

### UNIT III: LONG-RANGE PLANNING OF SERMONS

The Great Commission sets forth the primary goals of the Church: (1) make disciples in all the world, (2) baptize them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and (3) teach them to observe all things which Jesus taught and commanded. The pulpit ministry is related directly to two of these goals, and the third—baptizing the converts—should be either a direct or indirect result of the pulpit ministry. Making disciples extends beyond the activities related to the pulpit, but inspiration and guidance for personal witnessing and mass evangelism are dependent on preaching. Every sermon should contain a didactic element in which disciples are taught some phase of the teachings of Christ.

Long-range preaching plans are essential if the people are to be instructed in all that the Lord has commanded. The week-by-week selection of sermon topics results in haphazard choices and the neglect of some vital areas. Preaching can be given coherence by a plan which is based on an over-all goal and follows a definite design for accomplishing that goal. A complete plan will extend over several years. The purpose of this unit is to assist in long-range preaching plans.

Lesson 8 deals with approaches and techniques for projecting plans for a year or more in advance. It points out some of the advantages of planning ahead. Lesson 9 looks at the task of developing the total spiritual man. Some preachers emphasize evangelism—that is, the conversion of the lost—but they neglect to instruct the new Christians in the basic doctrines of the faith. The minister needs to understand the steps required in taking a person through the developmental process for reaching the goals set forth in the Great Commission. First, a person needs to be made into a disciple through evangelistic efforts. Next, he needs instruction in the meaning of baptism and church membership. Then he needs instruction in observing all Christ has commanded. The latter includes his witnessing, giving, and Christian living. Unless sermons help a person move from step to step, he will likely make little spiritual progress.

Without having specific targets for developing the spiritual life, the minister's preaching will be like shooting into the air with the hopes of hitting a bird or shooting into a bush without knowing whether the prey is there. The minister's preaching should have targets based on the needs of man, and he should take careful aim in the selection of sermon subjects and their development in order to accomplish the purpose for which he is called.

Some of the urgent emotional needs of individuals may be neglected if only the development of the spiritual life is considered. Therefore, Lesson 10 discusses pastoral care preaching and makes suggestions for sermon subjects which are important in meeting the needs of those who require special help. Problems related to health, relations in the home, fear, and various kinds of anxiety hinder the spiritual development of Christians. These problems can be defeating unless the persons facing them receive instruction in how to apply their faith.

Lesson 11 discusses types of sermon series which can fit into the year's pulpit plan. Most series will improve the effectiveness of teaching the Bible through sermons. They are valuable also in enabling the pastor to know the direction to go in preparing his next sermon.

Lesson 12 deals with the sermon and worship. In this study guide and the previous one on sermon preparation, preaching has been taken out of the context of the total worship experience in order to give specialized attention to the preparation and delivery of sermons. The message, however, must fit into a total experience of worship. The sermon will not accomplish its greatest effect apart from worship which includes other aspects of the service.

LESSON 8

PROJECTING PLANS FOR PULPIT WORK

Introduction

Planning the pulpit ministry means to project months in advance the major objectives, titles, and texts for sermons to be preached at specific services. The details of the message will be developed during the week prior to its delivery, but the subject to be prepared will have been decided already, and it will fit into an over-all plan to preach the whole counsel of God. Without a plan, much of the Bible will be neglected.

Planning sermon subjects six months or a year in advance does not hinder flexibility in preaching nor exclude the leadership of the Holy Spirit. If circumstances arise which require a new direction, the projected plans can be changed or adapted. The Holy Spirit knows the mind of God and also what a congregation needs months in advance. He can guide even better in a planned programme of preaching than He can in a haphazard one.

The pastor's time is divided among many ministries including administration, counselling, evangelism, teaching, and preaching. In order to use his time most efficiently, each area of his work should be planned and scheduled. Pulpit planning will enable him to make the most of the time he has available for sermon preparation.

