

POWERFUL BIBLICAL PREACHING

A Seminar on Preaching

by Dr. Derek Morris
www.PreachWithPower.com

Your Preaching Profile

How many years have you been preaching?

How many times per year do you preach?

Who has been the most significant influence on your preaching?

What is the most significant book you have read on preaching?

What do you consider your greatest strengths in preaching?

What do you consider your greatest challenges in preaching?

Module #1: THE CASE FOR EXPOSITORY PREACHING

Introduction

"Preaching is indispensable to Christianity." With these thought-provoking assertion, John Stott begins his defense of preaching in his classic work Between Two Worlds: The art of preaching in the twentieth century. I was interested to learn that this text was originally published under the title I Believe in Preaching, and if you ever had the privilege of attending John Stott's congregation at Langham Place in London, you would know that to be a very appropriate title. Because in an age when the churches in England were empty, All Souls Church was packed, particularly with baby boomers, who came to hear the Word of God proclaimed with power. But are Stott's words believable? Is preaching indispensable to Christianity or is Stott simply clinging to an outmoded form of communication, an relic from a bygone era?

Let's consider some of the challenges to preaching in the 21st century

I. The Challenges facing Preaching in the 21st Century

A. The anti-authority mood

1. We are living in a different environment from that of our grandparents or perhaps even that of our parents. In the past 25 years there has been a steady erosion of confidence in leadership and organizations. There is not only a skepticism regarding authority. There is an anti-authority mood.
2. And the preacher has been affected by this changing attitude toward authority. He used to be looked upon as a man of standing in the community. He was respected and sought out for counsel.
3. Today all that is in transition. The media presents the preacher as someone who is at best slightly out of touch with reality, at worst an object of ridicule and derision.
4. In a feeble attempt to step back into the limelight, some preachers have taken to acting themselves! They slide down water slides fully dressed, warn that they will "be taken home" if money is not raised, and look like another huckster, playing "stage tricks with the doctrines of life and death."

B. The loss of confidence in the authority of Scripture

1. The preacher's problem is compounded by the fact that much of the

Christian church is no longer certain that it has anything to say.

- a. Relativity has been applied to doctrine and ethics, and absolutes have disappeared.
- b. Darwin has convinced many that religion is an evolutionary phase.
- c. Marx, that it is a sociological phenomenon.
- d. Freud, that it is a neurosis.
- e. And the hermeneutics of historical criticism have robbed the Word of God of its power.

2. Stott observes that "the pulpit of the present day has no clear, ringing and definite message." (p. 83) Little wonder that a child, bored by the preacher's lifeless discourse, turned to his mother and said, "Mommy, pay the man and let's go home."¹

C. The intense competition for attention

1. We live in the cyberspace generation. A century ago, many would come to listen to a preacher because there was little else to do except perhaps to read a good book.
2. But this is the age of Internet browsing and channel surfing. In 1980, Haddon Robinson suggested that a preacher has about 30 seconds to capture the attention of the hearers. But much has changed in the past fifteen years. The hand-held remote control can dispatch the preacher off into cyberspace oblivion in a matter of seconds. And if they are a captive audience in a church service, they may not walk out, but they will check out mentally.
3. Ten years ago, when Fred Craddock, published his highly acclaimed text Preaching, he gave two basic assumptions about learning to preach. Fortunately, one of the them was that learning to preach is possible. But the other basic assumption is more true than ever: "learning to preach is difficult...preaching itself if a very complex activity."²
4. So should be just give up? With such fierce competition for attention,

¹John Stott, *Between Two Worlds: The Art of Preaching in the Twentieth Century*, p. 83.

²Fred Craddock, *Preaching*, p. 16.

does the preacher of the 21st century have anything more to say? I would suggest that we not only have something to say; we have something that we must say.

II. The Divine Command to Preach

A. Preaching is essential

1. As Stott asserts, "Christianity is, in its very essence, a religion of the Word of God. No attempt to understand Christianity can succeed which overlooks or denies the truth that the living God has taken the initiative to reveal himself savingly to fallen humanity; or that his self-revelation has been given by the most straightforward means of communication known to us, namely by word and words." He spoke through the Prophets. He spoke supremely through His Son, the Word made flesh, and He continues to speak through His Spirit.
2. "It is God's speech which makes our speech necessary. We must speak what he has spoken." (Stott, p. 15)
3. We preach because we are commanded to preach. Matt 28:18-20. Preaching is an act of obedience. Albert Mohler, in the opening chapter of A Handbook of Contemporary Preaching reminds us that "preaching is not a human invention but a gracious creation of God and a central part of His revealed will for the church." p. 13

B. Preaching is distinctive to Christianity

1. Of course, other religions have their accredited teachers, but the rabbis, gurus and mullahs only interpret the ancient tradition.
2. Only Christian preachers claim that they are under a divine commission to preach and that by the work of the Holy Spirit, they actually proclaim the oracles of God (1Pet 4:11)
3. When Paul interfaced with a secular hedonistic society in Corinth, he gave this inspired testimony:
 - a. 1 Cor 1:17 For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. 18 For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God....21 ...it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

b. 1 Cor 2:1-5

4. And so, as Robinson points out, in the NT record, preaching stands as the event through which God works, even in a secular society. "Something awesome happens when God confronts an individual through preaching and seizes him by the soul." p. 19

III. An Analysis of Expository Preaching

A. Definition

1. Expository preaching is the communication of a biblical concept, derived from and transmitted through a historical, grammatical, and literary study of a passage in its context, which the Holy Spirit first applies to the personality and experience of the preacher, then through him to his hearers. p. 20

B. The Passage Governs the Sermon

1. The thought of the biblical writer should determine the substance of an expository sermon. The biblical text is not an inconsequential spring board from which the preacher leaps, never again to return! Rather it is the gold mine from which he draws priceless treasures.
2. A biblical preacher does not search for a text to support his ideas. Rather, he forms his ideas from the text.
 - a. This requires courage. As Robinson points out, "An interpreter must be willing to reexamine his doctrinal convictions and to reject the judgments of his most respected teachers." p. 20

C. The Preacher Discovers the Biblical Concept

1. While words are important, they are only truly useful as they communicate a concept. As Robinson puts it, What the big idea?
2. An analysis of words, phrases and grammar will help to discover the concept that the biblical writer intends to share.
 - a. Example: Isaiah 40:31 What does it mean to "wait upon the Lord? A sermon on patience?

- b. Example B: 1 John 1:1-2 What's the concept? Would a sermon on the value of testimony meetings be faithful to the text?
- c. Example c: Psalm 131. What's the concept? Like a weaned child with his mother

D. The Concept is Applied to the Preacher

- 1. The preacher cannot be a disinterested bystander in the process of preaching. In fact, Robinson makes the bold assertion that " God's dealing with the preacher is at the center of the process." p. 24
- 2. When a preacher prepares a biblical sermon, God prepares the preacher. As he studies the Bible, the Holy Spirit studies him.
- 3. Until a preacher has allowed the message of the text to touch his own life, he has no right to preach it to others. He will be exposed as a fraud. He must speak with first-hand language, both verbally and non-verbally.
- 4. The following statement by Robinson is right on target:
 - a. "Ultimately God is more interested in developing messengers than messages, and since the Holy Spirit confronts men primarily through the Bible, a preacher must learn to listen to God before he speaks for Him." p. 26
- 5. Craddock is right when he observes that "all preaching is to some extent self-disclosure by the preacher." (Craddock, p. 23) So the question is this: What will you disclose about yourself when you preach?

