

HOW TO PREACH

I. THE PREPARATIONS OF A PREACHER

- A) A PREACHER MUST BE CALLED & SENT BY GOD, Rom.10:15. Just as an ambassador must be appointed and given the authority to represent his nation, so a preacher must be appointed and given authority by God, 2 Cor.5:20, Heb.5:4, Jn.20:21.
- B) A PREACHER MUST HAVE A PREPARED LIFE, Ezra 7:10.
1. A prepared heart, Ez.7:10. If we wholeheartedly want to follow and obey God, He will show us His will and cause us to understand true doctrine, Jn.7:17.
 2. A preacher must study, 2 Tim.2:15. Ezra 7:10 shows us how Ezra then sought the law of the Lord -he studied the scriptures. After a prepared heart (or spirit) we must gain a prepared soul (or mind), Rom.12:2, Josh.1:8.
 3. A preacher must be a doer of the Word, Ez.7:10. This was the 3rd step in Ezra's preparation.
 - a) If our heart (spirit) is pure, our mind (soul) will understand God's truth. If we will then obey the truth with our body, we will become fully sanctified spirit, soul, and body, to be a vessel of honor to preach God's Word, 1 Thess.5:23, 2 Tim.2:21-22, 4:2.
 - b) If we are not doers of the Word, we turn from the truth to error and deception, Jam.1:22. Solomon was a preacher (Eccles.1:1) who disobeyed the Word of God (Deut.7:14-20) so he became a backslidden, confused, miserable man, Eccles.1:2. Preachers who do not practice what they preach are also a great reproach to the work of the gospel, Rom.2:21-24.
 4. If we have the proper preparations, as Ezra did in Ez.7:10, then we will be prepared like Ezra to be a good preacher or teacher.
- C) A PREACHER WILL BE TESTED to see if they are ready to fulfill their calling. These tests can include:
- a) An unprepared preacher can be opposed by God, Ex.4:24-26
 - b) A preacher may be opposed by the devil (Ex.5:1-9) by God's people (Ex.5:20-21) or by his own carnal nature, Ex.5:22-23.

II. WHAT TO PREACH, I Cor.14:6 There are 4 kinds of profitable preaching:

- A) REVELATION - A vision, a dream, a scripture or word that God has spoken to your heart, Jer. 23:28. If God has given you a revelation, that can be the seed (even if it was only a little revelation) that you can nurture and grow to become a full message. Study Dan.5:18-28.
- B) KNOWLEDGE - Preach about something you know or understand:
1. Preach about things you have experienced- God's love, protection, guidance, fear, repentance, etc. Read Dan.4, Acts 4:20, 11:1-18.
 2. Preach about a need or a sin that you know is in the church, Rev.3:15, Eph.3:19, Rom.14:14.
 3. Preach a message that you know is appropriate (perhaps it is a holiday, funeral, or a special occasion).
- C) PROPHECY - The Lord can anoint us when we preach, and guide us into speaking about things that we had not prepared to speak about. A prophetic flow should be followed when you feel the anointing lead you. Yet it is difficult (and often unwise) to assume that you need not prepare to preach, but only wait for the anointing to guide you.
- D) DOCTRINE - We need to systematically teach sound doctrine to give our church members strong spiritual foundations, 1 Tim.4:16, 2 Tim.4:2-4, Heb.6:1-2
- The example of the Apostles: Acts 2:41-42, 5:27-29.
 - Paul preached the *whole* counsel of God, Acts 20:27.
 - The world's most famous sermon, the Sermon on the Mount, was a doctrinal teaching, Mt.5:2 & 7:28.

