

PREPARING TO PREACH





Preachers' Workshop

2TIMOTHY4

STRENGTHENING SCOTTISH PREACHING

www.2tim4.org



2 Timothy 4:1-8



Preach the Word!

1. Christ Jesus is coming (verse 1)

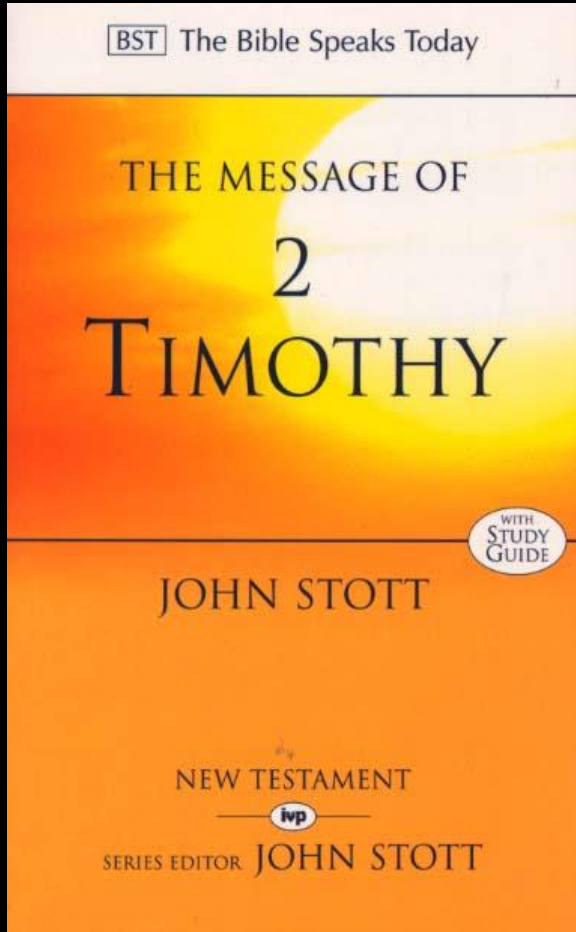
*In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus,
who will judge the living and the dead, and
in view of his appearing and his kingdom,
I give you this charge: Preach the Word*

The “appearing” of Christ Jesus

- the King
- the Judge

2. Difficult days are coming (verses 2-5)

"Preach the Word...for the time will come..."



Paul is giving a second basis on which to ground his charge. It is another future event, not now the coming of Christ but, before that end point, the coming of dark and difficult days."

2. Difficult days are coming (verses 2-5)

A hearing problem - people will

- “turn *away* from the truth”
- “turn *aside* to myths”

“When people stop believing in God, it is not that they no longer believe in anything but rather they believe in everything.”

G.K.Chesterton



2. Difficult days are coming (verses 2-5)

The response to the problem

- keep **going** at all **times**

“be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage – with great patience and careful instruction.” (verse 2)

- keep **calm** in all **situations**

“But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.”

3. Paul's departure is coming (verses 6-8)

"For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time for my departure is near." (verse 6)



3. Paul's departure is coming (verses 6-8)

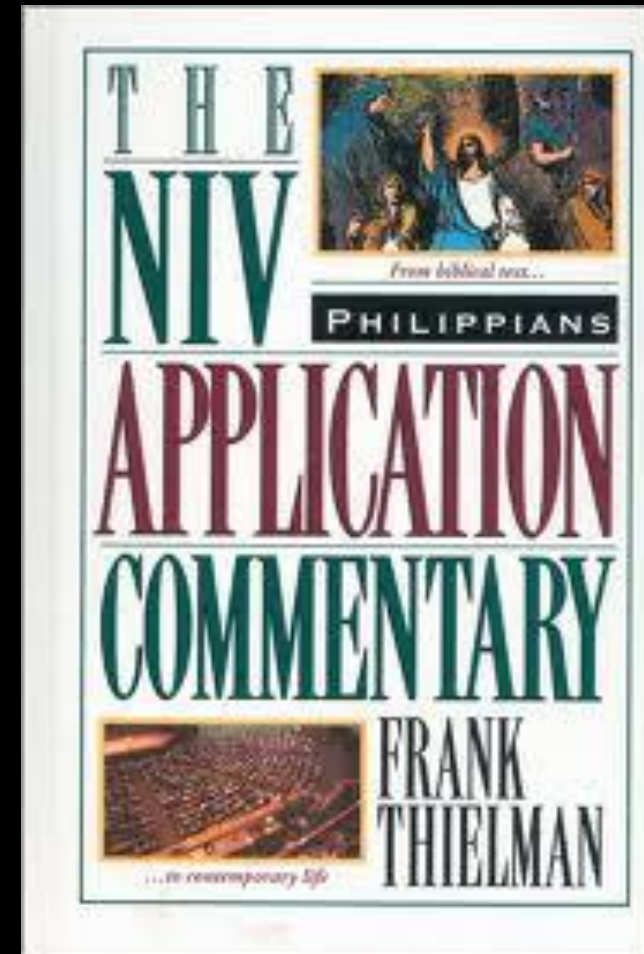
*"For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time for my **departure** is near."*



What happened next?



Although Nero was a prolific author, nothing of his literary output remains. Paul's name on the other hand, is instantly recognised by millions, and existing copies of his letter to the Philippians, in many languages, run easily into the millions. Indeed, the time has come, as T.R. Glover observed, when people call their dogs Nero and their sons Paul.



Preach the Word!



