

# How to Effectively Preach the Gospel

Mixture of divine gift and human skills; effective preaching is the blending of human effort (skills, preparation and practice) and a level of anointing you have from God. Anointing is no substitute for preparation, we can ENHANCE our skill levels. (Billy Graham – preaching to

PROCLAMATION is “The public speaking out to society about good news, it will involve the POINTED APPLICATION of the truth of God’s word to peoples’ real life situations with the strong challenge that they RESPOND BY REPENTANCE AND FAITH.”

As we preach we are seeking to communicate both the CONTENT AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE GOSPEL. The distinct element of CHALLENGE distinguished proclamation from teaching, we are always seeking to call people to bow to Jesus.

“... The biggest failing in modern preaching today is the failure to give people something to accept or reject.” P. Trotman

When we preach the Gospel we are always PREACHING FOR A VERDICT like a lawyer at a trial. Proclamation may not always be the appropriate mode of communication to a person at that time but when it is time to proclaim then proclaim!! PROV 10:5 (24:11). Don’t be APOLOGETIC for you have good news! Don’t be arrogant – just get on with it Isaiah 40:8-9.

## 1. Aim to be a Servant Communicator

“...Effective communication of the Gospel depends not only on a thorough understanding of the content of the message but also on the ability to relate the message to the contemporary situation – most Christian communicators have been MORE MESSAGE THAT PECEPTOR ORIENTATED...” Make sure that the messenger does not obscure the message! Hid behind Jesus, don’t hide Him behind your own personality.

In other words we can seem to care more about what we say than saying it in a way that people can understand and relate to! As SERVANT COMMUNICATORS IT’S OUR JOB TO MAKE IT EASY FOR OUR HEARTS TO UNDERSTAND OUR MESSAGE!

The preacher does the hard work of preparation on the peoples’ behalf (picture of bird feeding chicks semi-digested food!!). We have to make people be interested in our word from the Lord – draw them into it until it grips them too!! BE DESPERATE TO COMMUNICATE – watch your audience feed back to tell you whether or not you are coming across. To avoid communication abandon the LANGUAGE OF ZION along with your K.J.V. Always explain your terms, unpack technical theological language, never use spiritual jargon, jargon is an EXCLUSIVE LANGUAGE of one particular interest group – preaching should always be INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE. Use every day down to earth language (idiomatic and vernacular) it’s not irrelevant – God would far rather people understood than we preserved some false sense of his dignity.

We need to use the appropriate VOCABULARY for our audience. Different words can be used in UNIVERSITY/INNERCITY MIXED CONGREGATION. Thus you have to assess your audience before your preparation. Age/sex/education.

Lambeth Experience – Gospel in words of two syllables

To help your communication interrogate your words as you speak. Try and be a concrete thinker not all airy fairy and waffling. Ask yourself “does this make sense, or am I making leaps in my mind that are logical but forgetting to tell the audience?!” The result is the preacher argues from A to D in one leap in public whilst having gone via B-C in his mind: result – baffled looks!! Always question the relevance of your statements “so what’s that mean for the audience?” People switch off if they can’t see the relevance of what you say. Also you must make an apologetic (defence) of way out unusual radical statements; this gives the thinking listeners something to ‘chew over’ otherwise he’ll just tune you out as a nutcase who hasn’t thought about what he’s saying! Always ask yourself what questions/arguments this sentence will bring up and try and cover some of them, anticipate and deal with objections to your truth!

We don’t need to be too complex in what we say. Corrie Ten Boom said K.I.S.S. Keep It Simple Stupid! The best preaching is SIMPLE/PRACTICAL/VISUAL.

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## 2. How you speak is vital!

Make sure that the messenger does not obscure the message (but that they would see Jesus). The first commandment of preaching is: "Thou shalt not bore your audience to death," you have no excuse if you make the Gospel boring!! Have something to say or say nothing! Have something to say and say it well; don't use four words when one will do, many congregations die of asphyxiation under the weight of waffle poured down on them from the pulpit! (Words like fire-fighting foam extinguishing the Holy Spirit)

Animation and variation in your tone of voice – avoid monotonous monotones, that drone on as the people drop off. Use your vocal range. Some people go to the opposite extreme, starting with a yell and ending up totally hysterical (calling it 'the anointing'!) No need to verbally brow beat people into submission (it shows a lack of respect for your listeners). Use CONVERSATIONAL INTERMATION, lean forward, draw people into your confidence, invite them into what you say with a phrase like "don't you think" or "lets look at this together" – don't pin them against the back wall of the church all the time by the force of your verbal assaults.

DRAMATIC GESTURES – George Whitfield "I should be heard, I must be heard, I shall be heard" – THUMP!!

BODY LANGUAGE – Your whole body speaks all of the time, the skill is making sure it doesn't contradict what your mouth is saying and harnessing the power of body language to ENHANCE YOUR COMMUNICATION.

COMMUNICATION – 20% verbal, 80% non-verbal. Use your whole body to communicate, and must bring mannerisms under control (i.e. picking your nose, etc.)

Most people are not able to concentrate for long listening to a talking head on a pole! We have arms and legs – use them. Walking about is fine as long as the audience doesn't have to strain their necks to keep you in view!! Hand and arm gestures have to be in time with the words they are illustrating.

Be relaxed and non-threatening, don't try and intimidate the audience. Be bright and cheerful, dress in such a way as not to detract from what you say (i.e. no stains from yesterday's lunch on your shirt). Address people personally we/you not just a vague "some people", let people feel that we're speaking to them directly. Remember we don't preach to a congregation but to a group of individuals. Look for eye contact with them – the eyes are the window to the soul.

