

LESSON 11

PREACHING SERIES OF SERMONS

Introduction

Most long-range pulpit plans include sermon series. A series of sermons is two or more sermons related by a common subject, theme, person, place, time, or book of the Bible. For example, if several sermons are based on Abraham, they can be related in a series by the subject of faith or the theme of building altars or a biographical study of Abraham himself or a sermon based on each chapter of Genesis 12-23. A series of biographical sermons extending beyond Abraham could follow the theme of great men of faith.

Sermon series have several advantages. They give continuity to preaching and enable the people to focus on sections or subjects of the Bible. When a subject is emphasized for several weeks, people will know more about it than if several sermons are preached on the subject at different times throughout the year. Sermon series help the preacher to plan his messages in advance and to make study and preparation of sermons more enjoyable. He finds a joy and purpose in this kind of preaching because he knows where he is going and can do deeper study on the subject. People also like series of sermons because they can prepare for and look forward to the next sermon. Sermon series stimulate attention and develop interest in Bible study. They are a great aid in helping people to develop spiritually.

In planning a sermon series, a controlling purpose and an objective which are big enough for the entire series are chosen. The series is planned as a whole, including the number and titles. If a series finds unity in a subject, the more preparation for each sermon is required to avoid repetition.

The entire series should be planned well in advance of the delivery of the first sermon. Although the title of each sermon may be refined during more specific preparation, usually the title of each sermon in the series should be chosen and related to the general theme before the series begins. The purpose that each sermon is to accomplish should be stated and a general description of its content should be planned. If possible, the major points of all the sermons should be developed; otherwise, the preacher will find himself reaching ahead for material which should come in a later sermon.

A series of sermons is two or more sermons related by a common s _____, t _____, p _____, p _____, t _____, or b _____ of the Bible.

(Compare your answers with the text.)

Use the following words to fill in the blanks in the advantages of preaching sermon series:

enables, develops, continuity, study, plan, stimulates, prepare

1. A series gives _____ to preaching.
2. A series helps the preacher _____ his messages in advance.
3. A series makes _____ and preparation more enjoyable.
4. A series _____ the people to _____ and anticipate preaching.
5. A series _____ attention and _____ interest in Bible study.

(Compare your answers with the text.)

Normally, a series should not be extended beyond a month if the organizing principle is based on a subject or theme. If a series continues indefinitely, the people become weary because the speaker will likely begin to repeat himself. If the organizing principle is the study of a book of the Bible, or a biographical series (following a theme but dealing with different personalities), or a plan of preaching through the Bible, the content varies enough to avoid monotony and repetition.

Biographical Series

Reasons for preaching biographical sermons

Most preachers discover that preaching on characters of the Bible is popular and an effective way to present Bible truths. People are interested in hearing about the experiences of others. The popularity of television programmes and movies which are based on characters portrayed by actors, indicates current interest in biography. Individuals identify with the dramatic experiences of others.

God has revealed Himself to and through persons. He spoke piecemeal through the prophets of old, and His full and final revelation came in His Son. Revelation is not dry propositional truths handed down from heaven, but it is the living God encountering man in real situations. These encounters include strengthening man as he faces trials, delivering him from his enemy, and correcting him for his misdeeds. Normally God uses natural events to bless or to correct His people, but it is persons in real living situations with whom God deals.

In the midst of troubles and uncertainties, contemporary man finds guidance and encouragement in biographical sermons. Biographical preaching examines biblical accounts of God's dealings with individuals. Its content focuses on the circumstances of the people, what God did for them in their situations, and what the responses of the people were to their experiences.

Biographical sermons are one of the easier types to prepare. In addition to providing the truth to be set forth, the relating of a person's life provides many of its own illustrations. The truths, which may be abstract doctrines of the Bible, become clear and personal when seen in the life of the character. People are able to identify with Bible characters and to receive answers to many of their pressing problems. This type of sermon appeals to all ages and is especially effective with young people.

A series should not extend beyond a month if the organizing principle is based on a _____ or _____.

(subject, theme)

Preaching on characters of the Bible is an effective way to present Bible _____.

