

⇒ Class presentations:

- Charles Spurgeon: Lectures To My Students. [German Lutheran pastor & theologian Helmut Thieliicke once said, “Sell all (the books) that you have ... and buy Spurgeon ... ”]
 - ✠ The Minister’s Self-Watch (Vol 1)
 - ✠ The Call To The Ministry (Vol 1)
 - ✠ The Preacher’s Private Prayer (Vol 1)
 - ✠ Our Public Prayer (Vol 1)
 - ✠ Sermons – Their Matter (Vol 1)
 - ✠ On The Choice Of The Text (Vol 1)
 - ✠ On Spiritualizing (Vol 1)
 - ✠ On The Voice (Vol 1)
 - ✠ Attention (Vol 1)
 - ✠ The Faculty Of Impromptu Speech (Vol 1)
 - ✠ The Minister’s Fainting Fits (Vol 1)
 - ✠ The Minister’s Ordinary Conversation (Vol 1)
 - ✠ To Workers With Slender Appartus (Vol 1)
 - ✠ Illustrations In Preaching (Vol 2)
 - ✠ Anecdotes From The Pulpit (Vol 2)
 - ✠ The Use Of Anecdotes And Illustrations (Vol 3)
 - ✠ The Holy Spirit In Connection With Our Ministry (Vol 3)
 - ✠ Necessity Of Ministerial Progress (Vol 3)
 - ✠ The Need Of Decision For The Truth (Vol 3)
 - ✠ Posture, Action, Gesture, Etc 1 (Vol 3)
 - ✠ Posture, Action, Gesture, Etc 2 (Vol 3)
 - ✠ Earnestness: Its Marring And Maintenance (Vol 3)
 - ✠ The Blind Eye And The Deaf Ear (Vol 3)
 - ✠ On Conversion As Our Aim (Vol 3)
- Rick Warren: Preaching Tips That Will Change Lives.
- James E. Rosscup: The Priority Of Prayer In Preaching.
- Ron Cammenga: Preaching Christ From Old Testament Historical Narrative Texts.
- Sinclair Ferguson: Preaching Christ From The Old Testament.

Preaching Workshop – Lesson 1: Law And Gospel

1 Eleven Theses

☞ Thesis 1: God speaks to people either Law or Gospel. These two ways of divine speaking need to be distinguished but belong together and work together dynamically.

- When God speaks Law, he asks us to do something. For instance, he says: “Do not commit adultery. Keep the sabbath day holy. Love God with all of your heart, mind and soul. Love your neighbour as yourself.” When God speaks Law, he says: “Do this and do that.”
- When God speaks Gospel, he does not ask us to do anything but proclaims what he is doing himself. For instance, he says: “I forgive you. I love you. I pour out my Holy Spirit on you. I convict you of your sin and save you.” When God speaks Gospel, which is Good News, he says: “I do this and I do that – for you.”
- In summary: We do the Law and God does the Gospel.
- Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Article IV, 5: "All Scripture should be divided into these two chief doctrines, the law and the promises." Formula of Concord, Article V, 1: "The distinction between law and Gospel is an especially brilliant light which serves the purpose that the Word of God may be rightly divided and the writings of the holy prophets and apostles may be explained and understood correctly. We must therefore observe this distinction with particular diligence lest we confuse the two doctrines and change the Gospel into law. This would darken the merit of Christ and rob disturbed consciences of the comfort which they would otherwise have in the holy Gospel when it is preached purely and without admixture, for by it Christians can support themselves in their greatest temptations against the terrors of the law." Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Article XII, 53: "These are the two chief works of God in people, to terrify and to justify and quicken the terrified. One or the other of these works is spoken of throughout Scripture. One part is the law which reveals, denounces, and condemns sin. The other part is the Gospel, that is, the promise of grace granted in Christ."

☞ Thesis 2: The Law always ends up accusing us.

- Why do we not obey even the best of laws? This side of eternity we are also sinners. We keep falling into sin. The Bible says: “If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us” (1 John 1:8). Therefore, every law sooner or later ends up accusing us. The Law says: “Do this and do that,” but we fail to live up to its perfect standards. We sin and stand accused.
- Formula of Concord, Article V, 17-18: “Everything that rebukes sin is and belongs to the law, the proper function of which is to condemn sin and to lead to a knowledge of sin (Romans 3:20; 7:7) ... the true function of the law remains, to rebuke sin and to give instruction about good works.” Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Article IV, 38: “ ... For the law always accuses and terrifies consciences. It does not justify, because a conscience terrified by the law flees before God's judgment.” Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Article XII, 88: “For the law will always accuse us because we never satisfy the law of God. As Paul says (Rom. 4:15), ‘The law brings wrath.’”

- Formula of Concord, Article V, 10: “The mere preaching of the law without Christ either produces presumptuous people, who believe that they can fulfill the law by external works, or drives people utterly to despair.”

➔ **Thesis 3: The Law is preached first to accuse of sin, then the Gospel absolves and comforts.**

- Luther: “The law makes us aware that we are sick with sin. Then the gospel is welcomed as the medicine healing our sickness.” Smalcald Articles, Part III, Article 3, 1-4: “The New Testament retains and performs the office of the law, which reveals sin and God's wrath, but to this office it immediately adds the promise of God's grace through the Gospel” (cf. Formula of Concord, Article V, 14). Mark 1:15; Acts 2:38; 20:21.
- If we hear threats (law) after the promises (gospel), then we are robbed of the comfort, which God wants to give us.

➔ **Thesis 4: The Law is not preached to those that are already terrorized by the Law. They need to hear the Gospel.**

- More law preaching would add to people's misery and despair.
- God would not be known as a loving God.
- Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Article IV, 257: “Thus in the preaching of penitence it is not enough to preach the Law, the Word that convicts of sin ... Consciences cannot find peace unless they hear the voice of God, clearly promising the forgiveness of sins ... ”

➔ **Thesis 5: The Gospel is not preached to those that are no longer bothered by their sins. They need to hear the Law.**

- More gospel preaching would encourage people to go on sinning.
- People would be fooled into thinking that everything was all right.
- God's free gift of forgiveness would become cheap.
- In 1937 the theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote: “We Lutherans [he could have added other Christians] have gathered like eagles round the carcass of cheap grace, and there we have drunk of the poison which has killed the life of following Christ ... Cheap grace has turned out to be utterly merciless to our Evangelical Church ... Instead of opening up the way to Christ it has closed it. Instead of calling us to follow Christ, it has hardened us in our disobedience ... The word of cheap grace has been the ruin of more Christians than any commandment of works ... ” Bonhoeffer attacked the preaching of “cheap grace” which is precisely the preaching of more grace to those that are no longer bothered by their sins. Bonhoeffer says: “Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline, Communion without confession, absolution without personal confession. Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate.” Cheap grace is grace without following Jesus as our Lord. This cannot be. If we ever think along those lines, we do not need more Gospel preaching but the Law.

➔ **Thesis 6: The Law does not produce good works.**

- If we used the law to pressure and coerce people into performing good works, we would act as if people by themselves were capable of doing what the law requires.

- We would be tempted to earn our salvation.
- We would either become proud of our achievements or despair in the face of the law's uncompromising demands.
- We would do good works out of a sense of duty and not out of love.
- We would become resentful and bitter about what we perceive to be a cruel task-master in heaven.

➔ **Thesis 7: The Gospel produces good works.**

- Good works are always a response to God's good news.
- Works that are performed under the threat of punishment are not good works. Good works are works of love. Luther, Preface to the Letter of Romans: "But to fulfill the law means to do its work eagerly, lovingly and freely, without the constraint of the law; it means to live well and in a manner pleasing to God, as though there were no law or punishment. It is the Holy Spirit, however, who puts such eagerness of unconstrained love into the heart, as Paul says in ch. 5. But the Spirit is given only in, with, and through faith in Jesus Christ, as Paul says in his introduction. So, too, faith comes only through the word of God, the Gospel, that preaches Christ."
- C.F.W. Walther: The Proper Distinction Between Law And Gospel, Concordia Publishing House 1929: "A preacher of the law comes down on people with threats and punishment; a preacher of divine grace coaxes and urges people by reminding them of the goodness and mercy which God has shown them."
- Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Article IV, 125: "Since faith brings the Holy Spirit and produces a new life in our hearts, it must produce spiritual impulses in our hearts. What these impulses are, the prophet shows when he says (Jer. 31:33), 'I will put my law upon their hearts.' After we have been justified and regenerated by faith, therefore, we begin to fear and love God, to pray and expect help from him, to thank and praise him, and to submit to him in our afflictions. Then we also begin to love our neighbour because our hearts have spiritual and holy impulses."
- Luther, Preface to the Letter of Romans: "Faith is a work of God in us, which changes us and brings us to birth anew from God (cf. John 1). It kills the old Adam, makes us completely different people in heart, mind, senses, and all our powers, and brings the Holy Spirit with it. What a living, creative, active, powerful thing is faith! It is impossible that faith ever stop doing good. Faith doesn't ask whether good works are to be done, but, before it is asked, it has done them. It is always active. Whoever doesn't do such works is without faith; ... Faith is a living, unshakeably confidence in God's grace; it is so certain that someone would die a thousand times for it. This kind of trust in and knowledge of God's grace makes a person joyful, confident, and happy with regard to God and all creatures. This is what the Holy Spirit does by faith. Through faith, a person will do good to everyone without coercion, willingly and happily; he will serve everyone, suffer everything for the love and praise of God, who has shown him such grace. It is as impossible to separate works from faith as burning and shining from fire."

➔ **Thesis 8: The Gospel produces good works and makes us wage "war" against our old sinful self.**

- Luther, Concerning Christian Freedom: "For the inner self, being conformed to God and created after the image of God through faith, rejoices and delights itself in Christ, in whom such blessings have been conferred on it, and hence has only this task before it: to serve God with joy and for nought in free love. But in doing this he comes into collision with that contrary will in his own flesh, which is striving to serve the world and to seek its own gratification. This the spirit of faith cannot and will not bear, but applies

itself with cheerfulness and zeal to keep it down and restrain it, as Paul says, 'I delight in the law of God after the inward self, but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin' (Romans 7:22-23), and again, 'I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway' (1 Corinthians 9:27), and 'They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affectations and lusts' (Galatians 5:24)."

- An evangelist complains: "... what is particularly saddening and even agonizing, is that many ministers and leading Christians give completely false instruction on how to overcome sin. The directions that are generally given on the subject, I am sorry to say, amount to this: 'Take your sins in detail, resolve to abstain from them, and fight against them, if need be with prayer and fasting, until you have overcome them. Set your will firmly against a relapse into sin, pray and struggle, and resolve that you will not fall – and persist in this until you form the habit of obedience and break all your sinful habits.' To be sure, it is generally added: 'In this conflict, you must not depend upon your own strength but pray for the help of God.' ..." (Charles Finney: *Power From God*, New Kensington 1996, 119-120).

