

PREPARING TO PREACH



FOR THE KING

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Chapter 1

THE CHALLENGE OF PREACHING

So you are called to preach. Or perhaps you are not sure if you are “*called*” to preach. You just recognize the need for *someone* in your church to preach. Or it may be that others have said, “You have a gift for speaking and a gift for leading. You should become a pastor.”

If for any of these, or other reasons, you were encouraged to enroll in this study course to prepare Bible messages, may the blessings of the Lord be upon you! May you experience the Lord’s guidance, strength, and perseverance as you prepare to preach God’s Word.

In this first lesson, we will cover four matters:

- The Definition of Preaching
- The Focus of Preaching
- The Method of Preaching
- The Outcome of preaching

The Definition of Preaching

The word “preach” as used in the New Testament, is κηρύσσω (kyrusso). This word means “to announce openly and publicly, or to proclaim, as a herald.” It’s to be a public speaker, or even an announcer. This meaning is clearly seen in the following verses:

*And how are they to **preach** unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who **preach** the good news!”* (Romans 10:15)

Biblical preaching takes place when a Bible-based message is shared with an audience, who both understand and apply it to their own lives.

The first time this word (κηρύσσω) occurs in the New Testament is in Matthew 4:17.

*“From that time Jesus began to **preach**, saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”*

In Mark 13:10 Jesus said,

*“The gospel must first be **proclaimed** (preached) to all nations”.*

After the 12 disciples were equipped for ministry, Jesus sent them forth to preach saying,

*“And **proclaim**¹ as you go, saying ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand’ ” Matthew 10:7).*

Throughout Jesus’ earthly ministry he told His disciples to preach his message to others. In Mark 16:15 Jesus says to them:

*“Go into all the world and **proclaim** the gospel to the whole creation.”*

What do you see as your part in fulfilling these commands?

The Focus of Preaching

The central focus of all of our preaching is seen in Paul’s personal experience, very soon after his conversion.

“And immediately he proclaimed Jesus in the synagogues, saying, ‘He is the Son of God.’ ”

What was the focus of Paul’s preaching?

Paul said it most clearly in 2 Cor. 4:5,

“For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord”.

What is it that we are to proclaim?

¹ “Proclaim” is κηρύσσω in Greek, translated “preach” in Matthew 4:17.

THREE TYPES OF SERMONS AND SERMON COMPONENTS

The purpose of this second lesson is to give you a “big picture” overview of what it means to preach—both in regard to the three main *types* of sermons, as well as the individual *parts* or components of a sermon.

Then, in lessons 3-12, you will learn how to develop outlines for these sermon types, and how to flesh them out by adding, introductions, explanations, applications, and conclusions.

Before completing this course, you will have the exciting opportunity of constructing three of your own sermons, one of each type—and *preaching* them!

What a great opportunity! Your Study Leader will be there to encourage, make suggestions, and stand with you by prayer.

As they say at The Home Depot: “*You can do it; we can help*”. And we will!

Basic Sermon Types

The three basic types of sermons are called: *topical*, *textual* and *expository*. What follows is an overview of each of these three types.

The Topical Sermon

By definition:

A topical sermon is based on a single topic, found in the Bible and its main points are a development of that topic.

Each main point of a *topical* sermon is a development of the topic, which is supported by Bible verses.

Sample topics for a topical sermon are: “love”, “joy”, “peace”—and hundreds more.

The nine fruits of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23 can provide topics for nine topical messages.

To find other suitable topics, you may consult the words listed in a Bible concordance, a Bible dictionary or another resource tool—including what is available on-line. “The New Topical Textbook” is an invaluable resource for topical preaching. And if you can be “online”, the “BlueLetterBible.org” will instantly locate every occurrence of any word in the Bible. A terrific resource!

Biographies of Bible characters can also be developed into topical sermons. A focused message on the life of a biblical character can be very profitable.

To summarize, a topical sermon has three characteristics:

1. It is a development of a biblical _____
2. Its main divisions are developed from that _____
3. These divisions are supported by _____

An example of a topical message is:

Why Jesus?

Following the introduction, which leads into the topic, the preacher might say, “This morning we are going to look at several biblical reasons for why we worship Jesus.”