Advantages of Advanced Planning

Selecting sermon subjects is facilitated

The pastor who conducts two worship services on Sunday and a midweek service will average speaking 150 times a year to the same people. If the pastor sits at his desk and attempts to list 150 sermon subjects, he would likely despair. Frequently, he has great difficulty in coming up with three subjects each week. Just when he is finished with the preaching responsibilities of one Sunday, he faces the task of coming up with three new sermons for the next week. Often he finds himself working late Saturday night to even settle on a subject for the Sunday morning service. As soon as the benediction is given in the morning, he must begin concentrating on another

*Underline the correct word and fill in the blanks.*

*Planning the pulpit ministry means to project (weeks, months, years) in advance the major o \_\_\_\_\_, t \_\_\_\_\_, and t \_\_\_\_\_ for sermons.*

*(Compare your answers with the text.)*

*Planning his pulpit work in advance will enable a pastor to have more time for*

*a \_\_\_\_\_, c \_\_\_\_\_, e \_\_\_\_\_, t \_\_\_\_\_, and p \_\_\_\_\_.*

*(Compare your answers with the text.)*

*Without planning ahead, a pastor finds it difficult to select approximately \_\_\_\_\_ sermon subjects in a year.*

*(150)*

subject for that evening. If sermon preparation is such a struggle for those who can devote full time to church work, the pastor who must divide his time between secular employment and pastoral responsibilities has an even greater problem.

The struggle of the pastor to decide on sermon subjects each week is alleviated somewhat by the long-range planning of his preaching. In such planning, the pastor decides the direction his preaching will take months in advance. He can evaluate the needs of the people and the subjects which will meet those needs more objectively. When he gets under the pressure of facing a preaching assignment without having decided upon a subject,

he chews his pencil and stares at his illiterate typewriter. He turns the leaves of his reluctant Bible; he flips the cards or pages containing dry "Ideas for Sermons"; he thumbs through his "Best Sermons" and wonders how they could be so designated.... He gets an idea, works it over for a day and a half and finds that it "will not fly without flopping" and has to throw it away.<sup>1</sup>

His emotional response under pressure makes it difficult for him to settle on a sermon which seems relevant. He will be spared these disturbing experiences if he has previously selected his subjects under the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

#### Time is conserved

Long-range planning will not guarantee good sermons automatically, but it will enable the pastor to use his time more efficiently. By listing the subjects he will be presenting in the months ahead, the pastor knows when he arrives in his study on Monday morning what directions his midweek and next Sunday sermons should take. Much of the minister's time is wasted each week in deciding what he is going to preach on next Sunday. He may begin to develop a sermon idea, but after several hours conclude that it will not do. He is again faced with the chore of coming up with another idea for the sermon. The preparation of a valuable sermon requires more than a positive feeling when the idea first originates. The projected plan enables the minister to begin

<sup>1</sup>J. Winston Pearce, Planning Your Preaching (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1967), pp. 18-19.

Unscramble the two key words in this statement.

A pastor's emotional response under \_\_\_\_\_ makes it difficult for him to choose a sermon idea which seems

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

(pressure, relevant)

Underline the word or words which make the following statement correct.

Long-range planning (will, will not) guarantee good sermons automatically.

(will not)

concentrated reading and development of the idea on Monday rather than spending the week searching for an idea. Also he will be able to relate more of his reading of periodicals and books to illustrations for the sermons which he has projected for the weeks ahead.

Often the outline of the message comes to mind readily, but is forgotten if it is not written down, and may still be lost if not properly filed. If the preacher has projected plans for future sermons, he can jot down the ideas for outlines and file them for the time when he will get down to specific preparation of those sermons. Time will be saved in the preparation of specific sermons if an outline has already been chosen.

Bible study goals can be achieved

Planned preaching enables the pastor to concentrate on deeper study of individual books of the Bible. Frantically looking three times each week for Scriptures to develop into sermons can result in a fragmented approach to Bible study. Planned preaching usually will include a series of sermons from one of the major books of the Old or New Testaments. During the preparation of sermons on that book, the pastor has opportunity to master its content. Over a period of eight or ten years, he can add greatly to his store of Bible knowledge and understanding.