Passing on the baton



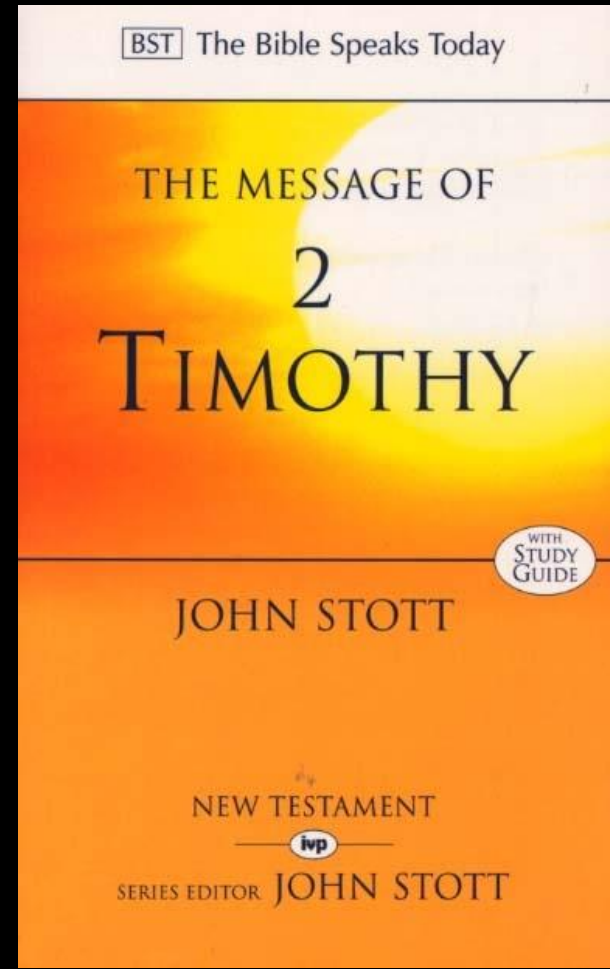
“And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.” (2 Timothy 2:2)

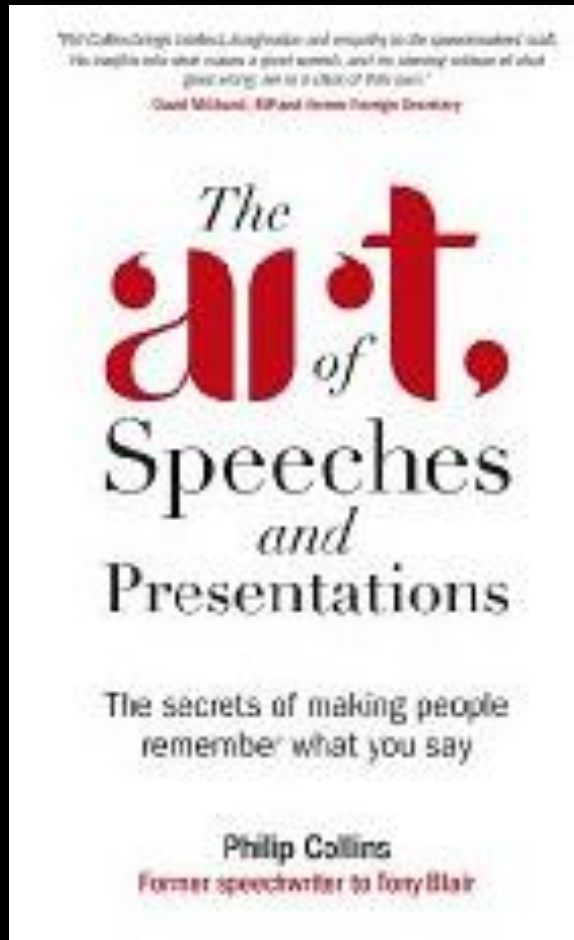
The 21st century challenge

"All around us we see Christians and churches relaxing their grasp of the gospel, fumbling it, in danger of letting it drop from their hands altogether."

The 21st century challenge

"A new generation of young Timothys is needed, who will guard the sacred deposit of the gospel, who are determined to proclaim it and are prepared to suffer for it, and who will pass it on pure and uncorrupted to the generation which in due course will rise up to follow them."





Speeches still matter, even in a technological age. The act of persuasion is ubiquitous in professional life and very many people need to master it. The act of making a speech is a medium that has remained essentially unchanged through the ages....

Against all the expectations and regular predictions of its demise, public speech still counts. It always will and it is a skill that needs to be mastered.

For full review see "Recommended reading from a surprising source" www.unashamedworkman.org

Preparing to Preach



The **divine dimension** in preaching

*For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you, because our gospel came to you not simply with words, but also with **power**, with **the Holy Spirit** and with **deep conviction**.*

(1 Thessalonians 1:4-5)

The human dimension in preaching

*We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. To this end **I labour, struggling** with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me.
(Colossians 1:28-29)*

The preacher's privilege

“It is an enormous privilege to be called to preach in the contemporary world, and to be a Biblical expositor! For one stands in the pulpit with God’s Word in his hands, God’s Spirit in his heart, God’s people before his eyes, waiting expectantly for God’s voice to be heard and obeyed.”