E. The Concept is Applied to the Hearer

- 1. Robinson suggests that a biblical preacher approaches the text in three ways:
 - a. first as an exegete he struggles with the meanings of the biblical writer
 - b. secondly as a man of God he wrestles with how God wants to change him personally
 - c. thirdly, as a preacher, he ponders what God wants to say to his

congregation. p. 26

2. Dull biblical preaching usually lacks creative applications. The question is asked, "What difference does it make?"
3. Scripture testifies that it is relevant to contemporary needs. Can you think of a text? 2 Tim 3: 16-17.
4. So ask the question, "What real need does this text address?" How can I challenge my congregation to live this sermon in the days ahead?

Module #2: WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA?

I. Bullets or buckshot

A. The importance of a single idea

1. Ideally, each sermon is the explanation, interpretation or application of a single dominant idea supported by other ideas, all drawn from one passage or several passages of Scripture.
2. While a sermon may contain many ideas, there should be one dominant idea, and all other ideas presented should relate to it. Robinson expressed it this way: "A sermon should be a bullet, and not buckshot." p. 33
3. Many homileticians have affirmed this important point, using terms like proposition, theme, thesis statement, main thought and central idea. These are synonyms, expressing the key thought that a sermon, like any good speech, embodies a single, all-encompassing concept.
 - a. Robinson quotes from the Yale lectures of J.H. Jowett, which are right on target: "No sermon is ready for preaching, not ready for writing out, until we can express its theme in a short, pregnant sentence as clear as crystal. I find that the getting of that sentence is the hardest, the most exacting, and the most fruitful labor in my study....I do not think any sermon ought to be preached or even written, until that sentence has emerged, clear and lucid as a cloudless moon."³
 - b. Stott affirms this assertion in Between Two Worlds when he says "the sermon, as a living word from God to his people, should make its impact on them, then and there. They will not remember the details. We should not expect (them) to do so. But they should remember THE DOMINANT THOUGHT because all the sermon's details have been marshalled to help them grasp its message and feel its power." p. 225

³J.H. Jowett, *The Preacher: his life and work, the 1912 Yale lectures* (New York: G.H. Doran, 1912: p. 133.

- c. Ian Pitt-Watson, a great Scottish homiletician, also agrees: "Every sermon should be ruthlessly unitary in its theme. "This is the first and great commandment!"⁴
 - d. Craddock gives some practical suggestions regarding the stating of the message of the sermon in a single sentence:
 - (1) positive, rather than negative
 - (2) affirmative rather than imperative
 - (3) simple rather than compound or complex sentence.⁵
4. In the case of Biblical preaching, that single dominant idea should be the central concept in the passage of Scripture on which the sermon is based.
 5. Robinson rejects the idea that sermons fail because they contain too many ideas. Rather, he suggests that they fail because they deal with unrelated ideas.
 6. Illustration: shortly after moving here to Collegedale, I was asked to preach at a local church. Their pastor had moved on and they were waiting for their new pastor to arrive. Following the sermon, several people came up to me and commented on the sermon. One of the church elders made this startling comment about the sermons that they were accustomed to. His comment was not stated critically, but simply shared as a statement of reality: "Our former pastor was a nice person, but he wasn't a preacher. He could talk for 30 minutes and when I left I didn't have any idea what he was trying to say." That's tragic, but unfortunately it is not unique. Even with sermons that are more interesting and informative, it is not always an easy task to discover the dominant thought. If the preacher has not taken the time to grasp the central idea, he cannot share it with the congregation. If he comes to the pulpit confused, by the end of the sermon he may do little more than confuse everyone else.
 7. If you want your sermon to be a bullet rather than buckshot, you need to

⁴Ian Pitt-Watson, *A Kind of Folly, Toward a Practical Theology of Preaching, the 1972-5 Warrach Lectures* (St. Andrews Press, 1975): p. 65.

⁵Craddock, p. 155.

be able to summarize the theme of the sermon in one dominant idea.

B. The Definition of an Idea

1. According to Robinson, an idea is **a distillation of life that abstracts out of the particulars of experience what they have in common and relates them to each other.** p. 45
2. An idea sometimes enables us to see what was previously unclear. When someone effectively articulates an idea, a common reaction is "Oh, I see what you mean!"

II. **How Ideas are Formed**

A. Basic components of an idea.

1. An idea consists of two basic elements: a subject and a complement.
2. The word subject here is used in a technical sense. It is not the same as a subject in grammar. In grammar, the subject can be a single word. In the sentence, "she preached a sermon" the grammatical subject is "she." But in homiletics, as Robinson points out, the subject of a sermon can never be only one word. p. 39
3. The subject must offer a full, precise answer to the question, "What am I talking about?"
4. A subject cannot stand by itself. It needs a complement to be complete. A complement answers the question, "What am I saying about what I am talking about."
5. An idea emerges only with the complement is joined to a definite subject.

B. Some examples of the forming of an idea

1. Psalm 117.
 - a. Subject: why everyone should praise the Lord
 - b. Complements:
 - (1) his love is great toward us

(2) his faithfulness endures forever.

c. Central idea: Everyone should praise the Lord because his love is great and his faithfulness endures forever.

Module #3: TOOLS OF THE TRADE

I. Learning how to preach

A. The value of methodology

1. Every preacher has some form of methodology for developing his sermons. I met one young man who aspired to be a preacher who said, "I don't prepare at all. I just stand up and let the Lord lead." Whether he recognized it or not, that was his methodology.
2. As we study various books on homiletics, we discover that teachers of preaching suggest a variety of methodologies in the preparation of sermons. Does that help us or confuse us?!
3. I would suggest that knowing the different methods that others use in the preparation of Biblical sermons can be an invaluable help. And we need to choose that methodology that works for us.
4. One thing is clear: effective biblical preaching does not happen by accident. Good expositors have developed a methodology that works for them.

B. The limitations of methodology

1. Having emphasized the importance of methodology, it needs to be stated that effective biblical preaching is not merely the result of following a list of directions.
2. As Robinson points out, effective biblical preaching requires insight, imagination and spiritual sensitivity.
3. There is a certain mystery to the process. It is more like building a cathedral than a dog house.
4. And so, while we may adopt a certain methodology, we must always rely on the power and presence of God through the ministry of the Holy Spirit to make our preparation and presentation effective.

II. Stages in the Development of Expository Messages

Stage 1: Choose the passage to be preached.

Our typical reaction at this time is to ask, "Well, what do I want to preach about?" Perhaps one should ask, "What portions of Scripture, which book should I preach from for the next year?"

A. Factors affecting the selection of a passage

Stott suggests four main factors that will affect your choice of passage:

1. Liturgical. While we may not follow a liturgical calendar, we are clearly influenced by the various seasons of the year:
 - a. Christmas season - birth of Christ
 - b. Easter - death and resurrection of Christ
 - c. Pentecost - gift of the Holy Spirit
2. Pastoral. What is happening in the life of the congregation? What needs and challenges exist that should be addressed?
3. Societal. "Preaching needs to be sensitive to the big public questions in people's minds." p. 216 What are some major issues right now in our culture?
4. Personal. When a text makes an impact on our own lives, we may feel a burden to preach it. Stott notes that
"this does not mean that every sermon has to be born out of our personal experience. Some of us have to preach on marriage while remaining unmarried, or on divorce while remaining married, and all of us have to preach on death before we have died! Yet sermons which emerge from deep personal conviction have a rich self-authenticating quality." p. 219

B. Factors affecting the length of the passage

1. Length of Thought Unit
 - a. Look for the natural divisions of the material. This may or may not correspond to the chapter divisions. In some versions of the Bible, paragraphs are used to delineate the thought units.
 - b. Some years ago my pastor was preaching a series on the book of John. And I appreciated the challenging messages. But, in my opinion, he was making a major mistake. He was preaching on a

chapter each week. Now let's look at one chapter in John: John 2. How many thought units are there in John 2?