The needs of people are met more adequately

Like the pastor, the people need to dig deeply into specific books of the Old and New Testaments. If the pastor has planned his sermon subjects well in advance, he can encourage the people to prepare for each sermon by studying the Scripture beforehand themselves. There has developed a new interest in studying the Bible; therefore, series of sermons on books of the Bible are usually met with great interest.

Planned preaching varies the subjects from week to week. In an earlier lesson, it was pointed out that the majority of people who are present in services are Christians. Evangelistic sermons should be preached, but most of the messages should be directed to the development of Christians. Unless sermon subjects are planned carefully, the subject matter may not meet the needs of the majority of the congregation.

Members of the congregation vary in age, both physically and spiritually. Some new Christians need to hear sermons on elementary doctrines, while older Christians are in need of more advanced teaching. Various members present will need supportive sermons to prepare them for suffering and sorrow.

*Now that you have read the first paragraph, which began on the previous page, and this one, note two ways that a pulpit plan conserves the pastor's time.*

1. He does not lose time seeking a \_\_\_\_\_.
2. An \_\_\_\_\_ may have already been chosen.

*(subject, outline)*

*Underline the correct phrase.*

*Planned preaching results usually in--*

1. *fragmented approach to Bible study.*
2. *in-depth study of the Bible.*

*(2. in-depth study of the Bible)*

*The people can be encouraged to study the Scripture beforehand when the preacher \_\_\_\_\_ ahead.*

*(plans)*

Others need devotional and consecrational emphases. Projecting plans for preaching should include all major sermon objectives, and, therefore, offer a balanced spiritual diet to the congregation. If definite plans are not made, the pastor may find himself dwelling too much on the areas of his immediate interests rather than the interests and needs of the people.

The quality of sermons is improved

Good sermons require planning and development. Time is needed to contemplate the Scripture which has been chosen as the text, in order for its full meaning to blossom. Dividing (breaking down) the subject into major points is seldom an easy task. The gathering of appropriate illustrations may be neglected if the sermon has to be completed shortly after the idea has been conceived. Planning the subjects in advance provides time for gathering appropriate illustrations and allowing the sermon idea to mature before it is preached.

More of the Bible is taught

Most men do most of their preaching from a few selected books of the Bible. They hesitate to venture into unfamiliar books because they have not had time to master their backgrounds and messages. When they are pressed to prepare another sermon, it is easier to turn to familiar material. The preacher, however, who projects his sermon subjects in advance knows which books of the Bible he will be using. He has sufficient time to do the background study in order to set forth the main truths of the book more effectively.

Planned preaching not only includes more books of the Bible but is likely to encourage the didactic element of sermons. Every good sermon should teach effectively some biblical truth. Without proper planning, a large number of important truths will be neglected. One minister discovered, as he looked back over his ministry of forty years, that he had only about eight sermons. He had used many varieties in his approach and application, but the truths he set forth could be grouped into about eight categories.<sup>2</sup> When a sermon is conceived, developed, and preached within a week, it is usually prepared under pressure. Rather than finding a subject that is more relevant to the contemporary needs of the people and giving it a solid biblical foundation, the preacher usually is forced to revert to a subject on which he has a little material

*Plans which include all major sermon objectives offer a balanced spiritual \_\_\_\_\_ to the congregation.*

*(diet)*

*Read this paragraph and the next one before doing the following exercises.*

*Is this statement true or false?*

*Through planned preaching, truths from more books of the Bible are set forth. \_\_\_\_\_*

*(true)*

*Every good sermon should teach effectively some b \_\_\_\_\_ t \_\_\_\_\_.*

*(biblical truth)*

<sup>2</sup>J. Winston Pearce, Planning Your Preaching, p. 12.

and a few illustrations to back it up. He finds himself dealing repeatedly with the subjects he already has some knowledge about; therefore, he limits the number of truths which he treats.

### Procedure in Developing a Plan

#### The length of time to be planned

The minister may plan his subjects for three months, six months, a year, or even longer. Selecting subjects to be preached over a twelve-month period does not mean that the outlines of 150 sermons will be developed immediately. Actually, it means that the preacher will chart his course for months in advance, but he will develop the details week by week. Planning for a year at a time gives him the advantage of using the calendar to make the best use of significant Christian events. Christmas and Easter are two of the most important dates in the year. Wise planning enables the preacher to build up to those important days over a period of weeks in order that the people will be made more aware of their significance.

