

LESSON 6

THE OUTLINE OF THE SERMON

The messages of the Bible reveal that those who proclaimed the Word had some plan of organization in mind. The messages indicate a logical development though a clear outline is not always evident since the recorded messages are often brief and may only be a summary of what was said. For example, on the day of Pentecost, the Scriptures indicate that after Peter first spoke to the people, he testified with many other words (Acts 2:40).

The Classifications of Outlines

Sermons are usually classified or identified according to some standard. A sermon can be classified according to the method of organization, that is, how it is arranged according to the foundational elements.

The textual sermon

A message is called a textual sermon when the main points (major divisions) of the sermon are derived from the text. The main points are expressed in words or phrases of the text itself. For example, in Lesson 5 an outline for the message with the subject "Three Requirements for the Believer" could be derived from the text "He hath shown thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" (Micah 6:8) as follows:

- I. Believers Should Do Justly.
- II. Believers Should Love Mercy.
- III. Believers Should Walk Humbly.

Each of these main points of the outline is expressed in a phrase of the text. These points were also indicated in the predicate of the sentence cited as a proposition for the sermon in the previous lesson.

The expository sermon

In an expository sermon the whole outline of the message is derived from the text, that is, at least the major points (main points) and the minor points (subpoints) come from the text. In the

IS THIS STATEMENT TRUE OR FALSE?

The messages of the Bible indicate there was no plan of organization in the mind of those who proclaimed them. _____

(false)

A textual sermon is a message in which the _____ points are derived from the _____.

(main, text)

The whole outline of the message is derived from the text in an _____ sermon. (Compare your answer with the text.)

previous lesson, the sermon with the subject "Four Aspects of Testifying for Christ" based on Luke 24:44-49 could be arranged as follows:

- I. Christians Testify by Using the Scriptures.
 1. They explain how Christ fulfilled the Scriptures (v. 44).
 2. They depend on Christ for understanding the Scriptures (v. 45).
- II. Christians Testify to the Gospel of Christ.
 1. They tell of His suffering unto death (v. 46a).
 2. They tell of His resurrection to life (v. 46b).
- III. Christians Testify of Forgiveness through Repentance.
 1. They urge repentance from sin (v. 47).
 2. They claim forgiveness through Christ (v. 47).
- IV. Christians Testify through the Power of the Spirit.
 1. They receive the promise of the Spirit (v. 49a).
 2. They receive power for the task (v. 49b).

Both the major points and the minor points are derived from the text as indicated by the verses cited after the minor points. The text of an expository sermon is usually a longer passage of Scripture, but could be one or two verses. A careful analysis of words and phrases could provide ideas for the major and minor divisions.

The topical sermon

In a topical sermon the main points are derived from the subject or topic of the sermon rather than the text. In the previous lesson the sermon with the subject "Two Meanings of Salvation" based on the passage "by grace ye are saved" (Eph. 2:5b) could be outlined as follows:

- I. Salvation Means Deliverance from All Evil.
- II. Salvation Means Preservation for All Good.

The subject was based on the word "saved" in the text. Salvation has the meanings of deliverance and preservation. These meanings derived from the subject provided the main points of the sermon. They are not expressly indicated in the text itself, but are indicated in other portions of Scripture and from the experiences of men.

A sermon could be organized with some combination of these methods. A textual-topical sermon is a message which receives some of its main points from the text and some from the subject of the sermon.

In a topical sermon the _____ points are derived from the _____ or topic of the sermon rather than the _____.

(main, subject, text)

NOW THAT YOU HAVE STUDIED THE THREE CLASSIFICATIONS OF SERMON, IDENTIFY THE DEFINITION OF EACH (TEXTUAL, EXPOSITORY, TOPICAL).

_____ --The whole outline of the message is derived from the text.

_____ --The main points are derived from the subject or topic of the sermon rather than from the text.

_____ --The main points of the sermon are derived from the text.

(Compare your answers with the text.)

Sermons may also be classified according to the subject matter of the message. The two main topics under this classification are doctrinal sermons, which are sometimes called theological sermons, and ethical sermons, which are sometimes called Christian life sermons. Doctrinal sermons are those concerned primarily with beliefs, that is, truths to be accepted. Ethical sermons are concerned primarily with the way people live or behave, that is, things people should do or not do. In some sermons the concern is for both doctrinal and ethical matters. These would be classified as doctrinal-ethical sermons. Sermons may be classified under other categories of subject matter, often related to objectives, such as evangelistic, devotional, social, apologetic, philosophical, practical, or ecclesiastical (church) sermons.