These reasons are—

- I. Because Matthew 1:21; 9:6 says, Jesus *“will save his people from their sins”*,
- II. Because Matthew 28:18 teaches that Jesus has *“all authority in heaven and on earth”*,
- III. Because Matthew 1:22 teaches that Jesus is *“Immanuel”* (God with us)
- IV. Because Hebrews 7:25, says that Jesus is able to save completely.

Notice that each of these points develops the topic, and helps to answer the question: “Why Jesus”. Note further, that each of these four points is based on a specific verse of Scripture that helps explain the truth of that point.

THE TOPICAL SERMON

The topical sermon is covered first because it is the easiest for new preachers to understand, and prepare.

The topical sermon defined.

A topical sermon is one that is based on a single topic, with its main Bible-based points developing that topic.

Each main point in a topical sermon must be supported by Scripture that clearly teaches what each main point states.

Examples of Topical Messages

Here's an example of a Topical sermon outline, based on the subject:

Why Prayer isn't always Answered

This biblical topic can be developed using the following points:

- I. Because of asking with *wrong motives*, James 4:3
- II. Because of *doubting*, James 1:6-7
- III. Because of *sin* in our heart, Psalm 66:18
- IV. Because of *disobedience*, Proverbs 28:9
- V. Because of *marital problems*, 1 Peter 3:7

Notice in the above outline that each main point:

- Directly relates to the topic by helping answer the question of the sermon title.
- Is supported by a Bible verse teaching that truth.

Before this sermon is ready to preach, it needs to be “fleshed out” with an explanation of these passages; adding illustrations to them; and making applications of the truth contained in them. With a suitable conclusion the sermon would then be complete.

Here's another topical sermon topic, followed by its outline:

"Is God really Able?"

Based on this topic are the following main point, each of which is based on a Scripture verse related to the topic.

- I. To *save*, Hebrews 7:25
 - II. To *keep*, Jude 24
 - III. To *help*, Hebrews 2:18
 - IV. To *subdue*, Philippians 3:21
 - V. To *give grace*, 2 Corinthians 9:8
 - VI. To *do more than all we ask or think*, Ephesians 3:20
- Another topical sermon and outline is:

Learning About Satan

- I. Learning about his *origin*, Ezekiel 28:12-17
- II. Learning about his *fall*, Isaiah 14:12-15
- III. Learning about his *power*, Ephesians 6:11-12
- IV. Learning about his *activity*, Luke 8:12; 2 Corinthians 4:4
- V. Learning about his *destiny*, Matthew 25:41

Note the logical order of the points of these topical messages from his origin to his destiny. This should be done whenever possible.

When to Preach Topical Messages

Topical messages based of Bible verses can be appropriate on any occasion. They are most often used:

1. For special occasions and seasons of the year.
2. Christmas, Easter, Thanksgiving, and Veteran's Day are among the obviously appropriate times to preach topical messages.
3. To teach doctrine
4. Perhaps there is a need to emphasize a particular doctrine, or a series of doctrinal studies in your church, a "What We Believe" series.

Lesson 4

THE TEXTUAL SERMON

A textual sermon, as the name suggests, is based on a single *text* of Scripture.

It is from the *leading idea* found in the text that the sermon is developed. Further, the main *divisions* of the textual sermon must also come from this same text. We learned earlier that the main points of *topical* messages are supported by any biblical text. Not true however with a textual message, the main points of which must come from the text itself.

With these guidelines then,

A textual sermon is based on a verse or brief passage of Scripture, and whose topic and main points are found in this text.

Notice this in Jeremiah 29:11.

"I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope."

The main thought in this verse is:

"God's Plans for You!"

Based on this text the simple outline is:

- I. God's plans for you are *good*.
- II. God's plans for you will give *hope for the future*.

Notice that these sermon points are, a.) found in the text, and b) an aspect of the main idea of the text.

Another sample of a textual message is from Deuteronomy 29:29.

"The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law."

From this verse, the sermon theme and title might be:

“When Life Makes No Sense”

- I. Let God keep the secrets that belong to him.
- II. Embrace what God has revealed to you.

Here is another textual message, this one from 2 Timothy 4:2, where Paul admonishes young Timothy to:

“Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching.”

In Paul’s first letter to Timothy, he had urged Timothy to:

“remain in Ephesus that you may charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine, nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies, which promote speculations”. (1 Timothy 1:3)

Young Timothy had been charged by Paul to confront certain people who were teaching error in the Ephesian church. Being a youth made it difficult.

