

Cantrell's Concepts
Practical
Preaching
Preparation

“The art of alliterated sermon’s”

Donald L. Cantrell

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The Author

It has been my privilege to preach the Gospel since 1980. I have now been preaching for more than 28 years. I have never gotten over the day that God saved me at Old Fashion Baptist church in Chatsworth, Georgia. I had only been saved for about 7 months when I realized that God was calling me to be a preacher. I have gotten over many things since that day in May of 1980, but the call to preach still burns within my heart.

I had the wonderful opportunity to sit under one of God's most noble men, Walter Hare. In sitting under his preaching, I had the honor of learning the Art of Alliteration. I have tried to develop this skill in my preaching ministry. The key to Alliterated Outlines is maintaining biblical accuracy and not forcing a word that has no foundation in the message.

The main force that drives me in writing books and sharing my messages is the thought of being helpful. I want to help those ministers that may need a simple thought to prompt them in developing a mighty message. I find much pleasure in knowing that someone has found something useable in one of my books or outlines. This is an honor to me.

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In these times many do not have enough money for Bible College, nor do they have the time to pull up roots and move away. I try to establish some simple principles to help the busy pastor and preacher. If my writings are not practical then I have failed in achieving my goal as an author. I want my writings to not only be practical, but also to be preachable. I do not aim for the top shelf in the cupboard, but I aim for the lower shelf so that even the simplest may understand.

I have been allowed to pastor many churches during the last 30 years. I know the rigors and the pressure that the man of God faces in these difficult times. I want you to take these thoughts and use them in your pulpits. Hopefully the sincerity and the simplicity of them will allow you to minister to your people. I hope that these writings fan the flames of service within the hearts of every reader.

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Please feel free to contact me for any needs I may help with. If you need some help developing some alliterated sermons for a special need or a special series, I would be glad to offer my help in meeting your specific need.

Acknowledgments

In writing this book my mind wanders back to the early days of my Christian experience. I got saved in October of 1979 and answered the call to preach the word of God in May of 1980. The flame that was ignited inside of my soul is still burning fervently nearly 29 years later. I have never understood the heavenly call that God placed upon me; but I have tried to honor that call. I would rather preach than do anything else in life.

In those early days I listened to Moody radio and grew under the preaching and teaching of some of God's mighty men. In listening to these men, I became settled and grounded in the fundamentals of the faith. I feel indebted to men like: J Vernon McGee, Theodore Epp, and Warren Wiersbe. The job that I had at that time; gave me opportunity to hear the teachings of these men. I looked forward to hear the discussions of Donald Cole as he answered the questions of his audience.

I had the opportunity to sit in a Homiletics class and this fanned the flame even more within my soul to enrich myself as a preacher. I remember the class that my pastor offered to a few of us young preacher boys. He was willing to give us some proven pointers to help us become better at preaching the word.

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I still remember the first opportunity I had to preach the word of God. I announced my calling on Sunday morning and the pastor asked me to preach on the next Sunday night. I felt led to preach on Jonah, maybe because that was all I knew about. I preached the first chapter and did not feel comfortable in leaving Jonah in the belly of the whale. I proceeded in preaching the remainder of the entire book. It truly was the radio hour on that first Sunday night of my ministry.

I want to thank those men that gave me the opportunity to preach in their pulpits. I have never had to campaign for opportunities to preach; the lord has always opened the appropriate doors. I want to thank those people that invested in my ministry; those that helped pay for the various radio ministries throughout the years. The years have been good to this preacher because of those who have encouraged me and prayed for me; I am indebted to those wonderful people.

I would not have had this opportunity were it not for fellow ministers that have encouraged me to share my work with others. ***I am sincerely indebted to Pastor Ronnie Gibbs that helped open the door for me to publish my material.*** I want to thank John G. Butler for his words of encouragement and for taking the time for an unknown writer.

Introduction

In writing this book I never intended for us to explore the entire concept of preaching. The book addresses preaching concepts that are proven, practical, and preachable. The preacher that desires to better himself as he stands behind the pulpit will find principles in this book that will help him achieve that goal.

The moment a man answers the call to preach; he must make a choice concerning the concept of preaching. I have observed those that preach by letter; they open their mouth and ‘let her fly!’ I have been around the crowd that preaches from a text; they read the text and preach as far from it as possible. In listening to various men “preach” I have been witness of those that do not make much of studying the book. This particular crowd believes that God will fill them. The problem with this is that God will not put anything in an empty head.

A man must decide if he is going to allow himself to become a better preacher. The man that desires to become better will need the resources to help him achieve that goal. In answering his call, the preacher is suddenly expected to deal with the eternal destiny of his listeners. The man of God is allowed the opportunity to feed and fill the hearts of willing listeners.

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In choosing to read this book, you have made the choice of trying to find something to help you become a better preacher. It has been said that reading books does not make a preacher, only God can do that; but books can help the preacher become better. The preacher must learn to construct a sermon. He must learn to weave a message together that will feed the souls of his audience. In constructing his message he will lay block upon block until the work is sufficient and suitable to deliver.

I am fully aware of that crowd that despises those that want to read of and learn the art of preaching. God uses the foolishness of preaching as his chosen method, but He does not use foolish preachers or foolish preaching. The bible makes it very clear that a man is to study to show himself approved, one that knows how to rightly divide God's book. The only way to faithfully do this is to set aside time for faithful sermon preparation. The prepared preacher will be a powerful preacher. The man of God can become a better preacher.

I have spent much time in learning the art of alliterated sermon preparation. In constructing and designing my sermons, I have found much pleasure in using alliteration. We will spend some time discussing how to construct sermons that are practical, personable; and preachable for the preacher to take to his pulpit.

Chapter 1

The Definitions

In this chapter we will spend some time identifying the definitions concerning preaching terminology. The man that preaches needs to understand the various terminologies that are used in the field of preaching. I will never forget the first time that I heard the word “Homiletics”. I had no idea what the men were talking about, but I hoped that I did not have that disease.

- **Homiletics Defined**

The word originates for one that gives a mutual talk or a discourse. The best definition of homiletics is, “the art and science of preaching.”

1. *The ability to design a sermon*

(Preparation of a Sermon)

The minister perfects his ability to prepare a message that truthfully engulfs the meaning of a particular scripture.

2. *The ability to deliver a sermon*

(Presentation of a Sermon)

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The minister takes his work and puts it in the form of words that must sway the hearts of the hearer to make a decision; a decision concerning his message.

- **Preaching Defined**

It has been said that preaching is “*the communication of God by man to men*”. Preaching is God’s message delivered through a man to men. The man of God delivers the message of God.

1. *The personality of a man*

The man that God chooses to preach is a *selected man*. In selecting his man; God allows him to become a *separated man*. The message of God must have a man that can deliver this message.

2. *The proclamation of a message*

In selecting his messenger God will sift his message through this man. The message must be allowed the appropriate time to *sift* through the man and thoroughly *saturate* his being.

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3. The power of a moment

The man has about 30 minutes to deliver his designed message and to inflict an inner urge within the hearts of hearts to make a decision for God. Upon delivering the message that has saturated his being, he must make the powerful appeal to the very soul of his audience. The preacher must never minimize the power of his proclaimed message.

- **Pulpit Defined**

The actual definition of the word pulpit is as follows, “a raised platform or high lectern from which a clergyman preaches in a church”. It should be with great honor and humiliation that a man approaches this sacred place. The gospel message has been preached behind this sacred piece of furniture throughout the ages.

1. The division of the pulpit

The pulpit divides the man and his audience, *not because of his merit; but because of his message*. The pulpit *recognizes the selection* of this messenger to deliver God’s word. The pulpit also *reveals the separation* of this messenger

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due to his approved calling. The pulpit is not for the lifting of the man but his approved heavenly message.

2. *The declaration of the pulpit*

The pulpit is a *sacred place* that God's man delivers God's message to the hearts of his audience. The message will hopefully draw the attention and the affection of the audience. The pulpit is a *serious place* due to the man of God dealing with the eternal destiny of those listening to his message.

- **Text Defined**

The foundation of a preacher's message will come from his selected passage of scripture. In selecting this scripture the preacher will preach from his "text". In its conventional meaning, text means the "words of a book, or a book of such words". The root of our American word text actually comes from the Latin words, "texere, textus, and textum"; which means "***to weave or capable of being woven***". The word textile exemplifies this concept, the idea of weaving fabrics together.

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1. The ability of weaving - Foundation

In preaching a message the minister must be able to take his scripture and weave it together with his words into a presentation that is true to the passage.

2. The ability of connecting - Formation

The preacher will connect the points of his message in away that will be accurate, yet authentic for his desired purpose.

3. The ability of designing - Fabrication

Once the preacher has his foundation and he has woven the pieces together, he will now tie the work together in a way that is presentable and preachable. In this we find the true skills that one must develop to prepare a true sermon.

- **Sermon Defined**

The word sermon can be defined as, “a serious talk, especially one given in church based or discussing a passage of the bible’. In all actuality the word sermon can be interpreted as, “***the finished product or the product of the process***”.

The sermon is the finished product that the man

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of God takes to the pulpit to deliver to his audience.

1. *The product of his passage*

A sermon is not truly a sermon without having a biblical foundation. It may be a good speech or moving message, but without the scriptures it is no sermon.

2. *The product of his preparation*

The man thoroughly prepares himself and his message. A sermon will never reach its full potential with the appropriate time spent in preparation. In calling a man, God also called him to prepare.

3. *The product of his process*

The finished product of his passage and his preparation will be his presentation of a sermon. The finished product of the process that he has went through in conceiving a real sermon.

- **Exegesis Defined**

The Greek form of this word is, “*to lead out*”. It can be identified as, “*a critical explanation or interpretation of a text*”.

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1. Accurately interpreting the scriptures

The preacher will dig into the text and lead out the actual meaning of his chosen passage. The minister will not “*read into the text*”; but he will accurately “*read out of the text*”.

2. Adequately interpreting the scriptures

In digging into the word and finding its *significance* he can then dish it out for the audience to feast upon. The purpose of this should be to identify the *relevance* of this passage in relation to his audience.

3. Analytically interpreting the scriptures

The preacher will conduct thorough investigation and examination of his text and give proper credence to its original, historical; and cultural meaning.

4. Aggressively interpreting the scriptures

The process of exegesis must not be minimized in constructing the sermon. The house that is being built may end up being filled with holes that can damage and diminish the credibility of its builder.

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- **Hermeneutics Defined**

The Greek word for “explain” means, “*through, explain, and to interpret*”. The full translation of the word is, “to interpret fully; to reveal or unfold the meaning of what is said, explained, or expounded”. It can be said that Biblical hermeneutics is, “*the art and science of expounding and interpreting a passage of scriptures*”.

1. *The mandate of hermeneutics*

The desired goal of biblical hermeneutics is to ascertain the voice of God within the passage. If the voice of God has been revealed and identified then a man has successfully expounded his passage.

2. *The mistake of hermeneutics*

If any mistakes have been made in expounding the scriptures it is due to the voice of man speaking as the voice of God. A man must be careful.

