

PREACHING FOR RESULTS

Facilitator: Dr. Leonard Lovett

Preaching for Results entails participation in the act of creating an experience with the Word through the mind and heart. How does each sermon become an exciting preaching event? How ought we to prepare for such an event? Preaching is story-telling that includes several levels of verbal interaction which lifts up the spoken word as it points to the Living Word.

Seven (7) foundational Goals for effective preaching

1. Personal consecration precedes preaching. The contemporary student of preaching would do well to heed Paul's admonition to Timothy [1 Timothy 4:16] "Take heed to yourself and unto the doctrine..... Prayer is a prerequisite for power in the pulpit.

2. To learn a method of developing sermons that achieve results

3. To develop the ability to preach more powerful sermons through understanding preaching as Biblical storytelling, translating folk culture, language, dialogue and celebration.

4. To discern the role of Scripture in Preaching. To appreciate the role of the imagination in relating the Biblical story. How to handle the text properly.

5. To stress the significance of theology in preaching

6. How to read selectively. The long range goal is that participants will "develop the discipline" of learning to read religiously

7. How to transform the preaching moment into an event

What Preaching is not. It is not grabbing a mike, finding your key and for an unlimited time you rave and rant across the stage like a lion in a cage, bellowing to the top of your voice anything that entertains the immediate audience. That is much closer to singing than preaching. If what one does is not anointed, inspiring and challenging, it could qualify as an address, but not preaching.

What is Preaching? After struggling with the concept of preaching for several decades, I have concluded that **Preaching** is a radical encounter between the Living Word and the bearer of the spoken word, translated into meaning, charged with eternal destiny, borne by those who are willing to risk the scandal of the faith as the message is transmitted and communicated to those who have been brutalized by life's uncertainties. The communication of "divine truth." – L.Lovett

SEVEN (7) KEYS TO EFFECTIVE PREACHING

1. WHAT IS A THEME?

A. Definition of a Theme The first task in preparation for the preaching moment is to have a specific aim for each message...and tell your audience what it is. When a ship's captain does not know which port he is heading for, no wind is the right wind; if an air pilot doesn't know which air field to land, any field may suffice. Likewise if the preacher doesn't know where one is going in a message, no worship service is a good service. In homiletics the specific aim contained within the message is referred to by several names.

It is called the theme/sermon proposition/theme sentence/the "big idea,"... "the big idea" is the message germ. It may come to the preacher's attention in a number of ways. It is to the sermon/message what the spine is to the skeleton; the foundation to the house. It holds things together. It is the glue, the cartilage that helps to determine what the final product will become. The "big idea" is intended to generate thoughtfulness, and out of that thoughtfulness grows the message. The sermon/message is the development of a theme growing out of an idea that focuses on a human issue or divine claim.

B. Is the Theme Clear and Concise?

The form of the proposition, theme, or big idea should be one complete declarative sentence that is clear and cogent. It should contain no unnecessary or ambiguous, difficult words. It should contain all that is essential to the sermon, no less and no more.

C. It Should be a Timeless Truth worth Preaching about

A truth that is timeless defies the parameters and boundaries of time.

E.g. *That brings us to the vital issue, how does faith overcome doubt?* -Harry Emerson Fosdick

What does it do for our prayers to conclude them with the words "through Jesus Christ our Lord." - Ralph W, Sockman

"This message is a warning to anyone who believes they can persistently flirt with evil and win." - Leonard Lovett

2. IS THE TITLE PROVOCATIVE?

A. Problem of a Weak Title

What does your sermon title suggest? Does your title suggest that your presentation will be a preaching event or a movement? Well chosen titles can serve several purposes for sermons: *they help the preacher to summarize the message in his or her own mind; they stimulate the congregation's anticipation about the sermon long after the hour of worship has passed.*³ One should keep a page of one's notebook for titles as they are collected.

B. When the sermon title scoops the message

What really makes a title good?. Does the title tell too much about the sermon? Killinger suggests that four things make a title good. **1. A good title is reasonably brief.** It packs the central idea of the sermon into succinct phrases. **2. A Good Title is Honest** It should fairly and accurately describe the content of the particular sermon it represents. **3. A Good Title is Interesting.** It has a certain flair, a vibrant quality about it. **4. A Good Title is Memorable.** It has a lilt or rhythm that lingers in the mind.

C. Sermon Titles Fall into Several Categories

1. Clever Titles that provoke thought or offer a play on words. e.g. *Somebody is Calling My Name; In Defense of Beauty; Sleeping With the Enemy; The Kingdom has Gone to the Dogs; I May Die But it Will Not be Here [four lepers at the gate]*

2. Titles from Books Plays and Movies *These may be especially effective during times when everyone is reading and talking about particular events.*

Eg. *You Can't Go Home Again (Foy Valentine); based on Thomas Wolfe Novel; The Exorcist--New Testament Version; Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Dying---But Were Afraid to Ask; This Bud's for You (Aaron's Budding rod)*

3. Question Titles *Why Worship? (Fosdick); Are We Part of the Problem or the Answer ?Robert McCracken)*

4. Image Titles *They reflect a pictorial image. Turning the Corner; Key Next Door; (Weatherhead);*

5. Good Clear Titles *The peril of Ordinary Days (E. Steimle's); The Displaced Christ and Our Disordered World (Carl Henry); The Peril of a Crossless Life- (L. Lovett)*

6. Personal Interest Titles *The Importance of the Ordinary Man; On Finding It Hard to Believe in God; Making the Most of Friendship : How to Live Before you Die. Handling Life's Second Best (Fosdick)*

A Concluding Word:

*Try not give the entire sermon away so that there is nothing left that is intriguing to the hearer. Avoid titles such as: **Its Your Church--Its What you Make It; Preaching Christianity Through the Love of God and Humankind***

3. IS THE SERMON BIBLICAL?

Are the claims you make in your presentation based on Scripture? Philosophy? Your opinion?