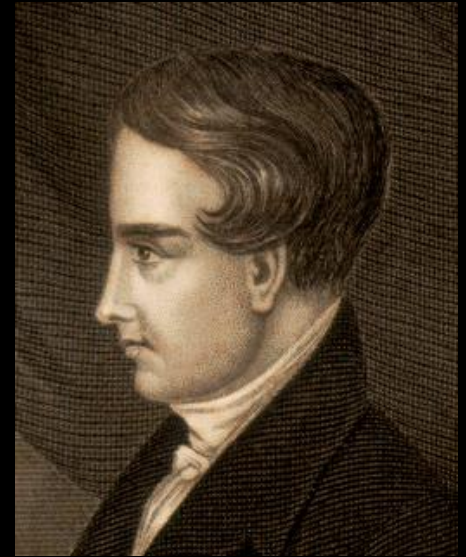
John R.W. Stott, “Christian Preaching in the Contemporary World,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 145:580 (October-December 1988): 370

PREPARING TO PREACH



THE PREPARATION OF THE PREACHER

"The greatest need of my people is my personal holiness."



"Study universal holiness of life. Your whole usefulness depends on this, for your sermons last but an hour or two; your life preaches all the week.

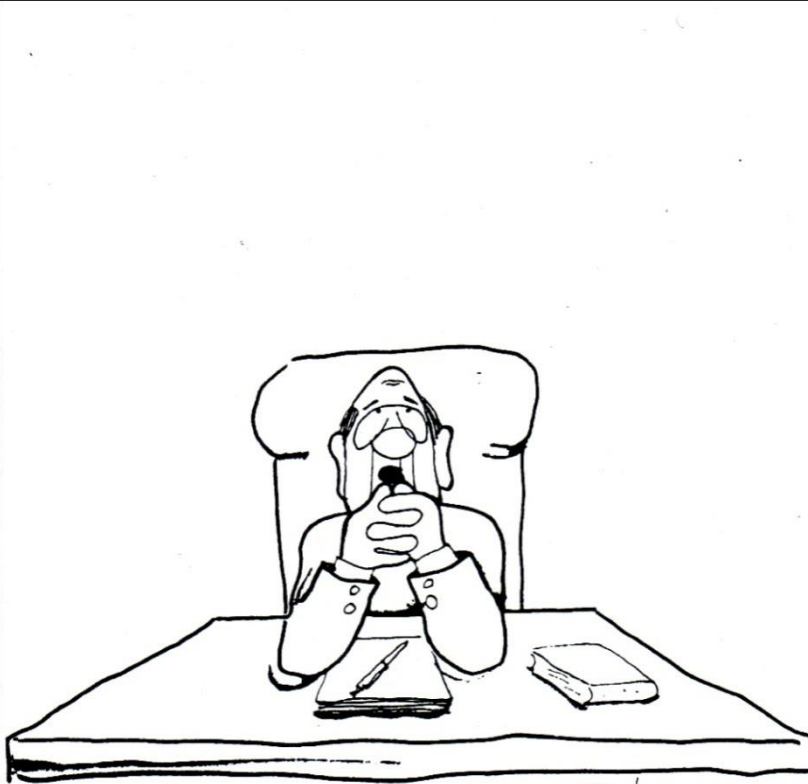
Give yourself to prayer, and get your texts, your thoughts, your words from God." (Robert Murray M'Cheyne)

THE PREPARATION OF THE SERMON



Three important stages

STAGE 1. Choosing the subject



"And, Father, I ask Thee now for a good text to accompany this fantastic story."

STAGE 1: Choosing the subject

A text

- a **verse** e.g. Romans 6:23

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

- a **section** e.g. Romans 6:15-23

A topic

"Overcoming pride"

"Baptism"

STAGE 1. Choosing the subject

A **single sermon**

Jonah 1:4-6

("When God sends a storm")

A **sermon series**

Studies in the Book of Jonah

("Running away from the Lord")

"Seven deadly sins"

STAGE 1. Choosing the subject

Some advantages of **systematic expository preaching**:

1. I focus on **what God wants to say** -
not what **I want to say**.
2. I preach from **all of Scripture** -
not just the **parts I prefer**.
3. I give people a **balanced diet** -
not just their "**favourite food**".
4. I deepen my **dependence on God** -
not relying on **previous knowledge**.
5. I have a **plan for preaching** -
not just **wondering what to preach** each week.
6. I preach Scripture **in context** -
not **in isolation**.

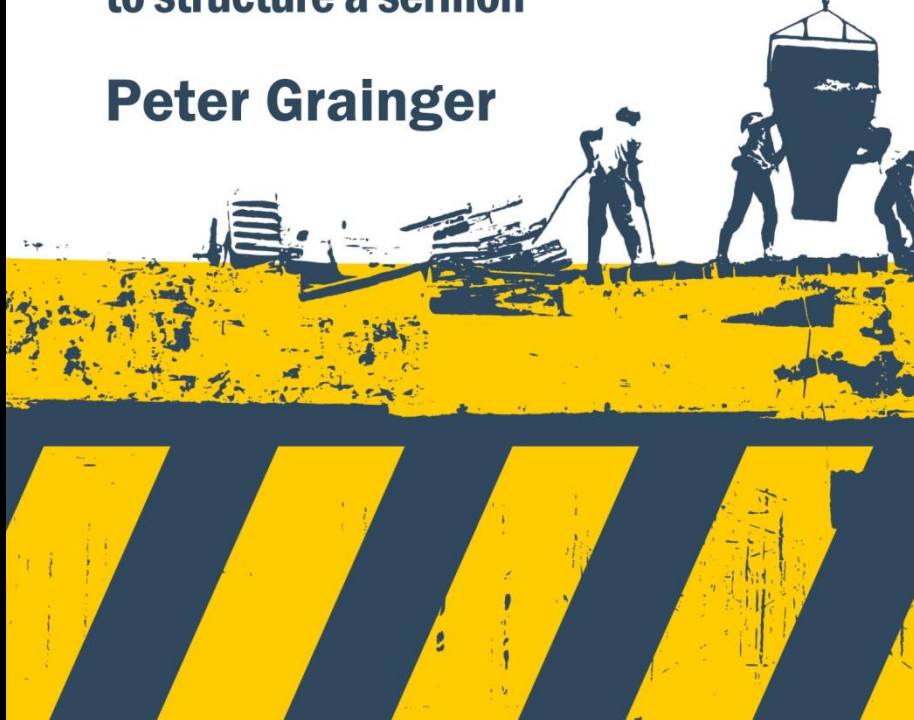
New Extended Edition

*'...sounds a loud and clear note for lively, imaginative,
Bible-based, Christ-centered preaching.'* **Alistair Begg**