3. *The method of hermeneutics*

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In dealing with the interpretation of words, we must identify:

- A. the definition of words
- B. the formation of words
- C. the function of words
- D. the relation of words

- **Exposition Defined**

The literal meaning of exposition is, “*the process of making clear, a setting forth of facts, detailed explanation*”. Exposition can be defined as “*the presentation of biblical truth that is the finished product of the prior process*”. In delivering your message; you are declaring the product of your previous process, the process of digging for the truth and now you will dish out the truth.

1. *The truthful evidence - derived*

The preacher has spent the appropriate time *to dig out* the true meaning of the passage. In becoming an effective preacher the man of God cannot minimize this process. In digging for the truth he

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will *dissect* the scripture and squeeze it until he has drained every drop of juice from the words.

2. *The thoughtful explanation - delivered*

The time has come for the preacher to stand up and boldly deliver the message that God has given him. In delivering this message the man of God must be willing to stand solid upon the truthfulness of his message. In delivering this message, the man of God is spreading the table for his listeners to feast upon.

Chapter 2

The Consideration of Alliteration

I dare say that many of us have tried to prepare alliterated sermons. In many cases the flow of the alliteration came with ease and required little effort on your behalf. In many other cases it seemed as if you were using meaningless words and it required more effort that you wanted to put forth. We may ask ourselves how this can be possible. In this chapter we will look at various steps in alliterated sermon preparation and hopefully clarify your concerns.

- **The Definition of Alliteration**

“The repetition of the same sounds or of the same kinds of sounds at the beginning of words or in stressed syllables.” **Alliteration** is the repeated occurrence of a consonant sound at the beginning of several words in the same phrase. **Consonance** is the repetition of the same consonant in a string of words, not the sound as is in alliteration. Alliteration may also include the use of different consonants with similar properties (labials, dentals, etc.) I personally use consonance as much as I use alliteration. I find this necessary to be successful in my outlines.

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- **The Delight of Alliteration**

In preparing sermon outlines I personally find it very fulfilling and challenging to use alliteration. I believe that a person can develop their skills in learning how to affectively use alliteration.

1. *The Journey and your Drive*

In constructing an alliterated sermon the builder will embark upon a journey that challenges his skills to the highest level possible. The road will proceed down paths that seem dark and dreary, but you must proceed on until the light begins to brightly shine. The path will go down one way streets that lead to dead ends. If this happens you must turn around and head down another road.

2. *The Joy and your Design*

In the beginning the sermon may look meager and meaningless, but the skilled alliterator will build word upon word. As the words are joined together, the sermon will begin to look like it has been constructed with a specific design in mind. The designer can feel the inner joy of knowing that his persistence and

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patience has paid off in the form of a sermon that is presentable and preachable. In this a man can find great joy.

- **The Details of Alliteration**

In preparing alliterated sermons a person must decide the path that his alliteration will take. I often allow much time in making this decision. In making this decision the sermon will begin to take form.

1. *Consider the Options*

A person has many options in constructing his sermon outline. The use of alliteration is varied and numerous:

Explore, Explode, Explain, Export

Attention, Attraction, Admonition

Conduct, Construct,

Desirable, Affordable, Vulnerable

Emotion, Devotion, Commotion

The Man's Mandate

The Marvelous Moment

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The Majestic Method

The Meager Material

2. Consider The Obstacles

In constructing your sermon outlines you may encounter obstacles. A word must *never be forced* just to preserve the alliteration. A word must *never be fraudulent* in your outline. I will scrape the entire outline if I must force the use of a word. ***“The flow must be fluid and free, it must never be forced.”***

- **The Danger of Alliteration**

The person that chooses to use alliteration will face various dangers along the way. The best way to avoid these dangers is too clearly identify them. I have observed many people fail in using alliteration because they disregarded the common pitfalls along the way.

1. The Alliteration must be Personable

In discussing the meaning of personable, I mean it has to fit your style. It will seem odd for a man to try and pronounce words that he does not even know the meaning

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of. A person must be true to themselves in designing alliterated sermons.

2. The Alliteration must be Presentable

It will be a waste of time for a person to design a sermon that he cannot present to the people. Do not alliterate for the sake of alliterating; it must be based upon your text. A sermon must not rhyme just to make it sound good.

3. The Alliteration must be Preachable

The ultimate goal of the alliteration will be for the man of God to take it to the pulpit. In doing this, he will boldly present his work in the form of preaching. If the alliteration is not preachable, it is not worthy to be called a sermon.

- **The Draw of Alliteration**

In developing alliterated sermons a person can find satisfaction in knowing that his work can payback many dividends. An alliterated outline in the hands of a skill designer can bring much comfort and counsel to his audience.

1. The Alluring Appeal

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The presentable product of the process is the finished alliterated sermon. In delivering this alliteration it can have an alluring appeal upon those sitting in the audience. The preacher can begin to lay out his design before his audience. If designed properly and poetically the orator will see the anxious look of the hearer as he desires more.

2. *The Assuring Aim*

The designer will not only build his words in the sight of his hearers, he has envisioned the appropriate objective of his design. I look at alliterated sermons as if I were ascending a flight of stairs; each step brings me nearer to the door that opens up so that I can have a view that takes my breath away. The design has an assuring aim and the end will be breathtaking and beneficial to every hearer in the audience.

- **The Disappointment of Alliteration**

I will be completely honest with the reader concerning the ability to design alliterated sermons; you either have it or you don't have it. I

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believe that a person can perfect their skills in designing alliterated messages; but if the skills are not there it will be difficult and disappointing.

1. The Given Skills

I personally believe that God has given some people the ability to write. I think that this is one of the many gifts that God has dispensed upon his children. If you talk to various ministers some of them would give anything to be able to alliterate effectively. In talking to others; many of these men can do alliteration with much ease and minimal effort. It has nothing to do with education or effort.

2. The Gifted Student

I absolutely believe that once God has given a man these skills to write and design alliterated sermons, he can perfect these skills to the point of excellence. In designing and developing his messages, the dedicated student can hone and honor his skills. I spend great amounts of time trying to enhance my alliteration skills. I do not take this gift for granted.

- **The Dedication of Alliteration**

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The student of alliteration must have deep dedication in perfecting his skills. In designing your sermons there will be times when the process seems to be dry and dark. It is in these troublesome times that a man must dig in for the long haul. I have noticed that during these times one must remain focused; because he may have a diamond in the rough if he will remain true to his skills and devoted to his strategies.

1. The Proven Process

If you will remain true to this proven process you can become a successful alliterator. In preparing sermons I go through two distinct steps. ***“I design the sermon and then I destroy the sermon”***. I then redesign the alliterated sermon and if needful, I go through the two steps over and over again.

2. The Perfected Product

In delivering the perfected product, none of the hearers knows the great pains that were taken to give them this sermon. The skilled alliterator will design his sermon outline as if he were building a house. It will all be built upon a firm foundation,

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and then he will construct the framework, and ultimately place the furniture inside.

- **The Dawning of Alliteration**

In these days it seems as if alliteration has caught on throughout our land. The fire of alliteration seems to be burning brightly and boldly in many preachers and places. In this transformation, alliteration will have its triumphs and travails. It will have its proponents and its dissenters.

1. *The Experiments of Some*

In this day and age of alliteration we will see many a preacher dabble in and out. The preacher that does not possess the given skill will probably fail in this experiment. In no way does this cast a bad light upon alliteration, it is not for everyone. We are not all alike in our skills, nor should we be.

2. *The Excitement of Some*

In trying to discern if alliteration is for you, the answer will not be hard to discern. The man that has been given this skill will find much satisfaction and fulfillment in designing alliterated

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sermons. I find more satisfaction in designing alliterated sermons than any other thing that I could be doing. I absolutely love the challenge of designing a message that is alliterated. It is exciting to see others step into this arena.

- **The Developing of Alliteration**

If a person realizes that he may have the given skills to design alliterated sermons he must allow himself the time to develop these skills. The given skills are not enough to adequately perform the task; it takes much time and practice. The skilled alliterator will begin his sermon with the people sitting back in the pew; but hopefully he will end his sermon with the people attentively sitting on the edge of their pew hanging on his every word.

1. *It Takes Practice*

The man that fails to practice is a man that has no desire to better himself or his given skills. The greatest athletes to ever play the game have spent much time in practice to perfect their natural skills. The man of God must not allow himself to become complacent.

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2. It Takes Patience

If you allow the time for practice, you will ultimately become a great alliterator. Patience is a friend to any man that is willing to learn, willing to get better. I challenge you to design, then destroy, and redesign and keep on until you know it is finished. In doing this you must develop skills that require patience.

Chapter 3

The Identification of some Tools

In this chapter we will discuss some tools that will be useful for sermon preparation. As I look back over the years, some of the tools that I started with are still being used now nearly 30 years later. We are living in some of the greatest times that a man could live in as far as the available tools. I want to challenge you to try various tools and find some that you can depend on and stick with them as the years pass.

- **The Internet**

I think the internet has enhanced our ability to have instant access to numerous tools. The internet affords us the luxury of minimizing wasted time and maximizing a wealth of knowledge with the click of a button.

1. *The Comfort of the Internet*

A person has the luxury of studying at any given time. The minister can study early in the morning or late at night in the comfort of his very own home. It is a privilege to sit at ones desk and search the world for needful information. The laptop

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can be used whenever or wherever a person deems it needful.

2. The Challenge of the Internet

In using the internet one must understand that just because it is written does not mean that it is true. The internet should not be used as a resource to diminish one's study time. The minister that refuses to study should take an honest look at himself and his calling. It is one thing to search through all of the available resources, but one must produce his own work. This is a mighty challenge for those that want to hedge on studying.

3. The Companion of the Internet

In this day and time we have become the busiest people of any age. The times that we live in consist of a person rising at 5:30 A.M. and going until 12:30 A.M. and it seems as if we never stop. The man of God should utilize the internet as a study companion, a tool for the betterment of his ministry.

4. The Caution of the Internet

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In all reality we know that the internet is full of good, but also much evil. The man of God must use caution in his time on the internet. It can become the source of evil influence and temptation if a man drops his guard.

- **Roget's International Thesaurus**

If you were to visit my study area, you would not have to look very far to see my thesaurus. I use this tool along with my bible. In designing alliterated sermon outlines, I have found no other resource that has helped meet my needs. The beauty of a thesaurus is how it is laid out; the ease of using it will be worth the purchase.

1. *The Vastness of a Thesaurus*

If you purchase a Roget's Thesaurus you will have a book that contains over 250,000 words or phrases. The words are arranged in categories by their meanings, and then you will find a wonderful index in the other half of the book. I have a thumb indexed version, but I have used it so much I know where to find most words without looking at the indexing.

2. *The Value of a Thesaurus*

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I find that this book has proved to be invaluable in my personal study. If I am using alliteration that begins with the letter “D” I can search through these words swiftly without having to sort through the definitions. I love using this tool, it makes alliteration come alive. It simplifies looking up words, without having to decipher through definitions.

