

Beginners Guide to Creating a Sermon

A guide for new ministers to preparing and creating Biblical sermons in the presence of God

By David C. Istre

PERSONAL PREPARATION

Preparing to preach begins with the heart, soul, and mind of the preacher

1. Pray and ask God to personally:
 - a. convict your heart with the text
 - b. challenge your life with the text
 - c. illuminate your understanding with the text
 - d. sanctify your whole being with the text
2. Sanctify your study
 - a. Set aside time to study and prepare in the presence of God
 - b. Defend your study and preparation time
3. Meditate on the text until
 - a. Christ takes hold of you through the text
 - b. Christ indwells you through the text
 - c. Christ softens your heart to the text
4. Examine yourself
 - a. Am I humbled before God
 - b. Am I submitted to God
 - c. Am I honoring and revering the word of God
 - d. Am I personally prepared to preach the word of God

Preparing to preach is as much about preparing one's heart, soul, and mind to become a vessel for the proclamation of God's word as it is about acquiring the necessary knowledge and skills to write and preach a sermon.

The preacher brings his whole being, life, vulnerabilities, expectations, hopes, vision, dreams, and fears into every lesson he preaches; therefore, the preacher should bring his whole being, life, all of his vulnerabilities, expectations, hopes, vision, dreams, and fears before God when preparing to preach God's word so that he can be made adequate by the grace of Christ.

Every point in this guide will look slightly different as God calls preachers of many different backgrounds to declare his glory and demonstrate his grace. The aim, therefore, is to become personally fit to "preach the word of God" in the presence of Christ and his kingdom.

IMMERSING INTO THE TEXT

Immerse yourself in the text by reading and re-reading the text until you are fully immersed in it:

1. Identify the full context of the text
2. Identify the full range of meaning by comparing translations of the text
3. Identify the major historic and cultural backgrounds
4. Identify the underlying Old Testament backgrounds or New Testament foregrounds of the text
5. Identify the main theological themes of the text
6. Identify the main arguments, propositions, and imperatives of the text
7. Identify the main application(s) of the text
8. Identify the major textual and apologetic issues of the text

The preacher should draw his sense of the Lord's message from the text as the Holy Spirit illuminates his mind to God's message. The preacher should allow the Holy Spirit to captivate his heart with the text as he begins to immerse himself into God's words. This process of immersing oneself into the text should never be rushed because it is where the preacher will draw the life-breath of his sermon from.

OUTLINING THE TEXT

Create an outline using the natural flow of the text

1. Outline the text according to its natural flow of thought
2. Create your main points
3. Write one proposition statement for each main point

The best way to keep a message clear and focused is to follow the natural flow of the text by writing one clear proposition for each main point of the text. This allows the voice of God's word to be the preacher's guide and anchor the preacher's sermon to the authority of God's word as he explores the application of God's word for the lives of the Church.

WRITING THE BODY OF THE SERMON

Expand on the central propositions of your sermon to form the body of your lesson.

1. Explore the implications of the text's historic and cultural backgrounds
 - a. Use the text's historic and cultural backgrounds to color and emphasize the text's message
2. Explore the importance of the text's Old Testament background or New Testament foreground
 - a. Use the text's backgrounds/foregrounds to support the text's message
 - b. Use these backgrounds/foregrounds as pillars to support the text's theological connections
3. Explore the text's theological connections
 - a. Use supporting Biblical texts to illuminate the text's theological significance
4. Explore the text's full range of meaning found in other translations
 - a. Emphasize the text's arguments, propositions, and imperatives
 - b. Emphasize the text's syntactical relationships to appropriately emphasize its meaning
5. Explore the text's applications
 - a. How does the text inform our spiritual life?
 - b. How does the text inform our physical life?
 - c. How does the text interact with other worldviews and apologetic issues?

The preacher should draw from the text the organic ideas, natural connections, and intended applications when creating the foundation of his sermon so that he can explore the depths of the text without losing the text's intended message.

STREAMLINING THE SERMON

Streamline your lesson point by point to ensure your sermon flows together as one sermon.

1. Read your main points together
 - a. Check accuracy
 - b. Check coherence
 - c. Check congruence
2. Read your sub-points
 - a. Look for superfluous points that are distracting to the message
 - b. Look for points that will disrupt the coherence of the main points
 - c. Look for missing points
3. Read your lesson with your audience in mind
 - a. Look for your audience in your lesson
 - b. Look for points that need additional explanation
 - c. Look for points that can encourage, challenge, or correct your audience

The best way to make sure lessons connect to audiences without eroding the integrity of the message is to re-examine the lesson after its body has been written. This is an opportunity to check the message's accuracy, coherence, and congruence to make sure that it isn't being undermined by mistakes, inconsistencies, or distractions that will take away from the impact of the message. The preacher should now connect the audience to his message by reading the message with its audience in mind and making any necessary changes or additions.

FINISHING TOUCHES

Write the introduction and conclusion of your sermon once you have the full picture of your lesson.

1. Write an introduction to emphasize the main point of the message
2. Write a conclusion to bring the message together and connect it to the audience's heart and mind

The most effective way to write an introduction and conclusion to a sermon is to write them after the body of the sermon is finished. Introductions should prepare the audience to see the central theme(s) of the message throughout the lesson. Conclusions should tie everything together and personally connect the body of the lesson to the audience.

BIBLICAL INSTRUCTION

The following texts give strong Biblical counsel to those who preach the word of God to God's people. Consider them carefully and frequently as you fulfill your ministry.

Ezra 7:10 (CSB) Now Ezra had determined in his heart to study the law of the LORD, obey it, and teach its statutes and ordinances in Israel.

Psalms 119:160 (CSB) The entirety of your word is truth, each of your righteous judgments endures forever.

Isaiah 66:2 (CSB) ...This is the LORD's declaration. I will look favorably on this kind of person: one who is humble, submissive in spirit, and trembles at my word.

Matthew 28:20 (CSB) teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.

John 17:17 (CSB) Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.

John 21:15, 17 (CSB) When they had eaten breakfast, Jesus asked Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?" "Yes, Lord," he said to him, "you know that I love you." "Feed my lambs," he told him. **17** He asked him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Peter was grieved that he asked him the third time, "Do you love me?" He said, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." "Feed my sheep," Jesus said.

Acts 2:42 (CSB) They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayer.

Acts 20:27 (CSB) because I did not avoid declaring to you the whole plan of God.

Romans 10:17 (CSB) So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the message about Christ.

1 Corinthians 3:7 (CSB) So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth.

1 Timothy 4:13 (CSB) Until I come, give your attention to public reading, exhortation, and teaching.

2 Timothy 3:16–17 (CSB) All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, **17** so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

2 Timothy 4:1–2 (CSB) I solemnly charge you before God and Christ Jesus, who is going to judge the living and the dead, and because of his appearing and his kingdom: **2** Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; rebuke, correct, and encourage with great patience and teaching.

1 Peter 1:23 (CSB) Because you have been born again—not of perishable seed but of imperishable—through the living and enduring word of God.

2 Peter 1:20–21 (CSB) Above all, you know this: No prophecy of Scripture comes from the prophet's own interpretation, **21** because no prophecy ever came by the will of man; instead, men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.