FIRM FOUNDATIONS

**Over 200 examples of how
to structure a sermon**

Peter Grainger



STAGE 1. Choosing the subject

Factors determining **how** and **what** you preach:
the **profile** of the congregation

- age and gender
- the level of literacy/education
- length of attendance in the church
- the level of Biblical literacy
- the degree of Christian commitment/understanding

STAGE 1. Choosing the subject

Factors determining **how** and **what** you preach:
the **worldview** of the hearer

Cultural changes in Britain:

40 years ago, students asked, "Is it **true**?"

20 years ago, students asked, "Does it **work**?"

today, students ask, "How does it **feel**?"

*"How do you reach a culture which hears with its eyes
and sees with its emotions?" (Ravi Zacharias)*

STAGE 2. Doing the spade-work

Goal – to discover

- what the **original author** intended to communicate
- what **God by his Spirit** intended to communicate through the human voice/pen of the author

*Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.
(2 Peter 1:20-21)*

STAGE 2. Doing the spade-work

Two important questions:

1. What does it **mean?**
(explanation)

2. What must I/we **do?**
(application)

In that order!



STAGE 2. Doing the spade-work

Research/study:

1. Different Bible translations

- from **literal** (text)
- to **idiomatic** (meaning)

2. **Books** (plus media)

- from **commentaries**
- to **sermons**



Preaching that Connects



PREACHING



The
World
of the
Bible

The
World
of
Today

STAGE 2. Doing the spade-work

Making the connection



"The great tragedy in the church today is that evangelicals are biblical but not contemporary, while liberals are contemporary but not Biblical."

We need faithfulness to the ancient word and sensitivity to the modern world."

STAGE 3. Creating the sermon

Four goals:

1. A title
2. An introduction
3. A structure
4. A conclusion



STAGE 3. Creating the sermon – a title

Three characteristics of a good title

- summarises main point
- memorable
- “attractive”

e.g. Luke 8:40-48

“Woman with haemorrhage”

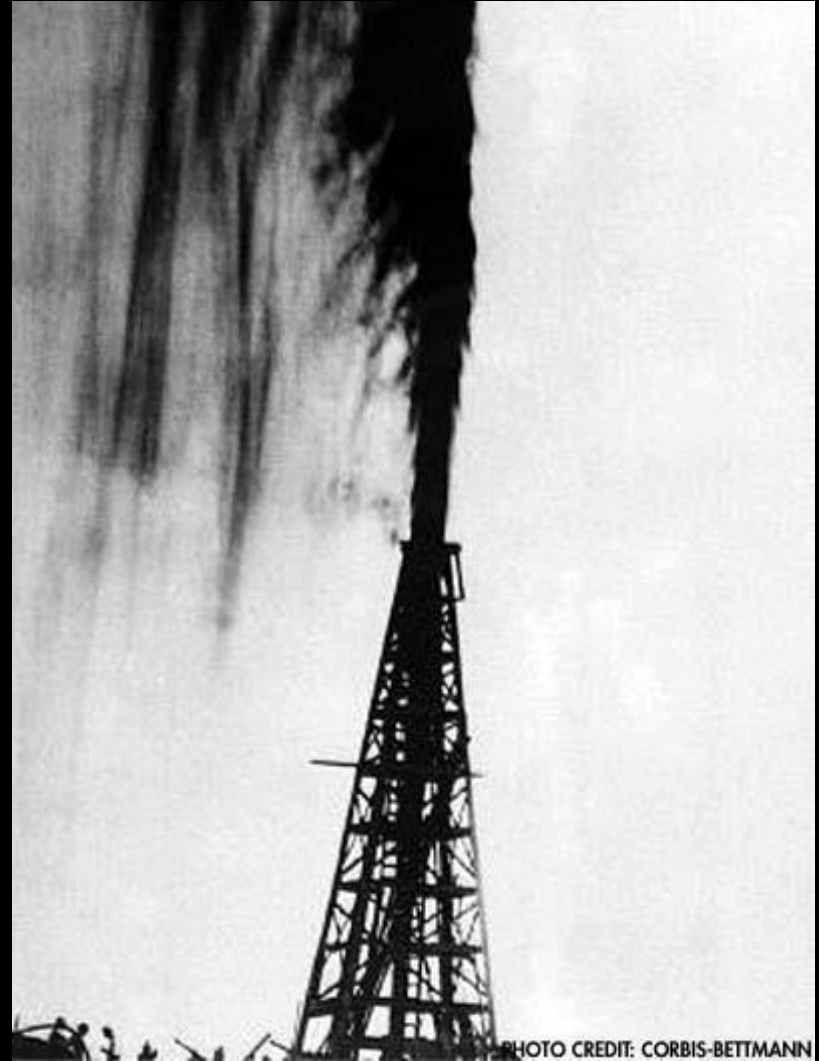
“Hoping for healing”