III. CHOOSING WHAT TO PREACH- Three steps towards choosing your message:

1. Pray and read your Bible, seeking revelation from God about what to preach.
 2. If the Lord does not seem to reveal anything, then with the wisdom and peace of God decide what knowledge or doctrine it would be appropriate to preach.
 3. If you are at the pulpit and a prophetic anointing begins to flow and lead you, then drop your planned notes to follow the Spirit.
- A) SEEK FOR A REVELATION TO PREACH- An ambassador or messenger is only effective when he has up to date information from headquarters. If the Lord gives you a revelation, consider the following:
1. Do we understand the interpretation? Gen.41:8. Have we meditated on it, searched the Scriptures on the subject and let that "seed" of revelation grow into becoming a mature message? Mk.4:28-29
 2. Do we feel it is the right time to reveal it? Mk.9:9, Gen.37:5-8, Lk.2:19. Some revelations are given by God for personal guidance and prayer, and are not to be quickly proclaimed.
 3. If we have no new revelation that we feel we should preach, then with the leading of the wisdom and peace of God decide what knowledge or doctrine it would be appropriate to speak about.
- B) DECIDE WHAT KNOWLEDGE OR DOCTRINE TO PREACH:
1. KNOWLEDGE: If we are considering preaching about a subject or experience we know about:
 - a) Is the subject or experience presently blessing our heart?
 - Don't feed the people old spiritual food if it is dry, cold, or rotten!
 - If you're preaching an old message, make it warm and fresh through study and prayer.
 - If you know about something that is presently alive in your spirit, then that can become a blessing to others if we share it. Life reproduces life!
 - b) Is the subject appropriate? Prov.25:11. Holidays and special events often suggest some appropriate topics to preach. Some examples are:
 - Mother's Day: Prov.31:10-31, Judges 5:7.
 - Valentines Day: Mt.5:8, Mt.22:37-40, Ps.139:23-24.
 - A Wedding: Eccles.4:9-12, Jn.2:1-10, Rev.19:6-9.
 - A Funeral: 1 Cor.15:51-57, 1 Thess.4:13-18.
 - c) Consider your audience and speak to their needs. Make it practical and relevant!
 - Are they children or elderly people? Farmers or educated professionals?
 - Are they all Christians or unbelievers? New believers or pastors?
 - d) If we know about a problem:
 - Does the Lord wants us to confront the problem? 2 Chron.35:20-24 (such as preaching against a local crime organization, communism, drug dealers, etc.). Eccles.7:17.
 - Is it the right time? Eccles.3:7-8, 1 Cor.4:5 Does the Lord want to come to expose & judge the problem at this time? Mt.13:24-30, Gen.15:16. Is the situation ripe?
 - Do we know the correct way to deal with the situation? 1 Chron.14:9-16 Every battle needs different plans
 2. DOCTRINE: If we feel that we should preach doctrine, we should consider:
 - a) Do the people have a good doctrinal foundation? Heb.6:1-2, Eph.4:14.
Teach & preach special Bible studies for the new Christians
 - b) Give more emphasis to the important doctrines of the Bible, Mt.23:23.
 - c) Is.8:20 Don't teach any doctrines that are not clearly established in the Word of God.
Examples: There is life on other planets, Jesus is coming back in 2000 A.D.
- C) IF A PROPHETIC ANOINTING COMES: If you feel a special anointing or a burden on your heart, then follow the flow of how the Lord wants to express His heart through you. This is a prophetic message you should speak from the heart of God, Rev.19:10. This does not mean that you have to prophesy "Thus saith the Lord" as you speak- the prophetic anointing simply means that you feel that you are expressing the heart and mind of God as you speak.
- a) We cannot plan this beforehand, although we should pray and prepare our heart so that if God wants to speak through us in a special way we will be prepared.

- b) If the Lord gives us a prophetic quickening and seems to speak to our heart before we begin to preach (such as in the song service), then either prepare quickly to speak on that topic, or include the newly quickened material in your previously prepared message at an appropriate place.
- c) When we feel this anointing or burden as we are preaching, we should follow the leading of the Spirit, not our preplanned notes!
- d) Unless revelation gifts operate with the prophetic, the areas where we can prophetically preach are listed in 1 Cor.14:3. They are edification, exhortation, and comfort.
- e) If you feel the burden lift from your heart, there are two directions you can go:
 - You can finish the message quickly and let the Spirit of God continue to move, perhaps through an altar call or a time of worship, or:
 - You can return to your notes to finish the message you have prepared. During your conclusion, emphasize the message that the Lord was prophetically speaking, and seek to let the anointing begin to move again as you change the order of service over to an altar call or a time of worship, rejoicing, or prayer.