Now, in a later context and under even more dire circumstances, Timothy is told how to do it.

A possible title for this sermon, because it is a charge to all of us, and not just to Timothy, might be:

“Your Challenge to Preach”

From this verse, the main points are:

- I. Preach from the Bible
“preach the word”
- II. Preach at Every Opportunity
“in season and out of season”
- III. Preach without Compromise
“reprove, rebuke, and exhort”
- IV. Preach with Patience
“with complete patience and teaching”

1 Timothy 4:12 is another great text:

“Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.”

The main idea in this verse is:

THE EXPOSITORY SERMON

Developing an expository sermon is essentially similar to that of a textual message, except that expository sermons are based on larger portions of Scripture.

Many pastors preach through entire books, section by section, using the expository method of preaching with each section.

Another advantage of the expository method, as one pastor expressed it, is that “The expository method forces you to eat not only potatoes and meat, but also broccoli and cauliflower.” By that he meant that the expository method helps avoid the danger of selecting just the passages that the congregation *wants* to hear. It includes as well, those they *need* to hear.

The word “expository” comes from the word “exposition”, and is akin to the root “to expose”. The expository preacher “exposes” the truth of the passage as he preaches it.

The definition of an expository sermon is that:

An expository sermon is based on a passage of Scripture which contains a common theme and from which the main points are developed.

Examples of Expository Sermons

Psalm 1:1-3.

Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers.

Develop your own outline for Psalm 1:1-3. To do this, first, state the subject of this passage.

Clearly, these verses speak about a _____ man.

As to a title, it might be:

"The Man Blessed by God"

Write below the key ideas in verses 1-3 that you would speak about if you were to preach a sermon from Psalm 1.

Notice: these main sermon points came: 1) from the selected verses; and 2) are in agreement with the sermon theme or title.

Now, let's develop an expository outline based on Matthew 7:13-23.

First, write "the big idea" that you see in this passage, which will be your theme.

You may write a tentative title below, or save that until later.

A possible title for this message might be:

"Evidences of Life"

What things in this passage provide evidence of having life eternal?

Is it reasonable then, that these ideas might form the main points of this sermon? What other thoughts do you have about this? What other title would you suggest?

“FLESHING OUT” YOUR SERMON OUTLINES

When you think of a sermon, think of it as being like your body’s skeleton. Your body’s basic shape and size, is determined by your skeleton. But skeletons need flesh on them! Sermons must be “fleshed out” (or filled out) in order for them to speak effectively to the hearers.

This fleshing out has three aspects. These are:

- Explanation
- Illustration
- Application

In this lesson we will focus on the first of these, the explanation.

Later in this lesson you will be given opportunity to “flesh out” the explanation part of your first sermon. This is the sermon that you will be preaching later during this course.

In Lesson 7 you will then further flesh out your sermon, by adding illustrations and applications to each main point of your sermon.

Review Lesson 3 again, then write below the *topic* on which you plan to preach, the *title*, and the sermon’s *main points*.

Theme: _____

Title: _____

Outline:

Now that you have your topical sermon theme, title, and main points, you are ready to work on the *explanation* part of each of your main points.

Explanation

James Braga wisely counsels⁸,

"Whenever a message is based upon Scripture, the biblical passage should be explained clearly and accurately. This feature is what makes for true biblical preaching and invests the message with authority."

The amount of time you spend explaining each of your sermon main points will depend on several factors, including on how fully and prayerfully you study these points; on the purpose of the message; the Bible study resources that are available to you, and even your personality and preaching style.

In explaining the main points of your sermon, process through the following steps.

1. Carefully Examine the Scripture Text⁹.

There was a zoology professor¹⁰ who brought several preserved fish to his class. He told his students, "Observe and note every feature you find about your specimen." Then he walked out of class. The next day he examined their notebooks and exclaimed, "Is that all? Look some more." And again walked out of class. On returning the following day, the professor was still dissatisfied with their findings. He then filled their notebooks with many more observations, which, if they had observed with greater care, could have been seen by each of them.

This story teaches us to search the Scripture with the greatest care possible! Ask the text the *who, what, where, when, why* and *how* questions. Write down what you find.

8 "How to Prepare Bible Messages" Multnomah Books, page 205.