What is wrong with taking your sins in detail, resolving to abstain from them and fighting against them? This is motivating with the Law. "Do this and do that! Overcome sin with a habit of obedience!" It does not work. Sin is like darkness which can only be overcome by light. We do not get rid of darkness in a room by trying to shovel out the darkness. We have to turn on the light. In the same way, resolutions and battle plans, even the best instructions based on the Law of God, fasten our attention on the sin and its source, when we need to fasten on to Jesus – the only light that can dispel our darkness. The power for victory comes from the Gospel. The power for new life comes from the grace of God.

However, there can be another problem. If the Gospel produces good works and therefore we preach the grace of God, the actions of God, to motivate people's obedience to God, do we not once again end up with "cheap grace"? Bonhoeffer tells the story of a pastor who was met by a parishioner after church. "The parishioner said: "Pastor, just lately I don't seem to get anything out of your sermons. They don't speak to me any more." The pastor counseled: "Just hang in there. The Bible promises that the word of God creates faith. God ministers to you." However, a few Sundays later the parishioner came back with the same complaint which left the pastor confused about what to say next."

The pastor was confused because he tried to motivate with the Gospel and therefore kept saying: "God loves you. You are a forgiven child of God. He speaks to you in sermons and wants to bless you. Good things happen as you listen. God promises much to you. God ministers to you." The pastor kept on going like this but it did not work. It became "cheap grace". What then was he to do? Was he to motivate with the Law instead? No, listen to what Bonhoeffer suggests: "That particular pastor should stop agonizing over this. He needs to spell out what he knows about the parishioner: 'You are trying to keep some part of your life under your own control. That is what is preventing you from listening to Christ and believing in his grace. You cannot hear Christ because you are wilfully disobedient. Somewhere in your heart you are refusing to listen to his call.' ..."

Bonhoeffer explains in general terms: "No one should be surprised at the difficulty of faith, if there is some part of his life where he is consciously resisting or disobeying the commandment of Jesus ... Is there some part of your life which you are refusing to surrender at his behest, some sinful passion, maybe, or some animosity, some hope, perhaps your ambition or your reason? If so, you must not be surprised that you have not received the Holy Spirit, that prayer is difficult, or that your request for faith

remains unanswered ... How can you hope to enter into communion with him when at some point in your life you are running away from him?”

Therefore the pastor's message to the struggling parishioner was to be: “Dear friend, unless you obey, you cannot believe. Unless you repent and obey, no sermon will speak to you because you are running away from Christ.”

Bonhoeffer recognized that in this instance and other instances you can no longer speak Gospel but need to speak Law. He followed Thesis 5: “The Gospel is not preached to those that are no longer bothered by their sins. They need to hear the Law.” However, this does not mean that in this case Bonhoeffer counseled to motivate good works by Law. The dynamic is that the Law needed to accuse again, so that the hardened parishioner reawakened to his need for salvation. He had to be confronted to overcome the lie that God is not serious about his Law (that his wrath does not burn against all unrighteousness) so that the hardened parishioner reawakened to his need for salvation which then would drive him to seek and find healing in the Gospel – the source for all of his good works.

Let's get at this from a different angle. A Christian counselor writes: “Life in the Spirit is *easy*. For that is the hallmark of the kingdom – no sweat ... If we have to *try* to be loving, that is evidence that we are serving not God but the idol of our . [sinful self]. If kindness, love and forgiveness flow from us easily and naturally, all credit goes swiftly and easily to the Lord, for His life is in us. So the presence of striving is always our first clue ... [for something being wrong]” (John & Paula Sandford: Restoring The Christian Family, New Jersey 1979).

This reaffirms what we have said so far. “Life in the Spirit is easy [that is: Life motivated by the Gospel of God is easy because then the grace of God motivates and empowers everything we do.] . that is the hallmark of the kingdom – no sweat ... If we have to *try* to be loving, that is evidence that we are serving not God but the idol of our . [sinful self].”

If we have to *try* to be loving, then we are motivated not by the Gospel but Law, relying on ourselves to do what the Law says. On the other hand, motivated by the Gospel, having a life in the Spirit, we don't have to *try* doing God's will, we just do – easily and naturally without raising a sweat.

In summary this is how we preach on discipleship: 1. We let the Law of God accuse us of sin. 2. We surrender to God and repent of our sin. 3. We receive forgiveness which removes any blockages to the power of the Gospel. 4. Good works flow from the grace of God within us. 5. As often as we struggle with good works, we go back to point 1.

➔ **Thesis 9: One and the same Word can function either as Law or Gospel.**

- The message of Jesus' death and resurrection can function as either law or gospel.
 - ✠ Law: You and your sins crucified Christ and you should not have done it.
 - ✠ Gospel: Through his death and resurrection Christ forgives you and takes away your sins.
- The message of godly prayer can function as either law or gospel.
 - ✠ Law: You should pray, but you do not pray enough.
 - ✠ Gospel: God speaks, listens and comforts you in prayer.
- We may be aware of how we and others hear words from the Bible and our preaching.

☞ **Thesis 10: The most difficult and highest Christian art is to master the dynamic of Law and Gospel, to distinguish these two ways of divine speaking, and to know when to speak either Law or Gospel.**

- The doctrine of distinguishing law and gospel may be easy to understand, but is most difficult to put into practise. The Holy Spirit must teach this in the school of experience. Luther: “There is no person on earth who knows how properly to divide Law from the Gospel. When we hear about it in a sermon, we imagine that we know how to do it, but we are greatly mistaken. The Holy Spirit alone knows this art ... ” (Walch, XXII, 65).
- After repenting and confessing our sins, we know that we are forgiven, but this knowledge does not always sink in. Sometimes it is hard to apply the gospel to our own life-situation (cf. 1 John 3:19-20). Luther: “In your tribulations you will become aware that the Gospel is a rare guest in people’s consciences, while the Law is their daily and familiar companion. For people have by nature the knowledge of the Law” (St. L. Ed. IX, 161).
- Outwardly a person may look like a devout Christian and not look like someone needing the accusing warnings of the law, but inwardly he is hardened doing evil things.
- Frustrated church people easily resort to preaching the law to make people do things. That never results in joy and the freedom of the gospel.

☞ **Thesis 11: Good Theology makes God the doer of the sentence. God does for us and to us.**

- On our own we cannot do anything, but God has to convict us of our sin and work salvation.
- When God is the doer of the sentence, we safeguard against making faith and the works of faith a human work.
- When God is the doer of the sentence, we stop accusing people with the law.
- When God is the doer of the sentence, we hear the sweet words of the gospel and experience the goodness of God.

2 Practical Considerations

- ☞ **God speaks a living word into current history.** The Word of God can never be a text-book of ready-made formulas. It is dynamic and speaks into specific circumstances. Discernment is needed to determine whether the current situation requires the preaching of Law or Gospel. [See also the need to discern the “now-word” which may contradict an earlier word of God. For instance, in Genesis 22:12 God calls upon Abraham not to harm his son even though he told him previously to sacrifice him as a burnt offering (Genesis 22:2). One may also consider Acts 10.]
- ☞ **Preaching comes before the written Word.** Uuraas Saarnivaara: Written And Spoken Word. Luther’s View, First published in the May 1950 issue of The Lutheran Quarterly: We stated above that Luther in general teaches that God bestows His pardoning and renewing grace by means of the spoken word, through the service of the ministry of reconciliation. His emphasis is definitely on the spoken word, when it comes to the means by which God bestows His grace upon men. But when it comes to the norm and rule of our faith and life, his emphasis is on the written word of the Bible. He often says that the Gospel, in its actual sense, is the spoken, proclaimed word. In his Preface to his Church Postil he says: “The Gospel is not a writing (or scripture, schrift) but a spoken word which explains Scripture”(WA 10I:1, 17, 6). In the first sermon of the same Postil he says: “The Old Testament alone ... is called Scripture. For the New Testament must, in the actual sense, be a living word and not writing (or scripture, schrift). Therefore Christ did not write anything but commanded to preach and

spread the Gospel, which was hidden in Scripture” (WA 10I:2, 35, 1). “It belongs to the nature of the Gospel and the New Testament that it is preached and proclaimed in an oral living voice” (WA 10I:48, 1). In a later sermon Luther again says that “the law and the Old Testament are dead writings, put into books, but the Gospel must be a living voice” (WA 10I:204, 20, 4th Sunday in Advent, gospel sermon).

Therefore the Church is a “mouth-house” (Bethphage) and not a “pen-house” (WA 10I:48, 1). The writing of the Gospels became necessary because of the fact that “there arose heretics, false teachers, and manifold errors, so that the sheep of Christ were offered poison instead of pasture. Therefore, ... in order to save at least some sheep from the wolves, the writing of books and Scriptures was started with the purpose of leading Christ's sheep to Scripture and... keeping them from wolves” (WA 10I: 1, 627, 1, Epiphany gospel sermon). Thus, the purpose of the New Testament writings was to provide against false doctrines and to keep Christians in the divine truth. The actual Gospel through which men were led to Christ and made partakers of salvation in Him, or the Gospel as a means of grace, continued to be the oral word.

Luther often used the term “external word.” By it he meant primarily the oral proclamation of the Gospel. He emphasized, however, that it must be based on the written word and draw from it. It must be “a preaching of the Scriptures,” as Luther states in the Smalcald Articles: “In those things which concern the spoken, outward word, we must firmly hold that God grants His Spirit of grace to no one, except through or with the preceding outward word. Thereby we are protected against enthusiasts, that is, spirits who boast that they have the Spirit without and before the word..., as they boast that they have received the Spirit without the preaching of Scriptures” (SA II, viii).

In his explanation of Psalm 51(1532) Luther says: “When our conscience is troubled in the sense of the wrath of God, there is no other remedy than a good word, either a word which is spoken by a brother who is present or a word which we recollect through a word previously heard (per praeteritum auditum)... from the mouth of the Holy Spirit... You must have a spoken word. This verse speaks against those who hate the outward word” (WA 40II:410, 2, Hs. [=Handschrift or manuscript text]). The Holy Spirit can give a person consolation both through the word spoken by a brother who is present and by bringing to memory a word which he has previously heard. But consolation and confirmation of faith may also be received through the study of the written word of God. All true consolation is derived from the Scriptures. “Scripture alone comforts... For if He does not give a consoling word to the heart, the heart will never find it” (WA 10I:2, 75 ff., Church Postil, 2nd Sunday in Advent, epistle sermon).

It is not in the power of man to appropriate for his comfort a spoken or written word. The effect of all word depends on the presence and work of the Holy Spirit. He must make it effective in the heart and conscience. The Spirit uses the word as He wills, or as the Augsburg Confession states: “By the word and sacraments, as by instruments, the Holy Spirit is given; who worketh faith, where and when it pleaseth God, in those who hear the Gospel” (AC V).

