

PRINCIPLES OF PREACHING

CHAPTER ONE

THE OBJECT OF PREACHING

1. WHAT PREACHING IS

A. Preaching has been defined as:

- ◆ "A manifestation of the Incarnate Word from the Written Word by the spoken Word" - Bernard Manning.
- ◆ "The audible sacrament ... an exposition, an exposure of God's revelation in Christ declared in the scriptures, in the power of the Holy Spirit in such a way that a mind is stimulated, a will is challenged and a heart is warmed" - Dr. Donald Coggin.
- ◆ Transferring the Word hot from the heart of the preacher to the hearer.
- ◆ Truth poured through personality - Phillip Brooks. The audience does not hear a sermon, they hear a man.
- ◆ Bishop William A. Quale had this in mind when he rejected standard definitions of homiletics. "Preaching is the art of making a sermon and delivering it?" he asked. "Why no, that is not preaching. Preaching is the art of making a preacher and delivering that!"

The sermon is the preacher up to date and true preaching is the outrush of the soul in speech.

In its ultimate sense, it is the communication of the heart of God to the hearts of men.

B. 1 Peter 4:11 declares that the preacher is the "oracle of God" which is defined in the dictionary as being a vehicle for divine inspiration or revelation. The Living Bible says, "Are you called to preach? Then preach as though God Himself were speaking through you".

C. There are 3 main Greek words used in the New Testament to describe preaching:

- a) EUANGELIZO - "to preach good tidings". This is mostly used in connection with evangelism and has to do with the content of the message. It is almost always used of the good news concerning the Son of God.
- b) KERUGMA - "A proclamation by a herald". This indicates the prophetic nature of the preacher. He speaks for God and his message is designed to compel a decision. The verb "kerusso" means "to be a herald" or to proclaim.

This explains why Paul encouraged his young associate Timothy to "preach the word" (2 Tim. 4:2). Preach means "to cry out, herald, or exhort". Preaching should so stir a man that he pours out the message with passion and fervour. Not all passionate pleading from a pulpit, however,

possesses divine authority. When a preacher speaks as a herald, he must cry out "the word". Anything less cannot legitimately pass for Christian preaching.

- c) PARRHESIAZOMAI (Acts 9:27) - means to be bold in speech. It refers to the courage necessary to be an unfettered preacher of divine truth. The preacher's task is not only to comfort the disturbed, but to disturb the comfortable, and for this he must not be afraid of the faces of the people. Jeremiah 1:8, and Joshua 1:5-6.

Preaching is fundamentally a part of the care of souls, and the care of souls involves a thorough understanding of the congregation. An able shepherd knows his flock.

To expound the scriptures so that the contemporary God confronts us where we live requires that the preacher study his audience as well as his Bible, and addresses them both boldly and with relevance.

2 . GOD'S INTENTION THROUGH PREACHING

- A. To Manifest Jesus - Tit. 1:3, Acts 5:42, 8:35, 10:36, 11:20, 17:18, 1 Cor. 1:23, 2 Cor. 4:5.
- B. To save them that believe - To create new life through the creative word.
- C. To impart faith - Rom. 10 : 8, Acts 14 : 7-9 .
- D. As a vehicle for the demonstration of the power of God. Mark 3:14-15, 16:20, 1 Cor. 2:4, Luke 8:1, and 4:8.
- E. To reconcile to God - 2 Cor. 5:18-19, and Eph. 2:17.
- F. To warn and to teach - Col. 1:28.

3. THE CALLING OF GOD IS RELATED TO PREACHING

If a person is called to the "Ministry", there must be an ability to preach in the same way that one of the qualifications of an elder is that he has the ability to teach (1 Tim. 3:2, and Tit. 1:9). Note that Paul was called to be a preacher and an apostle (1 Tim. 2:7 and 2 Tim. 1:11). These other scriptures indicate that preaching is an integral part of the calling: Mark 3:14, Luke 4:18, Romans 10:15, 1 Cor. 1:17, Acts 16:10 and Mark 1: 38. There is an element of the prophetic in every truly called man or woman of God, though they may not have the ministry of a prophet. The ability to preach is unique. It is God-given and cannot be manufactured. It begins with a burning heart in the preacher and results in changed lives in his hearers. Jeremiah said, "His word is as a fire in my bones".

4. THE POWER OF PREACHING

- A. Mark 16:15-16, Luke 11:32, 1 Cor. 1:18, 21, Romans 1:16, Luke 4:32, Mark 1: 22.
- B. Preaching compels a decision if it is truth inspired by God. 2 Cor. 3:6. The message will create action or reaction in the hearers. Acts 2: 37, 13:42-50, Luke 4:18 & 28-29.
- C. God will honour truth. The miracle of preaching is that if it is truth God will give you results to the level of both your faith and your proclamation. e.g. Evangelicals do not preach the

full gospel, but get many souls saved. Isaiah 55:11 declares that God's Word will not return to Him void, but will accomplish that which He pleases and prosper in the thing where to He sends it. He watches over His word to perform it. Jeremiah 1:12

5. YOU GET WHAT YOU PREACH FOR.

The content of the message is not as important as the orientation of the preacher. If his philosophy of the Christian life is a condemnatory or legalistic one, he will convey that life-style regardless of his sermon subject. On the other hand, if the preacher is faith-filled and positively oriented, he will always develop those qualities in his hearers.

The overall commitment of the preacher will determine the type of message he will consistently bring and the ultimate effect he will have on people, e.g.

- a) Oswald Smith of the People's Church, Toronto had a life-long commitment to Missions. His Church for many years has been among the leading Churches in this field.
- b) Evangelicals get few miracles in their meetings because their consistent position is that the days of miracles is past.
- c) Those who constantly carry a fight to their people in their preaching, either fighting the congregation or Board or fighting some cause (i.e. anti-permissive society, anti-charismatic, anti-catholic, etc.) tend to get their fight returned to them.

In this regard, both the commitment and orientation of the preacher is critical.

Whatever his particular philosophy may be or his commitment to certain doctrines, the overall orientation of every preacher must be to winning souls. Some may claim exemption from this because they have the Gift of the teacher, etc. The two greatest teachers in the Church's history Jesus and Paul, were also constantly motivated by souls (Luke 19:10 and Rom. 9:1-3).

Whatever our calling, we must all do the work of an evangelist. 2 Tim. 4:5. George Sweeting, President of Moody Bible Institute points out that regardless of the differing themes of history's great preachers, their one overriding passion was for souls.

Our Concern for the Unconverted

"Some folk like to live within the sound of Church or chapel bell, I want to run a rescue shop within a yard of hell." - C.T. Studd.

Study the lives of great Christians and you will notice the great themes that characterised their ministries.

Charles G. Finney was gripped with human responsibility.

Count Nicholas Zinzendorf wrote hymns, sermons, and pamphlets emphasising, "I have one passion - Jesus"

George Whitfield preached "Ye must be born again" so often that many people criticised him. When asked why he used the same text over and over, he answered, "Because you must be born again!"

Jonathan Edwards often emphasised God's judgement; Billy Sunday stressed: "Be sure your sin will find you out"; Gipsy Smith's forte was the beauty of Jesus; and A.B. Simpson's heart was world evangelisation

D.L. Moody also had a major theme. He printed the words "God is love" on every light in the old Moody Church. His personal study of God's love evoked the response, "I just could not help loving people". A sermon on God's love ministered to him so completely, tears would stream down his face.

But each of these - and every person God uses - has in common a passion for souls. Their fervent desire to see people come to Christ made the difference.

The Apostle Paul also felt this burden. "I speak the truth in Christ - I am not lying, my conscience confirms it in the Holy Spirit - I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers ..." (Rom. 9:1-3a).

He said in essence, "What I have is real. I care about people and my conscience confirms it by the Holy Spirit".

We know what it's like to be troubled by stealing, lying, and immoral acts, but do we have the same attitude toward the unconverted? People perishing without Christ were on Paul's conscience.

To the Ephesians he wrote, "Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears" (Acts 20:31).

The same was true of the Lord Jesus. He looked on the multitude and "was moved with compassion". Since God loves people, so must we.

The word "compassion" stems from two latin root words, "com" meaning "with", and "passion" meaning "to bear" or "to suffer". The compound simply means "to suffer with". Do you suffer with those outside of Christ?

John Henry Jowett in his book "A Passion for Souls" said, "The Gospel of a broken heart demands the ministry of a bleeding heart". He added, "We can never heal needs that we do not feel".

Paul went further. He possessed what we might call a redemptive passion. What did he mean when he wrote, "I wish ... myself ... cursed ... for the sake of my brothers"? Paul would give up his own salvation if, by so doing, his kinsmen could be won.

This same fervour apparently possessed Scotsman John Knox to agonise in prayer, "Give me Scotland or I die"!

Rachel felt a deep inner concern because she was childless. Embarrassed, ashamed, and desperate, she cried out to her husband, Jacob, "Give me children, or I die!" (Gen. 30:1). Only when you and I experience this same heart cry for the unconverted, will God grant us spiritual children.

- George Sweeting (President, Moody Bible Institute)

6. THE GOALS OF PREACHING

- A. Inspirational - It must impart God to the people and bring the uplift of the Holy Spirit to them.
- B. Motivational - It must produce change in their lives. They must be motivated to repent and live according to God's word and plan for their lives. It is the preacher's task to motivate the Church to its ministry. Phillip Brooks said, "You must count your work unsatisfactory unless you burn men's brains and awaken their consciences".
- C. Relational - Preaching should establish the relative positions of God and man, & then man to man. Matt. 21:37-40.
- D. Revelational - It should bring forth the whole counsel of God for that congregation. There should be an element of fresh truth being constantly revealed. Matt. 13:52. It is not enough to impart information. It is essential that his messages should have revelation from God. Facts of the Word which God has taught him personally.
- E. Confrontational - Not in a negative, destructive sense, but with respect to being able to accept the responsibility to challenge and change a city. The preaching which has no goal to change its community has lost its reason for being.
- F. Proportional - Preaching must be:
 - a) Balanced - It is possible to be so caught up with ultimates that practicalities are ignored. There should be a proper balance between what is revealed and what is relevant.
 - b) Consistent - The preacher ought not to go after fads or new emphases unless he can see that he can make it part of his ministry for all time. Zig-zagging in ministry will produce confusion, inaction and frustration in the congregation. Paul advised Timothy to be consistent. 2 Tim. 4:2 - "be instant in season and out of season".

7. THE QUALITY OF THE PULPIT DETERMINES THE CHARACTER OF THE CHURCH

- A. Preaching is the basis of the Pastor's authority.

Dr. Harold Okenga, for 33 years Pastor of Boston's famed Park Street Church, declares, "You cannot stand and converse with people from the pulpit; you'll lose them. If you have a strong pulpit ministry, you are going to have a strong Church, no matter if everything else is lacking. If you have a strong counselling Church without a strong pulpit, you'll have a weak Church. Preaching has got to be there, or people are not going to come. It has to be enlightening, interesting, and challenging. Conversational preaching is a mistake. You have got to develop certain points, like a syllogism. You have to develop something people can follow, an outline with alliteration. When you get through, people can say, 'That's what he said about this and that's what he said about that'."

- B. In fact the preacher must go further and preserve his pulpit from the inane and unworthy. If he allows the credibility of his pulpit to be called into question by the preaching of others, it will inevitably reflect on him.

