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HOMILETICS MADE CLEAR

A Practical Guide to Preparing and Delivering Biblical Sermons



SALONGO SSENTABA RONALD

Expanded 2026 Edition

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Edited and Expanded 2026 Edition

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This book is a ministry-training resource and does not replace accountable study, pastoral oversight, or careful attention to local safeguarding requirements.

Dedication

I dedicate this book first to my beloved wife, Nalongo Josephine Nakasiita Ssentaba, whose companionship, prayer, patience, and strength continue to support our family and ministry. I also dedicate it with deep love to our children: Faith Angel Ssentaba; our twins, Esther Power Ssentaba and Esther Pearl Ssentaba; Gideon Pillar Ssentaba; and Gideon Prophet Ssentaba. May you grow in wisdom, truth, courage, and the knowledge of God, and may your lives declare His faithfulness more clearly than any words I could write.

I further dedicate this work to young Christian ministers who desire to handle God's Word faithfully and serve people from different backgrounds with humility, courage, clarity, and love.

Acknowledgment

I thank Harvest Teaching Ministries for the biblical instruction and ministry training that contributed to the original classroom notes behind this book. I offer special appreciation to Pastor Gerald Mukuye, the proprietor of Harvest Teaching Ministries, for investing in the preparation of Christian workers and creating opportunities for ministers to learn.

I also acknowledge Norman Holmes and his book Homiletics Preparing and Delivering Sermons, which served as a principal teaching resource for the course from which many of my early notes were developed. This expanded work preserves the subjects learned in that training, restates them in original language, and brings them into conversation with Scripture and other recognized works on preaching. I remain grateful to the pastors, teachers, congregations, students, and writers whose faithful service has helped generations of ministers handle the Scriptures responsibly.

To younger preachers preparing to serve a demanding generation: pursue wisdom, welcome correction, and give first place to the true teaching of God's Word. Methods, media, and audiences will change, but the minister must remain truthful, teachable, prayerful, and faithful to Christ. Do not exchange biblical truth for popularity, excitement, or quick influence. Let Scripture shape both the message you preach and the life from which you preach it.

Preface

This book began as practical classroom notes on homiletics. The material has been reorganized, corrected, expanded, and rewritten for young Christian ministers preparing to speak in churches, schools, homes, conferences, outreach meetings, funerals, weddings, community gatherings, and online spaces. The language is intentionally simple, but the responsibility is treated seriously. Clear preaching requires spiritual dependence, careful study, sound theology, ethical conduct, knowledge of the audience, and repeated practice.

The central conviction of this book is that the preacher is a servant of God's Word and of the people who hear it. The goal is not to display the preacher's knowledge or personality. The goal is to explain Scripture faithfully, proclaim Christ clearly, and help hearers respond to God in faith and obedience.

The Theological Foundation of This Book

The teaching in this book rests on the following convictions. These statements provide the doctrinal boundaries within which its guidance on interpretation, sermon preparation, spiritual gifts, and ministry practice should be understood.

The inspiration and authority of Scripture

We believe that the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are inspired by God and are the trustworthy, sufficient, and governing authority for Christian faith, doctrine, and conduct. Preachers therefore stand under Scripture; they do not use personal experience, tradition, culture, prophecy, or popularity to overrule its teaching (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21).

The Trinity

We believe in one God who eternally exists as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The three persons are distinct, yet they are one in divine being, glory, and purpose. Christian preaching should therefore honor the Father, proclaim the Son, and depend on the Holy Spirit without dividing the one true God (Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14).

The person and saving work of Jesus Christ

We believe that Jesus Christ is fully God and fully human. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, lived without sin, died for our sins, rose bodily from the dead, ascended to the Father, and reigns as Lord. His death and resurrection are the decisive foundation of forgiveness, reconciliation, victory over sin and death, and the believer's hope (John 1:1-14; 1 Corinthians 15:1-8; Philippians 2:5-11).

Salvation by grace through faith

We believe that all people are sinners who cannot save themselves. Salvation is God's gift, received by grace through

faith in Jesus Christ, not earned by religious works or human merit. Saving faith includes repentance, trust in Christ, and a new life that bears the fruit of obedience through God's transforming grace (Ephesians 2:8-10; Romans 3:21-26; Titus 2:11-14).

The ministry of the Holy Spirit

We believe that the Holy Spirit glorifies Christ, brings conviction, gives new birth, indwells believers, produces holy character, gives power for witness, distributes gifts, and guides the church in truth. Dependence on the Spirit never excuses careless interpretation or disorder, because the Spirit who empowers ministry is the Spirit of truth, holiness, love, and self-control (John 16:13-15; Acts 1:8; Galatians 5:22-25; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11).

The church and its mission

We believe that the church is the people of God gathered in Christ and sent into the world. Its mission includes worship, discipleship, fellowship, compassionate service, the defense of truth and justice, and the proclamation of the gospel to all peoples. Preaching serves this mission by forming mature disciples who bear faithful witness to Christ (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 2:42-47; Ephesians 4:11-16).

Christ's return and Christian hope

We believe that Jesus Christ will return personally and gloriously, that God will raise the dead and judge with perfect justice, and that those who belong to Christ will share in the promised renewal of all things. This hope calls the church to holiness, perseverance, comfort, faithful service, and readiness rather than speculation or fear (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Titus 2:11-14; Revelation 21:1-5).

Spiritual gifts and biblical authority

We believe that the Holy Spirit gives gifts for the building up of the church and that believers should exercise them with humility, love, order, discernment, and accountability. No prophecy, revelation claim, dream, impression, or spiritual experience carries the authority of Scripture or may contradict its clear teaching. Spiritual claims must be tested, and Christ's character and the edification of the church must govern their use (1 Corinthians 13:1-14:40; 1 Thessalonians 5:19-22; 1 John 4:1-3).

How to Use This Book

- Read one lesson at a time and complete its reflection or practice exercise.
- Keep a Bible, notebook, and sermon-preparation file beside you.
- Test every principle by Scripture and discuss difficult questions with mature Christian leaders.
- Practice with short messages before attempting longer sermons.
- Ask for feedback and revise your work.
- Use the preparation process and worksheets in the final lessons for every sermon.

What You Will Learn

- How to interpret a passage within its context and genre.
- How to write a textual idea, sermon aim, and memorable main idea.
- How to explain, illustrate, apply, organize, and deliver a sermon.

- How to minister responsibly to different audiences and special occasions.
- How to protect integrity through truthful sources, safeguarding, and accountability.
- How to evaluate each sermon and continue growing as a servant of the Word.

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Lesson 1 The Meaning and Purpose of Preaching

What homiletics studies

Homiletics is the disciplined study and practice of preparing and delivering sermons. It asks how a minister moves faithfully from the biblical text to a clear message for a particular audience. Homiletics therefore includes interpretation, theology, structure, illustration, application, delivery, and evaluation. It is not a technique for making weak ideas sound impressive. Its purpose is to help the preacher communicate God's Word truthfully, clearly, lovingly, and responsibly.

Biblical words connected with preaching

The New Testament uses several words for communicating God's message. The verb kerysso means to proclaim or announce publicly, as a herald announces an entrusted message. The verb euangelizomai means to announce good news, especially the good news of what God has done in Jesus Christ. Didasko means to teach, while parakaleo can mean to exhort, encourage, or appeal. These words overlap. They remind us that Christian ministry includes proclamation, gospel witness, instruction, encouragement, and pastoral appeal. No single word gives the complete theology of preaching.

The message and the messenger

A herald does not invent the king's message. In the same way, a preacher is a steward, not the owner, of God's Word. Yet the messenger still matters. Character, preparation, tone, and conduct can either support or weaken the message. Paul therefore told Timothy to watch both his life and his doctrine. Biblical authority comes from God and His written Word;

personal confidence, education, position, or volume cannot create that authority.

The central purpose

Christian preaching should explain what Scripture says, show what it means in its literary and historical setting, connect it to the gospel and the whole counsel of God, and call hearers to faithful response. Depending on the passage, that response may include repentance, faith, worship, hope, obedience, reconciliation, endurance, justice, service, or mission. The preacher seeks transformation by the Spirit through the Word, not applause for the speaker.

Ministry practice

Before preparing a sermon, write one sentence answering three questions: What does this passage reveal about God? What truth should the hearers understand? What faithful response does the passage require? These questions keep the sermon focused on God, grounded in the text, and directed toward life.

Why preaching matters

Preaching matters because God has chosen to make His truth known through His written Word and through faithful human witness. In Nehemiah 8, the law was read and its meaning explained so that the people could understand. Jesus announced the kingdom of God and taught with authority. In Acts, the apostles proclaimed Christ's death and resurrection, explained Scripture, called people to repentance and faith, strengthened churches, and appointed others to teach. Romans 10 connects hearing with the proclamation of Christ, while 2 Timothy 4 commands the minister to proclaim the Word patiently and persistently. Preaching does not replace personal discipleship, counseling, worship, or service, but it gives the gathered church a shared encounter with biblical truth. It

teaches believers to read Scripture, exposes error, comforts sufferers, calls sinners to Christ, shapes worship, preserves the faith across generations, and sends the church into mission.

Four essential relationships in preaching

Norman Holmes's course gives strong attention to the preacher, the message, the hearers, and the act of delivery. These four relationships help explain why a sermon can fail even when one part is strong. A sincere preacher without a biblical message offers sincerity without authority. Accurate notes that are not communicated clearly remain inaccessible. Skilled speech without love can manipulate. An audience-centered message without faithfulness can become mere approval-seeking. Mature homiletics holds all four together: a prepared servant, an entrusted biblical message, real hearers, and a responsible act of proclamation.

An expanded definition of homiletics

The word homiletics comes through Greek and later Christian usage connected with conversation, address, and instruction. In Christian education it has come to mean the theological and practical discipline concerned with sermons. It studies why the church preaches, what message is entrusted to the preacher, how Scripture is interpreted, how a sermon is shaped, how it is delivered, and how it should call people to faithful response. Homiletics is both a field of study and a ministry practice. As a field, it examines biblical foundations, history, communication, and method. As a practice, it trains a real person to explain a real biblical text to real hearers in a real situation.

How major preaching writers strengthen the definition

John A. Broadus treated sermon preparation and delivery as work requiring both sound material and effective communication. Phillips Brooks famously emphasized the

relationship between truth and the preacher's personality, reminding ministers that God does not normally bypass the messenger's formed character. Haddon Robinson describes biblical preaching around the communication of a biblical concept derived from careful study and applied to hearers. John Stott pictures preaching as bridge-building between the world of the biblical text and the world of contemporary listeners. Bryan Chapell stresses that faithful exposition should show how God's grace answers the human condition revealed in the passage. These approaches differ in emphasis, but they agree that preaching is more than public religious speech: it is biblical truth responsibly interpreted, embodied by a servant, communicated clearly, and directed toward faithful life.