(truths)

Underline the correct ending for the following sentence.

*God's revelation is--
through dry propositional truths.
to and through persons in real situations.*

(to and through persons in real situations.)

Biographical sermons provide g _____ and e _____ for man in every day situations.

(guidance, encouragement)

Are biographical sermons an easy or difficult type to prepare? _____

(easy)

Suggested biographical series

A series of biographical sermons on the life of Samson could follow the general theme of "A Portrait of Humanity." The first sermon could point to Samson's strength with the title "Man's Potential." His strength was a gift from God, and when he became an unfit vessel God withdrew His power. A second sermon could be on Samson's weakness with the title "Man's Sin." His physical strength and weakness were illustrations of his spiritual strength and weakness. Sin caused his weakness. A third sermon focusing on Samson's fate could be entitled "Man's Helplessness." The fourth sermon could be on Samson's surrender with the title "Man's Hope."

From this series you will notice that the theme is Samson a character of long ago, but the sermon titles are stated in such a way that they apply to the contemporary man. In the preaching of biographical sermons, the listeners should not be left thinking of the man of long ago, but they should be led to think of him as a person whose experiences were similar to their own. They should be led to see their own relationships to God. The sermon will have to present Samson as a historical person, but it should transfer the historical into the present in its application. The title and the major points should be stated in the present tense whenever possible. The past events of the biblical character's life can be used as illustrations for the points.

The series of sermons on Samson illustrates the subject approach in biographical preaching. The character gives the organizing principle for the four sermons. A similar series based on the life of Jonah or John the Baptist could deal with his character, mission, and contributions. Character analyses set forth the principles in the lives of the persons that made them what they were. An analysis may focus on the unique characteristics of the person, his greatness, his weaknesses, or a psychological analysis underlying his actions.

Another approach in biographical preaching is to select a theme about a character. A series on the greatness of Abraham could analyse his greatness as the father in the home, his loyalty to Yahweh, and his consideration of others.

The lives of the more prominent persons of the Bible offer possibilities for numerous sermons. Abraham and Samson have been discussed already. Joseph, Moses, Samuel, and David are some other Old Testament characters whose experiences with God yield numerous spiritual truths. Sermons on the life of Joseph could include:

- "God's Providential Care"
- "Sources of Strength During Temptation"

Match each sermon title with its corresponding emphasis from the experiences of Samson.

- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------|
| ___ "Man's Potential" | Samson's-- |
| ___ "Man's Sin" | a. fate |
| ___ "Man's Helplessness" | b. surrender |
| ___ "Man's Hope" | c. strength |
| | d. weakness |

(c, d, a, b,)

In order for truth from a historical character to relate to contemporary man, there should be:

1. recognition of _____ experiences
2. present application of _____
3. statement of title and major points in the _____ tense.

(1. similar, 2. facts, 3. present)

A character analysis for developing the subject of a sermon may focus on--

1. the unique _____ of the person
2. his _____
3. his _____
4. a _____ analysis underlying his _____.

(Compare your answers with the text.)

- "How to Overcome Hatred"
- "The Difference Faith Makes"
- "God Does Not Forsake His People"

Numerous sermons can be drawn from the life of Moses. In speaking to a group of teachers, F.W. Robertson preached a sermon entitled "The Character of Moses." His purpose was to show them how the education of Moses helped to make him a great man. After defining true education, Robertson analysed Moses' education by Pharaoh's daughter, by his mother, and by circumstances. Next, he pointed out the mental, moral, religious, and public results of Moses' education. Other sermons on Moses could include:

- "How God Makes Himself Known"
(the burning bush)
- "What God Can Do With a Willing Heart" (God's call to Moses to appear before Pharaoh)
- "What God Can Do With a Committed Life" (deliverance of the people from bondage)
- "Christian Service Requires Patience" (Moses' disobedience in striking the rock).

Imagination will enable the minister to see in Moses the aspirations, ambitions, defeats, sin, loneliness, and numerous other experiences of modern man.