- **The Blue Letter Bible**

I found the blue letter bible on the internet several years ago. It has become one of my favorite tools in designing alliterated sermons. The best thing about this tool is that it is easy to use and has a vast amount of resources. In using this bible one has the choice of their particular bible version.

1. *Strong's Concordance*

In using the blue letter bible all a person has to do is click on a bible verse and the Strong's Concordance is at your disposal. One of the most rewarding things that I like to do is search out the true meaning of a word. I use to sit at my desk and have it full of various study tools, not so in this

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day and age. All I have to do is pull up the blue letter bible and I have full access to a Strong's Concordance.

2. Word Search

In looking up various bible verses all you have to do is type in a word and the word search tool will show you every place that the word is used in the bible. It will also tell a specific number of the use of a word. I like looking up words and have found this resource to be the fastest way to look up any word or phrase.

- **Alliteration Giants**

If you want to become better at alliteration all you need to do is study the works of those that have perfected this art. In my desire to become a student of alliterated sermon design, I begin to search out those authors that blazed the trail of alliteration. I have found many authors that inspired me to learn this art.

1. Jerry Vines

In the past I had the opportunity to hear this prince of alliteration preach. It was a Camp Zion in Myrtle Mississippi and he

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literally brought the house down. If I could only purchase the material of one man, it would be Jerry Vines.

2. *John Phillips*

If you want to read material that takes alliteration to another level, this is the man. John Phillips has been blessed with a unique vocabulary and can alliterate like no other person. The only issue with his alliteration is that it goes so deep; sometimes I have to go back and see where we came from. If you want to take your alliteration to another level, go and purchase the works of John Phillips. The best thing about his work is that it is expository, book by book.

- **Commentaries that I find most Useful**

In the past I have spent lots of money in purchasing books and commentaries, some were good; but many proved to be useless. I think that it used to be popular to fill ones library with books, the more books in your library the better. The only issue with this is that most of these books would never used, actually never even opened up. The best advice that I could offer the

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beginning preacher is to be wise in purchasing books, don't waste your money on fluff. I personally only purchase material that is practical and will prove to be useful.

1. Thru The Bible Commentaries

In the beginning of my ministry I purchased the individual books of **J. Vernon McGee**. The best thing about his books is their simplicity and their practicality. I have found that his teachings are conservative and fundamental; but very practical. If I could only have one set of books it would be these five commentaries.

2. Matthew Henry Commentary

I really do like the commentary of Matthew Henry; his work is as up to date as any author on the market. It will be a good purchase if you buy this work.

- **Sermon Preparation**

I have many books in my library concerning how to prepare sermons and how to preach. The tools that I have found to be the most effective are the ones that get me there the fastest. The simpler the

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presentation is the better it is for me. I do not like dry, crusty, boring terminology. In reality I may be a simple preacher, but simplicity seems to work in this age.

1. How To Prepare Sermons - Evans

I believe that this book is one of the greatest works on homiletics and the art of sermon preparation. It is a very easy to read book that is well written. If you have not purchased a book on sermon preparation please go out and buy this work, it will prove to be useful.

2. A Practical Guide to Sermon Preparation

This book is authored by *Jerry Vines* and it goes into much detail concerning preaching and delivery.

3. Principles and Practice of Preaching

This book is a classic that is authored by *Ilion T. Jones*. In reality this book is a very comprehensive work that will be beneficial to the reader. In this book you will find valuable insight into becoming a better sermon designer.

Chapter 4

The Meditation Stage

The preacher is expected to deliver a message that comes from God, one that has sifted through his being, and is delivered to his audience. The audience is not privy to his workings behind the scenes. In hearing his sermon that hopefully moves them for the Lord, the listener does not comprehend what goes into designing a sermon. The preacher has various abilities in designing and developing his sermons.

- **Meditation Defined**

The word meditate is used 14 times in the bible. It is used 12 times in the Old Testament and 2 times in the New Testament. We find the word meditation 6 times in the book of Psalms.

1. *The Meaning of Meditation*

If we were to clearly define the biblical use of this word, we would realize that it consist of a time of reflection and a time of musing. It takes on the idea of one talking to himself in low murmurings and mutterings. If a person is meditating on

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something, he is actually imagining how it could be or what could happen.

2. The Mention of Meditation

I would dare say that the most known verse concerning meditation would be found in **Psalms 1: 2** “But his delight [is] in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night”. If we were to look in the New Testament we would notice that Paul encourages Timothy to meditate upon all of the things that Paul had presented to the young man.

1 Timothy 4: 15 “Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all”.

3. The Motive of Meditation

The idea of meditation is presented to us from a biblical perspective to encourage us to allow the proper time to digest what we are reading. The man of God must allow time to muse over what he is reading and designing. We must allow time to digest fully what we are

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developing and designing. It would benefit all of us to allow the proper time to ponder, to reflect, and to focus our thoughts upon what we are about to develop and design. The minister can be looked upon as not only an architect, but as the one that also builds the building.

- **Meditation Demonstrated**

If we were to properly use the tool of meditating we would allow God to fully identify his will for our sermon ideas. The steps to properly meditating are varied and numerous, but they are needful in every preachers life. The greatest example of a person allowing time for meditating would be the life of Jesus Christ. In the midst of his busy days, he often came apart from the crowd to allow time for meditation.

Mark 1: 35 “And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed”.

Matthew 14: 13 “When Jesus heard [of it], he departed thence by ship into a desert place apart: and when the people had heard [thereof], they followed him on foot out of the cities”.

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Matthew 15: 29 “And Jesus departed from thence, and came nigh unto the sea of Galilee; and went up into a mountain, and sat down there”.

Mark 17: 1 “And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart.”

Matthew 20: 17 “And Jesus going up to Jerusalem took the twelve disciples apart in the way, and said unto them”.

Mark 14: 23 “And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone”.

Mark 6: 31 “And he said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat”.

1. The Example of Jesus

If meditating was important to Jesus it should be of the utmost importance to each of us as men of God. In meditating Jesus would come apart from the crowd and often even his disciples. The Lord

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needed this time to discern the voice of God in his every movement.

2. The Experience of Jesus.

In coming apart from the crowd Jesus would often be found praying to his heavenly father. In watching his movements, we find him praying in the garden, on top of the mountain, he even spent 40 days in the wilderness fasting and praying to his heavenly father. If meditating was important to him, we must ask ourselves if it is important to our lives. In meditating we allow the voice of God to talk to us.

- **Meditation Discovered**

I challenge each reader to allow the proper time for scriptural and spiritual meditation. In doing so you will find that it is fulfilling and your sermons will be impacted greatly.

1. *The Purpose of Meditating*

In meditating you are allowing the proper time to develop your thoughts. The man of God that meditates does not hastily throw a sermon together. The sermon idea

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has pricked your conscious or your mind and now you must allow it to permeate your very being. In meditating you are allowing the sermon to sift through you, to possess you in away that it literally burns within.

2. *The Process of Meditating*

The seed thought for your sermon has ignited your thought process. In doing so you must allow the process to take full effect upon on your being. In meditating you will begin to develop the scriptural foundation for your sermon. The thrust or theme of your sermon will begin to come into focus. The meditation process makes the unclear become clearly visible and viable. The knobs are turned back and forth until the objective is clear.

3. *The Product of Meditating*

In meditating the preacher has allowed for the proper time in developing his thought process. The sermon seed had only been a simple thought, but now it has come alive and can be developed into a full sermon. If the meditation process is allowed the proper time, in the end the man of God

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will be able to display and deliver a finished product that is preachable. In meditating the minister has a product that he is proud of delivering to his audience.

- **Meditation Depicted**

The best depiction of true meditation is that of a cow chewing its cud. A cow has 4 compartments in their stomach. In resting the cow will regurgitate the food out of its stomach and it will re-chew and re-swallow this food. The proper process of a cow chewing its cud will take place as the cow is resting. In resting the cow will chew the food over 30,000 times in an 8 hour period. In doing this it greatly benefits the cow and actually proves to be very healthy. In chewing its cud the cow produces saliva that coats its stomach so that it can eat more food. The process actually helps the cow to produce more milk which is beneficial to its owner.

1. *Meditation is Beneficial*

If the man of God will allow himself the proper time to meditate, this process will prove to be very beneficial. It is a healthy thing for the man of God to meditate. A healthy sermon is one that has been sifted

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through the man of God through the course of meditation. The farmer expects to see 70% of his cows chewing their cuds at any given time. If this is not happening the farmer is quick to realize that there is some trouble on the horizon.

2. *Meditation is Profitable*

In meditating the preacher will find that he stays refreshed and in being refreshed he will be able to design more sermons. The process of meditation will benefit not only the preacher, but the listener will also profit for his meditation. In meditating the man of God can chew upon the scriptures until he has exhausted all that is profitable for his text. In meditating we find the foundational facts for our sermon. The best sermon is one that is built entirely upon a good foundation of scripture. The foundation has been laid the and preacher can lay out the facts that he found in meditating.

Chapter 5

The Perception Stage

In preparing a sermon it is vital that a person has the ability to perceive what the sermon can become. In designing a sermon I view the preacher as the architect and the builder. In the construction business this is not always the case. Often times the architect will draw up the design and then it will be passed onto someone else to build the design. A preacher must have the God given ability to multi task when it comes to sermon preparation. Perception must be utilized for this process.

- **The Process of Perception**

As the man of God begins to construct the sermon he can utilize his perception skills in evaluating and constructing his sermon. The word perceived must be understood.

1. *Perception Examined*

The word has a meaning of insight, intuition, knowledge gained by perceiving, or the capacity for such insight. In utilizing ones sense of perception the concept of a sermon actually begins to take a sensible shape,

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one realizes what the sermon can become with the proper design and input.

2. Perception Explored

In the beginning of your sermon process allow a certain amount of time to consider the full capacity of your sermon. If you utilize your mental perception skills you will not only explore the foundational thought of your sermon, but you will consider the final thought for your sermon. If one fully visualizes the finished product, it will help him stay true to his sermon objective and design.

3. Perception Exemplified

The reality of this trait called perception is that we use it in many areas of life. We have internal perception that recognizes when we are hungry; it tells us when we are tired and need sleep or rest. The internal perception is fueled by our senses. If we listen to our senses we allow them to direct our touch, taste, vision, our smell. We use our perception skills to visualize what the sermon can become as the process begins to take place. I do not believe that a sermon just happens by

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accident. A true biblical sermon happens by design; it takes time and much preparation.

- **The Potential of Perception**

In designing a sermon one needs to perceive what the sermon can become as the process takes place. It is like an artist sitting down with a piece of clay, in the beginning the clay seems as if it is without potential or form. In the hands of a proven artist the lump of clay begins to take form and becomes a wonderful piece of art. The sermon may simply begin with a seed thought, but as it goes through the meditation process and the perception process it displays much potential. The potential of a sermon lies within the eyes of its designer, only the designer can foresee its final outcome.

1. *Acknowledging its Birth*

The potential of every sermon begins when it is birthed into an idea. It may seem as if it is so small and simple, but this is okay. The sermon must be birthed before it can become of any value to its designer.

