

UNIT III

PREACHING THE SERMON

Unit III consists of discussions concerning the preaching of the sermon. This involves essential matters relating to both the sermon and the act of preaching.

Lesson 10 is a study of the very important matter of the application of the sermon since applying the message to the lives of the hearers is the ultimate end of preaching. The discussion involves the nature, the use, and the types of application and the use of persuasion.

Lesson 11 is an investigation of the style of the sermon including the qualities of clarity, energy, and elegance and the improvement of style. The discussion also includes the use of imagination and the use of humor in the sermon.

Lesson 12 is a discussion of the delivery of the sermon and includes a study of the setting for delivery, the methods of delivery, and the voice and actions in delivery. The study concludes with a discussion of the responses to preaching, the fulfillment of the objective of the sermon.

LESSON 10

THE APPLICATION OF THE SERMON

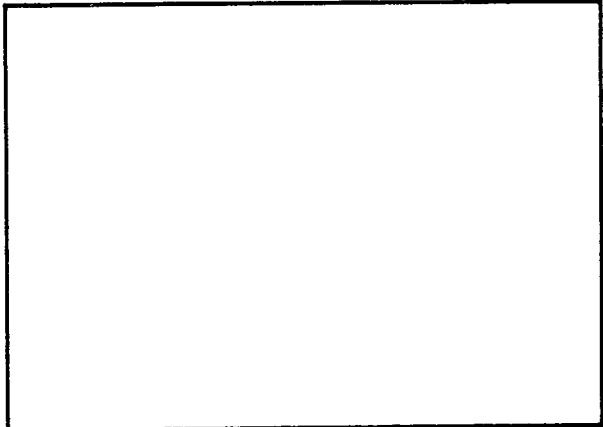
The application of the sermon is a primary function of preaching. The British Baptist preacher C.H. Spurgeon went so far as to say, "Where the application begins, there the sermon begins." Relating the message of the sermon to the listeners is of the utmost importance in preaching, and yet this need is sadly neglected in the proclamation of the Word of God. Application is the ultimate end of the sermon, the accomplishment of the sermon objective.

The Nature of Application

Application is that portion of the sermon in which the message is related to the lives of the hearers in a convincing way so that they will believe the message and act accordingly. In application the preacher applies the message of God to the people, offers ways to accomplish what God expects of them, and persuades them to respond to the appeal. It shows the people how the subject applies to them and offers ways to fulfill its demands. A summons is given to the listeners to do the will of God and an appeal is made to do it. Thus, in sermon application three distinct aspects are evident: (1) applying the message to the people, (2) offering ways to fulfill the demands, and (3) persuading the people to respond. Application then is a distinguishing factor in preaching which sets it apart from teaching, lecturing, and other forms of speaking.

The Use of Application

The use of application is evident in the preaching of the apostles. The messages recorded in the Book of Acts conclude with an appeal to the people to respond to the Gospel (Acts 2:38; 3:19; 4:12; 5:31-32; 10:43; 13:38-41). The appeal of the apostles is variously expressed as repentance, faith, obedience, and baptism. The last record of Paul's ministry states that "he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets" (Acts 28:23). The application appears primarily in the conclusion of the message when the demands of the Gospel are focalized sharply on the minds and hearts



The portion of the sermon in which the message is related to the lives of the hearers is the _____.

The three distinct aspects of sermon application are:

1. _____ the message to the people;
2. _____ ways to fulfill the demands;
3. _____ the people to respond.

What is the distinguishing factor in preaching which makes it different from teaching of lecturing? _____

(application, applying, offering, persuading, application)

In Acts, the appeal to the people by the apostles is expressed as _____, faith, _____, and _____.

(repentance, obedience, baptism)



of the people. Certainly a strong appeal should be made in the sermon conclusion where the objective of the message is embodied laying a basis for the appeals of the invitation. However, application of the message may also be made throughout the sermon as truths are stated and explained. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus applied the principles of the Kingdom all throughout the message as they were stated and illustrated (Matt. 5-7). Occasionally a brief appeal may be made in the introduction to encourage attention or to focalize a need. Paul urged the attention of the mob at Jerusalem as he defended his actions on the basis of his conversion and call into the Lord's service (Acts 22:1).

In application the preacher stands as the representative and spokesman for God. Paul wrote that the message of reconciliation had been given to Christians and therefore said, "We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God" (2 Cor. 5:20). The preacher especially pleads on behalf of God for men to do what He expects of them. Paul charged the young preacher Timothy to "preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (2 Tim. 4:2). He also urged Titus concerning the message of salvation saying, "These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee" (Titus 2:15). The application of God's message is indicated in these passages by such words as "beseech", "pray" (beg), "reprove", "rebuke", and "exhort".

