Lighthouse Bible Institute

Week 8

BIBLICAL PREACHING & TEACHING: Communicating the Message

Big Idea: Biblical preaching requires more than accurately understanding God's Word; it requires faithfully, clearly, and passionately communicating the Word so listeners understand its meaning and recognize their responsibility to respond.

Lesson Goal: To equip students to deliver biblical messages with clarity, conviction, good body language, and reliance upon the Holy Spirit.

I. Introduction — From Preparing the Message to Preaching the Message

A. Throughout this course we have emphasized accurate interpretation, the Big Idea, outlining, explanation, illustration, validation, and application. But a sermon is not finished simply because it has been written.

B. It is possible for a biblically accurate sermon to be poorly delivered and thus hindering the message. It is also possible for a biblically weak sermon to be communicated very effectively. Effective biblical preaching **requires both faithfulness** to the text and **effectiveness** in communicating the text.

C. **MacArthur – "*It is not enough just to have a message; you must also deliver it powerfully.*"**[1]

II. The Priority of Biblical Communication

A. Preach and teach with the recognition that you are communicating God's Word, not merely a speech.

1. 2 Timothy is Paul's final letter and final words to his son in the faith, Timothy. He had just finished writing about the power of Scripture as coming from God and being able to both save and sanctify the believer (2 Tim. 3:15-17). How serious was Paul concerning the responsibility of preaching God's Word in 2 Timothy 4:1-2?

- **2 Timothy 4:1–2 —** **1** *I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom:* **2** *Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.*

2. The authority of preaching comes from _____, not the personality or rhetorical ability of the preacher.

a. In the Old Testament alone, the phrases "the Lord said," "the Lord spoke," and "the word of the Lord came" appear at least 3,808 times.[2]

b. Al Mohler Jr. - "The authority of Scripture is none other than the authority of God Himself. As the Reformation formula testifies, 'where Scripture speaks, God speaks.' The authority of the preacher is intrinsically rooted in the authority of the Bible."[3]

c. Robert Thomas – "Authority comes from the preacher's mandate to proclaim the King's Word as a herald with all the authority of the throne behind him (2 Tim. 4:2). A herald

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[1] Robert L. Thomas, "Bible Translations and Expository Preaching," in *Rediscovering Expository Preaching* (Dallas: Word Publishing, 1992), 321.

[2] As cited in Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Authority* (London: InterVarsity Press, 1958), 50.

[3] R. Albert Mohler Jr., "A Theology of Preaching," in *Handbook of Contemporary Preaching*, ed. (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1992), 15.

has authority as long as he faithfully presents his King's message. The preacher's authority also rests on an accurate relaying of the message of God's Word."[4]

3. The _____ of communication must never become more important than the message.
4. The goal is not to impress people with the preacher, but to confront them with the truth of God's Word.

B. Communicate for the understanding of the listeners

1. **Nehemiah 8:8 —** [8] *So they read distinctly from the book, in the Law of God; and they gave the sense, and helped them to understand the reading.*
2. **1 Corinthians 14:9 —** [9] *So likewise you, unless you utter by the tongue words easy to understand, how will it be known what is spoken? For you will be speaking into the air.*
   - Though the context of 1 Corinthians 14:9 is dealing with the confusion of tongues without an interpreter, the principle applies to the importance of communicating God's Word clearly, with intelligible words
3. Consider whether listeners can follow the message and recognize its application.
4. Do not merely say something correctly; labor to say it understandably.
   a. This means that the sermon must be clear to the messenger if it is to be clear to others.
   b. Effective preaching avoids both condescension (talking down to hearers) and obscurity (talking over their heads), instead meeting the listeners at the level of conversational language which will be grasped by the majority of the congregation.[5]

C. Communicating with Dependence on the _____

1. **1 Thessalonians 1:5 —** [5] *For our gospel did not come to you in word only,* ***but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit*** *and in much assurance, as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake.*
2. Paul contrasts confidence in human wisdom with reliance on the Spirit and power of God.
   - **1 Corinthians 2:4–5 —** [4] *And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power,* [5] *that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.*
3. Faithful preparation does not replace dependence upon God. Communication skills cannot regenerate sinners or produce spiritual transformation.
   - **1 Corinthians 3:6–7 —** [6] *I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase.* [7] *So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase.*
4. Reject both dependence on technique and neglect of preparation.
5. **God alone can change the heart**
   a. 1 Corinthians 3:6–7: Paul planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. Faithful preparation and delivery do not replace the dependency on God to work.
6. **Pray for your listeners.**
   a. **Ephesians 1:16–18 —** [16] *do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers:* [17] *that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him,* [18] *the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,*

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[4] Robert L. Thomas, "Bible Translations and Expository Preaching," in *Rediscovering Expository Preaching* (Dallas: Word Publishing, 1992), 327.