- ➔ **We have to experience and live the Word before we can preach it.** John 1:14: “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us ... ” Incarnational Preaching: <http://postmodernpreaching.net/incarnational.htm>: What is incarnational preaching? It is preaching out of the encounter with God that we live out in our lives. Bishop William A. Quayle once said that preaching is not the art of making a sermon ... it is the art of making a preacher. Phillips Brooks taught that *preaching is truth speaking through personality*. Haddon W. Robinson, in defining expository preaching, mentions its incarnational aspects: *Expository preaching is the communication of a biblical concept, derived from and transmitted through a historical, grammatical, and literary study of a passage in its context, which the Holy Spirit first applies to the personality and experience of*

the preacher, then through him to his hearers (From Haddon W. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages*)

A sermon is a Word that lives in our hearts. It speaks through our whole personality. It is a Word event in our lives, an oral encounter. The Old Testament prophets used the word *na'um*, “oracle” or “burden,” to describe the messages they received from God, messages that weighed heavily on their hearts (cf. Numbers 23:7, Psalm 36:1, Isaiah 13:1, Jeremiah 23:33-38, Ezekiel 12:10).

The rationalism of the modern era made many of our sermons seem so emotionless and detached from life. We dispensed truth as if we were dishing out food, instead of being prophets and sages. Postmodern preaching ought to be heart-felt. We want to speak out of our personal encounters with the living God.

I have a friend, from the African American tradition, whom I greatly respect. He serves in a small inner-city Baptist church founded by his father. The work is discouraging and difficult and the church barely survives. He and his wife have to work other jobs. One day, I invited my friend to preach in my church, not because of his fame or connections, but because of his suffering. I knew he could say things I never could have. Toward the end of his sermon, as he slipped into the rhythmic call and response exhortation of the African American sermon, when the main point is driven home, I could sense him touching lives. His whole personality and his heart-felt emotion spoke to a whole class of people who never responded to me before. It was *his life lived before God* that was speaking.

Postmodern society is filled with plastic voices. These are the advertisements of our age that call out to people for attention, like painted ladies from corners. The danger we face is to become just another plastic voice. It happens when our message is not backed by our authenticity ...

3 **Practical Exercises**

➔ **Read Acts 9:1-31 and identify five Law statements and five Gospel statements.**

- Law:
 - ✠ Verse 6: “Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.”
 - ✠ Verse 12: “ ... place his hands on him to restore his sight.”
 - ✠ Verse 16: You must suffer for my name.
 - ✠ Verse 22: When Jesus is proven to be the Christ, you must have faith.
 - ✠ Verse 31: You must live in the fear of the Lord.
- Gospel:
 - ✠ Verse 3: Jesus made a light flash around Paul and spoke to him.
 - ✠ Verse 15: Paul is Jesus’ chosen instrument.
 - ✠ Verse 17-18: Jesus filled Paul with the Spirit.
 - ✠ Verse 22: God made Paul grow more and more powerful.
 - ✠ Verse 31: God made the church grow in numbers.

➔ **Now turn each of the five Law statements into Gospel statement and turn each of the five Gospel statements into Law statements.**

- Law turned into Gospel:
 - ✚ Verse 6: “Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.” => Jesus guided Paul in his future life.
 - ✚ Verse 12: “ ... place his hands on him to restore his sight.” => Jesus gave him power to heal the blind eyes of Paul.
 - ✚ Verse 16: You must suffer for my name. => Jesus considered him worthy to suffer for his name.
 - ✚ Verse 22: When Jesus is proven to be the Christ, you must have faith. => Jesus provides evidence for faith.
 - ✚ Verse 31: You must live in the fear of the Lord. => The Lord makes us live in reverence before him.
- Gospel turned into Law:
 - ✚ Verse 3: Jesus made a light flash around Paul and spoke to him. => Paul had to stop in his tracks.
 - ✚ Verse 15: Paul is Jesus’ chosen instrument. => Paul needs to be obedient to his master’s will.
 - ✚ Verse 17-18: Jesus filled Paul with the Spirit. => Paul had to seek the infilling with the Holy Spirit.
 - ✚ Verse 22: God made Paul grow more and more powerful. => Paul was to steward the growing power of God.
 - ✚ Verse 31: God made the church grow in numbers. => The church had to incorporate a growing number of converts.

☞ **Debate whether a sermon should finish with Gospel or Law.**

- There should have been enough Gospel preaching so that the Law becomes a joyful and practical response rather than a condemning word.
- The Law never motivates good works.
- [Preaching sets up an encounter with God and an encounter with God is always an experience of grace even when God calls to repentance. Preaching sets up impartation.]

4 **Review Question**

☞ **Was my preaching Gospel or Law?**

☞ **What did my preaching of the Word do? (Did God impart his grace or call to repentance?)**

✠ Preaching Workshop – Lesson 2: The Sword Of The Spirit

1 Two Bible Passages

☞ Acts 10:1-48: “At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius ... One day at about three in the afternoon he had a vision. He distinctly saw an angel of God ... The angel answered, ‘Your prayers and gifts to the poor have come up as a memorial offering before God. Now send men to Joppa to bring back a man named Simon ...’ ... About noon the following day ... Peter went up on the roof to pray ... he fell into a trance. He saw heaven opened ... Then a voice told him ... The voice spoke to him a second time ... This happened three times ... While Peter was thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, ‘Simon, three men are looking for you ... Do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them.’ ... Cornelius answered, ‘ ... Now we are all here in the presence of God to listen to everything the Lord has commanded you to tell us.’ Then Peter began to speak: ‘ ... You know the Word [emphasis mine] he sent to the people of Israel, telling the good news [preaching] of peace through Jesus Christ – he is Lord of all ... everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name. While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message ... ”

- **God sent an angel, a trance, a vision, a voice from heaven and Spirit impressions but none of these communications served to explain Jesus to Cornelius. God employed all manners of supernatural communications for the sole purpose of setting up a simple preaching engagement between Peter and Cornelius because God is using none other than his human sons and daughters to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ. What a privilege for us!**

✠ Bible Backup – 2 Corinthians 5:9-6:10: “ ... we make it our goal to please him [our God] ... for we must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad. Since, then, we know what it is to fear the Lord, we try to persuade people ... For Christ’s love urges us on, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves, but for him who died for them and was raised again ... if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God was making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. As God’s fellow workers we urge you not to receive God’s grace in vain ... I tell you, now is the time of God’s favour, now is the day of salvation ... ”

✠ Bible Backup – Luke 10:16: “He who listens to you listens to me; he who rejects you rejects me; but he who rejects me rejects him who sent me.”

- **The good news in a nutshell is peace through Jesus Christ who is Lord of all.**

✠ Bible Backup – Romans 1:16-17: “I am not ashamed of the gospel [good news], because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes ... For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last ... ”

✠ Bible Backup – Luke 24:47: “ ... and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations ... ”

- **The preaching of Jesus Christ releases the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit comes through proclaiming Jesus Christ.**

✠ Bible Backup – Ephesians 6:17: “ ... the sword of the Spirit . is the word of God.”

✠ Bible Backup – 1 Thessalonians 1:5-6: “ . our gospel came to you not simply with words, but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction ... you welcomed the message with the joy given by the Holy Spirit.”

☞ 1 Corinthians 2:1-5: “When I came to you brothers, I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. I came to you in weakness and fear and with much trembling. My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit’s power, so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom, but on God’s power.”

- **The core message is Jesus and him crucified.**
- **The power of preaching does not depend on any clever or persuasive putting together of words.**
- **Preaching must come with a demonstration of the Spirit’s power.**

✠ Bible Backup – Romans 15:18-19: “ ... what Christ has accomplished through me in leading the Gentiles to obey God by what I have said and done – by the power of signs and miracles, through the power of the Spirit ... I have fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ.”

✠ Bible Backup – 2 Corinthians 12:12: “The things that mark an apostle – signs, wonders and miracles – were done among you with great perseverance.”

2 Three Foundational Statements

☞ **The Word has no power without the Spirit.**

- Bible Backup – Luke 24:45-49: “ ... repentance and forgiveness will be preached in his name to all nations ... but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.”
- Bible Backup – Acts 1:4-8: “ ... Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised ... in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit ... But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; [then] you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”
- Bible Backup – 2 Timothy 3:5: “ ... having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them.” Zechariah 4:4: “ ... ‘Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,’ says the Lord Almighty.”

☞ **The Spirit does nothing without the Word.**

- Bible Backup – Genesis 1:1-25: “ ... And God said, ‘Let there be light,’ and there was light ... ” 2 Peter 3:5: “ ... by God’s word the heavens existed and the earth was formed ... ” Hebrews 1:3: “ ... sustaining all things by his powerful word ... ”
- Bible Backup – Ephesians 6:17: “ ... the sword of the Spirit . is the word of God.” Revelations 19:11-16: “I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True ... his name is the Word of God ... Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations ... ” Hebrews 4:12: “ . the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword ... judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.”

- Bible Backup – Isaiah 55:10-11: “As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.”
- Bible Backup – Matthew 16:19: “I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” John 20:22-23: “And with that he breathed on them and said, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.’”
- Bible Backup – 1 Peter 1:23-25: “. you have been born ... through the living and enduring word of God ... ” James 1:18: “God chose to give us birth through the word of truth ... ”
- Bible Backup – Luke 8:4-15: “ ... This is the meaning of the parable: The seed is the word of God ... But the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop.” Colossians 1:6: “ ... this gospel is bearing fruit and growing ... ” Acts 6:7: “So the word of God spread ... ” Acts 12:24: “But the word of God continued to increase and spread.” Acts 19:20: “In this way the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power.”
- Bible Backup – 1 Thessalonians 1:5-6: “. our gospel came to you not simply with words, but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction ... you welcomed the message with the joy given by the Holy Spirit.”
- Bible Backup – Titus 1:3: “ ... he brought his word to light through the preaching entrusted to me ... ” Philippians 2:15-16: “ ... in which you shine like stars in the universe as you hold out the word of life ... ”
- Bible Backup – Ephesians 5:26: “ ... cleansing . by the washing with water through the word ... ” 1 Timothy 4:5: “ ... it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer.”
- Bible Backup – 1 Thessalonians 1:13: “ ... the word of God . is at work in you who believe.”
- Bible Backup – 2 Timothy 4:1-2: “ ... in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage – with great patience and careful instruction.”

☞ **The Spirit confirms the Word with power.**

- Bible Backup – John 10:38: “ ... even though you do not believe me, believe the miracles, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father.” John 14:11: “ ... believe on the evidence of the miracles ... ” Acts 2:22: “ ... listen to this: Jesus ... was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know.” John 14:12: “I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.” 1 Corinthians 4:20: “For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power.”
- Bible Backup – Mark 16:20: “Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it.” Hebrews 2:3-4: “ ... This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord ... God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit ... ” Acts 4:29-30: “Now Lord, ... enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness by stretching out your hand to heal and perform miraculous signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus.” Acts 14:3: “ ... the Lord . confirmed the message of his

grace by enabling them to do miraculous signs and wonders.” Acts 8:6: “When the crowd heard Philip and saw the miraculous signs he did, they all paid close attention to what he said.”