2. *Allowing its Growth*

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The potential of a sermon begins to take a viable form as it is allowed to grow. The seed thought has begun to blossom into something that will eventually become practical and preachable. Do not overlook the potential of a sermon.

- **The Promoter of Perception**

If we were to look at the sermons that Jesus preached it would not take us long to see how he utilized the tool of perception. Jesus Christ allowed time to perceive the potential of his sermons and his parables.

1. *The Intention of Jesus*

I believe that Jesus utilized his perception skills in choosing his disciples. He allowed the unskilled followers to reach their full potential due to him investing in each man. The Lord did not stop upon picking the men; he saw the full potential of the finished product. We must allow the sermon to reach its full potential.

2. *The Investment of Jesus*

If we were to fully understand how to utilize the tool of perception, look no

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further than Jesus. The Lord was willing to invest in various people, because he had the ability to perceive what the outcome could be if allowed free course. The Lord perceived that the maniac of Gadara could become an upstanding citizen if allowed the opportunity. The tool of perception can be our friend in sermon design and sermon construction if we allow it the opportunity.

Chapter 6

The Formation Stage

Once we reach this stage in sermon preparation, the sermon will begin to become tangible. In this stage I will actually place the pen to the paper. Normally the sermon has only been contemplated up until this point in the sermon process. In preparing a presentable sermon a person must allow the effective process to run its full course. In allowing this process to evolve the sermon begins to take on a tangible form.

I have often coached at our local recreation department and it is so fun watching the process of forming a baseball team. The first process is the drafting of the kids, and then comes the tedious task of contacting all of the boys and girls. The next step is scheduling a team meeting and allowing the kids to step onto the baseball field. I like to let others help conduct mini drills so that I can evaluate the skills of each boy and girl. The next part of the process is the actual formation of the team. The team can not be formed until I go through many processes in accessing the skills of the kids.

I dare say it is the same process in developing and forming a sermon. The sermon can never go through the formation process until it goes through the other

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processes. In this chapter we will now advance the sermon into a legible form or format. In this stage the preacher will place his pen upon the paper and watch his sermon come to life.

- **The Clear Definition**

Formation: “an act of giving form or shape to something or of taking form, an arrangement of things in some prescribed manner or for a particular purpose”.

1. *Formation Emphasizes Structure*

In reality the formation of a sermon allows the builder to add structure to his work. The best builders are those that place great emphasis to the adequate structure of their formation.

2. *Formation Emphasizes Stability*

The best sermon is the sermon that is stable in its design. The God called preacher must design a sermon that is stable in its format. *We are not called to preach “by letter”; it is not appropriate to open our mouth and let her fly!* This is not God called preaching. The God called man must spend time in designing his

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sermon. God uses the foolishness of preaching, he does not use foolish preachers or preaching.

3. Formation Emphasizes Scripture

In formatting your sermon you will place much emphasis upon the word of God. A sermon is not a sermon that is not designed upon a specific scripture or upon a specific passage of scripture. A sermon has no structure or stability unless it is based totally upon the scripture

- **The Chosen Design**

Upon reaching this point in the sermon you will have to decide how you will design your sermon. A sermon can take various paths and possibilities. It will benefit all of us to consider the various types of sermons.

1. Textual Sermon

The sermon takes its cue from the biblical text. In this type of sermon the preacher will allow his topic to arise from his text; but he will proceed to discuss them in his own words and interpretation. The norm for a textual sermon is a shorter passage

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of scriptures. A textual sermon will allow the use of various scriptures to help with its development. The use of textual preaching is great in defining some of the greatest themes that the scriptures have to offer the reader.

2. Topical Sermon

In preparing a topical sermon the preacher will base his message upon a subject rather than upon a specific passage. In this type of preaching you can deal with a particular issue or topic. The preacher can be very comprehensive in this format of preaching. In all actuality topical preaching can become a detailed series of expository messages. The dangers of topical preaching are taking a scripture out of context. The preacher can allow himself to preach upon his own personal soap box. The sermon moves from helpful to vengeful and this is not the intent of biblical preaching.

3. Expository Sermon

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The true meaning of expository preaching is a sermon that is based entirely up a series of scriptures. The points of the text come from the points found within the scripture. Expository preaching will challenge the preacher to discard personal feelings in favor of the entire counsel of Scripture. Expository preaching is hard work. It demands real study. It demands real preparation. It demands that a minister walk where his people walk.

4. Biographical Sermon

In this type of sermon the preacher will delve into the life of a biblical character and expound upon the biblical truths that are found in their life. It can be very beneficial in preaching this type of sermon if the preacher allows it to form a modern day application. The preacher can find much value in evaluating the life of God's chosen servants.

- **The Crafted Delivery**

One must actually give thought to the type of delivery that will be used before the sermon makes its way to the pulpit.

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1. Scripted Delivery

Preaching with a previous preparation, it can be with help of notes or a script, or rely on the memory of the preacher.

2. Extemporaneous Delivery

Preaching that is without overly detailed notes and sometimes without preparation. Usually a basic outline and scriptural references are listed as notes. **I do not ever recommend this delivery.**

3. Impromptu Delivery

One that preaches without any type of preparation, ***empty headed preaching!*** I call this lazy preaching or unapproved.

The formation stage is vital to the tedious details of your sermon. In this particular stage the sermon begins to gather much momentum. I look forward to this stage of my sermon design, it is in this stage that I design and redesign my sermon. In preparing an alliterated sermon I frequently design and destroy my sermon many times before coming to the proper consensus between my outline and the scriptural meaning.

I have allowed the appropriate time to meditate upon the sermon thought or idea. The process of perception

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has run its free course within my heart and mind. The sermon has progressed from the mental to the probable; and now it will become visible. The formation stage is the pay off for the time of meditation and perception. The pen will be placed upon the paper for the first time and the sermon arises in the form of words that can be outlined and eventually preached.

I will give you a simple example of one of my sermons that reached the formation stage. If the preacher can get his sermon to this stage he will normally be very successful in adequately fulfilling his objective, the finished sermon. The God called preacher will allow himself the proper time to dig out the facts that will help him to format his sermon. The digging out will begin to payback once the minister has the opportunity of dishing out the word to his hungry audience. It is something in which to take pleasure.

Title: "The Authentic Church & Her Genuine Growth"
Theme: "Thessalonica Was the Model or Real Church"
Text: "I Thessalonians 1: 1 - 6"

- I - Authentic in their Spiritual Evaluation (1/3)
 - A) Work of Faith - For Saving
 - 1 - Perceived Faith
 - 2 - Practiced Faith
 - 3 - Perfected Faith
 - B) Labor of Love - For Serving
 - 1 - Love Plainly Documented & Observed
 - 2 - Love Publicly Demonstrated & Offered

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C) Patience of Hope - For Sustaining

- 1 - The Persistent Plodder - Determination
- 2 - The Patient Praiser - Demonstration

II - Authentic in their Soul's Election (4)

A) The Evident Salvation of their Soul

“Public Testimony”

B) The Eternal Security of their Soul

“Peaceful Trust”

C) The Elected State of their Soul

“Positional Truth”

1 - Regarding the Father (Eph. 1:4, II Tim. 1:9)

“Saved Before the Foundation of the World”

2 - Regarding the Son (Galatians 2:20)

“Saved at the Cross of Calvary”

3 - Regarding the Holy Spirit (I Cor. 12:13, Titus 3:5)

“Saved the Moment we decided to Accept Jesus”

III - Authentic in their Supernatural Endorsement (5/6)

A) The Powerful Entrance of the Scripture

“Proven Acceptance & Power - It's Free Course”

1 - The Man of God and his Personal Touch

2 - The Message of God and its Powerful Truth

B) The Personal Evidence of the Spirit

“Plenteous Assurance & Proof - It's Full Course”

1 - The Factual Notation of the Holy Spirit

2 - The Fiery Nature of the Holy Spirit

3 - The Fervent Need of the Holy Spirit

The sermon that reaches this point will pass through to the finished stage rather swiftly. I take a vast amount of time in designing my sermon. I look forward to this stage of allowing the sermon to take own its specific formation. ***The process is listed below in order:***

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Title: Step Number 10

Theme: Step Number 2

Text: Step Number 1

I - Step Number 3

A) Step number 6

B) “ “ “

C) “ “ “

II - Step Number 4

A) Step number 7

B) “ “ “

C) “ “ “

III - Step Number 5

A) Step number 8

B) “ “ “

C) “ “ “

Chapter 7

The Foundation Stage

The sermon is now ready to take on its shape and this will be build upon the chosen subject and scripture. In preparing your sermon or in building it; you must construct it upon a firm foundation. We will look closely at the importance of this foundation and what it actually means in sermon design.

- **The Chosen Text - Scripture**

We must always remember that a sermon is not a sermon that is not based soundly up a specific scripture or a set of scriptures. The difference between preaching and speaking is that a speaker's message is based upon any variety of topics, but a preacher's message is absolutely grounded in the scriptures.

1. *Sound Foundation*

The preacher must bring his thoughts in line with his chosen text, not his text in line with his thoughts. The scripture must be allowed to say what it means; not mean what he says. I have watched in

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horror as a preacher has tried to preach on something he is not able to do, ummm.

2. *The Solid Footing*

In building upon this chosen text the preacher must be able to clearly define the content and intent of his text. The entire sermon must stand upon this text. The sermon must solidly stand upon your text or it may crumble in front of you.

3. *The Specific Focus*

The preacher has been called to preach, not to chase rabbits or to pursue preferences or personal passions. In reading the text one must stay with the text and never allow yourself to deviate from the focus of your text. I have witness many preachers “preach from a text, as far from it as possible”.

- **The Cutting Theme - Subject**

Once you have chosen your text and have become familiar with its content and intent you will proceed to conceive your theme. The theme is the basic boundaries that you will your sermon to move within. In choosing the theme you have

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defined your specific boundaries and parameters. A theme is needful and helpful for the pastor or preacher. Allow your theme to engulf all of your intentions for preaching the sermon. The theme will prove to help the preacher be successful.

1. The Interpretation of your Theme

In interpreting your theme one must allow the scripture to help in this process. I believe that the best interpretation of scripture is other scripture. Allow the theme to be easily discernable with the chosen scripture.

2. The Intention of your Theme

As the sermon begins to take form and the formation becomes visible always remember your intentions. If your intention is to challenge the flock, stay with this theme. If it is to seek the salvation of lost people do not deviate from this chosen theme.

3. The Inspiration of your Theme

In preparing your sermon something pricked your mind or your memory. I

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have often found this process helpful in choosing my theme.

4. The Identification of your Theme

I absolutely believe it is beneficial for the preacher to allow his audience to hear his announced theme. Upon announcing and identifying your theme to the audience this will help you to stay on task and shoot at the correct target. I find this so helpful in staying focused.

- **The Compelling Thrust - Strategy**

I have just recently begun to work this into my actual sermon outline. The thrust of my sermon is “*what do I want to accomplish in the hearts of my audience*”? I have often witnessed men preach a wonderful message but allowed no time to drive home his intent. The sermon is not finished that does not specifically challenge the hearer for a specific outcome. I am not talking about compelling people to come to the Alter for a public display. I am talking about driving home the main thrust to the point that when one walks out the door the Holy Spirit can prick their heart concerning the intent of your sermon.