*What is your speech essentially about?
Tell me in a single sentence. If you can't do that, you don't know. And if you don't know you aren't ready to do a speech. (Philip Collins)*

See *“The Purpose-Driven Wife and Other Sermon Titles”*
www.unashamedworkman.org

STAGE 3. Creating the sermon – an introduction

*“if you don’t strike oil
in the first five minutes,
stop boring!”*



STAGE 3. Creating the sermon – an introduction



"I felt that in preaching the first thing you had to do was to demonstrate to the people that what you were going to do was very relevant and urgently important... I started with the man whom I wanted to listen, the patient. It was a medical approach really – here is a patient, a person in trouble, an ignorant man who has been to the quacks, and so I deal with all that in the introduction. I wanted to get to the listener and then come to my exposition." (Martyn Lloyd-Jones)

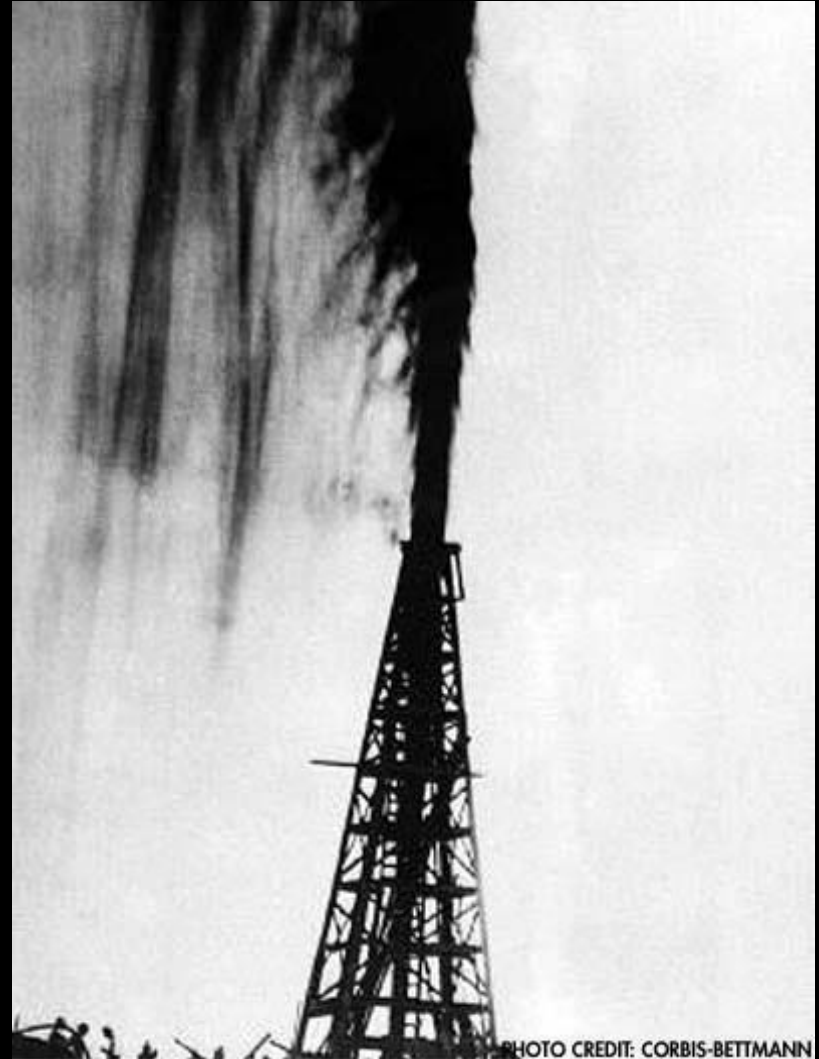
STAGE 3. Creating the sermon – an introduction

Three characteristics

- catches the **attention**
- introduces the **theme**
- leads into the **title**

Creativity!

Accuracy!



STAGE 3. Creating the sermon – a structure

Three essentials

- based on the **text**
- help to **understanding**
- easy to **follow**



STAGE 3. Creating the sermon – a structure

An example:

COURTING DISASTER –

1 Corinthians 6:12-20

1. The **purpose** of the body (verses 12-14)
2. The **power** of the body (verses 15-18)
3. The **purchase** of the body (verses 19-20)

STAGE 3. Creating the sermon – a conclusion

Three features

- summarises the **main point**
- calls for a **response**
- finishes **succinctly**





Hook



Book



Look



Took



Group study

Group Exercise 1: Matthew 14:22-36

1. What is the **context** — what happened **immediately before** this? What **similar incident** occurred previously? (see Matthew 8: 23-27). What **differences** are there between these two incidents?
2. Jesus *“**made**” the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him*” (verse 22) Why does **he stay behind** and why does he **send them ahead** without him?
3. Only Matthew includes this incident about Peter in his Gospel. What does it tell his readers (and us) **about Peter**? See also Matthew 16: 13-23
4. Is the story meant to teach that **Christians can walk on water** if they have faith in Jesus? If not, what is the **main teaching point** of this passage?
5. Suggest a **title** and a **structure** for preaching from this passage?
6. How might you **preach this passage**
 - to those who are **Christians**?
 - to those who are **not**?

Group Study



Group Exercise 2: Luke 15:11-32

1. This parable is **unique to Luke's Gospel**.

How does it fit in with **Luke's overall aim** in writing his Gospel?

2. This is the **third of three parables**.

- what is the **context** – why did Jesus tell these parables?
- what **differences** are there between the three parables?

3. What is the **significance of the elder son** in the third parable?

4. What **insights from Jewish culture** might add to our understanding of the parable?

5. Does the **traditional title** of the parable summarise its message?
Can you suggest a **better title** and a **structure** for this parable?