IV. HOW TO PREPARE A MESSAGE

- A) PRAY! Spend time in prayer before you choose what message you will speak. You can preach something that was birthed from the natural (your natural intellect or feelings), or something that was born of God (imparted to your heart and mind). But only what was born of God will have lasting fruit, 1 Jn.5:4, 1 Cor.3:10-15. As Christ's ambassadors, we need to receive from God what He wants us to speak to the people, Jn.12:49.
- B) STUDY! We are told to *study* to be good preachers, 2 Tim.2:14-16. Along with your Bible, the following are some good study helps to have available:
 - 1. A concordance- With a concordance you can study all the times a word from the Bible is used in other scriptures. In this way, you can let the Bible fully explain itself concerning any word that you study, 1 Cor.2:13. For example, consider if you are planning to preaching something about the eagle. In a complete concordance (such as Strong's, Young's, or Cruden's complete concordances) you will find that this bird is spoken about around 3 dozen times in the Bible as eagle, eagle's, eagles, and eagles'. If you study all of these scriptures you will see what the Bible teaches about the eagle, and what spiritual lessons can be learned.
 - 2. A study Bible- These contain many useful study helps that often help you to study such things as Bible topics, history, maps, cross references, alternate translations, etc.
 - 3. Other study books, such as a Bible dictionary, Bible handbook, commentaries, etc.
 - 4. Your own notebook of your old messages- keep an organized copy of all the messages you have already prepared and preached. You may want to preach a part of a message again, or the same entire sermon. If God gives you a good message, do not forget it or lose it! It may be appropriate to speak sometime again in the future, Mt.13:52.
- C) THREE TYPES OF MESSAGES:
 - 1. TOPICAL- This is where you preach a topic or an idea, such as: prayer, the eagle, repentance, joy, etc. A topical message can easily be prepared with a concordance.
 - 2. TEXTUAL- This is where you preach from a verse, and take your main idea(s) or title from the verse.
 - 3. EXPOSITORY- This is where you bring out the meaning of a story, chapter, or even a book of the Bible. This type of preaching can require more skill in explaining the scripture, but it is valuable to teach the people how to also become good interpreters of the Bible for themselves.
- D) PREPARE AN OUTLINE: This helps you to organize what you want to say into good order, Eccles.12:9-11, Is.28:13. As an example, a good meal has to be arranged in order to be appetizing. If it is all blended or mashed together, it is just as nourishing, but it probably will not be eaten!
- E) FOUR INGREDIENTS IN A GOOD OUTLINE:
 - 1. UNITY- Unity makes the message easy to understand. Each part of the message should be related to the rest. There should be a main theme or message to your preaching.

2. ORDER- A message should be well presented and logical. An organized sermon will be easier for the people to remember, meditate on, and put into practice. There is order to everything that God does, 1 Cor.14:40.
3. MOVEMENT- You want to always keep moving forward in your message, always progressing towards your goal, Phil.3:13-14. Every sermon should have a purpose or goal- it should accomplish something constructive in the hearts & lives of those who listen! A sermon should always move the listeners onward toward that goal.

The sermon must move on in the proper direction that God wants the message to go. We do not want our sermons to uselessly wander around in circles, waste time going off on unneeded tangents, or lead the people down dead-end streets that will take them to nowhere. No, our preaching must have purpose. We want to lead the people forward into greater spiritual understanding, and into a deeper consecration to the Lord. To do this, you must have an understanding of God's purpose for the message you will speak, and wisdom to move the people step by step towards that goal.