The wise preacher may choose to project the planning of his pulpit ministry beyond a year. If he anticipates leading a church for several years, he should discover the needs of the congregation and the community and adopt a plan to meet those needs. The lives of people cannot be changed in a short period of time. A few sermons incidentally selected will not indoctrinate them adequately in the traditions of the faith nor lead them to be effective servants of Christ. Immoral conditions which have developed in a community over a long period of time cannot be eradicated in a short period of time nor by a haphazard denouncing of them. The preacher should determine the nature of the spiritual needs, set goals to meet those needs, and lay careful plans for accomplishing his goals. His goals should extend over a period of years, and his pulpit ministry should complement his strategy for developing the church and influencing the community.

If the minister were engaged in a business enterprise, he would project his plans for months in advance. The clothing retailer has to anticipate the styles and number of garments to have in stock for each season of the year. He cannot wait until the day before seasonal buying begins to make his orders. If a man enters a new business, he must plan the size facilities he needs, the amount of advertising which is required, the kind of items to stock, and many other details. Much planning goes on before the items are ready to sell from the shelves. Likewise, much planning needs to be done before sermons are delivered, if the pastor expects his pulpit ministry to be effective and to be used of God to change lives.

*The procedure a preacher should follow in planning his work over a period of years includes:*

1. Determine the nature of the spiritual \_\_\_\_\_ of the people and community.
2. Set \_\_\_\_\_ to meet those needs.
3. Lay careful \_\_\_\_\_ for accomplishing his \_\_\_\_\_.

*Rearrange these phrases to make an important statement.*

*for developing the church, A preacher's pulpit ministry, his strategy, and influencing the community, should complement*

*(Compare your answers with the text. Your rearranged statement should read like the last sentence in the textual paragraph.)*

Planning the sermon subjects and selecting Scripture references for a year at a time appear to be the most satisfactory approach. Of course, sermon subjects cannot be planned until the activities of the church have been determined. Many churches give emphasis to evangelism, missions, stewardship, the Christian home, Christian growth, and religious education during the year. If the pulpit ministry is planned to correlate with the over-all programme, the work of the church is strengthened. Adequate correlation of plans is impossible in less than three months. More churches plan the emphases of their programme a year or more in advance.

Equipment needed for planning

The church calendar, work sheets on which to write sermon ideas, a Bible, and a few days are needed for planning. The church calendar contains the planned church activities for the year. Each work sheet should be designed for a month's pulpit activities.<sup>3</sup> Place the month and year at the top of the work sheet, and divide it into four columns. Use the first column to designate the week of the month. Since some months have five Sundays, the columns will need to be divided into five sections. The second column provides space to note the special emphasis of the church programme for that week. Use the third column for recording the Sunday morning sermon subject or major objective, the sermon title, and the text. Room should be available to make brief notations concerning the direction the subject will take. The fourth column provides the same space for the Sunday evening sermon, and the fifth column is for the midweek service. Twelve work sheets will be needed for planning the year's pulpit work. If each sheet is 8 1/2 by 11, the year's work can be laid out on a 26 by 44 inch piece of cardboard or plywood. There is value in the minister's having the total year's work before him while he is studying each day.

Initial steps in developing the plan

After each work sheet is labelled with a month of the year, the actual dates of the Sundays can be inserted in the first column. Next, the special emphases of the church programme should be transferred from the church calendar to the second column. Obviously, not every week will have a special emphasis. The next step is to secure the dates of special national and Christian holidays and record them in the second column. A review of the entries under special emphases will suggest appropriate sermon subjects for a number of the preaching services.

<sup>3</sup>See the work sheet sample in Appendix A.

Many churches plan the emphases of their programme at least a \_\_\_\_\_ in advance.