C. To this end. the preacher must dedicate himself to be a man of intense personal study that he might rightly divide the Word of truth. 2 Timothy 2:15 If he is not growing in God his pulpit ministry will be weakened with a corresponding malaise in the church.

CONCLUSION

Preach the Word of God urgently at all times, whenever you get the chance, in season and out of season, when it is convenient and when it is not. Correct and rebuke your people when they need it, encourage them to do right, and all the time be feeding them patiently with God's Word. (2 Tim. 4:2 - Living Bible)

Anyone sensitive to the Scriptures knows the awe of the ministry. Matthew Simpson in his "Lectures on Preaching" put the preacher in his place:

"His throne is the pulpit; he stands in Christ's stead; his message is the Word of God; around him are immortal souls; The Saviour, unseen, is beside him; the Holy Spirit broods over the congregation; angels gaze upon the scene, and heaven and hell await the issue. What associations, and what vast responsibility!"

MAN'S NOBLEST EXERCISE.

by E.M.Bounds

During this affliction I was brought to examine my life in relation to eternity closer than I had done when in the enjoyment of health. In this examination relative to the discharge of my duties toward my fellow-creatures as a man, a Christian minister and an officer of the Church, I stood approved by my own conscience; but in relation to my Redeemer and Saviour the result was different. My returns of gratitude and loving obedience bear no proportion to my obligations for redeeming, preserving, and supporting me through the vicissitudes of life from infancy to old age. The coldness of my love to Him who first loved me and has done so much for me overwhelmed and confused me; and to complete my unworthy character

I had not only neglected to improve the grace given to the extent of my duty and privilege, but for want of that improvement had, while abounding in perplexing care and labour, declined from first zeal and love. I was confounded, humbled myself, implored mercy, and renewed my covenant to strive and devote myself unreservedly to the Lord.--Bishop McKENDREE.

The preaching that kills may be, and often is, orthodox dogmatically, inviolably orthodox. We love orthodoxy. It is good. It is the best. It is the clean, clear-cut teaching of God's Word, the trophies won by truth in its conflict with error, the levies which faith has raised against the desolating floods of honest or reckless misbelief or unbelief; but orthodoxy, clear and hard as crystal, suspicious and militant, may be but the letter well shaped, well named, and well learned, the letter which kills. Nothing is so dead as a dead orthodoxy, too dead to speculate, too dead to think, to study, or to pray.

The preaching that kills may have insight and grasp of principles, may be scholarly and critical in taste, may have all the minutiae of the derivatio and grammar of the letter, may be able to trim the letter into its perfect pattern, and illumine it as Plato and Cicero may be illumined, may study it as a lawyer studies his textbooks to form his brief or to defend his case, and yet be like a frost, a killing frost. Letter preaching may be eloquent, enamelled with poetry and rhetoric,

sprinkled with prayer, spiced with sensation, illumined by genius, and yet these be but the massive or chaste, costly mountings, the rare and beautiful flowers which coffin the corpse. The preaching which kills may be without scholarship, unmarked by any freshness of thought or feeling, clothed in tasteless generalities or vapid specialities, with style: irregular, slovenly, savouring neither of closet nor of study, graced neither by thought, nor expression, nor prayer. Under such preaching how wide and utter the desolation ! how profound the spiritual death!

This letter-preaching deals with the surface and shadow of things, and not the things themselves It does not penetrate the inner part. It has no deep insight into, no strong grasp of, the hidden life of God's Word. It is true to the outside, but the outside is the hull which must be broken and penetrated for the kernel. The letter may be dressed so as to attract and be fashionable, but the attraction is not toward God nor is the fashion for heaven. The failure is in the preacher. God has not made him. He has never been in the hands of God like clay in the hands of the potter. He has been busy about the sermon, its thought and finish, its drawing and impressive forces, but the deep things of God have never been sought, studied, fathomed, experienced by him. He has never stood before " the throne high and lifted up," never heard the seraphim song, never seen the vision nor felt the rush of that awful holiness, and cried out in utter abandon and despair under the sense of weakness and guilt, and had his life renewed, his heart touched, purged, inflamed by the live coal from God's altar. His ministry may draw people to him, to the Church, to the form and ceremony; but no true drawings to God, no sweet, holy, divine communion induced. The Church has been frescoed but not edified, pleased but not sanctified. Life is suppressed; a chill is on the summer air; the soil is baked. The city of our God becomes the city of the dead; the Church a graveyard, not an embattled army. Praise and prayer are stifled; worship is dead. The preacher and the preaching have helped sin, not holiness; peopled hell, not heaven.

Preaching which kills is prayerless preaching. Without prayer the preacher creates death, and not life. The preacher who is feeble in prayer is feeble in life giving forces. The preacher who has retired from prayer as a conspicuous and largely prevailing element in his own character has shorn his preaching of its distinctive life-giving power. Professional praying there is and will be, but professional praying helps the preaching to its deadly work. Professional praying chills and kills both preaching and praying. Much of the lax devotion and lazy, irreverent attitudes in congregational praying is attributable to professional praying in the pulpit. Long, discursive, dry, and inane are the prayers in many pulpits. Without unction or heart, they fall like a killing frost on all the graces of worship. Death dealing prayers they are. Every vestige of devotion has perished under their breath. The more dead they are the longer they grow. A plea for short praying, live praying, real heart praying, praying by the Holy Spirit--direct, specific, ardent, simple, unctuous in the pulpit--is in order. A school to teach preachers how to pray, as God counts praying, would be more beneficial to true piety, true worship, and true preaching than all theological schools.

Stop ! Pause ! Consider ! Where are we ? What are we doing? Preaching to kill ? Praying to kill ? Praying to God ! the great God, the Maker of all worlds, the Judge of all men ! What reverence! what simplicity ! what sincerity ! what truth in the inward parts is demanded ! How real we must be ! How hearty ! Prayer to God the noblest exercise, the loftiest effort of man the most real thing ! Shall we not discard forever accursed preaching that kills and prayer that kills, and do the real thing, the mightiest thing--prayerful praying, life-creating preaching brings the mightiest force to bear on heaven and earth and draws on God's exhaustless and open treasure for the need and beggary of man.

THE MESSAGE

CHAPTER TWO

1. THE MAN IS THE MESSAGE

A. Preparation of the Preacher.

The sermon can never be different to the man. We convey what we are regardless of what we say. Matthew 12:34.

The key to preaching is that there is a man or woman sent from God - John 1:6. The process worked out in John's life is no different from that applicable to every servant of the Lord - there are years of preparation. E.M. Bounds said, "It takes 20 years to make a message because it takes 20 years to make the man". While this time would not be the same in all cases, there must be preparation of the preacher.

Before a man proclaims the message of the Bible to others, he should live with that message himself.

Regrettably, many preachers fail as Christians before they fail as preachers because they do not think biblically. A significant number of ministers - many of whom profess high regard for the Scriptures - prepare their sermons without consulting the Bible at all. While the sacred text serves as an appetiser to get a sermon under way or as a garnish to decorate the message, the main course consists of the preacher's own thought or someone else's thought warmed up for the occasion.

"Anything less than a divine assignment in the pulpit reduces the preacher to contemptible politics, grovelling employment, crawling subservience, and lack of self-esteem" - C.M. Ward.

B. Authenticity. It is all too easy for a preacher under the stimulus of an attentive crowd to "talk further down the road than he has walked". In all things we must be authentic. We can only impart what we have received.

- a) Practise what you preach
- b) Preach to yourself
- c) Constantly be stretching upward for yourself and your congregation.

2. BE CHRISTOCENTRIC

The Bible is full of subjects to preach on. This is in itself a danger for it is possible to preach a lifetime without ever preaching Christ to the people. There is no point to being an expert on False Cults, Prophecy, Pentecostal Gifts, Healing, Theology, etc. if your message does not constantly lift up Jesus. The following is a quotation from one of the greatest preachers of all time:

CHARLES SPURGEON'S ADVICE TO HIS STUDENTS

I know a minister whose shoe latchet I am unworthy to unloose, whose preaching is often little

better than sacred miniature painting - I might almost say holy trifling. He is great upon the ten toes of the beast, the four faces of the cherubim, the mystical meaning of badgers' skins, and the typical bearings of the staves of the ark, and the windows of Solomon's temple: but the sins of the businessmen, the temptations of the times, and the needs of the age, he scarcely ever touches upon. Such preaching reminds me of a lion engaged in mouse-hunting or a man-of-war cruising after a lost water-butt.

More and more I am jealous lest any views upon prophecy, church government, politics, or even systematic theology, should withdraw one of us from glorifying in the Cross of Christ. Salvation is a theme for which I would fain enlist every holy tongue. I am greedy after witnesses for the glorious Gospel of the blessed God. O that Christ crucified were the universal burden of men of God. Your guess at the number of the beast, your Napoleonic speculations, your conjectures concerning a personal anti-christ - forgive me, I count them but mere bones for dogs; while men are dying and hell is filling, it seems to me the veriest drivel to be muttering about an Armageddon at Sebastopol or Sadowa or Sedan and peeping between the folded leaves of destiny to discover the fate of Germany.

Of all I would wish to say this is the sum: my brethren, preach CHRIST, always and evermore. He is the whole Gospel. His Person, offices and work must be our one great, all comprehending theme. The world needs still to be told of its Saviour, and of the way to reach him. Justification by faith should be far more than it is the daily testimony of Protestant pulpits; and if with this master-truth there should be more generally associated the other great doctrines of grace, the better for our Churches and our age.

Jesus said, "If I be lifted up I will draw all men unto me" ... John 12:32. Note also the cry of the heathen in verse 21 - "Sir we would see Jesus". Preacher - learn how to weave everything you say around the one prominent and central theme of the person and work of Jesus Christ.

3. BE REDEMPTIVE AND RESTORATIVE

Some preachers take perverse delight in flaying their congregation alive and you will also find a few spiritual sadists who enjoy being lashed from the pulpit. The preacher who falls into the trap of satisfying the "lunatic fringe" in his congregation can write off the rest from effective function in the body of Christ. Do not preach the unworthiness of people or attempt to make them small. Always lift up Jesus as the total solution to every human problem. If you declare their sin without their Saviour, you have brought them back under the Old Testament dispensation and reduced them to hopeless failure and a futile program of legalism to try and please God. They will then live in Eternal Insecurity. The preacher must never take the lid off the Ark of God and expose the Law without it being covered by the shed blood on the Mercy Seat.

The mark of spirituality is the ability to restore - Galatians 6:1. Anyone can accuse and destroy, but only the mature can "rescue the perishing, care for the dying, and snatch them in pity from sin and the grave, weep over the erring one, lift up the fallen and tell them of Jesus - the mighty to save".

Our ministry must constantly attempt to bring people, both sinners and saints to a redemptive state, rather than a condemnatory one.

(Recommended reading on this theme = "Love Acceptance and Forgiveness" - by Jerry Cook)

4. PREACH REPENTENCE

In order to bring people into right relationship with God, it is necessary to establish a basis of true repentance - a sorrow for and a forsaking of sin.

Much modern preaching is self-centred instead of God centred. Lift up the majesty and holiness of God. Exalt the Lord with such clarity that man's need is exposed and a desire created to be like God.

There must be a change in people's lives. It brings no glory to God if you add people to the Church who continue to be unrepentant and unregenerate. Never appeal for enlistment, but for heartfelt genuine repentance.

The word "repentance" occurs more than 50 times in the New Testament and in most of its books. Hebrews 6:1 lists it as one of the foundations of the Christian life.

