

LESSON 6 The Method of Preaching

In Lesson 5 we discussed four major themes and the reasons for their importance. We learned that a wealth of material is available for development by the conscientious person who preaches. Now we turn to The Method of Preaching.

As you learn how to prepare and preach sermons, you will learn to set a goal for each sermon, to gather and arrange material based on the Scriptures, and to communicate the message effectively. In addition to the mechanics of sermon building, you will evaluate your sermons to see if you have met your goal, and discern whether or not your preaching ministry provides a balanced spiritual diet that can help the ones to whom you minister grow in the faith.

Remember that the power of salvation is not in the person who preaches or in the method he or she uses. The gospel of Jesus Christ is the power of salvation. The apostle Paul put this truth into perspective: “I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile” (Romans 1:16). Never be ashamed of the gospel! It is God’s message, backed by His power, and guaranteed to produce results. Preach it with assurance and see what God can do! But never forget that the power lies in the message, not in the messenger.

lesson outline

Determine the Goal

Gather the Material

Arrange the Material

Communicate the Message

Peter, an Example

lesson objectives

When you finish this lesson you should be able to:

1. Explain the importance of determining the goal of preaching.
2. Discuss the function of gathering material for sermon preparation.
3. Justify the need for arranging sermon material.
4. List from memory the four guidelines for effectively communicating a message.
5. Show how Peter exemplifies a New Testament preacher.

learning activities

1. Read the opening section, outline, and objectives.
2. Learn the meanings of any key words that are new to you.
3. Take the self-test at the end of the lesson and check your answers.
4. Carefully review Unit 2 (Lessons 4–6), then complete the unit student report for Unit 2 and send it to your GU instructor.

key word

homily

lesson development

DETERMINE THE GOAL

Objective 1. *Explain the importance of determining the goal of preaching.*

You cannot plan a trip until you know where you are going. Then you plan how to get there. Just so, in preaching you set a goal for each message, then you work toward reaching it. If you expect to accomplish anything when you preach, you must set one definite goal. To determine what that one goal is, you will need to consider two things.

First, the needs of the people must be known. Jesus knew the needs common to all people (Matthew 6:31–32) as well as the needs of each person (John 1:43–50). The need to be loved, to be saved, to be wanted, to be useful are examples of needs common to everyone. Individual needs must be met too! And Jesus did that. He ministered personally to many individuals (Matthew 9:27–31; 12:9–14; Mark 1:40–45; John 3:1–14; 4:1–26).

Often as I prepare a sermon, I picture several people seated around my desk. I imagine a teenage young man, a busy businessman, a young mother, a widow, a college student, and a 60-something lady. I ask myself, “What does the text from which I will preach this Sunday have to say to each of these?” I ask the Lord to help me know the needs of people. A good preacher is an involved pastor.

Application

1 The goal of the sermon helps us to answer which one of the following questions.

- a)** What do I want this message to accomplish?
- b)** What does the text say?
- c)** How do I apply these truths to my hearers?



Second, the needs of the people must be met. Jesus referred to meeting the needs of people when He spoke about the sick needing a physician (Mark 2:17). When you are preaching to meet a specific need, not only can that need be met but many other people are likely to be helped also. When hunting quail, the hunter aims for a specific bird, not the whole covey. So it is in preaching. You will help more people overall if you have one goal for each message and reach it.

When you have determined the need, the next question is, What do I preach to meet the need? The Holy Spirit will guide you as you seek to minister to the needs of the people. Trust and follow His leadership (1 Corinthians 2:10–12).

Those who preach often find that a Scripture text will impress itself on their hearts as the Holy Spirit ministers to them when they pray concerning the needs of the people. This Scripture text then determines the scope and theme of the sermon. The sermon, as we shall see later in this lesson, is the faithful exposition and application of the Scripture to the needs of the hearers by the power of the Holy Spirit. At other times, as we are reading or studying the Word of God, a Scripture text seems to leap off the pages at us almost demanding that we preach it. However the text comes to you, it will determine the nature, course, and goal of your sermon.

Another excellent way to meet the needs of people is to preach a series of sermons through a biblical book. The Bible is God's inspired Word. As you preach through a book, the Spirit of God will take the Word of God and apply to the needs of the people of God. Preaching a series of sermons will also enable you preach on many topics and not just address your favorite issues.