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1. The Thrust should be Confining

We must not allow the listener to broadly consider his options. The thrust must be delivered with pinpoint precision. The preacher that chases rabbits will miss out on reaching a set destination in his preaching. The man that shoots at nothing will hit it every time.

2. The Thrust should be Compelling

In hearing the sermon the man of God must allow time to drive home his thrust. In doing so his audience will feel compelled to make a personal decision concerning his message.

- **The Challenging Title - Savory**

I often do not choose my title until the sermon has been fully developed. I may have a seed thought pertaining to my title, but I want to wait until the end so that the title fits the sermon; not the sermon fits the title!

1. The Title Must be True

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One must not pick a title that is untrue. It is wrong to announce a title that does not line up with your message. The pulpit is not the place for salacious lies. The title can be far reaching, but it must be truth.

2. The Title Can be Tantalizing

I think the title can draw much attention as the preacher begins his journey. The preacher that allows time to adequately title his sermon may find that his audience is more ready to feast on his delivered message.

3. The Title Should be Tasty

In announcing your title the listener will either quickly come onboard or he may drift off into space. It is correct to preach on “Hell”, but is another thing to preach upon “The Horrible Heat of Hell”. In hearing this roll off of the tongue it immediately catches the ear of the audience and this is the title objective.

Chapter 8

The Framework Stage

In finishing the foundation it is time to see the actual building to begin taking shape. The sermon has gone through much of the process, but now the pen is going to the paper. The seed has begun to blossom into a very visible object that seems to have a purpose. The foundation stage is not attractive to look at, but it is so essential for the framework to stand upon. I want to explain and establish the importance of this part of the weaving and building process.

- **Identify the Main Points**

The easiest way to identify the main points of your outline is to dig them out of your text. I am going to show you how I go through this process.

1. *The Detection of my Main Points*

In exploring and expounding the text any pastor can readily find his main points. The main points of your message will normally shine forth as diamonds among a piece of black coal. The pastor should look across his text as if looking from peek to peek, in doing so he will identify

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the main points of his text. The pastor will link them with his theme.

2. The Elevation of my Main Points

I personally like to build my sermon as if I were ascending a flight of stairs. The main points are steps that take me from the bottom of the stairs unto the top of the stairs, in which I am able to witness the most fabulous breathtaking view that the human eye can afford to see.

The main points are connectors that link the sermon together. Example below:

Title: “The Path of the Prodigal”

Theme: “The Perplexing Journey”

Thrust: “A Prodigal Can Find Hope & Help”

Text: “Luke 15: 11 - 24”

I - The Prodigal & His Selfish Demand

II - The Prodigal & His Sinful Departure

III - The Prodigal & His Shameful Desire

IV - The Prodigal & His Strategic Decision

V - The Prodigal & His Sure Direction

VI - The Prodigal & His Sublime Delight

VII - The Prodigal & His Spiritual Depiction

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3. The Connection of my Main Points

It is proven to be successful in my ministry if I can adequately connect the sermon from point to point. I like to see a smooth flow in the sermon transition from point to point. We must remember that we are designing and building a sermon, the main points take us from room to room.

4. The Alliteration of my Main Points

I find much pleasure in trying to alliterate the points of my sermon. The time it takes to alliterate the main points is well worth the effort. In using alliteration the preacher can allow the words to be linked and display a flow that is appealing.

- **Magnify the Main Points**

The sermon now has become very visible and it seems as if it has a set design. The main points have been identified so the preacher now must magnify those points.

1. The Strategy of Sub Points

In utilizing sub points, the preacher now gives more insight into his sermon. The

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wise pastor allows much time in developing sub points for his sermon. Sub points help visualize main points.

2. The Strength of Sub Points

The flow of your sermon is made much stronger by using sub points because they give the sermon needed strength. The sub points are weaved around the main point so as to give it stability. Sub points are like the small supports that are nailed in between the walls of every house. The boards seem so insignificant, but without them the house would be fragile.

3. The Simplicity of the Sub Points

In using these sub points one must remember that they are only for support. The main points are the most visible aspects of your message, so use sub points with simplicity. The sub points help to make the main points brighter and better, so use them as lights.

Let us consider the following example:

I - The Prodigal & His Selfish Demand (12)

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- A) The Undesirable Proposal of the Son**
- B) The Unthinkable Pain of the Father**

II - The Prodigal & His Sinful Departure (13)

- A) The Willfulness of his Heart**
- B) The Wastefulness of his Heritage**

III - The Prodigal & His Shameful Desire (14/16)

- A) The Famine that he Faced**
- B) The Food that he Fathomed**
- C) The Failure that he Felt**

IV - The Prodigal & His Strategic Decision (17/19)

- A) The Pigpen Maneuvered Him - his life**
- B) The Pigpen Motivated Him - his longing**
- C) The Pigpen Moved Him - his leave**

V - The Prodigal & His Sure Direction (20)

- A) The Crushing of his Heart**
- B) The Craving for his Home**
- C) The Caressing of his Hope**

VI - The Prodigal & His Sublime Delight (21/24)

- A) His Prayer was Denied**
- B) His Pardon was Deliberate**
- C) His Party was Divine**

VII - The Prodigal & His Spiritual Depiction

- A) The Modern Day Prodigal - Help**
- B) The Modern Day Prodigal - Hope**

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C) The Modern Day Prodigal - Healing

I actually designed this sermon as I typed it for this chapter. I use the above process in designing this sermon; I promise you that it truly works.

Chapter 9

The Furniture Stage

In the furniture stage I actually go back and add various accessories to my main points and my sub points. I personally do this for my own satisfaction. I think that this add more spice to the sermon and gives it more insight. I normally always do this in the furniture stage because I can see the overall sermon standing before my very eyes. It does not take long to add these accessories.

I - The Prodigal & His Selfish Demand - Pity

II - The Prodigal & His Sinful Departure - Path

III - The Prodigal & His Shameful Desire - Plummet

IV - The Prodigal & His Strategic Decision - Pondering

V - The Prodigal & His Sure Direction - Proposal

VI - The Prodigal & His Sublime Delight - Pleasure

VII - The Prodigal & His Spiritual Depiction - Promising

I like trying to tidy up the sermon during this stage of sermon design. It is like constructing a real building; you can always make it better and more attractive.

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I - The Prodigal & His Selfish Demand - Pity

“A Request That Was Hurtful”

II - The Prodigal & His Sinful Departure - Path

“A Road That Was Hard”

III - The Prodigal & His Shameful Desire - Plummet

“A Report That Was Horrendous”

IV - The Prodigal & His Strategic Decision - Pondering

“A Remorse That Was Helpful”

V - The Prodigal & His Sure Direction - Proposal

“A Resolve That Was Hasty”

VI - The Prodigal & His Sublime Delight - Pleasure

“A Reward That Was Humbling”

VII - The Prodigal & His Spiritual Depiction - Promising

“A Reassurance That Was Hallowed”

I hope that you can see some order in how I added some furniture to this sermon. It took me about 15 minutes to add these seven additional items to the sermon design. If you will build the sermon and get all of the framework done then you can add some additional items or move some things around.

I think that this is the most challenging part of doing alliterated sermons; this makes it fun yet very fulfilling and fruitful. It does not take that much more of your time to dress the alliteration up a bit.

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I - The Prodigal & His Selfish Demand - Pity

“A Request That Was Hurtful”

A) The Undesirable Proposal of the Son

1 - The Son Displayed his Longing

2 - The Son Desired his Liberty

B) The Unthinkable Pain of the Father

1 - The Shared Gift

2 - The Somber Grief

II - The Prodigal & His Sinful Departure - Path

“A Road That Was Hard”

A) The Willfulness of his Heart

1 - The Son & his Immediate Journey

2 - The Son & his Impending Jeopardy

B) The Wastefulness of his Heritage

1 - The Strange Land of That Far Country

2 - The Shining Lights of That Far Country

3 - The Sinful Life of That Far Country

4 - The Sudden Loss of That Far Country

III - The Prodigal & His Shameful Desire - Plummet

“A Report That Was Horrendous”

A) The Famine that he faced - His Loss

B) The Food that he fathomed - His Lack

C) The Failure that he felt - His Lesson

IV - The Prodigal & His Strategic Decision - Pondering

“A Remorse That Was Helpful”

A) The Pigpen Maneuvered Him

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“Life & Consideration”

B) The Pigpen Motivated Him

“Longing & Contemplation”

C) The Pigpen Moved Him

“Leave & Confirmation”

V - The Prodigal & His Sure Direction - Proposal

“A Resolve That Was Hasty”

- A) The Crushing of his Heart - Reminded**
- B) The Craving for his Home - Resolved**
- C) The Caressing of his Hope - Reassured**

VI - The Prodigal & His Sublime Delight - Pleasure

“A Reward That Was Humbling”

- A) The Denial of a Prayer - It Went Unsaid**
- B) The Dismay of a Pardon - It Was Unsought**
- C) The Delight of a Party - It Was Unwarranted**

VII - The Prodigal & His Spiritual Depiction - Promising

“A Reassurance That Was Hallowed”

- A) Help for the Prodigal - Forgiveness**
- B) Hope for the Prodigal - Freedom**
- C) Healing for the Prodigal - Fulfillment**

As you can see the sermon can be altered by:

- 1 - Addition
- 2 - Subtraction
- 3 - Adjustment
- 4 - Rewording or Revising

Chapter 10

The Finishing Stage

In this stage of the sermon all we are going to do is tidy up the sermon and make sure that we have covered the entire basis, just like someone that is finishing a house. In finishing a house there comes a point when you go back and make sure that all of the work is adequate and complete. In viewing your work the carpenter may find that some screws need to be tightened up or that some of the painting needs to be touched up.

I always like to do this on the night before I preach the sermon. I usually never print my sermon until I have allowed time to touch it up a bit:

- **Time for Reviewing**

It is needful to go back and review your sermon. In reviewing your sermon you may find that you have inserted the wrong text. It is unnerving to announce your text and begin reading it from the pulpit and realize that this is not your text. I dare say that any preacher that has preached for any length of time has had this happen. If you will go back and read over your sermon and your text

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this can help eliminate any errors. Please save yourself some uneasy moments by reviewing!

1. Review for Credibility

Let me make this point clear, the preacher must preach his sermon with full credibility. The sermon must be built upon a credible foundation. The preacher must allow the scripture to be the basis for his message. The credibility of a sermon has often been lost due to the preacher making it say what he wants it to say, this is tragic and troubling. The review stage will allow the pastor to investigate his intentions for preaching this message.

2. Review for Clarity

The pastor may think that his message has clarity until he reviews his content and his intent. I have watched many a preacher ***deliver his message*** to no avail in the ears of his audience. The problem was that they allowed no time to ***drive home the message***. I remember a preacher that preached upon the disciples that were in the ship out in the stormy sea, but he preached so long that he left them in the

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midst of the storm. Please review for clarity. The good preacher will drive home his ultimate intent with clarity.