Pity the man who fails to understand that his sermon should change lives in some specific way. A.W. Tozer speaks a perceptive word to all of us:

There is scarcely anything so dull and meaningless as Bible doctrine taught for its own sake. Truth divorced from life is not truth in its Biblical sense, but something else and something less No man is better for knowing that God in the beginning created the heaven and the earth. The devil knows that, and so did Ahab and Judas Iscariot. No man is better for knowing that God so loved the world of men that He gave His only begotten Son to die for their redemption. In hell there are millions who know that. Theological truth is useless until it is obeyed. The purpose behind all doctrine is to secure moral action.

Henry Ward Beecher appreciated the importance of purpose when he declared, "A sermon is not like a Chinese firecracker to be fired off for the noise it makes. It is a hunter's gun, and at every discharge he should look to see his game fall".

5. PREACH THE GOODNESS OF GOD

God so loved that He gave - John 3:16. There never was a truer word said than the slogan adopted by Oral Roberts, "God is a good God". Even our repentance is dependent on this. Romans 2:4 says that it is the goodness of God which leads us to repentance.

Dr. David Yonggi Cho, pastor of the world's largest church, the Assembly of God in Seoul Korea, lists the following things as keys to developing a successful preaching ministry.

A. Minister strongly on the three-fold blessings of God - 3 John verse 2:

- a) Prosperity
- b) Healing
- c) Spiritual well-being

The curse on Adam was three-fold:

- a) Loss of fellowship - spiritual death
- b) Physical death and sickness

c) Environmental death - destruction of our prosperity.
This curse has been taken away in Christ. Gal 3:13

B. Concentrate on solving problems.

Seldom do normal people lose sleep over the Jebusites, the Canaanites, or the Perizzites, or even about what Abraham, Moses, or Paul has said or done. They lie awake wondering about grocery prices, crop failures, quarrels with a girlfriend, diagnosis of a malignancy, a frustrating sex life, the rat race where only the rats seem to win. If the sermon does not make much difference in that world, they wonder if it makes any difference at all.

On the other hand, we would do well to remember J.D.Baumann's observation, "We are very much like the people of the ancient world. It is only in some superficial thoughts, rational beliefs, and mental moods that we are different. In all of the basic heart realities we are the same. We stand before God exactly as people in every age have stood before Him. We have all experienced David's guilt, the doubting of Thomas, Peter's denial, the falling away of Demas, perhaps even the kiss of the betrayer Judas. We are linked across the centuries by the realities and ambiguities of the human soul".

Sermons catch fire when flint strikes steel. When the flint of a person's problem strikes the steel of the Word of God, a spark ignites that burns in the mind. Directing our preaching at people's needs is not a mere persuasive technique; it is the task of the ministry.

On this basis a congregation has the right to expect that the preacher is at least aware of their problems before he offers solutions.

C. Teach the people to be successful. If you help your people to a successful life, they in turn will make you successful.

D. Develop a right self-image in the people.

In short, if you want to have a developing congregation, concentrate on feeding them wholesome, attractive and appetising food.

Your only major problem will be how to accommodate them all!

6. NEVER APOLOGISE FOR THE GOSPEL

The preacher, whatever his calling must have some degree of the prophetic in his ministry. He belongs to God and not the people.

Because of this, he must be careful to preserve himself from entanglements with his people which would weaken his message. He must be able to preach without fear or favour and this will not be possible if any "owns" him.

While biblical ideas must be shaped to human experience, men and women must be called to conform to biblical truth. "Relevant sermons" may become pulpit trifles; unless; they relate the current situation to the eternal Word of God.

STEALING GOD'S WORD

CHAPTER THREE

INTRODUCTION

It is an awesome responsibility and an inestimable privilege to speak in the Name of the Lord. It cannot be taken lightly.

Jeremiah 23:9-32 deals with the case of unworthy preachers and God's attitude to them.

God says that He is against the prophets that steal His word from their neighbours mouths (v 30-32). The Living Bible says, "I stand against these `prophets' who get their messages from each other, these smooth tongued prophets who say `This Message is from God!'. Their made-up dreams are flippant lies that lead my people into sin. I did not send them and they have no message at all for my people says the Lord".

This scripture is applicable to the modern situation where preachers get their messages from books, ideas or tapes of others' sermons and not from personally seeking God. It is all the more applicable when we read verse 20 - this will be happening in the "latter days".

From time to time various emphases go round the Church and many jump on the bandwagon and begin to promote that new idea or trend without fully checking its source or implications. We have often heard the claim, "This is what God is saying to the Church!", and yet it has turned out to be another dead-end or a non-event or even a damaging delusion.

This does not mean that God is not bringing more light to His Church - a fresh revelation of His purposes or a prophetic redirection of the church's emphasis or energy. However, it is vitally important that we know that we have heard from God before such a claim is made. A stolen message will incur the wrath of God.

There is a certain process of production with God's Word (note Hebrews 4:2). As far as the preacher is concerned, the primary requirement is that he has gotten his message from God directly. Many a preacher who strongly resists the doctrine of human mediators is content to accept all his ideas and spiritual teaching from others and does not gather his manna for himself.

1. THE PREACHER'S SOURCE

- A. Jesus ordained His disciples to "be with Him", that He might send them forth to preach and to have power. This is still the right order of the Ministry.
- B. Standing in the counsel of God (Jer. 23:18) - this means living close enough to God to both hear and see God's Word.
- C. The Preacher's source material is the Words of God's holiness (v 9). There is incredible power in the unadulterated Word of God to change the human heart. Verse 29 says that God's Word is like a hammer that breaks the rock or like a fire. Modern ministers who are not serious about God's word have made God a laughing stock before the world.

2. RUNNING WITHOUT A PERSONAL MESSAGE

Verse 21 says "I sent them not yet they ran". Note Hebrews 5:4. No man takes this honour to himself, but he that is called of God. 2 Samuel 18:18-32 gives the story of Ahimaaz of Cush.

Ahimaaz ran without the message and brought confusion.

Unless the Word of God becomes ours and is the message lived in us, we are stealing the message from someone else's mouth.

Every preacher must establish whether he has:

- a) Been sent;
- b) Has a message.

If so, his responsibility is to cause the people to:

- a) Hear the Word of God (verse 22)
- b) Speak it faithfully (verse 28).

3. WRONG MOTIVATIONS OF PREACHERS

- A. Prophesying in Baal. Whatever does not come from God will not glorify God and will therefore glorify self or Satan. An adulterated message will not be owned by God. The Lord called these prophets "adulterers" (verse 10, 14). They attempted to mix God's Word with more acceptable ideas.
- B. A vision of their own heart and not out of the Word of the Lord (verse 16). Their own false concepts coloured their delivery of the Word.
- C. Stubbornness. (Verse 17) The margin translates "imagination" as "stubbornness". The refusal to be adjusted by God or receive correction in their ministry. Knowing that they were not bringing the word of the Lord but persisting in their perverse way.
- D. Lies (verses 22 and 26). It is only a short step from self-deception to deliberate deception of the people. Modern religions abound in the lying assessment of God's Word and mockery of His truth. Yet these spurious ministers dare to speak in His name. Let us beware in case we who have received so much light should minister that which is inferior or deceptive.
- E. Lightness -- Verse 13 calls it folly. Taking God lightly and treating His Word without respect in the pulpit will breed contempt for true spiritual values in the people.
- F. Bowing to the expectation of the people. These prophets were motivated by a desire to pacify the people who were disturbed by the preaching of Jeremiah. In the last days people with "itching ears" will choose preachers who will tell them only what they want to hear (2 Tim. 4:13). Saul, King of Israel bowed to the people pressure and lost his kingdom. Aaron did the same and made a golden calf resulting in 3000 being slain.

4. COUNTER PRODUCTIVE PREACHING

The Lord indicted these prophets because their ministry had harmed the work of God instead of helping it.

- A. The people were not turned away from their evil ways - v 22.
- B. They caused the people to forget God - verse 27.
- C. They elevated idolatry in preference to God - verse 27.
- D. They caused the people to err - verse 32

5. THE PREACHER'S JUDGEMENT

God said he would bring evil upon these spurious prophets and make their way slippery.

Every Minister carries a greater responsibility than his congregation 1 Corinthians 3 is often thought to apply to the whole Church, but it actually speaks of the judgement of ministers at the Judgement Seat of Christ. We will be called to account for what we have built on the foundation of the local Church which is Jesus Christ. Verses 9 and 10 declare that the Church is a building erected by various ministers. Verse 13 declares that our work will be tried and only gold, silver and precious stones will remain. All "light" stuff will be burned. If the minister has not profited the people he will suffer loss. It is a terrible thing to defile the temple of God - the local Church (verse 16).

Any minister who causes or allows uncleanness, strife, heresy, etc., to enter or remain in his congregation is falling short of his responsibility.

ORIGINALITY

While God hates the preacher to draw his message from the mouths of other preachers instead of standing in His counsel, it is inevitable that others will make an impact on him.

It is not wrong to share truth that has been imparted to you by others. No-one can be totally original. We are the product of our environment to a certain degree and will be taught and inspired by others' preaching, teaching and writings. Paul committed Timothy to teach the things which he had learned from Paul (2 Tim. 2:2). The key thing in using others' material is two-fold:

- a) Acknowledge the source if quoted directly; and
- b) Absorb the truth to the point where it becomes part of your own life and experience and you can be authentic in preaching it.

The word must become flesh in you, and then it will live in the hearts of others.

VARIOUS PREACHING STYLES

CHAPTER FOUR

The preacher should use a variety of styles in preaching. He should approach his subject in differing ways, rather than having a stereo-typed routine to his message.

There are many ways in which his message may be presented some of which are:

1. TEXTUAL PREACHING

This message is generally confined to a verse or two of scripture and all of the points are drawn exclusively from that section of scripture alone.

For example, Isaiah 45:22 - "Look unto me, and be saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else." can be broken into the following sections:

- A. The Greatest Blessing - "be ye saved"
- B. To the Greatest Number - "all ye ends of the earth"
- C. With the Greatest Security - "For I am God"
- D. On the Easiest Terms - "Look unto me"
- E. Through an Exclusive Way - "There is none else".

This method of preaching cracks open a verse of scripture to discover its central truth. It involves choosing an appropriate statement of Scripture, investigating it, analysing it, discovering all the truth it contains, and then presenting that truth in an orderly and progressive manner that is easy for the hearers to assimilate.

There are literally hundreds of texts which are best developed by this method. Some good examples would be: John 3:16, Romans 6:23, Ephesians 2:8-9, Rev. 3:20, etc.

2. TOPICAL PREACHING

This method seeks to develop the message from the perspective of a subject rather than a specific text. Even if a text is used as the rationale of the message it is generally only as a foundation to the message or a springboard to other points.

- A. The preacher may use a number of texts to build up a subject. For example, he may take the subject of "Justification". His aim would be firstly, to discover everything the Bible has to say on this enthralling subject.

He would then arrange all the Scripture references and thoughts he gets into an orderly format

so that he can develop his theme as fully and faithfully as possible. His objective is to tell his audience everything they should know on this important subject. Of course, he may not be able to do this in one teaching session.

B. Alternatively he may begin with various points he wishes to convey and then seek to support these points from scripture.