- (1) Miracle at Cana v 1-12
- (2) Cleansing of the Temple v 13-17
- (3) The authority of Jesus challenged v. 18-25

c. In a narrative section, you will generally be dealing with a much longer passage of Scripture. For example, a consideration of the raising of Lazarus requires a study of the 57 verses in John 11, which is quite a task.

2. Sermon Length

- a. A second factor affecting the length of the passage selected is the amount of time allocated for the sermon.
- b. If a passage is too large to deal with in detail in 30 minutes, the preacher has two options:
 - (1) seek a natural division in the text and deal with two smaller portions in a series of two sermons
 - (2) present the larger passage in a less detailed manner
- c. It is a fatal mistake to try to present in the pulpit everything that you have researched in your study.

Stage 2: Study your passage and gather your notes

1. Firstly, determine the context.
 - a. Does this require reading and analyzing the whole book? Yes! But you don't have to do all the analysis yourself! The introductory sections to the books in Bible Commentaries can be very helpful in this regard.
 - b. One advantage of preaching a series from a book of the Bible is that the research you do will provide a basis for the entire series.
2. Secondly, examine the details of the passage.
 - a. Consider the structure, vocabulary and grammar. Several study

aids are extremely helpful in this process: (see Robinson, pp. 71-74)

- (1) Lexicons: definition of words, root meanings
- (2) Concordances: help determine the meaning of words through usage
- (3) Grammars: help reveal how words combine to render meaning
- (4) Word-study books: consideration of word usage in context
- (5) Bible Dictionaries: answers questions about background, culture etc.
- (6) Commentaries: Give an analysis of the text and an interpretation. Generally, it is not wise to buy whole sets. Choose those volumes which are exceptional. Know if the editors are coming from a conservative perspective or a liberal perspective.

This is not merely an academic exercise, but rather a an earnest spiritual endeavor. John Stott underlines the sacred nature of this task in the following comment:

"I have always found it helpful to do as much of my sermon preparation as possible on my knees, with my Bible open before me, in prayerful study. This is not because I am a bibliolater and worship the Bible; but because I worship the God of the Bible and desire to humble myself before him and his revelation, and, even while I am giving my mind to the study of the text, to pray earnestly that the eyes of my heart may be enlightened. (Eph 1:18)" p. 222

Stage 3: Determine the exegetical idea and its development

1. In searching for the subject of the passage, what are the 6 questions to ask? How, what, why, when, where, who?
2. Example: James 1:5-8
 - a. Subject: wisdom? How to obtain wisdom? How to obtain wisdom in the midst of trials.

- b. Complement: Ask God for it in faith
 - c. Exegetical idea? The way to obtain wisdom in the midst of trials is to ask God for it in faith.
3. Once you have determined the central idea, outline its development in the passage. i.e. 1 John 1:9

Module #4: THE ROAD FROM TEXT TO SERMON

I. Developing the Exegetical Idea

A. Bridging the gulf

1. Expository sermons consist of ideas drawn from the Scriptures and related to life. As Robinson points out, in order to preach effectively, the preacher must be aware of three different settings:
 - a. the ancient world: that is, the Biblical setting
 - b. the modern world: that is, the world in which he lives
 - c. his particular world: that is, the specific setting in which he ministers.

B. Options for developing the idea

As Robinson points out, when anyone makes a declarative statement, only four things can be done to develop it:

- a. restate it
 - b. explain it
 - c. prove it
 - d. apply it
1. **RESTATE IT.** The function of restating the content is not to interpret or apply but merely to put it in your own words in order to clarify it or to impress it upon your hearers.
 - a. for example, in Psalm 103
 - (1) praise the Lord, O my soul
 - (2) all that is within me, praise His holy name
 2. **EXPLAIN IT.** What does it mean? (explain it)
 - a. does this text require explanation?
 - b. are there certain events or issues which the author assumes his readers understand?
 - c. for example: what does it mean in Psalm 23 when David says, "you anoint my head with oil?" He does not explain it in the passage. He assumes that his readers understand. (Allow students to respond)
 - d. Answering the first developmental question helps to make the text

intelligible. We understand what the author is talking about. Robinson suggests that this is one of the major battles of preaching. p.82-3

3. PROVE IT. Is it true? (prove it)
 - a. This second developmental question explores validity.
 - b. It seems like a strange question to ask of Scripture. Your initial response might be "Of course it's true. It's in the Bible!"
 - c. What does Robinson mean when he says that we should adopt the attitude "it is in the Bible because it is true" rather than "it's true because it is in the Bible?" p.86
 - (1) is there are difference between those two positions?
 - d. Take for example Phil 4:13 "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."
 - (1) Is it true? See 2 Cor 4:7-9; 2 Cor 12:9-10
 - e. How does Barnhouse explore the validity of the text "Greater works than these shall he do; because I go to my Father." Jn 14:12
4. APPLY IT. What difference does it make?
 - a. This third developmental question relates to application and explores implications.
 - b. Robinson points out that "basic to perceptive application is accurate exegesis. We cannot decide what the passage means to us unless first we have determined what the passage means.
 - c. When is application fairly easy?
 - (1) when the situation is similar. For example, James 1:19-20 has a direct application to Christians of every generation.
 - d. When is application more difficult?
 - (1) when there is little parallel? For example, slavery was a part of the New Testament world. How do we apply passages related to slaves and masters to our modern

context?

- (2) when we must deal with problems that the biblical writers never encountered. i.e. genetic engineering, threat of nuclear holocaust.
- e. As John Bright points out, "The preacher needs to understand not only what the text says, but also the concerns that caused it to be said and said as it was." We need to discover the author's theological intention or purpose in order to apply the text correctly.

II. Formulating the Homiletical Idea

A. Definition

1. The homiletical idea of a sermon is the statement of the exegetical idea in such a way as to fully relate to the congregation.
 - a. Stott notes that "to discover the text's meaning (exegetical idea) is of purely academic interest unless we go on to discern in message (homiletical idea) for today..." p. 221.

B. Rewording the exegetical idea

1. When the exegetical idea is a universal principle, such as Luke 12:15, the homiletical idea can be identical.
 - a. Explore the exegetical and homiletical ideas of Lk 12:15
2. The language of a homiletical idea should be concise, winsome and compelling. It should grab the listener's attention and be easily remembered.
 - a. Share results of current research
3. An exegetical idea can become a homiletical idea by making it precise and personal.
 - a. Example 1 Thess 1:2-6
 - (1) Exegetical idea: Paul thanks God for the Thessalonian Christians because of the results springing from their faith, hope and love and because of the evidences of their

election by God.

- (2) Homiletical idea: We can thank God for other Christians because of what they do for God and what God did for them.

4. A homiletical idea may be more contemporary and less tied to the wording of the text.

a. Example: 1 Cor 8, meat offered to idols.

- (1) exegetical idea: Paul encourages us to be considerate to those who have different views regarding meat offered to idols.
- (2) homiletical idea: when you think about morally indifferent matters, be flexible in love.