A working definition for this book

Homiletics is the prayerful, theological, interpretive, ethical, and communicative work through which a prepared Christian minister discovers the intended message of Scripture, shapes it into a clear sermon for a particular audience, proclaims it in dependence on the Holy Spirit, and calls hearers to respond to God through Jesus Christ. Every word in this definition matters. Prayerful points to dependence on God. Theological keeps the sermon consistent with the whole teaching of Scripture. Interpretive requires careful attention to meaning. Ethical concerns the truthfulness and character of the messenger. Communicative requires clarity for actual hearers. Prepared rejects careless speaking. Particular audience recognizes that communication occurs in context. Dependence on the Spirit rejects self-sufficiency. Response reminds us that a sermon seeks more than information.

Kerysso proclaim as a herald

The Greek verb kerysso, sometimes written in class notes as keruso, means to proclaim publicly or announce as an authorized herald. Its emphasis is not that the preacher possesses personal authority independent of God, but that an entrusted message is being announced openly and urgently. Mark 1:14 says that Jesus came into Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God, and 2 Timothy 4:2 commands Timothy to proclaim the Word in season and out of season. These uses teach the minister to speak openly and faithfully while remembering that the message belongs to God.

Euangelizomai announce good news

The Greek verb euangelizomai means to announce or bring good news. In Luke 4:18 Jesus reads that He was anointed to proclaim good news to the poor, and Acts 8:35 describes Philip beginning with Isaiah and telling the Ethiopian the good news about Jesus. The term focuses attention on the saving news being communicated: God has acted in Christ. Christian preaching may include warning, correction, and instruction, but it must not lose the gospel that gives those words their proper setting.

Didasko teach

The verb didasko means to teach or instruct so that hearers understand truth and learn a way of life. Matthew 5:2 introduces Jesus teaching His disciples, and Acts 18:11 describes Paul remaining in Corinth and teaching the Word of God. Teaching explains, connects, and clarifies. A sermon may proclaim with urgency and still teach with patience; the New Testament does not require ministers to choose between the two.

Parakaleo appeal encourage and exhort

The verb parakaleo can carry the ideas of urging, appealing, encouraging, or comforting, depending on context. Romans 12:1 uses it for Paul's appeal that believers present their bodies to God, while 1 Thessalonians 5:14 calls the church to admonish, encourage, help, and be patient. This word reminds preachers that application should not always sound the same. Some hearers need warning, others courage, others comfort, and all need patient truth spoken in love.

Martureo bear witness

The New Testament also uses the language of witness. To bear witness is to testify truthfully about what God has revealed and done, supremely in Jesus Christ. Acts 1:8 joins the Spirit's power with the disciples' calling to be Christ's witnesses. A witness does not improve the truth by exaggeration. The preacher's testimony must agree with Scripture and must never replace the gospel with personal experience.

Lesson summary

- What homiletics studies
- Biblical words connected with preaching
- The message and the messenger
- The central purpose
- Ministry practice
- Why preaching matters
- Four essential relationships in preaching
- An expanded definition of homiletics
- How major preaching writers strengthen the definition
- A working definition for this book
- Kerysso proclaim as a herald
- Euangelizomai announce good news
- Didasko teach

- Parakaleo appeal encourage and exhort
- Martureo bear witness

REVIEW AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How would you explain the main purpose of this lesson on the meaning and purpose of preaching to a younger minister?

2. Which biblical passage connected with this lesson should you study more carefully, and why?

3. What common ministry mistake does this lesson help you recognize or prevent?

4. Which principle will be most difficult to practise in your present ministry setting?

5. What one change can you begin before preparing or delivering your next sermon?

MINISTRY ASSIGNMENT

Choose one biblical sermon in Acts. Identify what is proclaimed, what is explained, and what response is requested.

Academic Notes and Sources

- Norman Holmes, Homiletics: Preparing and Delivering Sermons, 1-8, for the importance and purpose of preaching.
- Haddon W. Robinson, Biblical Preaching, 3rd ed., on the biblical idea and sermon purpose.
- John R. W. Stott, Between Two Worlds, on relating the world of Scripture to the world of the hearer.
- Frederick W. Danker, ed., A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, 3rd ed., s.vv. kerysso, euangelizomai, didasko, parakaleo, and martyreo, for the Greek terms discussed in this lesson.

Lesson 2 Preparing the Preacher

Where preparation begins

Preparation for preaching begins before sermon notes are written. God first prepares the person who will carry the message. The preacher must receive the gospel personally, grow as a disciple of Jesus Christ, learn to live under the authority of Scripture, and serve faithfully in ordinary responsibilities. Public ministry cannot safely carry more weight than private character and spiritual maturity can support.

Conversion and assurance

A preacher is not made by eloquence alone. The minister must understand and personally trust the gospel: salvation is God's gift through Jesus Christ, received by grace through faith, producing repentance and a new direction of life. Assurance should rest on God's promise in Christ rather than on public success, titles, dreams, or the approval of a crowd. A person who is uncertain about the gospel should seek patient pastoral instruction before assuming responsibility to teach others.

Consecration and obedience

Consecration means setting oneself apart for God's service. It is not a claim that the preacher has become sinless; it is a continuing surrender of body, mind, time, relationships, ambitions, and resources to God. Romans 12:1-2 connects this surrender with a transformed mind, while Ezra 7:10 presents a healthy order: Ezra prepared his heart to study God's law, to practise it, and then to teach it. The preacher studies as a disciple before speaking as a teacher.

Formation in the local church

A developing minister needs the worship, correction, sacraments, fellowship, and discipline of a local church. Gifts become clearer through service. Begin with responsibilities that do not provide status: prayer, visitation, helping, learning, listening, and caring for people. Faithfulness in small tasks allows leaders and the congregation to recognize character, competence, and calling over time.

Called and sent

Scripture presents public ministry as a serious trust. A desire to preach should be tested by sound doctrine, mature character, spiritual gifts, service in the local church, and the recognition of responsible leaders. A dramatic experience may encourage a person, but it should not replace biblical qualifications or accountable confirmation. A young minister should welcome training, correction, and time for growth.

Character before platform

The qualifications in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 emphasize character more than public talent. The preacher should be truthful, self-controlled, hospitable, faithful in relationships, gentle, teachable, and free from the love of money. Gift can gather a crowd, but character helps a ministry remain trustworthy. Private prayer, financial integrity, sexual purity, honest speech, and respect for other people are part of sermon preparation because the life of the messenger affects the credibility of the message.

A servant under authority

The preacher serves Christ, Scripture, the church, and the people who listen. This means refusing to manipulate hearers through fear, false promises, invented prophecies, public

humiliation, or pressure for money. It also means admitting uncertainty where Scripture does not speak clearly. The pulpit must never be used to settle personal conflicts, attack unnamed individuals, reveal confidential information, or protect abusive leadership.

Study and dependence

Prayer and study belong together. Prayer without careful study may become careless opinion. Study without prayer may become proud information. The minister asks the Holy Spirit for humility, understanding, courage, and love while doing the demanding work of reading, comparing, checking, organizing, and revising.

Reflection questions

What habits in my private life strengthen or weaken my public ministry? Who has permission to correct me? Am I seeking a platform, or am I preparing to serve people faithfully? What safeguards protect children, vulnerable adults, finances, and confidential conversations in my ministry setting?

The four foundations of a prepared preacher

A prepared preacher needs spiritual life, biblical knowledge, ministry skill, and accountable relationships. Spiritual life includes prayer, worship, repentance, obedience, and love. Biblical knowledge includes the whole story of Scripture, central Christian doctrine, and the ability to interpret passages responsibly. Ministry skill includes writing, speaking, listening, planning, and caring for people. Accountable relationships include church leaders, peers, family where applicable, and people permitted to ask difficult questions. Weakness in one foundation eventually affects the others.

Study before speech

Second Timothy 2:15 calls the worker to handle the word of truth correctly. This requires a reading plan broader than the next sermon. The young minister should read entire biblical books, learn basic doctrine, keep notes, memorize important passages, and become familiar with reliable reference works. Study should create humility rather than pride. The more a preacher understands the depth of Scripture, the less casually the preacher will make absolute claims.

Preparation of body mind and schedule

Human limits are not signs of spiritual failure. Sleep, nutrition, exercise, medical care, emotional health, and reasonable rhythms of work and rest affect attention and judgment. A preacher should plan study time early enough to avoid preparing every message in panic. When a crisis reduces preparation time, it is wiser to preach a simple, well-understood text than to pretend certainty about material that has not been studied.

Signs of readiness and warning signs

Readiness is seen in teachability, consistency, love for people, growing biblical judgment, and faithful service when no platform is offered. Warning signs include refusing correction, collecting titles, exaggerating testimonies, using secret revelations to control decisions, repeated moral dishonesty, and anger when another person is invited to speak. Such signs require pastoral attention before greater responsibility is given.

Lesson summary

- Where preparation begins
- Conversion and assurance
- Consecration and obedience

- Formation in the local church
- Called and sent
- Character before platform
- A servant under authority
- Study and dependence
- Reflection questions
- The four foundations of a prepared preacher
- Study before speech
- Preparation of body mind and schedule
- Signs of readiness and warning signs

REVIEW AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How would you explain the main purpose of this lesson on preparing the preacher to a younger minister?

2. Which biblical passage connected with this lesson should you study more carefully, and why?

3. What common ministry mistake does this lesson help you recognize or prevent?

4. Which principle will be most difficult to practise in your present ministry setting?

5. What one change can you begin before preparing or delivering your next sermon?

MINISTRY ASSIGNMENT

Write a one-page personal ministry covenant covering doctrine, character, money, relationships, confidentiality, and accountability.

Academic Notes and Sources

- 1 Timothy 3:1-7; 4:12-16; 2 Timothy 2:15; Titus 1:5-9; James 3:1; and 1 Peter 5:1-4 provide the principal biblical qualifications.
- Norman Holmes, Homiletics: Preparing and Delivering Sermons, 9-20, for preparation of the preacher.
- D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, Preaching and Preachers, on the preacher, calling, preparation, and dependence on the Holy Spirit.
- Phillips Brooks, Lectures on Preaching, on truth communicated through the preacher's formed personality.

Lesson 3 The Bible Theology and the Holy Spirit

Scripture is the governing authority

A Christian sermon is biblical when its main claim, supporting explanation, and intended response arise from Scripture. A preacher may use stories, history, language study, testimony, or current events, but these must serve the biblical message rather than replace it. A verse used as a decoration does not make a sermon biblical.

