

LESSON 12

THE DELIVERY OF THE SERMON

The actual delivery of the sermon is of the utmost importance in preaching, for in a strict sense a message only becomes a sermon when it is spoken. In the New Testament the apostles' preaching (kerygma) involved both the message and the act of speaking. Sermon delivery then is this act of speaking or preaching the message of the Lord.

The Setting for Delivery

The setting for the delivery of the sermon plays a prominent role in preaching and contributes to the effectiveness of the message. The delivery of the sermon depends on the preparation of the preacher, the message, and the people, but also everything involved at the time and place of the act of preaching. The audience should be receptive to the preacher and his message, and therefore anything that contributes to an atmosphere conducive to preaching is most important. Of prime necessity is an appropriate place to preach, which according to the Book of Acts could be almost anywhere. It could be a church building, a chapel, a home, a public building, a room in a place of business, an auditorium, an open field, or a street corner. Proper arrangements should be made to secure the place of preaching, and the time and place of the meeting should be announced and advertised. The place selected for preaching should have adequate seating or standing room so that the preacher can be clearly seen and heard. If the audience is large, ushers are needed to seat people and keep order. The place should be well-arranged and comfortable with good acoustics, using a public address system if necessary. Nursery facilities for babies and small children should be provided to avoid disturbances. The whole atmosphere should be one of reverence and expectancy with a minimum of distractions to encourage the audience to be attentive to the message proclaimed.

In the New Testament preaching is almost always accompanied by other expressions of Christian service and worship, especially prayer and singing. These are most helpful since they contribute to effective preaching and to the response to the Gospel. Preaching is central to evangelism and worship. A study of the New Testament reveals that preaching was often accompanied by such

The act of speaking or preaching the message of the Lord is _____.

The apostles' preaching involved both the _____ and the _____ of speaking.

(sermon delivery, message, act)

Important matters in the act of preaching include: the _____ and the preacher's _____.

Appropriate places where preaching can be done include: _____, _____, _____, room in _____, _____, _____, _____ field, _____ corner.

(setting, preparation, church building, chapel, home, public building, business place, auditorium, open, street)

The two acts of worship that almost always accompany preaching are: _____ and _____.

(prayer, singing)

practices as prayer, singing, reading of the Holy Scriptures, testimony, confession of faith, meditations, offering, invitation, and the Amen. These are the elements that comprise evangelistic crusades, revival meetings, worship services, and prayer meetings. In the simplest of services preaching should be accompanied by prayer and congregational singing and by an invitation in which the hearers are given an opportunity to respond at least in prayer. Special music is most helpful when available, including solos, choir specials, ensembles, and instrumental music. When possible, an order of service should be arranged for a church service. The service should be well-arranged and reverent without being ritualistic. The music should be spiritual and worshipful without being liturgical. The order of service could follow this arrangement:

- Call to Worship
- Invocation
- Hymn
- Reading of the Scriptures
- Hymn
- Recognition of Visitors and Announcements
- Offertory Hymn
- Offering and Offertory Music
- Special Music
- Message
- Invitation
- Reception of New Members
- Benediction

The preacher should take command of the service, but others can help in leadership, especially a song leader or music director. The congregation should be involved in the service as much as possible. Deacons and other men can help by serving as ushers, by taking the offering, and by leading in prayer. The whole congregation can participate through congregational singing, by reading of the Scriptures responsively or in unison, through reciting a confession of faith, or by giving a personal testimony. Everyone who needs to make a public response during the invitation should be encouraged to do so.

The Methods of Delivery

Several methods of sermon delivery are used in preaching but not with uniform effectiveness. Reading a sermon is the method in which a sermon is written out in full and read to the congregation. This method has the advantage of care in preparation and the benefit that comes from writing. But it has these disadvantages: the sermon appears formal and often artificial taking the form of a monologue; the preacher is confined to his manuscript with little freedom in expression, especially in the use

Some practices which usually accompanied New Testament preaching were: p _____, s _____, r _____ of s _____, t _____, c _____ of f _____, m _____, o _____, i _____, and the A _____.

(prayer, singing, reading of Scriptures, testimony, confession of faith, meditations, offering, invitation, Amen)

IS THIS STATEMENT TRUE OR FALSE?

The congregation should only listen in a worship service. _____

(false)

of gestures; and people are usually unresponsive to this type of delivery. Sermons should not be read unless demands are made regarding the content or the time of delivery such as a radio sermon.

