



# *Preparation and Delivery of Sermons*

## Lesson 4

### Preparing an Expository Sermon

#### **I. SELECT A TEXT.**

##### **A. The text may be predetermined for you.**

1. Some churches predetermine curriculum.
2. In teaching/preaching through a book, the curriculum is automatically per-determined.

##### **B. In determining your own curriculum, several factors should be considered.**

1. The needs of your audience. (Example: Church needs vary with time within a church and from church to church.)
2. The type of audience you face. (Lost, saved, children, senior citizens, church service, youth camp, radio, pastor's conference.)
3. One-time or brief appearances as opposed to an on-going forum.

#### **II. DETERMINE THE NATURAL PERIMETERS OF THE TEXT.**

##### **A. Find where the natural block or paragraph begins and ends.**

##### **B. Always view a paragraph in light of and harmony with the larger section in which it is found.**

1. Always view a larger section in light of and harmony with the theme and message of the book in which it is found.
2. Always view a book in light of and harmony with the Bible as a whole. (Theological analysis)

#### **III. FIND THE CENTRAL IDEA OF THE TEXT. *CIT***

##### **A. Read and read repeatedly.**

1. Read the text until you have it in your heart.
2. Read slowly and carefully. Look at every detail; turn every pebble.
3. Read the verses leading into and flowing out of this passage or text. Be sure you capture God's flow of thought sufficiently to understand this text in light of what God had in mind.
4. Look for the idea of this text in light of God's bigger idea(s).
5. Read and meditate until you are sure that you have God's idea clearly in mind. You do not have the central idea of the text clearly in mind until you can state in one summary sentence what the author meant by what he said in the text.

**B. Capture what you find in your reading.**

1. Always have a legal pad or other writing materials.
2. In your studies always capture what you learn and see throughout the study process.
3. Jot down headings and as you study and find truths, begin to arrange ideas and findings under appropriate headings.
4. This can be done on computer.

**C. Write out the central idea of the text. This will usually require several revisions.**

**D. Clues for locating the central idea of the text.**

1. *Identify the CIT from a single statement in the passage.*
2. *Identify the CIT from the larger context.*
3. *Identify the CIT from recurring ideas.*

**IV. LOOK FOR THE OUTLINE IN THE TEXT.**

**A. Understanding the outline.**

1. **Definition:** An *outline* is a summary of a text that is written in the form of a list of main ideas and supporting points for those main ideas that are derived from the text.
2. An outline has (1) coordination, (2) parallelism, (3) subordination and (4) division.

**B. Each text will have an outline.**

1. Your task is not to make an outline; your task is to find the one that God has already placed in the text. **Never impose an artificial outline onto a text.**
2. In logical order write down the main points or points of equal strengths within the text. Use Roman numerals (or some similar organizational device). These are called *compliments*.
3. In logical order write down the supporting ideas for each compliment. These are called *supplements*.
4. In some cases there will be supporting material for the *supplements*. Record these in proper, logical order.
5. Remember that in all cases the text dictates the outline at all levels; not the reverse. **(Never impose material onto the text.)**
6. **Note:** Some texts may not have a clear-cut linear outline. The outline may be broader and not tight-knit. This is often the case where Hebrew poetry exists.

**V. SEEK TO DEVELOP A PROPOSITIONAL STATEMENT FOR THE SERMON AND DETERMINE YOUR PURPOSE.**

**A. The propositional statement transforms the central idea of the text into a theme for the lesson/sermon.**

1. The central idea of the text is a statement of what the author meant by what he wrote. A propositional statement is that idea transformed into a theme for the lesson/sermon by which you will communicate the author's idea to your contemporary audience. The proposition transforms the past-tense idea of the author into a future-tense application of that idea to the contemporary audience at hand.
2. No teacher/preacher is ready start further development of the lesson/sermon until he/she can express this theme or proposition into a short, pregnant sentence as clear as crystal.
3. Work to transform the proposition into an interrogatory sentence. This sentence should consist of (1) an interrogatory adverb, (2) a cardinal number and (3) a plural noun.

**B. Determine the purpose of the message.**

1. **Definition:** The *purpose* is what the teacher/preacher specifically hopes to accomplish in the lives of his listeners with this particular message on this particular occasion.
2. What do you want the listeners to do about this lesson/sermon? If the teacher/preacher does not know what he/she wants the people to do about the lesson/sermon, he/she cannot legitimately expect them to do anything.

**3. Example:**

a) **Text:** 2 Timothy 1:3-2:13.

b) **Central idea:** Paul charged Timothy to faithfully pass Christianity on to the next generation in spite of opposition.

c) **Proposition:** Christian leaders should faithfully pass Christianity on to the next generation in spite of opposition.

d) **Interrogatory sentence:** What 3 issues did Paul raise about passing Christianity on from generation to generation?