1. Carefully read and question the text in its setting
2. Invoke the authority of the text.
3. The significance of theology for preaching. (the primary task of theology is to clarify the nature of the Christian faith for the believing community).

4. DOES THIS SERMON ADDRESS PEOPLE CONCERNS/ISSUES?

The preacher stands between the radical demands of God and the needs of humankind. When faith and the issues of life comes, power comes, glory comes. Am I preaching to a problem, a concern, a live issue?

5. IS MY SERMON CONTEMPORANEOUS?

1. Are contemporary issues/concerns addressed?
2. Does Speaker translate ancient language of Scripture to contemporary thought forms? Does my preaching scratch where people are itching?

6. WILL THIS MESSAGE PROVOKE HEARERS TO ACTION?

1. Are hearers ready to act on the imperatives/claims and demands of the message?
2. Is the Message permeated with the claims of the Kingdom? (Greek- *Basilea*)

7. WILL THIS SERMON BE DELIVERED IN THE POWER (Anointing) OF THE HOLY SPIRIT?

1. To what extent was the preacher sensitive to the power of the Spirit in delivering the message? Did I pray through my sermon as I prepared it?
2. Does the speaker avoid histrionics and inauthentic gestures with the realization that the anointing makes the difference?

CONCLUSION: Suggested approach to Preaching

The Dialectical Method

George Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, German philosopher contended that history is a process of unfolding determined by an absolute purpose or idea, (which orthodox Hegelians called God); that the machinery of change was called “historical dialectic.” That history is made up of a number of culture periods, each the expression of a dominant spirit or idea. After fulfilling its purpose, the period is confronted by another contradictory idea or set of values. The traditional “thesis” is challenged by the new “antithesis.” Out of this struggle there emerges a “synthesis” of old and new. Then the cycle starts all over again.

The late Dr, Samuel D. Proctor borrowed the dialectical theory and imposed it on preaching and developed the dialectical approach (method) to preaching in his *The Certain Sound of the Trumpet: Crafting a Sermon of Authority*, Judson press, 1994 and his *How Shall They Hear?*, Judson Press, 1992.

Outline of the Dialectical Method in Preaching

Subject.....

Text.....

1. Introduction: Antithesis (the real)
2. Transition: Thesis (the biblical mandate)

Relevant Question

3. Conclusion: Synthesis

1. Point
2. Point
3. Point

OR

Subject...

Text...

1. Introduction: Thesis (the biblical mandate, the ideal)

2. Transition: Antithesis (the real)

Relevant Question

3. Conclusion: Synthesis

1. Point 2. Point 3. Point

Instructor Commentary: The dialectical **method** is only a tool for preaching. It is not the only **method**. However, when used, it is highly effective, because it forces the preacher to argue one's case to the point of resolution. This **method** is often used unknowingly in selling an automobile, proposing for marriage, presenting a proposal, etc. This **method** is a way of thinking that facilitates reaching the truth. This **method** pleads that nothing important should be overlooked or taken lightly. As a student of preaching, **master the method** and it can become applicable to any sermon in process or progress

DELIVERY; START LOW, GO SLOW, RISE HIGH, CATCH FIRE AND SIT DOWN

*Caution: Do not insult your audience by threatening to take your seat five (5) or six (6) times
It is not only anti-climactic (the roller coaster effect) it can also be downright embarrassing*

THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION SHOULD BE PLACED ON YOUR STUDY DESK AND USED AS A MODEL AS YOU PREPARE YOUR SERMONS IN THE COMING DAYS. *You will be surprised how easy sermon preparation will become after a few times using this method.*

YOU CAN DO IT!

THE SERMON PLAN

I SERMON TITLE **Witnessing in a Difficult Situation**

SERMON THEME *Can God intervene through us?*

II INTRODUCTION ANTITHESIS [The **Real**] A Problem, a set of facts, a crisis, a state of affairs- example= *“Our society is out of control, crime is on the rise, terrorism haunts us, true witnesses are diminishing.”*

III THESIS [The **Ideal**] the Text **Acts 17: 1- 5** the good news, Gospel example= *“In the midst of troubling times, here is a story that demonstrates God’s presence in a bad situation.”*

IV RELEVANT QUESTION - [must reconcile the **real** and the **Ideal**] Must be a candid question that sets the limits, boundaries for the sermon; the more relevant the question, the better the SYNTHESIS [the body and conclusion] example- *“Given the state of affairs, what ought to be our response?”*

V SYNTHESIS [Must clearly **demonstrate** how the **Ideal**>>>**addresses** >>> the **Real**; resolution of the problem takes place here. **Your conclusion** may consist of two (2) or as many as six (6) **brief points** to close your case.

Example- a. *We need a rebirth of spiritual power*

b. *We need a rebirth of faith*

c. *We need a rebirth of hope*

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