oil flows. The pipe must not only be golden, but open and flawless, that the oil may have a full, unhindered, unwasted flow.

The man makes the preacher. God must make the man. *The messenger is, if possible, more than the message.* The preacher is more than the sermon. The preacher makes the sermon. As the life-giving milk from the mother's bosom is but the mother's life, so all the preacher says is tintured, impregnated by what the preacher is. The treasure is in earthen vessels, and the taste of the vessel impregnates and may discolor. The man, the whole man, lies behind the sermon. *Preaching is not the performance of an hour. It is the outflow of a life.* It takes twenty years to make a sermon, because it takes twenty years to make the man. The true sermon is a thing of life. The sermon grows because the man grows. The sermon is forceful because the man is forceful. The sermon is holy because the man is holy. The sermon is full of the divine unction because the man is full of the divine unction.

The Complete Works of E. M. Bounds .

Communicating For Change - Part 2 of Lesson 6

1. Begin with the _____ of the audience in mind first.

When we approach preaching with a goal of teaching the Bible to people, the goal becomes to cover the text or the material. But when the primary concern is to teach people the Bible, the primary concern is: “Did they understand and will they remember what I talked about? Knowing the Bible and what it says is not enough. A better goal might be to **teach people how to live a life that reflects the values, principles, and truths of the Bible**. In short, the goal is life change. I desire for the audience to live differently in response to what they have heard.

Randy Pope says “**Preaching is not talking to people about the Bible; it is talking to people about themselves from the Bible**” (Preaching in the Prevailing Church).

2. Preaching for Life Change _____ a different approach.

Preaching for life change requires far less information and more emphasis on application. Less explanation and more inspiration. Although all scripture is equally inspired, not all scripture is equally applicable. That is why you rarely preach from Leviticus! Consequently, if our goal is life change, then we must select and emphasize some texts over others. Preaching for life change involves selecting passages that are most appropriate for and applicable to our target audience. When you make a commitment to preach for life change, your preparation is not complete until you have asked and answered the following two questions. So what? and Now what?

3. Andy Stanley’s basic premise.

If life change is your goal, point by point preaching is not the most effective approach. What that means for me is that what I have learned and been taught about preaching over the years must be adapted, changed, improved upon and reconsidered if I truly desire to make life change my goal.

So, the question becomes, “Am I willing to learn a new approach?” Am I open to learning how to arrange the message around just one point, rather than using a point by point approach. A “*point*” refers to an application, an insight, or a principle. ***The point becomes your destination, your goal, your bottom line.*** It describes the application, insight, or principle that will result in life change.

4. _____ you preach, you must know the answer to two things.

- What is the _____ I want my audience to know?
- What do I want them to do about it?

The process for developing the one point message can be broken down as follows:

- 1) Dig until you find the one point.
- 2) Build everything around it.
- 3) Make it stick - Make it memorable.

5. Dig until you find the one point.

This requires work and preparation in order to discover what the one point is. Preparation will involve _____ what the text does and does not say, what we wish it would say, and what we did not expect it to say. In order to reach our goal of having people live a life that reflects the values and principles of scripture, we must find our one point in _____. Let the scripture speak for itself. We ask ourselves:

- What, if anything, does the Bible say about this topic?
- If nothing, why?
- Who, in the scriptures, faced a situation that forced them to interface with this topic or idea?
- What did they do? Why did they not do what I might have expected them to do?
- Did Jesus ever address this topic directly or indirectly?

6. **Build _____ around your newly discovered point.**

Lists may go on paper, but single, powerful ideas have ways of penetrating the human heart for life change. Once you have determined the main point, then the filler has to go. It is time to start _____. Ask yourself, Does this really facilitate the journey or is it just something that will get a laugh or fill the time?

7. **Craft a _____ statement or phrase that makes the point stick (memorable).**

Examples:

- Your friends determine the direction and quality of your life.
- Purity paves the way to intimacy.
- Everybody lives forever somewhere.
- Good people don't go to heaven, forgiven people do.
- To understand why, submit and apply
- Others first.
- Maximum freedom is found under God's authority.

8. **Create a Map clarifying the best way to your point.**

Use a _____ outline. Me, We, God, You, We

ME	WE	GOD	YOU	WE
Orientation	Identification	Illumination	Application	Inspiration

Me - Begin with a story or a statement about yourself. This is your introduction. This is where you look to establish common ground, connect with the people, demonstrate transparency and likeability. Begin to create tension.