Sometimes the need presents itself and you search the Scriptures for an answer. At other times you will see in the Scriptures an answer to existing needs. Whatever the case, you must determine one goal for each message; then prepare and preach to meet the need represented by that goal. If needs are to be determined and met, then there must be an object, a goal to preaching. Alexander Pope's words on writing apply to

preaching in this regard: “In ev’ry work regard the writer’s End, Since none can compass more than they intend.”¹

Your goal in preaching any sermon should be so clear in your own mind that you could state it in seven to ten words.

Application

2 Circle the letters of the statements that give TRUE explanations of why we must determine specific goals for sermons.

- a) Without a specific goal for his sermon, the one who ministers risks not having an effective response to the sermon.
 - b) The ones who listen to sermons that have no goal may be confused concerning what the minister is trying to say, what his purpose is.
 - c) Where there is no sermon goal, the one who ministers generally tends to drift from subject to subject without developing any course of action for the hearers to take.
 - d) The fact that one does not have a specific goal for his sermons is a mark of his total dependence on God.
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GATHER THE MATERIAL

What Does the Bible Say?

Objective 2. *Discuss the function of gathering material for sermon preparation.*

When the need is determined and the goal is decided upon, the next question is: What does the Bible say? In your search for what the Bible says on any matter, avoid twisting or forcing a text to say something it does not say. For example, the apostle Paul’s assurance that not even a hair of your heads will be lost (Acts 27:34) is not intended as a solution for baldness. It is, however,

¹ Alexander Pope. 1847. *The Works of Alexander Pope, Esq.* London: Gilbert & Rivington.

a very descriptive and clear statement of the unlimited extent of God's protection. You will recall from Lesson 3 that the context determines the meaning. The plain, literal meaning of a passage should be used unless it cannot be taken literally. Therefore, if you will take a text from Scriptures and keep close to it, you will avoid any twisting of the Scriptures. And if you will base every message on the simple, straightforward declaration of Scripture, you will preach with authority and your message will be received as the Word of the Lord. Additionally, avoid preaching a sermon based on one translation of a certain text. Let your selected Bible passage be clear and confirmed by multiple translations. As you search the Scriptures, purpose to find what the Bible has to say. Then you can proclaim God's message with confidence, expecting God to meet the needs of the people to whom you minister.

Application

3 Write in your notebook two or three sentences to explain the statement: In preparing a sermon, a person must determine what the Bible says regarding the subject.

What Have I Experienced and Observed?

Sermons are not as much made like machinery as they are grown like fruit. They are not as much built like houses as they are received like messages. Part of the process is that of thought, meditation, and study. Ask yourself, What have I observed or experienced that will make this Bible text more meaningful? What truths of this Scripture passage have I experienced or observed in another's experience? Where in the Bible is this doctrine illustrated in the life of someone? You must be sure, however, that when you preach, you avoid using any experience of your own or another's that could cause embarrassment or hurt. Carefully weigh what you will say and how it will be received. You do not have to make public reference to personal experience, although you may use these experiences with profit on occasion.

Stories and illustrations give power and meaning to a text if you have experienced them and profited by the truth they portray. Illustrations are like windows; they let in the light.

Application

- 4** Circle the letters of TRUE statements that explain how experience and observation are essential in gathering sermon material.
- a)** Observations and personal experiences are important to the sermon for their ability to entertain people.
 - b)** Illustrative material is important in the sermon because this material makes the Bible portion more meaningful and shows how practical the truths of the Scripture are.
 - c)** The experience of people and their observations help us to apply the truths of the Word to our own situation. Thus, what God has done for others, He will do for me also.
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What Do I Know?

Ask yourself, What have I ever read, heard, seen, or thought on this subject? Time, prayer, and meditation are needed here. Search your mind for anything and everything that is meaningful. Let the text act like a magnet to draw every bit of information about the truth it contains. Time and experience will add to your store of information. When you use what you have, you will begin to note things that come your way. Remember, Jesus used so many of the simple things in the natural world to illustrate spiritual truth. So use what you have; draw on it as a resource for preaching. I often study and make a rough outline for my Sunday sermon on Tuesday. Then I think, pray, read, and sort from Wednesday through Friday, finalizing the sermon on Saturday morning. We preach from the overflow; therefore, give the Holy Spirit time to fill you.