[5] H. C. Brown Jr, H. Gordon Clinard, Jesse J. Northcutt, Al Fasol, *Steps to the Sermon: An Eight-Step Plan for Preaching with Confidence*, Revised. (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1996), 168.

   b. **Psalm 119:18 — [18]** *Open my eyes, that I may see Wondrous things from Your law.*

D. Communicate with a prepared life

1. **1 Timothy 4:16 — [16]** *Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.*
2. Pray for clarity and boldness - In both Colossians 4:3–4 and Ephesians 6:19–20, Paul requests prayer for opportunities, clarity, and boldness in proclaiming the gospel.
3. Value faithfulness over performance – The goal is not to be entertaining and to be seen as a great communicator, but the goal is to faithfully communicate the Word of God.

III. The Importance of Delivery — How We Communicate Matters

A. Delivery is an essential part of preaching

1. Two preachers can communicate identical content with very different results. One reads monotonously with little eye contact; the other speaks naturally with appropriate emphasis and conviction.
2. Delivery should serve the message, never compete with it.

B. Communication involves words, voice, and body language

1. Words: what we say.
2. Voice: tone, volume, pace, and emphasis.
3. Body language: facial expression, eye contact, posture, and gestures.
4. When the words say "this is important" but the voice and posture suggest indifference, communication is weakened.

C. Communicate with genuine _____ for people

1. **Ephesians 4:15 — [15]** *but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ.*
   a. It has rightly been said, "People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care." This principle is especially true in preaching.
   b. The preacher's posture should be of one coming alongside his hearers instead of one speaking against them, you are exhorting him rather than accusing him.
2. 1 Thessalonians 2:8 demonstrates Paul's affection for those to whom he ministered.
   a. **1 Thessalonians 2:8 — [8]** *So, affectionately longing for you, we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives, because you had become dear to us.*
3. How can you communicate with boldness and not become harsh?
4. Building relationships through consistent presence with your congregation increases their receptiveness to your message.
5. Also, biblical rebuke can be direct without becoming harsh or self-serving.

IV. Communicating with Clarity — Helping People Understand

A. Use understandable language

1. Do not eliminate important theological terms such as justification, sanctification, propitiation, and imputation; explain them clearly.
2. Instead of only saying "forensic justification through imputed righteousness," explain that God declares a believing sinner righteous on the basis of Christ's righteousness credited to him.

B. Communicate one central message

1. State the Big Idea in one sentence.

2. Ensure each major point develops that idea.
3. Help listeners see how the parts fit together.
4. Identify the truth listeners most need to remember.

C. Make the structure easy to follow

1. Use clear transitions that show the relationship between points and the movement of the biblical text. Example: “First Paul explains what God has done for us in Christ. Now notice how that truth should change the way we live.”

D. Repeat strategically

1. Listeners cannot reread the previous paragraph as they can in a book. Reinforce important truths and applications purposefully, without unnecessary repetition.

V. Communicating with the Voice — How We Say It

A. Volume

1. Speak audibly and clearly, adjusting to the room and sound system.
2. Avoid equating loudness with spiritual power.
3. A microphone amplifies the voice but does not replace articulation.

B. Pace

1. Vary your pace according to the content and emphasis of the passage
2. Complex doctrine may require slower explanation; narrative may move more briskly; serious warnings benefit from deliberate speech.

C. Pauses

1. Pause to emphasize truth, create anticipation, and give listeners time to reflect.
2. Avoid filling every silence with “um,” “uh,” or repeated filler phrases.
3. Avoid repeating challenges to congregation, “Amen”, can I get an “Amen”.

D. Pitch and tone

1. Let the tone reflect the passage.
    a. **Romans 8:1 —** [1] *There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.*
    b. **James 4:8 —** [8] *Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.*
    - How should the tone differ between these passages?
    - Which words deserve special emphasis?
    - How could the wrong tone weaken the message?
2. Principle: Our tone should reinforce the truth of Scripture, not contradict it.

E. Emphasis

1. In “Christ died for our sins,” emphasizing “Christ,” “died,” or “our sins” highlights different dimensions of the truth.
2. If every statement is at maximum intensity, nothing stands out

F. Read Scripture Aloud

1. Scripture reading is itself an important part of biblical communication, not merely a preliminary to the sermon.
2. Read the passage beforehand, noting unfamiliar words, punctuation, natural pauses, and changes in speakers.
3. Read with reverence, clarity, and expression appropriate to the meaning of the text.
4. Principle: Do not read God's Word carelessly and then attempt to preach it passionately.