- **Time for Revamping**

I believe that it is wise for the preacher to revamp areas that are weak. Upon find weakness in the sermon, the preacher has two choices, either remove the weak points or strengthen the weak points. ***It is a fact that weak design will birth weak delivery, we are preachers not magicians.*** The finishing stage allows you the time to revamp your design.

1. *Revamp your Weaknesses*

I have found that in using alliteration a preacher will often force a point into his sermon design. The entire sermon is built upon scripture. The title, the theme, the thrust, the main points, the sub points and the sermon illustrations are all based upon the scripture foundation. If a point is forced and makes your sermon weak it must be revamped.

2. *Revamp your Wording*

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I admire those ministers that make full use of the English vocabulary, but many a preacher would sound silly in utilizing the full English language. A preacher must be true to his own personal vocabulary. The preacher must also allow his wording to fit his particular audience. Do not try to use wording that makes you seem odd.

- **Time for Removing**

I have often reached this stage and realized that my message either had to be revamped or I was going to have to remove some of my design. It is much better to remove items from the sermon at this point than take it to the pulpit and live to regret it.

1. *Remove if it is Unclear*

I have observed preachers try to deal with subjects that were overwhelming to them. If you do not fully understand your text or your subject, do not preach it. It is one thing for people to assume that you do not know something, but it is another for one to open their mouths and let them know that you do not know.

2. *Remove if it is Unsound*

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The preacher must have a solid foundation that is biblically based. I promise you that God is not going to give you a new revelation into the scriptures. The modern day preacher will not discover a new set of “doctrines” or the Lord will not speak to you some hidden truth that has never been discovered. If you are going to preach something that is unsound, you better be careful for in doing so you may be headed for trouble.

- **Time for Reflecting**

Once you have reached this stage it would do the preacher good to just sit back and allow the sermon to sift through his mind and penetrate his heart. The best sermons are those that have griped the man before it gripes his audience. It is good to sit back and allow time for gentle reflection. In reflecting the preacher can sense the inner workings between his content and his intent. The reflection time is needful and fruitful.

1. *Reflect upon his Design*

It is soothing to reflect upon your finished work. The sermon has been built into something that will help his audience. I

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find satisfaction in looking over my sermon, realizing its feeble beginning.

2. Reflect upon his Delivery

The preacher must decide how much time he will allow for each particular point. In this stage he can reflect upon the value of each point and illustration.

3. Reflect upon his Direction

It is the smart preacher that knows where he is heading. In knowing the direction the preacher can help his audience. If the preacher does not know his direction, how will his audience know what is expected of them?

Chapter 11

The Final Stage

The final stage is when the preacher has completed all of his work and the product is ready to take to the pulpit. I did not spend any time discussing the use of illustrations or adding stories that will help illuminate your message that was not my intent for this work. In this section we will look at what happens once the message goes to the pulpit. The preparation is complete and the sermon is ready for the preacher to deliver.

- **Deliver with Enthusiasm**

I am of the opinion that if the pastor is enthused about his own message then he can expect the audience to be enthused about his message. The preacher is like an artist that paints his pictures with words. The good preacher will wisely paint his story with enthusiastic strokes that are appealing and enticing to his audience.

1. *Enthusiasm that offers Help*
2. *Enthusiasm that offers Hope*

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3. *Enthusiasm that offer Healing*
4. *Enthusiasm that offers Him (Jesus)*
5. *Enthusiasm that offers Heaven*

- **Deliver with Expectation**

The preacher should expect to see an outcome that prompts his audience to make a decision for Jesus Christ. The purpose of preaching is to reach a specific for the betterment of the saints and for the salvation of the sinner.

1. *Expectant in his Intention*

The preacher must have clear intentions in delivering his sermon. The intent must be made clear at the very beginning of his delivery. In making clear your intent it is easier for the audience to come on board with your expectations.

2. *Expectant in his Inspiration*

If the preacher is not inspired by his preaching how can he expect his audience to be inspired? I am not talking about wild fire ignorance, but inspirational preaching. I have never seen anything conceived from a dead thing, have you?

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3. Expectant in his Invitation

I am a firm believer in utilizing the time of invitation and I fully expect seeing results from my sermon. I give the invitation with a vibrant expectancy of seeing decisions for or against Jesus. I believe it is our duty to expect decisions.

- **Deliver with Earnest**

It is the wise man of God that believes in what he is saying, for in believing his audience my also believe. The preacher must buy into his sermon before he ever wins the hearts of his audience. I have witnessed many preachers preach messages that seemed as if even they did not believe in. If you are challenging your church concerning winning souls and you do not win souls, will they buy into your sermon, highly doubtful.

1. Preach with Sincerity

Sincere preaching is effective and it can win the hearts of ones audience. The preacher that is sincere can find that his audience will buy into his sermon more readily than someone that seems insincere in what he is preaching.

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2. Preach with Seriousness

I am a firm believer in using humor in my messages. The use of humor can be very beneficial in winning the hearts of the hearer, but only if applicable. The preacher must realize the seriousness of the hour, the destiny of men's souls is at stake when he is in the pulpit. I do not believe in starchiness, but I am a firm believer in seriousness. Preaching is about as serious as it can get, right?

- **Deliver with Emphasis**

The preacher has spent a lot of time in preparing his sermon. The sermon has evolved from a sermon seed into a structure that is presentable and preachable. The man of God is standing behind the pulpit with an attentive audience that is waiting for him to feed them, what must he now do?

1. Emphasize the Scripture

The scripture will challenge the hearer and convert those that may be lost. The preacher that emphasizes his scripture will arm himself with the most powerful arsenal in the universe.

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2. Emphasize the Subject

The preacher must clearly deliver his message to his listeners and in doing so place emphasis upon his subject. The sermon must have a clear subject and strategy. Emphasize your subject!

3. Emphasize the Savior

If you wander to far from preaching on the Savior, I dare say that you may have wandered to far my friend. The ideal sermon will be weaved around and upon the gospel of our wonderful Savior. The good preacher will always allow time to pass by his mighty Savior, Jesus Christ!

- **Deliver with Empathy**

The effective preacher will understand the nature and the needs of his audience. The preacher needs to get a feel for the atmosphere that he will be preaching in and in doing so he can better understand the hearer. The ineffective preacher is the man that allows him self to remain unattached to his audience. I think that when Ezekiel sat where his hurting people sat, then he could more readily identify with them.

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1. Empathy for their Hurts

I witnessed a notable evangelist preach an awesome sermon the other night. At the conclusion of his message everyone was pressing upon him to speak to him. The preacher inquired about a woman that had went to the altar for prayer. Upon hearing her story he sought her out and prayed for her situation with tears flowing down his cheeks, that my friend is empathy.

2. Empathy for their Hearts

The best preacher is the one that wants to win the hearts of his people for the betterment of the kingdom. The preacher will deliver the needed medicine that can help equip the hearer in his walk for Jesus. The best intent is the intent to with the hearts of needy hungry people!

3. Empathy for their Homes

We live in difficult times, in days that the home seems to be the object of continual assault and vicious attacks. The wise preacher will have empathy for those homes that are hurting and on the verge of destruction. The most notable in our

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congregations may be facing unannounced difficulty in their homes. The empathetic preacher does not attack the homes of his listeners; but wisely seeks to help the hurting homes.

4. Empathy for their Hardships

It seems as if we are living in times of desperation, times that seem to be hopeless and unnerving. The wise preacher will boldly proclaim from the pulpit that there is hope in Jesus Christ and the church has the answer. The preacher does not know the thoughts that are gripping the minds of his audience. The caring preacher will display concern for those that have lost their jobs, those that may be on the verge of losing their house. The wise preacher will care that moms and dads are desperately trying to hold their families together. True empathy is effective from the pulpit!

Chapter 12

Sample Sermons

In this chapter I will add some of my sermons. The sermons are free for you to redesign or can be used just as they are in their original state. I personally like to design and develop my own sermons, for in doing so I fully understand the content and intent of the sermon design. I know some preachers that can take the sermon design of someone else and preach them effectively. I know of others that take another man's sermons and add to them and redesign them; then they preach them.

- **The Power of a Sermon - It's Need**
 1. The Prophets Preached Sermons
 2. The Disciples Preached Sermons
 3. The Apostles Preached Sermons
 4. The Lord Jesus Preached Sermons

- **The Personality of a Preacher - His Nature**
 1. The Preacher Must be True to Himself
 2. The Preacher Allows Time for Sifting

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3. The Preacher Imitates No Other
4. The Preacher Must be Approachable

I hope that the following sermons will be helpful and useful to you in learning to prepare sermons.

Title: “When It’s Time To Move Forward “

Theme: “God Wants Us To Move Forward “

Text: “Exodus 14: 1 - 31 “

I - The Past Foe That Was Faced

A) The Bondage of Their Enemy

1 - Slavery

2 - Misery

B) The Bigness of Their Enemy

C) The Boundaries of Their Enemy

1 - Limited in His Power

2 - Limited in His Perception

II - The Present Fear That Was Featured

(It Is Our Obligation - When We Cannot

Get Out Of Our Troubles, To Get

Above Our Fears)

A) Look at Their Opposition

B) Look at Their Obstacles

C) Look at Their Options

D) Look at Their Opportunity

1 - Don't Fear

2 - Stand Still

3 - Go Forward

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III - The Powerful Faith That Was Formed

- A) This Would Be a Day of Decision
- B) This Would Be a Day of Destiny
- C) This Would Be a Day of Declaration

IV - The Probable Failure That Was Fixed

- A) Their Foes Would Be Defeated & Buried
- B) Their Fears Would Be Denounced & Broken
- C) Their Faith Would Be Deepened & Blossom
- D) Their Future Would Be Decided & Bright

Title: “From Famine To Funerals”

Theme: “The Danger Of Wandering”

Text: “Ruth 1: 1 - 7”

I - The Terrible Drought (1)

- A) The People of This Drought
- B) The Power of This Drought
- C) The Purpose of This Drought

II - The Thoughtless Departure (1 - 2)

- A) His Hasty Inclination - It Was Thoughtless
- B) His Honest Intention - It Was Temporary
- C) His Human Indiscretion - It Was Terminal

III - The Tragic Deaths (3 - 5)

- A) The Length of Their Stay - The Family Lingered
- B) The Largeness of Their Sorrows - The Family Losing
- C) The Lesson of Their Story - The Family Learning

IV - The Timely Decision (6 - 7)

- A) The Great News That She Heard
 - 1 - The Famine Had Broke

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- 2 - The Future Looked Bright
- B) The Great Notion That She Had
 - 1 - Her Delightful Decision
 - 2 - Her Deliberate Destination

Title: “Burning Hearts”

Theme: “An Emmaus Road Experience”

Text: “Luke 24: 13 - 35”