Reciting a sermon involves writing of a full manuscript, memorizing the whole message, and delivering it from memory. The advantages and disadvantages are similar to reading a sermon except this method takes much more time due to the process of memorizing the sermon and requires a good memory which many preachers do not have. It allows more freedom to use gestures in delivery, but the preacher is still confined to the wording of the manuscript and in danger of forgetting portions of the message. This method is not recommended. Extemporaneous preaching is delivering a message from the inspiration of a moment with little or no preparation. This method is dependent on the preacher's feelings at the time and suffers from a lack of adequate preparation. It does help a preacher to think on his feet and gives him freedom in delivery. However, this method is not recommended when the preacher knows ahead of time that he is to preach, but occasions do arise when he is called on to preach without previous notice. He should be able to preach the Gospel, showing men the way of salvation.

Preaching from notes is a method used extensively in which the preacher prepares his message in outline form and delivers it from the notes prepared. This method requires some preparation in the development of an outline. The preacher should at least prepare a full sentence outline, but plan to bring only brief notes in the form of key words to the pulpit. He does have a measure of freedom in the pulpit, allowing for a brief departure from the outline as need arises, but he does lose eye contact with the audience when he refers to his notes. Some preachers bring notes to the pulpit, but often do not refer to them. Free delivery or free speaking is a method in which the preacher thoroughly prepares his message but delivers it without manuscript or notes. He prepares his message either by writing out the complete message or by preparing a full outline. He studies his message and meditates on it and then either preaches it through orally in some private place, possibly with a tape recorder for reviewing, or preaches it through in his mind. However, he does not take notes or a manuscript to the place of preaching, but preaches it freely without trying to remember the exact wording of the sermon. This method has the important advantages of the other methods without any real disadvantages. It requires thorough preparation in the development of the message and in rehearsing for delivery and allows freedom in delivery which is popular with people. The preacher can learn this method by beginning with a message that is based on exposition of Scripture and that is thoroughly a part of him. He

READ ALL OF THE TOPIC THE METHODS OF DELIVERY
THEN MATCH THE CORRECT DESCRIPTION WITH EACH
METHOD.

- ___ 1. Reading a sermon
- ___ 2. Reciting a sermon
- ___ 3. Extemporaneous preaching
- ___ 4. Preaching from notes
- ___ 5. Free delivery

- a. After thorough preparation, delivering of message without notes.
- b. Writing out and reading the message to the congregation.
- c. Preparing the message in outline form and delivering it from notes.
- d. Writing the manuscript, memorizing it, and delivering it from memory.
- e. Delivering a message from the inspiration of a moment with little or no preparation.

(b-1, d-2, e-3, c-4, a-5)

Which two of the methods of delivery are most effective? _____

(preaching from notes, free delivery)

should rehearse it thoroughly by preaching it through in his mind or out loud and then deliver it to a small group or at a prayer meeting. If he forgets a part of the message, he should pass on to the next thought. The more that he practices free delivery, the easier it becomes and the more effective the response of the people.

The Voice in Delivery

The preacher's voice is the most important element in sermon delivery. Therefore, the preacher needs to give attention to certain aspects of speaking or powers of the voice. First of all, he should speak at his natural pitch of voice, the level of frequency that is most favorable to his voice with the least effort and strain. He should guard against beginning and continuing in a high key or an unnatural low pitch. He should, however, utilize proper pitch in inflection of words and utilize his full range of pitch for variety and emphasis in speaking. Furthermore, the preacher should be concerned about his tone of voice, the quality of sound. His voice has a certain distinctive resonance which can be improved by attention to smoothness, melodiousness, and flexibility in speaking and by the practice of singing. He should guard against the nasal tone, the hoarse sound, and the harsh expression. Above all, he should not speak in the ministerial tone or "holy whine," a certain singsong manner characteristic of some preachers in which the voice rises and falls in a rhythmic and repetitive pattern. The preacher should give attention to proper pronunciation of words, accenting words on the proper syllable. He should also observe the principles of proper enunciation of words, speaking in articulate sounds. This involves the giving of the proper sound to vowels and consonants and guarding against adding or omitting sounds and substituting or distorting sounds. Moreover, the preacher must consider the force of his voice. He must have sufficient volume and penetrating power to be heard by everyone in his audience. The preachers of the Bible, including the Lord Jesus, had no difficulty in being heard even in open places. The preacher should practice projecting his voice to make it reach the most distant person in an audience. Force of voice comes by bodily exercise to keep in good general health, by vocal exercises and breathing exercises, by practice in projecting the voice, and by practice in reading aloud and especially in singing. In speaking he should particularly guard against dropping his voice at the end of a sentence and becoming inaudible, but rather should end his statements with force of expression. In addition, the preacher should vary the tempo of his voice, that is the rate in which he speaks. He should be flexible and utilize the pause,

The most important element in sermon delivery is the preacher's _____.