VI. Communicating with the Body - Nonverbal Communication

A. Robinson – "The eyes, hands, face, and feet say as much to a congregation as the words we utter—in fact, they say more. In a famous study, psychologist Albert Mehrabian broke it down to a formula. Only 7 percent of a speaker's message comes through their words; 38 percent springs from their voice; 55 percent comes from their facial expressions."[6]

- **Note**: These percentages come from research concerning the communication of feelings and attitudes when verbal and nonverbal signals conflict. They should not be applied as a universal measurement of how much of a sermon is communicated through words, voice, and body language.

B. Robinson – "If nonverbal messages contradict the verbal, listeners will more likely believe the silent language……..Your words may insist "This is important," but if your voice sounds flat and expressionless and your body stands limp, the congregation will not believe you. If you shake your fist at your hearers while you say in scolding tones, "What this church needs is more love and deep concern for one another!," your listeners will wonder whether you understand the love you are talking about."[7]

C. Eye contact

1. Speak to people, not merely at notes.
2. Look naturally across the room rather than at one section.
3. Avoid staring or continually looking down.

D. Facial expressions

- Expressions should naturally reflect joy, concern, sorrow, seriousness, or celebration appropriate to the text, rather than being manufactured.

E. Gestures

1. Use gestures to reinforce statements and contrasts.
2. Avoid repetitive, exaggerated, or distracting movements.

F. Posture and movement

1. Stand naturally. Move with purpose, not out of nervous habit.
2. Standing still can sometimes emphasize a serious truth more effectively than pacing.

G. Distracting mannerisms

1. Watch for filler phrases ("and uh", um")
2. Avoid swaying, rocking, handling objects, adjusting clothing, or repeatedly touching the microphone.
3. Avoid holding the podium like it is a life raft.
4. Video recording and constructive feedback can reveal habits you may not notice.

VII. Communicating with Conviction — Preaching from the Heart

A. Personally embrace the truth

1. **2 Corinthians 4:13 — [13]** *And since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written,* ***"I believed and therefore I spoke,"*** *we also believe and therefore speak,*
2. After your listeners hear you speak, would they say that the message you presented had really gripped your heart? How will the message impact people if it hasn't impacted the one delivering it?

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[6] Haddon W. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages*, Fourth Edition (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic: A Division of Baker Publishing Group, 2025), 144.

[7] Ibid., 145.

a. Walter Kaiser – *"From the beginning of the sermon to its end, the all engrossing force of the text and the God who speaks through that text must dominate our whole being. With the burning power of that truth on our heart and lips, every thought, emotion, and act of the will must be so captured by that truth that it springs forth with excitement, joy, sincerity, and reality as an evident token that God's Spirit is in that word. Away with all the mediocre, lifeless, boring, and lackluster orations offered as pitiful substitutes for the powerful Word of the living Lord. If that Word from God does not thrill the proclaimer and fill [him] … with an intense desire to glorify God and do His will, how shall we ever expect it to have any greater effect on our hearers?"*[8]

b. G. Campbell Morgan argues that *passion* is an essential ingredient for an effective delivery. In explaining the meaning of passion in preaching, he tells of a discussion the the English actor Macready had with a well-known pastor. The pastor was trying to understand why crowds flocked to fictional plays but few came to hear him preach God's changeless truth. Macready responded, "**This is quite simple.… I present my fiction as though it were truth, you present your truth as though it were fiction**. (Mogan goes on to say) I am not arguing for mere excitement. Painted fire never burns, and an imitated enthusiasm is the most empty thing that can possibly exist in a preacher. Given the preacher with a message …, I cannot understand that man not being swept sometimes right out of himself by the fire and the force and the fervency of his work."[9]

c. **Spurgeon –** *"It is dreadful work to listen to a sermon, and feel all the while as if you were sitting out in a snowstorm, or dwelling in a house of ice, clear but cold, orderly but killing. You have said to yourself, "That was a well-divided and well-planned sermon, but I cannot make out what was the matter with it;" the secret being that there was the wood, but no fire to kindle it"*[10]

d. **D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones** – "A theology which does not take fire, I maintain, is a defective theology; or at least the man's understanding of it is defective. Preaching is theology coming through a man who is on fire. A true understanding and experience of the Truth must lead to this. I say again that a man who can speak about these things dispassionately has no right whatsoever to be in a pulpit; and should never be allowed to enter one."[11]

B. Let passion arise from biblical truth

1. Passion is not synonymous with shouting or theatrics.

2. The preacher should communicate the seriousness of sin, wonder of grace, certainty of judgment, and hope of resurrection with an appropriate emotional tone.