4. CLIMAX- A message should aim for a climax. Just as a boxer aims for a knockout punch, or a piece of music prepares for a moving finale, a sermon should bring us to a climax. This should focus attention of the listeners on the purpose for the sermon, and motivate them to respond.

The messages in the Book of Acts often have a very strong climax. Please study Acts 2:36, 7:51-56, Acts 13:38-41, 14:9-10, 17:30-31, 26:27-29, and 28:25-28 to see the moving climaxes that these sermons ended with. Several times it says that the listeners were "cut to the heart" by the climax of the message. The preaching of the Word went like a sharp sword into their hearts, and the results were often very dramatic.

The message should slowly build up, step by step, through the points of the sermon, to have one climax near the end of the message. Do not have a big start, and a boring end to your message! You also do not want to have many climaxes or high points in the message. That will leave the people dizzy and confused, like a roller coaster ride that takes you up and down. Many climaxes can also cause the people to become tired and they will not respond wholeheartedly at the end of the message.

- F) THE THREE MAIN PARTS OF A SERMON. A sermon should have three main sections: an introduction, a main body, and a conclusion. Their functions can be illustrated by the three parts of an arrow, the feathers, the shaft, and the point.
 1. The Introduction- The beginning of the sermon. It gives direction to the rest of the message, just as the feathers on an arrow guide the arrow.
 2. The Main Body- This is the main section containing the content of the sermon. This is like the shaft, the main part of the arrow.
 3. The Conclusion- The ending of the sermon. This is like the point of the arrow, that is to penetrate the target. Our target is the hearts of the listeners!

V. THE FIRST PART OF A SERMON OUTLINE: THE INTRODUCTION

A) PURPOSE:

1. Create interest and gather the people's attention- make it inviting!
2. Make it clear and simple what the message is to be about.

B) INGREDIENTS:

1. GREETING - You might start with a greeting if you are speaking to visitors, or if you are a guest speaker. This is not necessary if you are preaching to your own regular people.
2. TITLE - To simply state the content or purpose of the message. Make it short, perhaps even 1 word.
 - a) Some simple examples: Revival, Born Again, 3 Reasons Jesus Died on the Cross.
 - b) Interesting titles can help gain the interest of the people, like "Matching Footprints" (when preaching from 1 Pet.2:21), "Measuring God's Love" (for Eph.3:17-19), and "Marks of Maturity" (for 1Jn.2:12-14).

- c) Avoid exaggerated titles. Do not promise the people more than you can give them!
Some bad examples of this could be: "God has a new Mercedes Benz for You!" (when preaching from Mt.21:22) or "The U.F.O.s are Coming!" (from 2 Thess.1:7-8).
- 3. TEXT VERSE (or verses). This is a verse that you announce and read at the beginning of your message. It will:
 - a) Give the authority of the Word of God to your message.
 - b) Help to simply state the content of the message
 - c) Start a good foundation that you can build the message from
 - d) Help to keep your message from wandering away
(NOTE: The title may come from the text verse. If your text is Jn.3:6, your title might become "You must be born again." A title from Heb.12:14 could be "Without Holiness no One will See the Lord.")
- 4. PRESENT SOMETHING INTERESTING to the people to gain their attention. Some examples are:
 - a) A *short* story
 - b) Refer to anything in the earlier part of the service that helps confirm that God is already speaking about the subject that you are going to preach about. This confirmation could be a prophecy, a theme in the song service, or a testimony or scripture reading.
 - c) Refer to the day (if a holiday) or season (time to plant, harvest, etc.) or the occasion (wedding, funeral, celebration), or some present news (if it is relevant to the message)
 - d) Show the people how the message is important for them
 - e) Use an action or object that will illustrate the subject or lesson
- 5. NEVER APOLOGIZE for your message when you begin! If you tell the people that the message is not very good, then they will not expect to receive much. See Rom.1:16, 2 Tim.2:15, 4:2.
- Some examples of this are: "I was too busy to prepare," or "I have not spoken very many times,"
- "I lost my sermon notes," or "I have been discouraged, but I will try to preach anyhow."
- 6. KEEP THE INTRODUCTION SHORT! Gain the attention of the people, and tell them what direction the message is going- then start the message. An introduction should usually be less than five minutes long.

