

Preaching the Gospel

A monthly magazine for preachers and those who want to preach.

Paul K. Williams, editor

P.O. Box 324, Eshowe 3815, 035-474-2656

E-mail: bible@netactive.co.za

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YOUR SERMON IS IMPORTANT!

If it is not, don't preach it!

Of course, some subjects are more important than others at the time, but unless you have a feeling that your sermon is of burning importance, you won't be able to do much good. And it will certainly not be good for you, the preacher.

We are not preaching in order to fill up time or make people feel good. We are preaching the GOSPEL, the only message which will save souls. We are warning against ERROR, which will keep people from being saved. We are pointing people to heaven and saving them from hell. My brother, that is important. We have the most important job in the world!

Preach it like it is as important as it is. Study your subject until the message is burning in you. You are not standing up there just to fill up time. Use that time to save souls!

"To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ." (Eph 3:8)

Your sermon is important!

THE MAIN DIVISIONS

In the first issue I said that the main divisions of your sermon are a very important part of preparation. You have a purpose which you have written at the top of the page. Everything you use in your sermon will go to accomplish that purpose. But that material has to be organised. If you are not careful your sermon will be a muddle. A sermon which is not properly organised—outlined—is bound to be ineffective. I have listened to many sermons where the preacher seemed to be going around in circles. This is not good preaching.

Good preaching is organised so that your hearers can keep with you on your journey to the goal. It is organised so that your hearers can remember your main points—your main arguments—and take them home with them. A good outline is like a basket for holding the points you are making. Without the outline your sermon is like a great pile of groceries without a bag or a box to put them in.

Following are examples of sermons with the purpose statement, the text, and the main points. There is much more to a sermon outline than this, of course. But I am giving these to illustrate how to divide your sermon into its main divisions.

TITLE: FLEE THESE THINGS

Purpose—to show four things from which Christians must flee and to exhort Christians to stay away from these things.

TEXT: I Timothy 6:11

MAIN DIVISIONS

- I. Flee Sexual Immorality—1 Cor. 6:18
- II. Flee Idolatry—1 Cor. 10:14
- III. Flee From Greed—1 Tim. 6:9-11
- IV. Flee Youthful Lusts—2 Tim. 2:22
- V.

TITLE: FRUITS OF REPENTANCE

Purpose—to prove that true repentance will cause us to change and to exhort the hearers to bring forth the fruits of repentance.

TEXT: Matthew 3:8

MAIN DIVISIONS

- I. The one who before repentance refused to obey will obey.—Matt. 21:28-30
- II. The liar will tell the truth.—Col. 3:9
- III. The adulterer will divorce.—Matt. 19:9; 5:32.
- IV. The drunkard will stop drinking.—Prov. 20:1
- V. Thieves will return stolen goods.—Eph. 4:28; Luke 19:8

TITLE: RATHER MOURN

Purpose—to point out why we should mourn when a brother is living in open sin.

TEXT: 1 Corinthians 5:2

MAIN DIVISIONS

- I. We should mourn for the church as a whole.—1 Cor. 5:2
- II. We should mourn for the sake of those we try to win to Christ.
- III. We should mourn for the sake of the one who is sinning.

TITLE: SACRIFICIAL GIVING

Purpose—to show that our giving should be sacrificial and to motivate us to give in this way.

MAIN DIVISIONS

- I. Sacrifice is a Bible principle.
- II. There is joy in sacrificing for the ones we love.
- III. Our giving can be increased substantially by a little sacrifice.
- IV. The church must provide a program that will cause the members to want to give sacrificially.

The preacher must work hard to master the art of dividing his sermon into its main divisions. I cannot emphasise this too much. The better you perform this task, the better your sermon will be.

REPEAT YOUR MAIN POINTS

The old preacher said, "I tell them what I'm going to tell them, then I tell them, then I tell them what I told them." That's a pretty good practice, at least most of the time.

This means that in his introduction the preacher lets his hearers know what his purpose is and how he intends reaching this result. He shows the steps he is going to take on the way to the conclusion, usually stating the main points of his sermon.

Then as he preaches, he makes it easy for his hearers to know what his first point is, then his second, then his third. If these are arranged in the proper order and developed well, he is then ready for his conclusion.

In the conclusion he repeats his main points again, reinforcing them with another illustration, or application, or scripture. Then he is ready for the final, important sentences of his sermon.

When you state the outline of your sermon in the introduction, then call attention to the main points as you move from one to the other, and when you finally repeat those points, you help your hearers to remember what you said and to see that you have truly proved your point. You have accomplished your purpose.

Following this system is good discipline for the preacher. It forces you to outline your sermon well and to think logically. If you do this for most of your sermons, you will find your effectiveness increases.

GOOD LEADERSHIP

Bill Hall, Athens, Alabama

What are the characteristics of good leadership? Good leadership has vision to see what needs to be done. Good leadership moves forward, is positive in its approach, stirs confidence in others, convinces them that the impossible task can be accomplished.

Good leadership has faith in people. Good leadership believes that others want to work and that they will respond when properly challenged; it places the best possible construction on the actions of others. Good leadership "*bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things,*" because good leadership loves.

Good leadership does not run ahead of others. It does not do everything itself. In fact, it frequently steps aside, and waits—sometimes anxiously—while others are given a chance to perform the tasks which they are capable of performing. Good leadership is not nearly so concerned with getting **things** done as it is with developing **people** into useful, mature servants of the Lord. Good leadership is constantly producing leadership in others.

Good leadership has a real concern for others, and has the ability to communicate that concern. Good leadership is patient, understanding; it is neither too quick to rebuke nor is it indulgent toward sin. Good leadership places itself in the other man's position to see things from his viewpoint.

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Good leadership is humble; is willing to acknowledge mistakes; it can accept criticism, and separate the constructive from the destructive. Good leadership seeks the praise of God rather than the praise of men; it sacrifices popularity to do God's will.

Good leadership has conviction, but is not stubborn or headstrong. It listens to others and views their ideas objectively. Good leadership treats all alike; is impartial. Good leadership is frank and candid, but is kind. Good leadership is self-confident, but not proud; it does not have to be self-promoting.

The church needs men and women who are leaders, but what a difference between those who **seek** to lead and those who **truly** lead.

--*Two Men*, pages 135-136.

“I AM UNDER COMPULSION”

For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for I am under compulsion; for woe is me if I do not preach the gospel. (1 Corinthians 9:16)

Paul was called by Jesus to be an apostle of Christ, to preach the saving gospel. He understood that he was a bondservant of Christ to do what he was called to do. He was under obligation to preach.

The man who dedicates himself to preaching the gospel is in the same condition. Preaching the gospel must come first. Considerations of money, or comfort, or the esteem of our brethren must not enter into the matter. We are preachers. Whether things go well or poorly for us, whether we eat well or find ourselves in hunger, whether people like us or hate us, we must preach the gospel.

And why would we not want to? We have been given the wonderful privilege of doing God's work so that people will be SAVED and GO TO HEAVEN! I am persuaded that there is not another work on this earth so wonderful as this.

Study 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 carefully, my brother preacher.

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PKW