- 1) To set on fire, light, burning
- 2) To burn, consume with fire
- I - The Negativity of the Hour
 - A) Consider their Chosen Disbelief
 - B) Consider their Common Despair
 - C) Consider their Comfortable Direction
 - D) Consider their Cold Discussion
- II - The Need of the Heart
 - A) The Close Relation
 - 1 - Quit talking about him
 - 2 - Start talking to him
 - B) The Clear Revelation
 - 1 - We need our Eyes Opened Up
 - 2 - We need our Hearts Set on Fire
 - C) The Compelling Rejuvenation
 - 1 - The Forcefulness of their Request
 - 2 - The Powerfulness of their Revival
- III - The Nature of their Hope
 - A) The Path That Propelled Them
 - 1 - Interaction overcame Information
 - 2 - Relation overcame Religion

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- 3 - Heavenly Fire overcame Human Flesh
- 4 - Gladness overcame Sadness
- B) The Person That Prompted Them
 - 1 - Need a Burning for the Saviour
 - 2 - Need a Burning for the Church
 - 3 - Need a Burning for Souls

IV - The Notation of their Haste

- A) The Inward Joy of the Men
- B) The Backward Journey of the Men

Title: "Dead Men Walking"

Theme: "When Legion Meet The Master"

Text: "Mark 5: 1 - 20"

I - The Wretched Maniac - A Serious Problem

- A) His Dwelling - The Power of Sin Darkens People
- B) His Demeanor - The Power of Sin Demoralizes People
 - 1 - Society Could Not Help Him (4 - 5)
 - 2 - Society Could Not Handle Him (3)
 - 3 - Society Could Not Hide From Him (Matthew 8: 28)
 - 4 - Society Could Not House Him (Luke 8: 27)
- C) His Destruction - The Power of Sin Destroys
- D) His Despair - The Power of Sin Divides People

II - The Watchful Moment - A Spiritual Problem

- A) The Storm That Was Calmed
- B) The Sinner That Was Convicted
- C) The Savior That Was Coming

III - The Wonderful Master - A Solved Problem

- A) Meeting with the Master Cured Him Immediately (6, 15)

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B) Meeting with the Master Changed Him Dramatically
(16)

C) Meeting with the Master Challenged Him Socially
(18 - 20)

Title: "It's Not The End"

Theme: "Death Is The Beginning"

Text: "Job 14: 7, 14, 1 Cor. 15:19/20"

I - Let Us Consider Life

A) He Was A Man Full Of Life

1 - A Fulfilled Life

2 - A Fantastic Life

B) He Was a Man of Love

1 - Love for His Family

2 - Love for His Friends

C) He Was a Man of Laughter

1 - His Choice - Enjoyed/Endured

2 - His Courage - Laughed/Languished

D) He Was a Man of Liberty

1 - Concerning His Fate

2 - Concerning His Future

II - Let Us Consider Death (Hebrews 9:27)

A) Death is A Powerful Foe

1 - It Does Not Discriminate

2 - It Does Not Delay

B) Death Is a Personal Fact

1 - The Undeniable Power of It

2 - The Unavoidable Prospects of It

C) Death Is a Painful Friend

1 - For the Heavy Sorrows of Life

2 - For the Harsh Sickness of Life

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D) Death Is a Physical Finish

- 1 - It Is the Exit of Our Physical Life
- 2 - It Is the Entrance of Our Eternal Life
 - * It Should Be Entered Without Doubt
 - * It Should Be Entered Without Dread
 - * It Should Be Entered Without Danger

Title: "From Tribulation To Triumph"

Theme: "Death Is Not So Bad If You Are Ready"

Text: "Job 14: 1 - 14"

I - Let Us Consider the Path of Life

- A) The Beautifulness of It
- B) The Briefness of It
- C) The Bitterness of It
 - 1 - We Must Consider It's Harshness
 - 2 - We Must Consider It's Heaviness
 - 3 - We Must Consider It's Helplessness

II - Let Us Consider the Promise of Death

- A) Death Is a Fact - We acknowledge it
- B) Death Is a Foe - We Avoid It
- C) Death Is a Friend - We Accept It
- D) Death Is a Finish - We Applaud It

III - Let Us Consider the Place of Eternity

- A) Eternity Will Introduce the Saint
 - To A Much Brighter Place
 - Due to Who Is There
- B) Eternity Will Introduce the Saint
 - To A Much Better Place
 - Due To What Is Not There

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C) Eternity Will Introduce the Saint
To A Much Bigger Place
Due to What We Have There

Title: “The Price Of Partial Commitment”

Theme: “We See The Destruction Of Dinah”

Text: “Genesis 34: 1 - 31, Genesis 35: 1 - 5”

I - The Guilty Parent of Dinah

- A) Jacob & His Clear Mandate (Gen. 31:13)
- B) Jacob & His Crucial Mistake (Gen. 33:14/20)
 - 1 - The Partial Commitment of Jacob - His Heart
(*From Haran to Bethel 500 miles, He Went 460*)
 - 2 - The Crucial Choice of Jacob - His House
- C) Jacob & His Coming Misery (Gen. 33:18)
 - 1 - The Payment of His Past Deception
 - 2 - The Pain of His Present Descendants

II - The Great Potential of Dinah

- A) Her Mighty Family & Heritage
- B) Her Marvelous Faith & Hope
- C) Her Majestic Future & Honor

III - The Grievous Path of Dinah

- A) Dinah & Her Personal Freedom
 - 1 - Unearned Freedom That Was Dangerous
 - 2 - Uncontrolled Freedom That Was Deceptive
 - 3 - Unwatched Freedom That Was Deadly
- B) Dinah & Her Pleasurable Fascination
 - 1 - It Was So Simple
 - 2 - It Was So Subtle
 - 3 - It Was So Seductive

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C) Dinah & Her Powerful Foe

- 1 - Shechem Chased & Sought Dinah - The Look
- 2 - Shechem Captivated & Seduced Dinah - The Lust
- 3 - Shechem Changed & Shamed Dinah - The Loss

IV - The Gigantic Pain of Dinah

A) The Offense Was Admitted - Sin's Picture

B) The Offer Was Alluring - Shechem's Plan

- 1 - His Passion Was Exposed
- 2 - His Plea Was Extreme
- 3 - His Price Was Enormous (Mark 8: 36/37)

C) The Outcome Was Awful - Simeon's Plot

- 1 - He Deceived Them
- 2 - He Discomforted Them
- 3 - He Destroyed Them

Title: "The Danger Of Hidden Rocks"

Theme: "We Must Be Aware Of The Obstacles"

Text: "Acts 27: 29, Hebrews 6: 19"

I - The Terrible Anguish of Life

A) The Storms That Rage

- 1 - The Sureness of Them
- 2 - The Swiftiness of Them
- 3 - The Stoutness of Them

B) The Stones That Ruin

- 1 - Some Are Hidden - Will Trip You
- 2 - Some Are Hazardous - Will Tear You
- 3 - Some Are Heavy - Will Trap You

II - The Timely Anchors of Life

A) The Anchor & its Identification

- 1 - It Is Steadfast

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2 - It Is Sure

3 - It Is Supreme

B) The Anchor & its Location

1 - Its Upward Grasp

2 - Its Inward Grip

III - The Truthful Answers of Life

A) What Do I Find

1 - I Find Christ

2 - I Find Courage

3 - I Find Compassion

B) Where Do I Flee

1 - I Can Flee To Jesus Christ

2 - I Can Flee To His Church

3 - I Can Flee To His Word

Title: "The Fall Of A Great Man"

Theme: "The Funeral Of Ralph Quinn"

Text: "2 Samuel 3:38, Job 14: 5, 16"

I - A Man That Enjoyed Life

A) He Told Me of the Value of Life

B) He Told Me of the Vagueness of Life

II - A Man That Emphasized Family

A) His Sincere Love

B) His Supreme Longing

III - A Man That Endured Pain

A) I Saw His Condition

B) I Saw His Courage

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IV - A Man That Encountered Salvation

- A) His Spiritual Journey Was Long In Coming
- B) His Supernatural Joy Was Lasting In Concluding

V - A Man That Embraced Death

- A) He Stood At Deaths Door
- B) He Sought To Go Thru Deaths Door
- C) He Saw the Other Side of Deaths Door
- D) He stepped thru deaths Door

VI - A Man That Expected Heaven

- A) He Knew Heaven Was a Better Place
- B) He Knew Heaven Was a Brighter Place

Title: “God Sure Is Good”

Theme: “God Is Good To His People”

Text: “Psalms 73: 1 - 2”

I - The Jeopardy of Our Journey

- A) In What We Face - Our Daily Struggles
- B) In What We Fear - Our Dwindling Strength
- C) In What We Forget - Our Distant Source
 - 1 - We Forget His Unseen Presence
 - 2 - We Forget His Unquestionable Purpose
 - 3 - We Forget His Untapped Power

II - The Justice of Our Journey

- A) It Is a Matter of Trust
 - 1 - Noah Found This Trust - God Sure Is Good
 - 2 - Abraham Found This Trust - God Sure Is Good
 - 3 - David Found This Trust - God Sure Is Good
- B) It Is a Matter of Time

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- 1 - It Worked Out For Joseph - God Sure Is Good
- 2 - It Worked Out For Gideon - God Sure Is Good
- 3 - It Worked Out For Ruth - God Sure Is Good

III - The Joy of Our Journey

- A) The Joy of His Abiding Presence
- B) The Joy of His Amazing Plan
- C) The Joy of His Awesome Power

Title: "He Knows"

Theme: "When We Can't See God, He Still See's Us"

**Thrust: "When We Cannot Find Him On Our Radar,
Be Rest Assured He Has Us On His
Radar"**

Text: "Job 23: 1 - 10"

I - The Lowly Condition of Job - His Path (1/2)

- A) What the Condition of Job Was Not
 - 1 - It Was Not His Location (a place)
 - 2 - It Was Not His Imagination (mental)
 - 3 - It Was Not His Correction (sin)
 - 4 - It Was Not His Provocation (own makings)
- B) What the Condition of Job Was
 - 1 - It was a Dry Condition - His Fog
 - 2 - It was a Depressing Condition - His Feelings
 - 3 - It was a Distant Condition - His Fears
 - 4 - It was a Dangerous Condition - His Future

II - The Lonely Confusion - His Problem (3/9)

- A) Job's Burden was overwhelming
His Vexation & Cry

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1 - The Diagnosed Situation

2 - The Directed Search

3 - The Deserted Seat

B) Job's Bearings were overcast

His View & Compass

1 - Job Living in the Fog

2 - Job Languishing in the Fog

C) Job's Beliefs were overblown

His Void & Clarity

1 - What Job Could See - The Visible Losses

- His Limitations
- His Exaggerations

2 - What Job Could Not See - The Invisible Lord

- The Closeness of his Lord
- The Comprehension of his Lord

III - The Lovely Confession of Job - His Perception (10)

A) Job Confessed the High Place of God

B) Job Confessed the Hidden Presence of God

1 - God's Personal Presence - Always Near

2 - God's Promised Presence - Abundantly Noted

C) Job Confessed the Holy Perception of God

1 - God Knew Job's Name

2 - God Knew Job's Needs

3 - God Knew Job's Nature

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Title: "Hell"

