

CALLED TO SHEPHERD GOD'S PEOPLE

**200 CLASS OUTLINES FOR
PORTABLE BIBLE SCHOOLS**

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SECTION FOUR

HOMILETICS

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Developing the Skills of Preaching

The dictionary defines homiletics as the art of preaching, and this course is concerned with assisting the development of that art in each of the students. But it should be understood that preaching is far more than simply standing in front of a group of people and speaking effectively. It is really - or it should be - communicating the personal message of God to human hearts. Paul writes very forcefully about that truth: "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness, but unto us who are saved it is the **power** of God" (1 Cor. 1:18). This course asks you to work diligently to perfect the art of preaching, so that God's power may be released for the salvation and edification of many.

In the limited pages that we have we shall not be able to touch upon the mechanics of delivery - use of the voice and gestures, for example - for that can be observed and commented upon by the teacher in class time when sermons are being delivered. The lessons will instruct about the content of sermons and give examples of the outstanding types.

It should be noted that the material for the other portable school courses is divided into lessons for each day's classes, but much of the homiletics course has been arranged a bit more loosely into weekly units. This will allow for flexibility in the class for the practical work of preparing and presenting sermons.

This material comes largely from the fine book, *How to Prepare Sermons*, by William Evans, published by Moody Press.

WEEK ONE, Day 1: WHAT IS PREACHING?

Preaching is the proclamation of the Good News of salvation through man to men. Its two elements are a man and a message - personality and truth.

The preacher is separated by God for the specific work of preaching the gospel. He deals with God in behalf of men; he deals with men in behalf of God. He must be a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith. The effect of such a life and such preaching is that many will be added to the Lord (Acts 11:24).

The sermon is a part of the preacher; it must be the expression of his very life and experience. The experience of the truth must be in the preacher himself before he can proclaim it with convicting force in and through the sermon.

Discussion - What are the essential elements in the preparation of an effective preacher's life? What are some personality traits which may defeat his ministry?

Day 2: TEXT OF THE SERMON

1. There are many advantages in having an aptly chosen text:

1. It awakens the interest of the audience. "What will he say about that?"
2. It gains the confidence of the audience. "This is the Word of God!"
3. It gives the preacher authority and boldness. "Thus saith the Lord" gives the authority of heaven.
4. It will keep the preacher's mind from wandering.
5. It will keep the preacher Biblical.

2. General principles which govern the choice of a text:

1. The preacher must study the spiritual needs of the people.
2. He should consider the cycle of truth he has preached. Have some doctrines of truth been omitted? It is good, at the beginning of the year, to draw up a list of subjects to preach during the year.
3. He should consider his own ability to present the subject. Some themes will be too difficult for the young preacher to handle.

3. These principles are a great help in the choice of a text:

1. The constant reading of the Word of God is essential.
2. The use of a notebook is extremely helpful.
3. The reading of good books stimulates fresh thoughts.
4. The guidance of the Holy Spirit is paramount. The man who is living continually under the influence and power of the Holy Spirit will scarcely ever be at a loss for something to preach about.

Assignment - Make a list of 10 texts which you will preach on in the coming months.

Day 3: THE SERMON'S TOPIC

The wise choice and proper wording of the theme is extremely important. Consider these suggestions:

1. The preacher should know his theme thoroughly.
2. The theme should be one that the people can understand. It must not be over the people's head.
3. The theme should not be trivial - it must have weight and dignity.
4. The preacher should have a definite aim in treating his theme. Preaching for conversions and decisions is essential.
5. The theme should be suitable to time, place and occasion. At Easter he should preach on the resurrection of Christ, etc.

Discussion - What are some themes that are not worth treating in a Sunday sermon? What are some that are?

Day 4: GATHERING SERMON MATERIAL

Reading good books will enrich a preacher's thoughts. Too, he needs to be alert to daily events. Think about them, pray about them and relate them to Scripture. Christ was always observant, and His sermons abound with illustrations taken from things He had seen and heard.

The preacher should carry a notebook, so he can jot down the things he sees and hears that impress him, and then he should think about them.

The preacher must be gathering constantly.