In addition, use any materials you have gathered and filed on the subject. As we saw in Lesson 3, this collection of information can increase your store of usable sermon material.

Application

5 State the importance of personal knowledge in gathering material for preaching. Use your notebook for this response.



ARRANGE THE MATERIAL

Plan the Preaching

Objective 3. *Justify the need for arranging sermon material.*


Planning is necessary to good preaching. Once or twice each year you should look back where you have been and anticipate where you are going in your preaching. Avoid preaching the same or similar texts, subjects, and messages. Like Paul, preach the whole purpose of God (Acts 20:26–27). Study your preaching patterns carefully to see that you are not neglecting the great truths and texts of Scripture. One helpful step can be to open a good book on theology to the table of contents. As you look down the table, have you not preached on any major biblical theme lately? If your answer is yes, then get busy and preach that theme.

Why not plan to preach a series of messages on the Ten Commandments, the Journeys of Israel, the Parables of Matthew, the Miracles of John's Gospel, or the Great "I Am" Discourses in John? Other series will suggest themselves to you as you continue in the ministry of preaching. Above all, avoid hit-or-miss, spur-of-the-moment selection of texts and topics for preaching. You and the people who hear you will benefit from a well-planned preaching program.

Not only is planning important to your overall preaching ministry, it is also important to the preparation and delivery of each message you preach. It is impossible to plant, water, and harvest a good sermon in one week. For sermon building is a process that touches every aspect of the preacher's life. As such, it is a developing, lifelong process.

A sermon is a bridge that helps you take people from where they are to where they need to be. A good plan and sufficient material will help you build that bridge. An orderly, forward-looking plan for preaching will enable you to help people grow and develop spiritually. In addition, as you preach through the great themes of the Bible, you will challenge them, for every sermon can and should have the vitality and novelty that come as the Holy Spirit takes us ever deeper in our knowledge of God. And the Spirit will help us to apply the truth of the Word to our lives. An orderly, forward-moving plan for preaching will also help you to preach messages that are interesting, easy to understand, and easy to remember. Your people can meditate on such truths long after the echo of your voice has faded away.

Application

- 6** Circle the letters of statements that are TRUE in their discussion of the importance of planning in sermon preparation.
- a)** When a person uses a plan for his preaching ministry, he is able to avoid preaching the same texts and subjects because he reviews regularly what he has done and therefore plans more intelligently what he needs to do.
 - b)** The planning of a person's preaching enables him to preach all the biblical teachings and thus avoid neglect of the great truths and texts of Scripture.
 - c)** By carefully planning your preaching, you can take people from spiritual infancy toward the goal of Christian maturity and greater Christlikeness.
 - d)** When you plan your preaching, you indicate that you are self-sufficient and no longer have to depend on the Lord.
 - e)** An orderly, forward-moving plan for preaching will enable people to understand what you preach and how the various themes lead them toward spiritual maturity.
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Determine the Central Truth

Every message you preach should have a central truth taken from the Scripture text upon which the sermon is based. The central truth is the heart of the message. It is important that you write it in one sentence. If the message is not clear to you, it will not be clear to your listeners. Mist in the pulpit will create fog in the pew. If you can summarize the message in one sentence, you can better present it without wandering to other things. If you can condense your message into a single sentence, a good listener can summarize it in one sentence. This may be difficult to do, but it will help you as you preach

Once you have chosen the central truth, all of your efforts, arguments, illustrations, and supporting material should harmonize in supporting it. Do not allow secondary ideas to distract your attention. Stay off rabbit trails and detours, regardless how tempting they might be. Follow through in developing this one central truth. Pray about it and meditate on it until it becomes a part of you. And when you get ready to make your outline, you will know exactly where you are going. Your goal will be clear.

Application

- 7** The selection of the central truth of a sermon is important to sermon preparation and delivery because the central truth
- a)** serves to excite the imagination of hearers and is primarily an attention-getting device.
 - b)** is the entire message in condensed form, and it gives focus both to preparation and delivery.
 - c)** indicates what audience the minister is attempting to reach and identifies what specific need he is trying to meet.
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Arrange in Orderly Manner

At this point you need to structure all the material in a reasonable and usable order. A sermon outline is an effective means of arranging and organizing this material. A sermon outline is to preaching what a skeleton is to a body, framework is to a house, and steel girders are to a skyscraper. It is indispensable! We turn now to the consideration of sermon organization and the development of a system that will help you in this area.

