

THE ART OF PREACHING: HOMILETICS (EFFECTIVELY)

OUTLINE:

Introduction: Objectives and definitions

1. The preachers Context/world:

2. The preachers study/preparation

3. The preachers technique: Delivering the sermon, methods, style of presentation

4. The preachers inner life:

5. The preachers sermon evaluations

Conclusion:

INTRODUCTION Colossians 4:2-6 and Romans 10:14-15

- There *all kinds of sermons* today- mention positive and negative sermons
- A sermon that lasted 23 hours- longest ever by Rev. Donald Thomas- Guinness book of records

i) Objectives of the session:

- Amidst of all these we have *a call to preach* hence it is time to enhance/refine our preaching
- Must exercise humility and acknowledge that we *need integrity in handling scriptures (its mandatory)*
- *Delivery matters* a lot i.e. the mannerisms in preaching
- Through *effective communication- we will deliver sermons that are biblical, authentic, contextual and life changing-* Being powerful; being careful and being faithful... character or inner life

ii) Definitions:

- **Sermon:** It is the oral proclamation of God's written word by an appointed messenger. (spoken, uttered)
- **Preaching:** divine assignment. It is a **science** (principles) and **art** (task) by which the relevance of the biblical text is communicated (R. B. Zuck).
- It is the *manifestation* of the incarnate word (Jesus) from the written word (bible) by the spoken word (preaching) by B. L. Mannings
- **Homiletics:** is the *study* of the theory and practice of preaching- it is the *study* of the *processes of sharpening our ability to preach* and thus making us *effective* in the ministry of the word

- Preaching assumes/shoulders/accepts the uniqueness of the authoritative word; the unique presence of the *Holy Spirit* as the word is preached; the unique empowering of the preacher by the Spirit and the unique activity of that same Spirit in the application of his inspired word to the hearts of those who are receptive pg 11
- We as preachers love success stories- but it is true that “*some people find listening to preachers tedious/boring/monotonous/ tiresome at best and irritating at worst*” (Stuart pg 12)
- How then do we make sure we *communicate effectively*? What will *keep our audience so attentive* and how do we *need to prepare and deliver our sermons*? These are the questions we need to answer

1. THE PREACHERS CONTEXT: understanding the world

- Our desire should be to ***impart the world with the gospel***: to bring man face to face with Christ should be taken as a matter of urgency hence the need to devote our whole life to doing nothing else but this pg. 10
- The gospel is true, and it stands unchanged from age to age. It is immutable/ unchallengeable as God himself. But while the basic message thus remains constant and invariable, our presentation of it must take account of, and be largely conditioned by, the actual world on which our eyes look out to-day
- The gospel is not for an age, but for all time: yet it is precisely the particular age- this historic hour and none other- to which we are commissioned by God to speak.
- It is against the background of the contemporary situation that we have to reinterpret the gospel once for all delivered to the saints; and it is within the framework of current culture with hopes and fears that we have to show the commanding relevance of Jesus.
- God’s hungry sheep are hoping for the pasture of the living word
- We must desist diluting the gospel message today as we some doing it- peddlers of the word- preaching for profit
- Sermon must be God centered (who God is/has said) and people related- identify with human condition & indicate an appropriate behavioral response (Stuart)

2. THE PREACHERS STUDY/PREPARATION: hoping to produce a sermon

- (IBS- Hermeneutics) scripture is what makes the sermon; keeping faithful to scriptures- expository preaching, is the need of our day- letting the bible speak its own message! Digging out from the scriptures

- Quality preaching *does not* happen by **accident**. It is a result of *hard work, creative thinking, careful research,* and a *dependence* upon the *Holy Spirit*- In other words there is *no shortcut* to 'homiletical' excellence (Dan Baumann)