- Bible Backup – 1 Corinthians 2:1-5: “ ... My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit’s power, so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom, but on God’s power.” Romans 15:18-19: “ ... what Christ has accomplished through me in leading the Gentiles to obey God by what I have said and done – by the power of signs and miracles, through the power of the Spirit ... I have fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ.” Galatians 3:5: “Does God give you his Spirit and work miracles among you because you observe the law, or because you believe what you heard?”

3 Practical Considerations

☞ God wants to work through you by his Spirit. Therefore, be absolutely hungry for the infilling and power of the Holy Spirit.

- If on any given day there are a number of preachers to choose from, let the one being filled with the Spirit speak. [See also Acts 6:3: “Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom ... ” 1 Corinthians 14:26,30]
- Position yourself so that God can fill you with his Spirit.
 - ✠ Repent and pursue holiness. [See also 2 Chronicles 7:14; James 5:17; 1 Thessalonians 5:19.]
 - ✠ Exercise faith. [See also James 5:15; Hebrews 11; Matthew 14:27-33.]
 - ✠ Pray. [See also Luke 11:5-13.]
 - ✠ Receive prayer (with the laying on of hands). [See also Acts 8:17; Romans 1:11; 2 Timothy 1:6.]
 - ✠ Wait on the Lord. [See also Acts 1:4-5; Psalm 27:8-14; Isaiah 40:28-31.]

☞ Step out in faith and expect that the Holy Spirit works through the Word and confirms the Word.

- Let the Bible encourage you. [Consider Matthew 10:7-8 in addition to all of the passages above: “Jesus said: ‘As you go, preach this message: ‘The kingdom of heaven is near. Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons ... ’”]
- Let other preachers and evangelists encourage you. [Carlos Annacondia: Listen To Me Satan, Lake Mary: Charisma House 1998, p29: “Maybe you wonder what I do. I simply preach the good news as the Bible says in the Gospel of Mark: I speak the Word. Once the people have accepted Jesus and come forward to the platform as a public demonstration of their step of faith, I cast out the demons in the name of Jesus Christ, and they come out. I pray for the sick, and they get healed. I also pray, in every meeting, for the baptism of the Holy Spirit. It’s very important to fulfill these four facets. Don’t neglect to do it, since each one is necessary: salvation, deliverance, healing and the baptism of the Holy Spirit.” Ruth Heflin: Glory, Hagerstown: McDougal Publishing 1990, p151: “When you preach on salvation, folks get saved. When you preach on healing, folks get healed. When you preach concerning financial provision, folks begin to move into the provision of God. And when you preach on the glory, you begin to have a revelation of the glory of God.”]
 - ✠ Expect to see people saved.
 - ✠ Expect to see people delivered.

- ✚ Expect to see people healed.
- ✚ Expect to see people being filled with the Holy Spirit.

➔ **Make sure that you are preaching and not (always) teaching.**

- There is a difference between explaining spiritual truths and declaring the same truths with power. Even in non-religious conversations there is language which is called performative language because it performs what it declares. For instance: “I declare this meeting adjourned.” The “I do” in a marriage ceremony. Know the power which is entrusted to you. [See also Matthew 16:19: “I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” John 20:22-23: “And with that he breathed on them and said, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.’”]
- Learn the difference.
 - ✚ Teaching: “Faith comes from hearing the Word.” ⇔ Preaching: “As you hear Jesus proclaimed right now, there is something stirring in your heart. God is working faith in you and there is trust growing within you. Take hold of it.”
 - ✚ Teaching: “Everyone who believes in him receives the forgiveness of sins.” ⇔ Preaching: “As you have faith, forgiveness comes. Jesus is washing you clean at this very moment.”
 - ✚ Teaching: “Christians can drive out demons in Jesus’ name.” ⇔ Preaching: “Take hold of the name of Jesus. Trust in his holy name and the demons must leave you now. I declare their defeat and in Jesus’ name set you free.”
 - ✚ Teaching: “The prayer of faith makes a sick person well.” ⇔ Preaching: “We call on God now and the sick will recover. Receive your healing.”
 - ✚ Teaching: Instruction ⇔ Preaching: Invitation.

4 **Practical Exercises**

- ➔ **The message of Jesus Christ and him crucified is always accompanied by demonstrations of the Spirit’s power. Furthermore, the Holy Spirit always confirms the Word of God. What can you expect the Holy Spirit to confirm in the preaching of Acts 9:1-31? Identify some concrete themes and outcomes in the hearers of the Gospel.** [Possible answers: sudden conversion of a very hardened person; having an appearance of Jesus, clear guidance in prayer; the laying on of hands with power; healing; growing powerful in wisdom; fearlessness in persecution ...]
- ➔ **Explain the difference between teaching and preaching by identifying three examples from Acts 9:1-31.** [Possible answers: Even a new convert can be filled with the Spirit (teaching). ⇔ Receive the Spirit now (preaching). God is not shy in giving concrete details in prayer (teaching). ⇔ Ask God to speak to you more clearly in prayer. Open your ears and let him spell out his plans in more detail (preaching). God enables Christians to be fearless in persecution (teaching). ⇔ Fear is leaving you now. You can let it go (preaching).]
- ➔ **Expect to see people saved. Expect to see people delivered. Expect to see people healed. Expect to see people being filled with the Holy Spirit. However, what are you to do in practice? What are you to do that requires faith and taking a risk? What strategy may God give you?** [Possible answers: altar call, public taunting of demons and asking them to come out of people, public healing attempts, laying on of hands for the

infilling with the Spirit, attempting to speak a foreign language through the gift of tongues in one's preaching, making a prophetic declaration, making a congregation wait for the Holy Spirit, ...]

5 **Review Question**

- **Was there power in my preaching?**
- **Did I step out in faith and allow God to confirm his word? What happened?**

Preaching Workshop – Lesson 3: Producing A Sermon Outline 1

1 Brainstorm

- **Brainstorm sermon topics. What has God been teaching you in this season? Is there a Scripture that is coming alive for you? What is going on within the congregation? What are the readings of the lectionary? Is God guiding you by putting certain resources before you (e.g.: books, TV shows, conversations)?**
- **Before you read any commentaries or meditate on any given Bible passage brainstorm ideas, concepts and angles which may grow into sermon points and the focus of your preaching.**
- **At this stage allow even outrageous thoughts and crazy ideas to be written down.**

Practical Exercise: Go into groups of three and brainstorm sermon ideas on Acts 9:1-31. You may ask yourselves the following questions: What is unusual or puzzling in the sermon text? What are my gut-reactions? Where do I have questions? Does anything in the text seem to connect with other books or magazine articles or conversations that I have read or heard? Write down your brainstorming ideas and share with the bigger group.

2 Research – Interpretation – Application

(From John Mallison: The Small-Group Leader, Openbook Publishers 1996, p120)

- **Research** (What does the passage actually say?)
 - Make patient inquiry into the text.
 - Read and re-read in a variety of versions.
 - Gather information on people, places and situations mentioned.
 - Note references to time and sequence.
 - Seek out the meaning of the main words and phrases.
 - Ask questions of the passage, beginning with ‘How ...?’ ‘Why ...?’ and ‘What ...?’
 - Re-write the passage in your own words – as you would say it.
 - Keep it simple and brief.
- **Interpretation** (What does it mean?)
 - What was the original intention of this passage? What gave rise to it being written?
 - Compare it with other passages of Scripture.
 - Look up cross-references. Let Scripture interpret Scripture.
 - Refer to a commentary (only after you have done all this work).
- **Application** (What could it mean for me and the congregation?)
 - Think of the ways in which you would be different if you took this seriously.

- If you put this into practice, to what persons and situations would you have a different approach? In what ways?
- The word “SPACESTEP” guides us in applying the Bible to our lives:
 - ✠ S – Is there a **sin** to confess?
 - ✠ P – Is there a **promise** to receive?
 - ✠ A – Is there an **attitude** to cultivate or avoid?
 - ✠ C – Is there a **command** to obey?
 - ✠ E – Is there an **example** to follow or avoid?
 - ✠ S – Is there **something** for which to give thanks?
 - ✠ T – Is there a **truth** to believe?
 - ✠ E – Is there an **error** to reject?
 - ✠ P – Learn to **pray** the passage. [From Rev Dr Terry Fullam.]

➤ **Action Plan** (What will I plan to do? What will people in the congregation plan to do?)

- From “Application”, select one or two things which you could begin working on immediately.
- Think of the steps you will need to take. Make a plan for action.

➤ **Timing** (When will we begin?)

- Set some realistic deadlines for some of the main steps in your plan.

➤ **Support** (With whom will I share my intent? With whom will others share their intent?)

- List the names of one or two Christian friends with whom you will share your plans and seek their support, especially in prayer. (Consider also small groups.)

➤ **Accountability** (When will I report progress? When will the others report progress?)

- Set a time with your friend/s for talking over your progress, or otherwise in working through your plan.

3 Preaching Inductively And Deductively

How to Employ Each Style for Maximum Results

An Interview with Donald Sunukjian

Preaching Today Sermons: We hear a lot about inductive and deductive preaching. Yet it can be difficult for preachers to clearly distinguish between the two, using each effectively. Can you give us a brief yet memorable definition of each approach?

Donald: Inductive preaching essentially asks a question and arrives at the answer toward the latter part of the sermon. Deductive is the opposite of that. In deductive preaching you give the declarative statement up front and then support it. So the styles differ by whether the listener hears the point you’re going to make up front, or they hear the question and then arrive at the answer through a progression.

Tell us a little bit about the various levels of the sermon where we make serious choices between the two.

There are really four places in the sermon where induction and deduction show up. The first is the overall sermon pattern. The second is in the preview, where you tell the listener “here’s where I’m going to go with this sermon.”

In the preview you often make statements or raise the questions you’re going to answer. So right away you’re dealing with induction or deduction. If I say “Today we’re going to see that with God the shortest distance between two points is often a zigzag”, I’ve given you my deductive main idea. But then I follow it up with a preview and say something like “I want us to see first of all that God deliberately takes us on a zigzag path. We’re going to turn to a time in Israel’s history when God did that very thing. Then I want to answer the question why. Why does God do that? What’s his purpose? And finally I want to see how God keeps us encouraged when we don’t seem to be heading toward point B.”

Now I’ve mapped out the sermon for you. My first preview element was deductive. We’re going to see *that* God does it deliberately. My second preview element was inductive. We’re going to see *why* he does it. I raised a question that I’m going to answer in the message. My third preview was also inductive. We’re going to see *how* he keeps us encouraged. So I’ve used a combination of induction and deduction, which is entirely unrelated to whether my overall sermon pattern is deductive or inductive.