A homily is a simple and informal form of preaching. Homilies usually consist of a verse-by-verse or word-by-word commentary on a passage of Scripture. There are three forms of homilies: a verse-by-verse commentary on a passage of Scripture; a topic or subject homily; and a blend of the two, a verse-by-verse and subject homily. A more advanced homily simply has an introduction and a conclusion added to the running commentary. It is this advanced form of homily (sermon) that we will consider. It consists of (after the Scripture text and central truth) the introduction, the body, and the conclusion.

1. *The Introduction.* What an entry is to a house, an introduction is to a sermon. The basic purpose of an introduction is to gain attention and create interest. The introduction may come from the context, the Bible setting, the occasion, current events, etc. Prepare the introduction carefully and write it out. This will assure you of getting off to a good start. Keep the introduction short; about two or three minutes. It should relate to the whole body of material. Be sure to vary your introductions, and add a final sentence that easily moves the thought from the introduction to the body of the sermon.

2. *The Body.* The body of a homily consists of verse by verse comment on the Scripture text. Study the verses of the text carefully until some order and grouping appears, especially in longer passages. Limit the body to three or four major divisions. This will make it easy to manage in preaching. Here is one procedure to follow in forming the divisions of the body from

the Scripture passage: 1) Use a verse or two to make a statement of the content (tell what it says). 2) Make an application of this statement (show how it applies to your listeners). 3) Illustrate the truth and/or application from nature, Scripture, observation, or personal experience. 4) Summarize the whole matter in one sentence. Then move on to the next verse or verses and repeat the process. In simple terms, state the principle, explain the principle, illustrate the principle, and then apply the principle.

Application

8 In the following suggested outline for 1 Corinthians 13, fill in a statement of content for each of the verse segments given.

Text: 1 Corinthians 13:13, "But the greatest of these is love."

Central Truth: The greatest thing in the world is love.

- a) I. (vv. 1-3)
- b) II. (vv. 4-7)
- c) III. (vv. 8-13)

9 In the following outline, list four of the uses of adversity that are suggested by the text (Psalm 119:71) and by our own life experiences.

Text: Psalm 119:71, "It was good for me to be afflicted so that I might learn your decrees."

Central Truth: Adversity is often a necessity of life.

- a) I. Adversity
- b) II. Adversity
- c) III. Adversity
- d) IV. Adversity

10 Based on Jesus' threefold answer to the question of John the Baptist (Matthew 11:4–6), write three statements that could serve as major points for the body of this sermon outline.

Text: Matthew 11:3, “Are you the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else?”

Central Truth: Is Christ what the world needs?

- a) I. Jesus says, (v. 4)
- b) II. Jesus says, (v. 5)
- c) III. Jesus says, (v. 6)

11 One person preached from the text, “For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain” (Philippians 1:21). His four major points were: 1) He can run away from life, 2) He can run along with life, 3) He can take hold of life firmly, and 4) He can put himself in the hands of one greater than himself and let Him run his life. Based on these points his “central truth” was

- a) The uncertainty of life.
- b) The possibilities of the good life.
- c) what to do with life today.



As you prepare to preach the message, remember that the central truth is like the hub of a wheel. The different divisions of the sermon body are its spokes. As the spokes run to and from the hub, so the authority for the truth of each division comes from the central truth. And the truth of each division makes its appeal for proof to the central truth. Each division of the sermon body should be an outgrowth of the passage of Scripture on which it is based. Good preaching is not saying three things; good preaching is saying one thing three different ways. So stay focused on your central theme or big idea.

3. The Conclusion. The conclusion is the last and best chance to bring the truths of the message to the hearts of the listeners. The big question every sermon ought to raise is, “Brothers, what shall we do?” (Acts 2:37). Every congregation

has the right to an answer to that question. The conclusion should give that answer. It is the final appeal to action. The conclusion should be written out and not be longer than the introduction. The last words must be effective! An appropriate illustration, a brief restatement of the major truth, a verse of a hymn, any of these might be used to capture the total weight of the message. Aim the conclusion to the heart of the listeners. Be sure to give an invitation for people to respond. Your invitation will vary from salutation to fuller commitment to healing to witnessing, etc. Challenge the congregation to be doers of the Word, not merely hearers.