A preachers Six crucial points in preparation

- Have **confidence** in the **Bible** as revealed Word of God that is effective in transformation of human life (preacher's life first). Consumed truth
- Recognize that the **message belongs to God** and must not just be acknowledged by the mind (CLARITY) of the hearer but also to be obeyed
- Search **ones motive** for the preacher must have a consuming desire (PASSION) to see lives changed to the glory of God- not seeking praise of men, financial gain, fame
- The preacher will need to know the **audience well**. Be familiar with their world (current trends in culture, politics, church), the size and composition, and such things like venue, date, time, duration,
- Type of **preaching engagement** (crusade, main CU meeting, youth annual missions rally, Women's husband day). Whatever the engagement the sermon may vary depending on the purpose; that is either evangelistic, devotional, doctrinal, apologetic
- Decide the **type** and **purpose** of the sermon one is preparing- teaching, doctrinal, textual etc

- The choice of Text:** some invitations are open or given a topic

Carefully consider:

- The **spiritual needs** of the people to whom one is ministering
- Presenting **"the whole counsel of God"** not just pet/favorite subject (scripture integrity)
- One's **ability to handle** the text and subject derived from it

Remember:

- Remember *constant reading* of the **word** of God is primary- wide & deep resource
- The use of **notebook** should be cultivated- *writing sermon notes*
- The *reading of good Christian books* provide rich materials (other thinkers)
- The *guidance* of the **Holy Spirit** is paramount-more prayers for guidance
- Good effective preachers are those who **cook** their sermons out of *meditative reflection on the scriptures*

- The theme:**

Set out a clear aim and purpose of the message: "Aim at nothing and you will surely hit it". People should be aware of it even without the preacher stating it (not all over)

Have a Title for your sermon: that captures the theme in a memorable way

The introduction:

- i. Should state the *subject* of the sermon
- ii. *Awaken the interest* in the theme- gain hearers interest at the outset (1st 1-3 mins)
- iii. *If possible have an element of surprise/arresting beginning- a story, problem or real life situation*
- iv. *Prepare the audience* for what is to follow

Avoid:

- i. *Boasting*
- ii. Being *too loud, sensational or emotional*
- iii. Being *too long* on the introduction (after 20 mins you say you are beginning)

“Taking too long preparing the table makes people lose their appetites”

The Body: main points and sub-points

- i. Look for natural division of the text (Mostly three)
 - This should possess unity
- ii. Ask the fact finding questions- who, where, when, what, how, why, so
- iii. Follow the story or events
- iv. Divide topic into parts

The conclusion: greatest difficulty for most preachers

Brings together all the truth; should be *simple* and *definite*; Have a *direct personal appeal*. Give people time to respond to the message. Help people *apply/have a take home*. Preserve the energy for conclusion!

3. THE PREACHERS TECHNIQUE: DELIVERING THE SERMON

Skill is necessary to *make plain* the truth- *convince the hearers*; to let it in the irresistible light- into their consciences- no option other than conversion!

i) Four things to keep in mind when preaching- amplifying the sermon

- a. *Proclamation:* making the word clear
- b. *Explanation:* giving the meaning
- c. *Application:* practical application not academic one

d. *Implementation*: told how to go about the implementation of the word- Go and do this and that

- **Grab** people's attention and **hold** people's attention all the way- "The preacher must never be dull, he must never be boring; he must never be what is called 'heavy'" (L. Jones)
- The preacher who **grips an audience** is the preacher who is obviously gripped by the message being delivered pg 29 (Stuart)

ii) **Outline the sermon**

- Structure the message, guide to the listener, sense of pace, no overlapping- **Have a clear Outline of your sermon- build up to a climax**

iii) **Use of alliteration**:

Frequent *recurrence*- useful for *preacher's memory*, help the *sermon stick* in mind

iv) **Methods of delivery**:

a) **Reading the manuscript**: the whole speech is written, accurately with the best language. It includes everything...

Disadvantage- the speaker looks down and lacks enthusiasm

b) **Recitation**: the sermon is written out in full and memorized. Speaker is afraid of memory lapse- the mind may 'hung'

c) **Memorization modified**: modified form of recitation. Introduction and conclusion written in detail and committed to memory. Outline of sermon also committed to memory. The preacher opens graciously and closes impressively

d) **The extemporaneous delivery**: means to compose, to perform or to speak without previous study or preparation. *Modified form*- outline and brief notes are produced rather than the whole sermon

v. **TYPES OF SERMONS**- There are various types of sermons to which skills in homiletics may be applied:

a) **Textual**: This is where the preacher takes a particular passage of scripture and brings out the message from it.

b) **Topical**: A preacher picks a particular topical issue and explores what the scriptures say about it, most likely referring to different passages of scripture.

c) **Biographical**: Here, the preacher guides his/her audience into an examination of the life of a particular character in the Bible.

d) **Book Exposition:** This is where a preacher takes a particular book of the Bible and journeys with the congregation systematically through the book, chapter by chapter.