He needs to give serious consideration to six aspects of speaking: _____, _____, _____, _____, _____, _____.

(voice, pitch, tone, pronunciation, enunciation, force, tempo)

Natural pitch of voice means the level of frequency that is most favorable to the preacher's voice with the least _____ and _____.

(effort, strain)

Enunciation includes:

1. Giving proper sounds to _____ and _____;
2. Guarding against _____ or _____ sounds;
3. Guarding against _____ or _____ sounds.

(vowels, consonants, adding, omitting, substituting, distorting)

and he especially should not speak so fast that people cannot understand or follow him. The average rate of speaking is about 100 words per minute, and thus a 3,000 word message would take about 30 minutes. Ordinarily this would consist of a 12 page manuscript of 250 words per page typed on 8 1/2 by 11 inch paper with 25 double spaced lines per page. The length of effective messages usually varies from 15 to 30 minutes, depending on the message, the occasion, and the audience. The preacher should guard against preaching too long and tiring his audience. He should vary the pitch, force, and speed of his speech to protect against monotony and to provide emphasis and variety in preaching.

The Actions in Delivery

In the delivery of the sermon the preacher's actions are important considerations, including his whole behavior: appearance, posture, and gestures. In his appearance he should dress neatly and attractively whether he preaches in a suit or in casual clothing as dictated by the occasion. He should avoid appearing too flashy or too solemn. His facial expression should be the natural result of his feelings, avoiding facial contortions in speaking. He should appear humble but not spiritless; serious, but not sanctimonious; bold, but not arrogant. He should guard against nervous mannerisms. The expression of his eyes are most important, affecting his whole appearance. He should keep eye contact with the audience, looking at the people, not over them, and giving attention to all the segments of the congregation. He should avoid continually breaking eye contact by referring to notes. In reading Scripture, the eyes of course are focused primarily on the text, but contact with the audience should be made from time to time.

The preacher's posture also affects his delivery. His general bearing or posture in sitting, standing, and walking is reflected in his preaching posture, and thus he should seek to keep in good health and to exercise daily. He should stand erect and at ease in the act of preaching with his feet firm in the most natural position. He should be able to preach with or without a pulpit. If a pulpit is used, he should not lean on it or slouch over it. He should take care not to rock back and forth or from side to side on his feet and should avoid undue movement around the pulpit or place of preaching and needless pacing back and forth. This is especially important if a microphone is being used.

The proper use of gestures involving the head, body, and hands can add to the effectiveness of sermon delivery. Gestures are best when they are

Tempo, the rate at which a preacher speaks, should be _____. He especially should not speak so fast that people cannot _____ or _____ him.

(varied, understand, follow)

Important actions of behavior of the preacher which he should consider are:

_____, _____, and _____.

Neatness, attractiveness, and naturalness should characterize his _____.

(appearance, posture, gestures, appearance)

spontaneous and in good taste. Their use is guided by the character of the preacher, his message, the audience, and the occasion of preaching. The gestures should be suggested by and in fitting with the words of the message. They should be made to occur at the time of the statements or slightly before. The hands should normally be placed at the side with the palms facing toward the body, and when used in delivery the most appropriate gestures are the open hand, the pointed finger, and sometimes the clenched fist, all depending on the meaning to be conveyed. The Bible should be handled reverently and naturally and not unduly clenched or waved in delivery. At times it can be used in gestures to gain attention to its teachings. Awkward and violent gestures should be avoided. Gestures should not be used excessively nor repetitiously which tends toward ineffectiveness and monotony. The preacher should seek the advice of friends from time to time as to his use of gestures in order to correct faults and to utilize gestures more effectively.

In the actual delivery of a sermon, the preacher should normally follow this suggested pattern:

- (1) He should thoroughly prepare his message, get it on his heart and mind through rehearsing, and pray for the power of the Spirit for its effectiveness.
- (2) He should move to the pulpit or place of preaching with dignity and maintain poise during delivery.
- (3) He should stand firm at the place of preaching with only his Bible in hand if possible.
- (4) He should take a few moments to gain attention and to make eye contact with the audience and continue to speak directly to them in a very personal way.
- (5) He should begin his message in a natural voice at a low level and with sufficient volume to be heard.
- (6) He should use gestures sparingly at first and then most appropriately throughout the message.
- (7) He should preach his message with earnestness and freedom, forgetting himself and depending on the Lord, leaving the results to Him.