A series of biographical sermons on different individuals could emphasize the theme "Qualities of Spiritual Leaders." Hebrews 11 sets forth faith as the common element of the great Old Testament patriarchs. In addition, it points out other qualities of character or areas of life in which faith is expressed. It emphasizes that faith and obedience go hand in hand. Abel's faith was evident in his worship. Enoch's faith was manifest by his righteous living. Noah's faith was expressed in his believing God's warning of judgement. Abraham's faith was demonstrated by his confidence that God would lead him to a better land. Sarah's faith expressed confidence that God could do that which seemed humanly impossible. Moses' faith caused him to cast his lot with a slave people who had a great God rather than with the conquering Egyptians who had a great empire. The writer of Hebrews states that there was much more in the lives of Old Testament persons which could yield spiritual truth, but "the time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Japhthae of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword..." (vv. 32-38).

In the New Testament, an endless number of sermons can be preached on the life of Christ. The

One identifying quality of many Old Testament patriarchs is _____.

List some individuals in the Old Testament whose lives exhibited faith.

(faith. Compare your list with the text.)

Gospels give a theological interpretation of His birth, childhood, baptism, temptation, ministry, death, burial, and resurrection. Although the divinity of Christ overshadows His humanity, the Apostles lived with Him as a human being. Their question was not whether He was human but whether He was more than human. John's Gospel does not look at Him so much from a biographical, human perspective as from the conviction of His divine nature. From the life of Jesus as presented in the Synoptics, the preacher can draw numerous truths concerning a righteous life and one's relationship to God.

The lives of the Apostles could form the foundation of a series of biographical sermons. The central theme could be "Qualities of Men Whom Jesus Chooses." Not much information is given concerning some of the Apostles, but others justify several sermons. Numerous spiritual truths can be learned from the lives of Paul, Peter, and John.

Many famous preachers of the past who effectively used biographical sermons include: Clovis Chappell, Clarence McCartney, Alexander MacClaren, F. B. Meyer, D. L. Moody, Frederick W. Robertson, Charles H. Spurgeon, and Alexander Whyte.

Sermon Series From a Book of the Bible

Genesis

The Bible is a book of redemption. The first eleven chapters of Genesis explain the need of redemption and give a prologue to the history of God's plan being worked out in one nation. Genesis could be divided into several series of sermons. Each series could have a unifying theme. After speaking of the need for redemption in Genesis 1-11, the theme could change to Abraham's place in God's redemptive plan.

Since the first chapters of Genesis deal with great theological truths, the major objectives normally would be doctrinal. Genesis 1 deals with God's relationship to the world. The chosen title would determine whether the sermon will focus on the greatness of God as Creator or on the world in its dependence upon the Creator. Genesis 2 emphasizes God's special act in creating man, thus man's special relation to God. He was created to be like God in order to have fellowship with Him. Man must determine the priority of his relationship to created existence and to the Creator. He has dominion over lower creation, but he is not independent of God. Genesis 3 sets forth the origin and nature of sin, which lies in man's pride and self-interest. He refuses to recognize his dependence upon God and turns the concern of his life away from fellowship with his Creator and to an emphasis on

Now that you have finished reading about biographical series, unscramble the names of nine biblical characters whose lives offer possibilities for sermon series.

1. jeposh _____
2. soesm _____
3. nosams _____
4. meluas _____
5. divad _____
6. marabah _____
7. sircht _____
8. tepre _____
9. apul _____

(Joseph, Moses, Samson, Samuel, David, Abraham, Christ, Peter, Paul)

The theme for a series of sermons from Genesis 1-11 could be "Man's Need of _____."

(redemption)

Three possible sermon titles from Genesis 1, 2, and 3 are:

- Genesis 1 -- _____*
Genesis 2 -- _____
Genesis 3 -- _____

*(Gen. 1--Man's Special Relation to God,
 Gen. 2--Man's Rejection of God's authority,
 Gen. 3--Man's Hopeless Efforts to Overcome Sin)*

securing the material. The story of the fall is the story of man's attempt to live an independent and self-controlled life.