Revelation illumination and application

God's written Word is the church's sufficient and governing authority for doctrine and faithful living. Illumination describes the Holy Spirit helping believers understand and receive the meaning of Scripture. Illumination does not give a passage a new meaning that contradicts its context. A personal impression may prompt prayer or attention, but it must be tested and must never be presented as equal to Scripture.

Application asks how the unchanging truth of the text should shape people in a present situation.

Read each text within the whole Bible

Every passage belongs to a book, a covenantal setting, and the unfolding story of creation, fall, redemption, and restoration. The preacher should not force Jesus into every detail through imagination, yet Christian preaching should show how a passage relates to God's saving work fulfilled in Christ. Law, wisdom, prophecy, Gospel, letter, poetry, and apocalyptic literature each communicate in different ways and must be handled accordingly.

The Spirit works through truth

Dependence on the Holy Spirit is not an excuse for poor preparation. The same Spirit who empowers proclamation inspired the Scriptures and produces truthfulness, love, self-control, and order. The preacher should pray before study, during study, before preaching, and after preaching, while also preparing diligently. Spiritual power is not measured merely by noise, emotion, length, or visible reactions.

A simple theological check

Ask whether the sermon is consistent with the clear teaching of Scripture about God, Christ, salvation, the Holy Spirit, the church, humanity, holiness, and hope. If a statement would surprise mature Christian teachers, verify it before preaching. Where faithful Christians disagree, explain the main views fairly and avoid speaking with more certainty than the text allows.

How doctrine protects preaching

Doctrine gives the preacher a map of the Bible's central teaching. It helps a minister recognize when an interpretation

of one verse conflicts with clearer passages. The doctrines of the Trinity, creation, sin, the person and work of Christ, justification, sanctification, the church, resurrection, and final hope are not separate from preaching; they guide how texts are understood and applied. A sermon should not attempt to explain every doctrine, but it must not contradict the faith it claims to proclaim.

Word and Spirit belong together

Some ministers emphasize careful teaching while others emphasize spiritual power. Scripture does not create this opposition. The Spirit inspired the Word, glorifies Christ, produces holy fruit, gives gifts, and enables witness. Therefore spiritual preaching should be truthful, Christ-centered, morally serious, loving, and orderly. Careful interpretation is not unbelief, and emotional intensity is not proof of anointing.

Lesson summary

- Scripture is the governing authority
- Revelation illumination and application
- Read each text within the whole Bible
- The Spirit works through truth
- A simple theological check
- How doctrine protects preaching
- Word and Spirit belong together

REVIEW AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How would you explain the main purpose of this lesson on the bible theology and the holy spirit to a younger minister?

2. Which biblical passage connected with this lesson should you study more carefully, and why?

3. What common ministry mistake does this lesson help you recognize or prevent?

4. Which principle will be most difficult to practise in your present ministry setting?

5. What one change can you begin before preparing or delivering your next sermon?

MINISTRY ASSIGNMENT

Take one sermon idea and label what comes from the text, what is interpretation, and what is application.

Academic Notes and Sources

- 2 Timothy 3:14-4:5; John 14:26; 16:13-15; and 1 Corinthians 2:10-16 govern the discussion of Scripture and illumination.
- Bryan Chapell, Christ Centered Preaching, 3rd ed., on redemptive exposition.
- The Lausanne Covenant, especially its articles on Scripture, evangelism, and Christian responsibility.

Lesson 4 Reading and Interpreting a Biblical Passage

Begin with observation

Read the passage repeatedly in more than one reliable translation when possible. Mark repeated words, commands, promises, contrasts, causes, results, questions, changes of speaker, and connections to surrounding paragraphs. Identify the human author, the first hearers, the situation, and the purpose of the book. Observation slows the preacher down so that familiar assumptions do not control the message.

Respect context

Read what comes before and after the selected verses. A sentence receives meaning from its paragraph, and a paragraph receives meaning from the argument or story of the whole book. Avoid collecting unrelated verses merely because they share a word. A concordance can find passages, but context determines how those passages should be understood.

Recognize genre

Narrative normally shows truth through events and characters; it does not mean that every action recorded should be copied. Poetry uses imagery and emotional intensity. Proverbs express wise general principles, not unconditional promises for every case. Letters develop arguments for churches and individuals. Prophecy combines covenant warning, hope, and future expectation. Apocalyptic writing uses symbols that require humility and attention to the book's own explanations.

Use language tools carefully

Word studies can help, but a word does not carry every possible dictionary meaning each time it appears. Meaning is controlled by the sentence and context. A preacher who does not know Hebrew or Greek should use dependable dictionaries and commentaries, compare translations, and avoid claims such as 'the original language really says' unless the claim has been checked.

Move from then to now

State the principle taught by the passage in a form faithful to its first setting. Then identify what is similar and different in the hearers' situation. Finally, develop applications that fit the text. This movement protects the sermon from both ancient

information with no present relevance and modern advice with no biblical foundation.

Interpretation worksheet

Write brief answers under six headings: context, genre, structure, key words, main theological truth, and intended response. Consult trusted resources only after doing your own observations. Record where an idea came from so that quotations and distinctive insights can be acknowledged honestly.

From observation to interpretation

Observation records what is present in the text; interpretation explains what those details mean; correlation relates the teaching to the rest of Scripture; application shows the faithful response. Confusing these stages causes error. A preacher may feel an application immediately, but must still ask whether it rests on the passage's actual meaning. Write observations first, then conclusions, and show the evidence that connects them.

Using commentaries responsibly

Commentaries are teachers, not masters. Consult more than one where possible, especially on difficult passages. Note agreements and disagreements. Prefer works that explain the text rather than merely offering sermon ideas. Do not copy an outline without acknowledgment. After consulting sources, return to the biblical passage and decide which conclusions are best supported.

Lesson summary

- Begin with observation
- Respect context
- Recognize genre
- Use language tools carefully

- Move from then to now
- Interpretation worksheet
- From observation to interpretation
- Using commentaries responsibly

REVIEW AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How would you explain the main purpose of this lesson on reading and interpreting a biblical passage to a younger minister?

2. Which biblical passage connected with this lesson should you study more carefully, and why?

3. What common ministry mistake does this lesson help you recognize or prevent?

4. Which principle will be most difficult to practise in your present ministry setting?

5. What one change can you begin before preparing or delivering your next sermon?

MINISTRY ASSIGNMENT

Study a paragraph using the six headings in the interpretation worksheet. Compare your work with two trusted commentaries.

Academic Notes and Sources

- Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stuart, How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth, 4th ed., for genre-sensitive interpretation.
- William W. Klein, Craig L. Blomberg, and Robert L. Hubbard Jr., Introduction to Biblical Interpretation, 3rd ed., for contextual and grammatical-historical interpretation.

Lesson 5 Choosing a Text and Defining the Sermon Aim

Ways to select a passage

A minister may preach consecutively through a biblical book, follow the church calendar, address a pastoral need, explain a doctrine, or prepare for an evangelistic occasion. Consecutive preaching helps the church hear difficult and neglected passages. Topical preaching can address an urgent need but requires special care so that selected verses are not removed from context. Prayerful planning and pastoral observation should work together.

Do not use the pulpit impulsively

A problem in the church may need to be addressed, but the preacher should first verify facts, seek wise counsel, consider confidentiality, and decide whether a private conversation is more appropriate. A sermon should not become a hidden message aimed at one person. Never disclose a survivor's story, medical information, family conflict, or disciplinary matter without proper permission and safeguarding review.

Discover the textual idea

Summarize the passage in one complete sentence. Include both the subject and what the passage says about that subject. For example: 'Because God reconciled us to Himself through Christ, believers serve as ambassadors who appeal to others to be reconciled to God.' This sentence is more useful than a broad topic such as 'reconciliation.'

Write the sermon aim

The aim describes the change sought in the hearers. It may begin, 'By the end of this sermon, the hearers should

understand, believe, feel, or do...' The aim must fit the passage and the occasion. A sermon cannot accomplish everything. One clear, faithful aim is stronger than many unrelated intentions.

Create a memorable main idea

Express the main idea in ordinary language that the audience can repeat. It should be accurate, specific, and short enough to guide the sermon. A useful main idea contains truth and direction: 'Because Christ has reconciled us, we carry His message of reconciliation with humility and courage.' Every major point should explain, prove, illustrate, or apply this idea.

Planning a balanced preaching ministry

A church needs more than sermons about the minister's favorite subjects. A long-term plan can include Old and New Testament books, Gospel narratives, doctrine, Christian character, mission, family life, work, suffering, justice, prayer, and hope. Planning does not remove dependence on God; it protects the church from narrowness and allows adequate preparation. Plans may change when genuine pastoral emergencies arise.

From need to text without forcing the text

Pastoral need can guide text selection, but it must not dictate a meaning the passage does not carry. If the church needs teaching about grief, select a passage that truly addresses grief or the hope surrounding it. Do not choose a verse because one word resembles the topic. Let the text correct the preacher's first assumptions about the need.

Lesson summary

- Ways to select a passage
- Do not use the pulpit impulsively
- Discover the textual idea

- Write the sermon aim
- Create a memorable main idea
- Planning a balanced preaching ministry
- From need to text without forcing the text

REVIEW AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How would you explain the main purpose of this lesson on choosing a text and defining the sermon aim to a younger minister?

2. Which biblical passage connected with this lesson should you study more carefully, and why?

3. What common ministry mistake does this lesson help you recognize or prevent?

4. Which principle will be most difficult to practise in your present ministry setting?

5. What one change can you begin before preparing or delivering your next sermon?

MINISTRY ASSIGNMENT

Prepare a textual idea, sermon aim, and main idea from 2 Corinthians 5:17-21.

Academic Notes and Sources

- Norman Holmes, Homiletics: Preparing and Delivering Sermons, 33-52, for choosing what to preach.
- Haddon W. Robinson, Biblical Preaching, 3rd ed., on the exegetical idea, homiletical idea, and sermon purpose.
- John R. W. Stott, Between Two Worlds, on responsible movement from the biblical world to contemporary hearers.

Lesson 6 Types of Sermons

Expository preaching

An expository sermon explains and applies the meaning of a biblical passage. Its structure may follow the structure of the text, though it does not have to copy every verse in equal detail. Exposition can cover one verse, a paragraph, a story, a psalm, or a larger section. What makes it expository is that the sermon idea and purpose are governed by the passage.

Textual preaching

A textual sermon develops its main divisions from a short text. It can be useful for brief services or a focused truth, but the preacher must still interpret the verse within its paragraph and book. The danger is building large claims on a phrase without considering context.