6. How might you **apply this parable**

- to those who are **Christians**?
- to those who are **not**?

Group Exercise 23: Luke 15:11-32

1. This parable is unique to Luke?

How does it fit in with Luke's overall aim in writing his Gospel?

Why Four Gospels?

“Why Four Gospels?” by Donald Bridge
Christian Focus Publications, 1996

Matthew

Written for Jews

Most structured

Who is Jesus?

Jesus: the King of the nations

“Worship him!”

Mark

Written for Romans

Most dramatic

What did Jesus do?

Jesus: the Son of God

“Follow him!”

Luke

Written for Greeks

Most thematic

What is Jesus like?

Jesus - the Saviour of the world

“Love him!”

John

Written for Christians

Most theological

Why did Jesus come?

Jesus - the Christ, the Son of God

“Believe in him!”

Preaching from the Gospels

The **distinctive character** of each Gospel:

- what is the **target audience**?
- what material is **unique** to this Gospel?
- what is **omitted** from shared Gospel material?
- what is **shared** with other Gospels?
- where is it **placed** in the Gospel?
- how does it relate to its **immediate context**?
- how does it relate to the **wider context** of the whole Gospel?
- **why?**

Group Exercise 23: Luke 15:11-32

1. This parable is unique to Luke?

How does it fit in with Luke's overall aim in writing his Gospel?

LUKE'S THEME: *“Good news of great joy for all people”*

- The love of Jesus for the lost – 3 parables
- 2 unique to Luke (lost sheep in Matthew 18:12-14 - different context/emphasis)
- one featuring a woman (often in Luke)

Group Exercise 2: Luke 15:11-32

2. This is the third of three parables.

- what is the context – why did Jesus tell these parables?
- what differences are there between the three parables?

Context: Luke 15:1-3

Now the tax collectors and "sinners" were all gathering around to hear him. But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them."

Then Jesus told them this parable:

- The lost **sheep** – waywardness
- The lost **coin** – carelessness
- The lost **son** - wilfulness

Group Exercise 2: Luke 15:11-32

3. What is the significance of the elder son in the third parable?

He is like the Pharisees and teachers of the law

- he will not welcome sinners (his brother)
- or eat with them (he refuses to join the banquet)

Did he ever join the feast?

Group Exercise 2: Luke 15:11-32

4. What insights from Jewish culture might add to our understanding of the parable?

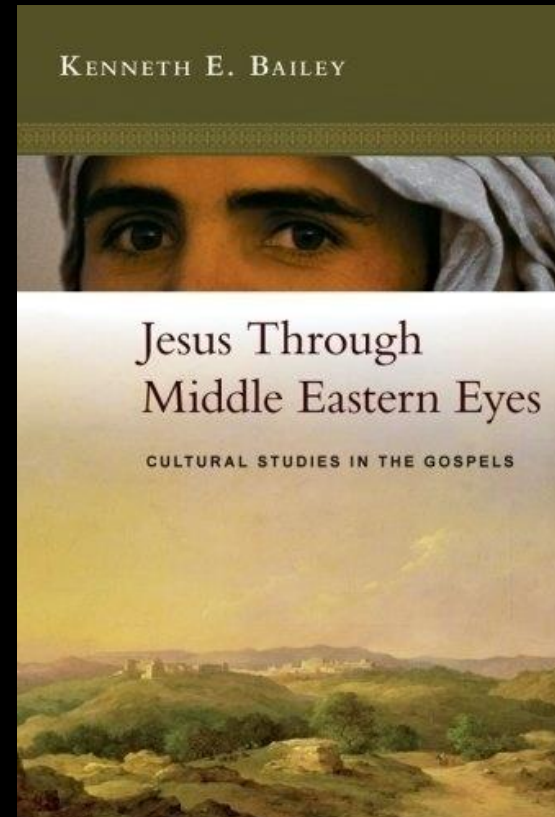
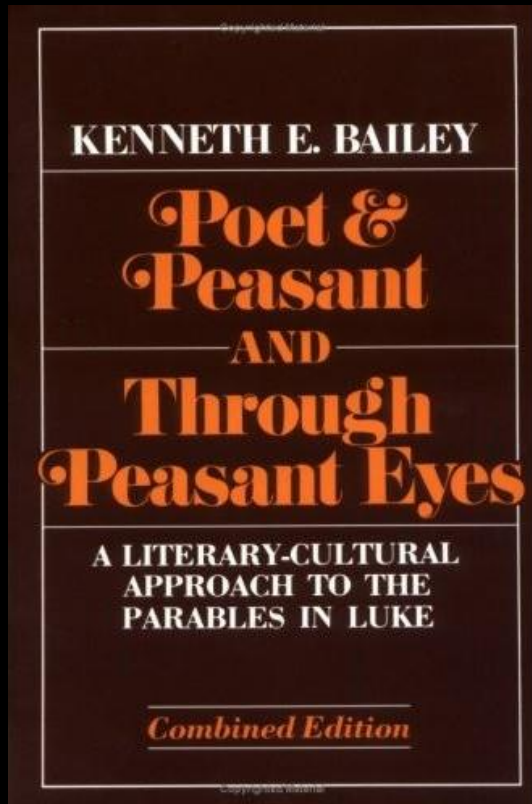
“Father, give me my share of the property” =
“I wish you were dead”

“he ran to his son” =
the father’s condescension

The older son’s refusal to join the celebrations =
shaming his father and family

Group Exercise 2: Luke 15:11-32

4. What insights from Jewish culture might add to our understanding of the parable?



Group Exercise 2: Luke 15:11-32

5. Does the traditional title of the parable summarise its message? Can you suggest a better title and a structure for this parable?