Application may be appropriate or necessary on the basis of a statement of fact, an explanation of a truth, an exposition of a Scripture passage, a presentation of an obligation, an illustration of a concept, or a conclusion of an argument. For example, Jesus used a parable to make a final appeal to His hearers in the Sermon on the Mount to do the things He had said as an obligation of discipleship (Matt. 7:24-27). Peter made an evangelistic appeal at the close of his message on the day of Pentecost after he proclaimed the Gospel out of his exposition of Scripture (Acts 2:38-40). The application should be the natural outcome of the expression of truth, whether Scripture passages, or doctrines, or duties. Applications should be made with simplicity and clarity and appeals made with feeling and force according to the situation. Application may be directed toward the lost or toward the saved, or both. It may have meaning or importance to some but not others according to their needs, whether comfort, encouragement, warning, rebuke, reproof, exhortation, enlightenment, direction, or challenge.

Where does the application appear most often in the sermon? _____

(conclusion)

IS THIS STATEMENT TRUE OR FALSE?

In application the preacher stands as the representative and spokesman for God.

(Compare your answer to the text.)

CHOOSE THE CORRECT WORD FOR EACH BLANKS FROM THE FOLLOWING WORDS: explanation, illustration, conclusion, exposition, statement, presentation.

Application may be appropriate or necessary on the basis of a _____ of fact, an _____ of a truth, an _____ of a Scripture passage, a _____ of an obligation, an _____ of a concept, or a _____ of an argument.

The application should be the natural outcome of the expression of _____. It should be made with _____ and _____.

(statement, explanation, exposition, presentation, illustration, conclusion, truth, simplicity, clarity)

The Types of Application

Several types of application are used in preaching with effectiveness. The most prominent kind in New Testament preaching and with many outstanding preachers since the first century is direct appeal. In this type of application, the imperative mood which expresses a command is utilized, or the second person in address (you) is used with a verb of exhortation or obligation. The preacher speaks directly to his hearers and to their needs, urging them to faith and duty. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus throughout His message commanded His hearers to live righteously. After explaining that His disciples were the light of the world, He commanded, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5:16). Peter, at the close of his message on Pentecost, used the second person plural and the imperative mood as follows as he commanded, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38). At times, the preacher may identify himself with the people by using the first person plural with a verb of obligation as the words "we must" in the following closing statement of Peter before the rulers and priest, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). The preacher may also use indirect appeal in application in which an obligation is implied in a statement but not specifically commanded or urged. For instance, Peter appealed to the council at Jerusalem in the following way regarding the salvation of the Gentiles by grace alone, "Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they" (Acts 15:10-11). Rhetorical questions as in the above instance can be used effectively in indirect appeal.

The preacher may also use remarks in application. These are brief statements made from time to time throughout the sermon, applying principles to the lives of the hearers. Jesus made a number of remarks throughout the Sermon on the Mount in application of the principles of the Kingdom of God (Matt. 5-7). He made remarks applying the Golden Rule to His disciples, "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets" (Matt. 7:12). Remarks may be expressed either in direct appeal or indirect appeal. The preacher should be careful that the application is related to the subject under discussion. Inferences

The most prominent kind of application is _____ . In this type of application, the preacher speaks directly to his hearers and to their needs urging them to _____ and _____ .

(direct appeal, faith, duty)

In the use of indirect appeal, an obligation is implied in a statement but not specifically _____ or _____ .

(commanded, urged)

The use of remarks in application means that the preacher makes brief statements from time to time throughout the sermon applying _____ to the lives of the _____ .

(principles, hearers)

may also be used in application. These are appeals made on the basis of a Scripture passage or a statement in the sermon in which the application is inferred, deduced, or implied, and not directly indicated. An inference may be an appeal to faith or duty, as this appeal to rejoice by Jesus inferred from the last beatitude. "Blessed are ye, when man shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you" (Matt. 5:11-12). The preacher should make certain that the inference is related to the subject under discussion. In the above instance Jesus related the persecution for His sake to the rewards that follow for those who suffer persecution for Him. Application may also take the form of practical instructions or lessons. The preacher states or explains a Scripture passage or subject and then draws lessons from the statement or explanation, applying the message to the lives of the hearers. For example, the following lessons may be drawn from Paul's attitude at the end of his life as revealed in his second letter to Timothy:

For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing (2 Tim. 4:6-8).

1. We should strive in the good fight of faith.
2. We should strive to finish our course of faith.
3. We should strive to keep the faith.

Then we also shall receive a crown of righteousness from the Lord on that day when He shall appear again on earth.

The three practical instructions could be discussed more fully in the application to the congregation.

The Use of Persuasion

The principal aspect of application is persuasion in which the hearers are urged and influenced to decision and action by reason or emotion. It is not enough to convince men of the truth of God and to offer ways to accomplish His will. Men must be persuaded to do the will of God, which involves a decision of the will of man. Paul wrote, "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men" (2 Cor. 5:11). At Ephesus, "he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three

IS THIS STATEMENT TRUE OR FALSE?

Inference as a type of application is an appeal made on the basis of something in the sermon in which the application is directly indicated. _____

(false)

The form of application in which the preacher draws lessons from a previous statement or explanation in the sermon is called _____.

(practical instructions)

What is the principal aspect of application?