Topical preaching

A topical sermon gathers biblical teaching about a subject such as prayer, marriage, justice, the Holy Spirit, work, grief, or stewardship. Strong topical preaching studies the most relevant passages in their contexts, distinguishes central teaching from debated questions, and organizes the material around a clear biblical claim. Weak topical preaching begins with the preacher's opinion and searches for verses that appear to support it.

Narrative and biographical preaching

Narrative preaching follows the movement, tension, choices, and resolution of a biblical story. Biographical preaching considers what Scripture teaches through a person's life. Avoid turning every character into a simple hero or villain. The main

question is not merely 'Who should I imitate?' but 'What is God revealing and doing in this part of the biblical story?'

Doctrinal and evangelistic preaching

Doctrinal sermons explain what Scripture teaches about a major truth and why it matters. Evangelistic sermons announce God's holiness, human sin, Christ's person and saving work, the call to repent and believe, and the grace offered in the gospel. Evangelistic preaching should be clear and urgent without manipulation, exaggeration, or false guarantees.

Choosing the form

Choose the sermon form that best serves the text, audience, purpose, and occasion. Variety can help hearers, but novelty should never control interpretation. A simple form handled faithfully is better than a clever form that hides the biblical message.

The four preaching categories in the original course

Norman Holmes's training, as reflected in the class material from which this book developed, also organizes preaching according to the source or character of the message: revelation, a word of knowledge, prophecy, and doctrine. These categories are different from the sermon forms described earlier. Expository, textual, topical, narrative, doctrinal, and evangelistic describe how material is selected or arranged. The four course categories describe how the preacher understands the burden or content being communicated. They should therefore be interpreted carefully under the final authority of Scripture.

Preaching a revelation

In this course usage, revelation preaching refers to a biblical truth becoming freshly clear and urgent to the preacher

through prayer and study. It does not mean adding new doctrine to Scripture. The preacher should examine the passage in context, test the insight against the whole Bible, and avoid claiming that a personal impression is unquestionable. For example, a minister studying John 15 may newly recognize the necessity of abiding in Christ; the sermon must still explain what John 15 actually teaches rather than using the experience as authority.

Preaching a word of knowledge

A word of knowledge in the course notes refers to teaching that brings biblical understanding to a subject, question, person, or situation. The preacher gathers accurate information, studies relevant passages, and explains the truth in an orderly way. A message on forgiveness, stewardship, spiritual gifts, or Christian work may take this form. Knowledge must remain joined to love and humility. The preacher should distinguish verified facts, biblical interpretation, wise judgment, and personal opinion.

Prophetic preaching

Prophetic preaching declares God's truth with moral clarity and timely application. It may expose sin, call for justice, warn of consequences, strengthen hope, or summon God's people back to covenant faithfulness. It is not mainly predicting private futures. Nathan confronting David, the Old Testament prophets addressing national unfaithfulness, John the Baptist calling for repentance, and New Testament exhortation all show dimensions of prophetic speech. In the church today, any claimed prophetic direction must be tested and must never override Scripture, accountability, safeguarding, or lawful responsibility.

Doctrinal preaching

Doctrinal preaching explains a major teaching of Scripture by bringing together the most relevant passages and showing how the truth shapes worship and life. Suitable subjects include the character of God, the person of Christ, salvation, the Holy Spirit, the church, resurrection, and Christian hope. The danger is collecting isolated verses or speaking abstractly. A doctrinal sermon should define the teaching, establish it from passages in context, answer major misunderstandings, connect it to Christ and the gospel, and show its practical importance.

How the two systems work together

A sermon may be doctrinal in content and expository in form, prophetic in burden and textual in form, or evangelistic in purpose and narrative in form. The categories should not compete. They help the preacher ask different questions: What kind of burden am I carrying? What truth governs it? What passage should control it? What sermon form communicates it faithfully? What response is appropriate?

Strengths and dangers of each sermon type

Expository preaching protects context but can become a running commentary without unity or application. Topical preaching can answer urgent questions but may collect verses carelessly. Textual preaching can be focused but may ask a short phrase to carry too much. Narrative preaching can engage imagination but may become moralistic. Doctrinal preaching can establish believers but may become abstract. Knowing these dangers helps the preacher use each form responsibly.

A sermon series

A series can follow a biblical book, doctrine, ministry theme, or group of related questions. Give each message its own clear aim while showing its relationship to the series. Avoid stretching a series after its purpose is complete. Provide a brief review for visitors, but do not spend so long reviewing that the present sermon loses its time.

Lesson summary

- Expository preaching
- Textual preaching
- Topical preaching
- Narrative and biographical preaching
- Doctrinal and evangelistic preaching
- Choosing the form
- The four preaching categories in the original course
- Preaching a revelation
- Preaching a word of knowledge
- Prophetic preaching
- Doctrinal preaching
- How the two systems work together
- Strengths and dangers of each sermon type
- A sermon series

REVIEW AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How would you explain the main purpose of this lesson on types of sermons to a younger minister?

2. Which biblical passage connected with this lesson should you study more carefully, and why?

3. What common ministry mistake does this lesson help you recognize or prevent?

4. Which principle will be most difficult to practise in your present ministry setting?

5. What one change can you begin before preparing or delivering your next sermon?

MINISTRY ASSIGNMENT

Take one passage and sketch expository, textual, and topical approaches. Explain which form serves it best.

Academic Notes and Sources

- Norman Holmes, Homiletics: Preparing and Delivering Sermons, 21-32, for the original course categories.
- Haddon W. Robinson, Biblical Preaching, 3rd ed., and Bryan Chapell, Christ Centered Preaching, 3rd ed., for expository method.

Lesson 7 Building a Clear Sermon

Unity

A sermon has unity when one main idea governs the whole message. Remove material that is interesting but unrelated. Unity helps the audience know what the sermon is about and why each part is included. If the sermon needs several unrelated titles to describe it, the focus is probably too broad.

Order

Arrange the sermon so that each part prepares for the next. Common movements include problem to solution, question to answer, explanation to implication, doctrine to practice, or tension to resolution. The order should serve understanding rather than display the preacher's creativity.

Movement and climax

A sermon should progress instead of repeating the same thought. Each section adds insight, deepens conviction, or moves the audience toward response. Climax is the point where the sermon's central truth and appeal become clearest. It need not be loud. It should arise naturally from the text and the sermon movement.

Transitions

Transitions tell hearers where the sermon has been and where it is going. A transition may summarize the previous point, ask the next question, or show a logical connection. Because listeners cannot reread a spoken sermon, clear transitions are acts of hospitality.

Common outline patterns

A deductive outline states the main claim early and then explains its parts. An inductive outline allows evidence and questions to lead toward the main claim. A narrative outline follows conflict and resolution. A problem-solution outline names a real need, exposes inadequate answers, and presents the biblical response. A question-and-answer outline can clarify difficult subjects. Use the pattern that communicates the passage most naturally.

Traditional classroom outline names

Some homiletics courses use picture names for sermon outlines. A ladder outline moves step by step toward a conclusion. A contrast outline places two beliefs, choices, or outcomes beside each other. A diamond outline approaches one central truth from several directions and then brings the message back to that truth. An analogy outline develops a careful comparison, while a search outline follows a question

through several passages or stages. These names can help a student visualize movement, but they do not create meaning. The biblical text must still govern the claim, order, and application. An analogy must be limited to the points of genuine similarity; otherwise the preacher may build doctrine on imagination.

Outline test

Read only the title, main idea, major points, and conclusion. Do they form a complete and logical message? Are the points parallel enough to remember? Does each point clearly arise from the text? Can one point be removed without changing the sermon? If so, it may not belong.

The introduction main body and conclusion

Holmes's course treats the three main sermon parts separately because each has a distinct responsibility. The introduction brings hearers and text together. The main body carries the work of explanation, proof, illustration, and application. The conclusion gathers the whole sermon and calls for the response required by the text. These parts should serve one main idea. A powerful introduction cannot rescue a confused body, and a forceful conclusion should not demand a response the body has not established.

Developing major points

Major points should express complete thoughts, not merely topics. 'Faith' is a topic; 'Faith receives God's promise before circumstances change' is a claim. Points should be distinct, related to the main idea, and supported from the passage. Two strong points may serve better than seven weak ones. The number is not sacred; clarity is.

Writing transitions for listeners

A written reader can look back, but a listener hears each sentence once. A strong transition may say, 'We have seen what God has done; now the passage shows how we respond.' Such a sentence reviews, connects, and prepares. Write important transitions in full even if the rest of the outline uses brief notes.

Lesson summary

- Unity
- Order
- Movement and climax
- Transitions
- Common outline patterns
- Traditional classroom outline names
- Outline test
- The introduction main body and conclusion
- Developing major points
- Writing transitions for listeners

REVIEW AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How would you explain the main purpose of this lesson on building a clear sermon to a younger minister?

2. Which biblical passage connected with this lesson should you study more carefully, and why?

3. What common ministry mistake does this lesson help you recognize or prevent?

4. Which principle will be most difficult to practise in your present ministry setting?

5. What one change can you begin before preparing or delivering your next sermon?

MINISTRY ASSIGNMENT

Reduce a previous sermon to one main idea and three movements. Remove every item that does not support them.

Academic Notes and Sources

- Norman Holmes, Homiletics: Preparing and Delivering Sermons, 53-70 and 79-98, for message preparation and the sermon body.
- John A. Broadus, On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons, rev. ed., on unity, order, movement, and sermon divisions.
- Haddon W. Robinson, Biblical Preaching, 3rd ed., on the controlling sermon idea.

Lesson 8 Explanation Illustration and Application

Explanation

Explanation answers, 'What does the text mean?' Define necessary terms, show the author's reasoning, clarify the setting, and address likely misunderstandings. Do not bury the congregation under every detail discovered in study. Select the details that help hearers understand the main idea.

Illustration

Illustration answers, 'What does this truth look like?' Good illustrations make an idea concrete without becoming the center of attention. Sources include biblical narratives, everyday life, history, nature, carefully verified news, and personal experience. Fictional or combined stories must not be presented as fact. Ask permission before using another person's experience, and remove identifying details where necessary.

Application

Application answers, 'What should we believe, desire, stop, begin, continue, or change because this text is true?' Application is more than adding 'we should' at the end. It shows how grace, truth, and obedience meet actual decisions, relationships, habits, suffering, work, worship, and public life.

Apply to different hearers

A congregation may include mature believers, new Christians, seekers, doubters, children, people in grief, people with disabilities, and listeners from different cultures or education levels. One sermon can offer several applications while preserving one central aim. Avoid assuming that every hearer has the same family situation, income, health, literacy, or experience.

Grace and obedience

Christian application should not imply that people earn God's acceptance through performance. The preacher explains what God has done, who believers are in Christ, and how grace produces faithful obedience. Commands should be preached as commands, promises as promises, warnings as warnings, and wisdom as wisdom.