Module #5: THE POWER OF PURPOSE

I. Determining the sermon's purpose

A. The key question

1. Why are you preaching this sermon? It is not enough to respond that you are preaching a series of the Gospel of John. Nor is the question answered by responding that you are covering the assigned topic.
2. What are you trying to accomplish? As Robinson put it: "No matter how brilliant or biblical a sermon is, without a definite purpose it is not worth preaching."
 - a. I heard an illustration of the importance of purpose from a student attending a recent week of prayer. Reflecting upon the sermons of the week, the student said, "I'm not sure what he is trying to say." The implication was that he was a "good speaker," and I heard the content of his sermon, but what was he trying to accomplish? Why was he preaching the sermon?
3. The purpose states what one expects to happen in the hearer as a result of your preaching this sermon.
4. Once you have determined the sermon's purpose, you have a target to aim at. The next step, which we will look at in the Ch 6 is deciding how to accomplish that purpose. But unless we know where we are going, we will undoubtedly end up in the wrong place.

B. The example of Jesus

1. In Matthew 7:24-27, at the close of the great sermon on the mount, Jesus clarified the purpose of his sermon. His desire was that his hearers put into practice the principles of the kingdom spelled out in his teaching.
2. Jesus was not primarily concerned with conveying information, but with life change.
3. As Tozer expressed it in our text, the purpose behind any doctrine should be to secure moral action. p. 108

C. The author's intention

1. As Robinson points out, one must discover the purpose of a passage in

Scripture before one determines the purpose of the sermon.

2. Why was the passage included in the Scripture?
3. What was the author's specific intention? On occasion, this is articulated by the biblical author. For example, John spells out his specific intention in Jn 20:30-31
 - a. what is his purpose in writing the fourth Gospel?

II. Looking for measurable results

A. Definition

1. Measurable results are those changes which can be observed in your hearers: changes in knowledge, attitudes, and/or actions.
2. **A purpose statement not only describes what we seek to accomplish, but if possible also tells us how we can know if we have arrived.** p. 110

B. Examples

1. What observable behavior can be measured as a result of this sermon.: let's look at Luke 10:17
 - (1) What is the subject? the joyful experience of the disciples
 - (2) What is the complement? because they had experienced the power of God in their ministry
 - (3) What is the exegetical idea: the disciples were joyful because they experienced the power of God in their ministry.
 - (4) What is the homiletical idea: we can find joy as we experience the power of God in our ministry.
 - (5) Purpose: (knowledge) to convince the hearers that they can have find joy as they experience the power of God in their ministry.
 - (6) Measurable results: to challenge the hearers to do their ministry in the coming week depending on the power of

God and notice the joy that comes to their lives.

Module #6: THE SHAPES SERMONS TAKE

I. Selecting a sermon form

In selecting a sermon form, ask yourself the question: "How should the homiletical idea be handled to accomplish my chosen purpose?"

A. An Idea explained

1. This is a common form when preaching a doctrine of Scripture, especially in evangelistic preaching.
2. For example, Alexander Maclaren's sermon on the supremacy of Christ. He states, "My business is not so much to try to prove Paul's words as to explain them, and then to press them home."
3. Robinson maintains that a truth correctly comprehended carries its own application.
4. This approach answers the question, What does this passage mean?

B. A Proposition proved

1. Answers the question, Is that true? Can I believe that?
2. For example, Robinson suggests a sermon on 1 Cor 15:12-19, defending the proposition that "the Christian faith is worthless unless Christians rise from the dead."
3. The idea is stated in the introduction and the major points defend it in a series of arguments.

C. A Principle Applied

1. Answers the question, So what? What difference does it make?
2. In this form the expositor lays down a biblical principle in his introduction or his first major point and then in the remainder of the sermon explores the implications of the principle.
3. Look with me at the example on Page 121-122.

D. A Subject Completed

1. In this form, only the subject is presented in the introduction, not the entire idea. Then the major points of the outline complete the subject.
2. Each point that follows completes the subject, rather than being linked to the preceding point.
3. Notice the example of page 122-123.

E. A Story Told

1. A narrative does not merely repeat the details of the story.
2. It conveys a major idea, supported by other ideas. The content of these points is drawn from the incidents in the story. All of the points should develop the central idea of the story.
3. Robinson suggests that a narrative sermon is most effective when they discover the speaker's ideas from themselves rather than him stating them directly.

F. Inductive method

1. Most of the above forms are deductive in methodology. That is, one states the key idea at the beginning of the sermon and then explains, proves or applies it.
2. With the inductive method, the idea only emerges in the conclusion.
 - a. the introduction introduces only the first point.
 - b. each succeeding point is linked to the previous point with a strong transition.
 - c. This produces a sense of discovery in the listeners.
 - d. As Robinson pointed out, this is especially helpful for indifferent or hostile audiences.
3. Inductive and deductive methodology may be combined in a sermon. For example, a problem explored:
 - a. identify a personal or ethical problem, explore roots and discuss inadequate solutions.

- b. suggest a biblical principle or approach to the problem, and in the rest of the sermon explain, defend and apply it.

II. Outlining the Sermon

A. The purpose of an outline

1. clarifies the relationship between the parts.
2. heightens a sense of unity, by viewing the sermon as a whole.
3. crystallizes the order of ideas so that the listener will receive them in the appropriate sequence.
4. reveals the need for additional supporting material to develop his points.

B. The specifics of outlining

1. Major points stand as Roman numerals. Each should be a complete grammatical sentence.
2. Secondary points which expand on each major point should be preceded by a capital letter which is indented.
3. A third sub-category is an Arabic number, also indented, showing subordination to the main and secondary points.
4. An outline should have relatively few points in order to remain simple and clear.
5. Example: (use example of sermon to show to students)

C. Transitional sentences

1. Transitional statements let the audience know that the preacher is moving on.
2. They are particularly important because they reveal to the hearer how the

individual parts of related to the whole.

3. A transition can take the form of a question.
4. Transitional statements should be carefully prepared because they are an integral part of the sermon structure.

ASSIGNED PASSAGE FROM PHILIPPIANS

Preaching text:(what portion of this passage will you use as your preaching text? All or part? Why?)

Subject: (what is the text talking about?)

Complement: (what is the text saying about the subject?)

Exegetical Idea: (Subject+Complement)

Homiletical Idea: (a suggestion from each group member)

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

Purpose of Preaching the Sermon:

Sermon Form:

Module #7: MAKING DRY BONES LIVE

I. The use of supporting materials

While an outline is important as the skeleton of the sermon, outlines by themselves are stark and lifeless. Just as a boat-builder first builds a frame and then covers it with the shell in order for the boat to float, so the preacher needs to first construct the outline and then fill it in with supporting materials in order for the sermon to accomplish its purpose. Types of supporting materials include:

A. Restatement

1. This involves stating an idea in other words.
2. It accomplishes two basic purposes:
 - a. gain clarity
 - b. impress the listener with the truth
3. Restatement is important because unlike a reader, the hearer must get what is said when we say it. They cannot go back and hear it again. It may be necessary to say it again in order to make ourselves clear.
4. How does restatement differ from repetition?
 - a. repetition says the same thing in the same words. This may be helpful like a refrain throughout a sermon.
 - b. restatement says the same thing in different words.

B. Explanation and Definition

1. Both clarify an idea, but in different ways.
2. Definition: establishes limits by determining what is included or excluded by a term or statement.
3. Explanation: establishes boundaries by amplifying on what an idea implies or how ideas relate to one another.
4. Definitions and explanations may be particularly important when a preacher is very familiar with his subject.