The Responses to Preaching

Following the delivery of the sermon, people should be given an opportunity to respond to the message. This is usually called the invitation. The simplest invitation, one that can usually be offered, is to ask the congregation to bow their heads in prayer following the sermon conclusion and to make an appeal for the various decisions that need to be made. This could be followed by prayer by the preacher. If appropriate, he could ask those who had made a decision to raise their hand. He could further ask those making decisions to stand or to meet with him after the service.

Gestures are best when they are

_____ and in _____
_____.

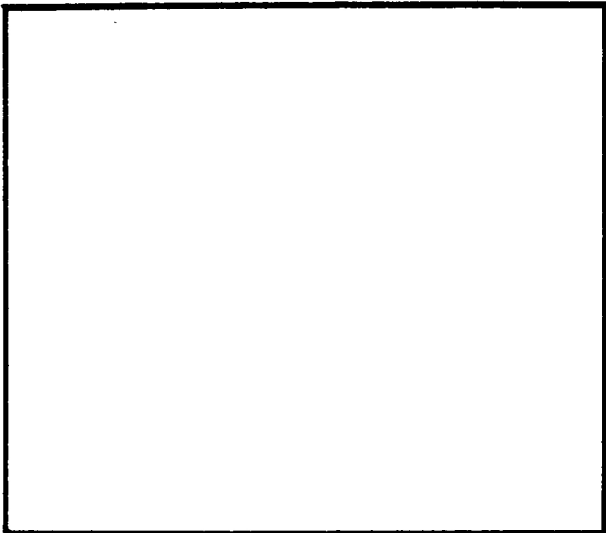
(spontaneous, good taste)

The opportunity for people to respond follows the delivery of the sermon and is called the _____.

(invitation)

In revival meetings, evangelistic crusades, and church services an opportunity is usually given to people to make a public response of their decision. At the close of the message an appeal is given for decisions for Christ. The congregation is asked to stand, and during the singing of an invitation hymn, the people making decisions in their hearts are invited to come forward to the front of the auditorium and to tell the preacher or counselors the decisions that they have made. Additional appeals to respond can be made after the singing of each stanza. The preacher should generally refrain from making appeals during the singing. The preacher could ask people to bow their heads prayerfully during the invitation and ask the choir or a soloist to sing the invitation hymn. Smoothness in transition from the conclusion to the invitation is important. Distractions should be eliminated during the transition and invitation. Prayer is often appropriate following the sermon conclusion. Those who come forward should be asked the reason for their coming, letting them express their decisions rather than putting words in their mouth. In many churches those responding to the invitation are presented to the Church for membership. The audience is often invited to greet the people at the front of the auditorium. If an invitation is not given the preacher should ask those making a decision or desiring to make a decision to remain after the service for counseling either at the front of the auditorium or in a designated room.

The listeners are usually asked to make one of the following decisions: acceptance of Christ as Saviour and Lord; moving church membership by promise of a letter from a sister church, by bringing a church letter, or by statement of previous membership in a sister church; dedication of life in service for Christ; rededication of life to the Lord; repentance from backsliding or from falling into sin; request for baptism by one who is already a believer; response to the call to the ministry; request for prayer; or response to a stewardship appeal. The types of decisions which are usually called for depend on the message, the audience, the occasion, and the impression of the preacher. In effective preaching many people in the congregation are moved to decisions for Christ even if they do not make the decisions publicly known. The invitation to respond to the Word of God should be given, for this is the main objective and ultimate end of preaching. Responses to the Gospel should be the prayer and expectation of every preacher.



IS THIS STATEMENT TRUE OR FALSE?

An abrupt transition from the conclusion of the sermon to the invitation should be avoided. _____

(true)

Types of decisions called for by the hearers depend on the message, audience, occasion, and impression of the preacher. They usually include these:

1. _____ of Christ as Saviour and Lord;
2. moving church _____ by promise of a letter, or by statement;
3. _____ of life in service for Christ;
4. _____ of life to the Lord;
5. _____ from backsliding or falling into sin;
6. request for _____ by one who is already a believer;
7. response to call to the _____;
8. response to a _____ appeal.