(year)

For long-range pulpit planning a pastor needs:

1. a church \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_ on which to write sermon ideas
3. a \_\_\_\_\_
4. a few \_\_\_\_\_

(calendar, work sheets, Bible, days)

Using church and Christian calendars

A church may plan to have a special emphasis on Bible study in January. Either the pastor could preach a series of sermons from one book of the Bible during the month or, he could lead in a study each night for a week. March may be designated for special evangelistic efforts. The special emphases of April include the death and resurrection of Jesus. Since Mother's Day is observed in many countries during the month of May, it is a good time to emphasize the Christian family. Some countries have national holidays in June and July. The celebration of the independence of the nation can set the stage for messages on the Christian's relation to the state and to the Kingdom of God. The beginning of the school year is a good time to emphasize Christian education and to prepare for a new emphasis in the Bible school for the months ahead. Harvest Sunday or Thanksgiving is usually observed in October or November. This season provides an excellent time for promoting stewardship. The month of December points to the birth of Christ, and the last Sunday or Wednesday evening turns attention to the passing of the old year and coming of the new. From this general outline of the year, the minister begins to get a sense of direction for his preaching.

Considering the major objectives

The preacher needs to determine the purpose of the morning and evening services each week. In most churches, the morning service is usually a more formal worship service while the evening service is called the evangelistic meeting. Some designate the midweek service a prayer meeting, and others call it a Bible study.

Worship suggests focusing on God and His nature. Sermons of consecration and devotion are appropriate in carrying out this emphasis; however, evangelistic, promotional, doctrinal, supportive and ethical sermons can also be used effectively in worship. Since some people who attend the morning service do not return for the evening and midweek services, they should receive some exposure to all of these major emphases.

Perhaps the consecrative, evangelistic, and doctrinal objectives should receive more attention than the others. There is no rule for the frequency of including any one of the major objectives. The characteristic nature and needs of each church will determine the proper balance of emphases.

Unless the evening service is frequented by people who have not made decisions for Christ, the emphasis should not be exclusively evangelistic. Some church members are required to work on Sunday

*A church calendar indicates special emphases in the church programme to which \_\_\_\_\_ should often be related.*

*(sermons)*

*Read the rest of this page before answering the following.*

*Some major types of sermons are:*

*c \_\_\_\_\_, d \_\_\_\_\_,  
e \_\_\_\_\_, p \_\_\_\_\_,  
d \_\_\_\_\_, and e \_\_\_\_\_.*

*Which types should Sunday morning sermons include? \_\_\_\_\_*

*(consecrative, devotional, evangelistic, promotional, doctrinal, ethical, all)*

morning and can attend only the evening service. If all they hear is evangelism, they will have little opportunity to grow in doctrinal understanding and ethical conduct.

In developing a plan for preaching, the minister may assign one of the major objectives to each of the three weekly services. The chosen objective should be in keeping with the special emphasis of that week and the particular nature of the morning and evening services. Also, he should keep in mind the anticipated make-up of the congregation; otherwise, he may discover that he is planning sermons for people who are not normally present at the time the sermons are scheduled. The following questions will give him some guidance in analysing the constituency of the congregation for each service:

1. Will the service be made up primarily of adults or young people?
2. Will they be professing Christians or non-believers?
3. How mature are they as Christians?
4. What areas in their lives need strengthening?
5. What kind of sermon would be of greatest benefit to them?

The evangelistic sermon is not limited to the needs of non-Christians. Its emphasis can be directed to Christians by challenging them to do the work of an evangelist. A constant diet of evangelistic sermons when no lost people are present in the services, however, becomes monotonous to the Christians and neglects their other areas of need.

Perhaps the preacher should plan to devote at least one sermon each month to each of the seven major objectives. This plan would assign a general subject to half of the twelve or fifteen speaking responsibilities each month. It assures that the people will receive a balanced diet with regard to various areas of Christian life. The major objectives for the other services should be determined by other apparent needs of the people. Since every human need is not apparent, planning to speak systematically on each of the major objectives will insure that at least the basic areas of unseen needs are touched.

Assigning a major objective to each service gives a general sense of direction in determining the subject. For example, if the objective is evangelistic, the sermon subject could deal with the following: sin and condemnation, saving faith, the cross, death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, how Jesus shared

Unscramble the words to complete the list of four things a preacher should know about his congregation.