An example of a topical message on Salvation would be:

- a) Salvation from the Power of Sin
- b) Salvation from the Person of Sin
- c) Salvation from the Penalty of Sin
- d) Salvation from the Presence of Sin

Or on Sin:

- a) The Cause of Sin
- b) The Curse of Sin
- c) The Cure of Sin

Or on the River of the Holy Spirit (Ezek. 47):

- a) The Source
- b) The Course
- c) The Force.

The preacher may preach on current events, prophecy, or against the “Occult” or “Humanism”, or “How to Win over Worry”, or “How to have Victory in the Thought Life”, etc., and then back up these points from scriptures.

This type of message would generally draw heavily on illustrative material, either from the Bible or other sources.

A topical concordance is of immense value when preparing such a message. There one can quickly find every Scripture reference relating to the topic concerned. This would be the most common form of preaching.

3. EXPOSITORY PREACHING

This is the message based on a complete passage of Scripture. It may be a chapter, or a book, or a section of a chapter, but it will be a section with a common theme.

Expository preaching is the communication of a biblical concept, derived from and transmitted through a historical, grammatical, and literary study of a passage in its context, which the Holy Spirit first applies to the personality and experience of the preacher, then through him to his hearers.

Some examples of sections of the scriptures which would be best dealt with by the expository method are:

- a) The Christian's Armour - Eph. 6:10-18
- b) The Fruit of the Flesh and the Spirit - Gal. 5:16-23

- c) Romans, chapters 6-8 - Freedom, Failure and Fruitfulness
- d) Isaiah 53 - The Suffering Messiah,

Most expository preaching would concentrate on extracting the main message from a whole book of the Bible in either of two ways:

- A. One message on the central truth of the Book, i.e. an overview of it
- B. A series of messages - chapter by chapter, or section by section, to extract all the major ideas from the book.

The word "expository" (from "Exegesis") means an exposure, exhibition, a setting forth, a description, explanation or commentary. While topical preaching is generally a declaration of truth, exegetical preaching is more of an explanation of truth and an attempt to demonstrate the harmony of the passage preached on. It is interpretative & leans heavily on the context rather than on external illustrations.

This type of preaching more naturally suits the "Teacher" and should only be attempted by experienced preachers as it can be dull and tedious if not handled skillfully.

Clear, relevant biblical exposition does not take place Sunday after Sunday by either intuition or accident. Good expositors have systems for their study.

4. BIOGRAPHICAL PREACHING

This message is based on the life and experiences of a Biblical character. The events of his/her life or the dealings of God in him or her are used as illustrations of Biblical truths. For example:

- a) Faith under Fire - from the story of Shadrach, Meshach, & Abednego (Dan.3)
- b) Victory over Temptation - from the life of Joseph and the event of Potiphar's wife (Gen. 39)
- c) Overcoming Insurmountable Odds - from the event of David & Goliath.

Every biography recorded in the Bible holds important significance for us. Every life has something to teach us.

The study of Bible characters is very enthralling and absorbing. Choose a particular person. Read every reference to them that occurs in the Bible. Make notes of every thought that comes to mind.

Begin to assemble those thoughts into chronological order, that is the order in which they occurred.

- ◆ - Study the birth of the person.
- ◆ - Consider the circumstances of their upbringing.
- ◆ - Focus upon the dealings of God in their life.
- ◆ - How did they react to such?
- ◆ - What did they learn from it?

- ◆ - If they were a success in life, what made them successful?
- ◆ - If their life ended in failure, where did they go wrong?
- ◆ - What can we learn from their life?

This type of preaching would draw most of its illustrative material from the person's life and experience.

The biographical message lends itself to being made interesting as it is easy to weave the storyteller's skill into it.

However this advantage can also lead to its major disadvantage - it can become wearisome and over long if every point in the person's life is strained out for some truth.

5. TYPOGRAPHICAL OR INTERPRETATIVE PREACHING

This is the art of uncovering and communicating truth which is hidden beneath the surface of the various "types" in the Bible. A "type" is a person, object or event which is symbolically prophetic of someone or something yet to come. It is similar to, and characteristic of, that person or event. In its biblical application, it refers to a Bible character or event which foreshadows some future one.

For example, the Passover Lamb in Exodus is a type of Christ. Every detail of that paschal lamb spoke prophetically of the redemptive role Christ would play as the "Lamb of God" (John 1:29). Every prophetic symbol in this event of Exodus 12 was fulfilled when Christ died for the sins of the world.

Biblical types are often referred to as "shadows of things to come". Such persons and events cast a shadow into the future, portraying the shape of things to come.

Much of the Bible is written in this obscure form and the Laws of Interpretation need to be applied to it in order to understand what the passage is really saying. For example, the account of the building of the Tabernacle in Exodus is not just a record that it was done and how. Each part has a special significance. This type of preaching is Revelatory. It concentrates on bringing to light hidden things. The typographical or Interpretative areas include the Tabernacle, The Song of Solomon, The Parables, The Book of Daniel, Revelation, and much of Ezekiel.

In addition to this many of the experiences of people are also typical rather than merely illustrative, e.g. Elijah and Elisha and the double portion anointing, Ruth and Boaz, Esther, Isaac and Rebekah, etc.

The interpretation and exposition of Bible types is a rather specialised task which deserves the skill of those who are mature and knowledgeable in biblical subjects. Novices should avoid attempting to preach from the more profound types, as unskilled interpretations can lead into all kinds of unfortunate error.

A deep and thorough knowledge of the whole Bible is essential in those who seek to expound the meaning of the types. Such teachings should be substantiated and undergirded by the whole Bible.

When you first attempt to teach from biblical types, please try to keep the following principles in mind:

A. Begin with the simpler types in which the implication is very obvious.

- B. Never try to interpret every tiny detail of the type. Keep to the broader outline of truth.
- C. Avoid being dogmatic as to what the type teaches.
- D. Never base your doctrinal position on the teaching of types. Types should illustrate doctrine, not initiate it.

6. ANALYTICAL PREACHING

This type of sermon relates to the detailed analysing of a subject in order to extract the greatest amount of truth from it, and from this truth, to teach the underlying principles involved.

This is in some ways similar to both Expository and Topical preaching. However, it would generally deal with the passage or subject more exhaustively and minutely than either of these other types of preaching.

There will often be a concentration on "word studies" or even the grammatical construction of the text or passage.

This type of preaching would generally be appropriate for a congregation which already has a solid Biblical understanding, i.e. a Minister's Conference or a Seminar for Church Leaders, etc. It would not generally be suitable for an evangelical meeting, etc.

7. ANALOGICAL PREACHING

Much of the Bible is written in the form of analogy. It teaches a truth from a parallel case. The writers often use a natural subject from which to teach a spiritual truth. It involves the comparison of similar functions, or the process of reasoning from parallel cases. The analogical sermon endeavours to communicate truth contained in an analogy.

Examples of this type of preaching would be the comparison between:

- a) Saul of the Old Testament, and Saul of the New Testament; or
- b) Samuel and Samson - who both had very similar beginnings but totally different endings; or
- c) The two books, Ecclesiastes and Song of Solomon, which though written by the same author, express totally different perspectives on spiritual life. This type of sermon would use the analogies to show the reasons why they are different, and then apply that truth to the hearer's lives.

8. SERIES PREACHING

While this type of preaching may include all of the types listed above, it is different in that each message, while being complete in itself, is essential to the next stage in the series. There would usually be a brief recapitulation of the points covered so far before each new message was begun.

One of the advantages of series preaching is the opportunity to cover a number of subjects cohesively, or without anyone feeling that you singled them out to preach at. i.e. if you preach a series on the Ten Commandments, when you cover lying or adultery, etc. these cannot be

seen to be a personal attack.

Another advantage is that long subjects can be adequately treated in a comprehensive way and thus misunderstandings can be avoided.

The series should not be over-long, except for very gifted preachers.

9. EXHORTATIVE PREACHING

This is listed separately even though any one of the categories mentioned may be exhortative. It is possible to develop a message which has as its primary motive the urging of people to a better relationship with God or a more productive relationship which may include some, all or none of the above types of preaching.

It would be "extemporaneous" or have large sections that were spontaneous. It is the type of preaching which is very inspiring, stimulating and effective in the very short-term. It is not possible to preach this kind of exhortative message constantly. After a few times it ceases to be effective. The preacher would generally draw upon his experience of the Word as a whole rather than base his message on specific study on a specific subject.

This style is often used to deliver the more inspirational type of sermon. Evangelistic messages can be presented very effectively in this way. The sermon flows from the heart and often carries a strong emotional involvement.

This kind of preaching can be exciting and stimulating when presented by a capable and experienced preacher. It stirs the emotions as well as informing the mind.

There are two potential weaknesses in this style. The first is that it often lacks in meaningful content and the minds of the hearers are not edified. The second is that the delivery may become over-emotional and become irrational and unconvincing.

10. PROPHETIC PREACHING

Every preacher should have some element of prophecy "bubbling forth" ("inspired utterance") in his preaching.

However, it is possible that the prophetic anointing can come upon a preacher who will then speak his message with such anointing and authority that it goes beyond ordinary "planned" preaching and is also different to extemporaneous exhortative preaching, which is where the preacher draws upon his Biblical knowledge deliberately, but spontaneously. The prophetic message is often a revelation to the preacher as well. While this may be very stimulating to the preacher, it is quite dangerous unless the preacher has the ability to think fast enough to check his facts while he is speaking. There is a possibility of error or heretical ideas being taught if no prior thought or study has been given to the subject. Note 2 Tim. 2:15.

Prophetic preaching is rare and should be considered the exception rather than the rule, and would be more in the area of the Prophetic Office than other ministry gifts.

PREPARING THE MESSAGE

CHAPTER FIVE

1. THE BIRTH OF THE MESSAGE.

A. The preacher must develop his seed-thoughts and ideas for the message in prayer. Without the sense that God is providing the inspiration for the subject, the preacher becomes a speech maker deciding at his own discretion the points to be made and so speaking from the mind, will only reach minds. However the preacher is essentially the mouthpiece of God. There must be an element of the prophetic in his preaching regardless of his Ministry Gift. He should speak as the oracle of God. 1 Peter 4:11 and Ex. 4:12.

An old recipe for a rabbit dish starts with, "First catch the rabbit" without the rabbit there is no dish. The obvious question facing the preacher in preparing his message is, "What does God want me to say?" "From which text, topic or passage should I draw the message?"

B. Once having prepared his own heart to receive a seed-thought from God, he should develop a sensitivity to the ways in which the Holy Spirit will generally bring that seed-thought to him.

- a) The prevailing needs of the hearers
- b) Current events or circumstances
- c) Direct inspiration from personal study or prayer or revelation - i.e. a word of wisdom
- d) God's dealing with the preacher
- e) The preacher's own vision for the Church.

C. When this seed-thought is discovered, plant it in the heart and allow it time to germinate. Some call this the pressure cooker method - put the ideas into your heart and apply the heat of prayer until it comes to the boil.

Often a message is brought forth before it is ready and is as unpalatable and difficult to assimilate as a half-cooked steak.

