

Session 05 – Mastering Sermon Delivery

Review of Last Session

- Preaching models Bible study
- Sermon in a nutshell
 - The life question—a reason to listen
 - The biblical answer—God’s wisdom
 - The life application—a life change

A Practical Theology of Sermon Delivery

- Recognize that your sermon is effective only as you cooperate with the work of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-14, 37-41).
- Draw confidence from the Holy Spirit’s empowerment (Acts 4:23-31).

Sample Sermon: The Judgment (Matthew 25:31-46)

- A five-minute sermon
 - The life question:
 - Facing the cop after running a red light at 3 am left me nervous and wondering what hope I might have.
 - How can you survive the final judgment?
 - The biblical answer:
 - God saves some for their love (v. 31-40).
 - God rejects some for their lack of love (v. 41-46).
 - Let Christ form love in your heart.
 - The life application:
 - Spend less energy on the rules and more in Christ’s transforming presence.
 - If you find that your thoughts or deeds toward your wife or your boss or someone at church are less than complete love, submit at this moment: let Christ form love in your heart.
- Questions for reflection
 - Preliminary: Were the three elements of the sermon nutshell clear?
 - What did you notice about the nonverbal elements?
 - What more could be done to make the nonverbal elements better?

Refining Your Nonverbal Vocabulary

- According to research done by Psychologist Albert Mehrabian (see his book *Silent Messages*), 55% of communication is body language, 38% is tone of voice, and 7% is the words themselves.
 - This means you should, at least, be conscious of non-verbal communication as you prepare to preach.

- This means you would do well to plan at least one key gesture to reinforce the main point of your sermon.
- This might mean you should make every effort to get out from behind the pulpit so people can see your body language.
- Exercise: Have students take turns trying to communicate the following messages using only body language and tone: the building is on fire, I love you, the Bible is our foundation, and there is a battle between God and Satan.
- The most important concept to grasp is that your body language and your words should agree. My first preaching teacher, Derek Morris calls this congruence.
 - Bad example: Sad news reported with joy.
 - Bad example: Joyful news reported with distain.
 - Good example: The Second Coming announced with joy.
 - Good example: Three points outlined with hand gestures.
 - Most of this is natural, if you let it be. But beware that your body will send messages you don't intend, like anger or nervousness (if that is what you have inside). You can't hide what is inside so make sure that, when you preach, you are not pretending or putting on a show or too worried about the mechanics of it all. The truth will come out and create dissonance in your communication.
- Areas of nonverbal communication to consider:
 - Body
 - Posture
 - Eye contact
 - Facial expression
 - Arms and hands
 - Body movement
 - Voice
 - Tone
 - Pitch
 - Volume
 - Pacing

Preparing Preachable Notes

- Simplify your outline.
 - Re-outline the sermon like scenes in a story, with one leading to the next. Include only simple statements to summarize the thrust of each scene.
 - Write transitions between the scenes that review and preview, like doors that open both ways.
 - Example: *The God of Broken Dreams* sermon outline at soudertonsda.org.
- At bare minimum, put your manuscript in outline form (Example: *God's Gutsy Promise* sermon manuscript at soudertonsda.org).

Preaching Without Notes

- The advantages
 - It connects you with the audience to let your natural communication skills kick in (taking this out of the realm of performance and putting it into the realm of communication).
 - It frees you from canned language to foster a more natural flow to your communication.
 - It makes it difficult for people to check out on you, because you are not talking at them but to them.
 - It tests your faith by requiring you to trust God that he will help you remember well and give you the words to speak.
- The process
 - Read through your full outline or manuscript aloud 3-4 times.
 - Memorize your scene list by reading it twice and then repeating it three or four times without looking at your notes.
 - Read your transitions 2-3 times.
 - Master the first three sentences and the last three (of your sermon).
 - Practice your sermon aloud with nothing but your Bible.

Using Surroundings and Visuals

- Place ideas in space with hand gestures or body position.
- Progress from your right to your left when presenting a sequence because that will make it flow naturally for the audience in the direction they are used to reading and seeing progressions.
- PowerPoint is good if it reinforces the truth but take care not to distract from the message with too many varied images.
- An object, like Jesus' Lilly of the field, can be used to later serve as a reminder of the message.
- There are almost endless possibilities for the use of visuals.