Application

12 Identify the parts of the sermon described (left) by placing the number of the appropriate part (right) in front of it.

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| ... a Scriptural base on which the sermon is built | 1) Text |
| ... b Device that gets people's attention and leads them into the sermon | 2) Central truth |
| ... c Commentary on the content that tells what it says, illustrates it, and applies it | 3) Introduction |
| ... d Focus or aim of the sermon in condensed form | 4) Body |
| ... e Action stage of the sermon when hearers are challenged to a response | 5) Conclusion |

13 In your notebook explain how the five parts of a sermon should be arranged for preaching.



COMMUNICATE THE MESSAGE

Objective 4. *List from memory the four guidelines for effectively communicating a message.*

To communicate is to give information by speaking, writing, etc. The process of communication is complete only when the message has been given and received. When your listeners understand you they know what you know on the matter. Thus, you have communicated. The four guidelines that follow serve as a checklist against which you can measure your communication performance.

Follow the Plan

Some preachers write out in full and read their sermons to the congregation. Others preach from a prepared outline. Whatever method you choose, little is gained if you prepare a plan for preaching and then do not follow it. However, when you have prepared material well and then follow the plan, you can expect to communicate your message. Be yourself and develop yourself into the best preacher possible. Make preaching the heart of your ministry, for it is the heart of God's call on your life.

Application

14 Choose the answer that best completes the sentence. A sermon plan should be followed carefully

- a)** because it is the master of the preacher; he is its slave.
- b)** so that people will sense that the one who ministers knows what he is doing and where he is going.
- c)** to ensure that the predetermined goal will be reached and the needs met.

Be Concise, Concrete

Some people have to say something; others have something to say. Every preacher who has prepared a gospel message has

something to say! Avoid meaningless phrases and repetition of words that only take up time. Get to the point. Say enough to be understood, but do not be burdensome. It is far better to quit when people want you to continue with your message than to continue when they want you to quit.

Use specific, simple language. Use words that describe action. Say more about doing than about being. Preach of people, places, things. Use concrete language, not abstract language. Remember, the human mind is more like a picture gallery than a debating hall. Be specific, not general. Use pictorial words—things that can be touched, heard, smelled, and seen. Use illustrations that illuminate the truth you are preaching. They are like windows that let in light. However, a house is not all windows! And your sermon should not consist of an endless string of illustrations, which may indeed amuse and entertain, but leave your people spiritually hungry and empty. Preach the Word!

Application

15 Circle the letters of the TRUE statements. Based on information given in “Be Concise, Concrete,” we conclude that:

- a)** Some who minister have a tendency to talk unnecessarily about things that do not concern the overall objective of the sermon.
- b)** One who is truly sensitive to the needs and feelings of the people, the leading of the Holy Spirit, and good common sense will not use preaching time for foolishness, unnecessary words, or attacking anything but sin and Satan.
- c)** One who ministers should try to achieve balance in his ministry, not using stories, illustrations, and personal experiences for their own sake but primarily to illustrate the truth proclaimed.



Preach for the Objective

Everything in the sermon outline is there because it contributes to reaching the predetermined goal of the message. When you preach, everything must contribute to meeting that same goal. Be mindful of the goal of the message. Reach out to the people. Communicate with them. Do not be afraid to use your entire body to communicate. (Think how an orchestra conductor puts his whole body into conducting.) Meet them where they are when you begin to preach and take them where you want them to be when you finish. While this is the objective of the immediate message, in a larger sense each message is part of your ministry to the people whom you serve. Your message objective is part of your ministry objective: to declare the whole purpose of God (Acts 20:27) so that the lost will find Christ and the believers will mature in the faith.

As you outline your sermon to preach for objective, vary your style and structure. For example, consider the following outline of a sermon on Mark 10:46–52, the healing of Bartimaeus.

1. The condition of the man
2. The cry for mercy
3. The command of the Savior

Perhaps it would be more engaging and memorable to show people the ABCs that lead to a miracle.