The third area where induction or deduction shows up is in the body of the message, or what we might call the Roman numerals. And there are certain ways to decide whether I should handle each Roman numeral inductively or deductively.

The fourth place where induction or deduction shows up relates to our reading of the text. We ought to read the Scripture deductively. Always tell the listener before you read the text what they will find in the verses. Too often preachers say, “Let’s see what Paul says next in verse 17-24,” and then we start reading. And the listeners glaze out on us real fast.

We know what we’re looking for there but they don’t.

That’s right. So instead you would say something like, “In verses 17-24 Paul tells us the third time that we are vulnerable to temptation. Just when we have done something for Christ, Satan has his best chance to get at us. Paul says right after he had preached with great response he found Satan lifting him up to pride. Read with me to see how we are vulnerable after a spiritual victory.” Now as the listeners read verses 17-24 they know what they’re looking for. They listen intelligently. They say, “Yes, there it is. I see it.”

Let’s back up and talk about each of these levels just a little bit more. When is it advantageous to choose deductive or inductive? Let’s also talk about the overall sermon structure. How do we use the big idea?

The first level is whether the overall sermon pattern is going to be deductive or inductive. Will the listener get my central truth up front or will they learn it later in the message?

The advantage of a deductive structure is that the big idea is up front. It’s clear. It’s early so the listener grabs onto it. The disadvantage is you give away all the cookies at the start. The listener can say, “Got it. I’m out of here. I can catch the football game in the first quarter instead of waiting till the fourth quarter.” So the advantage is clarity. The disadvantage is it gives away the suspense or climax.

The inductive structure advantage is just the flip side.

The advantage is the listener’s interest is sustained because you have not yet arrived at that central theme. They’re going through a journey with you.

That's right. They're learning with you. The climax is yet to come. The tension is still there. The disadvantage is that unless you're really clear, by the time you get to it, they won't have followed you.

So with deduction we have to ask "How do I use it in a way so there's still some reason for the listener to keep listening?" When I use induction we ask "How do I really know that I'm being clear orally?"

Now, let's come back to deduction. When would I use deduction? When would I give away all the cookies at the start and still know that I could keep the listener with me? The answer is when my deductive statement automatically raises questions in the mind of the listener.

So, somehow it's provocative.

Absolutely. Let me give you an **example**. "Today we're going to talk about the fifth commandment, Honor your father and your mother. Some of you say, 'Oh, good. I hope the kids are listening.' That commandment wasn't given to kids. It was given to adults standing at the base of Mount Sinai. We think of it in terms of kids because of what Paul says in Ephesians 6 'Children obey your parents,' but originally God was talking to a nation of adults. Honor takes the form of obedience when we're children. But what did God have in mind at the other end of life when adults were looking at parents who were entering the last decades of life?"

Now, here comes my deductive statement. "Today we're going to see that to honor our parents in their latter years is to support them financially. When God said 'Honor your father and your mother, more than anything else he meant be ready to assist them economically in their retirement years. See that they lack for nothing in the way of housing, medicine, clothing, or anything necessary for a comfortable life.'"

Now there's my deductive statement, and nobody's saying, "*Got it. I'm out of here.*" They're saying "*Wait a minute. Where did you get that from? I've been reading the Bible for years. Honor... you preachers find money everywhere. How much money are you talking about? I can barely support my own family. I've got kids going to college. How old do my parents have to be? What about my siblings? Should they help out?*" They've got all kinds of questions they hope I'm going to address in the message.

So the first way to use deduction is when your central truth in the introduction raises questions in the minds of the listeners. The listener has a reason to keep listening.

Other than that we probably will want to go inductive since most biblical materials are written inductively.

So once you have developed your main idea it would be helpful to stop and ask "What are the questions that I'm going to raise by this? Does it really raise questions or not?" The answer to that will determine whether you're going to go deductive or inductive.

Yes. Often the passage of Scripture has a natural flow to it. I'm surprised at how many times a narrative passage places the central truth at the end. But I still may start with it. For instance, I might be preaching on the life of Jacob and say, "Today we're going to see from the Scriptures that even though you have messed up God's plan for your life God still has a way of making it possible." And I know the listener is saying, "Oh Lord, I hope that's true. Convince me of it."

Even though there is enough listener interest to hold the truth until the end, I want them to know at the start what comfort the Lord is going to give them in this message.

Let's talk about the preview sentences.

Any sentence is an idea. If I say, “This podium was made by a master craftsman,” that’s an idea. There is something I’m talking about: the podium; and there’s something I’m saying about it: it was made by a master craftsman. It has a subject and a complement.

When we make a deductive statement, we are giving the subject and the complement up front. When we raise a question, we are raising only the subject. So when we come to the preview sentences we have to decide if we’re going to be deductive or inductive. **Let’s say** I start my introduction by saying, “Early in geometry we learn that the shortest distance between two points is a straight line. Well, that may be true in geometry but not with God’s dealings in our life. Today we’re going to see that the shortest distance between two points is a zigzag. God will lead us in his own route to get us safely to his intended destination for us. Now, where do I find that in Scripture? We’re going to turn to a time in Israel’s history when God led them deliberately on a zigzag path.”

Now, that’s a deductive statement. I’ve given you what I’m going to talk about.

But I’ve got some questions to answer about that. The listener is thinking, “Is that true? Would God lead me on a zigzag path? I’ve been on my zag so long I don’t know whether point B is God’s destiny or I psyched myself into it.” The movement of the text will follow that inductive development. I take them to Exodus 13 where it shows that God led Israel on a zigzag path. It tells them why he did that and how he kept them encouraged when they didn’t seem to be moving in a straight line.

I want the listener to say, “Oh, I’ve got to keep listening to that. You’re going to prove to me that God does do it.” That’s deductive. “Then you’re going to explain why. I need you to answer me that, and help me to know how I stay encouraged.” That’s inductive. So I’ve used a combination of deduction/induction in the preview elements to mark off the big chunks of the message while keeping the listener in a state of tension over unanswered questions.

So those inductive questions in the preview are derived from the text and from your understanding of what questions people are going to have.

That’s true. I start with the text because the text is answering those questions the listener had. If you discover what question the passage is answering, you know what question the audience is asking.

Let’s move on then to the individual outline movements, the Roman numerals. How do we decide whether to use induction or deduction when we get into those points?

When you’re in a major point, look at your sub-points. If the sub-points are a list, then go inductive. You can say, “All right. Finally we come to Roman numeral three. What are the rewards of obedience?” Then answer that question in your sub-points. “The first reward of obedience is joy. The second reward of obedience is long life. The third reward of obedience is children who know the Lord.”

It wouldn’t make sense to say, “In Roman numeral three we’re going to see that the rewards of obedience are joy, long life and children who follow the Lord.” Why give it all away like that? Look at the sub-points. If they’re a list, go inductive.

With some lists, though, there’s no priority. Item five could be item one, while item two could be item three.

That’s right. In fact, most biblical passages are not lists at all. They are a chain of thought or a progression. **If I said** “Roman numeral three: What is the reward for obedience? We notice in verse 14 that Israel is prosperous. But in their prosperity Israel turns to the fertility gods of the land. Because of this, God lets an oppressor come in and take over Israel. The Midianites come and eat Israel’s food, reducing them to poverty.” Though I’m going through my

progression, by now you've forgotten what my question was. "What was this Roman numeral about?" You haven't heard anything about obedience.

Whenever you have a sequence in the sub-points, you cannot go inductive. The listener will lose you because there is no connection in the first three or four sub-points to the inductive question you ask.

I need to be deductive when I've got a sequence. "In Roman numeral three we finally come to the reward of obedience. And we will see in verses 17-24 that the reward for obedience is a restoration of the years that were lost. Let's follow Israel's history to see that when they returned to God, He restored what they had lost." And now I go into my sequence, but you know where it's headed. I have reached to the last sub-point and put it into the major Roman numeral. I have made a deductive statement of everything that I'm going to cover.

So in the Roman numerals, if the sub-points are a list, go inductive. But if the answer to your question is way down on the bottom of a list of eight sub-points, you've got to go deductive.

In closing, comment on the tension between clarity and interest level. There are choices we have to make, aren't there?

Yes. There are times you choose a style because you've got to be clear. The issue isn't whether or not you have everybody on the edge of their seat. At other times you're just trying to keep people interested. And you've got to balance this tension at every point of the sermon.

Preaching is so much fun. It takes the best mental work we're capable of. And when you do it well, you have such a sense of Lord, thank you. Thank you for enabling me to do this.

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4 **Practical Exercises**

- **Go through the following example sermons and point out the deductive and inductive segments:**
- **Continue with your brainstorming list on Acts 9:1-31 and then also do some more thorough research on this Bible text. Write down your ideas and insights on a piece of paper. Keep meditating on the Bible text, let God open up the Scriptures for you and keep adding to your thoughts over a period of time. Bring your work to the next session of our Preaching Workshop.**

Preaching Workshop – Lesson 4: Producing A Sermon Outline 2

1 **Practical Exercise:** We share the results of our homework (brainstorming and research on Acts 9:1-31).

2 Sermon Structure As Story

Excerpts From Article “Towards A Foundational, Flexible, Sermon Structure” (modified), http://www.preaching.org/-public_pdf/Sermon_Scene_and_Structure.pdf

... The most ubiquitous form of communication in premodern, modern and postmodern society has been the story. A large proportion of the Bible was written as narrative and the sermons in Acts were constructed as narratives. Story has always had special appeal and now dominates contemporary communication. As Robinson says, “We have become a storied culture” [Haddon W. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching 2* ed (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), 129].

Standing even observes, “It seems, therefore, as though God has created us to live in a universe where narrative and stories define who we are” [Roger Standing, *Finding the Plot* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster Press, 2004), 42]. So if any form is to provide a foundational structure for all sermon construction, it may well be the story form ...

The basic building block of story construction is the “scene.” Scenes can make up the chapters of a book, the scenes of a play, the segments of a movie, or the components of a conversation. So a narrative sermon can be constructed in scenes. The following narrative principles pertain to structuring a sermon in scenes.

1. A story is composed of a number of scenes. All the scenes contribute to the story.
2. Each scene forms a complete unit. It stands by itself. While all the scenes are needed to understand the theme, direction and context of the story, each scene has its own theme that makes sense by itself. This scene theme can be summarised in a sentence.
3. Each scene can have a different form, content and context. There is no common structure for scenes.
4. The story develops and progresses both through the scenes and within each scene. While each scene revolves around a theme, scenes are fluid entities that may not end where they begin.
5. The first scene forms the introduction to the story and the final scene forms the conclusion.
6. The scenes are usually joined by invisible, logical developments that make sense to the listener/viewer/reader. Scenes are sometimes introduced with a transition when the development of the story may not be clear to the audience.
7. Any scene may contain the resolution of the story, but often for the sake of maintaining tension it will be one of the final scenes.
8. The story keeps moving on. There is generally no revision of the story or previous scenes. It is presumed that previous scenes have been absorbed and can be built upon.
9. The story is encapsulated in a summary of the themes of the scenes.