(1) Paul who received the Christian message committed it to Timothy.

(2) Paul charged Timothy to commit the Christian message to faithful men regardless of the cost.

(3) Paul charged Timothy to pass on the responsibility of discipleship to those whom he discipled.

e) **Purpose:** I want those believers who hear this message to commit to becoming intentional about discipling the people for whom they are responsible.

**C. Check your proposition.**

1. The proposition promises information that the lesson/sermon must fulfill. Can you fulfill the promise of the proposition?
2. A good proposition should be a generalization reflecting the timeless, universal truth of the text.
3. The proposition should be one simple sentence.
4. The proposition should be very clear.
5. The proposition should comprehend the entire thought of the message.

6. The proposition should be important enough to deserve the elaboration that follows in the main body.
7. The proposition should express or imply some response or change on the part of the hearer(s). This makes it *sermonic*.

## **VI. DEVELOP OR *FLESH-OUT* THE OUTLINE.**

### **A. Organize your exegetical work in harmony with the central idea of the text and the natural outline.**

1. Arrange the material in such a way that when it is presented, the listeners will see clearly the message of the text.
2. In the body of the sermon exegesis is first. Application is empty and powerless if it is void of God's message.
3. Include definitions, language explanations, historical background, kindred Scriptural references, pertinent theological information and explanations, grammatical and literary information as needed to communicate the message at hand.

### **B. Include application.**

1. Add illustrations, antidotes, testimonials and other devices that enable listeners to visualize and see the truth and how it applies to them.
2. Apply the truth to real-life, contemporary situations. Include *how-to* instructions.
3. Make sure to use adequate supporting evidence and other reinforcing materials.
4. Application should constantly be built into the sermon. It usually becomes more and heavier after adequate exegesis is given however application can be interspersed throughout the sermon.

### **C. Be sure the lesson/sermon has sermonic flow.**

1. A lesson/sermon should build toward a point and climax.
2. A lesson/sermon should call the listener to conformity to the message of God as presented and seen in the text.
3. A lesson/message should bring about change in the life of the listener.
4. A lesson/sermon should bring the listener to a decision.

### **D. A lesson/sermon should follow this basic development.**

1. *Introduction*: Approximately 5% to 10% of the sermon.
2. *Body*: Approximately 80% to 90% of the sermon.
3. *Exegesis*: 40% to 45% of the sermon.
4. *Application*: 40% to 45% of the sermon.
5. *Conclusion*: Approximately 5% to 10% of the sermon.

## VII. EDIT YOUR LESSON/SERMON TO MEET APPROPRIATE CONSTRAINTS.

### A. Good hermeneutical work and thorough exegesis will almost always produce far more material than the teacher/preacher can legitimately include in his/her presentation.

1. Do not feel that you must include everything you discover.
2. Edit your material and include only that which makes the point then move on. Get rid of everything that doesn't belong in a particular presentation. It may be good but it may not fit.
3. Save your research notes for use in later studies.
4. In almost no setting is a preacher expected or trying to present the *last word* on a given text or present a comprehensive commentary. Furthermore, few, in any, are capable of doing so.
5. Be sensitive to time-constraints, not only for each presentation, but also for completing book studies or teaching series.

### B. Be extremely careful that you are not guilty of *overkill* or including too much information. Failure here is extremely counter-productive.

1. Excessive details and the laboring of points that have already been established discourage, frustrate and *turn off* people. They will become bored and lose interest.
2. Lingering in excessive details takes time and prevents the preacher from driving home clearly and decisively the main point(s) of the text. The attention-span of people has limits. Points and connections between points must be made within a reasonably short time-frame. Otherwise continuity and flow will be lost.
3. People tend to *turn off* and abandon preacher who cannot get to the point and move forward. They will not stay with those who are wordy, disorganized or unclear. People migrate to preachers who are clear, concise and articulate. They want crisp and concise information, definitive and clear points and good forward progress. They will not stay with those who drag out a sermon or a study series.
4. Repetition is good but once it becomes excessive it becomes mundane and boring. Messages must remain fresh.
5. The time allotted for a sermon is almost always limited. Each presentation should be a complete unit within itself. For preachers to take advantage of people by running one week's presentation into the next in a continual and increasing failure to keep abreast and cover the material at hand on a timely basis is inexcusable. This is too often the case where members of a church or Sunday school class are "*expected*" to faithfully be in their places regardless of the quality of the sermons.
6. The time people give for a sermon is a part of their lives and should be viewed as a sacred trust. It should never be abused or taken for granted.

Recommended resource: Vines, Jerry and Jim Shaddix. *Power in the Pulpit*. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1999.