Application questions

What should the hearer know about God? What false belief does the text correct? What hope does it offer? What sin does it expose? What action can begin this week? What support may a struggling person need? How does the gospel provide both pardon and power?

The balance of explanation illustration and application

A sermon with explanation only may inform without showing relevance. Illustration without explanation may entertain

without truth. Application without explanation may command without biblical authority. These three works should support one another. Explain the truth, help hearers see it, and show how it addresses life. The balance will vary by text and audience.

Making applications responsible

Distinguish direct biblical commands from wise suggestions. Do not make a personal method binding on every believer. Application should consider ability and circumstance: telling an abused person simply to return, a grieving person simply to rejoice, or a poor person simply to give more may misuse Scripture and cause harm. Faithful application joins truth with pastoral wisdom.

Lesson summary

- Explanation
- Illustration
- Application
- Apply to different hearers
- Grace and obedience
- Application questions
- The balance of explanation illustration and application
- Making applications responsible

REVIEW AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How would you explain the main purpose of this lesson on explanation illustration and application to a younger minister?

2. Which biblical passage connected with this lesson should you study more carefully, and why?

3. What common ministry mistake does this lesson help you recognize or prevent?

4. Which principle will be most difficult to practise in your present ministry setting?

5. What one change can you begin before preparing or delivering your next sermon?

MINISTRY ASSIGNMENT

Write one explanation, one illustration, and three audience-specific applications for a single verse.

Academic Notes and Sources

- Norman Holmes, Homiletics: Preparing and Delivering Sermons, 79-108, for the sermon body and illustrations.
- John A. Broadus, On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons, rev. ed., on explanation, illustration, argument, and application.
- Abraham Kuruvilla, Privilege the Text, on responsible movement from text to theological application.

Lesson 9 Introductions Conclusions and Invitations

The introduction

The introduction should gain attention, establish relevance, introduce the passage, and lead naturally to the main idea. It can begin with a question, tension, brief story, observation, or direct statement. Avoid long apologies, unrelated jokes, exaggerated promises, or comments that delay the sermon.

Titles and opening sentences

A title should be clear and honest. It may name the subject, question, or movement of the text. The opening sentences should be prepared carefully because they establish trust. State

the biblical reference early enough for hearers to find it, and read the text accurately and with appropriate expression.

The conclusion

The conclusion gathers the message and presses its main truth upon the conscience, imagination, and will. It should not introduce a new sermon. Summarize briefly, return to the main idea, and show the appropriate response. End deliberately rather than repeating the final point several times.

Invitations and response

A gospel invitation should clearly explain repentance and faith in Christ. Do not manipulate people through embarrassment, music, threats, invented urgency, or promises that God has not made. Some hearers may respond publicly; others may need prayer, counsel, safeguarding help, or time to ask questions. Explain what the next step means and ensure trained people are available.

Prayer after the sermon

The closing prayer should respond to the text, not repeat the entire sermon. It may confess dependence, thank God for truth and grace, ask for obedient faith, and remember people in particular need. Where sensitive responses may arise, provide a safe and accountable process for follow-up.

Earning attention honestly

Attention is not the same as entertainment. The preacher earns attention by naming a real question, showing the importance of the passage, and speaking with clarity. Do not begin with a sensational claim that the sermon cannot support. The introduction makes a promise about where the message is going; the body must fulfill it.

Ending with the weight of the text

Different texts call for different endings. A promise may end in assurance and worship. A warning may end in sober appeal. A lament may end with patient hope rather than quick resolution. A doctrinal passage may end with confession or praise. The conclusion should carry the emotional and theological weight of the passage, not merely the preacher's preferred style.

Lesson summary

- The introduction
- Titles and opening sentences
- The conclusion
- Invitations and response
- Prayer after the sermon
- Earning attention honestly
- Ending with the weight of the text

REVIEW AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How would you explain the main purpose of this lesson on introductions conclusions and invitations to a younger minister?

2. Which biblical passage connected with this lesson should you study more carefully, and why?

3. What common ministry mistake does this lesson help you recognize or prevent?

4. Which principle will be most difficult to practise in your present ministry setting?

5. What one change can you begin before preparing or delivering your next sermon?

MINISTRY ASSIGNMENT

Write two introductions and two conclusions for the same sermon. Choose the most direct pair.

Academic Notes and Sources

- Norman Holmes, Homiletics: Preparing and Delivering Sermons, 71-78 and 125-134, for introductions and conclusions.
- John A. Broadus, On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons, rev. ed., on introductions and conclusions.
- Haddon W. Robinson, Biblical Preaching, 3rd ed., on purpose, appeal, and sermon development.

Lesson 10 Delivering the Sermon

Clarity and natural speech

Preach as a servant speaking to people, not as an actor performing a religious voice. Use words the audience understands. Explain necessary theological terms. Short sentences, concrete nouns, and active verbs usually communicate well. Repetition can help memory when it is purposeful, but constant repetition weakens movement.

Voice

Use enough volume for the room and vary pace, pitch, and emphasis according to meaning. Do not shout continuously. Pause after important statements and before transitions. A microphone should support a healthy voice, not invite the preacher to strain. Hydration, breathing, and rest are practical parts of stewardship.

Body language and eye contact

Stand in a balanced way, use gestures that arise naturally from meaning, and look at people across the room. Avoid constant pacing, pointing at individuals, distracting habits, or using movement to manufacture excitement. In multicultural settings, remember that gestures and eye contact may carry different meanings.

Notes and memory

A full manuscript supports precision; brief notes support eye contact and flexibility. Many ministers use a detailed manuscript during preparation and a shorter preaching outline in delivery. Whichever method is used, rehearse aloud. Knowing the sermon well is different from memorizing every sentence.

Time and setting

Respect the time given. Plan the length of the introduction, main movements, conclusion, and any interpretation or translation. Arrive early to check the microphone, lectern, lighting, Bible, presentation, accessibility, and seating. A well-prepared minister reduces avoidable distractions.

When things go wrong

If a verse is misread, correct it simply. If equipment fails, continue calmly if possible. If emotion becomes overwhelming, pause and breathe rather than pretending. If a medical, safety, or safeguarding emergency occurs, stop the sermon and follow the responsible procedure. People are more important than completing an outline.

Conduct while preaching

The preacher should remain spiritually attentive and physically self-controlled while speaking. Avoid humiliating individuals,

arguing with imaginary opponents, repeatedly announcing the time, or blaming the congregation for a weak response. If people appear confused, clarify rather than scold. If the congregation responds warmly, do not prolong the sermon merely to preserve excitement. Listen to the interpreter, worship leader, service leader, and any safety instruction. The aim is to serve the message and the people, not to prove power over the room.

Sensitivity to the Holy Spirit

Sensitivity to the Holy Spirit includes faithfulness, wisdom, love, courage, and self-control. A preacher may appropriately pause, shorten a section, repeat a central truth, pray, or respond to an evident pastoral need. Such flexibility should not become disorder or an excuse for careless preparation. The Spirit's leading will not contradict Scripture or justify manipulation. A mature preacher can remain open to God while respecting time, leadership, and the dignity of hearers.

Delivery as interpretation

How a passage is spoken communicates how the preacher understands it. Lament should not sound like comedy, and resurrection hope should not sound indifferent. Read Scripture aloud during preparation and mark changes of speaker, questions, contrasts, and emotional movement. Appropriate expression serves meaning; performance that draws attention away from meaning does not.

Preaching with an interpreter

Send the interpreter the text and outline early. Use complete sentences, pause at natural points, and avoid wordplay that cannot cross languages. Speak to the audience rather than turning constantly toward the interpreter. Agree beforehand

how Scripture quotations, questions, and invitations will be handled.

Lesson summary

- Clarity and natural speech
- Voice
- Body language and eye contact
- Notes and memory
- Time and setting
- When things go wrong
- Conduct while preaching
- Sensitivity to the Holy Spirit
- Delivery as interpretation
- Preaching with an interpreter

REVIEW AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How would you explain the main purpose of this lesson on delivering the sermon to a younger minister?

2. Which biblical passage connected with this lesson should you study more carefully, and why?

3. What common ministry mistake does this lesson help you recognize or prevent?

4. Which principle will be most difficult to practise in your present ministry setting?

5. What one change can you begin before preparing or delivering your next sermon?

MINISTRY ASSIGNMENT

Record a five-minute message. Review clarity, pace, voice, posture, eye contact, and timing.

Academic Notes and Sources

- Norman Holmes, Homiletics: Preparing and Delivering Sermons, 109-124, for delivery while preaching.
- D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, Preaching and Preachers, on delivery and the spiritual character of proclamation.
- Phillips Brooks, Lectures on Preaching, on the relationship between truth and personality.

Lesson 11 Preaching to Different Audiences

Know the people

Audience awareness is not compromise. Jesus and the apostles communicated the same truth in forms suited to different hearers. Learn the audience's language level, age range, cultural background, questions, wounds, and biblical knowledge. Ask local leaders what should be understood before speaking.

Children and young people

Use concrete language, shorter movements, participation, and examples from their world without pretending to be their age. Never shame a child publicly or use a child's private story without permission. Follow child-safeguarding policies in every invitation, counseling conversation, photograph, and follow-up activity.

People from other cultures or languages

Speak more slowly when interpretation is used, provide complete thoughts, and avoid jokes or idioms that cannot be translated. Meet the interpreter beforehand and share the Scripture text, names, and outline. Do not describe another culture as inferior merely because its customs differ from your own.

Mixed and interfaith audiences

Explain Christian terms rather than assuming knowledge. Represent other beliefs accurately and respectfully. A clear Christian witness does not require ridicule. Focus on who Christ is, what Christians believe, and why the gospel is good news. Invite questions and distinguish disagreement from hostility.

Grief trauma and crisis

In funerals, disasters, conflict, or personal tragedy, speak truth with tenderness. Do not explain every mystery, blame sufferers, announce the eternal destiny of a person without warrant, or promise immediate relief. Lament, presence, Scripture, prayer, and the hope of resurrection may serve more faithfully than confident speculation.

Accessibility

Consider hearing, sight, mobility, neurodiversity, literacy, and language. Provide clear sound, readable projected text, step-free access where possible, and alternatives to response methods that require walking publicly. Accessibility communicates that every person bears God's image and belongs in the hearing community.

Audience analysis without stereotyping

Knowing an audience means listening, not assigning simple labels. Age, nationality, education, and occupation provide some information but never explain a whole person. Speak with local people, learn common questions, and notice who may be absent or overlooked. Prepare examples that include different experiences without pretending that one illustration represents everyone.