Francis A. Schaeffer in his book "True Spirituality" argues that the great battle for men takes place in the realm of thought:

"Ideas are the stock of the thought-world, and from the ideas burst forth all the external things; painting, music, buildings, the love and the hating of men in practice, and equally the results of loving God or re God, in the external world. Where a man will spend eternity depends on his reading or hearing the ideas, the propositional truth, the facts of the gospel ... either his believing God on the basis of the content of the gospel or his calling God a liar The preaching of the gospel is ideas, flaming ideas brought to men, as God has revealed them to us in Scripture. It is not a contentless experience internally received, but it is contentful ideas internally acted upon that make the difference. So when we state our doctrines, they must be ideas, and not just phrases. We cannot use doctrines as though they were mechanical pieces to a puzzle. True doctrine is an idea revealed by God in the Bible and an idea that fits properly

into the external world as it is, and as God made it, and to man as he is, as God made him, and can be fed back through man's body into his thought-world and there acted upon. The battle for man is centrally in the world of thought."

People shape their lives and settle their eternal destinies in response to ideas.

What do we mean by an idea? A glance at the dictionary demonstrates that defining an idea is like packaging fog. The word "idea" itself moved into English from the Greek word "eido" which means "to see" and therefore "to know". An idea sometimes enables us to see what was previously unclear. In common life when an explanation provides new insight, we exclaim, "Oh, I see what you mean!" Still another synonym for "idea" is "concept", which comes from the verb "to conceive". Just as a sperm & egg join in the womb to produce new life, an idea begins in the mind when things ordinarily separated come together to form a unity that either did not exist or was not recognised previously.

The preacher must allow such "ideas" to grow within him until they are ready to be born. No-one is helped by a "still-born sermon".

- A. Every message must have a specific aim. This should be able to be stated in a few words. A smorgasbord of truths will generally be more confusing than helpful, and vague purposes in preaching will defeat the preacher before he starts.

We concentrate our thought with greater efficiency if we know as we begin what we intend to accomplish.

Vague purposes or unthought-through subjects produce sermons like dropped lemon meringue pie - they splatter over everything, but hit nothing very hard!

J.H. Jowett in his Yale lectures on preaching said,

"I have a conviction that no sermon is; ready for preaching, not ready for writing out until we can express its theme in a short, pregnant sentence as clear as crystal. I find the getting of that sentence is the hardest, the most exacting, and the most fruitful labour in my study. To compel oneself to fashion that sentence, to dismiss every word that is vague, ragged, ambiguous, to think oneself through to a form of words which defines the theme with scrupulous exactness - this is surely one of the most vital and essential factors in the making of a sermon: and I do not think any sermon ought to be preached or even written until that sentence has emerged, clear and lucid as a cloudless moon. Yet Sunday after Sunday men and women leave church unable to state the preacher's basic idea because the preacher has not bothered to state it himself."

- B. Aim to get one major concept across.

Three or four points not related to a more inclusive point do not make a message. They make three or four sermonettes all preached at one time.

Surveys of congregations show that people complain that sermons often contain too many ideas. While this is probably not an accurate observation it is more likely true that many sermons fail because they deal with unrelated ideas. A sermon should be a bullet and not buck-shot!

The preacher must discipline himself to avoid including material, however good, which will

develop a second theme.

C. Packaging the "big idea".

To successfully get his own major concept across the preacher will need to carefully package it in a number of illustrations and subsidiary points which will all help to:

- a) re-state,
- b) explain,
- c) prove, and
- d) apply the central truth and theme of the message.

D. Generally this theme will be expressed in, or launched from a specific text or brief passage of scripture.

3. COLLECTING THE MATERIAL

A. From the time that the seed-thought is clear until the message is preached keep a file (or notebook) on that theme. Every day add to it the thoughts gained through prayer and study, or the illustrations from life or your own experience which occur to you.

B. The preacher should give himself to diligent specific study of the subject in the following ways:

a) Reading scriptures associated to the subject and comparing the text or preaching passage with similar passages or Biblical events.

I. A cross reference Bible and concordance will be a useful tool in this type of research.

a) Check the background to the text or passage of scripture by:

I. Ascertaining to whom it was written and why. We cannot decide what a passage means to us unless first we have determined what the passage means. To do this we must sit down before the biblical writer and try to understand what he wanted to convey to his original readers.

II. Its relationship to the context.

III. The use of Bible Dictionaries.

IV. Check key words and the meaning of names in a Hebrew or Greek lexicon which will often bring out hidden truths or illustrations.

V. The use of his library and resource file to support and illustrate the message.

VI. Reading the passage in various translations can also throw new light on it.

VII. Drawing on his memory for key illustrations to give the message relevancy.

VIII. The use of imagination to create parabolic or hypothetical or humorous illustrations.

4. COLLATING THE MATERIAL

The message should have:

A. A Specific Introduction

- a) An interesting story, an attention arresting point, a gripping title or announcement, or the use of some humorous illustration can help to gain the attention of the hearers.
- b) The preacher should make the most of his first twenty-five words to seize the attention of his hearers. This needs to be well planned for maximum impact as this will set the tone for the rest of the message. An introduction should command attention.
- c) The message should never be introduced with an apology. If you are ill-prepared let the congregation discover that fact for themselves. In many cases, they will not find out.
- d) Keep the introduction short. The introduction should only be long enough to capture attention, raise needs, and orient the audience to the subject, the idea or the first point.

An old woman said of Welsh preacher, John Owens, that he was so long spreading the table, she lost her appetite for the meal!

- e) The introduction should not promise more than it delivers. When the preacher fails to meet the need he has raised or the expectation he has aroused, the congregation will feel cheated. Sensational introductions to mediocre sermons resemble broken promises.
- f) The aim or theme of the message should be clearly spelled out in the introduction or immediately following it.
- g) The application of the sermon should begin in the introduction, and not the conclusion.
- h) It is often best to leave the Bible reading until after or part way through the introduction. This will often help to keep the people's attention through the scripture reading, instead of allowing them to tune out because they feel that they already know the subject being read.

B. A Body

The effective message will have a logical sequence and progression of points. The preacher should ensure that it makes sense and is easy for his hearers to follow and remember:

- a) Unless it is remembered it has been lost and is therefore without value. Not everyone will give you their attention, but most people want to remember what the preacher says. It is his responsibility to assist them to do this.

- b) Effective sermons maintain a sense of tension - the feeling that something more must be said if the message is to be complete. There should be the sense right from the start of the sermon that it is leading somewhere specific, thus maintaining the interest of the hearers in the progressively unfolding plot of the message.
- c) Some form of connecting the various points needs to be given careful thought. This will enable the message to flow as one message concentrating totally on the chosen theme instead of degenerating into a spiritual smorgasbord of a multitude of unrelated and unconnected points.

Words or phrases such as "therefore" or "this then leads us to", or an illustration or suitable scripture or a question, can form good connectors.

- d) The various main points illustrating, developing or explaining the theme should then fill up the body of the message:
 - I. There should not be too many.
 - II. Each of these points should be titled to give them clarity. Sometimes the use of alliteration or associated titles will help organise the message and give it clarity.
 - III. Use the listeners general knowledge to lead them from the known to the unknown or from the natural to the spiritual.
 - IV. Give specific attention to illustrating the points you are making. The clearer such illustrations are the easier it will be for the congregation to both understand and remember the message as a whole.
 - V. Each point should be a statement, not a question. Questions do not show relationship because they are not ideas. The points in outline should answer questions, not raise them. Questions may be used in the delivery of the sermon as transitions introducing new points. Such transitional questions precede a point and are placed in parenthesis.
 - VI. Whenever possible lead the people to self discovery of truth by implying the point rather than stating it directly. When you say something directly, it is simply not as potent as it is when you allow people to discover it for themselves.

C. A Conclusion

Just as an airplane pilot needs special planning and concentration to land his craft at a pre-designed point, so the skillful preacher should never be in doubt about where or how his sermon will land. Some outstanding preachers treat this part of the message so seriously that they prepare it first. It should produce a feeling of finality and then allow the minister to call for a verdict from the people. Either directly or indirectly the conclusion of the message should answer the questions raised and make the people face another question. "What am I going to do about this?" "Am I willing for God to work this into my life?", etc.

- a) Some of the elements which can be used to conclude the message are:
- I. An illustration or short story which sums up the "big idea".
 - II. A re-statement of the message in the form of a summary. However it should only be used to tie loose ends together and not be a second preaching of the sermon. Restatement differs from repetition. It says the same thing, but in a different way and is necessary to effective communication. People need to be reminded as much as they need to be informed. One formula for sermon development that should be respected, if only because it is old says, "Tell them what you are going to tell them; tell them what you are telling them; then tell them what you have told them".
 - III. A quotation from some lucid or well-known source or from a hymn or poetry can successfully draw the message to a conclusion.
 - IV. A question - the bible abounds in this type of conclusion.
 - V. Application - a direct statement of truth applied to the hearers was often used by Jesus to sum up His message - i.e. Matt. 21:44, Mark 8:38, etc.
- b) New material or a new direction should not be introduced in the conclusion. These final moments drive home what has been said and must not take the hearers off into new avenues of thought.
- c) The conclusion should conclude the sermon without announcing its appearance. It is better not to say, "In conclusion", or "Finally", as most people have come to expect that "Finally" does not necessarily mean immediately!
- d) The conclusion should make a smooth progression to an altar call possible and enable the application of the message to be acted upon.
- I. Appeal to the mind by summarising the message.
 - II. Appeal to the will be persuasion.
 - III. Appeal to the emotions by motivating a response and application of the message in the hearer's life.

5. PREACHING NOTES

It will be helpful for the preacher to write out his points either in full, or precis form in order to establish to himself if that point really fits in or is necessary to the message. Writing tends to sharpen our thinking.

It is best for the preacher to finally produce an outline of his message covering all his main and subsidiary points, even if he does not use it to preach from. The skeleton outline is best, - a precis of the main and subsidiary points with relevant scriptures.

A. If notes are used, he should learn to use them as a guide rather than a rigid prison of his ideas. The Lord will often provide spontaneous inspiration during the message and the preacher should be free to include it if it does not detract from the theme being dealt with.

B. As much as possible all the main texts and references should be committed to memory.

- C. Always keep the notes, even if they are never used to preach from again. They become an important part of your resource file representing hours of study on that subject.
- D. Always record on your sermon notes where and when the message was preached.

6. PLANNED LANGUAGE

Give diligent and prayerful thought to the use of language to convey your message. It will only be as clear, concise and cohesive as the vocabulary you use. Work hard to find the best ways of saying things so that people will readily appreciate the point and be impelled to act on it. Remember that the aim of education is to simplify not complicate. Commit to memory key phrases, etc. Words can capture and colour the preacher's thoughts.

7. SATURATE THE MESSAGE IN PRAYER

Pray constantly in the Spirit while preparing and collating the material. The Holy Spirit will bring wisdom to your mind and assist you in making it a creative and inspiring message.

8. DEVELOP A POWERFUL MEMORY

It will be helpful to employ your memory as much as possible. If you can memorise your main and subsidiary points and the scriptures to be used, you will be freed from the limitation of your notes and be much more flexible in your preaching. This, however, is not essential. Some of history's most effective preachers read their sermons word for word!

PREACHING RESOURCES

CHAPTER SIX

The successful minister will need to develop a wide range of resources to assist him in the preparation of his messages. He will not be able to retain all the necessary material he has been exposed to for instant recall mentally, and will therefore need to know where he can find the right illustrations and ideas.

The Resource File will be made up of the accumulation of his research, ideas and experiences and should be put together in such a way that he will be able to quickly extract from it this information.