Genesis 4-11 shows that man is incapable of dealing with his sin and guiding his life to its true purpose. Instead of becoming better, man degenerates, as illustrated by Cain and the inhabitants of the world up to the time of Noah. Man cannot exist apart from his Creator, nor can he improve the moral condition of his society. He is hopeless in his dilemma. For God to deal with him on the basis of justice is for man to be left in condemnation and punishment. The Tower of Babel illustrates man's hopeless attempts to improve his situation. By experiencing failure, he was prepared to receive the redemptive grace of God.

The next series of sermons could begin with Genesis 12 and speak of Abraham's place in God's redemption. The first sermon could be "God's Requirement of Loyalty." Abraham was born in the midst of an idolatrous people. For God to speak to and through Abraham, it was essential for Abraham to separate himself from the evil influences of his relatives and to demonstrate his faith by following Yahweh to a distant land. The next sermon could be "The Covenant Relationship Between God and Man." The first relationship is discussed as a promise of God to Abraham, but it developed into the expression of a covenant in Genesis 17. The Covenant required Abraham to live righteously and God to fulfill His promises. The next sermon could be "Evidences of God's Care." Genesis 15:1 states, "Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." The emphasis of the Scripture is on God's faithfulness in keeping His promises. Another message could be entitled "Man's Part in God's Redemptive Plan" (Gen. 18:16ff.). Man is responsible to make known the righteousness of the Lord, who will not tolerate the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah. Man who has received the knowledge of God is responsible for passing that knowledge on to his children and his household after him. If man is to fulfil his covenant responsibility in God's redemptive plan, he must be faithful. A sermon entitled "The Testing of Faith" could emphasize that God demands first place in man's loyalty. Man is to obey God even to the giving of his children (Gen. 22).

In moving from Abraham to Isaac and Jacob, the emphasis shifts from God's relating to the father of the faithful to His use of less prominent and faithful persons. The success of God's redemptive plan, however, is not defeated by sinful men. God's wisdom is portrayed in the choice of Jacob rather than Esau, and His providential control is illustrated in the life of Jacob. The story of Joseph continues to emphasize God's hand in the making of a family into a nation. God's chosen people had a place in His redemptive purpose, and the story of Joseph shows how God preserved them and provided for them.

The next series in Genesis, beginning with Chapter 12, would deal with _____ place in God's redemptive plan.

(Abraham's)

Number the following sermon titles in the order they would be in the series mentioned above.

- ___ The Covenant Relation Between God and Man
- ___ God's Requirement of Loyalty
- ___ Evidences of God's Care

(2, 1, 3)

A sermon series entitled, "God's Use of Little Men," could relate to I _____ and J _____ and others less prominent than A _____.

(Isaac, Jacob, Abraham)

Matthew

The Gospel of Matthew emphasizes that Jesus was the Davidic Messiah; however, He is also presented as the Son of Man. A unifying theme for numerous sermons based on Matthew's Gospel could be "God's Chosen King." The series could begin with "The Birth of the King." Matthew emphasizes in the genealogy that Jesus fulfills the requirements of the Messiah by being a descendant of David. He was recognized outside of Israel by the Magi as a person of divine destiny, and He was divinely protected from the jealousy of Judah's earthly king.

The next sermon could be "The Anointing of the King." In the Old Testament, God's messiah (anointed one) was dedicated by a prophet who used oil in a public ceremony. David was endowed with the Spirit of God at his anointing. Jesus' anointing was by the Holy Spirit when the prophet John baptized Him. The public ceremony involved immersion in water rather than pouring of oil on His head. The anointing by the Holy Spirit qualified Jesus as God's chosen King.

A sermon on God's testing of His chosen would follow (Matt. 4). At His baptism, it was made known to Jesus that He would be a suffering messiah rather than a victorious military monarch. The temptations in the wilderness tested His willingness to follow God's will in suffering.

The Sermon on the Mount suggests a new series of sermons on the conduct of kingdom citizens. The Beatitudes speak of the contrast between citizens of an earthly kingdom and of a heavenly kingdom. Salt and light set forth the influence of kingdom citizens. The higher righteousness required of them is presented in Jesus' discussion of anger, lust, revenge, and hatred. Their attitudes are discussed in Matthew 6:1-15. Their prayer life manifests a new perspective and sense of values. The activities of those who have entered the Kingdom have a new heavenly focus. The relation of the material to the heavenly is to be conditioned by faith (6:24-34). Righteousness is to be demonstrated by conduct and not just by words (7:12-29).