A = Assume responsibility for your life (v. 47)

B = Believe God can change you (v. 48)

C = Clarify what you want God to do (v. 51)

D = Determine to follow Jesus (v. 52)

Your key points stated as principles rather than factual phrases will be easy to remember and apply. As you make your outline, speak in the present tense and not the past tense. Also, use “you” and “we” rather than “he” or “it.” When your outline

is both present tense and personally connected, it will have greater impact on your listeners.

Application

16 Read the following Scriptures and answer the questions.

a) In Acts 20:24 the apostle Paul confesses to the elders of the Ephesian church that his ministerial objective is to

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b) In Acts 20:20–21, 26–27, Paul states that his preaching consisted in

.....

c) In comparing 1 Corinthians 9:24–27 with Philippians 3:14–15, Paul encourages his hearers to

.....

d) In 2 Timothy 4:6–8, Paul declares that he has completed his race, reached his objective, and awaits

.....



Paul had a goal for his ministry, (whether it was public or private), and it was to turn people from sin to God and to declare fully the message of God’s grace. He also had personal goals. He did not want to become so involved in ministry that he would lose out in the race and become a spiritual fatality even as he tried to win others to Christ (1 Corinthians 9:24–27; Philippians 3:7–16). We will do well to take heed to his admonition and example.

Gather the Results

When you preach the Word, God guarantees the results (Isaiah 55:11; Psalm 126:6). The results you are seeking—saving the lost or building up believers—will come only by the ministry of the Word and the Spirit.

When you have preached, do these things to gather the results:

1. Give the Holy Spirit opportunity to work in the hearts of the people. He will convince them of their need and of God’s provision for that need (John 16:8).
2. Give brief, simple instructions. Peter told the crowd exactly what they should do to respond to his message (Acts 2:38–39).
3. Give the congregation an opportunity to respond. If the conclusion of your message is an appeal, expect a response.

The story is told of a preacher who approached the distinguished preacher C. H. Spurgeon and asked, “How do we preach the same gospel and you have results and I don’t?” Spurgeon answered, “You don’t expect results every time you preach, do you?” “No,” replied the preacher. “Then that is one reason why you don’t get any!” Spurgeon exclaimed. When you preach, expect God to make something happen. Evangelist Billy Graham often begins his preaching by telling people about the invitation that will come at the end of the sermon. This prepares people and lets them know you are trusting God for real life changes.

Application

17 List from memory the four guidelines for effectively communicating a message.

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18 The four directives given to those who minister concerning the message they preach are designed to help them

- a) become master preachers by using polished, beautiful language, challenging riddles, and story-telling for the purpose of holding people's attention.
- b) reach the objective they have set for the sermon by effectively communicating to people.
- c) become accustomed to the mechanics of preaching so that people will recognize their skill and professional training.



PETER, AN EXAMPLE

Objective 5. *Show how Peter exemplifies a New Testament preacher.*

Simon Peter is an example of a common man who became an effective preacher. After he denied Jesus to a slave girl (Matthew 26:72), he preached in Jerusalem to thousands (Acts 2). The power of the Holy Spirit that came upon him on the Day of Pentecost made the difference between the earlier fear and his later boldness (Acts 1:8).

Peter's preaching method, as recorded in Acts, is not structured precisely like our homily. Nevertheless, he began at the point of people's needs and moved toward meeting those needs. He began with the familiar (the Old Testament history) and explained how the program of God for people's salvation moved to its completion in Christ. In addition, he showed how the birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus were fulfillments of Old Testament prophecy. Finally, in his conclusion he appealed to his hearers to repent of their sins and believe in Jesus so that they could enjoy all the provisions of God: forgiveness of sins, peace, times of refreshing, and security from the judgment to come.

Peter did not learn everything about preaching and people overnight. There is an apparent progression in understanding and growth in spiritual awareness in his ministry from Acts

2, 3, 4, 5, and 8 to 10, where he preached to the household of Cornelius. The development was not in Peter's method, the mechanics of his preaching, or his own study. Rather, it was his obedience to the leading of the Holy Spirit that brought about the evangelization of the Gentiles. Before Peter's ministry at the house of Cornelius, God prompted Peter by a series of visions (Acts 10:9–17), spoke to him by the Holy Spirit, telling him to go to Caesarea (Acts 10:19–20), and revealed how fully He had prepared the way for universal evangelism. After these marvelous spiritual experiences, Peter's task of preaching was made much easier, for he realized that he was only a channel through which the ministry of God's Word flowed to others.