1. THE COLLATION OF RESEARCH DATA AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

The wise minister will read as much as possible. Leaders are readers. The challenge though is to retain what he reads by creating a file of the information gained from reading:-

- a) Always read with a pen or scissors handy. Cut out the sections you feel you can use from magazines or note the subject and central idea from the book together with the Title and page.
- b) It is better to collect too much than too little. Absorb everything you read which catches your attention - collect quotes, ideas, illustrations, information, full articles, news reports, statistics, personal experiences, biographical sketches, catchy titles, statements, humour etc.

2. THE ORGANISATION OF THE RESOURCE FILE.

It is next to useless to collect all this information unless it is properly organised so that you can get access to any item almost immediately.

- a) Use manilla folders and if possible set them up in a filing cabinet in alphabetical order.
- b) Use a separate folder for each subject.
- c) Title the folder with the subject, i.e. - MERCY, FAITH, ANGER, WORSHIP etc.
- d) Number the articles or illustrations in each folder. - If they are small quotes or statements paste or attach them to a sheet of plain paper. Number the sheet and then identify each item on the sheet as :1,:2,:3 etc. i.e. The first item under Mercy may be a full magazine article or story containing 2 or 3 pages mark it Mercy No. 1. The next item may be the sheet of plain paper with a number of small items attached. The sheet would be marked "Mercy No. 2" and each item would be marked as 2:1,2:2,2:3 etc.
- e) Cross reference the items. If an article, quotation etc. could be used under more than one category either copy it if it is small and include it under all applicable categories or file it under the most appropriate one and refer to it under other categories. i.e. Anger

No. 12 may be applicable to Emotions, Hatred, or Forgiveness. You then may have, Emotions No. 27 - see Anger No. 12, Hatred No. 8 - see Anger No. 12, Forgiveness No. 42 - see Anger No. 12.etc

3. DEVELOP YOUR LIBRARY.

Treat books as valuable sources of information and build up your library as much as possible. However all the information should be identified in your resource file also. As you read the books write on a note pad the various items of information and then include this in the file, i.e. Perfection No. 27:5 see "Holiest of All" - Andrew Murray page 106; Discipline No. 4:1 see "Dare to Discipline" - James Dobson, page 21.

4. WRITE AS YOU LISTEN.

When you hear other preachers take notes and as soon as possible afterward transfer their ideas and quotes to your resource file, i.e. Leadership No. 27:1 - "God could only give the 70 Elders what Moses already had. He could not give them more than their leader had received" - Judson Cornwall at Calvary Temple 17/10/82.

Also catalogue all the information on cassette or video tapes, i.e. "Divorce and Remarriage" No. 18 - Message by Jack Hayford - Tape File No. 82.

It means a disciplined approach to study to develop a resource file but it will become one of the greatest investments the preacher will ever make.

THE ART OF COMMUNICATION

CHAPTER SEVEN

There are three types of preachers: those to whom you cannot listen; those to whom you can listen; and those to whom you must listen. The congregation generally decides during the introduction of the message what kind of preacher is addressing them.

A message ineptly delivered arrives still-born.

An inept preacher will be satisfied to get his ideas out of his head or heart, but an effective preacher strives to get his ideas into other people's heads and hearts.

A Russian proverb offers wise counsel to the preacher: "It is the same with men as with donkeys: whoever would hold them fast must get a very good grip on their ears!"

Preaching has not achieved its ultimate unless the message is received, understood and acted upon. While there is a sense in which preaching is declarative, and is valid whether it is received or rejected, it must always be understood.

A mist in the pulpit becomes a fog in the pew.

Before we can effectively understand how real communication occurs, we must ask ourselves some questions:

1. WHAT IS COMMUNICATION?

For many years it was believed that communication was based on the idea of the telephone - that communication occurs when the receivers (people) receive 100% of the sender's (preacher's) message. However people are not necessarily like telephone receivers and are not always able to receive or decode the message sent to them.

In the early 1960's Marshal McLuhan shook the foundations of communication studies with the statement, "The medium is the message".

With this statement he pointed to two basic facts:

- a) The message is not central to the act of communication.
- b) The communicator (medium) is central.

While many people would dispute McLuhan's hypothesis, there is a lot of truth in it as far as preaching is concerned. In fact, it is totally in line with one of the basic principles of ministry - "God's methods are men". Preaching is more than imparting true information. It is the packaging of that information in a man or woman demonstrating the authentic nature of the message. In other words, the preacher becomes his own message regardless of what he preaches.

Communication therefore is nothing less than the establishment and nurturing of relationships between parties involved.

Communication is an event, not merely content. It is a life-inspiring or life-changing meeting. Communication is taking the risk to share yourself with people, rather than your words alone. The ultimate act of communication was when God Himself took on human flesh and became His own message. Jesus did not bring the message. He was the message.

2. WHAT IS THE GOAL OF THE MESSAGE?

This needs to be clearly thought out. What is the preacher's intended result? Does he simply want to be a successful orator? Is his goal to get off the hook for another week? Or has he planned to impart a quality of truth to his hearers which they will receive into their lives and be changed through it. True preaching is not to merely to inform the mind, but to form the life.

Phillip Brooks declared, "You must count your work as a preacher unsatisfactory unless you waken men's brains and stir their consciences?."

Preaching will never go beyond its goals.

3. HOW CAN WE IMPROVE COMMUNICATION SKILLS?

A. The use of Body Language

Communication studies by Psychologist Albert Mehrabian show that 93% of what we convey is unspoken. This dominant non-verbal part of any communication includes both body language, and tone of voice.

The complete message

The preacher should take care to develop skills of conveying himself and his message in consistent ways. If there is a difference between what we feel and what we say, the message will be confused. It is a contradiction to preach about the love of God with a closed fist and a scowl.

As a handshake will tell you much about a person, so your non-verbal communications will reveal much to your audience about your attitude to your message.

During the introduction an audience gains impressions of a speaker that often determines whether or not they will accept what he says. If he appears nervous, hostile, or unprepared, they are inclined to reject him. If he seems alert, friendly, and interesting, they decide he is an able person with a positive attitude toward himself and his listeners.

B. Never be dull

It is the unpardonable sin of preachers. If you dare to be dull it says that you did not care enough about your hearers to get fire and truth from God and package it attractively.

Charles Spurgeon, who was called the Prince of Preachers, says of Jesus:

"Jesus preaching was attractive; He sought above all means to set the pearl in a frame of gold so that it might attract the attention of the people. He was not willing to place Himself in a parish church and preach to a congregation of thirteen and a half, but would preach in a style that people felt they must go to hear Him. Some of them gnashed their teeth in rage and left His presence in wrath, but the multitudes still thronged to hear Him and be healed. It was no

dull work to hear this King of preachers. He was too much in earnest to be dull and too humane to be incomprehensible."

- a) The development of a vivid style of language and presentation will enable a congregation to "experience" the message.

Communication which taps a listener's experience appeals to both mind and feelings. To achieve this the Minister should use both sight and sounds. The congregation sees his gestures and facial expressions and hears his words.

- b) In order to develop the skill of being vivid the Minister must be observant. We cannot represent life clearly unless we first observe it accurately.
- c) Vividness develops when we let nouns and verbs carry our meaning. Adjectives and adverbs clutter speech and keep company with weak words. According to E.B. White, "The adjective has not been built that can pull a weak or inaccurate noun out of a tight place". Strong nouns and verbs stand alone. A "tall man" should become a "giant", a "large bird" a "pelican". Say "he bellowed", not "he talked loudly"; or "he trotted" rather than "he went quickly". Be especially careful of qualifiers like "very", "so", "quite", "rather", "too". They betray a failure to choose words of substance. "Scalding" has strength, "very hot" does not; "excruciating" hurts more than "too painful"; and "scintillating" paints a better picture than "so interesting". When choosing verbs use live ones. Finite active verbs make sentences go. The principle to follow is "Somebody does something". Passive verbs suck the life out of speech. "Opinions and judgments are formed by us on the basis of what we have known" sounds dead. "We think as we have known" possesses vitality. "A good time was had by all" lies there while "Everybody enjoyed himself" moves.

Verbs, like nouns, wake up the imagination when they are precise. He "went" gets him there, but not as clearly as "crawled", "stumbled", "shuffled", "lurched". She "shouts", "shrieks", "rants", "whispers" tells us what "says" does not.

- d) While language is important the most successful antidote for dullness in the pulpit is not brilliance but reality. A preacher who experiences his own sermon will have little trouble conveying it to others adequately. Thomas Betterton (1635-1710) once said, "Actors speak of imaginary things as though they were real, while too often you preachers speak of real things as though they were imaginary". The preacher MUST live his message.

C. Make your message clear

The following quotation illustrates the need for clarity in our communications:

In the classified ad section of a small-town newspaper, the following advertisement appeared on Monday:

"FOR SALE: R.D. Jones has one sewing machine for sale. Phone 958 after 7 p.m. and ask for Mrs. Kelly who lives with him cheap."

On Tuesday: "NOTICE: we regret having erred in R.D. Jones' ad yesterday. It should have read: One sewing machine for sale. Cheap. Phone 958 and ask Mrs. Kelly who lives with him after 7 p.m."

On Wednesday the ad was confused again. Finally on Thursday the ad read: "NOTICE: I, R.D. Jones, have no sewing machine for sale. I smashed it. Don't call 958 as the telephone has been disconnected. I have not been carrying on with Mrs. Kelly. Until yesterday she was my housekeeper, but she quit."

If the message is garbled, the response will be weak or even negative.

1 Cor. 14:8 - "For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?"

Napoleon had three commands for his messengers which apply to any communication: Be Clear! Be Clear! Be Clear!

Years ago President Calvin Coolidge returned home from the church service one Sunday and was asked by his wife what the minister had talked about. Coolidge replied, "Sin". When his wife pressed him as to what the preacher said about sin, Coolidge responded, "I think he was against it".

D. Develop story-telling skills

Learn to tell stories effectively and to paint pictures with words and the tone of your voice. Package the message in illustrated form.

Note Nathan's technique with David - 2 Samuel 12:1-13.

When we gossip, we gossip not about ideas but about people. When popular news magazines such as "Time" handle compound-complex subjects such as the economy or political upheaval in China, they do so in part by discussing the people involved. Narration within a sermon describes the individuals and events embraced in biblical accounts. Every passage has its people - sometimes they stand there laughing, cursing, praying, and at other times they hide and we must look for them. In every text, though, there is always somebody writing and somebody reading. Pull aside a doctrine and you'll find personalities. For example, grace does not exist in cold storage in heaven. There is only someone giving grace and another receiving it. The Holy Spirit knew the value of narration when He filled the Scriptures with it, and Jesus demonstrated the impact of narration in the parables He told.

Narration can supply background in a sermon by filling in the history, setting, or personalities involved.

E. Use Illustrations

Examples or illustrations of your points are like windows that let in light to your message. It is a mistake to fill the sermon with abstract, theoretical or technical information.

Illustrations aid memory, stir emotion, create need, hold attention, and establish rapport between the speaker and the hearer.

Good pulpit communication moves back and forth from the abstract to the concrete. Each time the preacher states a broad general truth, the mind of the hearer asks, "for instance?". That's when you need some example or incident which illustrates the point.

The best illustrations are those which represent your life experience. However, care should be taken with illustrations that they do not take over the message and overshadow the point being conveyed. It is too easy for the illustration to become an end in itself. Never tell a story for its own sake. Draw illustrations from life, from your reading, from history, from science, from current events, and from Biblical examples. As much as possible avoid pre-packaged illustrations as they tend to be lifeless and stilted.