- a. Why? He may be less aware of a congregation's ignorance.
 - 5. As a general rule, a preacher should define every important term in language that the congregation understands. It is better to define too many terms than too few.
- C. Factual Information
- 1. What is factual information? Observations, examples, statistics etc that may be verified apart from the speaker.
 - 2. Be careful not to present your opinions as facts.
 - 3. What does the inclusion of facts accomplish? Not only does it help the listener to understand, but it also secures respect for the speaker.
 - 4. Remember that while facts need to be accurate, they do not need to be exact. Example: "There are over 3,500 promises in the Bible," rather than "There are 3562 promises (a debatable number)...."
- D. Quotations
- 1. Quotations support or expand a point for two reasons:
 - a. impressiveness
 - b. authority
 - 2. Quoting people of authority or high qualification adds weight to the supporting material.
 - 3. Quoting a prejudiced authority who expresses an opinion which contradicts his bias can be especially compelling.
 - 4. Quotes should be used sparingly and should be brief.
 - 5. How should you handle a longer quotation?
 - a. quoting it all can hinder communication
 - b. quote portions and paraphrase other sections
- E. Narration

1. Narration paints pictures in our minds.
2. Use dialogue to put words in people's mouths.
3. Use soliloquy or "self-talk" to paint a person's thoughts.
4. What must guide us in use of narration?
 - a. Robinson points out that while imagination goes one step beyond the biblical data it must be tied to and in harmony with them. p. 148

II. The Use of Illustrations

A. Definition

1. The word illustrate means "to throw light on a subject."
2. A foundational principle for the use of illustrations is that illustrations should illustrate!
3. Chinese proverb: He is the eloquent man who turns his hearers' ears into eyes, and makes them see what he speaks of." (Stott, p. 239)
4. What does Robinson mean when he says "there is no such thing as a "good illustration"...."
 - a. it may be good for illustrating a particular truth.
 - b. it may be poor if forced upon an inappropriate idea.

B. The benefit of illustrations

1. Illustrations apply ideas to experience.
 - a. Jesus was a master at the use of illustrations, particularly parables.
 - b. Commenting on Jesus' use of illustrations, W.E. Sangster wrote "only a combination of vanity and blasphemy could convince a man that the matter was beneath his notice."⁶

⁶W. E. Sangster, The Craft of the Sermon, p. 211.

- c. Stott notes that the incarnation of Jesus is the ultimate affirmation of the importance of illustrating truth. p. 237
 - d. "Locate the familiar to introduce the unfamiliar" (Craddock, p. 204)
2. Illustrations can render truth believable.
 - a. Stott notes that "illustrations transform the abstract into the concrete, the ancient into the modern, the unfamiliar into the familiar, the vague into the precise, the unreal into the real, and the invisible into the visible. p. 239
 - b. Example: Ps 139:23-24 Story of the dead mouse in my electrical outlet.
 3. Illustrations serve as memory devices.
 - a. Story of Gary Moyer offering one of his lungs for his wife.
 4. Illustrations give you the opportunity to present the truth another time without wearying the listener.

C. Where is the best place to find illustrations

Not in books of illustrations! Craddock notes that the best illustrations come "not from books of sermon illustrations available by the bulk and wholesale, but by observation and experience, or by creating an analogy to fit the purpose. (Craddock, p. 204)

1. Illustrations come from personal experience.

(Draw diagram of two circles which connect: preacher and listener.

Source: 1, 2, 3.

Remember the 3 guidelines:

- (1) it should be true
- (2) it should be modest
- (3) it must not violate confidence

I was conducting a colloquium on spiritual life at Andrews, and I was sharing about the armor of God. A student shared this experience, which is a powerful illustration:

- a. he was taking a walk, lots of mosquitos, he felt under attack and

came back covered in bites

- (1) the next day he used Cutter bug repellent. You could not see it but it gave him a shield of protection. He enjoyed his walk and didn't get any bites.
- (2) And, he said, "it says on the can that this is good for the whole family!"
- (3) Everyone got the point. It was a good illustration of the protection that the armor of God gives. Even though we can't see it, it works.
- (4) Now if he needed to explain that to us, the illustration would have been weak. But the parallel was so apparent, and the idea was clear.

2. Illustrations come from reading.

Learn to read with a pen in hand. A copier is also handy if you have a lengthy illustration.

- a. history
- b. biographies
- c. current affairs

3. Creating illustrations

- a. Is it ethical to create your own illustration? According to Craddock, Jesus did so. But make sure that you don't present it as if it were true. For example, "on my way to Alaska this summer..." when you never made the trip is a lie. You will lose credibility.
- b. You can flag a created parable by saying "a certain man..." or "once upon a time." Morris Venden does this when he tells a parable.

Module #8: PREPARING THE INTRODUCTION AND CONCLUSION

I. The Introduction

Finally, we get to talk about the introduction! Why have we waited so long? Stott asserts

"it seems essential to prepare the body of the sermon first. If we were to begin with a predetermined introduction or conclusion, we would be almost bound to twist the text to fit." p. 243

A. Its purpose

1. To Command Attention

- a. Robinson contends that the preacher has about 30 seconds, or 25 words to seize the attention of the listener.
- b. Remember, there are three types of preacher:
 - (1) those you cannot listen to.
 - (2) those you can listen to.
 - (3) those you must listen to!
- c. So go after the minds of the hearers and compel them to shift from involuntary attention to voluntary attention.
- d. This can be done through:
 - (1) a paradox
 - (2) a rhetorical question
 - (3) a startling statement or statistic
 - (4) a provocative statement
 - (5) a humorous insight
 - (6) a story
- e. Whatever you use, never settle for a weak introduction.

2. To Touch Felt Needs

- a. If your introduction demonstrates to the hearers that what you have to say will touch them where they live, you'll capture their attention.
- b. Arthur Cohen concluded from his research that more learning takes place and opinions change faster and more permanently when the information that is presented is applied to life.

- c. Those needs take many forms. But the listeners should realize that the preacher is not applying the Word to someone else's situation but to theirs.

3. To Introduce the Body of the Sermon

- a. In a deductive sermon, the Introduction should introduce to the congregation the main idea of the sermon and its development.
- b. In an inductive sermon, the introduction should present the subject of the sermon. There should be no doubt what the preacher is talking to them about.
- c. The introduction does not attempt to say everything. Effective sermons maintain a sense of tension, the feeling that something more must be said if the message is to be complete.

B. Cautions

- 1. Never open a sermon with an apology. Why?
 - a. If you are ill prepared, you do not deserve sympathy.
 - b. If you have done your best to prepare a biblical sermon, and you are spiritually prepared, there is no need to apologize.
- 2. Keep the introduction short.
 - a. Exactly how long should it be? Long enough to:
 - (1) capture attention
 - (2) raise needs
 - (3) introduce the main idea
 - b. If you keep going after that is accomplished, it's too long.
- 3. Don't promise more than you can deliver
 - a. Don't claim to offer the complete solution for all of the problems of life and then fail to even get to first base.
 - b. The congregation will feel tricked by your broken promise.

4. Use humor carefully.
 - a. Humor can be very effective if it sheds light on the main idea.
 - b. However, if it is frivolous, theatrical, mere entertainment, you will lose the confidence of the hearers who will dismiss you as a comedian.

5. Be aware of your body language.
 - a. When you step up to the pulpit, your body language is extremely important.
 - b. All eyes are on the preacher. Should they listen to you or not.
 - c. If you appear nervous or unprepared they will be inclined to tune you out. Do not adjust your clothing or shuffle your notes.
 - d. However, if you appear alert, friendly and caring, you will win their confidence.
 - e. Before you begin to speak, take a few seconds to look at the congregation. Let the love of Jesus flow through your life to touch them even before you speak one word.
 - f. I have found that to invite the congregation to join you in prayer prior to your introduction is very helpful. Some suggest a moment a silent prayer before the sermon begins.