Peter's message had one central feature: the proclamation of the gospel. His experience shows that the power is not in the person or in the method, but in the gospel (Romans 1:16). God uses trained, capable people, but even the most capable ministers acknowledge that the gospel is preached not in the wisdom of men but in the power of the Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:3–5).

I encourage you to study to gain all the skill you can, and to work diligently to do the best you can to preach this gospel message. But be aware always that the power of salvation is not in the skills you learn or the ability you have, but in the message you preach: the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Application

19 Circle the letters of TRUE statements that explain in what ways Peter exemplifies a New Testament preacher.

- a)** Peter is an example of a New Testament preacher because he had one primary theme: the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- b)** Peter's ministry shows how completely he utilized the structure of the homily in communicating the gospel.
- c)** Peter's ministry is a convincing demonstration of the effectiveness of the gospel as it is proclaimed in the power of the Spirit.

- d) The record of Peter's preaching ministry in Acts indicates that he always had a goal in mind, for he began at the point of the people's needs and ministered to meet those needs.
 - e) Peter's example in ministry demonstrates that education is not important, preparation is not necessary, and spiritual growth is not required in the one who ministers, since God uses "empty vessels."
 - f) From Peter's record of ministry in Acts chapters 1–10, we learn that God used Peter's knowledge of: Israel's history, Jesus' life and teachings, his own relationships with people, the Old Testament Scriptures, and his utter dependence on the Holy Spirit's enablement—all of these—to enrich Peter's ability to communicate effectively.
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self-test

MULTIPLE CHOICE. Choose the best answer for each question.

- 1** Which one of the following statements is NOT a reason that determining a goal is basic to an effective preaching ministry?
- a)** Without a clear-cut goal, a person risks not having a good response.
 - b)** People will have difficulty following the point of the sermon when there is no clear-cut goal.
 - c)** Hearers will feel that “no goal” equals greater dependence on the Spirit.
 - d)** Ministers without clear-cut goals tend to drift from one subject to another without developing a course of action for hearers to take.
- 2** Determining a goal enables the one who ministers to
- a)** find where the interests of his people are.
 - b)** concentrate on the type of preaching that interests him.
 - c)** comply with the sound, structural preaching followed by most preachers.
 - d)** minister to the needs of people.
- 3** One of the primary functions of gathering the material, according to this lesson, is to
- a)** find what the Scriptures have to say about the subject you have chosen.
 - b)** develop a professional system of locating and using resource material like many great writers and lecturers do.
 - c)** impress the people to whom one ministers that he is capable, organized, and an authority on any biblical subject.
 - d)** develop self-discipline in study that will hopefully help in ministering.

- 4** What one has observed and experienced is an important part of gathering the material because observations and experiences
- a)** have an interesting quality about them and serve to entertain people.
 - b)** act as vehicles to convey and apply the truth of the Word to everyday life.
 - c)** enable the one who ministers to vary the content of his sermons and thus avoid boring people.
 - d)** demonstrate the broad knowledge of the one who ministers.

5 What I know is an important function of gathering the material because

- a)** my knowledge grows through experiences, observation, study, meditation, and prayer, and all these help me to apply the truth more effectively.
- b)** the sum total of all I know is what my people will eventually receive; therefore, I must study constantly if I am to be an effective communicator.
- c)** my opinions are the most important part of the preaching exercise, and this should stir me to devote my life to the pursuit of knowledge.

6 Included under the category of arranging the material is the need to plan the preaching, which serves to

- a)** help a person have a well-rounded preaching ministry.
- b)** develop in-depth understanding of the great themes of the Bible.
- c)** build each sermon into the effective communications tool it should be to meet people's needs.
- d)** include all of the above: a), b), and c).

7 The central truth is important to the sermon because it

- a)** is the attention-getter.
- b)** indicates to whom the minister is preaching and what he expects as a result.
- c)** is the message in shortened form.
- d)** demands a response from the audience.