VI. THE MAIN BODY OF THE MESSAGE: 7 KINDS OF OUTLINES

- A) DIAMOND OUTLINE: This is where you look at the subject from different sides or perspectives. Just as a diamond can reflect light in many different ways, with no special order needed in viewing it; some subjects can be looked at from different sides, with no special order to the viewing. Each view or perspective will show a different beauty, truth, or flash of light. Some examples are:
 - 1. Three Reasons to Praise the Lord: 1. Strength, 2. Deliverance, and 3. Cleansing.
 - 2. Six Ways God Deals with Men (Ps. 107): 1.v4-9, 2.v10-16, 3.v17-22, 4.v23-32, 5.v33-38, 6.v39-42.
 - 3. Aspects of Love, 1 Cor.13:4-7.
 * There are many diamond outlines in the Bible, such as Gal.5:19-21, Ps.150, Job 38-39, & Mt.23:13-32.
- B) LADDER OUTLINE: In this type of outline, order is important. Each point or step builds on the one before it. Some examples are:
 - 1. Three Steps To Maturity (1 Jn.2:12-14): a) Children, b)Young Men, c)Fathers
 - 2. God's Plan for the Redeemed (Ephesians 2:1-7):
 - a)Past Condition: Dead in Sin, vs.1-3
 - b) Present Condition: Saved & Raised With Christ, vs.4-6
 - c) Future Condition: Blessed for the Ages to Come, v.7
 - 3. Saved From God's Judgment:
 - a) All are sinners, Rom.3:2
 - b) God will judge all men, Heb.9:27
 - c) Come to Jesus and you will be saved, Jn.3:16-17

d) Reject Christ and you will be condemned, Jn.3:18-20.

* Other examples of ladder outlines: 2 Pet.1:5-7, Rom.5:3-5, 8:29-30, 10:13-15.

C) CONTRAST OUTLINE - This is where you compare two (or more) opposites.

Some examples are:

1 The Righteous & the Ungodly (Psalm 1)

2. Unbelief and Faith (The 12 Spies, Num.13 & 14)

* The most basic organization of the Bible is a contrast outline: the Old & New Testaments!

* Jesus often used contrasts in His preaching, such as The Rich Man and Lazarus (Lk.16:19-31),

A Man with Two Sons (Mt.21:28-31), and Two Roads, Two Trees, & Two Houses (Mt.7:13-27).

* We can see an example of a message in the Bible that combines both a diamond & a contrast outline at the same time, in Eccles.3:1-8. Each subject is unrelated (born / die), (weep / laugh), (kill / heal), (gain / lose) like a diamond outline, but each subject contains a contrast.

D) BIBLE STORY (OR EXPOSITORY) OUTLINE: This is where you go step by step through the verses of a Bible Story, or chapter, or book of the Bible. Some examples are:

1. The Lord's Prayer, Mt.6:9-13

a) verse 9, "Pray in this manner" The Lord's prayer is a *pattern* of how we can learn to pray. If we learn how to pray the 6 themes taught in it, for 10 minutes each, we will have learned how to pray for an hour, Mt.26:40.

b) Theme # 1- Drawing Near to God (Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name), Is.66:1-2.

c) Theme # 2- Establishing God's Kingdom: Spiritual Warfare (Your kingdom come...), Lk.12:32, Eph.6:12-18.

d) Theme # 3- Receiving God's Provision (Give us this day our daily bread), Mt.6:33, Phil.4:19.

e) Theme # 4- Receiving and Giving Forgiveness (And forgive us...), 1 Jn.1:9, Mt.18:21-35.

f) Theme # 5- Overcoming the World, the Flesh, and the Devil (And do not lead us into temptation...), Mt.26:41, 1 Cor.10:13, Jam.4:6-10.

g) Theme # 6- Praising God (For Yours is the kingdom...). Praise will strengthen our faith (Rom.4:20), and balance our times of sorrow in prayer (Neh.8:9-10).