Discussion - What are some local events of the past month that suggest useful sermon thoughts? Write the ideas and their application to be listed in your notebook.

Day 5: ARRANGING SERMON MATERIAL

A proper arrangement of sermon material is extremely important. The preacher ought to arrange his material so it will all converge in the main purpose of the sermon.

Advantages in the arrangement of sermon material:

1. To the preacher - Whatever is clearly and logically arranged is easy to memorize.
2. To the sermon - The effectiveness of a sermon depends greatly on a clear and logical arrangement.
3. To the audience - Whatever makes it easy for the congregation to remember and carry away the Bible teaching is worth the toil of good preparation. Good arrangement on the part of the preacher is absolutely necessary for good following on the part of the audience.

Discussion - What are some examples of poor arrangement in sermons, and why?

WEEK TWO, Day 1: GOOD SERMON ARRANGEMENT

Qualities of a good sermon arrangement:

1. **One theme** - The preacher should have only one theme in his sermon and concentrate all his argument, proof, testimony and illustrations toward enforcing that single theme.

2. A **logical connection** between the divisions of the sermon. The argument should first be made to the intellect, then an appeal to the emotions, and finally to the will.

3. Every sermon needs an **outline**, just as a man's body needs a skeleton. Generally speaking, the plan of a sermon should be easy to follow. Outlines that are striking are easily remembered. Some preachers, for this reason, make their outlines so each general heading begins with the same word or sound. Others use the law of opposites and contrasts. One sermon could have these headings:

Theme - *The Transfiguration*

- | | |
|------------|------------|
| 1. Place | 3. Persons |
| 2. Purpose | 4. Power |

Another sermon had these headings:

Theme - *How to Become a Christian*

- | | |
|-----------|-------------|
| 1. Admit | 3. Submit |
| 2. Commit | 4. Transmit |

Assignment: Prepare an outline using the same letter for each main point.

Day 2: INTRODUCTION OF THE SERMON

Every good sermon or message divides itself into three parts: the introduction, the body or argument, and the conclusion.

An introduction to a sermon is like spices to a sauce - it gives flavor to the meat of the sermon. There are exceptions - brevity of time or an informal talk - but as a general rule, it is best to introduce the subject.

The purpose of an introduction:

1. To awaken interest in the theme. It is the business of the speaker to present his matter so interestingly that the audience cannot help but listen and be interested.
2. To prepare the audience for what is to follow.

Sources of an introduction:

1. General familiarity with the text or theme. To introduce Psa. 23:4-6, the preacher might give this introduction: "How often this text has lighted up death beds and comforted the bereaved."
2. Historical setting of the text.
3. Geography of the Bible.
4. Customs and antiquities of the Bible.
5. Circumstances peculiar to the writer and those addressed.
6. The occasion - Easter or Christmas.

Assignment - Prepare an introduction to an Easter sermon.

Day 2: QUALITIES OF A GOOD INTRODUCTION

1. Not too loud, sensational or emotional. It is too soon to make an appeal to the emotions. It is best to begin by speaking slowly and in a low tone of voice, warming up to the subject gradually, then working up to a climax.

2. Not too long. A lengthy introduction tires the people.

3. Carefully prepared. It is good to write it out fully. First impressions are lasting, therefore one must carefully prepare the introduction.

Assignment - Write a good introduction to a sermon on Rom. 1:16,17. Share it with the class.

Day 3: BODY OF THE SERMON

The sermon may have as many divisions as the topic calls for and can be handled. It may have perhaps three, perhaps even seven. The divisions should be natural and logical in their order and transition from one to another. Sometimes they are announced, but not always.

The divisions should answer these questions:

1. **What?** - The first division should deal with a statement and definition of the subject. There should be no misunderstanding of the subject after this division. It is an address to the intellect, not to the emotions or the will.

2. **Why?** - This division should set forth the necessity, reason or proof of the subject. It asks: Why is it true? Why should I believe it or accept it? How may it be proven? Is it reasonable?

3. **How?** This sets forth the manner and method by which the theme of the sermon may be brought about, or the conditions under which it may be received or fulfilled.

There are three thoughts usually present in the treatment of this division: God's part, man's part, and the question of means.