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
          gae
2. Christian \_\_\_\_\_  
                          pixenceree
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
          yuriatmt
4. specific \_\_\_\_\_  
                          denes

(age, experience, maturity, needs)

What is an advantage of assigning major objectives to various services? \_\_\_\_\_

(Compare your answer with the text.)

His faith, heaven, and hell. If the general subject of saving faith is chosen for a given service, the minister will have the option of numerous Scriptures. Also, he could turn to the life of a person who had responded to Christ in faith. A biographical sermon could be based on any of the Apostles, Paul, people who came to Jesus, or one of the vividly described conversion experiences in the Book of Acts. The chosen text should provide the specific title and the content of the sermon.

When the minister turns his attention to a service calling for a devotional objective, he can speak on the general subjects of the love of God, prayer, living faith, the grace of God, worship, or fellowship. He might decide that the people need guidance in praying; therefore, he will assign the general subject of prayer to a particular service. A concordance will guide him to a number of Scriptures dealing with different aspects of prayer. He might choose to speak on the nature of prayer, unanswered prayer, why God requires man to pray, God's prayer promises, victorious praying, the relation of prayer to faith, effective praying, or any number of subjects on prayer.

The consecrative objective deals with the following areas: God's call to special service, purity in living, dedicated service, tithing, evangelistic witnessing, teaching in the church school, and faithfulness to Christ. Sermons dealing with God's call to special service might set forth how God calls, the challenge of missions, the need for pastors, God's will in secular vocations, and service as a dedicated layman.

The need for doctrinal sermons is almost unlimited. People's understanding of the nature and work of God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit is limited and inadequate. They need to know something about future hope, condemnation, the nature of the Church man, sin, Satan, providence, predestination, and many other subjects. A doctrinal objective designated for a service previous to Christmas might focus on the Incarnation, the Virgin Birth of Christ, the Promised Messiah, the Suffering Servant, or the world's need of a Saviour. Doctrinal sermons between Christmas and Easter could emphasize the nature of Christ as reflected in the titles "Son of God," "Messiah," and "Son of Man." As Holy Week approaches, the emphasis could be on the necessity for Christ's going to Jerusalem, His view of true spirituality which brought conflict in the Temple, God's providence in the judgement and condemnation of Jesus, and the atoning death of Christ on the Cross. The understanding of Christians concerning the Church is very limited, and this area deserves the attention of many sermons. The same can be said concerning doctrines related to last things, that is, death, resurrection, Christ's return, and judgement.

Read all of this page, including the beginning of the first paragraph on the previous page, and continue through the first four paragraphs on the following page. Then do the exercise below.

Match the general sermon subjects with the major sermon objectives.

Major sermon objectives

- 1. Evangelistic
- 2. Devotional
- 3. Consecrative
- 4. Doctrinal
- 5. Ethical
- 6. Supportive
- 7. Emotional

General subjects

- a. God's call, dedicated service, tithing
- b. doubt, sickness, courage
- c. citizenship, race relations, marriage
- d. Bible school enlargement, special offering, Bible study
- e. sin, saving faith, the cross
- f. prayer, the grace of God, worship
- g. future hope, the nature of the Church, providence

(e-1, f-2, a-3, g-4, c-5, b-6, d-7)

For services which have been assigned an ethical objective, the general subject could deal with Christian citizenship, race relations, love and marriage, divorce, honesty, gambling, alcoholic beverages, social activities, business practices, and relations to neighbours. If the congregation needed instruction in the area of honesty, the title might be "Honesty in Word" or "Telling the Truth," "Paying a Fair Day's Wage," "Giving an Honest Day's Labour," "Being Honest with God," "The Influence of an Honest Life," "Being Honest with Yourself."

The supportive objective is concerned with the areas of death, doubt, sickness, courage, fear, faith, and the reason for personal losses. People want to know how to face death, what happens to the soul at death, what hope there is for the dead, and how the body is raised from death.