2. Sit, Walk, & Stand: the Book of Ephesians-

a) Sit, Eph.1:1-3:21. We sit in the finished work of Christ

b) Walk, Eph.4:1-6:9. We walk in the new life given us.

c) Stand, Eph.6:10-20. We stand in Christ's victory against the devil.

E) ANALOGY OUTLINE: A Bible story is looked at, and then given a spiritual interpretation, 1 Cor.15:46. This is to not deny or minimize the importance of the plain, literal story; but can add a spiritual or prophetic meaning.

An Example is the 2 Miraculous Catches of Fish, Lk.5:3-10 & Jn.21:2-11. A spiritual interpretation:

a) These two catches of fish by Peter and the disciples are prophetic of the ministry of Peter, Mk.1:17.

b) When Peter had the first miraculous catch in Lk.5, he left his fishing to become a minister, Lk.5:10.

c) But the net in Lk.5:6 began to break. The weak net signified the weakness of Peter's original ministry, which failed when he denied the Lord, Mt.26:69-75.

d) Peter went back to fishing, in Jn.21:3. Peter left his calling to be a minister, but God did not bless it, Jn.15:5, Heb.10:38.

e) Peter was not fully clothed, both naturally & spiritually, Jn.21:7, Is.64:6.

f) Jn.21:15-17 After Christ tested him 3 times (just as Peter had denied Christ 3 times) Peter was restored to his ministry.

g) Jn.21:11 Peter brought the net, which was unbroken this time. This signified that his ministry would not break again, just as Christ prophesied that Peter would become faithful to death in Jn.21:18.

MORAL: If you have failed the Lord, He can forgive you, change you, recommission you, and cause you to become a faithful servant of God.

F) QUESTION AND ANSWER OUTLINE (or several)- or a Problem & Answer (or several)

1. Isaiah 33: 14-17 Title: How Can We Dwell With a Holy God?

- a) Is.33:14, Heb.12:29 How can we dwell with a holy God?
- b) Is.33:15 Answer: Seven ways we should be holy
- c) Is.33:16-17 Six blessings we will be given
- 2. Psalm 15 & 24 are each a Psalm that ask & answer a question.
- 3. Malachi 1:2, 1:7, 2:17, 3:8, 3:18 shows us the outline of the book: it is many questions & answers.
- G) SEARCH OUTLINE - Various possibilities considered until the right answer is found.
 - 1. Micah searched for the answer to, "How can I please the Lord?" in Micah 6:6-8
 - 2. Job chapter 28 is about searching for (and finding) wisdom.

VII. ABOUT ILLUSTRATIONS

- A) The Use of Illustrations - Use one for every major point of your message- and perhaps more.
 - 1. Illustrations get the people's attention. Keep them from getting distracted or bored!
 - 2. Illustrations demonstrate practical application. Show them how the message can help them.
 - 3. Illustrations help the people to remember your lesson. "A picture is worth a 1,000 words."
- B) Types of Illustrations
 - 1. A story or spoken illustration (such as the parables that Jesus used)
 - 2. A written or drawn illustration (a picture, or something on a blackboard or an overhead projection)
 - 3. An acted illustration (hand movements, walking, carrying an imaginary burden)
 - 4. An object (a clay pot, a flashlight, a yoke)
- C) Sources of Illustration
 - 1. Scripture - A story that illustrates the truth you are speaking about.
 - 2. History: -about the 2nd Coming of Christ: General McArthur's "I will return"
 - 3. Current news: Jesus used this to sharpen the point of truth, Lk.13:1-5.
 - 4. Nature & Science, 1 Kings 4:33.
 - about the Trinity: water in 3 forms, or the 3 parts of an egg
 - about the danger of sin: quicksand, the spider web, or the bite of a snake
 - 5. Personal Experiences - yours, or other peoples' experiences
 - 6. Fiction - Perhaps you could "invent" a good story to illustrate your message, or use another person's story, perhaps from famous literature. (one of Aesop's fables, a useful folk tale, a popular book...)
- D) Gather good illustrations and write them down! A preacher who has to speak every week needs to continually seek for fresh illustrations. Write them down, keep a good story to use again.