By persuasion hearers are urged and influenced to _____ and _____ by _____ or _____.

To do the will of God, men must be _____.

(persuasion, decision, action, reason, emotion persuaded)

months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God" (Acts 19:8). King Agrippa said in response to Paul's preaching, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian" (Acts 26:28). In Rome at a gathering of the Jews at his lodging, "he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening. And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not" (Acts 28:23-24). Persuasion is essential to preaching; men must be urged to respond to God.

Persuasion is based on reason and emotions which influence the will. The appeal of reason should be utilized appropriately and extensively in persuasion. At Corinth Paul "reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks" (Acts 18:4). In this scientific age many people are persuaded to decide for Christ by appeals based on logical reasoning. But the emotions are also important in persuasion, especially the emotions of fear and love. The appeal of fear has been effective in influencing many to do the will of God, both believers and unbelievers. Paul said, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror [fear] of the Lord, we persuade men" (2 Cor. 5:10-11). However, the appeal must be balanced with the appeal of love. Following the above statement, Paul said, "For the love of Christ constraineth [compels or urges] us; because we thus judge [are convinced], that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again" (2 Cor. 5:14-15). The appeal to duty is often necessary. Paul further stated, because the message of reconciliation was committed to believers, "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray [plead with] you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God" (2 Cor. 5:20). The appeal to happiness is influential with many people. Jesus appealed to happiness (blessedness) at the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount in the Beatitudes (Matt. 5:3-12). Other effective appeals are dedication, gratitude, service, holy living, and the example of Christ.

The preacher should be careful in his use of persuasive techniques and emotional appeals. His attitude toward the listeners should be genuine and earnest, coming out of a heart of love and concern for them to do the will of God. He should be genuinely enthusiastic to serve the Lord and honor Him. This type of enthusiasm only comes from the Spirit of God moving in his heart. He should be careful not to be misunderstood or to be deceitful in persuasion. He should avoid appealing to shallow

Are some people persuaded to decide for Christ by appeals based on reason? YES, NO?

Which two emotions are especially important in persuasion and need to be balanced?
_____ and _____

The appeal to _____ is often necessary and the appeal to _____ is influential with many people.

(yes, fear, love, duty, happiness)

feelings and becoming overly emotional in his exhortation, but on the other hand he should not restrain true emotions or give the appearance of indifference or unconcern. His appeals should be both to reason and to emotions, but his ultimate goal should be the decision of the will which leads to action. He should preach with a sense of urgency for a verdict in the hearts of the listeners as that created by the preaching of Peter on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:40-41). Paul pleaded with the Corinthians truly to receive the grace of God, saying, "For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured [helped] thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. 6:2). This sense of urgency to decide for Christ should be manifested throughout the preacher's message, but especially in the conclusion where the claims of Christ are focalized on the lives of the hearers and the demands of the Gospel are pressed upon their hearts. The invitation following the sermon is an opportunity for the preacher to give his hearers the opportunity to make decisions for Christ and to make them publicly known. Whenever possible, the preacher should give an invitation to respond to his message, whether he asks them to pray where they sit, to indicate a decision by a show of hands or by standing, or to come forward during a service to make public a decision for Christ.

The preacher should make appeals with a sense of _____.

Opportunity for public decisions for Christ can be given by the preacher during the invitation time following the _____.

(urgency, sermon)

Home Study Exercise

Basic activity (Levels 1, 2, and 3):

1. What is meant by the application of the sermon? _____

2. What are the three distinct aspects of sermon application? _____

3. Why is sermon application so important? _____

4. In the Book of Acts, the appeal of the Apostles is expressed how? _____

5. In what part of the sermon does application appear most often? _____

6. In application the preacher stands as the _____
_____ for God.
7. When is application appropriate or necessary? _____

8. How should application be made? _____

9. Application may have meaning or importance according to what needs? _____

10. What are the types of application? _____

11. What is direct appeal? _____

12. What is indirect appeal? _____

13. What is meant by persuasion? _____

14. Why is persuasion so important? _____

15. Name five appeals used in persuasion. _____

16. Application should be made with a sense of _____.

17. When should the appeal for public decisions be made? _____

18. Choose a passage of Scripture and make a brief application of it. _____

Supplementary activity (Levels 2 and 3):

Read pages 123-125 of the textbook.

1. Explain the authors' view of application in the conclusion.
2. What do the authors mean by direct appeal?
3. According to the study guide, how should the preacher use persuasive techniques and appeals?
4. Read 2 Corinthians 5:18-21. Explain the place of the preacher and his message in God's reconciliation of the world.

Advanced activity (Level 3):

1. From your reading and experience, explain the three aspects of sermon application.
2. Describe some of the other effective appeals that can be utilized in persuasion.
3. Read the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5-7). Describe Jesus' use of application in this message.

Seminar Discussion

1. Discuss the nature and importance of application.
2. Why is the use of persuasion so important in sermon application? What are the dangers to avoid in the use of persuasion?
3. Let each student present his application of a Scripture passage. Allow students to comment.