Note: It is advisable that in all these types of sermons, one should consider taking the expository approach, due to the numerous advantages listed under the topic of Expository Preaching above.

v) ***The style of presentation:***

- **Style** should not replace content. Poor content with good style will satisfy many, while good content with poor style will satisfy few.
- Yet *style must always remain a supplement* to the message rather than an *end in itself*.
- It is unnecessary and wrong to **ape/copy** the TV-evangelists of our day but must find or develop our own expression and individual style.
- Discover how you speak in formal situations, to discover *what comes out naturally*. Be real/not fake- You are unique! With a unique personality

There are several qualities to seek in a good style:

a) ***Clarity:***

- It *enables the audience to understand the message easily*- avoid the *language* that is only familiar to you and *unknown to the hearers*. Work hard in developing *good vocabulary* and learning how to use it.
- If you are a victim of 'shrubbing'- acknowledge it, know how to respond and work hard to reduce it to the minimal level.

b) ***Energy and forcefulness:***

- This demonstrates *enthusiasm*. The audience feels that the preacher is *convinced* of the importance of the message and will be more easily persuaded.
- *Realize the dangers of a dry, uninteresting presentation*. Make the hearers feel the excitement of the message. Be fascinated by the message for passionate expression to be seen.
- *"I preached as never sure to preach again, and as a dying man to dying men"* pg 28 (Richard Baxter).
- Demonstrate joy and intensity in preaching

c) ***Fluency and elegance:***

Well written sentences, air of poetry, and good prose/writing style

d) Strong transitions statements and sentences:

- Help the congregation to know where you are going and to understand the logical development of your points “*Serve as road signs to point out where the sermon has been and where it is going*”
- Use words such as *again, moreover, furthermore, let us consider, in addition*
- Adverbs such as: *how, why, when and where*

e) Write a sermon:

But *don't be over too dependent*- shows it's *fully thought through*- *don't copy and paste*

vi) Rhetoric/Public speaking and delivery:

a) Posture: should be good

- Help tremendously in projecting a positive image of being relaxed yet *enthusiastic and confident*- posture communicates great deal of information to the audience. If *too stiff- audience becomes tense*. Stand naturally and not intimidated
- **The appearance:** Dress neatly, but not to cause distractions by fanciful clothing. Dress well and appropriately- in a manner that does not draw attention

b) Tonal inflection and variety of speech:

- Voice is the “*preacher's greatest natural asset*”. This *sustains the audience's interest*. Effective use of *pauses* will point to a particular *emphasis*.
- A *monotone* or *too rapid delivery* will cause the listeners *attention to wonder*- check the *speed* of delivery- put on *breaks*- go slow- *don't fear silence!*
- *Correct breathing* is extremely important- *protect and strengthen your vocal chords*
- Articulation: This is the art of uttering speech clearly. Don't mumble/murmur

c) Gestures:

They should be *direct, emphatic/categorical, well paced* and *moderate*. ..Overly dramatic will impress in the wrong way, detracting from the message and drawing the audience to the speaker rather than to the text/message. They should be *natural, relaxed* and *sensitive*.

d) Eye contact and facial expression:

- Should be *direct* and *appropriate* to the mood of the point... Proper use of the above convinces the congregation of the *speaker's sincerity* and leads them into the content of the message.
- Don't look to *heaven*, or *close your eyes*, *face sideways* or *look down/up* or even *move up and down vigorously*. Look at the *audience* to know what is *happening*

e) Attitude:

- **Motive:** Love for God and love for his people/creation
- The approach should be *humility* and *not pride*
- Know your *audience*, *be committed to respect the audience, love and care* for them. Don't abuse your position.

f) Illustrations and testimonies (must be authentic):