Using these principles, here is a narrative sermon outline of Matthew 2:1-12 constructed in scenes (S1 stands for Scene 1):

- S1. Births are intimate celebrations for family and friends**
- S2. And Jesus’ birth was just like that (Luke 2:1-20)**
- S3. Except for the “wise men” (2:1)**
- S4. Who travelled to worship Jesus on the strength of a star (2:2-12)**
- S5. Because they were truth-seekers (2:2)**
- S6. So come on truth-seekers – focus on Jesus ...**

First, scenes can be summarised by a sentence. This sentence is the theme around which the scene is centred. It is the heart of the scene and provides unity. Any information that does not relate to the summarising sentence should be excluded from the scene. The scene needs to centre on a single, clear idea. Second, each scene can be shaped differently and contain a variety of content. There is no normal way to shape a scene. A sermon scene could contain exegesis, explanation, illustration, validation, dialogue, commentary, reflection, or any combination of these in any order. While each scene must have a beginning (commencement) and ending (closure) that separate it from the preceding and following scenes, the shape and content of each scene may vary dramatically ...

At first glance, the scenes' structure appears to be as limiting as the points' structure. It seems to turn every sermon into a one-point narrative. Certainly preaching by scenes facilitates, perhaps even encourages, such a structure. But I will now show that the scenes' structure is very flexible. A wide range of sermon styles can be structured in scenes ...

A declarative sermon based on Psalm 23 could be outlined as:

- S1. It's great to know that we can count on God**
- S2. In tiring times (1-3a)**
- S3. In testing times (3b)**
- S4. In frightening times (4)**
- S5. And for all time (5-6)**
- S6. So give him your concerns right now**

This is a four-point sermon in which scene 1 is the introduction (where the main idea is announced) and scene 6 is the conclusion. A three-point sermon could similarly be constructed in five scenes. A pragmatic sermon on Psalm 23, constructed in scenes, might look like this:

- S1. Sometimes it feels that God doesn't care**
- S2. You start to wonder if God may be more concerned about others**
- S3. But the problem is with us, not with God - he (as shepherd) really does care**
- S4. So let him guide you (1-3)**
- S5. And let him protect you (4)**
- S6. And let him be proud of you (5-6)**

In this outline, the first three scenes explore the issue and provide the answer and the final three scenes show how the answer can be put into practice.

The scenes' structure is ideal for outlining narrative sermons. A narrative sermon on Psalm 23 could be structured in the following scenes:

- S1. We spend a lot of our life looking after other people, but deep down we dream of having someone to look after us**
- S2. So we search for someone to look after us, but no-one can do it**
- S3. Because that's God's job – he's the shepherd (1)**
- S4. Wherever you're at today, he's looking after you (1-6)**
- S5. So sit back and lap up his care today**

You might recognise signs of Lowry's homiletical plot in this outline. It's a story that raises tension in the first two scenes, announces the main idea in the third, and explores the ramifications in the final two scenes.

A visionary (image-based) sermon on Psalm 23 could be structured in the following scenes:

- S1. Shepherding was a tough job in David's day. (1) [with some photos or video, maybe even a live sheep if you're radical]**
- S2. Why do you think David describes God as a shepherd? [discussion in pairs with feedback]**
- S3. He says that God is wise like a good shepherd. (1-3)**
- S4. And God is powerful like a good shepherd. (4-6)**
- S5. A symbol of both these shepherd characteristics is the shepherd's staff [give out small replicas]**
- S6. Please write on your staff how God has shepherded you**

This outline is based around the imagery of a shepherd and his staff. It includes elements of interaction, symbolic action and personal reflection and probably would be targeted towards a post-modern audience. The scenes' structure, however, remains an appropriate method of organising the sermon ...

Chapell provides an example of an expository, points-based outline based on Romans 8:31-39. His outline is:

- I. God's love is greater than sin (31-34)*
- II. God's love is greater than circumstances (35-37)*
- III. God's love is greater than Satan (38-39)*

This outline can be rearranged into a scenes' outline by adding an introduction and conclusion to the outline and linking the points together:

- S1. It's great to know that we are secure in God's love no matter what happens**
- S2. Because God's love is greater than sin (31-34)**
- S3. And God's love is greater than circumstances (35-37)**
- S4. And God's love is greater than Satan's power (38-39)**
- S5. So nothing will ever separate us from God's love through Jesus (39)**

Lowry provides no examples of outlines in *The Homiletical Plot*, but Stanley, who broadly follows the same approach, outlines a sermon on submission in marriage in *Communicating for a Change*:

ME - Sometimes I find myself wondering how to respond to situations in my marriage

WE - I imagine that you have found yourself in situations where you weren't sure what to do either

GOD - The Bible teaches that we are to submit to one another; put the desires and needs of our spouse ahead of our own needs and desires

YOU - Next time you aren't sure what to say or do, ask yourself this question, "How can I put the needs and desires of my spouse ahead of my own in this moment?"

WE - Imagine what would happen in our community if all of us began to model that kind of mutual submission before our friends and our neighbours

This outline is already constructed in scenes, but I will nuance the outline to make it tighter:

- S1. Sometimes my marriage is tough because we're so different**
- S2. You know what it's like - it's a struggle**
- S3. But God tells us to submit to our spouse**
- S4. So next time you feel the tension rising, give in, put your partner's needs/wishes first**
- S5. This could have a huge impact on our marriages, our church, and even our community**

In *Homiletic*, Buttrick provides a basic moves' structure for a narrative sermon on Luke 17:11-19. Here is his outline:

1. *The lepers cried, "Have pity!" and we can understand*
2. *How does Jesus answer? With a commandment, "Go." Isn't that just like God?*
3. *Well they went: Faith is doing the word of Jesus Christ*
4. *But if faith is only obedience, it can turn into dead law*
5. *One came back to worship: Christian worship gives thanks*
6. *So the Christian life is both obedient faith and worship*

This outline highlights the similarities between moves and scenes. Again, I will slightly nuance the scenes, but I'm not sure that I can improve on Buttrick's outline.

- S1. The lepers came to Jesus asking for help in their desperate plight (11-13)**
- S2. But Jesus sent them away to be healed (14)**
- S3. And they went - now that's faith-filled obedience (14)**
- S4. But Jesus is looking for more than obedience**
- S5. You see, one leper came back to say thanks (15-16)**
- S6. Obedience with thanks - now that's what Jesus looks for (17-19)**

Wilson's four page structure can be constructed in scenes by adding a shorter introduction and conclusion (say three minutes each) to the four pages (say six minutes each - Wilson's minimum). Here is an example of a four-page outline of a sermon on Luke 15:11-32 that Wilson provides:

Page one (trouble in the Bible): The son was prodigal with his father's money

Page two (trouble in our world): We waste what we are given

Page three (grace in the Bible): The father is prodigal in his love

Page four (grace in our world): God's love is enough

This is what the outline could look like constructed in scenes:

- S1. I've never asked for an inheritance in my life**
- S2. When the son in this story was given his father's money, he completely wasted it**
- S3. The trouble is, we're no different**
- S4. But that didn't stop the dad pouring out his love on his son**
- S5. You see God never stops loving**
- S6. God loves you no matter where you've been or what you've done, so come home**

Anderson does not provide a specific outline of what he terms an integrative sermon, but he does suggest elements that an integrative sermon on 2 Corinthians 2:12-17 would need to include. I have summarised these elements:

The Human Story: People can smell a preacher coming. Sometimes Paul really stunk

The Underlying Mystery: We tend to mask bad smells, but it's a problem if we mask the fragrance of Christ for those who think it smells awful

The Logical Argument: (1) Preachers carry the smell of Christ. (2) To some we smell beautiful like life and to others we stink like death. (3) We keep preaching no matter how we smell

The Motivating Vision: We confidently preach Jesus no matter what it smells like

These elements could be integrated in a scenes' structure like this:

- S1. I have a friend who works at the bakery - you can smell him coming**

- S2. Christians witnesses are like that - they often smell great, a bit like Christ (14-16)**
- S3. But not everyone likes the smell, some think it stinks (16)**
- S4. It's easy to want to mask the smell for those who may be offended by the "stench"**
- S5. But come on, let's confidently preach Jesus no matter what it smells like to others (17)**

Webb suggests that each sermon be constructed like a movie on a storyboard with about eight panels. This is very close to the concept of an eight scene sermon. In the example outline Webb provides, the eight panels for a sermon on Demas (2 Timothy 4:10; Colossians 4:14; Philemon 24) are summarised:

- 1. The group that Paul attracted*
- 2. Who was this Demas?*
- 3. Demas forsakes Paul*
- 4. Demas's story is my story*
- 5. Paul's two worlds – what?*
- 6. Why Demas's decision?*
- 7. We have to choose too*
- 8. Choose the crown of righteousness*

These phrases don't make a lot of sense by themselves, but they are linked on Webb's storyboard to a more complete outline of each panel. Here's what Webb's sermon could look like in a scenes' structure:

- S1. Paul was a charismatic leader who attracted a remarkable group of followers**
- S2. One of these was Demas who was a good guy (Colossians 4:14; Philemon 24)**
- S3. But in the end he deserted Paul (and God) because he loved the world (2 Timothy 4:10)**
- S4. I know what that's like, I've done the same thing**
- S5. We all have to choose continually which world we're going to live in**
- S6. And there's plenty of pressure to turn away from God**
- S7. So today we have to choose again**
- S8. Let's go for the upward path because we know where it ends (2 Timothy 4:8)**

The scenes' structure works well for Webb's outline as long as the scenes are kept short. At three minutes a scene (probably the minimum for an effective scene), this would be a 25 minute sermon ...

The quest for a flexible, foundational preaching structure is tantalising because such a structure would offer preachers the opportunity to experiment with different sermonic styles without having to start from scratch each time. It would provide a familiarity of structure within a rich diversity of approaches to sermon form. Perhaps the scenes' structure provides this elusive, flexible, foundational structure. It certainly has been proved to be flexible ...

3 **Practical Exercise:** Work out the scenes' structure of the following sermons.

4 **Designing A Sermon Outline**

- ➞ Have another look at all of your brainstorming, research and application points.
- ➞ Go for a prayer walk or pray in whatever manner works best for you. Let God impress on you the main preaching point and let him bring everything together according to his design. You may not actively reflect on

your material but – as you become still in the presence of God – give him control over your thoughts. It may feel a little like “day-dreaming” which allows God to let your thoughts flow in his direction.

- Think of preaching as a conversation and telling a story. Outline a progression of thought.