II. The Conclusion

"Apart from the text, the most vital part of the sermon is the conclusion."⁷

⁷Andrew Blackwood, The Fine Art of Preaching (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1976), p. 125.

A. Its purpose

1. The purpose of the conclusion is to conclude, not merely to stop.
2. It pulls all of the ends together. It need not be long. When your done, quit! There's nothing more frustrating than listening to a preacher who doesn't know how to end and goes on and on and on.
3. Like the introduction, its importance is out of proportion to its size, and therefore requires special attention and thoughtful preparation. Stott suggests that "conclusions are more difficult than introductions" (p. 245) and I would tend to agree with him.

B. Important components of conclusions

1. Summarization

- a. A conclusion may review all of the major points of the sermon and bind them all together as part of the main idea of the sermon.
- b. In that it is a summary, the conclusion should never introduce new ideas.

2. Application

- a. Stott suggests that " a true conclusion goes beyond recapitulation to personal application. Not that all application should be left to the end, for our text needs to be applied as we go along." p. 246
- b. This may include specific directions. What are the implications of this sermon for the coming week?
- c. The preacher may offer a specific challenge. Perhaps the sermon has dealt with expressing love within the family. He may challenge the hearers to:

- (1) write a letter that afternoon
- (2) make a telephone call
- (3) spend some special time sharing the gift of love

3. Exhortation

- a. It is appropriate in a conclusion to call people to respond.

- b. According to Blackwood, a sermon should lead "to moral and spiritual action." (Blackwood, p. 134)
- c. Appeals should be simple, clear, and inclusive.
- d. An appeal can be given in the concluding prayer. Perhaps the sermon has dealt with the gift of salvation. The prayer may be an invitation for those who have never accepted Christ to respond, for those who have to make a recommitment, and for those who are struggling to ask for patience and mercy.

4. Illustration

- a. An illustration that high-lights the key thought of the sermon may make an excellent conclusion.
- b. Gordon Beitz is skilled at using illustrations to conclude his sermons with his stories from Fenton Forest.
- c. Having used the illustration, stop. It should be so clear than only a sentence or two is necessary to close.

(1) Example of Peter Marshall, p. 168-169

5. A Quotation

- a. An impressive quotation may add impact to a conclusion, with two guidelines:
 - (1) it should be short
 - (2) it should be memorized
- b. The impact is doubled if that quotation is the lyrics of a song which can then be used as a hymn of dedication. But beware of writing a sermon to fit the lyrics of a song. You may end up distorting the text to (Give examples)

6. A Question

- a. A Question may be helpful as long as the issue has been clearly addressed in the sermon.

- b. Please don't preach a sermon on the need for a devotional life and then conclude by asking, "But how are you going to experience that close walk with God?" That only causes frustration!

Module #9: THE DRESS OF THOUGHT

I. The Preparation of a Manuscript

A. Its benefits

1. There is no doubt that the preparing of a sermon manuscript improves preaching.
2. While it is true that not all preachers write a manuscript there seems to be a correlation between good preaching and submitting to the discipline of writing a manuscript.
3. Preachers, more than any other communicator, should be concerned about words. We would agree with Robinson that to be unconcerned about words is immoral when the eternal destinies of the hearers is at stake.
4. The discipline of writing a manuscript compels the preacher to be clear and exact in what he says. His style becomes apparent, whether good or bad.
5. Writing a manuscript reveals whether the outline is cohesive and whether the transitions are clear.
 - a. Remember that transitions need to be longer and more detailed in a sermon than in a book or article. Why? If the hearer misses it the first time, he's lost. He can't go back and read it again. So take time to make it clear.

B. Its pitfalls

1. The danger of preparing a manuscript is that the preacher then becomes bound to it or restricted by it.
2. As Robinson points out, the manuscript is not the preacher's final product.
3. A sermon manuscript should not be read, or even memorized. Why?
 - a. the audience may be different from what the preacher expected. This may necessitate a change of style or a different use of words.
 - b. The Holy Spirit's agenda during the preaching event may be different from ours.

II. How to Bring Clarity to a Sermon

A. Clear Outline

1. Fundamental to a clear sermon is a clear outline.
2. Remember to do that before you fill in all the details.
3. I heard a sermon this weekend which had no clear outline. It dealt with three thought units in John 12 but I did not discover a main idea or major transitions that held the key points together. That should be noticed before the sermon is preached. Taking the time to outline the passage would have made that clear. The result might have been three clear sermons instead of one clouded sermon.

B. Short Sentences

1. There is a correlation between clarity and sentence length. What is it? As a general rule, clarity increases as sentence length decreases.
2. Keep a normal sentence to less than 20 words. Never go over 30 words.
3. Short sentences are not only easier to follow but they are easier for you to remember.

C. Simple Sentence Structure

1. Remember the old adage: "Keep it simple!"
2. Main subject, main verb, and (where needed) main object is the most simple sentence structure.
3. Robinson points out that vividness develops then we let nouns and verbs carry our meaning. Adjectives and adverbs are appropriate in their place but they can easily clutter speech.

a. for example:

- (1) wordy: he fell as quickly as he could to the floor
- (2) better: he dropped to the floor

- b. other examples: (coach group to simplify)
 - (1) he called out at the top of his voice
 - (2) the extremely small poodle made its way as quickly as possible through the crowd
 - (3) the young man dressed in a navy uniform was very very happy
- 4. Also, concentrate on independent clauses before adding dependent clauses.

D. Simple Words

- 1. "Big" words do more to impress than to inform.
- 2. So use a short word unless a longer word is absolutely necessary.
- 3. However "well" you express your thoughts, if your hearers don't grasp what your talking about you have failed.
- 4. Obviously there is a balance. You don't want to talk down to your congregation. Here's a simple principle: Don't overestimate the people's vocabulary or underestimate their intelligence.

III. How To Avoid Sounding Uninteresting

A. Pay Attention to your own use of language

- 1. Use your lag time during regular conversation to be careful and creative in your use of words.
- 2. Use a tape recorder during an informal conversation and then review your use of words. Is your mind in neutral using the same old phrases and words, or is your mind in gear?
- 3. Periodically, review your preaching in search of overused words and phrases

B. Study How Others Use Language

- 1. There's a principle that was given to me about 6 years ago that has drastically affected my life: Seek counsel from successful people. I might

modify that by adding "who are Christians."

2. Don't get advice from people who are not effective. Not try to copy those who are not successful.
3. If you listen to a preacher who really grabs your attention, take time to debrief. What compels you to listen? What can you learn that will help you improve your own style?
4. Craddock makes the following practical suggestion: "read fifteen or twenty minutes each day (before breakfast or before retiring at night) from the essays, plays, short stories, poetry, and novels of those recognized as great writers. The intent here is not to imitate or to find useful material, but to sit among masters of the language and listen." p. 198

C. Read aloud

1. It's a tragedy that the television has become a substitute in the family for reading aloud. We even have Bible cartoons to substitute for reading of the Scripture.
2. But read aloud has positive results:
 - a. your vocabulary will increase
 - b. new patterns of speech and creative wording will be entered into your own data-base.
3. Don't just read sermons. Read a variety of literature, but especially read the Bible.