Traditional title: *“The Parable of the Prodigal Son”*

- but the parable has **two sons**
- and the focus is on **the Father**
- who loves **both his sinful sons**

New title?

Structure:

1. The son who **strayed**/the **rebellious** son
2. The son who **stayed**/the **resentful** son
3. The father who **loves**

Group Exercise 2: Luke 15:11-32

6. How might you apply this parable

- to those who are Christians?
- to those who are not?
- To **Christians**/religious people who are like the elder brother
- To **non-Christians** who are like the younger brother

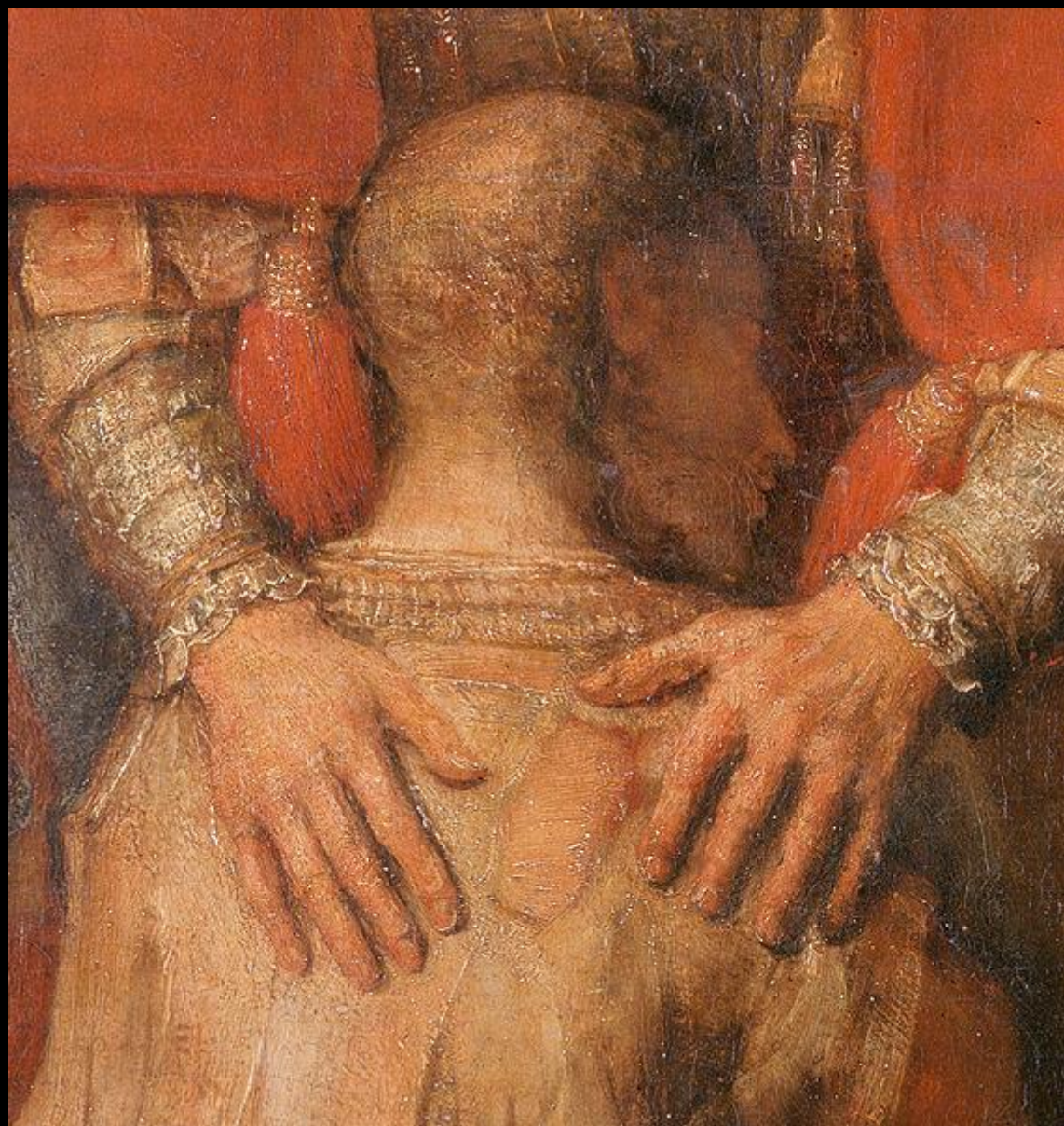


*“Preaching a parable is a novice preacher’s dream
but often an experienced preacher’s nightmare.”*

(Thomas O. Long *Preaching the Literary forms of the Bible* Philadelphia: Fortress, 1989)