F. Use Humour

The best humour is in real life situations. Avoid slapstick and joke book humour and negative humour. Never rubbish people in jest, and especially not your wife or husband. Use humour like syrup on a sundae or icing on a cake - a little sets it off, but too much spoils it.

G. Relate your message to the people

It must always be relevant:

- a) The preacher must not only answer the questions our fathers asked; he must wrestle with the questions our children ask.
- b) It will not be possible to do this, however clever you may be at putting ideas and words together, unless you are genuinely interested in your people. This brings us back to what communication really is. It is the developing of relationship between the preachers and the hearers.

In order for you to be successful in knowing where your people are in life, you will have to discipline yourself to the dynamic skill of "listening". Find out all you can about your people's needs and study their aspirations and desires.

We speak at 120-180 words a minute, but most people think at least five times faster than that. Often when people are talking to us we let our attention wander. The ability to listen and respond can make the difference in any relationship.

- c) The preacher must adjust the delivery and style of his message to the level of his congregation. Do not feed bones to babies or dishwater to adults!

H. Develop eye contact with the congregation.

Eyes communicate. They supply feedback and at the same time hold an audience's attention. When you look directly at your hearers, you pick up clues that tell you whether they understand what you are saying, whether they are interested, and whether they enjoy the sermon enough to continue listening. An alert speaker will adjust what he says- for example, adding explanation or illustrations - as he interprets these responses. Moreover listeners feel that ministers who "look them in the eye" want to talk with them personally. Therefore pastors who gaze over the audience's heads, stare down at notes, look out of windows, or worse, shut their eyes while they speak, place themselves at a crippling disadvantage. Almost without exception a congregation will not listen attentively to a speaker who does not look at them

while he talks. Just as significant, people mistrust someone who avoids eye contact and as a result they undervalue what he says.

Even though you address a congregation as a group, you talk with them as individuals. As you stand to speak, pause to establish personal contact with your hearers. Move your eyes over the congregation and let them rest for an instant on several different people. Throughout the sermon continue your eye contact. Plan to talk with one listener at a time for a second or two, looking that person in the eye, then turn to someone else. Choose listeners in every section of the auditorium, and keep the eye contact long enough so that they know that you have singled them out and are speaking to them. If the congregation is very large, you can select a small group in one area and look at them for a moment or two, then shift to another group, and continue to do that throughout the sermon. Be sure not only to look at your listeners, but to talk with them.

Concentrate on communicating to each one the message you eagerly want him to understand.

- I. Study the ministry and communication skills of current successful preachers.

4. HINDRANCES TO COMMUNICATION

The preacher is himself the message. He can detract from it by:

- A. His attitude. Never be casual or careless or flippant with the Word. People can see it! Never advise the people that you have not had time to study properly. They will tune out immediately. The lack of study is your problem. Do not make it theirs. If you have been genuinely pressed for time by an unusual amount of urgent pastoral ministry depend on the Holy Spirit's help to minister to the congregation and determine to be better equipped next time.
- B. Dress. Develop the art of being neatly and inspiringly dressed. John T. Molloy, author of the book "Dress for Success" (Recommended Reading) and consultant to many of America's top corporations in the attire their Executives should wear, has many suggestions to make about the appearance of all successful leaders. While allowing for differences in style and taste he states that there are two traits which are common to all successful executives. Their hair is neat and combed, and their shoes are shined.

He also points out that negative reactions are usually generated by certain types of dress and colours. The preacher is foolish to disregard these simple clues to good grooming, and unnecessarily create an antipathy with his congregation which may dilute the impact of his preaching.

One study in grooming showed that people make up their mind whether they like you or not in the first 45 seconds and that the major part of this attitude is based on dress and mannerisms. A Minister does not prove he is a great preacher by looking as though he dressed while looking into a Greek text instead of a mirror.

- C. Mannerisms. The preacher should deal with all offensive mannerisms which will take his hearers' attention from the message. Gestures, habits, eccentricities which detract must be broken. One of the most effective ways to overcome such habits is for the preacher to listen to his audio tapes and better still, to watch his preaching on video tape.

When we address an audience, our position becomes unique and emphatic. Stuffing hands in the pockets, stroking the hair or face, playing with a ring, fussing with a necktie, shuffling the feet are the bad grammar of delivery. Mannerisms and repetitious behaviour peculiar to you may go unnoticed by friends and be tolerated by associates, but in the pulpit they scream for attention and divert people from what you are saying. In the pulpit, therefore, movement of the body must be disciplined to be effective.

D. Poor Grammar and Use of Language.

- a) Since the message is couched in words, the diligent preacher will do all in his power to use them correctly. People tend to subconsciously correct the preacher's bad grammar, pronunciation and emphasis, and so lose concentration on his message. Poor grammar and faulty pronunciation unnerve a listener, and raise doubts about the preacher's competence.
- b) Restrict the use of jargon. Religious terms like eschatology, pneumatology, Johannine, exegesis, etc. used in a congregation setting do more to impress and often to confuse than inform.
- c) Use simple language. Always use a short word in preference to a long word unless it is really necessary. Long words have a paralysis in their tail.

The average person has a vocabulary of about 600 words. The average Minister uses about 5000 words. Billy Graham says, "As I have grown older, I have had to study to be simple".

Legend has it that a few years ago a young copywriter came up with an ad for a new kind of soap: "The alkaline element and fats in this product are blended in such a way as to secure the highest quality of saponification, along with a specific gravity that keeps it on top of the water, relieving the bather of the trouble and annoyance of fishing around for it at the bottom of the tub during his ablution". A more experienced ad man captured the same idea in two simple words: "It floats".

George G. Williams maintains that from 70 to 78 percent of the words used by W.Somerset Maugham, Sinclair Lewis, Robert Louis Stephenson, and Charles Dickens have only one syllable.

Seventy-three percent of the words in Psalm 23, 76 percent of the words in the Lord's Prayer, and 80 percent of the words in 1 Corinthians 13 are one syllable words.

No matter how accurately a phrase or word expresses a speaker's meaning it is worthless if the listeners do not know what it means. "Speak", said Abraham Lincoln, "so that the most lowly can understand you, and the rest will have no difficulty".

- d) Avoid stale comparison, metaphors and clichés. Throw them out and get fresh sayings that clarify the point and keep the audience alert.
- e) Monotone delivery will bore. Emphasis on certain words either by a change of tone, tempo or volume will maintain interest. The phrase in Ps. 23:1, "The Lord is my Shepherd" has only five words. But if it is repeated five times, and each time a different word is emphasised, the meaning changes.

E. Length of the Sermon. The mind cannot assimilate more than the seat can endure! Stop when you get through.

Fredrick Temple, Archbishop of Canterbury in the late 19th Century, was a humane, liberal and sensible man. It is said that he once remarked, "In making a sermon, think up a good beginning, then think up a good ending, then bring these two as close together as you can."

An appropriate prayer could be - "Lord fill my mouth with worthwhile stuff, and nudge me when I've said enough".

F. Avoid weak points. Always assess the total message once you have written your drafts and delete any weak or unnecessary points. Remember that you can fool all the people some of the time, and some of the people all of the time, but you cannot fool all the people all the time. If you persist in using insupportable statements and points you will lose your credibility and eventually your congregation.

Bernard Baruch states, "Every man has the right to his own opinion, but no-one has the right to be wrong in his facts".

The aim of communication must be to make the hearers understand your message, because a truth correctly comprehended will produce its own application. This won't happen unless you can hold the attention of your congregation.

SEEKING THE ANOINTING

CHAPTER EIGHT

Unless the preacher is anointed of the Holy Spirit, there is no point to him preaching his message. Without the impetus of the Spirit his message will be either flat and lifeless, or it will be humanistic in its motivations. 2 Cor. 3:6 makes it clear that without the Spirit, the word will kill.

Peter said, "We have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven" (1 Pet. 1:12). In the New Testament the word was the "message", the preachers were the "messengers", and the Holy Spirit was the "means".

It is self-evident that the anointing of God is not automatic and varies from person to person.

1. THE ANOINTING IS CONNECTED TO THE CALL

God's callings are His enablings and He will provide the resources for those He sends. The level of the anointing for preaching is dependent upon the call to the Ministry. Because a person decides to go and preach, it does not mean he is anointed to preach. Moses' anointing to deliver Israel did not come until the Burning Bush experience. Prior to this, in his own energy he attempted to deliver the people, but ended in failure.

2. THE ANOINTING IS DEPENDENT UPON RELATIONSHIP

Many preachers make the mistake of resting on the anointing given at their call as all that is needed. This is termed "**Travelling in the Gift**". The only way that a successful ministry can be maintained is by constant relationship with God. The Minister's prayer life will be reflected in both the authority and fruit of his Ministry.

The Holy Spirit is the agent of our anointing.

We must understand that when we are joined to the Lord we are one spirit with Him. 2 Corinthians 13:14 and Philippians 2:1 point out that there must be fellowship and communion with the Holy Spirit. He is not coming on us as a special act of God for a specific preaching assignment, but is constantly released within us through us cultivating a deep relationship with Him.

The faith we need to minister is greatly strengthened by this type of relationship. Seek God with all your heart and become sensitive to the direction and impulse of the Holy Spirit within you.

3. THE ANOINTING IS NOT NECESSARILY ASSOCIATED WITH EXTERNAL PHENOMENON

a) While on occasions God will give you feelings or signs that help you release your faith through your preaching, this is not always so. Some of the strongest anointings you will have will be when you feel nothing and may in fact be weak in yourself. Note 2 Cor. 12:9. If God gives to you some blessing or sign associated with His anointing upon your life, do not attempt to repeat it or seek it. These things tend to be at His discretion rather than ours

and can become distractions and diversions from the true anointing on another occasion.

- b) The phenomena of human eloquence is not to be confused with the anointing. Apollos was an eloquent preacher, but not Spirit-filled. Acts 18:24-25, and Hitler was both eloquent and influential in his speeches!

4. MINISTER OUT OF CONFIDENCE TOWARD GOD AND NOT PERSONAL WORTHINESS

Most preachers feel condemned for their failures or inadequacies in Ministry. It is a trap of Satan to get us to look at ourselves instead of God. The effective Minister will cultivate an absolute conviction that God is in charge and will honour His Word. This treasure we have in earthen vessels that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us - 2 Cor. 4:7. Do your best and leave the rest.

5. GOD HONOURS HIS WORD

Preach truth, not fantasy. God can only respond to and anoint His own Word in the mouth of the preacher. He will not support wild ideas or fallacies. Preach salvation, faith, love, holiness of life, and concentrate on things that are clear in the Word. Do not major on obscure subjects or teachings which need to be twisted out of shape in order to stand. The preacher should generally go for souls in every service. One of the driving motivations of the Son of God in coming to earth was to seek and save the lost. God can and will anoint the preacher who cares for souls and reaches out in faith for them.

6. ALWAYS SEEK THE GLORY OF GOD AND NOT SELF-PROMOTION.

The desire to be popular in preaching is an insidious poison which will eventually cripple the preacher. Deal with such motivations in prayer and fasting to subdue any other desire except the unmitigated glory of God. He will never share His glory with another and the anointing is part of His glory. If we take it to ourselves and use it for our own aggrandisement as Samson did, we will be bereft of God's power and presence and left to handle the pressure of ministering by ourselves.