The promotional objective should be assigned to services only when the church has a special project. Programmes of the church which need to be promoted are Bible school enlargement, special offerings, financial support, and special activities such as planned Bible study and training for Christian service. The promotional sermon points out the need for the special activity and the responsibility of the members to participate in it.

By working from the major objectives, numerous sermon subjects become apparent. Begin with a major objective, select an area under that objective, and, in light of the needs of the people, select a text and a specific title. Develop the body of the sermon from the text and title. General plans can be projected for a year at a time, and the sermon ideas can begin to mature. Final development of the sermon comes a few days before it is to be preached.

#### Using sermon series

Rather than beginning with the major objectives and relating them to the special events of the church calendar, the minister may choose to preach a series of sermons from a particular book of the Bible. The specific objective of a particular sermon in such a series would be determined by the designated text in relation to the need of the congregation. In planning a year's pulpit work, the minister could assign a section of Scripture to the designated service without being too specific; however, if the plan is left too general, it will be of little value. He might decide to preach through the Bible, that is, to develop a sermon from each book of the Bible. Such a plan would yield 66 sermons. His projected plan will become more valuable if he can determine the theme of each book and the major objective of the sermon from each. If he thinks that he is exhausting possible sermon titles, he should remind himself that one sermon from Genesis,

*The steps in developing a year's preaching plan from the major objectives are:*

1. *Begin with a m \_\_\_\_\_ o \_\_\_\_\_.*
2. *Consider needs of the people, select a t \_\_\_\_\_ and t \_\_\_\_\_.*
3. *D \_\_\_\_\_ the body of the sermon from the text and title a few days before it is to be preached.*

*(Compare your answers with the text.)*

*Instead of beginning with the major objectives, a minister may choose to preach a \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_.*

*(series, sermons)*

Matthew, or Romans cannot possibly cover all the truths set forth in that great book. More discussion will be given in a subsequent lesson concerning the preaching of sermon series.

### Planning for the midweek service

Usually the midweek service combines prayer and devotional study of the Bible. If the church meets for the purpose of praying, it should not neglect that purpose. A variety of methods can be used in guiding the church in prayer: sentence prayers, group prayers, requests for prayer, testimonies of answered prayer, silent prayer, directed prayer, and Scriptures on prayer.

The disciples requested Jesus to teach them to pray. Contemporary disciples are still asking how to pray, and they should be taught. If a brief devotional period is included with the time of prayer, attention could be focused on the nature of prayer and how to pray. There is benefit in having the devotional study first in order that the people can apply the instruction they have received.

If Bible study is the main feature of the midweek service, the preacher may choose to work through a chosen book of the Bible. The presentation may be in the form of a homily; that is, he follows the verses of the text and comments on them. His messages should be more than exegesis of the passage; however, his structure need not be as formal as the Sunday morning message with its balanced outline. The purpose of teaching the Bible in any situation is to make it relevant to contemporary needs. If preaching can be distinguished from teaching, it is at the point of preaching's placing greater emphasis on the application of the message to contemporary life. A homily should emphasize the application of the text to present life.

Pentecost is fifty days after Easter. The minister could begin a study on the Book of Acts during the midweek service a few days prior to Pentecost. A study of Acts 2 would be appropriate during the week of Pentecost. From there, the preacher could show how the young church reached out in influence and witness and how its life and beliefs developed to include different races. With summer vacations at hand, Acts gives an appropriate emphasis that wherever the Christians went they shared their faith. When the disciples returned from their journeys, they reported to the churches. Such an emphasis could be used to encourage people to take their Christianity with them on their vacations. A study of the 28 chapters of Acts plus attention to special emphases would take almost a year. Such a study would be very profitable since an understanding of Acts is essential for interpreting the Epistles of the New Testament.

Usually the midweek service combines \_\_\_\_\_ and devotional study of the \_\_\_\_\_.

(prayer, Bible)

Is this statement true or false?  
The purpose of Bible teaching as well as preaching is application to present life.

(true)

The Minor Prophets are neglected in Bible study. The preacher might decide to devote two or three midweek services to the longer books and one week to the shorter ones of the Twelve. He could use a minimum of 18 services to cover the Minor Prophets and such a study could actually extend to six months.