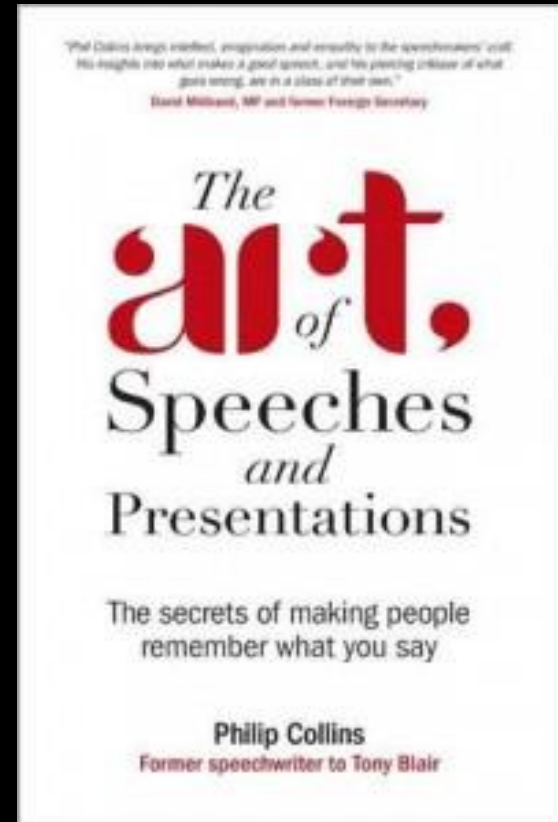
Rembrandt: *Return of the Prodigal Son*





A challenge to every preacher!

The first and most important reason why great speech is so much harder now is that there are fewer causes that demand greatness.

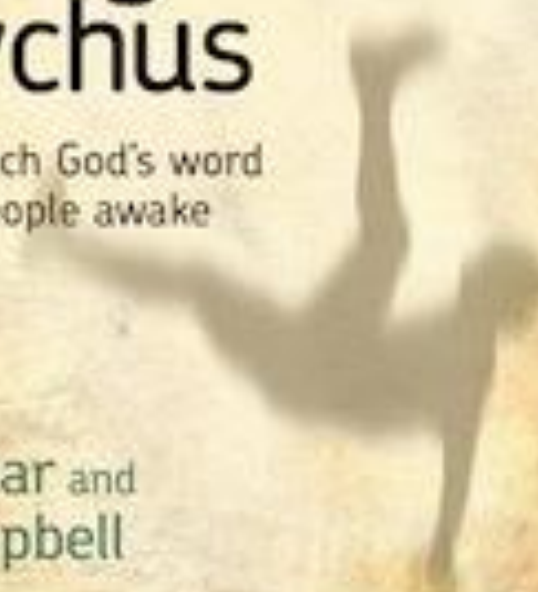




Saving Eutychus

How to preach God's word
and keep people awake

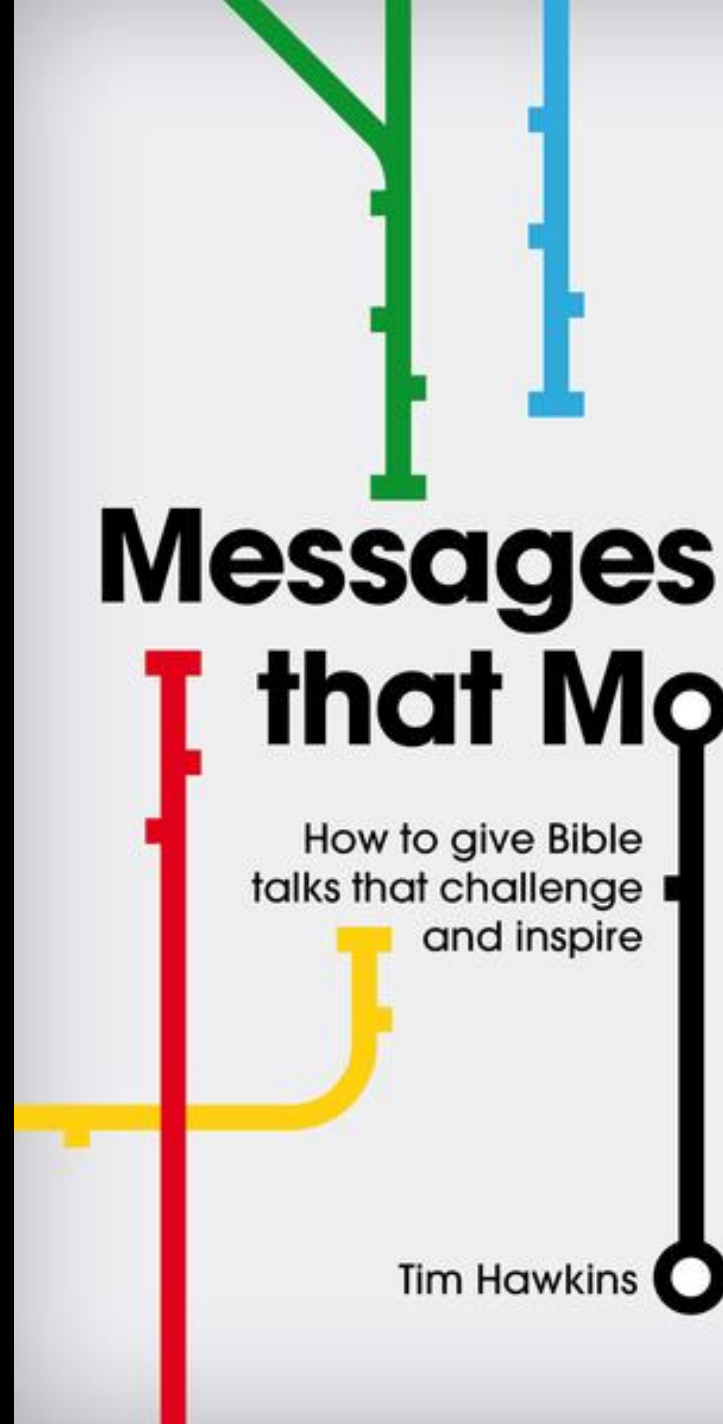
Gary Millar and
Phil Campbell



Messages that Move

How to give Bible
talks that challenge
and inspire

Tim Hawkins



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