A third series could be entitled "The Work of the Kingdom," based on Matthew 8-12. The first sermon would be "Helping the Needy" and would refer to the healing miracles in Matthew 8. Lepers were social outcasts. Jesus put forth His hand and touched the leper, cleansed him, and instructed him to show himself to the priest to be declared clean in order that he could return to society. What are churches doing to help the social outcasts of our day? The work of the Kingdom includes helping the underprivileged. The servant of the Centurion suffered from paralysis. Although he was a servant, he was not too lowly for Jesus' concern. Newspapers carry accounts of the health conditions of the leading citizens of a country,

A unifying theme for numerous sermons based on Matthew's Gospel could be "_____."

The series could begin with "The _____ of the _____."

(God's Chosen King, Birth, King)

The next sermon in the suggested series above could be "The _____ of the King."

(Anointing)

The Sermon on the Mount suggests a series of sermons entitled "Conduct of Kingdom Citizens."

Sermon titles could be:

"The _____ of Kingdom Citizens"

"The _____ of Kingdom Citizens"

(Kingdom Citizens, Influence, Attitudes)

A third series from Matthew's Gospel could be entitled, "The _____ of the Kingdom."

The first sermon would be "Helping the _____."

(Work, Needy)

but seldom do people concern themselves with the sickness of servants and slaves. The basic work of the Kingdom is to help those in need. Even the King lived as a servant and helped the afflicted.

Jesus was most concerned with helping the spiritually enslaved. He cast the devils out of two Gergesenes (Matt. 8:28ff.). He forgave the sins of the paralytic (Matt. 9:2ff.). The scribes held that the paralysed man was being afflicted because of his sins. As long as the man remained paralyzed, Jesus' power to forgive sins was questioned. Jesus commanded the paralytic to take up his bed and to walk. The healing of the palsied man left no question that Jesus had power from God to forgive sins. Matthew, the publican, was just as much in need of forgiveness (Matt. 9:9). Publicans were not known for their honesty. The work of the Kingdom is to remake the lives of sinners by cleansing them and changing them. Jesus pointed out that He came as a physician to those who were spiritually and morally sick.

Matthew 10 deals with the call and commissioning of kingdom servants. The nature of their work is stated, and they are given warning that they will be opposed. They are promised God's grace and guidance, however, in the midst of their persecution. Even members of their own household will be antagonistic to them, but loyalty to the Master will result in finding life.

Opposition to the Kingdom is set forth in Matthew 11. Since the Master was opposed, the servants likewise can expect persecution. Adversity came from the political leaders who imprisoned John the Baptist. It came from the common people who were not satisfied with what the Kingdom offered by grace. It came from religious leaders who were unsympathetic with Jesus' ministry to the publicans and sinners. It came from the privileged who were satisfied to ignore the mighty works of Jesus and continue in their sin. Matthew 12 presents the work of the Kingdom in conflict with legalistic rituals. Jesus rejected the pharisaical customs concerning the keeping of the Sabbath and used the day for the benefit of man. Opposition became so strong that he was accused of doing His mighty works in the power of the prince of the devils.

The next series of sermons could emphasize "Characteristics of the Kingdom." The parables in Matthew 13 describe the various aspects of the Kingdom. The parable of the sower is related to its growth. A prerequisite of growth is the sowing of seed which is the "good news" of the Kingdom. Not everyone, however, who hears the Gospel will respond in faith. The condition of the heart of the person who hears determines his response. The disciples who sowed could take courage because of the assurance that some of the seed would bear abundant harvest.

The second sermon in a series on the work of the Kingdom could be "The C _____ of Kingdom Servants."

(Commissioning)

In a series entitled, "Characteristics of the Kingdom," two sermon titles could be--

- 1. "How the Kingdom _____"*
- 2. "The Relation of the Kingdom to the _____"*

(Grows, World)

The parable of the tares distinguished the Kingdom from the world. The Kingdom is in the world but not of it. Kingdom citizens are the good seed in the field, but they exist alongside the tares who are children of the enemy. At the time of harvest, which is the end of the world, the children of the Kingdom and of the evil one will be separated to their eternal destinies.