9 This rule applies equally to each sermon type.

10 Quoted in "How to Study the Bible", page 73, in this iTIM series.

ILLUSTRATIONS AND APPLICATIONS

Now that you have completed the *explanation* portion of your topical sermon, your next task will be to add *illustrations* and then *applications*.

Sermon Illustrations

The word “illustration”, according to Webster’s dictionary means “to make bright; to clarify, as by using examples or making comparisons”.

It has been suggested that illustrations are to a sermon what windows are to a building.

Jesus’ Use of Illustrations

Significantly, about one third of Jesus’ teaching involved illustrative allusions, illustrations or parables. Consider the following examples.

“Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” Matthew 11:28-30

What illustrative allusions do you find in this passage?

“You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people’s feet. “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. Matthew 5:13-16

The two illustrations Jesus uses in the above passage are:

Read Matthew 12:33-45 and list the illustrations you find in this passage.

Since Jesus spoke so much with illustrations and parables, what does this tell you about their value in your preaching?

Guidelines for Using Illustrations.

- Illustrations should *clarify* the point of the sermon. Telling a story that does not clarify is not appropriate. Your goal is to focus on the truth. Illustrations can help *enlighten* this truth.
- Illustrations should be *credible*. It must be true to life. Far-fetched illustrations are not appropriate.
- Illustrations should be *brief*. Clarifying a point can usually be done with a brief illustration. Occasionally however, longer ones can be appropriate.
- Illustrations should *not be overdone*. Usually one illustration per main point is sufficient, although there is no hard and fast rule about this.

Sources of Illustrations.

- The *Bible* itself. Not only did Jesus use a myriad of illustrations, but also the entire Bible, particularly the Old Testament, is a rich source for illustrations.

Notice how Paul uses the Old Testament to illustrate truth in 1 Cor. 10:6-12.

INTRODUCTION, PROPOSITION TRANSITION AND CONCLUSION

A good sermon will have these four additional elements. And introduction, which is sometimes called a “hook”; a statement of what the sermon is about; a statement to link the introduction with the body of the sermon, and a final conclusion, showing how the message is to be applied to life. Let’s look at these elements, one at a time.

The Introduction

The introduction is the beginning part of the sermon. In the introduction, the preacher seeks to grab the interest of the audience to the message he is about to preach. Think of the introduction as a “hook”—which will grab the attention of the hearers and lead them into the subject of the sermon.

Sermons can often effectively be introduced with a story to which the audience can relate. Jesus frequently began with an introduction when he preached.

Turn in your Bible to Matthew Ch. 13. Let’s “listen in” as Jesus teaches a large crowd. Notice verse 3, “*A sower went out to sow*”.

Sowing? Well of course! In Jesus’ day people were very familiar with sowing crops. By beginning his parable about sowing, his audience became “hooked”. This parable connected them to what Jesus was about to teach.

Again in verse 24, Jesus used another “hook”.

“The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field, but while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away.”

From each of the remaining parables in Mt. Ch. 13, state why the crowd would become *focused* of what Jesus was teaching.

13:31

13:33 _____

13:44 _____

13:45 _____

13:47 _____

While not sermons, these parables reveal *how* Jesus spoke to the crowds, and thereby are models for developing introductions.

Guidelines for Preparing Introductions.

- Introductions should be *brief*. They can be from one to several minutes in length, depending on the sermon type, occasion and audience.
- Introductions should *arouse interest*. They should be interesting, understandable, and even graphic.
- Introductions should *lead into* the main idea of the message.

Thoughtfully (and prayerfully) write out the introduction you will use when you preach your topical sermon. Write it here.

The Proposition

Simply stated,

The proposition is a statement describing the purpose of the sermon.

It follows immediately after the introduction.

Propositions can be as simple as these:

PREACHING YOUR TOPICAL MESSAGE

Did you ever think you would get to this place—when you are getting ready to preach your first Bible message? Or perhaps you are a more experienced preacher. Either way, may the message you preach this week be a rich blessing to you, as well as to your listeners.

Where You Preach Your Topical Sermon

Where will you preach this sermon will be decided by your study leader, you, and your listeners. It can be almost anywhere. It could be to a Bible class in your church, or to the entire congregation. It could be to people at a city mission, or to folks in a retirement center in your community. It might even be to your fellow class participants in this study on preparing to preach.