VOICE PROJECTION – Seek to project your voice at a level suitable for the room and size of congregation. Always speak to the back row and watch their eyes to see that you are heard. (In big buildings without P.A. speak over the heads of the back row). Never be too quiet. Don't keep looking down at your notes as you speak because your words get muffled, and don't speak too fast.

Seek God for pithy one-liners that sum up chunks of what you just said (Prov. 25:11). Ask surprising rhetorical questions to wake audience up! Use REPETITION, keep pressing your truth home, recap previous points each time to remind people what's gone before.

## 3. Always structure what you are going to say

Not surprisingly a talk must have a beginning, a middle and an end. The beginning has to be good, it must be designed to grab peoples' attention, not apologetic. (Rock concerts etc., if you don't go off with a bang you've lost it!) You can use shocking quotes, or statistics, often good to start with a question to the audience.

You must end a talk at the end, plan how you are going to finish and stick to that plan – don't be like an aeroplane trying to land. Going out well is almost as important as starting well. (Most people remember your first illustration and your last point best!)

Don't ramble all over the place, you must structure your material (but don't let the structure twist the contents) in a way that will help it come over. Fifty-two headings with 3 sub-headings each will not do today!

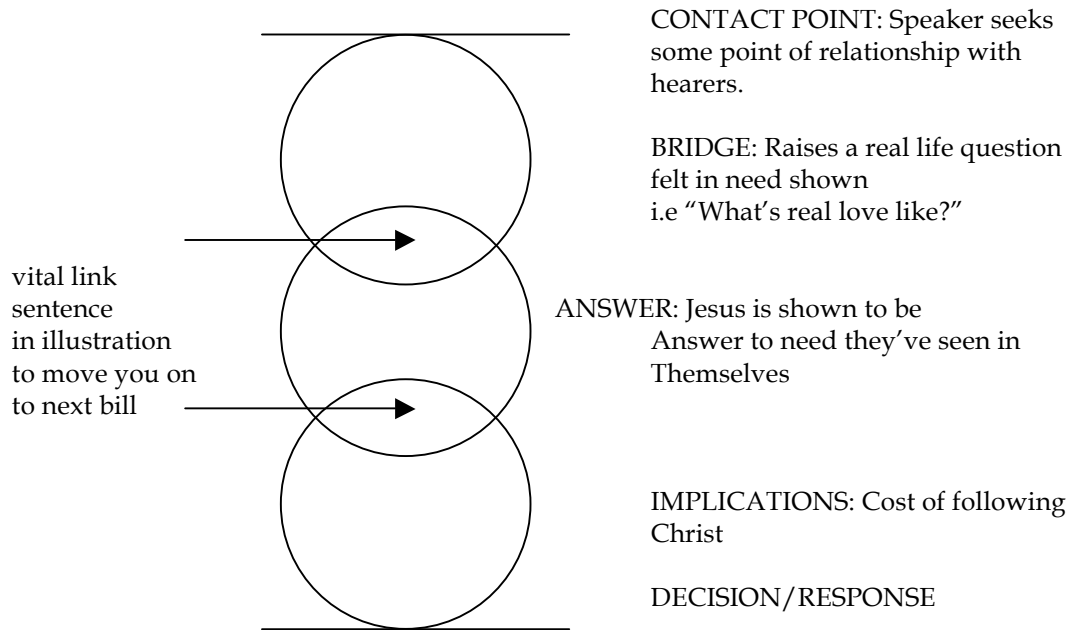


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2. Preaching from the world around us to a Biblical conclusion: This method is best suited to street preaching or to totally include audiences who don't really accept Biblical authority and need to be drawn into see the Bible's solutions are applicable to their daily problems. (STREET MEETING)

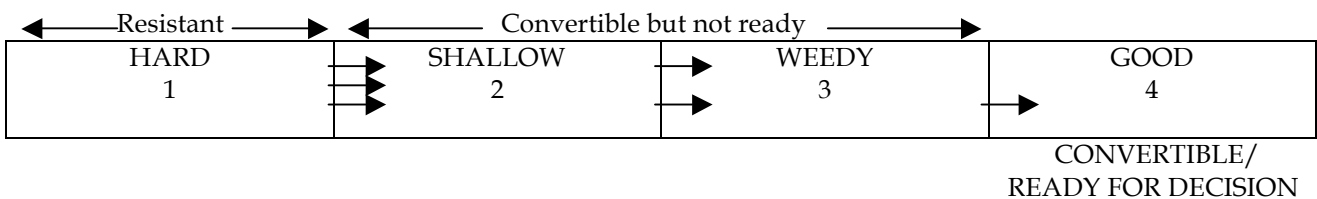
Advantage of this method is it can be tailored to fit any target audience it's based on PERCEIVED FELT NEED and present Jesus as the answer.

(The hearers felt need at the centre)



We must always be asking where is my audience on the 0-10 scale of salvation. Billy Graham Association research shows people hear the Gospel 7 times before making a commitment, we need to understand that evangelistic preaching is not just a REAPING STRATEGY BUT IT CAN ALSO BE A SOWING TOOL AS WELL:

## Matthew 13:1-23 The Parable of the 'Soils'



Slant your message to include material that will help those in 1-3 as well as going for 4. Don't go for early spiritual birth, people at 2-3 can make decision because of problems of UNDERSTANDING (2) and of COMMITMENT/COST (3) have not been explored and faced up to.

Thus you can preach to deepen understanding (apologetics) and you can talk about cost more to help people move towards true salvation.

Once you open your mouth seek to throw yourself onto the wind of the spirit. Let the Holy Spirit put words into your mouth and go for it:

BE PASSIONATE, BE POWERFUL, BE PERSUASIVE, and above all persevere until God uses you!!