The parables of the mustard seed and the leaven emphasize the mysterious growth of the Kingdom. From a very small beginning, the Kingdom will grow to encompass people in every nation. The Kingdom will have a significant influence on the world but will never become identical with it. The parables of the treasure and the pearl emphasize the value of the Kingdom.

Beginning in Matthew 16, the nature of the Messiah begins to be revealed. The Pharisees wanted a sign as proof that Jesus was the Messiah, but He refused to demonstrate His heavenly power. At Caesarea Philippi, Jesus identified Himself as Son of Man (Matt. 16:13), and the disciples identified Him as Christ (Messiah), the Son of the living God (Matt.16:16). Jesus accepted this recognition but immediately began to give a different image to the role of the Messiah. He informed His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, suffer, be killed, and be raised again the third day. His nature was to be that of a lowly, suffering servant rather than a ruling monarch. The nature of the Messiah determines the nature of the Kingdom and the role of His followers. His followers are to lose their lives in His service in order to find eternal life.

Matthew 17 speaks of the exalted or divine nature of the Messiah. In the transfiguration experience, the glory of Jesus shone through as the Son, and His clothing was white as the light. The appearance of Moses and Elijah represented the authoritative Law and the Prophets. The voice from the cloud identified Christ as God's Son and thus exalted the authority of His Word above that of the Old Testament represented by Moses and Elijah. What Jesus said about the nature of the Messiah was of greater authority than the Old Testament and superseded it.

The latter part of Matthew 17 deals with the power of the Messiah, which is available by faith to the disciples who serve in the name of the Master. Their conquest of the power of evil will be successful.

Another series can be on people who enter the Kingdom. According to Matthew 18, the King is more interested in the "little ones" of faith than in the mighty men of valour. He does not need valiant soldiers to establish the Kingdom, for it comes by the power of God. It is offered to children who by faith depend on the Heavenly Father rather than on their own resources. A sermon might be entitled

Beginning in Matthew 16, a series of sermons would concern the nature of the _____.

(Messiah)

Read the next paragraph. Then do the following.

Two aspects of the nature of the Messiah which provide sermon titles are:

- 1. The Suffering _____*
- 2. The Exalted _____ of _____*

(Servant, Son, God)

A series might also be developed from Matthew concerning _____ who enter the Kingdom.

(people)

"What Adults Can Learn from Children." The first thing is humility (Matt. 18:4). The opposite of humility is pride, and it characterizes adults who believe that self-sufficiency is the same as greatness. Pride is expressed in the unwillingness of one to admit his errors and failures. Jesus preferred the honesty, openness, and dependence of little children to the superficiality and independence of people who claimed importance according to the standards of this world. A second requirement is faith (Matt. 18:6). Children recognize their littleness and need of help from someone stronger and more intelligent than themselves. Man's only hope for entering the Kingdom is to recognize his need of help from God in the removing of his sins and controlling of his life for righteousness. A third requirement is forgiveness (Matt. 18:21ff.). Man can enter the Kingdom only by being forgiven, and his life as a Kingdom citizen is characterized by willingness to forgive his brother "seventy times seven."

The story of the rich young ruler exemplifies the people who cannot enter the Kingdom. The young man's wealth and success (a ruler) indicate that he was accustomed to self-accomplishments. He expected his religious efforts to be sufficient to qualify him for acceptance by God; however, he was not perfect and needed the grace of God. The sermon could be entitled "Lessons for Successful Men." It is impossible for man to enter the Kingdom; that is, sinful man can never earn the right of acceptance by God. His salvation is by God's grace (Matt. 19:26).

Matthew 20 emphasizes that God's blessings are His gifts of grace rather than the rewards earned by men. If man received what he deserves, he would be paid with death, which is the wages of sin. The parable of the labourers in the vineyard teaches that we cannot complain of injustice if someone else receives a gift of grace while we receive our just wage. Man's hopes of citizenship in the Kingdom is based on "God's extravagant goodness."