5 Practical Considerations

- **Do not be intimidated by sermon theories and possible structures. Trust your intuition and be free to develop your own style. Sermon writing is a creative art.**
- **Give yourself time for sermon writing. Live with the sermon topic for a while. Over a few days or weeks (or years) revelation will come.**
- **The public speaking guide is that for every minute of public speaking there is one hour of preparation.**

6 **Practical Exercises**

- **Produce an outline for a sermon on Acts 9:1-31.**
 - Read Acts 9:1-31 and brainstorm possible sermon points and ideas. Write them down.
 - Research Acts 9:1-31 and take notes of your discoveries.
 - Pray over your notes on Acts 9:1-31.
 - Prepare an outline of a sermon on Acts 9:1-31.

7 Review Question

- **Was my preaching clear?**
- **Do people understand why I preached to them?**

Preaching Workshop – Lesson 5: Sermon Introduction And Conclusion

1 Short presentation on Rick Warren’s article “Preaching Tips That Will Change Lives” by someone from the group.

2 Sermon Introduction

➤ Cut To The Chase Quickly

- Within the first paragraph or so you are forming a psychological contract with the listener. A promise is being made even if you are just telling a story. The listener expects what happens at the beginning to be an arrow, no matter how subtle, that points to where the sermon is heading. It promises to answer a problem, resolve an issue, discuss a dilemma, or narrate a powerful story. It promises something. Before preaching, ask yourself if the first two sentences would make you want to listen (Dave Ward).

➤ Choose A Gripping Beginning

- Writers and speakers often call this the hook. Your task is to take the first minute or two that you are given automatically to earn their trust and use it to put the listener on the hook – to grip them. They should want you to keep talking by the end of your sermon opener. Here are some sample ways to do it:

Start in the middle: “She stuck her finger to her lips without making a sound. Footsteps sounded below.”

Start with a conflict: “Everyone used to get along in Bayside community church.” “When four planes crashed into two towers, one government building, and a rural field we stopped feeling safe and secure.”

Start with a question: “Why do we go to church anyway? Have you thought about it lately?” “Imagine you have three children ages 2, 4, and 7 who haven’t eaten for two days.”

Start with a parable: “It happened to a certain woman, not very different from you ... ”

Start with a startle: “I could not find a single redemptive word in this passage. Not one. For hours I ... ”
“Tina was fifteen when she met Tom and unknowingly set herself up for lifelong poverty.”

Start with a testimony: “It was the most difficult and painful year of my life” (Dave Ward).

People are always interested in people. Remember that in your introduction. They are not nearly as interested in ideas, verses, or theological confessions (even theology professors).

Avoid sharing too many stories of yourself or your family. Though these are easier to come up with at times, they lose the interest of a congregation over time. The “while I was at the grocery store” kind of story should be rare in introductions. The sermon introduction is about God and the listener, not you and your family.

- Right from the sermon introduction remember to **work with tension and pace**. Cut out all the unnecessary “fat”, use more verbs (doing words) than nouns (naming words) and do not slow down the action with adjectives (describing words). In your sermon transcript keep reducing the number of words which you use.

2 Sermon Conclusion

The old preaching adage reminds us that preaching a sermon without knowing how to end it, is like taking off in a plane you have no idea how to land. The end of the sermon should come neither too early nor too late. It should add a sense of closure to the sermon without turning off the listener's imagination. Here are some suggestions for how to make this happen (Dave Ward).

☞ **Make The Dog Swallow Its Tail**

- That's an old way to say: write the sermon conclusion with the introduction in mind. The sermon should come "full circle" to a degree. You probably started with a concept, a problem, a question, or a fact of life in your introduction. It raised the interest of the listener and, as Randy Nichols puts it, formed a "contract with your listener". You suggested to them (hopefully not too directly) what your sermon was going to do. If the first sentence in my sermon is "Imagine what it would be like to live the rest of your life as a beggar" then the conclusion of the sermon has to come back to this concept of living like a beggar. If I started with a story about a handicapped boy who changed a town, my conclusion should somehow allude to that story or concept even if only in a sentence (Dave Ward).

Do not add new material which is beginning something new and not concluding the present message.

☞ **Hand Your Listener A Burning Coal, Not A Pile Of Ashes.**

- A sermon should build a burning consideration with the congregation. Something needs to be done. Something must be said. Something must be rethought, refigured, turned around. As Fred Craddock suggested in *As One Without Authority*: "The congregation cannot shake off the finished sermon by shaking the minister's hand. The sermon, not finished yet, lingers beyond the benediction, with conclusions to be reached, decisions made, actions taken and brothers sought while gifts lie waiting at the altar."

Don't hand over a pile of dead ashes wrapped up with a pretty box and bow. When you end your sermon, end it in such a way that it lives on throughout the week. Rather than the sermon being done, the sermon has left us undone in the face of grace. We know we must live with the sermon this week, not get on with living after the sermon is done (Dave Ward).

3 **Practical Exercises**

☞ **Critique the following sermon introductions and conclusions.**

- Sid Burgess (<http://www.edgewoodpc.org/sermons/sermon120306.html>). Introduction: Today we begin a new church year. We start once again the annual retelling of our Lord's life story. We will be reminded throughout the season of Advent-- that it was a very difficult beginning—hard times for the people of Israel, hard decisions for Mary and for Joseph, the hard journey to Bethlehem, "no room in the inn," the terror unleashed by Herod, and the flight into Egypt as homeless refugees. Each and every Church year Advent comes before Christmas. Advent comes to remind the Church that Jesus, fully divine, experiences the hard beginning of everyone, fully human.

When you get right down to it, all beginnings are hard. Whether it's a mother giving birth, a youth trying to establish his or her identity, a newly married couple trying to sort out tangled family relationships, or seniors timing their move into a retirement community, all beginnings are hard.

"All beginnings are hard," writes Chaim Potok in his novel, *IN THE BEGINNING*.

Critique:

- ✠ The first few sentences are boring without getting to the point of the message.
 - ✠ General statements do not evoke any feelings in the congregation. What hard times? What hard decisions? What hard journey? What terror?
 - ✠ You cannot mention the theological concept of Jesus being fully divine and fully human in passing. There will be listener who do not know what this means.
 - ✠ Naming the writer is a distraction and a potential putdown because the audience will wonder whether they are meant to know Chaim Potok.
- Sid Burgess (<http://www.edgewoodpc.org/sermons/sermon120306.html>). Conclusion: All beginnings are hard, but help is on the way. “The days are surely coming ... when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land.”

The church has always seen the fulfillment of this hope in Jesus, the Messiah, the good shepherd, who gathers his sheep together by laying down his life for them. Just as God's own grieving makes it possible for Israel to hope, so the good shepherd gives us life by dying. That is the paradox of faith, the paradox of Advent. We, too, must die in order to live. This is an extraordinary, incomparable assurance for the dying. But it is also the ultimate Good News for us, the living. For here, at the beginning of Advent, the start of a new Christian year, we are invited, we are encouraged to let go— to surrender our “death grip” on the past, grieve our losses, and embrace the hope God gives us for “more than we have yet seen.”

“Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.”

“Now to the One who by the power at work within us is able to do far more abundantly than all we ask or imagine, to God be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever.” Ephesians 3:20, 21

Critique:

- ✠ Make sure that the congregation understands the word “paradox”.
 - ✠ It is difficult to make the logical jumps from a “righteous branch” and “executing justice” to the “Messiah” to the “Good Shepherd” and a shepherd that is “giving life by dying”.
 - ✠ What does this conclusion expect the congregation to do? This is not focused. Is the congregation to wait because help is on the way? Are people to cry out for Jesus to come quickly? Are people to die and get ready to die in order to live? Are people encouraged to let go of the past and past grievances because God will give them more than they can imagine? (What would that be?) Is the congregation simply to give glory to God?
- William Willimon. Introduction: Someone has said the church is somewhat like a football huddle, the huddle that players go into at a football game. “You know that something important is being said there, but you can’t understand a word of it, and all you can see is their rear-ends.” But in fairness to the church, we must admit that it isn’t easy to be understood by the world, after all, what we are talking about, in this huddle called church, is God. That’s hard to talk about.

William Willimon. Conclusion: “Yes, I notice you are reading the Bible.” “Yes,” the man replied tersely. “I was wondering why you are reading the Bible,” said Laney. “You have a problem with that?” the man

asked. “No, no problem,” said Laney. “I’m preparing my Sunday School lesson,” said the man. “Really?” said Laney. “Like I said, I’m a Methodist minister.” “Well, good talking with you. I’ve got a tough lesson to present tomorrow, we are studying the Book of I Kings,” said the man. Laney, in relating this story later, said, “That’s evangelism! If we could just go on about our business, being Christian in the best way we know how, we will make the world curious. The world will ask, and then we can tell. That’s evangelism worthy of the name,” said Laney.

- William Willimon. Introduction: *Luke 18:9-14* “He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and regarded others with contempt.” “My son is a good kid. He’s quite a remarkable, wonderful young man,” the mother said to me on your first day here. “I’ll be the judge of that,” I thought to myself.

William William. Conclusion: Finally, the meeting ended. I’m heading for the door and pass this unshaven, beefy sort of person propping up a wall who says to me, “That was a killer sermon today.” I was stunned. “You, go to church?” “Sure. I’m there most every Sunday. Sit on the back row. George (he gestures toward this other unshaven sort of person in an inappropriate tee shirt next to him) goes with me. George said he liked your sermon a couple of weeks ago better than today. But I needed the one you did today. It was like God really spoke to me.” Two men went to the Chapel to pray. One a Methodist preacher. The other an unshaven Sophomore in a tee shirt. Two men went back to the dorm. The later was justified, made right by God, but not the former. If you’ve got ears to hear, hear.

- Edgar Mayer. Introduction: In 427 [I have forgotten the original date] BC the famous philosopher Socrates went down to Piraeus, the harbour of Athens, with his disciples.

Critique (Dr John Strelan):

- ✚ Delete the time reference because it will get people thinking about the circumstances of living in 500 BC.
- ✚ Delete the word “famous” because it implies that every reader should know Socrates but some of the listeners may not know him.
- ✚ Delete “Piraeus” because it is unnecessary information. Just say: “harbour of Athens”.

➞ **Prepare an introduction and conclusion for a sermon on Acts 9:1-31.**

- Use the theme of the outline which you have prepared.
- Alternative theme: The conversion of the worst persecutor of the church.
- Alternative theme: The suffering that is promised to Saul.

➞ **Take turns in presenting your sermon introduction and conclusion to the preaching workshop.**

➞ **Prepare a sermon transcript of five minute length and preach your sermon at our next lesson.**

4 **Ricardo Norton: What Preachers Can Learn From Aviation**

(<http://www.ministrymagazine.org/archive/2006/July/what-preachers-can-learn-from-aviation.html>)

Learning to prepare sermons and learning to fly an airplane both require precise knowledge and sound judgment. The similarities between preparing a sermon and flying an airplane are especially enlightening to preachers who fly a lot, for both pilots and preachers have the responsibility of taking the people safely to where they need to go. Like a short flight, the preacher elevates listeners to spiritual heights.