- 8** The orderly arrangement of a homily serves all of the following purposes EXCEPT
- a)** gaining the attention of the hearers.
 - b)** explaining, illustrating, and applying the content of the Scripture passage.
 - c)** guaranteeing spiritual response.
 - d)** pointing the hearers to a specific course of action as a result of the message.
- 9** Someone said of a minister, “He always has the answers to the questions that nobody ever asks.” This minister may have had which of the following problems?
- a)** He may not have understood the nature of communication.
 - b)** He may not have been sensitive to the needs of the people and of his responsibility to help meet those needs.
 - c)** He may not have the goals that related to his people.
 - d)** He could well have suffered from all of the problems described in a), b), and c).

TRUE-FALSE. Write T in front of the statements that are TRUE and F in front of those statements that are FALSE.

- ... **10** To communicate effectively one need only make a plan
- ... **11** The one who ministers should be direct, specific in language, avoid unnecessary words, use pictorial language, and be sensitive to the Holy Spirit and the people as he ministers
- ... **12** The effective minister aims to reach the goal he has set for his message
- ... **13** The minister who expects to achieve results every time he ministers is unrealistic

Before you continue your study with Lesson 7, be sure to complete your unit student report for Unit 2 and return the answer sheet to your GU instructor.

answers to study questions

- 10 a)** Ask those who have met Me
b) Observe those who have come to Me
c) Try Me for yourself
- 1 a)** What do I want this message to accomplish?
- 11 c)** what to do with life today.
- 2 a)** True
b) True
c) True
d) False. (It is usually a mark of laziness. Jesus said that the Holy Spirit would bring His sayings to our remembrance (John 14:26), but it is our responsibility to fill our minds with His Word first. Paul's encouragement in 2 Timothy 2:15 is a challenge to everyone whom God has called to minister.)
- 12 a)** 1) Text
b) 3) Introduction
c) 4) Body
d) 2) Central truth
e) 5) Conclusion
- 3** Your answer. It is absolutely essential for us to determine what the Bible says concerning a subject. It is the only authority on which we can rely, for it reveals what God feels and thinks about the matter and what our behavior should be. It is God's rule by which we are to measure our conduct and not simply some person's opinion.
- 13** Your answer. The five parts of a sermon should be arranged like the structure of a building. The text should give the sermon a foundation. Then the central truth, which is laid on the foundation, should give a condensed statement of the sermon content. The introduction, which creates interest and attention, is a building block. The body should add essential building blocks as it illustrates, applies, and summarizes the Scripture portion. The conclusion, the capstone of the sermon, should bring hearers to a point of decision.

- 4 a)** False
 - b)** True
 - c)** True
- 14 c)** to ensure that the predetermined goal will be reached and the needs met.
- 5** Your answer. Personal knowledge is important as a resource of life. As you meditate on the text, the Holy Spirit will help you to draw from this personal resource to make applications of spiritual truth. Appropriate sermon illustrations and examples most generally arise out of one's own store of personal knowledge.
- 15** All are true.
- 6 a)** True
 - b)** True
 - c)** True
 - d)** False
 - e)** True
- 16 a)** complete his mission and finish the work the Lord Jesus gave him to do: to declare the Good News.
- b)** preaching everything necessary to people's spiritual birth, growth, and development.
 - c)** run with a goal in mind so that they will achieve what God desires for their life in the Spirit.
 - d)** the prize of victory which is reserved for those who successfully reach that objective.
- 7 b)** is the entire message in condensed form.
- 17** Check your answer with the four points given.
- 8 a)** The Importance of Love
 - b)** The Qualities of Love
 - c)** The Permanence of Love
- 18 b)** reach the objective they have set for the sermon by effectively communicating to people.

- 9 a)** serves to make a person reflect on his past life.
 - b)** often challenges a person to use future opportunities more wisely.
 - c)** enlarges a person's understanding of affliction and its purpose or use in people's lives.
 - d)** can make a person's relationship to God more meaningful.
- 19 a)** True
- b)** False
 - c)** True
 - d)** True
 - e)** False
 - f)** True



Unit 2

The Ministry of Teaching

Lessons

- 7 The Meaning of Teaching
- 8 The Heart of Teaching
- 9 The Method of Teaching
- 10 A Balanced Ministry