(acceptance, membership, dedication, rededication, repentance, baptism, ministry, stewardship)

Home Study Exercise

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

1. What is sermon delivery? _____

2. The apostles' preaching involved what two things? _____

3. What are the important matters in the act of preaching? _____

4. Name some of the appropriate places to preach. _____

5. What practices accompanied New Testament preaching? _____

6. What are two acts of worship that almost always accompany preaching? _____

7. Name five methods of delivery. _____

8. Which are most effective methods of delivery? _____

9. What is free delivery? _____

10. What six aspects of speaking does the preacher need to consider? _____

11. At which pitch should the preacher speak? _____

12. What does enunciation involve? _____

13. At what tempo should he speak? _____

14. What are the important actions that need to be considered in preaching?

15. When are gestures the best? _____

16. When are people given an opportunity to respond? _____

17. Name the decisions that people are asked to make following the message.

18. Develop a full sermon from the foundational elements and outline. Use an outline previously constructed if you desire. Either give a full outline with the introduction and conclusion written out, or write out the sermon in full.

Supplementary activity (Levels 2 and 3):

Read Chapter VIII, pages 164-193, and the Epilogue, pages 194-196 of the textbook.

1. Explain the place of the preacher's emotions in preaching.
2. Explain the importance of the preacher's voice in preaching.
3. What are the key principles for the use of the body suggested by the textbook?
4. What are the general principles for the use of gestures given in the textbook?
5. Describe extemporaneous preaching according to the authors.

Read pages 129-134 of the textbook.

6. Describe the scope of the invitation.
7. What is the importance of reliance on the Lord in the invitation?

Advanced activity (Level 3):

1. Explain why variety is the key to effective vocal production.
2. What is meant by the projection of the voice?
3. Explain why preaching must be central to evangelism.

4. What is the relationship of preaching to worship?
5. Write out the complete sermon requested in the Basic activity of this lesson.

Seminar Discussion

1. Discuss the importance of the setting for preaching.
2. Discuss the merits of the various kinds of delivery. What should each preacher consider in his choice of sermon delivery?
3. What is the relationship between the sermon and the invitation? Why is the invitation important?

Additional Project

If it can be arranged, let each student preach a sermon to the group or to some other audience. Allow discussion of the effectiveness of the message. The message should be directed to the needs of the hearers. The sermon prepared for Lesson 12 could be used in this project.

APPENDIX A

SERMON OUTLINE FORM

Text:

Subject:

Title:

Proposition:

Objective:

Classification by method:

Classification by subject:

OUTLINE

Subject:

APPENDIX B

SERMON FILE

Sermons may be filed and indexed in several ways. If the preacher prepares his sermons using notes, he may type or print them on loose leaf note paper, preferably 8 1/2 by 11 inch size for maximum space, and file them in loose leaf binders according to texts in the order that they appear in the Bible. The subjects discussed in the sermon may be cross-referenced in a sermon index or in an index of a larger filing system (cf. The Ministers Filing System by Paul Gericke). The symbol of the Sermon File could be SF and the further identification the reference to the text. For example, a sermon on the subject "The Creation of Man" based on Genesis 2:7 would be entered on index cards labeled CREATION and MAN as follows:

CREATION	
SF Gen. 2:7 Creation of Man	

The subject of the sermon may be abbreviated to fit in the space. Either 3 by 5 inch or 4 by 6 inch lined file cards may be used with a dividing line inserted to provide two columns. The same entry would appear on the index card MAN.

The preacher may choose to keep his sermons in file folders. The 9 by 12 inch five-cut folders are the most adequate, accommodating notepaper or typing paper up to 8 1/2 by 11 inches. The sermons should be kept in chronological order according to the date they were preached. The first sermon preached would be SF 1, the second SF 2, the third SF 3, and so on, with the notation indicated at the upper right hand corner of the notes or manuscript. From ten (SF 1-10) to twenty-five (SF 1-25) may be filed in one folder, depending on the length of the preacher's notes or manuscripts. If the sermon above is the first to be filed, it receives the notation SF 1 and is entered on the index cards CREATION and MAN as follows:

CREATION	
SF1 Creation of Man	

The sermon should also be indexed on an index card labeled GENESIS. The next file folders would be labeled SF 11-20 or SF 26-50 and so on according to the number placed on each folder.

If the preacher prepares full notes or a full manuscript, the best method is to use one file folder for each sermon. Materials used in preparation, such as clippings, notes, poems, etc., may also be kept in the file folder. The notation and indexing of the sermon are the same as the above method. However, the first file folder receives just the symbol SF 1 on the tab of the folder, the second SF 2, and so forth. The front side of the folder may also be utilized to indicate the subject, the text, the title, the classification, the objective, and any other information the preacher feels important, such as the time and place of preaching. The sermon folders could be prepared by a printer or with a mimeograph machine if available. However, the preacher could type or print the information he feels necessary on the file folder (see accompanying diagram).

SF 1

Subject _____ Title _____
• Text _____ Classification _____
Proposition _____
Objective _____

DATE

PLACE

RESPONSE