7. TYPES OF ANOINTINGS

Not all anointings are the same as 1 Corinthians 12:7-11 points out. It takes skill, experience and sensitivity to the Holy Spirit to determine what anointing is resting upon us from time to time. There are occasions when an anointing to demonstrate God's power is present (Luke 15:17) and there are times when the Word of God preached is sufficient in itself (Jer. 23:29). On occasions the preacher will be under a strong prophetic anointing but the next time he ministers, that impulse of the Spirit may not be with him. This can be confusing if the preacher does not learn to recognise and differentiate between the various anointings that come at God's discretion from time to time.

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THE PREACHING THAT KILLS

The preaching that kills may be, and often is, orthodox dogmatically, inviolably orthodox. Nothing is as dead as dead orthodoxy, too dead to speculate, too dead to think, to study or to pray.

The letter may be dressed up so as to attract and be fashionable, but the attraction is not toward God nor is the fashion for heaven. The failure is in the preacher. God has not made him. He has never been the hands of God like clay in the hands of the potter. He has been busy about the sermon, its thought, its finish, its drawing and impressive forces, but the deep things of God have never been sought, studied, fathomed, experienced by him. He has never stood before "the throne high and lifted up", never heard the seraphim song, never seen the vision nor felt the rush of that awful holiness, and cried out in utter abandon and despair under the sense of weakness and guilt, and had his life renewed, his heart touched, purged, inflamed by the live coal from God's altar.

THE ENERGY OF THE SPIRIT

James Hervey, the friend of Wesley at Oxford, describes the change which took place in him through his anointing by the Spirit: While his preaching was once like the firing of an arrow, all the speed and force thereof depending on the strength of his arm in bending the bow, now it was like the firing of a rifle ball, the whole force depending on the powder and needing only a finger to let it off.

O Holy Spirit, come upon us in Thy fullness, and teach us this secret of the irresistible might of weakness - of doing great things for God through the energy of that Spirit by whom God does great things for us!

- A.J. Gordon

THE ALTAR CALL

CHAPTER NINE

Sunday, October 8, 1871 - date of the great Chicago fire. D.L. Moody was preaching in Farwell Hall on the text, "What will you do with Jesus who is called the Christ." Soloist Ira Sankey then sang, "Today the Saviour Calls".

Although Mr. Moody heard the fire bells and sensed the air was filled with smoke, he continued urging his audience to consider choosing Christ and to return the following Sunday to make a decision.

That night Farwell Hall burned to the ground and so did D.L. Moody's home and most of Chicago.

Moody said that was the worst mistake he ever made. He determined from that experience to always make the message of Salvation plain and to lovingly encourage spiritual decisions.

1. PREACH FOR A VERDICT

An evangelist is preaching for a decision. That is his heaviest burden. As Leighton Ford said, "If you know you are going to preach and give an invitation, you are going to preach to the point of commitment and response. It takes more out of you: not just the invitation, but the whole message. Because its just not "Take it or leave it"; it's not just giving a little talk, or teaching, or simply preaching a sermon. You are going for a verdict." Once that is done, the Holy Spirit probes the conscience bringing one face to face with the ultimate question that Jesus asked in His day, "Who do you say that I am?"

Billy Graham is equally emphatic that "especially at the invitation there is a great spiritual conflict. This is the part of the evangelistic service that wears me out physically and psychologically and spiritually more than any other. I sense that Satan is battling for the souls of men and women." At the moment of invitation the gathering in the stadium or auditorium becomes more than a mass meeting or a climax of months of preparation: the evangelist and his audience are caught up in the primeval, elemental conflict of the universe, between good and evil, the forces of darkness and the God of light. At that moment, there will be people who turn from darkness into light, from the power of Satan to God.

It is uncertain how the term "Altar Call" originated, but the practice of calling for a decision to be made as a result of the preaching is valid. In fact preaching which does not call for or compel or lead in some way to a decision is like fishing by casting in the bait and hook without having it attached to a line. There are plenty of Biblical examples for the invitation to be made for the hearers to respond to the Lord.

A. Moses - While Moses received the law, the children of Israel became impatient for his return. Their dissatisfaction led to carelessness and idolatry.

When Moses returned, he became angry. He burned the golden calf they were worshipping and threw the ashes upon the waters. The next day Moses called the people together and pressed them for a verdict. "Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, Who is on

the LORD's side? let him come unto me" (Exodus 32:26).

B. Joshua - Joshua, the successor of Moses, also urged a choice. At Shechem he challenged the people, "Choose you this day whom ye will serve" (Josh. 24:15). And the people responded. Joshua then recorded the decision of the people in the book of the Law of God (Josh. 24:26) and erected a stone "decision card" as a witness to their response (24:27).

C. King Josiah - King Josiah also called upon the children of Israel to renew their vows to the Lord (2 Chron. 34:31). But Josiah even went a step further. Verse 32 reads, "He caused all that were present ... to stand to it." Josiah felt that his witness was incomplete until there was a definite affirmation of purpose.

The Lord Jesus, too, set an example for us. He came saying, "Repent ye, and believe the gospel" (Mark 1:15). To Peter and Andrew, He called, "Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men" (Mark 1:17). He said, "Repent", "Believe", "Come", choose. He sought for a decision.

Staggering though it may seem, God is calling people through you and me today. Charles B. Williams translated 2 Cor. 5:20, "So I am an envoy to represent Christ, because it is through me that God is making His appeal. As one representing Christ, I beg you, be reconciled to God."

We must realise that the great Almighty God is calling men and women through what we are, say, and do.

From Genesis to Revelation, we see God's hand reaching out to men and women. God called Noah, "Come thou and all thy house into the ark" (Gen. 7:1). Through direct invitation, through creating circumstances, and through angelic ministry (Heb. 1:14), He continually seeks us.

The New Testament, speaking of Jesus says, "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). The Bible also closes with a loving, all-inclusive invitation: "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Revelation 22:17).

2. DO THE WORK OF THE EVANGELIST.

A. Regardless of your Ministry Gift, the preacher must exercise faith to see souls saved. The overwhelming statistical evidence is that more people come to Christ and stand firm in their faith through the regular ministry of the local Church, than through visiting evangelists.

B. The Pastor will need to break through the barrier of feeling incapable, and believe God for souls in his ministry, and be bold to overcome his natural reticence. He must develop a clear vision of people being saved and pray and believe for this to occur whenever he preaches. He should not give up for lack of results initially. Ask for decisions.

C. While there are no techniques which are valid for this vital part of the service, there are certain guidelines which will be helpful in conducting an appeal for decisions:

- a) Plan for it. The preacher should spend a considerable time in preparation and prayer for the altar call. It is almost as important as the message. If he has waited on God and gotten a plan, then at the end of the service when he is under emotional stress or is feeling drained he will not be caught without direction.

- b) Be sensitive to the mood of the meeting, and the leading of the Holy Spirit. There are times when the appeal will be needed before you have preached all you planned to. Quit at that point and call for decisions. There are occasions when the Altar Call could even precede the preaching.
- c) Be flexible. Avoid being too predictable in the way you conduct the appeal. While there are certain basics such as inviting people to identify themselves, there are a variety of ways in which you can do
- d) Be specific. Spell out clearly what you are appealing for and make it absolutely plain what you want the respondents to do. You may call for different needs in succession.
- e) Establish contact with the convert. Do not let people slip through your hands because you are embarrassed or fearful of offending them. It is essential to have them make a specific profession of faith - Rom. 10:9.
- f) Pray with the convert and for them.
 - I. Lead them in specific prayer renouncing and repenting of their sin and asking for cleansing. Always include a faith element by having the convert declare that he is saved.
 - II. Lay hands on them and break the power of habits and demonic forces in their lives.
- g) Have Counsellors trained and ready. The Counsellors should be standing by the person making a decision while the preacher is leading them in prayer. It is essential that there be no time delay between the finish of the prayer and the introduction to the Counsellor. They should be counselled in a place that is free from distraction and the Counsellor should be fully familiar with all of the follow-up procedures of the Church and should pray with the counsellee again before they leave.
- h) Use music and singers during the appeal. Music is a God-given facility for conveying the touch of the Spirit to the human heart. Note 1 Chron. 25:1, 2 Chron. 20:22, 2 Kings 3:15. This atmosphere of praise to God is most conducive to a spiritual response by the hearers.
- i) Be loving. Note 1 Peter 4:8 - Love shall cover a multitude of sins. Never be offensive or crude or rude. Do not expose or embarrass people. Be considerate and courteous. Put yourself in the place of the first time visitors to your Assembly whom you are seeking to get a decision from. Do not use humour at this point. While it may be acceptable in the message, it would almost never be acceptable during the appeal.
- j) Don't drag it out. Long appeals will weary the people and turn them off rather than draw them in. Have faith that the Holy Spirit is doing His convicting work in the congregation and if there is no response in a reasonable time, don't feel uncomfortable about dismissing the congregation.
- k) Generally hold an Altar Call in every service. Take every opportunity to compel a decision for Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit will honour the preaching of the Word of God and not just your gospel sermons.

CONCLUSION.

Expect the convicting power of the Holy Spirit to be present whenever you preach to produce real repentance. The word "convict" means "to awaken to a sense of guilt or sin".

Only the Holy Spirit can convict a lost soul of his sin and lead him to repentance. Jesus said, "No man can come to me except the Father draws him (Jn. 6:44)." Repentance is a gift conveyed to sinful man by the Holy Spirit - Acts 16:14, 11:18.

Spirit anointed preaching is a method used by God to strike conviction into the hearts of sinners and professed Christians alike.

Picture Savonarola under the anointing of the Spirit fearlessly raising his voice in condemnation of sin in pleasure-mad Florence, Italy. The church had become so corrupt that as a preacher he had to stand alone. Ever larger crowds came to the cathedral to hear him that there was scarcely room to breathe. The hearers were as clay in his hands. Tears gushed from their eyes, they beat their breasts and cried unto God for mercy: the church echoed and re-echoed their sobs.

Look at Jonathan Edwards preaching his famous sermon, "Sinners in the hands of an angry God." People actually grasped hold of the pillars and pews for they felt that they were sliding into the pit of hell!

See John Wesley at Epworth. Denied the use of the church where his father had pastored for 40 years, he stood on his father's tombstone and preached the gospel. Conviction became so intense that at times his voice was drowned out by the cries of the penitents and the sound of weeping.

Consider George Whitfield preaching to ten thousand coal miners. As the word of God began to penetrate their hearts little white gutters began to appear as the tears coursed down their soot covered cheeks. Hundreds were thoroughly converted.

Surely Spirit anointed preaching is a God chosen method of bringing Holy Spirit conviction.

Finally: do your best and leave the rest to God. One of our strongest temptations is to try and do too much. Jesus moved with a serenity and quietness in His ministry, and yet at the end of His ministry He said to His Father, "I have finished the work which you gave me to do". He did not heal all the sick, feed all the poor, or raise all the dead. He did what He could.

A PREACHERS PRAYER

*I do not ask,
That crowds may throng the temple,
That standing room be at a price,
I only ask that as I voice the message,
They may see Christ.*

*I do not ask
For churchly pomp or pageant,*

*Or music such as wealth alone can buy;
I only ask that as I voice the message,
He may be nigh.*

*I do not ask
That man may sound my praises,
Or headlines spread my name abroad;
I only pray that as I voice the message
Hearts may find God*

*I do not ask
For earthly place or laurel
Or of this world's distinction any part,
I only ask, when I have voiced the message,
My Saviours heart.*