One truth many points of contact

The biblical message does not change to please each audience, but the route to understanding may change. Farmers, students, workers, prisoners, professionals, refugees, and children may recognize different examples and pressures. Paul addressed synagogue hearers differently from the philosophers in Athens while remaining a witness to the same God and gospel.

Lesson summary

- Know the people
- Children and young people
- People from other cultures or languages
- Mixed and interfaith audiences
- Grief trauma and crisis
- Accessibility
- Audience analysis without stereotyping
- One truth many points of contact

REVIEW AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How would you explain the main purpose of this lesson on preaching to different audiences to a younger minister?

2. Which biblical passage connected with this lesson should you study more carefully, and why?

3. What common ministry mistake does this lesson help you recognize or prevent?

4. Which principle will be most difficult to practise in your present ministry setting?

5. What one change can you begin before preparing or delivering your next sermon?

MINISTRY ASSIGNMENT

Adapt one sermon outline for children, an interfaith audience, and a funeral. Note what changes and what remains.

Academic Notes and Sources

- John R. W. Stott, Between Two Worlds, on understanding both Scripture and contemporary hearers.
- Timothy Keller, Preaching, on communicating Christian faith within contemporary cultures.

Lesson 12 Special Ministry Occasions

Evangelistic services

State the gospel clearly: the holy and loving God created us; all people have sinned; Jesus Christ died and rose; salvation is God's gift received through repentance and faith; and those who trust Christ enter a new life of discipleship in His people. Avoid reducing conversion to repeating words without understanding or promising health and wealth as proof of faith.

Weddings

A wedding sermon should honor the couple while teaching biblical truth about covenant, love, faithfulness, service, forgiveness, and community. Confirm names, readings, and legal or church requirements. Do not embarrass the couple with private stories or turn the sermon into a general lecture unrelated to the occasion.

Funerals

Serve the grieving family, speak honestly about death, and proclaim Christian hope in Christ's resurrection. Obtain accurate information about the deceased. Avoid inventing virtues, exploiting grief for pressure, or making unsupported

declarations. Keep the message appropriately brief and coordinate with the service leader.

Teaching services and conferences

A teaching message may contain more explanation and note-taking structure, but it still needs a clear aim, movement, application, and pastoral tone. Define specialized terms and build breaks into long sessions. Provide references so learners can continue studying.

Public and civic occasions

When preaching at a school, workplace, hospital, prison, community event, or national gathering, clarify the invitation and expected audience. Respect lawful boundaries without hiding Christian conviction. Avoid party propaganda, ethnic superiority, and claims that identify God's kingdom with one political program.

Preparing with the service leader

Special occasions involve many people and expectations. Confirm the purpose, order, length, readings, names, language, and response process with the leader. Ask whether children or vulnerable people will be present and whether any family information is private. Responsible coordination prevents confusion and protects those being served.

Pastoral presence before public words

At a funeral, hospital, crisis meeting, or wedding, the minister's listening may matter as much as the sermon. Arrive early, learn names, and avoid turning another person's important day into a display of ministry. The message should fit the occasion while remaining truthful. Brevity can be an expression of care.

Baptism communion and dedication services

Sacramental or ordinance services require theological clarity and careful coordination with the church's doctrine. At baptism, explain union with Christ, repentance, faith, and entry into the visible community without making the candidate's personal story carry the entire message. At the Lord's Supper, proclaim Christ's saving death, self-examination, fellowship, and hope according to the church's understanding. At a child dedication or thanksgiving service, distinguish the prayers and promises being made from claims the church does not teach. In every case, explain unfamiliar practices for visitors and avoid turning holy acts into performances for photographs.

Schools hospitals prisons and workplaces

Institutional settings have rules, time limits, and people who may not have chosen to attend. Learn the boundaries before speaking. In a school, use age-appropriate language and follow child-protection requirements. In a hospital, protect privacy, keep the message brief, and do not interfere with medical care. In a prison, avoid promises about legal outcomes and coordinate follow-up with approved chaplaincy services. In a workplace, respect the invitation and do not pressure employees whose position may make refusal difficult. Christian courage and respect can operate together.

Lesson summary

- Evangelistic services
- Weddings
- Funerals
- Teaching services and conferences
- Public and civic occasions
- Preparing with the service leader
- Pastoral presence before public words

- Baptism communion and dedication services
- Schools hospitals prisons and workplaces

REVIEW AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How would you explain the main purpose of this lesson on special ministry occasions to a younger minister?

2. Which biblical passage connected with this lesson should you study more carefully, and why?

3. What common ministry mistake does this lesson help you recognize or prevent?

4. Which principle will be most difficult to practise in your present ministry setting?

5. What one change can you begin before preparing or delivering your next sermon?

MINISTRY ASSIGNMENT

Prepare a checklist for one special service you may lead during the next year.

Academic Notes and Sources

- The biblical passages cited in this lesson govern its counsel for weddings, funerals, evangelistic services, ordinances, and public occasions.
- Norman Holmes, Homiletics: Preparing and Delivering Sermons, 33-52, for the course emphasis on choosing a message appropriate to its occasion.

Lesson 13 Prophecy Discernment and Doctrinal Care

Preaching and prophecy

Christian traditions understand the present operation of prophecy differently. All traditions should agree that Scripture is the final written authority and that claims of divine guidance must be tested. A preacher should never use 'God told me' to silence questions, demand money, force marriage, control voting, predict dates, or avoid accountability.

Testing impressions

Test an impression by Scripture, the character of Christ, its moral fruit, wise counsel, and the realities of the situation. Use humble language when certainty is limited. Saying 'I believe we should prayerfully consider' is more honest than presenting a personal judgment as an unquestionable decree.

Preaching doctrine

Doctrine is not cold information; it is the church's careful summary of biblical truth. Build doctrinal sermons from multiple relevant passages interpreted in context. Distinguish essential Christian convictions from denominational distinctives and personal opinions. Explain why a doctrine matters for worship and life.

Handling disagreement

State other views fairly enough that their responsible supporters would recognize them. Avoid mockery and selective quotation. Explain the reasons for your conclusion, acknowledge difficulties, and identify the level of importance. Unity does not require pretending that differences do not exist, but love requires truthfulness and respect.

Correcting error

Correction should aim at restoration, protection, and clarity, not humiliation. Verify the claim, consult responsible leaders, and decide whether public correction is necessary. Serious abuse, criminal conduct, or safeguarding risk must be handled through proper reporting and protection processes, not only through preaching.

Levels of doctrinal importance

Some teachings define historic Christian faith, some distinguish church traditions, and others involve wisdom or personal conviction. The preacher should not speak about every issue as though it carries the same weight. State essential truths clearly, explain denominational positions honestly, and leave room for conscience where Scripture allows it.

A safe process for prophetic ministry

Where a church practises prophetic speech, establish visible accountability. Claims should be weighed by mature leaders, recorded when serious direction is given, and never used to bypass safeguarding, financial controls, medical care, or lawful reporting. People must be free to test a claim without intimidation. Failed predictions or harmful words require honest correction and pastoral care.

Lesson summary

- Preaching and prophecy
- Testing impressions
- Preaching doctrine
- Handling disagreement
- Correcting error
- Levels of doctrinal importance
- A safe process for prophetic ministry

REVIEW AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How would you explain the main purpose of this lesson on prophecy discernment and doctrinal care to a younger minister?

2. Which biblical passage connected with this lesson should you study more carefully, and why?

3. What common ministry mistake does this lesson help you recognize or prevent?

4. Which principle will be most difficult to practise in your present ministry setting?

5. What one change can you begin before preparing or delivering your next sermon?

MINISTRY ASSIGNMENT

Write a careful paragraph explaining how your church understands prophecy and how claims are tested.

Academic Notes and Sources

- 1 Corinthians 12-14; 1 Thessalonians 5:19-22; and 1 John 4:1-3 govern the discussion of spiritual gifts and testing.
- The Chicago Statement on Biblical Hermeneutics is consulted as a historical evangelical statement on interpretive responsibility.

Lesson 14 The Preacher and Personality

Personality is not destiny

Older ministry notes often classify people as choleric, sanguine, melancholic, or phlegmatic. These labels may help people discuss tendencies, but they are neither biblical categories nor a

complete scientific account of personality. Do not use them to excuse sin, limit calling, predict behavior, or judge spiritual maturity.

Introversion and extraversion

Introversion and extraversion describe patterns of energy and social engagement, not the presence or absence of faith. An introverted preacher may communicate with depth and careful preparation. An extraverted preacher may connect readily with people. Both need self-awareness, discipline, and love. Ambiversion reminds us that many people respond differently in different settings.

Preach through your real voice

Young ministers sometimes imitate a famous preacher's accent, gestures, vocabulary, or emotional intensity. Learn from good examples, but do not borrow another person's identity. God forms servants with different voices and gifts. Authenticity does not mean refusing training; it means allowing training to strengthen rather than erase the person.

Emotional maturity

Recognize your triggers, limits, and need for rest. Do not preach while using the congregation to process unresolved anger. Seek pastoral care or professional help when grief, trauma, anxiety, depression, addiction, or exhaustion affects ministry. Asking for help is an act of truth, not a failure of faith.

Working with a team

Invite readers, teachers, elders, youth leaders, women, and people from the local culture to help identify blind spots. A team can improve interpretation, application, safeguarding, and communication. Give credit for contributions and receive correction without defensiveness.

Spiritual gifts and trained skills

A spiritual gift does not remove the need to learn. A person gifted in teaching still studies interpretation; a gifted evangelist still learns to listen; a gifted exhorter still learns when people need comfort. Training does not manufacture God's call, but it helps gifts serve people more responsibly. Likewise, lack of dramatic personality does not disqualify a faithful servant.

Self-awareness in the pulpit

Know whether you tend to speak too quickly, avoid difficult emotions, over-explain, dominate conversations, or depend on approval. Self-awareness allows deliberate growth. It should not become self-absorption. The preacher looks at self honestly in order to serve Christ and people more freely.

Lesson summary

- Personality is not destiny
- Introversion and extraversion
- Preach through your real voice
- Emotional maturity
- Working with a team
- Spiritual gifts and trained skills
- Self-awareness in the pulpit

REVIEW AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How would you explain the main purpose of this lesson on the preacher and personality to a younger minister?

2. Which biblical passage connected with this lesson should you study more carefully, and why?

3. What common ministry mistake does this lesson help you recognize or prevent?

4. Which principle will be most difficult to practise in your present ministry setting?

5. What one change can you begin before preparing or delivering your next sermon?

MINISTRY ASSIGNMENT

Ask two trusted people to describe your communication strengths and blind spots. Compare their observations.

Academic Notes and Sources

- Phillips Brooks, Lectures on Preaching, for the classic emphasis on truth communicated through personality.
- D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, Preaching and Preachers, for pastoral reflections on calling, temperament, and delivery.