4. **What then?** - This leads to application, and is perhaps the most important part. It makes it a personal matter. We must persuade men to decide for Christ, to live a holy life before Him.

Assignment - Prepare an outline for the body of a sermon on Rom. 1:16,17.

Day 4: CONCLUSION OF THE SERMON

The last five minutes are the most important part of the sermon - what a mistake to neglect thorough preparation of it! Sometimes an effective conclusion is a recapitulation of the divisions and leading thoughts - a grand resume in a few striking, well-chosen, soul-moving sentences, or a pointed illustration. Sometimes a poem or the verse of a well-known hymn is used. Or the sermon may be finished by the use of one striking sentence. The conclusion should be no longer than the introduction, perhaps from three to five minutes.

Assignment - Prepare a stirring conclusion to your sermon on Rom. 1:16, 17.

Day 5: ILLUSTRATIONS AND THEIR USE

Jesus' discourses abound in anecdotes, illustrations and similes. He set forth by His example the value of illustrations in preaching more than anyone else. The use of illustrations is a great help to the audience to enable them to carry home the truth of the sermon.

The purpose of illustrations:

1. They throw light on the subject. They are like windows in a house - they let light in.
2. They explain.
3. They prove.
4. They give ornamentation.
5. They can bring conviction.

The sources of illustrations:

1. One should be on the lookout everywhere. Christ used the lilies, the raven, salt, a candle, a bushel, a long-faced hypocrite, gnats, moths, large gates and small gates, a needle's eye, yeast in bread, a mustard seed, a fishing net, debtors and creditors, etc.
2. Other sources include: newspapers, history, animals, vegetables, children, and many objects.

Discussion - What are some good illustrations for the truth in John 3 that we must be "born again".

NOTE: *For the rest of the course, the students will prepare an outline for each type of sermon, then preach the sermon. Don't forget to complete your sermon outline with an introduction, illustrations and a conclusion.*

WEEK THREE: BIOGRAPHICAL SERMONS

The life of a Bible character is presented in this type of sermon. Example:

The Four Surrenders of Abraham

1. To leave country and kindred - Gen. 12:1
2. Separation from Lot - Gen. 13:9
3. Cast out Hagar and Ishmael - Gen. 21:10
4. Offering of Isaac - Gen. 22

WEEK FOUR: NARRATIVE SERMONS

In these sermons an event of Scripture is portrayed. Example of a narrative sermon outline:

Daniel in the Lion's Den

Theme: God cares for His children

Introduction: Story of the young men in a land of captivity

Text: Daniel 6:19-23

Outline:

1. Diabolical Plot, Daniel 6, vss. 1-9
2. Daily Practice, vs. 10
3. Divine Provision, vss. 21-24

Conclusion: Daniel could face danger with perfect confidence, because he was on intimate terms with his God. Are you walking close enough to Him that you can face whatever life may have in store for you?

WEEK FIVE: TEXTUAL SERMONS

The textual sermon occupies itself chiefly with one certain thought contained in a verse or short segment of verses. The verse must be carefully analyzed. Example of a textual sermon:

A Gift with No Restrictions

Theme: Consecration

Text: Romans 12:1

Introduction: What the word consecration means: to devote, separate, dedicate or set apart for the glory of God. Consecration is abdicating the rulership of our lives in favor of King Jesus. Who is boss in your life? 1.

Who can be consecrated? "I beseech **you**, therefore, **brethren**." Those cleansed by the blood of Christ, members of God's family. Not the great, mighty or talented, but this is open to every believer. 2.

The appeal to consecration - "**by the mercies of God**." We are not commanded by force or authority, but by His mercies. Not prompted by fear, but by love and mercies.

Some of God's mercies: salvation, sanctification, indwelling of the Holy Spirit, daily help, health, heaven after death, friends, church.

a. It is voluntary-giving a present. We are not forced to do it.

b. It is personal - your bodies. Our lives, everything we have.

c. It is sacrificial - "a living sacrifice". It is putting our lives on the altar, as Abraham

presented Isaac.

4. The argument for consecration - “reasonable service”. If we have been truly redeemed, then it is only reasonable that we give Him our puny service.

