

SERMON PREPARATION

1. THE REALIZATION--We are “the Lord’s messenger in the Lord’s message” (Hag. 1:13; Jon. 3:2). We need to be men of the book like Micaiah, who said, “Whatever the LORD says..., that I will speak” (I Kgs. 22:14). The magnitude of our task is set forth by Paul in II Tim. 4:1-5, when he issued the burning decree, “Preach the word.” God’s word needs to be “like a burning fire” in our heart that cannot be contained (Jer. 20:9).
2. THE RESPONSIBILITY—The task of taking the gospel to the world is enormous (Matt. 28:19-20). There are approximately 7-8 billion people in the world, many of whom are lost and dying in sin (Rom. 3:9-10, 23). We have the answer to the spiritual needs of the world in the gospel of Christ (Rom. 1:16). The magnitude of responsibility resting upon us is reflected in the fact that we are “watchman on the walls” (Ezek. 33). I am convinced that if we do our part, God will do His (I Co. 3:6).
3. THE READINESS—Preparing to preach the Word of God is a thrilling, but daunting task because we are bringing people face to face with the Lord. The word we preach has the ability to save, strengthen, and secure souls (Rom. 1:16; Heb. 4:12; Acts 18:8-10; 20:32; I Jo. 2:3; 5:11-13). The following is a step by step process in preparing a sermon:
 - i. Prayer for God’s blessings (Jas. 5:16).
 - ii. What are the needs in the congregation—Has there been sickness, death, natural disaster, family problems, moral problems, economic reversals, etc.? Are there national problems that are threatening the moral fiber of our nation and religious freedom? We need to preach with a newspaper in one hand and a Bible in the other.
 - iii. Types of lessons—Broadus in his book, "**Preparation and Delivery of Sermons**," states, "*topical sermons are those in which the subject alone is derived from the text. Textual sermons are those in which the subject and main divisions are derived from the text. Expository sermons are those in which the subject, main divisions and most of the details are derived from the text.*"
 - iv. Subject matter—There are many different ways to be Biblical and balanced in the pulpit. You can preach series of lessons on Bible characters, worship, books of the Bible, prayers in the Bible, Messianic prophecy, the home, apologetics, fundamentals of the faith, etc. Don’t underestimate or forget the value of preaching the Old Testament (Rom. 15:4).
 - v. The text or topic—Once a decision has been made regarding the subject matter or text, it is essential to have the right tools for putting the

sermon together. (Commentaries, Lexicons, Bible dictionaries, Webster's Dictionary, a handy Thesaurus, Bible maps, Lectureship books, The Spiritual Sword Journal, The Gospel Advocate, The Carolina Messenger, The Gospel Journal, Apologetics Press, Christian Courier, and other sound material written by our brethren). These tools can be used to enhance and enrich your study of God's word. Word studies (including looking at the etymology of a word) along with the grammatical construction of the text can be profitable in sermon preparation (ex. Acts 2:38; Matt. 26:26-29).

- vi. The outline—It needs to be easy for you to remember and easy for the audience to understand. One of the best illustrations I have heard is that of a house—Front porch (introduction), inside the house (main points), back porch (conclusion). Typically I have three main points and sub-points. Alliteration is a good tool to use in the formulation of the outline.

SERMON DELIVERY

1. POLISHED FOR THE PULPIT—Be neat in appearance.
 - i. Suit, ironed shirt, matching tie, and shined shoes (matching colored socks—no white socks).
2. POLISHED IN THE PULPIT—Be professional.
 - i. Pray that God's word will find a home in good and honest hearts (Lu. 8:15).
 - ii. Are you well prepared?
 - iii. Are you passionate about your sermon (Jer. 20:9)? Someone said, "If you don't have fire in your sermon, throw it in the fire."
 - iv. Be compassionate (Mk. 1:40-45).
 - v. Maintain eye contact. If you use an outline, don't just read it.
 - vi. Speak clearly and concisely. Use correct English.
 - vii. You are a messenger of the King. Preach the word without fear or favor (II Tim. 4:1-5).