Air travel and sermons have distinct transitions and phases, including an introduction, a body, and a conclusion. This article draws lessons from basic flight anatomy, such as flight preparation, destination, takeoff, cruising altitude, and landing, and applies them to sermon preparation and delivery.

Preparation

A safe flight and a good sermon begin, of course, with good preparation. For optimal performance, aviators and preachers need good physical and mental preparation for the journey. Naturally, pilots should not fly when they are fatigued or ill [Richard L. Collins, *Flying Safely* (New York: Delacorte/E. Friede, c. 1981), 313]. The same is true for a preacher who is tired or sick. Even minor illnesses, such as a common cold that affects the tone of voice and normal breathing, can spoil a good sermon and undermine communication skills.

The operational manual. Pilots are required to follow the instructions of the manufacturer's manual for the planes they fly. For Christian preachers, the Bible remains as the undisputed preaching manual and operational handbook. After all, God commands His emissaries to "preach the word" (2 Tim. 4:2, KJV). This Word, useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, assures us that "the man of God may be thoroughly equipped" (2 Tim. 3:16, 17, NIV). Competent preachers adopt the Bible as their operational handbook.

The source of food for spiritual growth. Providing good and abundant food during flight was one of the airline industry's strategies, years ago, to attract and retain frequent travelers. Some airline companies even served coach passengers with cloth napkins and real silverware, but those were the "good old days." Because of financial constraints, food service in the airline business has decayed considerably; today, passengers in the United States receive only a soft drink and a small bag of snacks.

With the main source of spiritual food centering around the Bible, the pulpit should never reach the current status of airline-meal service. God has given Scripture as a recipe book to feed spiritual passengers with the dishes of heaven, served from the pulpit's table so abundantly and appealingly that new people are attracted to the church and continue to come for more food.

Plotting the course. Success in aviation centers around careful planning. Prior to departure and before passengers enter the aircraft, aviators check the electronic and mechanical instruments of the plane and review the trajectory of the flight. Likewise, preaching includes planning. "Preachers must be more than sermonic disc jockeys playing other's creations" [Michael Duduit, ed, *Handbook of Contemporary Preaching* (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1992), 135]. They need to compose new and attractive sermons for their audiences.

Consumed by the rigors of ministry and daily life, even the best preachers may not allow enough time for the ministry of the Word. For example, the apostles were busy doing ministry to the point of disregarding the preaching of the Word of God. In view of this predicament, the Twelve summoned the general body of disciples and told them that it was not right for them "to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables" (Acts 6:2, NIV).

Destination

With the destination as the focal point of flight preparation, pilots plot a safe route to take passengers where they need to go, communicating with the control tower to meet departure and arrival times. Good preachers not only start and finish sermons on time but also maintain constant communication with God in the control tower during the preparation and delivery of the sermon. Lloyd M. Perry, in *Biblical Preaching for Today's World*, writes, "Following a systematic

method for constructing a sermon does not rule out nor does it limit the guidance of the Holy Spirit” [Lloyd M. Perry, *Biblical Preaching for Today’s World* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1979), 44].

Henry J. Eggold affirms that “every sermon must have a goal, and both the preacher and the congregation ought to know what it is if dialogue is to take place. When a hearer doesn’t know where a preacher is headed, he begins to think of other things and lets the preacher go his solitary way” [Henry J. Eggold, *Preaching Is Dialogue* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1980), 23]. Without a clear destination, the preacher may get lost in the sermon and lead the people astray.

Choosing the topic can be compared to choosing where to fly. People book flights to places they need to go, and most go to church because they want sermons that help them reach higher levels of spirituality. Some sermon ideas may be theoretical and biblically correct but may not be relevant to the needs of the flock. Before deciding what to preach about, the preacher must be acquainted with the needs of the audience. They need to know in what airport of life they reside as they journey toward heaven. Every successful sermon leads hearers of the Word a step closer to their destination.

Takeoff

Takeoff exists as one of the most important maneuvers in aviation because a miscalculation or mistake by the pilot can be disastrous. It starts with the crew’s effort to capture the attention of passengers, and to provide them with specific instructions, and it continues with taxiing and liftoff. Similarly, the sermon introduction can be compared to the takeoff in aviation. People sit down before the sermon begins; the preacher captures their attention and then takes off with the sermon.

Capturing the attention of the audience. Capturing the attention of air travelers to make sure they are on the right flight, particularly frequent flyers, is of paramount importance for safety reasons. People who travel frequently tend to ignore the announcements and safety demonstrations provided by the crew. Preachers similarly have difficulty capturing the attention of worshipers who go to church regularly. Some worshipers sit in church and listen to sermons nearly 52 weekends a year. To capture their attention week after week requires ingenuity and avoiding predictable sermon introductions [Duduit offers ten alternatives preachers can use to avoid predictable sermon introductions. See pages 177, 178].

Eye contact. While taxiing and during the flight, pilots look at the surroundings to avoid colliding with other aircraft and obstacles. With eye contact being very important in preaching, good preachers listen to the audience with their eyes. A tear, a glow of satisfaction, or a frown in the forehead of the listener reveals a lot about the effect of the sermon on the congregation. Preachers are “ordained to preach the gospel, not merely to read it” [H. M. S. Richards, *Feed My Sheep* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1958), 124].

Introduction length. Some taxiing at large airports takes so long it seems as if the pilot leads the passengers to their destination by road, not by air. Likewise, some sermon introductions keep the listener wondering how the preacher will reach the destination. Some writers believe the introduction of the sermon should not comprise more than 10 to 15 percent of the sermon and indicate that preachers “should not spend so much time setting the table that there’s no time left to eat” [Floyd Bresee, “Sermon introductions, part 1,” *Ministry*, January 1991, 24].

Lift-up. Normal liftoff can be described as the airplane heading into the wind [Airplane Flying Handbook (U.S. Department of Transportation: FAA, 2004), 5–2] and gradually gaining altitude, with the airplane “flying itself” off the ground [W. N. Hubin. *The Science of Flight, Pilot-Oriented Aerodynamics* (Iowa: Iowa State University Press/ AMES, 1995), 208]. The effective sermon gradually lifts up the audience into the contents, allowing them to understand and assimilate the message.

Cruising altitude

Pilots and preachers can take their passengers to unbelievable heights. The higher the altitude and the less oxygen available, the more difficult the journey. “The world altitude record for an airplane was set on August 22, 1963, at 354,200 ft (107,960 m) by an X-15” [David F. Anderson and Scott Eberhardt, *Understanding Flight* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2001), 185]. Most commercial aircraft fly with pressurized cabins because, otherwise, passengers would not survive for lack of oxygen. The higher the contents of a sermon, the higher the concentration level and retention capacity the congregation needs. Preachers should preach at an altitude suitable for their congregation.

Preventing homiletic hypoxia. Hypoxia is a condition produced by lack of oxygen. Professional golfer Payne Stewart and five other people lost consciousness due to hypoxia and crashed while flying from Orlando to Dallas in 1999 [www.airsafe.com/stewart.htm. Payne Stewart was the winner of the 1999 U.S. Open golf tournament the same year he died. It is estimated the plane crashed at over six hundred miles per hour. www.planecrashinfo.com/famous1990s.htm]. Preachers can fly so high in their allocutions that they leave the audience breathless, but this type of homiletic hypoxia may fail to communicate the gospel properly. Sometimes people leave the church very impressed by the eloquence but without a clear understanding of the Word of God. Nothing vainer exists in preaching than saying nothing with elegance.

Flying straight. A government agency that sets and enforces flight rules strongly emphasizes the necessity for forming correct habits in flying straight and level. Straight-and-level preaching, as easy as it looks, has never been easy. Starting with good preparation, the mind becomes a powerful warehouse of ideas that surface during delivery. For the unprepared preacher, in need of content to complete the 30-minute sermon, a temptation surfaces to insert new ideas in the elocution although they may not be totally related to the topic.

Proper use of windows. Passengers and pilots benefit from the panoramic views airplane windows provide. The importance of illustrations, sometimes called *windows*, has led some writers to declare that a sermon that does not have illustrations should not be preached [Duduit, 199, 200. Subsequent pages of this book offer excellent insights on how to find, store, and use illustrations]. Illustrations awaken the interest of the audience, facilitate understanding of theological truths, and can persuade to action. “The right kind of illustration provokes a mental picture in which the hearer actually sees the point of application” [Perry, 142].

Sermon duration. Range in aviation describes the ground covered by an aircraft with the available fuel. The world’s record for a nonstop, nonrefueled flight of 24,987 miles was set by the specially designed Voyager in 1986 while flying around the world [Anderson, 189]. To be immortal, a sermon does not have to be infinite. Because the capacity of human retention and concentration has limitations, a sermon can overdose a congregation with knowledge to the point of saturation.

Landing

What goes up must come down—air travel and sermons have a beginning and an ending. In aviation, landing stays as one of the most important phases of flight, with over 50 percent of aerial accidents happening on the approach or landing [ohn Ernsting and Peter King, *Aviation Medicine* (London: Butterworths, 1988), 697]. The flight does not end until the aircraft parks safely at the terminal and all passengers and crew are safely out of the plane. The conclusion of a sermon and landing in aviation share striking similarities when memorable sermons and flights have a perfect ending. In fact, a perfect landing may help passengers forget a bumpy ride.

Conclusion phases. Sermon conclusions and landing in aviation can be divided into three phases closely related to each other: descend, touch down, and shut up. The pilot and crew inform passengers of the proximity to the destination, provide safety instructions, and, once on the ground, welcome them to the city where they have arrived and invite people to fly with them again. Sermon conclusions, in particular, summarize and exhort the congregation to respond by

going home and doing the Christian deed. Satisfied church listeners come back to churches that offer inspiring and relevant sermons.

Some sermons electrify audiences; others only electrocute them. Aviation offers preachers excellent ideas to produce unforgettable and inspiring sermons. Next time you step into the platform's cockpit to feed the saints, take them on an electrifying and transforming spiritual ride.

5 **Review Question**

- **Did the introduction give the sermon direction?**
- **Did the conclusion bring the sermon “full circle” (relate the ending back to the beginning) and invite a response?**

Preaching Workshop – Lesson 6: Flowing Between Bible Past And Preaching Present

1 **Short presentation on Rick Warren’s article “Preaching Tips That Will Change Lives” by someone from the group.**

➤ **Sermon**

➤ Spend time practicing the sermon ... first read it, then preach it ... there will be a subconscious memory of the words ... delivering the sermon (e.g.: notes) ...

➤ When you write, speak it out aloud ... evaluate by how it sounds ...

➤