Module #10: HOW TO PREACH SO PEOPLE WILL LISTEN

I. The Importance of Delivery

A. Relationship between content and delivery

1. In homiletics text books, a great deal of emphasis is placed upon content. And rightly so. It is a terrible tragedy to stand before the people of God and say nothing.
2. But, as Robinson points out, the effectiveness of our sermons depends upon two factors:
 - a. what we say
 - b. and how we say it
3. Content must be effectively delivered to have impact. However powerful the content, "a sermon ineptly delivered arrives stillborn." p. 191
4. While we might successfully argue that what the preacher says is more important than how he says it, studies have shown that as far as effective communication goes, the opposite is actually true.
 - a. Robinson points out that the speaker's voice inflections, tone and body language transmit his feelings and attitudes more accurately than his words.
5. Some of you many remember the research of Psychologist Albert Mehrabian who suggested the following communication formula:
 - (1) 7% words
 - (2) 38% tone
 - (3) 55% body language (facial expressions)
6. If there is incongruence, people will believe tone and body language
 - a. As Sigmund Freud observed, "No mortal can keep a secret. If his lips are silent, he chatters with his fingertips; betrayal oozes out of him at every pore."
 - b. You may say from the pulpit "it's time to get ready!" but if your body is limp and your voice is flat, the congregation will not believe you.

B. Keys to effective delivery

1. An earnest desire to communicate

- a. However slavishly you follow the rules, you will not be effective unless you have an earnest desire to communicate.
- b. As Charles Brown expressed it, "you're heart must be in your work." If you don't really think it's that important, why should they?

2. Rehearsal

- a. Just as your manuscript is improved by writing and rewriting, so delivery is improved by rehearsal.
- b. Rehearsal also tests the structure of the message and brings to mind new thoughts and ideas that more effectively communicate the message.

II. Non-Verbal Factors in Delivery

A. Eye-contact

1. In my opinion, eye contact is the single most important means of nonverbal communication.
2. When you look directly at your hearers, you send messages to them and receive messages from them.
3. Their eyes will tell you if they are with you. Is your point clear? Do you need an additional illustration?
4. An effective preacher will adjust what he says as he receives and interprets these responses.
5. So when you preach, don't just gaze out into the crowd. Talk to individuals. Robinson suggests that you should "choose listeners in every section of the auditorium, and keep the eye contact long enough so that they know you have singled them out and are speaking to them." p. 202
6. And a practical point: make sure the church is well lit and the pulpit area is well lit so you can see the congregation and they can see you.

B. Vocal Delivery

1. Pitch

- a. Definition: the movement of the voice up and down the scale, in different registers, with various inflections.
- b. Changes in pitch are called melody.
- c. Example: "Are you a Christian?"
 - (1) with rapidly rising pitch: suggests unbelief
 - (2) with even pitch: earnest inquiry
- d. Practice: read Psalm 23 at your normal pitch in a monotone voice. Now read it at a level that seems too high. Then at a level that seems too low. Then at what you think is appropriate variability of pitch around your habitual pitch.

2. Punch

- a. Definition: variations in loudness, achieving both interest and emphasis.
- b. Example: the Lord is my Shepherd (choose someone in the group to illustrate)
- c. Emphasis comes through variety.
 - (1) a loud shout can add punch. But not the whole sermon.
 - (2) a near whisper can have a similar effect.

3. Progress/Pacing

- a. Definition: variation in the rate of delivery.
- b. Example: 2 Sam 18:33 "Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!"
- c. As in pitch and punch, the secret lies in variety and contrast.

4. Pause

- a. Definition: pauses are "thoughtful silences."
- b. A pause gives the congregation time to think, feel and respond.
- c. A pause will underline an important point.
- d. Question: Why are preachers afraid of using pauses?
 - (1) they are afraid of silence
 - (2) it seems longer to them than to the congregation

2 Samuel 18:31-33

Just then the Cushite came, and the Cushite said, “There is good news, my lord the king! For the LORD has avenged you this day of all those who rose against you.” And the king said to the Cushite, “Is the young man Absalom safe?” And the Cushite answered, “May the enemies of my lord the king, and all who rise against you to do you harm, be as that young man is!” Then the king was deeply moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept. And as he went, he said thus: “O my son Absalom—my son, my son Absalom—if only I had died in your place! O Absalom my son, my son!”

ORAL INTERPRETATION OF 2 SAMUEL 18:31-33

Name _____	Very Poor	Poor	Average	Good	Total <u> </u> / 30 Very Good
VOICE QUALITY	1	2	3	4	5
VARIATION IN PITCH	1	2	3	4	5
VARIATION IN FORCE	1	2	3	4	5
VARIATION IN RATE	1	2	3	4	5
ARTICULATION	1	2	3	4	5
EFFECTIVENESS (appropriate to material)	1	2	3	4	5

COMMENTS:

Module #11: THE VISUALS OF PREACHING

I. Gestures

We all use gestures when we preach. Some are negative, and distract. Others are creative gestures which enhance communication.

A. Areas for gesturing

1. horizontal plane
 - a. center
 - (1) when applying truth directly
 - (2) when emphasizing present application
 - b. left or right
 - (1) when applying indirect ideas
 - (2) when presenting two different groups
 - (3) when referring to a negative issue
2. Vertical place
 - a. upper vertical
 - (1) lofty ideas, people, places
 - (2) God, heaven, holiness etc
 - b. middle area
 - (1) reference to people
 - (2) life in general
 - c. lower vertical
 - (1) baser ideas
 - (2) sin, evil, corruption

B. Hands

1. negative:
 - a. neutral hand gesture like hacking or chopping
 - b. hands in pockets
 - c. hands gripping pulpit
 - d. restless fidgeting
2. positive
 - a. "Satan wants to seize you by the soul"
 - b. "Jesus can break the chains that bind you!"
 - c. "You can have peace in the midst of the storms of life."
 - d. "Wherever you go, Jesus will be with you."
 - e. "We are living in the final moments of earth's history."
 - f. "Jesus is the Light of the World."

- g. "You are the light of the world."

II. Facial expressions

- A. negative
 - 1. avoid a frozen face
 - 2. avoid incongruent facial expressions
 - a. remember, people will believe your body language more than your words if the two contradict each other
- B. positive
 - 1. learn to let your facial expressions mirror your words. Let's take a moment to make faces at each other
 - a. excitement
 - b. surprise
 - c. fear
 - d. anxiety
 - 2. focus on naturalness and variety
 - a. "Jesus loves you so much that he died for you."
 - b. "The demoniac snarled, "What have you to do with us, Holy One of God!"
 - c. "Lord, don't you care that we perish."

