

# 5 Valuable Steps To Building A Sermon

Everyone has been called by God to be the speaker that they have been created to be. He has in His foreknowledge given you a voice and a way to speak that know one else has. What you are about to read is a foundation for gathering and preparing thoughts and ideas to turn them into the message that God would like you to speak in His timing. Some will work for you and some will not, some will work for one message but not for another, these are not have to's, but simply guidelines to help. Please read carefully over the next couple of pages as I pray that God will open your eyes to some helpful truths that will grow you closer to become that speaker, and discover the voice He has given you.

## The Essential of Prayer

There is nothing more important in life than prayer and so how much more important is prayer in sermon preparation? Our ultimate Teacher is the Holy Spirit and so ask God the Holy Spirit to enlighten you, to guide you, and give you insight into what the message should be about. I have read some Bible chapters and verses and then, all of a sudden, something just jumps out at me that I have never seen before. Even though I might have read it many times, it's like a flashlight was turned on in a certain verse or word and the meaning of the verse just jumped right off of the page. I believe before a person studies the Bible, whether a preacher or not, they should ask God to have the Holy Spirit give them help in understanding what is written so that we can pass this on to those who will hear a message on this or these verses that God wants them to hear. Now this should not take the place of you own quiet time with God. Preparing for a sermon in prayer is important but not more important then your own personal prayer time with God.

## Use Different Translations and a Study Bible

If you are going to give a sermon on persecution, look at a passage in different translations. I have an ESV, the New King James Version, the NASB, the King James Version and a few others and it's sometimes helpful to see how these passages are written in different translations. Even the Living Bible, which is a paraphrase, can make it sound like someone's writing this especially to you. You might use a study Bible to see what the commentary says about certain verses. Although the study notes are not inspired by God they might inspire you to think of something to add about the verses you are preaching on. I have a King James Bible that has margins in the middle that have scriptural references to other Bible passages which can help clarify or give more meaning to the verse or verses you are studying. Also, in my Bible there are numbered notations that give the original Greek, Hebrew or Aramaic of a certain word and that can make the passage more clear. I also love the website [blueletterbible.org](http://blueletterbible.org) and [biblegateway.com](http://biblegateway.com) because they helps me find additional meanings of Greek, Hebrew or Aramaic words which may clarify a word that otherwise may be simply read over.

## **Creating an Outline and Preparing**

This is a very important part of the sermon building process. If you are just starting out I encourage to write out as many of your thoughts about the message as possible and then began to read over them. As you read over them in prayer began to move parts around to connect with other thoughts that flow better, this is what I call the in-depth outline. Once this is done begin to practice preaching it in this form at least 2-4 times. Then sit down and relook at it pulling out all the key points and phrases that will help you to stay on tract, then rewrite it, this is called the final outline. You should then practice the message an additional 2-4 times in this form as this is the form you should take to the platform with you. A good public speaker practices his/her speech 5-7 times before they ever speak it to anyone, and what is preaching the a form of public speaking that God uses to save and change others. It helps to rehearse what you are going to say and how you are going to say it. It doesn't hurt to give someone in your family or a trusted friend a chance to see your outline and ask them what they think. I don't mind some constructive criticism because often someone else can see something that I might have missed, being it was right under my nose! It's hard to be objective with your own work but another set of eyes and ears can really help. Don't let the pressure of speaking get to you, only one part of it will be perfect, that is the part where you read out of the Bible. Everything else, if you have taken time to prepare is given into the hands of God to use as He sees fit.

## **The Main Thing is to Keep the Main Thing the Main Thing**

If the sermon is not biblically centered, Christ elevating, and God glorifying, then what's the point? If you are wanting to speak about the holiness of God, the need for repentance, the reason for the cross, and the forgiveness of sins, then don't insert what you think...only include what God says. For example, if the message is not about Christ and Him crucified, then what other subjects do you think are more important than this? I have several verses memorized and so when I do give the message I sometimes refer to key passages about the essentials of the faith like, Romans 10:9-13, [2 Corinthians 5:21](#), 1 John 1:9, Romans 5:8-10, and Acts 4:12. If you look these up, you can see why these are especially important to me.

## **Pick One To Three Points**

No one can remember a sermon with more than three points and usually they will remember your last point so make it your most important one. I heard a pastor once give a ten point sermon. It's nearly impossible to remember any more than three points in any sermon. If you try to give them too many points, the sermon will bog down and most of it will be forgotten, but if you say in advance that you have three points, then it is easier for them to follow you and to also, hopefully, take notes. The Bible chapter and verse are more important than the points so make sure that the Scriptures can be found by plainly citing the book, chapter, and verse(s). I heard Charles Swindoll once say that "A mist in the pulpit puts a fog in the pew."

## **Conclusion**

When you do give the sermon, make sure that they clearly hear what book, chapter, and verse you are using is. Tell your listeners that you will be turning to, say, Romans 10:9 and then give them time to find it. You might say something about what you are going to talk about so that they have time to find the book, chapter, and verse. It is more beneficial for them to be reading along with you because the real power is not in the pastor but in the Word; it's always in the message and never in the messenger. Unleash the power of the Word. My opinion is no more important than a talk show host talking about the newest fad in Hollywood so make sure that you are preaching straight out of the Word of God for that is the only opinion that ultimately matters. I must keep in mind that I am only an under-shepherd to the Great Shepherd and it is His church, not mine, and I am ultimately responsible to Him for the messages I give and the ones that I should have given.