

## Session 04 – A Framework for Biblical Preaching

### Review of Last Session

- Content of the message
  - The Bible is your license to preach.
  - The Bible is the source of sermon ideas.
- Principles to guide Bible study methods
  - Let the text set the agenda.
  - Let the Bible interpret itself
- Process for turning Bible study into sermon
  - Identify the subject of the text.
  - Identify the complement of the text.
  - Formulate a simple summary sentence.

### Preaching as Modeling Bible Study

- Church members most often learn how to study the Bible through the preacher's example.
  - Proof-texting, as a presentation method, should be used sparingly.
    - It is good as an introduction of new doctrine (to give the milk of the Word; Hebrews 5:12).
    - It models surface Bible study, when we need to help people stand on their own spiritually.
    - As a method of sermon delivery, using proof texts is like telling the end of the story but never the story. We are summarizing the study we have done instead of inviting the listener to join in the study with us.
    - Example: Presenting the topic of preparing for Christ's coming through a collection of verses like Matthew 24:42 leaves less impression and is harder to follow than a careful and lively study of the parable of the ten virgins of Matthew 25:1-13.
  - Contextualizing, as a presentation method, is usually the best way to model good Bible study.
    - Present the message from an anchor text.
    - Use other texts to illustrate, or illuminate, the anchor text.
      - This allows the text to set the agenda.
      - This allows the Bible to interpret itself.
    - This approach often helps the audience be able to understand more easily, it offers them more convincing evidence, and it allows them to experience healthy Bible study.
    - Example: A sermon on the parable of the ten virgins of Matthew 25:1-13 still allows you to bring in other important texts about Christ's coming from places like Matthew 24 while letting the anchor text govern the message.
- The preacher should give the listener enough information about how he or she discovered the message to let the listener do the same.

### Sermons in a Nutshell

- There are three elements present in every good sermon:

- A life question, which offers listeners a reason to listen
  - This is a question that the listener is already asking or might be induced to ask.
  - This can be raised in several ways:
    - A simple statement of the question
    - A citation of statistics
    - An appeal to general experience (e.g. “We all know what it is like...”)
    - A story
  - You formulate the question based on the message (biblical answer) you have already discovered in your sermon anchor text.
- A biblical answer, which offers listeners God's wisdom on the issue
  - This is the simple message you draw from your anchor text.
  - All the information presented should lead toward an understanding of and reinforcement of the sermon's summary sentence.
- Life application, which offers listeners something to do about this truth
  - This is how the biblical answer to life's question will change the listener's life.
  - There should be something for everyone in the audience.
- Example: The parable of the ten virgins in Matthew 25:1-13
  - The life question: When will the end of the world come?
  - The biblical answer: You can't know, so be always ready.
  - The life application: Don't let an hour pass without God (apply specifically to each group of people).
- The differences in sermon structures usually have to do with where the emphasis is placed in this three-part structure and not whether it is present.

### Sermon Outline as a Map for the Mind

- The sermon process is like traveling between two worlds.
  - The preacher enters the biblical world in search of treasure (the biblical answer).
  - The preacher then leads the listener from their world (the world of the life question) to the biblical world to discover the treasure (the biblical answer) he or she found.
  - The preacher then leads the listener back to their world (the world of the life question) to show them how it will change their life (life application).
  - Outlining the sermon is mapping this journey of discovery so nobody gets lost, the listener finds the treasure, and the listener gets it back home safely where it makes a difference.
- When outlining the sermon, keep the following two starting points in mind:
  - Build the sermon outline (the map) on the skeleton of the life question, the biblical answer, and the life application.
  - Take the listener down your own path of discovering the truth in the text, but without the rabbit trails and dead ends.
- The basic sermon framework unfolds as follows:
  - Introducing the life question
    - Capture attention.
    - Raise the life question.
    - Transition to the anchor text.
  - Presenting the biblical answer
    - Keep the life question pressing.

- Lead the audience through your anchor text to find the biblical answer.
    - Show how each part of the text relates to the central idea.
  - Suggesting the life application
    - Recap the ideas that led to the biblical answer.
    - Drive home the summary sentence.
    - Give actionable applications to various life situations.
- There are three basic sermon design schemes.
  - The Presidential Soapbox
    - This scheme gives the conclusion at the beginning and spends the rest of the sermon proving or explaining or applying it.
    - Its emphasis is usually on the life application.
  - The Explorer's Quest
    - This scheme leads a discovery process by exploring the evidence and finding the conclusion late in the sermon.
    - Its emphasis is usually on the biblical answer itself.
  - The Text-Led Sermon
    - This scheme follows the order of the text, often including elements of both other design schemes.
    - Its emphasis is the emphasis of the text, whether theory or application.

### Illustrating to Reinforce Truth

- The purpose of illustrations
  - Once you have your sermon scheme, you may need to add life to the message through illustrations.
  - Illustrations are the most memorable parts of a sermon, making them good and bad.
    - They are good if they clarify or reinforce the message.
    - They are bad if they distract from the message.
  - The purpose of an illustration is to reinforce the truth of your life question, biblical answer, or life application by making it personal, memorable, interesting, or clearer.
- Types of illustrations (taken from *Preaching that Connects* by Mark Galli and Craig Brian Larson)
  - Stories
  - Generic experience
  - Images painted with words
  - Quotations
  - Facts
- Where to find illustrations
  - Scripture
  - Personal experience
  - News
  - Books
  - Internet
- How to tell illustrations
  - Make it live.
  - Sharpen it.
  - Aim for the heart.