

THE ELDERS AND BIBLICAL AND CHRIST-CENTERED PREACHING

Volume 5

Section D



General Conference
Ministerial Association





“Jesus replied, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified... And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.”

John 12:23, 32





Nowadays it is easy for preachers to lose sight of the focus of their message. There is even a risk of neglecting the careful study of the Scriptures and yet still present to the congregation a nice message.



The internet offers many sermons all ready to go, which constitute a temptation for preachers who do not want to spend time preparing their own messages. Although those sermons may not be bad in themselves, using them is not the ethical thing to do for preachers who want to faithfully fulfill the mission that has been entrusted them.





If you study sermons from the internet, do so only as support, since it surely could be helpful. ***But if you do not take the time to pray, to study the Bible, and to make personal preparation for the messages to be presented to your church, you will be failing as leaders*** and will not be fulfilling your duty to consistently feed the sheep that the Lord has placed in your care.





**I. Remember that the
center of all preaching
must be Jesus**





- Exalt the life of Jesus and allow people to return home talking about the works of Christ, not yours.
- Try to talk little about yourselves, unless it is to highlight what Jesus has done in your lives.
- Do not forget that it is the Holy Spirit Who convicts the world of sin.



Use the pulpit to speak about a Savior who:



- *Forgives* the sinner.
- *Transforms* the human being.
- *Saves* fallen humanity.
- *Loves* the family.
- *Loves* the children and the youth.






- Died on the cross for the sinner.
- Resurrected triumphant.
- Intercedes for your children.
- Takes our prayers before the Father.
- Went to prepare a place for us.
- Will return to get His people.





“When the heart of the speaker is sanctified through the truth, his words will be living realities to himself and to others. Those who hear him will know that he has been with God, and has drawn near to him in fervent, effectual prayer. The Holy Spirit has fallen upon him,





his soul has felt the vital, heavenly fire, and he is able to compare spiritual things with spiritual. Power will be given him to tear down the strongholds of Satan. Hearts will be broken by his presentation of the love of God, and many will inquire. ‘What must I do to be saved?’”

RH April 15, 1902, par. 14





“When John, who was in prison, heard about the deeds of the Messiah, he sent his disciples to ask him, ‘Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?’ Jesus replied, ‘Go back and report to John what you hear and see...’”

Matthew 11:2-4



Inspired counsel



“This is the grand and heavenly theme that has in a large degree been left out of the discourses because Christ is not formed within the human mind. And Satan has had his way that it shall be thus,





*that Christ should not be
the theme of contemplation
and adoration. This name,
so powerful, so essential,
should be on every tongue.”*

3SM 185





“There have been entire discourses, dry and Christless, in which Jesus has scarcely been named.”

3SM 184





“Here is the work of the ministers of Christ. Because this work has not been done, because Christ and His character, His words, and His work have not been brought before the people, the religious state of the churches testifies against their teachers.





The churches are ready to die because little of Christ is presented. They have not spiritual life and spiritual discernment.”

3SM 185





II. Preach about the Word and with the Word





“Oh, that it might be said of ministers who are preaching to the people and to the churches, ‘Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures’! (Luke 24:45).” 3SM 188





- Do not forget that you have been called *to preach the Word*.
- What people need to *understand is the Word*.
- Do not give the impression of using *stories, illustrations and other material* more than the message of the Bible.





- Even the Spirit of Prophecy has to be used ***wisely, not implying that it is above*** the teachings of the Bible.
- Show that the ***basis of your subject is God's Word, the Bible.***
- The power is in the Word, in the message and ***not in the messengers.***





- Eternal life is found in ***Scripture and not in you as preachers.***
- Do not replace the Bible with the ***internet.***
- Do not replace it with ***stories that, while useful, must not be the basis or foundation*** of the message.
- Do not forget that the Bible is useful for ***teaching, correcting and instructing in righteousness.***





“You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me...”

John 5:39





“The assertions of man are of no value. Let the word of God speak to the people. Let those who have heard only traditions and maxims of men, hear the voice of God, whose promises are Yea and Amen in Christ Jesus.”

RH March 11, 1902, par. 13





III. Pray much when you prepare the sermons



- Pray from the moment you start thinking about the theme.
- Ask God to help you find the ideas needed so that the theme reaches the hearts of the people.
- When you pray, the Lord will show you the true needs of the congregation and will help you find the message that will satisfy and help those needs.





