PREPARING TO PREACH
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!
“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)
"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
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.”

PREPARING TO PREACH
"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
“And, Father, I ask Thee now for a good text to accompany this fantastic story.”
For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.
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”
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.
FIRM FOUNDATIONS

Over 200 examples of how to structure a sermon

Peter Grainger

New Extended Edition

‘...sounds a loud and clear note for lively, imaginative, Bible-based, Christ-centered preaching.’ Alistair Begg
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
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)
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
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”

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)

e.g. Luke 8:40-48
“Woman with haemorrhage”

“Hoping for healing”

See “The Purpose-Driven Wife and Other Sermon Titles”
www.unashamedworkman.org
“if you don’t strike oil in the first five minutes, stop boring!”
“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)
Three characteristics

• catches the attention
• introduces the theme
• leads into the title

Creativity!
Accuracy!
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
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

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?
1. This parable is unique to Luke? How does it fit in with Luke’s overall aim in writing his Gospel?
“Why Four Gospels?” by Donald Bridge
Christian Focus Publications, 1996
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?

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)

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?


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
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**?
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

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?

**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

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
2TIMOTHY 4
STRENGTHENING SCOTTISH PREACHING
www.2tim4.org