We - Here is where we begin to broaden the tension by including everybody who is listening. In this section, spend time applying the tension to as many areas as you can to spark an emotion in as broad and wide an audience as possible. Don't transition from WE until you feel as if you have created a tension that your audience is dying for you to resolve.

God - This is the meat from the Word. The goal here is to resolve the tension, answer the question that by this point people are asking. The goal here is to engage the audience with the text. Don't just read it, explain it and take the audience with you on a journey of discovery.

You - This is the application part of the message. This is where we answer the questions "So what?" and "Now what?" Ask:

- How does this apply to me?
- How does this apply to family relationships?
- How does this apply to relationships in the church?
- How does this apply to relationships with unchurched?
- How does this apply at work?
- How does this apply to teens and students?
- How does this apply to singles? Empty nesters? Newlyweds? Parents?

We - This is about vision casting. Dreaming together about what could be. Imagine what could be if we . . .

9. _____ **trumps information every time.**

Another way to say this is: Attention and retention is determined by the presentation, not the information. The point is, when people are engaged, time flies. When we are not engaged, time stands still. In most cases, presentation is what captures and holds people's attention.

10. **What creates _____?**

The more interested we are in a topic, the easier it is to engage us with the information. _____ creates a hunger for information. Presentation takes a backseat to information when an audience is absolutely convinced you are about to answer a question they have been asking, solve a mystery they have been unable to solve, or resolve a tension they have been unable to resolve. The purpose here is to manufacture interest. Information that does not address a felt need is perceived as irrelevant.

11. The most important part of the message might _____ be what you think it is.

Your _____ might be the most important part of the message. The introduction should provide the listeners with a reason to listen. Your assumption should be, If I do not capture their attention in the first five minutes, all is lost. Here are some questions to use to develop introductions:

- What is the question I am answering? What can I do to get my audience to want to know the answer to the question?
- What is the tension my message will resolve? What can I do to make my audience feel the tension?
- What mystery does this message solve? What can I do to make my audience want a solution?

Jesus does *this* in the following passage.

*²³ Then Jesus said to his disciples, “Truly I tell you, it is hard for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of heaven. ²⁴ Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.” ²⁵ When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished and asked, “**Who then can be saved?**”*

Matthew 19:23-25 (NIV2011)

12. Some rules of engagement.

- A. Check your _____. Public speakers need to increase their speed so that it is faster than normal conversation. If you talk too slow, you will be perceived as boring. People are able to listen much faster than we can speak. If we go too slow they get way ahead of us and become bored and disengage.
- B. Take it _____ in the corners (Transitions).
Give people some warning that you are about to make a transition.

Below is a transition statement from WE to GOD:

Fortunately for us, we are not the first group to wonder about this. Men and women from the first century shared our concern. So for the next few minutes we have the opportunity to listen to Jesus address this very issue. And once again, we are reminded of how relevant the Bible is to the issues we struggle with today.

- C. Use _____ every chance you get.
Visuals are engaging.
- D. _____ the urge to share everything you have learned in your research. If it doesn't facilitate the journey, cut it.
- E. _____ or watch your messages each week after you have delivered them. It is the only way to make sure you get better. If you want to improve, you are going to have to listen to yourself and ask for constructive criticism.

13. Some closing thoughts

Sometimes we get stuck. We find ourselves with several pages of information and no big idea or bottom line. Here are Andy Stanley's steps to follow if you find yourself stuck in message preparation:

- The first thing to do when you are stuck is to pray. I ask God to show me if there is something He wants to say to prepare me for what He wants to communicate to the congregation.
- Sometimes I need to deal with something in my personal life that is standing in the way.
- I remind myself that it is God who empowers people to change. I ask the Holy Spirit to open the eyes of my heart.
- I ask myself the basic questions once again.

- A. What do they need to know? (INFORMATION)
- B. Why do they need to know it? (MOTIVATION) What will happen to the person who never discovers the truth or principle we are about to discuss? What is at stake for them?
- C. What do they need to do? (APPLICATION) Be specific and creative.
- D. Why do they need to do it? (INSPIRATION)
- E. How can I help them remember? (REITERATION)

Make a copy of these questions and keep them where you study. When you get stuck, start at the top and work your way down.

Title:

Text:

ME -

Today we address the issue:

GOD-

YOU-

WE-

The Bottom Line:

Next Steps:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.