Thoughts About Your Preaching Experience

As you make your final preparations for this message, keep in mind these thoughts:

- Your listeners will be more interested in *what* you say than in *how* you say it. They will be listening for God's message, spoken through you.
- Your sermon will not be perfect. Don't worry about that. But it's a beginning, and a very good beginning. And over time, your Bible-based messages will bless, encourage, and challenge your hearers. They will be used by God!
- Be encouraged by Hebrews 12:1-2.

*"Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and **let us run with endurance** the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross,*

despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God."

Keep in mind that the Apostle Paul had similar feelings to what might be yours. He confessed:

*"And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. And I was with you in **weakness** and in **fear** and much **trembling**, and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God."* (1 Corinthians 2:1-5).

As you anticipate this opportunity are your feelings that of fear, weakness, and much trembling? If so, they were Paul's feelings as well! And yet, as we know, God used him—powerfully, and supernaturally. His writings became part of Scripture, and have blessed the Church ever since.

You may feel that your preaching is of little worth. Yet, because you will be preaching a biblical message, expect that God will use it to touch hearts.

We have this amazing promise from Isaiah 55:10-11,

*"For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; **it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.**"*

What a wonderful promise! It's a promise that God wants *you* to claim as you begin your preaching ministry. It's not about you. It's about God, about his word, and his son Jesus. You are simply a channel, an instrument. But an instrument that he wants to use. Now is your opportunity. Seize it!

Consider too, Paul's teaching to the Romans in chapter 12. The key thought here is that if you have been given a gift, God is calling you to "*use*" it. Keep in mind that gifts are not given for us. They are God's gifts—gifts that are given to the Body of Christ, that is, to his Church. "*Having gifts that differ*

PREACHING YOUR TEXTUAL MESSAGE

Now that you have preached your first sermon, your next task is to complete (that is, “flesh out”) your textual sermon.

As you learned in Lesson 4, textual messages are similar to topical ones, except that they are based on a single text, or brief passage of Scripture. The second difference is that the main points in textual messages come directly from the biblical text on which the message is based.

Preparing a textual message involves uncovering the main thoughts from the selected text, and then arranging them in a way that is also consistent with the sermon theme.

To illustrate this, let’s look at Romans 12:1.

“I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.”

From this verse, Dr. James M. Gray selected as his theme “A Believer’s Sacrifice”, and from that theme developed the following main points:

1. The *reason* for sacrifice “*by the mercies of God*”
2. The *thing* to be sacrificed “*your bodies*”
3. The *conditions* of sacrifice “*living*”
4. The *obligation* of sacrifice “*your spiritual worship*”

In this example, we can see how the main points are both found in the verse, and are consistent with the theme.

Here’s another textual outline, this one from James Braga and based on John 3:16.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

Braga titles his message, “Distinctives of the Gift of God”.

His main points are:

- I. It is a love gift “God so loved”.
- II. It is a sacrificial gift “that he gave his only Son”.
- III. It is an eternal gift “eternal life”.
- IV. It is a universal gift “whoever”.
- V. It is a conditional gift “believes”.

Notice that these main points are presented in *logical* order, rather than sequentially as written in the text. His purpose was to bring an evangelistic conclusion to this message.

Another example of a textual message outline comes from Joshua 1:8. A possible title is: “You and Your Bible”.

“This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.”

- I. Recognize your Bible’s Authority. “This Book of the Law”
- II. Let it be your constant companion. “shall not depart from your mouth”.
- III. Meditate on Your Bible. “you shall meditate on it day and night”.
- IV. Obey Your Bible Fully. “that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it.”
- V. Expect Your Bible’s Blessings. “For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.”

Now It’s Your Turn

For your work for this week, first review Lesson 4, where you developed the basics of a textual message.

The text you selected for your textual message is: _____

Your assignment for this week is to complete this message. To do so, follow the same steps as you did to write your topical message.

Many pastors will spend 10 or more hours preparing their Sunday message. Plan to do the same.

PREACHING YOUR EXPOSITORY SERMON

During this week you will complete the preparation for your expository message, and be given opportunity to preach it.

First, let's review the three main types of sermons.

- A *topical* sermon is based on a biblical _____ and its main points are derived from that _____ and are supported by _____
- A *textual* sermon is based on a _____ the main points of which are found in _____ and are consistent with the overall _____ of the text.
- An *expository* sermon is similar to a textual message, except that the expository sermon is based on a _____ and its main points are developed from the _____ and are consistent with the _____ of the message.