Lesson 15 Ethics Sources and Integrity

Truthful use of sources

A preacher should acknowledge direct quotations, distinctive outlines, statistics, and stories learned from others. Changing a few words does not make another person's work one's own. Keep research notes with author, title, page, and link. In oral delivery, a simple phrase such as 'John Stott observed' may be enough; written or online publication needs fuller citation.

Verify stories and statistics

Do not repeat an illustration merely because it is popular. Check whether it happened, whether the numbers are current, and whether the source is reliable. If verification is impossible, omit it or identify it honestly as an illustration rather than fact. False information damages trust and can distract from the gospel.

Testimony and confidentiality

Tell the truth about personal experiences and avoid making yourself the hero of every story. Obtain permission before sharing another person's testimony. Protect children, survivors, patients, counselees, employees, and people involved in discipline. Public information can still be used unlovingly; ask whether sharing it is necessary and beneficial.

Money and promises

Never promise a financial return that Scripture does not promise. Do not connect giving to access to prayer, prophecy, healing, leadership, or personal favor. Explain the purpose of offerings and use accountable financial procedures. A sermon about generosity should teach grace, stewardship, justice, and willing participation rather than pressure.

Use of artificial intelligence

Digital tools can assist with transcription, grammar, organization, and research, but the preacher remains responsible for truth, interpretation, originality, privacy, and pastoral judgment. Never upload confidential ministry information without authorization. Verify generated claims and citations. A machine cannot replace prayerful study, accountable character, or knowledge of the people.

Plagiarism and honest borrowing

Ministers learn from one another, and shared ideas are not automatically theft. The problem comes when distinctive language, structure, research, or stories are presented as original. Name the source naturally in speech and record full details in published work. If a sermon closely follows another person's outline, say so. Honesty teaches the congregation by example.

Power and boundaries

The pulpit gives unusual influence. Do not use that influence to request private loyalty, romantic attention, business advantage, political obedience, or protection from questions. Counseling should follow clear boundaries. Complaints should have a safe route. A leader's claim to good intentions does not remove the need for transparent systems.

Lesson summary

- Truthful use of sources
- Verify stories and statistics
- Testimony and confidentiality
- Money and promises
- Use of artificial intelligence
- Plagiarism and honest borrowing
- Power and boundaries

REVIEW AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How would you explain the main purpose of this lesson on ethics sources and integrity to a younger minister?

2. Which biblical passage connected with this lesson should you study more carefully, and why?

3. What common ministry mistake does this lesson help you recognize or prevent?

4. Which principle will be most difficult to practise in your present ministry setting?

5. What one change can you begin before preparing or delivering your next sermon?

MINISTRY ASSIGNMENT

Audit the stories, quotations, statistics, and personal information in a recent sermon.

Academic Notes and Sources

- 2 Corinthians 4:1-2; 8:20-21; 1 Thessalonians 2:3-12; and 1 Peter 5:2-3 govern the ethical emphasis.
- The Chicago Manual of Style, 17th ed., is consulted for principles of quotation, attribution, and documentation.

Lesson 16 Preaching Online and Through Media

Online hearers are real people

A camera changes the setting, but not the duty of love. Speak to the people present and those joining remotely without treating either group as an afterthought. Welcome online hearers, explain how they can receive prayer or follow-up, and protect private information in comments and livestreams.

Prepare for the medium

Online attention is often fragile. State the direction early, use clear transitions, and remove unnecessary repetition. Test sound before video quality; people may tolerate a modest picture but leave when speech is unclear. Frame the speaker simply, provide adequate light, and avoid distracting backgrounds.

Copyright and permissions

Obtain permission for music, photographs, videos, translations, and extended quotations used in recordings or streams. A church's permission to use material in a room may not include

online distribution. Credit creators and follow the relevant license. Do not assume that all internet material is free to reuse.

Permanent and shareable speech

A livestream can be clipped and circulated outside its original setting. Avoid careless claims, jokes at another person's expense, and disclosure of sensitive details. If a serious error is published, correct it openly and promptly. Keep recordings according to a clear ministry policy.

Digital discipleship

Views are not the same as spiritual fruit. Connect online proclamation to real pathways for Scripture reading, prayer, local fellowship, pastoral support, and service. Measure faithfulness by truth, love, accessibility, and responsible follow-up, not only by numbers.

Designing an online message

For online communication, begin with the text and purpose rather than the camera. Divide the message into clear movements, identify visual or verbal signposts, and plan how remote hearers can respond. Captions, readable slides, and a written summary improve access. Test the link and recording settings, but keep technology in service of ministry.

Comments moderation and pastoral care

Online ministry may attract sincere questions, mockery, disclosures of abuse, threats, and requests for urgent help. Assign trained people to moderate comments and move sensitive conversations to safe channels. Publish emergency and safeguarding contacts where appropriate. Do not promise confidentiality that the ministry cannot legally or ethically maintain.

Lesson summary

- Online hearers are real people
- Prepare for the medium
- Copyright and permissions
- Permanent and shareable speech
- Digital discipleship
- Designing an online message
- Comments moderation and pastoral care

REVIEW AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How would you explain the main purpose of this lesson on preaching online and through media to a younger minister?

2. Which biblical passage connected with this lesson should you study more carefully, and why?

3. What common ministry mistake does this lesson help you recognize or prevent?

4. Which principle will be most difficult to practise in your present ministry setting?

5. What one change can you begin before preparing or delivering your next sermon?

MINISTRY ASSIGNMENT

Create a simple online-service checklist covering sound, lighting, privacy, permissions, response, and follow-up.

Academic Notes and Sources

- Colossians 4:2-6 and 1 Peter 3:15-16 govern the tone of Christian communication.

- World Wide Web Consortium, Web Content Accessibility Guidelines, informs the accessibility principles applied to digital communication.

Lesson 17 Evaluation and Lifelong Growth

Evaluate the right things

Ask whether the sermon was faithful to the text, clear in its main idea, appropriate for the audience, centered on the gospel, specific in application, and delivered with love. Visible excitement may encourage the preacher, but silence does not prove failure and applause does not prove faithfulness.

Invite useful feedback

Choose several trustworthy listeners and ask focused questions: What did you understand as the main idea? Where were you confused? Which application was clear? Did any statement seem unsupported or insensitive? General praise gives little direction; specific feedback supports growth.

Review recordings wisely

When available and appropriate, review a recording. Notice pace, repeated phrases, length, posture, clarity, transitions, and whether the delivery matched the meaning. Do not become preoccupied with appearance. Select one or two improvements for the next sermon.

Keep a preaching journal

After each sermon record the passage, aim, length, what communicated well, what needs revision, questions raised, and pastoral follow-up required. Over time the journal reveals patterns. It also prevents the preacher from repeating illustrations or neglecting major parts of Scripture.

Continue learning

Read Scripture widely, study theology, listen to faithful preachers from different cultures, practice writing, and remain involved in ordinary pastoral service. Growth is gradual. The goal is not to become impressive but increasingly accurate, clear, courageous, compassionate, and useful to the people of God.

Measuring fruit over time

Some results appear immediately; others develop through years of hearing, remembering, and obeying Scripture. Look for growth in biblical understanding, love, repentance, prayer, reconciliation, service, generosity, endurance, and mission. Numbers can provide useful information, but they cannot measure every work of God and should not become the preacher's identity.

A personal development plan

Select one goal in biblical study, one in theology, one in communication, and one in character. Give each a simple practice, a person who can help, and a review date. For example, study one biblical book deeply, complete a doctrine course, record one sermon monthly, and keep a weekly Sabbath rhythm. Small faithful practices usually produce more growth than occasional bursts of ambition.

Lesson summary

- Evaluate the right things
- Invite useful feedback
- Review recordings wisely
- Keep a preaching journal
- Continue learning
- Measuring fruit over time

- A personal development plan

REVIEW AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How would you explain the main purpose of this lesson on evaluation and lifelong growth to a younger minister?

2. Which biblical passage connected with this lesson should you study more carefully, and why?

3. What common ministry mistake does this lesson help you recognize or prevent?

4. Which principle will be most difficult to practise in your present ministry setting?

5. What one change can you begin before preparing or delivering your next sermon?

MINISTRY ASSIGNMENT

Use the evaluation questions on your latest sermon and select only two improvements for the next message.

Academic Notes and Sources

- Haddon W. Robinson, Biblical Preaching, 3rd ed., on evaluation and continued development.
- John A. Broadus, On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons, rev. ed., on preparation, delivery, and ministerial growth.

Lesson 18 A Complete Sermon Preparation Process

Step 1 Pray and read

Ask God for humility and help. Read the passage several times without rushing to an outline. Note first observations and questions.

Step 2 Study the context

Identify the book's purpose, literary setting, historical background, genre, and the relationship of the selected passage to what surrounds it.

Step 3 Trace the structure

Mark the movements of the passage. Notice commands, reasons, contrasts, repeated terms, dialogue, conflict, and resolution. Write a simple structural outline.

Step 4 State the meaning

Write the textual idea in one sentence. Check it against the passage and reliable study resources. Correct weak or speculative conclusions.

Step 5 Connect to biblical theology

Ask how the passage relates to God's character, human need, covenant, Christ, the gospel, the church, mission, and Christian hope without forcing connections the text cannot support.

Step 6 Know the audience

Identify what the hearers already know, what they may misunderstand, what burdens they carry, and what language will communicate clearly. Consider children, visitors, seekers, and vulnerable people.

Step 7 Write the aim and main idea

State the intended response and a memorable sermon idea. Make sure both arise from the passage.

Step 8 Build the outline

Arrange explanation, proof, illustration, application, and transitions in a clear movement. Remove material that does not serve the main idea.

Step 9 Prepare the beginning and ending

Write the introduction and conclusion after the body is clear. Make the opening direct and the ending purposeful.

Step 10 Verify

Check every Scripture reference, quotation, name, historical claim, statistic, story, and application. Review theological accuracy, cultural sensitivity, safeguarding, confidentiality, and timing.

Step 11 Rehearse

Preach aloud with a timer. Simplify difficult sentences, strengthen transitions, mark pauses, and prepare notes suitable for delivery.

Step 12 Deliver and review

Depend on God, love the people, preach the Word, and remain attentive to the room. Afterwards, record lessons and complete necessary pastoral follow-up.

A realistic weekly rhythm

For a Sunday sermon, early days may focus on reading, context, and the textual idea; middle days on audience, structure, explanation, and application; later days on revision, verification, and rehearsal. Pastoral emergencies will interrupt

plans, so begin early. Protect concentrated study periods while remaining available through appropriate ministry systems.