VIII. WHILE YOU ARE PREACHING:

- A) Exalt Christ, and lead the People closer to Christ (Even Christians need to get closer to God!)
 - 1. Show that Christ is the answer: He can save, deliver, heal, sanctify... Heb.13:8.
 - 2. Use Christ as our guide and example, Prov.3:6, Ps.16:8. Did Christ face the same situation? What would Jesus do?
 - 3. Show how the Bible continually points to Christ, Jn.5:39, Heb.10:7.
 - 4. Do not exalt people, Mt.23:6-12. Do not praise important people in the congregation to gain their favor, or mention the names of important people you know, to show that you are important! Let your clothes, jewelry, or appearance not be overly "flashy" or rich to gain people's admiration. Turn the people to Christ, not yourself!
- B) Be Sensitive to the Anointing of the Holy Spirit
 - 1. Seek to bring and keep the anointing - The life and power of H.S. will keep people interested, and will minister help to them, 2 Cor.3:3, 3:6, Jn.6:63, 15:26, 1 Cor.2:4, Acts 1:8.
 - 2. Seek to be sensitive to the direction of the Holy Spirit, Jn.15:13, 14:26
 - 3. Learn to not preach past the anointing, Gal.3:3, Prov.30:5-6.
 - 4. Keep pure attitudes in your heart. Bitterness, unbelief, & impurities in your heart can be imparted while you are preaching, and can defile many, Heb.12:15.

C) Be Sensitive to the People

1. Consider your audience, and speak at their level:

- Are they children or adults? Uneducated, or professionals?
- Are they Christians or unbelievers? Young converts or pastors?

2. Are you keeping their attention? A good message has no value if you cannot keep the attention of the congregation. This is doubly important if you are speaking outdoors where the audience can easily wander away.

3. Do not speak beyond their attention span. Young children may not sit and listen beyond 5 to 10 minutes, while a trained adult congregation may listen for one hour.

D) Ways to Use your Voice:

1. Make sure your speaking can be clearly understood by all the people. If not, perhaps you need to be louder. This can be done by speaking louder, or if you have a microphone; you can get closer to the microphone or turn up the amplifier. But sometimes you do not need to be louder- the problem is that you need to be careful speak more clearly. Pronounce your words better, and do not speak too quickly!

2. Make sure your speaking is not too loud. People can have a hard time listening to a message if it seems that you are "yelling" at them all the time. Make sure the amplifier is not distorting, or sounding harsh or shrill. A good amplifier will make your voice sound just the same as your normal speech, only louder.

3. Do not speak monotone, or drone on and on with the same pitch. Make your voice sound interesting! Use variety in your speech to reinforce the content of your message. You can slow down & speed up, speak softer & louder, and use higher & lower pitch.

4. Do not speak too fast. Some preachers can sound like a machine gun when they speak, but the people do not have time to consider the message properly because the speaker has moved on so

quickly.

5. Pauses, and repeating your words, can add impact to what you say.

6. Avoid useless phrases and repetitions, always saying something like "you know?" or "like," or "right?" at the end of every thought. This can be very irritating and distracting.

7. Do not ruin your voice. A preacher must protect his voice, because it can become damaged and unusable. Use an amplifier that can help you to not speak too loudly. If you are preaching outdoors, having a wall behind you can echo your voice and make it louder. Preaching downwind when you are outdoors also helps to carry your voice farther.

E) Using Your Body Properly:

1. Do not distract the people away from your message, by unusual or overly repeated mannerisms. It can be irritating to look at a speaker who is always scratching his nose, or fixing his hair, or swaying back and forth.