The expository sermon was identified in Lesson 5 as:

A message is based on a passage of Scripture containing a common theme and from which the main points are developed.

Examples of Expository Sermon Outlines

Let's say you are preaching from 1 Peter 1:17-25. As you prayerfully read and think about these verses, you first find its major theme, and then, with this theme in mind, choose the title. For this passage we suggest:

How to "Live as Strangers"

In this passage we see that it means to:

- I. Live in Reverent Fear of God, 1:17
- II. Live in Appreciation of the Redemption's cost, 1:18
- III. Live pure by obeying the Truth, 1:22a

IV. Live by Loving One Another, 1:22b

Following the definition of an expository message, we see that: 1) The main sermon points are found in the passage, and 2) Each point is a development of the sermon theme.

Let's say you are preaching from James 1:5-8. As you prayerfully read and think about these verses, first discover its primary theme. For this passage, your theme/title might be :

Wisdom Promised; Wisdom Given

This passage begins, *"If any of you lacks wisdom"*. In order to get wisdom, you must have a felt need for it. An outline for this message can be:

- I. The *Scope* of this provision: *"any of you"*.
- II. The *Provider* of wisdom—*"God"*, 1:5
- III. The *Condition* for getting wisdom—asking *"in faith"*.
- IV. The *Result* of getting wisdom—*"generously"*.

Let's say you will preach from 1 Peter 4:1-5. After prayerful study you may chose the theme title:

"Armed with Attitude"

Your main sermon points, consistent with this theme, and are found in this passage are:

- I. We will have done with sin, 4:1b, 3.
- II. We will live for the will of God, 4:2, 4
- III. We will ignore what unbelievers say, 4:4-5.

How might you make discoveries such as these? There is no surer way than by reading and reading and reading the passage!

It's vital too, that you discover the main purpose the author had in writing. Sometimes this can be found by a careful reading of the entire book.

For example, what is the main point, or reason that John wrote his Gospel? You can discover this in:

John 20:31 _____

What was John's purpose in writing 1 John?

PREACHING IN “REAL TIME”

Now that you have completed this entire course, including preaching a topical sermon, a textual sermon, and an expository sermon, you are ready to move into the real world of preaching. This final lesson focuses on a number of matters that will help you as you move forward in your preaching.

Developing Your Preaching Style

There's an old saying *“There's more ways than one to skin a cat”*.

And there are also many *ways* to preach. The circumstances of the congregation, and the preacher's personality can also come into play.

What follows are some general tips about preaching.

1. BE YOURSELF. Don't try to preach like someone else. Otherwise, you may find yourself like David when Saul offered his armor to fight Goliath. Saul's armor was not a fit for the youthful David, and would have led to his sure defeat.

Don't try to copy another preacher in your preaching style. If God has called you to preach, he wants to use *you*—all of you—with your gifts, talents, experience, and passion.

Of this you can be sure: God *will* use you to proclaim God's Word to others. Paul says in Romans 12, in regard to our gifts, *“let us use them”*.

The first key in your preaching success is: _____

How does this apply to you personally?

2. BE BIBLICAL. Let your message come from the Word of God itself. As Isaiah 8:20 says,

"To the teaching and to the testimony! If they will not speak according to this word, it is because they have no dawn."

"No dawn" suggests to remain completely in the dark!

Notice too Paul's admonition in 2 Timothy 4:2.

*"Preach **the word**; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching."*

And notice Paul's warning in Galatians 1:8

"But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed."

Your preaching should come directly from the Bible. As Rev. Billy Graham frequently said, "The Bible says . . .".

Our messages must come from the Word; they must be Bible-centered—whether they are topical, textual, or expository.

Our preaching must be Bible-centered because:

3. BE GUIDED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT. The first step in preparing a message from God's Word is to seek God. Pray much about your message. And as you begin to prepare, take steps of faith. Seek to be His instrument through which God speaks to your audience. This is an awesome experience. It will "make your day", or even your week!

Share your response to Paul's prayer in Ephesians 1:16-17?

4. EXPECT TO BE FRUITFUL. In John 15:16 Jesus told his disciples:

*"You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and **bear fruit and that your fruit should abide**, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you."*