The latter part of Chapter 20 contrasts the attitude of kingdom leaders to that of the people of this world. The jealousy of the disciples caused them to desire positions of honour and authority over others, like the princes of the Gentiles (Matt. 20:25). Greatness in the Kingdom requires one to be a servant rather than a master or ruler. A sermon on this subject could be entitled, "The Way to Achieve Greatness." The sermon could contrast greatness in the world to greatness in the Kingdom.

The next series based on Matthew 21 through 27 could be entitled "Preparing for the Establishment of the Kingdom." Jesus presented Himself as the King (Matt. 21:1-11). His rule was to be characterized by peace and humility rather than pomp, pride, and

One possible sermon title in a series on people who enter the Kingdom could be "What _____ Can Learn from _____"

(Adults, Children)

Another title in a series on people who enter the Kingdom could be "People Who Cannot _____ the Kingdom."

(Enter)

What title could a series based on Matthew 21-27 be given?

(Compare your answer with the text.)

military aggression. His reign was to be marked by true righteousness; therefore, He did not permit the Temple to be abused but drove out the money changers and those who sold doves for sacrifices. He gave instructions concerning the judgement of those who refused to be obedient. Opposition increased among the Pharisees and scribes and eventually resulted in His death. He denounced the hypocritical actions of the religious leaders who claimed to keep the Law but would be guilty of murdering Him, an innocent man. Nevertheless, He continued to love even those who opposed Him.

His death and resurrection were essential for the establishment of the Kingdom of God. God's Kingdom had been removed from Israel because of her sin. She had been unable to improve her condition; therefore, her only hope was in a righteousness originating beyond her own efforts. Her mission was to take the Gospel to the Gentiles who likewise would be called into the Kingdom. Israel refused to be an obedient servant; therefore, the Kingdom was taken from her and given to a people (the Church) who would bring forth fruit.

In order to provide the means of righteousness for His people, it was necessary for Christ to die on the cross. By taking the sins of God's chosen upon Himself, they would be cleansed and qualified for entering God's presence. The new relationship of man to God, based on the death of Christ, was portrayed in the Covenant at the Last Supper. The Messiah's death was atonement for man's sins, an essential work of the King to make men righteous for entering the Kingdom. His resurrection was His victory over the power of the opposing kingdom of Satan. This last section of Matthew on the inauguration of the Kingdom must focus on the sacrificial death and resurrection of Christ.

Preaching Through the Books of the Bible

Beginning with Genesis and moving straight through to Revelation will provide a plan for preaching which may extend to a year or even several years. This plan will not result in the close relation of sermon subjects characteristic of a series on one subject, but there can be a relationship from week to week based on the historical background. If the minister determines to preach at least one sermon from each book, and several from the books which contain numerous vital doctrines, his plan will exceed 100 sermons. He could preach from the New Testament in the morning service and the Old Testament in the evening service. On the other hand, he might decide to preach doctrinal, evangelistic, or ethical sermons in one Sunday service and follow the plan of preaching through the Bible at the other service.



Another sermon concerning the establishment of the Kingdom might be called, "Righteousness Provided by the King's _____."

(Death)



Advantages of following a plan of preaching through the Bible are:

The Bible is preached, not just sermons from or about the Bible.

Expository sermons are likely to be developed.

Since the Bible is a logical book, it outlines itself and enables the preacher to show the relation of a sermon to the one which preceded it, thus forming a series.

The Bible contains messages applicable to the needs of this age.

This plan provides continuity and yet variety.

It will guide the preacher to touch on the social, evangelistic, doctrinal, and devotional needs of the people.

It gives honour to the Bible as the Word of God and helps the people to understand it.

It will make the minister a student.

It will also relieve him of the constant search for sermon subjects.

His sermons will be nourishing because they are filled with biblical truths.

He will be delivered from the temptation of developing a sermon as a reaction to something he has heard during the week.