2. Make eye contact with the people. Do not always be staring at your sermon notes. If you are nervous, look a little above the heads of the people in the back. You are God's ambassador to them- be friendly, and relate to them through keeping eye contact. But do not stare at one or a few people.

3. Use your gestures, or actions, effectively:

a) Avoid meaningless motion. Let everything you do, reinforce the message.

b) Let your actions correspond to the message, use the correct gesture for the occasion.

c) Do not overly repeat the same action.

d) Different facial expressions can help communicate your message. Do not look like a statue, but do not look like a clown!

e) Hand movements can add impact if not overly repeated, Acts 21:40, Dan.12:7.

F) End your Message Positively

1. Preaching the gospel literally means to preach the good news! The New Testament is a message with a very positive ending, Heb.8:7-12.

2. We want to build faith & hope in the people's hearts, not discouragement & condemnation, Is.42:3

3. There is a glory to preaching an unbalanced message of Old Testament legalism and condemnation, but 2 Corinthians 3:6-11 tells us that it is a fading glory that is not to be compared to the glory of preaching the New Covenant.

IX. THE CONCLUSION

A) SUMMARIZE THE MESSAGE

State clearly and quickly the content of the message. Like an arrowhead, make it sharp.

B) APPLY THE MESSAGE TO EACH PERSON'S HEART

- The message may start in the hearer's mind, but it should end in their heart! The conclusion should be like the sharp arrowhead of the sermon, that is to penetrate into the heart of the listeners.
- An appropriate story or illustration that is emotionally moving may touch the people's hearts.

C) LEAD THE PEOPLE TO A DECISION, TO A RESPONSE

1. To obey the Word of God, James 1:22. Be doers of the Word and not hearers only.
2. To change their life- make a practical response to the message, Josh.24:15.
3. Have the people respond with an action, to confirm their new commitment. Some examples are:
 - a) Have the people raise their hand, or stand up, or come to the altar, Ex.32:26.
 - b) Have a time of prayer: You can pray, but also encourage each person to pray for themselves. Perhaps you could also lead them in repeating a prayer after you.
 - c) Have a time of worship. Sing a relevant song, perhaps a song of consecration.
 - d) Invite the people to confess their sin & ask forgiveness to an individual, or even to the church.
 - e) Have a communion service
 - f) Have the people perform a symbolic act as a testimony of their new commitment:
 - sign a covenant, Neh.9:38
 - have a "Jericho" march, shout a victory shout, or blow a trumpet, Josh.6:15-16
 - burn a piece of paper, stamp their foot, or do some other appropriate action.
 - g) take up an offering if a special need was presented (and let the preacher be the first to give generously, as an example to the flock!)
 - h) Let some of the people give a testimony about their new dedication
 - i) Invite the people to speak to a counselor (perhaps have the counselors ready), or make an appointment to see the pastor.

D) BE SENSITIVE TO LET THE HOLY SPIRIT MOVE AFTER THE MESSAGE IS OVER (if He wants!)

The Holy Spirit must work with the message that was spoken; to confirm, convict, impart, or seal the message in our heart and life. Do not be quick to move the service on to another activity or to dismissal if the Holy Spirit desires to still move. Perhaps the gifts of the Spirit will begin to operate in the service, if you continue to wait upon the Lord and give the Holy Spirit the opportunity to continue the work begun by the preaching of the Word. Prayer, praise, and prophecy are three things that we can have at the end of a message that can help allow room for the Holy Spirit to continue to move.

- ### **E) IF YOU ARE A GUEST SPEAKER, OR ARE NOT THE LEADER OF THE SERVICE:** Then you must also be sensitive and submissive to the leadership of the service as well as to the Holy Spirit. The leadership may want to take control of the service at the end of the message, before you fulfill all of part C and D of these instructions about the conclusion. In that case, you release the leadership of the service back into their hands, knowing that you have fulfilled your responsibility.