- They *strengthen the sermon* and only *relevant* ones should be used. The audience should be in a position to understand!
- *Dramatic imagination:* Inevitable destruction and faith in Christ sermon- George whitefield illustration of a blind man with a dog walking on the blink of a cliff- one said "good God" in the congregation

g) Avoid possible distracters to sermons

- Determine the choice of language- be *simple* and *direct* avoiding pulpit jargon- Imitation of one's hero/competition/ being intimidated/pocketing.
- Avoid using unnecessary words- you know, as if we etc putting your *fingers* in the nose or unnecessary things... funny pocketing... etc.

h) Quote with moderation- especially on other writers... more bible verses

i) Be careful to keep time:

- Double check the arrival time and venue- give allowance for unexpected delay
- Don't preach an everlasting sermon- stop when you need to!
- *Conclude well:* reflect the main points, don't introduce new topic, and keep your voice intact.
- Have *personal applications, be brief, have element of surprise* and *don't conclude many times: as I come to the end, to the close, in conclusion, finally and the very last point, one more thing* etc (Overstepping the stopping point!)

4. THE PREACHER'S INNER LIFE:

- Have a *zeal based in knowledge:* for the zeal for God that is not according to knowledge is a zeal that dies in the middle years (Romans 10:1-2)
- Preaching is an *art* of making a *sermon* and *delivering it*- it is no trouble to preach, but a vast trouble to construct a preacher
- *Homiletics* can indeed be *taught in lectures/conferences and in books;* but it is the heart of everything that stands, the real work is not done in the level where a man

*acquires a knowledge of technique and rules and devices, but on the **deep levels of self commitment where one rigorously disciplines his life for love of Jesus Christ***

- Preaching needs *drastic preparation of character-* for *inner life* makes a preacher
- Every Christian being committed to live for Christ in every atom of his being
- Preacher must be utterly dedicated to his work- yet with rest and relaxation
- How? Not being involved in *civilian affairs-* a soldier or ambassador of Christ 2 Tim 2:4
- The strength from within is a must for the preacher- being prayerful and having closer walk with God.
- **1 Corinthians 4:1-4** men ought to regard us as *servants of Christ-* entrusted with secret things of God and *therefore must prove faithful*
- Acknowledge our *unworthiness as preachers;* God give me one more chance- pause in the pulpit and offer a loud or secret prayer- God be merciful to me a sinner
- Preach *for God's glory and not yours-* it's all about God. God's doing and not our own. Aim for greater things but also be careful to give all the glory to God!
- Be a *man of authority-* through biblical convictions. Do not keep apologizing for preaching- have great assurance in the Lord!
- God does not want *faint hearted creatures* as his ambassadors- but *those who commune with the heaven and are never intimidated by the world!* Remember Paul's conversion? Persecute Christians you are persecuting Christ!
- Can't flame because of neglecting the flame of your altar- too busy preparing the sermon that one omits preparing him/herself?
- Be a man of fire for Christ- passion/enthusiasm/zeal/ and sense of urgency
Do not put off the fire/dump down the flame- be baptized with the Holy Spirit and fire!
- Let the fire keep ever burning in you and let it never go out!
- As preachers we have a **high call-** a renewed call to moral purity- because we handle the word
- Before you turn for help in terms of preaching issues- turn inside!

5. SERMON EVALUATIONS- Refer to the sheets of paper

Can people read your sermons?

Are you willing to be collected for improvement and more effectiveness?

Be vulnerable to the people you are with for growth?

CONCLUSION:

- The power of the Holy Spirit is necessary- can't do without him in this process
- Endeavor to have a preaching that is saturated with scripture and not based on scripture alone.
- We need genuine/true preachers today and we must take up this role.
- How long for a sermon to be ready? 10 minute speech- two weeks. For a speech lasting an hour? One week, declared the president... energies are never wasted (by Stewart). Observe-interpret-apply! Not always meandering
- Fashion your sermon to the best of your ability- the best from you!
- We should say like Lloyd Jones who said *"To me the work of preaching is the highest n the greatest n the most glorious calling to which anyone can ever be called "*
- Therefore there must be considerable hard work behind the scenes before the preacher stands before the people (D. Stuart Briscoe)
- But remember preaching is a calling and not only a chore!