5. What am I to consecrate? - “your **bodies**”. Our bodies are not our own. They have been redeemed by Christ with His blood.

- a. Our physical strength - praise God for health and use it for Him.
- b.

Our feet to run errands of mercy - to take the gospel to someone.

- c. Our hands to do works of kindness and lift the fallen.

- d. Our eyes to seek out the needy and the perishing.

- e. Our ears to hear the cry of the distressed and seek them for Him.

- f. Our heart, symbol of the inner man, the real self. This is what He wants more than anything else. - 2 Cor. 8:5.

Conclusion - Consecration is a process. It is daily, a moment- by-moment yielding to the Master. Even now, consecrate your all to the Saviour.

Caution: Never take it back. A gift is given to be reclaimed no more.

WEEK SIX: TOPICAL SERMONS

A topic, or subject, is the focus of this type of sermon. A Bible concordance is very helpful in preparing it, for verses may be used from many parts of the Word. An example of a Topical Sermon follows:

Come and Drink

Theme: The Water of Life

Text: “Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, `If a man is thirsty, let him come to me and drink” (John 7:37).

Introduction: Have you ever been deprived of water? Do you know what it’s like to want water more than anything else? (Continue the thought of importance of water.)

Outline:

I. Water of life - its character

- 1. Living (John 4:10)

- 2. Clear (Rev. 22:1)

- 3. Pure (Rev. 22:1)

- 4. Abundant (Ezek. 47:1-9)

- 5. Free (Rev. 21:6)

II. For whom is it provided?

- 1. The thirsty (Rev. 21:6)

- 2. Whosoever (Rev. 22:17)

III. The way to obtain it

- 1. Come (Rev. 22:17)

- 2. Take (Rev. 22:17)

Conclusion: For the student to prepare.

WEEKS SEVEN AND EIGHT: EXPOSITORY SERMONS

The Expository Sermon differs from the types already studied in that it is occupied more fully with the exposition of the Scripture itself, while the textual and topical sermons usually explore only one thought or topic suggested by the text. It is usually thought that expository preaching is superior to other types.

These are some of the **advantages of expository preaching:**

1. It produces Biblical preachers and hearers. The preacher and his audience will be kept Biblical.

2. It conforms to the Biblical idea of preaching. This was Jesus' method (Luke 4), Stephen's (Acts 7 and 8), Paul's (Acts 28), and Peter's (Acts 2 and 3).

3. It is wider in scope. It gives a greater opportunity for the practical application of truth to the lives of the hearers.

There are possibly some **disadvantages:**

1. It can become monotonous for the congregation.

2. The preacher can become lazy. There is the danger of reading verse after verse of a chosen text and passing a few comments on them, rather than forcefully proclaiming the truth of the passage.

3. The text may be too long, confusing the audience.

4. Sometimes this preaching is too confining, keeping the preacher from dealing with current topics. The expository sermon should have one central theme, so that there will be unity of thought. Texts should be chosen from different parts of the Bible to avoid the monotony mentioned above, and the preaching should not be all theory, but very practical.

Example of an expository sermon:

Life from a Death

Theme: The Death of Jesus Christ

Text: Rom. 5:6-11: "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly," etc.

Introduction: Its place in Pauline teaching

Outline:

I. Someone died

1. This is an ordinary fact - everyone dies.
2. But this is an extraordinary fact when we remember:
 - a. The character of the One who died.
 - b. He could have avoided death.
 - c. The claims associated with His death.

II. The people for whom Christ died.

1. Sinners, ungodly, weak, enemies.
2. Meaning of the words "died for them".

III. The purpose of Christ's death

1. Negatively: Not to induce (coax) God to love men.
2. Positively: That man might be changed.
 - a. Justified
 - b. Reconciled
 - c. Saved from wrath
 - d. Saved by His life

Conclusion:

1. Do we recognize the significance of that cross?
2. Is it nothing to us? Or, is it what is most significant to us?
3. How we should love Him because of that death!

*God forbid that I should glory,
Except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ,
Though which the world is crucified to me,
And I to the world. –Gal. 6-14*