Theme: "Hell Is As Close As A Nudge Of God"

Text: "Deuteronomy 32: 35, Ps. 9: 17, Isa. 14: 9"

"Amos 9: 2, Luke 16: 19 - 31"

I - The Uncomfortable Gimmick of Hell

- A) The Mention of Hell (54 Times)
- B) The Misbelief of Hell
- C) The Misgivings of Hell

II - The Ungodly Garments of Hell

- A) The Simplicity of Hell
- B) The Seduction of Hell
- C) The Sadness of Hell

III - The Unwelcome Greetings of Hell

- A) The Awful Applause of Hell
- B) The Absolute Assurance of Hell
- C) The Addled Addition of Hell

IV - The Unforgettable Group of Hell

- A) The Expected Group
 - 1 - The Wretched
 - 2 - The Wayward
 - 3 - The Warranted
 - 4 - The Waiting
- B) The Unexpected Group
 - 1 - The Unsavd Church Crowd
 - 2 - The Unsavd Clean Crowd
 - 3 - The Unsavd Close Crowd

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VI - The Unfathomable Grief of Hell

- A) Physical Grief
- B) Personal Grief
- C) Eternal Grief

VI - The Unpassable Gulf Of Hell

- A) The Eternal Victims
- B) The Everlasting Void

VII - The Unbearable Groans of Hell

- A) The Groans from Their Placement
- B) The Groans from Their Pain
- C) The Groans from Their Prayers

VIII - The Uncertain Gamble of Hell

- A) The Suddenness of their Slip (rich fool)
- B) The Strangeness of their Slip (the nudge)
- C) The Seriousness of their Slip (forever)

Title: "The Greatest Love In The World"

Theme: "Rizpah Teaches Us About Love"

Text: "1 Samuel 21: 1 - 14"

I - The Two Sons of Rizpah - Her Love

- A) I See the Affection of This Mother
- B) I See the Adoration of This Mother
- C) I See the Attention of This Mother
 - 1 - Attentive With Her Time
 - 2 - Attentive With Her Touch
 - 3 - Attentive With Her Talk

II - The Tearful Story of Rizpah - Her Loss

Cantrell's Concepts

- A) The Reason for This Story
- B) The Request for Her Son's
- C) The Remorse of Her Soul

III - The Timely Stand of Rizpah - Her Loyalty

- A) The Devotion of This Mother
 - 1 - Her Wondrous Plan
 - 2 - Her Wearisome Place
- B) The Determination of This Mother
 - 1 - Determined In What She Was For - Her Faith
 - 2 - Determined In What She Was Against - Her Fight
 - * She Would Fight Off the Birds during the Day
 - * She Would Fight Off the Beast during the Night
- C) The Demonstration of This Mother
 - 1 - Her Watchful Persistence
 - 2 - Her Woeful Pain
 - 3 - Her Warranted Pride
 - 4 - Her Worthwhile Price

IV - The Triumphant Success of Rizpah - Her Lesson

- A) Record Was Proclaimed To the King
- B) Reward Was Provided By the King
- C) Role Was Priceless To the King

V - The Truthful Symbolism of Rizpah - Her Likeness

- A) The Sacrifice of This Mother
 - “Her Children & Cause”
- B) The Significance of This Morning
 - “You're Challenge & Commitment”
- C) The Symbolism of This Message
 - “Jesus Christ & Calvary”

Cantrell's Concepts

Title: "It's Still About The Babe Of Bethlehem"

Theme: "Will We Make Room For Jesus"

Text: "Luke 2: 1 - 20, Micah 5:2"

- I - Consider Bethlehem's Call
- II - Consider Bethlehem's Census
- III - Consider Bethlehem's Couple
- IV - Consider Bethlehem's Congestion
- V - Consider Bethlehem's Child
- VI - Consider Bethlehem's Crime
- VII - Consider Bethlehem's Celebrities
- VIII - Consider Bethlehem's Choir
- IX - Consider Bethlehem's Chatter
- X - Consider Bethlehem's Counsel

Title: "A Journey Of Joy"

Theme: "The Wise Men Found Joy In Jesus"

Text: "Matthew 2: 1 - 12, Numbers 24:17"

"Daniel 9: 24 - 26"

- I - The Wise Men & Their Story
 - A) The Location of These Men
 - 1 - Possibly Modern Iraq
 - 2 - Babylon Ancient Days
 - B) The Vocation of These Men
 - 1 - Astrologers
 - 2 - Interpreters of Dreams
 - 3 - Sorcerers, Magicians
 - C) The Notation of These Men
 - 1 - Biblical Knowledge
 - 2 - Biblical King (born around 4 B.C.)
 - D) The Identification of These Men
 - *6th century Fabrication*
- II - The Wise Men & Their Star

Cantrell's Concepts

- A) The Appearance of This Star
“A Sign That Called Them”
- B) The Appeal of This Star
“A Son That Changed Them”
- C) The Apprehension of This Star
“A Summons That Cost Them”

III - The Wise Men & Their Search

- A) Their Destination - Quest
- B) Their Deliberation - Question
- C) Their Desperation - Quandary

IV - The Wise Men & Their Splendor

- A) I See the Men Triumphantly Traveling
 - 1 - The Disappearance of the Star
 - 2 - The Reappearance of the Star
- B) I See the Men Rightly Rejoicing
 - 1 - The Great Shining Of This Star
 - 2 - The Glorious Stopping of This Star
- C) I See the Men Wonderfully Worshipping
 - 1 - The Wise Men Witnessed the Little Lad
 - 2 - The Wise Men Worshipped the Living Lord
- D) I See the Men Greatly Giving
 - 1 - Gold Revealed His Kingship - Valuable
 - 2 - Frankincense Reflected His Priestship - Perfume
 - 3 - Myrrh Represented His Sonship - Anointing Oil
(Suffering)

V - The Wise Men & Their Surrender

- A) The Divine Dream
- B) The Daring Decision
- C) The Different Departure

Cantrell's Concepts

Title: “The Perplexity Of Why”

**Theme: “Finding Firm Footing
When God Doesn’t Make Sense”**

**Text: “2 Corinthians 1: 1 - 8, Proverbs
25:2”**

**“Isaiah 45: 15, Deut. 29: 29, Eccles.
11:5”**

“Isaiah 55: 8 - 9, Romans 11: 33 - 34”

“1 Cor. 2: 16, 1 Cor. 13: 10 - 12, Job 23”

“For What, For What Reason, Cause, Or Purpose?”

I - The Unexpected Possibility of Why

- A) Unperceived Occasion
- B) Unspeakable Offense
- C) Unavoidable Oppression

II - The Unbearable Pain of Why

- A) The Fleeting Answer
That cannot be found
- B) The Fiery Anguish
That cannot be fathomed
- C) The False Abandonment
That cannot be fair

III - The Unending Perplexity of Why

- A) The Dark Veil of Concealment
 - 1 - Its Mystery
 - 2 - Its Misery
- B) The Deep Valley of Confusion
 - 1 - What we feel - He has failed me

Cantrell's Concepts

- 2 - What we fear - He has forsaken me
- 3 - What we fathom - He has forgotten me
- C) The Desperate Victim of Contention
 - 1 - The dreadful harshness of the hour
 - 2 - The dangerous hardness of the heart

IV - The Unknown Process of Why

- A) The Designated Entrance
 - 1 - A Chosen Course
 - 2 - A Chosen Cup
- B) The Destined Endurance
 - 1 - Sovereign Purpose of God
 - 2 - Steadfast Presence of God
 - 3 - Strong Power of God
 - 4 - Sweet Peace of God
 - 5 - Special People of God
- C) The Delayed End

Title: "Our Wonderful Savior"

Theme: "Looking At The Christ Of Christmas"

Text: "Isaiah 9: 6"

I - The Welcomed Announcement That Is Made

- A) The Selection of This Son
- B) The Sending of This Son
- C) The Salvation of This Son

II - The Worthy Appointment That Is Manifested

- A) Unequaled In His Position - Mighty Ruler
- B) Unbiased In His Plea - Mighty Savior
- C) Unblemished In His Purity - Mighty God
- D) Unchallenged In His Power - Mighty Helper

Cantrell's Concepts

III - The Wondrous Attributes That Are Mentioned

A) The Beauty of His Name (Wonderful)

- 1 - Wonderful In His Birth
- 2 - Wonderful In His Life
- 3 - Wonderful In His Death
- 4 - Wonderful In His Ascension
- 5 - Wonderful In His Return

B) The Benefits of His Claim (Counselor)

- 1 - His Ability to Counsel the Sinner
- 2 - His Ability to Counsel the Saint
 - * He Hears Me When I'm nigh
 - * He Holds Me When I Cry
 - * He Helps Me When I Sigh

C) The Boldness of His Fame (The Mighty God)

- 1 - The Supreme Son
- 2 - The Sinless Sacrifice
- 3 - The Sufficient Savior

D) The Brightness of His Aim (Prince of Peace)

- 1 - The Priceless Value of His Peace
- 2 - The Proven Validity of His Peace
- 3 - The Prominent Vastness of His Peace

Title: "The Path Of The Prodigal"

Theme: "The Perplexing Journey"

Thrust: "A Prodigal Can Find Hope & Help"

Text: "Luke 15: 11 - 24"

I - The Prodigal & His Selfish Demand (12)

- A) The Undesirable Proposal of the Son
- B) The Unthinkable Pain of the Father

II - The Prodigal & His Sinful Departure (13)

- A) The Willfulness of his Heart
- B) The Wastefulness of his Heritage

Cantrell's Concepts

III - The Prodigal & His Shameful Desire (14/16)

- A) The Famine that he faced
- B) The Food that he fathomed
- C) The Failure that he felt

IV - The Prodigal & His Strategic Decision (17/19)

- A) The Pigpen Maneuvered Him - his life
- B) The Pigpen Motivated Him - his longing
- C) The Pigpen Moved Him - his leave

V - The Prodigal & His Sure Direction (20)

- A) The Crushing of his Heart
- B) The Craving for his Home
- C) The Caressing of his Hope

VI - The Prodigal & His Sublime Delight (21/24)

- A) His Prayer was denied
- B) His Pardon was Deliberate
- C) His Party was Divine

VII - The Prodigal & His Spiritual Depiction

- A) The Modern Day Prodigal - Help
- B) The Modern Day Prodigal - Hope
- C) The Modern Day Prodigal - Healing

Conclusion

In concluding this book I hope that it has been a help to those wanting to better their steps in sermon preparation. I believe that God will allow those wanting to better themselves the opportunity to do so.

I do not claim to be an expert in sermon preparation, only a student that finds fulfillment in trying to become a better student of preparing sermons. I have been approached by many of my peers to prepare this work and I can say that it has helped me identify some needful areas in my sermon development.

If I can be of serve to the reader in anyway, please feel free to contact me. I hope that you will visit my website which is being filled with items that hopefully will be useful and helpful to the preacher:

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If I can help you conduct a conference on sermon preparation please contact me. If I can be of service to you in preaching a revival or a conference feel free to contact me. I want to help preachers and pastors.