In preaching through the Bible, numerous sermons can come from one book, as illustrated in the previous section, or an entire book can be treated in one sermon. Chalmers E. Faw in A Guide to Biblical Preaching has suggested five types of book sermons:

- introductory book sermons,
- major-theme or central-message book sermons,
- minor-theme book sermons,
- biographical book sermons,
- key-text book sermons.

Which advantages given for preaching through the Bible seem most important? The following clues ought to help you decide.

1. The _____ is _____.
2. Relevant _____ are preached.
3. _____ is attained.
4. The preacher is relieved of the _____ for sermon _____.
5. His sermons will be _____.

(1. Bible, preached. 2. messages. 3. Variety. 4. constant search, subjects. 5. nourishing)

An introductory book sermon on Genesis could be entitled "The Meaning of Religion." The emphasis of the sermon is on man's relation to God. The relationship must be understood in the light of creation, the fact that relationship has been broken by sin, and God's redemptive plan to restore the relationship.

Most of the larger books have more than one theme, and the major or central theme may not always be clear. The major theme of Exodus, however, is indicated by the title of the book. A sermon on Egyptian deliverance could be entitled "God's Help For the Helpless." The theme in the latter part of Exodus is the Covenant. The major theme of the Book of Romans is justification by faith. This theme is based on the doctrines of the sinfulness of man and the grace of God. Either of the latter could be considered to be minor themes; however, they are important doctrines. Biographical sermons are especially appropriate for dealing with the books of history. John 3:16 and 20:31 are key texts which could serve as the bases for a sermon on the Gospel of John.

Following a plan of preaching through the Bible can offer freshness and variety which can result from using different types of book sermons as suggested by Faw. Variety also can be achieved by developing sermons with different major objectives. The expository sermon will predominate; however, textual and topical sermons can also be planned.

Read all of this page. Then match the following titles with their corresponding types of book sermons.

- ___ 1. God's Grace Is Man's Hope
- ___ 2. God's Love Revealed Through Christ
- ___ 3. The Meaning of Religion
- ___ 4. God's Help for the Helpless

- a. Introductory book sermon on Genesis
- b. A major theme sermon on Exodus
- c. A minor theme in Romans
- d. John 3:16

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

Home Study Exercise

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

1. What is meant by a series of sermons? _____

2. List four advantages of preaching sermon series. _____

3. When should a series not extend beyond a month? _____
4. Give four advantages of biographical sermons. _____

5. List four possible biographical sermon titles based on Samson. _____

6. How can truth drawn from a historical character be made relevant to contemporary man?

7. In what four areas can an analysis of a person be made in developing the subject of a sermon? _____
8. Name ten biblical characters whose lives will yield numerous sermons. _____

9. State three themes for sermon series in Genesis and suggest three titles under two of the themes. _____

10. Suggest seven sermon series based on Matthew with at least two sermon titles under each.
- (1) _____
 - (2) _____
 - (3) _____
 - (4) _____
 - (5) _____
 - (6) _____
 - (7) _____
11. From the eleven advantages given for preaching through the Bible, select five which you consider to be most important. _____

12. Illustrate four types of book sermons. _____

13. Complete your twelve months' preaching plan including sermon series. You may have to adjust some of the major objectives which you chose previously.

Supplementary activity (Levels 2 and 3):

1. Read pages 60-73 in Planning Your Preaching by Pearce and answer the following questions:
 - (1) List the advantages Pearce gives for the plan of preaching through the Bible.
 - (2) Give five suggested titles for series of sermons on books or chapters of the Bible.
2. After reading pages 90-103 in Planning Your Preaching by Pearce, answer the following questions:
 - (1) What does Pearce state as the advantages of planning your preaching by months?
 - (2) Briefly summarize Pearce's suggestions concerning the techniques of planning.
3. Give three suggestions for series of sermons which fit into the plan of preaching by months.

Advanced activity (Level 3):

Suggest a general theme and specific titles for a series of five sermons based on the Book of James or First Peter.

Seminar Discussion

1. What are the advantages of preaching sermon series and how long should a series be?
2. What are the advantages of preaching biographical sermons?
3. Give the advantages of preaching through the Bible.
4. Outline the steps to follow in preparing a series of sermons.
5. What are five types of book sermons?