The final sermon test

Before preaching, ask: Is the main idea true to this passage? Can a listener state it? Have I explained what people need to understand? Are the illustrations accurate and appropriate? Are applications faithful, gracious, and safe? Have I acknowledged sources? Is the gospel clear where the passage leads to it? Can the message fit the assigned time? Have I prayed for the people rather than only for successful delivery?

Lesson summary

- Step 1 Pray and read
- Step 2 Study the context
- Step 3 Trace the structure
- Step 4 State the meaning
- Step 5 Connect to biblical theology
- Step 6 Know the audience
- Step 7 Write the aim and main idea
- Step 8 Build the outline
- Step 9 Prepare the beginning and ending
- Step 10 Verify
- Step 11 Rehearse
- Step 12 Deliver and review
- A realistic weekly rhythm
- The final sermon test

REVIEW AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How would you explain the main purpose of this lesson on a complete sermon preparation process to a younger minister?

2. Which biblical passage connected with this lesson should you study more carefully, and why?

3. What common ministry mistake does this lesson help you recognize or prevent?

4. Which principle will be most difficult to practise in your present ministry setting?

5. What one change can you begin before preparing or delivering your next sermon?

MINISTRY ASSIGNMENT

Complete all twelve preparation steps for a passage you expect to preach soon.

Academic Notes and Sources

- This process synthesizes the preparation sequence taught throughout the book.
- Norman Holmes, Homiletics: Preparing and Delivering Sermons, 53-134; Robinson, Biblical Preaching; and Stott, Between Two Worlds are the principal conversation partners.

Appendix A Sermon Planning Worksheet

Planning item	Notes
Passage	
Occasion and audience	
Context and genre	
Textual idea	
Theological focus	
Sermon aim	
Main idea	

Introduction	
Movement 1	Explanation Illustration Application
Movement 2	Explanation Illustration Application
Movement 3	Explanation Illustration Application
Conclusion and response	
Claims and references to verify	
Safeguarding and confidentiality check	
Planned length	

Additional planning notes

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Appendix B Sermon Evaluation Form

Area	Strong	Needs work	Comment
Faithful to the passage and context	☐	☐	
Main idea was clear	☐	☐	
Theology was accurate and balanced	☐	☐	
Structure was easy to follow	☐	☐	
Explanation was sufficient	☐	☐	
Illustrations served the truth	☐	☐	
Applications were specific and gracious	☐	☐	

Language suited the audience	☐	☐	
Delivery was natural and audible	☐	☐	
Time was respected	☐	☐	
Conclusion called for an appropriate response	☐	☐	
Ethics confidentiality and safeguarding were respected	☐	☐	

Main idea I heard:

_____

Most helpful part:

_____

One suggested improvement:

_____

Appendix C Sample Expository Sermon Outline

Ambassadors of Reconciliation

Text: 2 Corinthians 5:17-21

Aim: To help believers receive God's reconciling grace and represent Christ faithfully in relationships and witness.

Main idea: Because God reconciled us to Himself through Christ, He sends us to carry His message of reconciliation.

Introduction

Broken relationships leave people asking whether peace is possible. Paul begins with something greater than human conflict: God acts in Christ to reconcile sinners to Himself.

1 God makes people new in Christ

Explain verse 17 in its context. New creation is God's work, not self-improvement. Apply this to identity, hope, and repentance.

2 God provides reconciliation through Christ

Explain verses 18-19. God does not ignore sin; He deals with it through Christ. Reconciliation begins with God's initiative and grace.

3 God entrusts a message and ministry to His people

Explain verses 18-20. An ambassador represents another ruler and carries an entrusted appeal. Apply humility, accuracy, courage, and peacemaking.

4 Christ is the ground of our acceptance

Explain verse 21 carefully. Christ, who knew no sin, bears sin so that those united to Him share in the righteousness God provides.

Conclusion

Receive the appeal to be reconciled to God. If you are in Christ, carry that appeal faithfully and seek reconciliation without confusing forgiveness with unsafe access or the removal of proper justice.

Appendix D Glossary

Term	Meaning
Application	Showing the faithful present response to the truth of a biblical passage.
Context	The literary, historical, cultural, and theological setting that helps determine meaning.
Exegesis	Drawing out the intended meaning of a biblical text through careful study.
Expository sermon	A sermon whose main idea and purpose are governed by a biblical passage.
Genre	A type of literature, such as narrative, poetry, proverb, letter, prophecy, or apocalypse.
Hermeneutics	The principles and practice of interpretation.
Homiletics	The study and practice of preparing and delivering

	sermons.
Illumination	The Holy Spirit’s work helping people understand and receive Scripture.
Illustration	A concrete example or comparison that clarifies truth.
Main idea	The single controlling claim of a sermon.
Proposition	Another term for the sermon's central claim or main idea.
Textual idea	A sentence that states the subject and assertion of the biblical passage.
Transition	A sentence or phrase that connects sermon movements.
Worldview	A network of beliefs and assumptions through which a person understands reality.

Appendix E Additional Sermon Outline Examples

These outlines are newly written examples that demonstrate forms emphasized in the original Homiletics course. They are starting points for study, not finished sermons.

A Ladder Outline Growing Through Trials

Text: James 1:2-8

Main idea: God uses tested faith to produce mature believers who depend on His wisdom.

1. Recognize what trials can produce. 2. Allow endurance to complete its work. 3. Ask God for wisdom. 4. Ask in trusting dependence.

Teaching note: The movements rise step by step from the trial to mature, prayerful faith.

A Contrast Outline Two Ways to Build

Text: Matthew 7:24-27

Main idea: Hearing Jesus becomes secure discipleship only when His words are obeyed.

1. Both builders hear. 2. One obeys and one does not. 3. Both houses face the storm. 4. The foundations reveal the difference.

Teaching note: The contrast is not between people with and without storms, but between obedient and disobedient hearers.

A Diamond Outline The Grace That Saves

Text: Ephesians 2:1-10

Main idea: God saves helpless sinners by grace through faith and creates them for good works.

1. Our former condition. 2. God's merciful intervention. 3. Salvation as gift. 4. A new life of good works.

Teaching note: Every movement approaches the central truth that salvation is God's gracious work, then returns to its implications.

A Bible Story Outline Jesus Calms the Storm

Text: Mark 4:35-41

Main idea: Jesus is Lord in the storm and worthy of trusting fear.

1. Jesus leads the disciples across. 2. The storm exposes their fear. 3. Jesus rebukes wind and sea. 4. His question exposes little faith. 5. The disciples confront His identity.

Teaching note: Follow the tension and resolution of the narrative without turning every detail into a hidden symbol.

An Analogy Outline The Church as a Body

Text: 1 Corinthians 12:12-27

Main idea: Christ forms diverse believers into one interdependent body.

1. One body has many members. 2. Difference does not cancel belonging. 3. No member is unnecessary. 4. Members share honor and suffering.

Teaching note: Use only the comparisons Paul develops. Do not force every feature of a human body into doctrine.

A Question and Answer Outline Why Should We Pray

Text: Matthew 6:5-13

Main idea: Jesus teaches His disciples to pray to the Father with sincerity, confidence, and kingdom priorities.

Question 1: Whom do we address? Question 2: What should we desire first? Question 3: What daily needs may we bring? Question 4: How do forgiveness and spiritual protection enter prayer?

Teaching note: Answer each question from the text before adding broader supporting passages.

A Search Outline What Does God Seek in Worship

Text: John 4:19-26; Romans 12:1-2; Hebrews 13:15-16

Main idea: God seeks worship shaped by truth, Spirit-enabled devotion, surrendered life, praise, and practical love.

1. Search the words of Jesus about true worship. 2. Search the believer's surrendered life. 3. Search the sacrifices of praise and doing good. 4. Bring the findings into one faithful response.

Teaching note: A search outline must interpret each passage in context and should not become a collection of disconnected verses.

Selected Scripture Index

The calling and character of ministers

Acts 20:17-38; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; 4:12-16; 2 Timothy 2:15; Titus 1:5-9; James 3:1; 1 Peter 5:1-4

The ministry of the Word

Nehemiah 8:1-8; Isaiah 55:10-11; Luke 4:16-21; Acts 2:14-41; 20:27; Romans 10:14-17; 1 Corinthians 1:18-25; 2 Timothy 3:14-4:5

The gospel and Christ

Mark 1:14-15; Luke 24:25-27, 44-49; John 20:30-31; Romans 1:16-17; 1 Corinthians 15:1-8; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21

The Holy Spirit and discernment

John 14:26; 16:13-15; Acts 1:8; 1 Corinthians 2:10-16; 12-14; 1 Thessalonians 5:19-22; 1 John 4:1-3

Faithful communication

Proverbs 12:18; 15:1-2; 18:13; 25:11; Colossians 4:2-6; 1 Peter 3:15-16

Ethics and stewardship

Matthew 6:1-4, 19-24; 18:1-14; Acts 20:33-35; 2 Corinthians 4:1-2; 8:20-21; 1 Thessalonians 2:3-12; 1 Peter 5:2-3

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Documentation method: Scripture is the governing primary source. Lesson-level notes identify the principal works consulted for definitions, methods, interpretive principles, and historical frameworks. Page spans are supplied for Norman Holmes where the source table of contents and the relevant course topic establish the location. Dictionary articles are cited by headword. Other whole-work references identify conceptual influence rather than direct quotation. The prose is newly written and does not reproduce extended passages from these works. Any future direct quotation must include an exact page-level note from the edition used.

About the Author

Salongo Ssentaba Ronald is a Ugandan Christian author, Bible teacher, theologian, and the founder of Theos Transforming Ministries. His ministry is devoted to making biblical teaching clear, practical, and accessible to believers, families, church leaders, and developing ministers. He has served in teaching, leadership, and ministry-training settings in Uganda and the United Arab Emirates.

He holds a Master of Divinity in Theology from California River of Life University and has pursued further training in theology, Christian leadership, and youth leadership. His teaching interests include biblical interpretation, preaching, Pentecostal theology, marriage and family life, sexuality, forgiveness, spiritual formation, inner healing, Christology, and the doctrine of the Holy Spirit.

His books and developing ministry resources include Before You Say U Do, Why God Created Sex, The Bible Made Clear, Pentecostal Theology, Healthy Sex and Family Relationships, Forgiveness, The Tabernacle of Moses, Women of the Bible, The Book of Romans, A Theological View on Marriage, studies in Acts, Inner Healing and Deliverance, Pneumatology, Christology, and Introduction to the New Testament Gospels and Acts. Through these works, he seeks to equip readers to understand Scripture, live faithfully, and serve others with truth and grace.

He is married to Nalongo Josephine Nakasiita Ssentaba, and they are blessed with five children: Faith Angel, Esther Power, Esther Pearl, Gideon Pillar, and Gideon Prophet.

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