- Pray much before the *delivery of your message.*
- Pray at the end of your message asking God that the *Holy Spirit continues working in the hearts.*





- In your prayer, ask God that His Presence be with you as you *preach*.
- Pray for those who are listening to your message, whether they are believers or *unbelievers*.
- Ask God to keep *His promise: He will remind you of what to say.*





“If we study the word of God with an interest, and pray to understand it, new beauties will be seen in every line. God will reveal precious truth so clearly that the mind will derive sincere pleasure and have a continual feast as its comforting and sublime truths are unfolded.”

2T 337





IV. Be sensitive to the influence of the Holy Spirit





- Ask God to *inspire you with clear thoughts.*
- Be sensitive to the voice of the Holy Spirit.
- Be alert to any *suggestions that are made to you.*





- If after much prayer you have the impression that you should change or add something, *listen* to the voice of God and do it.
- Do not be concerned about the message coming across as pretty; ask God for the message to be *effective*.



Inspired counsel



“Flowery discourses will not be sufficient to feed the soul of the famishing child of God... An intelligent man remarked, ‘O that my pastor would give me something besides pretty flowers, and brilliant periods, and intellectual treats! My soul is famishing for the bread of life. I long for something simple and nourishing and scriptural.’



Daniel Webster gave utterance to these forcible words: 'If clergymen in our day would return to the simplicity of gospel truth, and preach more to individuals and less to the crowd, there would not be so much complaint of the decline of true religion. Many of the ministers of the present day take their text from St. Paul, and preach from the newspapers.'





When they do so, I prefer to enjoy my own thoughts, rather than listen. I want my pastor to come to me in the Spirit of the gospel, saying, ‘You are mortal. Your probation is brief, your work must be done speedily... You are hastening to the bar of God. The Judge standeth before the door.’”

RH June 23, 1891, par. 11





**V. Use illustrations
carefully**





- The foremost goal of *illustrations is to facilitate the understanding of the message.*
- They are used to *bring abstract affirmations to concrete assertions.*
- They are useful as *decor to make the theme more interesting.*





- Do not make of the *illustrations the center of the message.*
- Do not use an overabundance of illustrations such that you end up being *entertainers* to your audience.



- Do not use illustrations that *exaggerate or are out of content such that people start laughing and lose sight* of the message.
- The Bible is the key fountain for the *best illustrations*.
- Nature as well also offers an important treasure of illustrations.





VI. Characteristics of successful preachers



a. Consecration

- Their *consecration is constantly increasing.*
- They keep themselves *totally dependent upon God.*
- They dedicate much time to the study of the Bible and *in prayer.*



- The first concern of their lives is *salvation*.
- They rejoice in the privilege of being chosen by God to give *the message*.
- They accept that privilege with *great responsibility*.
- They always give *the glory and the honor to God*.



b. Kindness



- They are *friends of the people*.
- They treat everyone well and do it spontaneously and at all times.
- They never feel that they are in a *superior level to their listeners*.
- They are leaders who are accessible to the people.
- They allow everyone to see them as friends.



c. Consideration

- They accept people just as they are.
- They do not use the *pulpit to attack people*.
- If they notice some not paying attention, they do not embarrass them.





- They treat people as they like to be treated.
- They preach in order to bring hope to the people.
- They try to understand people where they are.



d. Compassion

- They are compassionate with people and feel an urgency to help them, just as Jesus felt compassion for the people because they were *sheep without a shepherd*.



- They understand people's difficulties, doubts, lack of decision making, lack of faith, mistakes, etc.
- Even when they notice people are not paying attention, they understand and try even harder to reach them with the message.



e. Wisdom

- They choose the *appropriate words*.
- They explain the message clearly.
- They answer the questions of the *people*.
- They organize the message.
- They make *altar calls*.





f. Self-control

They exercise self-control to:

- Overcome nervousness.
- Control *anxiety when making decisions.*





- Carry a conversation with unbelievers.
- Face *negative situations in the church*.
- Not seek human glory.
- Recognize that honor is only for **God**.



Conclusion



“The science of salvation is to be the burden of every sermon, the theme of every song. Let it be poured forth in every supplication. Let nothing be brought into the preaching of the Word to supplement Christ, the Word and power of God.





Let His name, the only name given under heaven whereby we may be saved, be exalted in every discourse, and from Sabbath to Sabbath let the trumpet of the watchmen give a certain sound.





Christ is the science and eloquence of the gospel, and His ministers are to hold forth the Word of life, presenting hope to the penitent, peace to the troubled and desponding, and grace and completeness and strength to the believing.”

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