If the devotional emphasis is to be given attention during the midweek service, the Book of Psalms is an unsurpassed source for material. The preacher will need to secure several good commentaries on the Psalms in order to understand the historical background of each and its appropriate contemporary application.

#### Accumulating and organizing sermon material

After the work sheets for twelve months have been completed, the preacher has in hand the major objective, the sermon title (which may be refined at a later time), and a chosen text for each message for the year. Since he knows where he is going in his preaching, he can make his reading more profitable by relating it to the different projected subjects. In order to retain the fruit of his reading, he will need a file folder for each message for the year. The tabs of the folders should be labelled with the date, a. m. or p. m. service, sermon title, and text. This information is taken from his preaching chart or calendar.

By keeping the preaching chart before him, the preacher remains conscious of the subjects on which he will be preparing messages throughout the year. The chart will be a guide to the file folders into which he can drop clippings from periodicals, notes of references, to books containing relevant material, illustrations, and exegetical work. If he reads an enlightening chapter in a book which relates to a planned future sermon, he should not depend on his memory but make a reference note and drop it in the appropriate folder. As he begins more specific preparation of each particular sermon, he will find that he already has accumulated much helpful information.

Use the following words to fill in the blanks:

subjects  
sermon  
material  
chart

A pastor's preaching \_\_\_\_\_ will keep him conscious of sermon \_\_\_\_\_ for the year and will guide him in filing \_\_\_\_\_ in appropriate \_\_\_\_\_ folders.

(chart, subjects, material, sermon)

Home Study Exercise

Basic activity (Levels 1, 2, and 3). After reading the study guide text, answer the following questions.

1. In one statement, tell what is meant by planning the pulpit ministry. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Why should a pastor plan his pulpit work in advance? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Suggest two reasons a pastor has difficulty selecting a subject if he does not plan ahead.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. How does a pulpit plan conserve time? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Suggest two ways planned preaching meets human needs more adequately. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Why is more of the Bible taught in planned preaching? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. Suggest the procedure a preacher should follow in planning his work over a period of years.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. What does a pastor need for long-range pulpit planning? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. How may a church calendar suggest sermon subjects? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. Why should all major sermon objectives be included in Sunday morning sermons? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
11. In planning sermons, what are four things a preacher should know about his congregation? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

12. List the seven major sermon objectives and suggest three general subjects for each. \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

---

---

13. Describe how a year's preaching plan is developed from the major objectives. \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---

14. Suggest a plan for the midweek service. \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

15. How does his preaching chart or calendar help the preacher to accumulate material? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

16. Begin the development of a twelve-month preaching plan. Use the work sheet for sermon planning (Appendix A) as a guide, and fill in as many of the "special emphases" and "major objectives" as possible. You should begin also to select titles and Scriptures for some of the services. Others will be added as you continue the study of the next three lessons. (See Lessons 9, 10, and 11.)

Supplementary activity (Levels 2 and 3):

1. List the advantages for long-range planning which Dr. J. Winston Pearce gives on pages 12-24 in Planning Your Preaching.
2. What is meant by the liturgical calendar or the "church year," and what parts of it do even the "free" churches use? (See Pearce, pp. 24-33.)
3. Utilize Pearce's suggestions on pages 44-58 in planning your year's pulpit work. This plan is to be completed in three weeks. Add to it each week as you study the lessons.

Advanced activity (Level 3):

Have a summary description of preaching goals and plans for two additional years beyond the twelve-month preaching plan you are working on now.

### Seminar Discussion

1. Why is long-range planning important to successful pulpit work?
2. Is it possible for the Holy Spirit to guide the minister in projecting sermon subjects a year in advance?
3. What is the difference between the liturgical calendar or "church year," the church calendar, and the national calendar? How can each be used to suggest subjects in planned preaching?
4. List the steps a minister should follow in planning a year's pulpit work.
5. Approximately what percentage of sermons should be devoted to each of the seven major objectives?
6. Let students who have prepared the supplementary activities explain the "church year" or Christian calendar and how it gives guidance in planning pulpit work.