VIII. Preparing for Delivery — From the Study to the Pulpit

A. Know the message

1. Read the text many times throughout the week.

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[8] Walter C. Kaiser, Toward An Exegetical Theology (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981), 239.

[9] G. Campbell Morgan, Preaching (reprint, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1974), 36-37.

[10] C. H. Spurgeon, *An All-Round Ministry: Addresses to Ministers and Students* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2009), 175.

[11] Lloyd-Jones, Preaching, 97

2. Be able to rehearse from memory the big idea and the major points and how they all flow together.
3. Know your introduction and conclusion especially well, allowing you to establish immediate contact with listeners and finish with conviction rather than becoming overly dependent on your notes.

B. Choose your method of delivery

1. Manuscript
   a. Advantage: Allows precise wording, careful theological expression, and better control of timing. Particularly helpful when communicating complex truths.
   b. Potential Weakness: Too much reading and dependence on notes.
   c. **Robinson**: A good part of the preparation for delivery lies in the use of a manuscript. For me, writing a sermon is a way of thinking. When I have thought myself clear, delivery is much more natural. Sometimes the greatest flaws in delivery come because the speaker is not completely sure of what he wants to say. …I believe it is absolutely essential that a minister have his introduction clearly in mind when he stands to speak. While other parts of the sermon may be outlined, the introduction ought to be written out. It is in the introduction that the preacher establishes contact with the people in the pew.… If there is ever a time that the mind will go blank, it is in the first moment or two when you get on your feet.[12]
2. **Outline / abbreviated notes**
   a. Benefits: Provides structure while allowing flexibility, natural expression, and greater eye contact with listeners.
   b. Potential Weakness: Requires thorough preparation and familiarity with the material. May lead to overlooked details, repetition, or wandering from the main point.
3. **Memorized**
   a. Benefits: Provides freedom from notes, allowing strong eye contact, natural gestures, and direct engagement with listeners.
   b. Potential Weakness: Requires significant preparation. May sound rehearsed or recited, and forgetting a portion can interrupt the flow of the message.

C. Practice your lesson or message out loud

1. Read the biblical passage aloud.
2. Rehearse the introduction and major divisions.
3. Practice transitions.
4. Work through difficult explanations and applications.
5. Practice the conclusion.
6. Time the presentation and revise.

D. Make your Notes User-Friendly

1. Use clear headings for your main points (bold them)
2. Build a good system that works for you.
   a. **Genesis 1:1 —** [1] *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*
   b. **Explanation (in black)**
   c. **Illustration (in blue)**
3. Paper notes vs. IPAD – Positives/negatives

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[12] Haddon Robinson, personal correspondence, 13 May 1991; as quoted in: Robert L. Thomas, "Bible Translations and Expository Preaching," in *Rediscovering Expository Preaching* (Dallas: Word Publishing, 1992), 329.

IX. Seek to Continually Improve your Communication

A. Invite constructive criticism
B. Listen or watch a recording of your message if possible.
C. Read books on preaching.
  1. Preaching and Preachers - D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones
  2. Preaching: How to Preach Biblically - John MacArthur and the Master's Seminary faculty
D. Learn from other can be valuable, but do not seek to mimic others, effective preaching must come through your own authentic voice. Spurgeon: *Let every man, called of God to preach the Word, be as his Maker has fashioned him.*[13]

Conclusion — Preach the Word

- The sermon does not end in the study. The preacher must stand before people and communicate what God has said. That requires careful preparation, clear communication, genuine conviction, appropriate delivery, and humble dependence on the Holy Spirit.
- Do not merely prepare a sermon worth preaching. Prepare yourself to communicate it faithfully, clearly, and passionately for God's glory and the spiritual good of those who hear.

Assignments

- **Today**:
  - Complete Quiz 8
  - Turn in your sermon outline for your selected biblical passage. Include your Big Idea, major points, and supporting material (explanation, illustrations, and application).

- **Due Next Class (November 14th) – Week 9**
  - **Homework** — Complete your sermon outline for your selected biblical passage. Include your Big Idea, major points, and supporting material (explanation, illustrations, and application).
  - **Read Chapter 8**
  - Refine your sermon outline and prepare to present weeks 9 and 10.

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[13] C. H. Spurgeon, *C. H. Spurgeon Autobiography Volume 1: The Early Years*, 1834–1859, rev. ed. (reprint, Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1962), 234.