The Organization of Outlines

The effective sermon has a well-arranged outline, which provides a logical organization of the preacher's thoughts around his text and subject. The outline provides unity to the message and coherence to the thoughts that make up the message, that is, the interrelationship of ideas. A good outline helps the preacher remember his message and deliver it with freedom. A good outline helps the people follow his reasoning and remember the message. The sermon outline consists of the introduction, the body and the conclusion.

The introduction

The introduction is the beginning of the sermon, the part that leads into the body of the message. A proper introduction is necessary to provide a gradual approach to the central message and to direct the attention of the hearers to that message. It should arouse the interest of the people and direct their thinking toward the body of the sermon which should fill some need in their lives. These facts are evident in a study of the message of the apostles in the Book of Acts.

The introduction should begin with a sentence or question that has been thought out carefully, one that is striking, thought provoking, or interest catching. It should include the reading of the text and a statement of the subject. It may include the objective of the message or an appeal for the attention of the hearer based on some particular needs. It may also include a brief illustration or background information about the text. The main points of the outline are generally not stated to allow for some expectation or suspense for the

The two classifications of sermons according to subject matter are: _____ and _____.

MATCH DOCTRINAL SERMONS AND ETHICAL SERMONS WITH THEIR MAIN EMPHASIS.

- | | |
|-----------------|------------------------------------------------|
| _____ ethical | 1. concerned primarily about beliefs or truths |
| _____ doctrinal | 2. concerned with behavior |

(doctrinal, ethical, 2, 1)

The sermon introduction leads into the body of the _____.

The introduction should arouse the _____ of the people.

(message, interest)

The introduction should include the reading of the _____ and a statement of the _____. It may include the _____ of the message and a brief illustration or background information about the _____. It should be appropriate for the _____ and _____ and for the _____ and _____.
(Compare your answers with the text.)

hearers, but they may be stated if necessary for the understanding of the people. The introduction should be appropriate for the text and subject and for the occasion and people. It should be clear and understandable and comparatively brief. The last statement of the introduction should be a transitional sentence, that is, one that moves from the introduction to the first point of the main body of the outline.

The body

The body of the sermon is the main part of the message and follows the introduction. The outline of the body provides the main framework or plan of the sermon. A properly planned outline provides unity to the message, bringing all the interrelated parts together. It provides order to the arrangement of the major and minor points or divisions. A good outline provides forward movement from one point to the next reaching a climax in the conclusion. It should provide a proportional arrangement of the parts, allowing proper time for the demands of each and protecting against unbalanced emphases.

The number of points of the outline are determined by the foundational elements of the sermon, especially the text, the subject, and the objective; and by the nature of the preacher, the occasion for the sermon, and the hearers of the message. Ordinarily for a twenty to thirty minute sermon, from two to six major points are adequate. This would provide for a total of from six to ten minor points. For example, a sermon with two major points would allow from three to four minor points for each major point, a maximum of eight minor points. A sermon with three major points would allow from two to three minor points for each major point, a maximum of nine minor points. A sermon with four major points should not have more than two minor points for each major point, providing a maximum of eight points. These are only suggested arrangements, but should be considered to avoid unbalanced arrangements and unduly long sermons.

The points or divisions of an outline should be arranged in simple, clear sentences. The major points should be derived from the subject of the sermon, and none of them should be equal to the subject. Each should be a distinct idea coming from the subject and should be distinct from the other major points. They should be stated in a brief sentence similar to each other, usually with the same subject. The relationship of the minor points to each major point should be similar to the relationship of the major points to the subject. For example,

The last statement of the introduction should be a _____ sentence which moves to the first point of the _____ of the outline.

(transitional, main body)

The main framework or plan of the sermon is provided by the _____ of the _____.

(outline, body)

The foundational elements of the sermon determine the number of _____ of the outline.

(points)

IS THIS STATEMENT TRUE OR FALSE?

The points of an outline should be arranged in long, involved sentences. _____

The major points of the sermon are derived from the _____.

(false, subject)

the topical sermon mentioned above could be outlined as follows:

Text: "By grace ye are saved" Ephesians 2:5b

Subject: Two Meanings of Salvation

Title: Saved from What?

Proposition: Two meanings of salvation are deliverance from all evil and preservation for all good.

Objective: The objective is to show the hearers the benefits of salvation in order that they might receive Christ and salvation.

Introduction

- I. Salvation Means Deliverance from All Evil.
 1. Salvation means deliverance from sin.
 2. Salvation means deliverance from present evils.
 3. Salvation means deliverance from death.
 4. Salvation means deliverance from hell.
- II. Salvation Means Preservation for All Good.
 1. Salvation means preservation for God.
 2. Salvation means preservation for present blessings.
 3. Salvation means preservation for eternal life.
 4. Salvation means preservation for heaven.