III. Eye contact (part of facial expression)

- A. negative
 - 1. looking mainly at your notes with a few token bobs - who are you trying to communicate with, your notes or your listeners?
 - 2. shifting eyes too rapidly from one listener to another
 - 3. staring at people
 - 4. gazing over the heads of the people
- B. positive
 - 1. maintain eye contact long enough to establish connection
 - 2. look at people in all parts of the audience
 - 3. keep eye contact when you are sharing personal illustrations and making direct appeals

IV. Initial visual impressions

- A. General Appearance
 - 1. Personal grooming
 - a. neat hairstyle
 - b. clean shaven or well-groomed facial hair
 - c. use of soap and deodorant etc

2. Clothing
 - a. Neat
 - b. Clean
 - c. Well-fitting
 - (1) not two sizes too small!
 - d. coordinated
 - e. appropriate to the setting
 - (1) audience
 - (2) occasion

B. Posture

1. When sitting
 - a. sit upright, not slouching
 - b. sit with legs together
 - (1) as a general rule, do not cross legs
 - (2) if done, cross in X rather than figure 4

2. When standing
 - a. stand upright
 - b. be natural, not rigid or stiff
 - c. feet should be approximately in line with your shoulders
 - (1) not together
 - (2) not unduly spread apart (Elvis Presley)
 - d. avoid unnecessary motion
 - (a) swaying
 - (b) fidgeting

3. When walking
 - a. move smoothly at a natural pace
 - b. this conveys a sense of confidence

V. Practical concerns

- A. Minimize the pulpit barrier
 1. if possible, get a clear plexiglass pulpit
 2. move away from the pulpit as much as possible

- B. Use the microphone effectively
 1. position a fixed microphone effectively - get it out of your face
 2. where possible, get a lapel microphone that permits free movement

- C. Use Multi-media as an aid, not a crutch
 1. overheads, slides, videos, power point
 2. if used well, can enhance communication

3. if used poorly, can become noise.
- D. Use objects for illustration
1. used more frequently in children's sermons
 2. an illustration is even more powerful when it can be seen, heard, touched etc

Psalm 139:7-10

Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend into heaven, You are there; if I make my bed in Sheol, behold, You are there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there your hand shall lead me, and Your right hand shall hold me.

VISUALS IN PREACHING

Name _____	Very Poor	Poor	Average	Good	Total ____ / 20 Very Good
VARIETY OF GESTURES	1	2	3	4	5
CONGRUENCE OF GESTURES	1	2	3	4	5
FACIAL EXPRESSIONS	1	2	3	4	5
EFFECTIVENESS (appropriate to material)	1	2	3	4	5

COMMENTS:

Module #12: SOLICITING AUDIENCE FEEDBACK

- I. The Importance of Listening to Your Audience

"Every preacher is evaluated, one way or another, by every listener. I want to get evaluation that will help me be most effective in reaching people with God's truth. **I consider getting accurate evaluation part of my job.** Constructive evaluation won't happen, though, no matter how willing I am to receive it, unless I'm asking the right people the right questions at the right time." Bill Hybels, Mastering Contemporary Preaching pp. 154-155

Three questions emerge from this comment by Bill Hybels: Who are the right people? What are the right questions? and When is the right time?

1. Who are the **right** people?
 - a. People with great discernment whom you have learned to trust.
 - b. Hybels utilizes his elders at Willow Creek.
 - c. Haddon Robinson creates an "invisible congregation," a group of six or seven specific people from different walks of life who ask questions and whose perspectives Robinson considers as he develops his sermon. He notes that "while they do not know it, each of them contributes significantly to my sermon preparation." Mastering Contemporary Preaching, p. 21.
 - d. I would suggest a blending of these two approaches: a cross-section, but of real people from the congregation: young adult, parent with small children, older adult, retiree...with a representative blend of men and women from a variety of cultural and ethnic backgrounds that reflects the diversity of your congregation.
2. What are the right questions?
 - a. Not, "Do you like me?" or even "How am I doing?"
 - b. Open ended questions that solicit specific and candid feedback regarding the effectiveness of your communication.
3. When is the **right** time?
 - a. Hybels suggests the post-sermon evaluation is somewhat useful. If post-sermon evaluation occurs, the sooner the better.
 - b. How much more productive to receive evaluation before you preach.
 - c. I agree. Any feedback is useful, but receiving feedback prior to preaching maximizes impact.

I want to suggest to you in this lecture, one mechanism for asking the right people the right questions at the right time. I refer to this mechanism as a sermon resource group.

II. Utilization of a Sermon Resource Group

A. Purpose

To share together with the preacher in the process of developing, delivering and evaluating effective biblical sermons. This enables the preacher to connect more effectively with the listeners.

B. Covenant

1. genuineness
2. presentness
3. unconditional positive regard
4. supportive psychological environment

C. Pre-sermon session

1. Purpose

To gather insights to aid in preparation and delivery of biblical sermons that are clear, interesting and relevant.

2. Format

- a. Manuscript provided to participants prior to the meeting. Session held early in the week.
- b. Issues to be addressed:
 - (1) what concerns do you have about this topic?
 - (2) what questions do you have about the text?
 - (3) how does this issue apply to your life?
 - (4) what is the most effective way to present this biblical concept?
 - (5) what illustrations come to mind which shed light on this issue?

3. Hybels notes that pre-sermon feedback "has saved me so many times from saying something I would regret later.." He continues by affirming "I have reached the point where I wouldn't want to preach without it." p. 160

4. In addition to providing feedback for individual sermons, pre-sermon sessions can also aid in the development of the sermon year. What Scripture passages should be covered? What topics should be discussed?

D. Post-sermon session

1. Purpose
To review evaluations and feedback after listening to the sermon in order to improve sermon effectiveness.
2. Format
 - a. A simple form is provided to SRG members for sermon evaluation. This form is brought to the post-sermon session.
 - b. Issues to be addressed:
 - (1) Was the sermon clear?
 - (a) if so, how? What was the homiletical idea?
 - (b) if not, what was the problem? How can we increase clarity?
 - (2) Was the sermon interesting?
 - (a) if so, how? What specifically helped maintain your interest?
 - (b) if not, what made it boring? How can it become more interesting?
 - (3) Did the sermon make an impact on your life?
 - (a) if so, in what ways was your understanding, attitude or behavior affected?
 - (b) if not, how can we strengthen application and increase impact?
 - c. Hybels filters all of the post-sermon evaluations through one person who is sensitive.

III. Development of a Preaching Calendar

A. Benefits

1. A Preaching Calendar helps the preacher to look at the big picture.
 - a. Are you preaching the whole counsel of God?
 - b. Is your preaching reaches the various groups within your congregation?
2. A Preaching Calendar saves time.
 - a. Less time is wasted on a weekly basis trying to discover a passage or theme for the week.
 - b. Advanced planning is easier when you know your preaching

calendar for the coming year.

3. A Preaching Calendar is helpful in planning the worship service.
 - a. Worship leaders can plan ahead.
 - b. Community can be invited to up-coming series.

B. The Process

1. Give a select group from your congregation a 30-day assignment,
 - a. Talk to other church members, friends and neighbors regarding felt needs. What sermons would they like to hear?
 - b. Develop suggested sermon series based on feedback.
2. Bring sermon planning group together for feedback session.
 - a. Listen to a report from each group member.
 - b. Write suggestions on a board.
 - c. Notice themes that emerge.
 - d. Develop a rough draft of potential sermon series for the year.
3. Solicit feedback from leadership team.
 - a. Review suggestions of sermon planning group.
 - b. Make deletions and additions based on needs of congregation and community.
 - c. Develop a revised draft of Preaching Calendar.
4. Take time for prayer and reflection.
 - a. Go on a prayer retreat and review the Preaching Calendar.
 - b. Allow the Holy Spirit to guide you as you make revisions.
 - c. Develop a final draft of the Preaching Calendar.

C. The Follow-Up

1. Develop a file for each sermon series/each sermon.
2. Recognize that changes will occur in the Preaching Calendar.
 - a. A major event in your church or community may necessitate the addition of a sermon on a specific theme.
 - b. A Preaching Calendar that remains 90% intact is better than no preaching calendar at all!

Seminar Evaluation

On a scale of 1-10, (low-high) how important is preaching as part of your ministry?

How many times do you preach each year?

What did you find most helpful in the seminar on Effective Biblical Preaching?

What suggestions do you have for improving the seminar?

Thank you for your feedback and your active participation in this preaching seminar!