Conclusion

The transition from one point to another is usually a sentence that includes the statement of that point. It may include such phrases as a numbering sequence as "first of all," "secondly," or "lastly," or a transitional statement or word as "let us now think," "furthermore," "therefore," or "now." A brief question or summary statement might also provide the transition, or even a change in voice, posture, or gesture. In the outline cited above, the following transitional statements could be utilized:

First of all, salvation means deliverance from all evil.

But salvation also means preservation for all good.

The transitional statements could also be the following:

Let us first consider salvation as meaning the deliverance from all evil.

Moreover, let us consider salvation as meaning the preservation for all good.

The conclusion

The conclusion of the sermon brings the message to a close. It leads out of the body of the sermon and leads into the invitation. Its primary purpose is to

Transition from one point to another is made in several ways. Some of them are:

1. A sentence that includes the statement of that _____.
2. Numbering sequence, such as _____.
3. A brief _____.
4. Change in _____, _____, or _____.

(point, first of all, lastly, question, voice, posture, gesture)

The message is brought to a close with the _____.

(Compare your answer with the text.)

apply the message to the lives of the people. The conclusion should be an appropriate ending to the message, bringing it to a climax, and should be personal in its application to the hearers of the message. It should embody the primary objective of the sermon.

The body of the sermon should flow smoothly into the conclusion, often with a transitional statement. The conclusion may include a brief summary of the message, which often provides the transition. It may include a story that illustrates the message or a poem that expresses the meaning of the message, especially the words of a familiar hymn. It may include questions which prompt the hearers to think and to decide. Above all, the conclusion should include applications of the message to the lives of the hearers. This should include direct appeal in the form of commands, such as "repent," "believe," "trust in Christ," or "come today," and in the form of the second person (you) in language, such as "you must come," "you should wait no longer," or "you must trust Him now."

The length of the conclusion depends on the appeal of the message and the needs of the people. Often it will be approximately the same length as the introduction, but may be longer depending on the urgent need of the hearers. The conclusion should move smoothly into the invitation when an appeal for decisions is made. Often there will be no break or obvious transition leading into the invitation. Occasionally a prayer may be appropriate between the two. In fact, the conclusion could be the invitation.

The primary purpose of the conclusion is to apply the _____ to the _____ of the people.
(message, lives)

IS THIS STATEMENT TRUE OR FALSE?
It is possible for the conclusion to be the invitation. _____
(true)

Home Study Exercise

Basic activity (Levels 1, 2, and 3)

1. What are three classifications of sermons according to method?

2. What is a textual sermon? _____

3. What is an expository sermon? _____

4. What is a topical sermon? _____

5. What are two ways sermons may be classified according to subject matter?

6. How would you describe the sermon introduction? _____

7. What does the outline of the body of the sermon provide? _____

8. What determines the number of points of an outline? _____

9. How should the points of an outline be arranged? _____

10. From where are the major points of an outline derived? _____

11. What are the ways that a transition can be made from one point to another?

12. What does the conclusion of a sermon accomplish? _____

13. What is the primary purpose of the conclusion? _____

14. Develop the major points of an outline from the foundations of the sermon prepared for last week's lesson using full sentences for each point.
Text : _____
Subject : _____
Title : _____
Proposition : _____

Outline : _____

Supplementary activity (Levels 2 and 3):

Read Chapter VI, pages 95-137, of the textbook.

1. What do the authors mean by the title of the sermon?
2. What are the guides for outlining suggested by the textbook?
3. What are the qualities essential to every part of the sermon?
4. What should the conclusion also include besides the above qualities?
5. Describe the types of conclusions that can be used?
6. What are the purposes of the introduction?
7. Develop a textual sermon outline observing the suggestions for outlining given in the textbook. Give the major points and the minor points with the foundational elements using the Sermon Outline in Appendix A.

Advanced activity (Level 3):

1. Explain the essential qualities of the title or subject of the sermon according to the textbook.
2. Explain how to begin to outline the body of the sermon according to the textbook.
3. What types of introductions can be used for a sermon?
4. Develop an expository sermon outline with the foundational elements, arranging the major and minor points in sentence form.

Seminar Discussion

1. Discuss the merits and the weaknesses of the three classifications of sermons according to method.
2. Discuss the importance of the introduction, the body, and the conclusion of the sermon.
3. Let each student present his sermon outline with the foundational elements according to Appendix A using a chalkboard if available. Allow the other students to offer suggestions for improvement.