

6 steps to prepare a sermon

A Curate's eye view of how to do it.



The Christian preacher is to be neither a speculator who invents new doctrines which please them, nor an editor who excises old doctrines which displease them, but a steward, God's steward, dispensing faithfully to God's household the truths committed to them in the scriptures, nothing more, nothing less, nothing else.

JOHN STOTT

There are as many different ways to prepare a sermon as there are preachers who preach them. Preparation of a sermon is an intensely personal thing – and we all do it in different ways. However just saying that isn't really helpful to anyone starting out in their preaching. So we asked one of our panel to tell us how he does it. You are welcome to try this method – or ask your incumbent how they do it, pester your favourite preacher until they let you in on their process or read any of the many books about it. Whatever your approach you need to work it out in such a way that the sermon comes from a preparation process that reflects you! Your character is God given. And God uses this in how we prepare and deliver our sermons. This is ok! Anyway this is what Charlie told us:

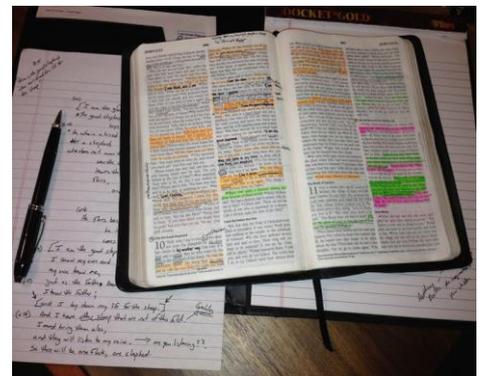
1. Pray With Persistence.

The development and delivery of Spirit-filled, eternity-altering, life-changing preaching demands a posture of prayer. Preachers are called to a task we're incapable of accomplishing. Prayer is an acknowledgement of our dependence. We petition the Spirit of God to do what we can't do. Prayer must persist throughout the preparation and presentation of the sermons we proclaim.

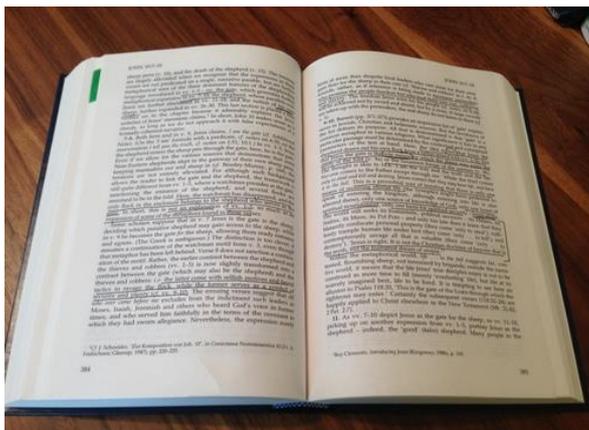
2. Read And Record.

If your sermon prep starts with something other than an open Bible, you're doing it wrong. The Apostle Paul told a young pastor named Timothy to "preach the word." We don't preach our creativity, thoughts, feelings, ideas, or stories. These may be PART of the sermon, but they are not to be the WHOLE of the Sermon.

Some like to start the process with a coffee, their Bible, and a blank piece of paper. marking up the text, writing it out by hand, recording observations and questions, and beginning the difficult, but rewarding work of letting the text speak. This is a great part.



3. Supplement Your Study.



Once you have done the first stage, your heart and mind has started to get around what the text may be saying, obviously and less obviously.

While the Holy Spirit speaks does speak directly through the text, we also know that He uses the work of other men and women to sharpen and clarify our thinking as well. This means we need to go to other writers and preachers to see what they have gleaned from the text. So we open commentaries, we read as much as we can from different places. This may be online, in our study Bibles, in official commentaries, or by listening to another person's

sermon online. This will teach us, and shape our thinking around the text.

4. Frame It Out.

Sometimes it's great to have some marinating time. This may be a few days, or simply a long walk, to allow all that you have read and thought to soak in, and then our Bible and notes are out, and it's time to find and frame the sermon. Crafting the Big Idea and looking for how to best outline my main point/s.

1) Interpretation 2) Illustration (3) Implication - explain what the text is saying, illustrate for the purpose for clarity, and bring the text to our everyday lives. Different people will find some or all of these steps difficult, but it is important to explain the point being made, often with a life illustration to help people see it and then explain how it will affect our lives. In your short time preaching, it is best to keep the illustration to a minimum, as this is the least important aspect, but often the easiest to focus on.

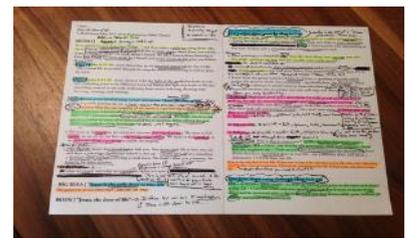
5. Write. Write. Write.

Some people preach without notes. While fine for some, preaching with no notes often results in rabbit trails, rants, and random thoughts that go unfiltered. Unless you have an abnormally strong memory, I believe everyone should take some type of notes into the pulpit with them.

We suggest that your sermon should be scripted fully. You may if you wish use notes. Key point to preaching from notes make sure what you MUST say is down. It best not to try to remember your important points.

6. Vandalize To Internalize.

There is little worse than a preacher taking a word-for-word manuscript into the pulpit and proceeding to read it. people don't want to hear you read to them, They want to hear you PREACH. This means you have to get all the work in you so that it can come out of you with conviction, clarity, and compassion. Sometimes I have to vandalize my notes in order to internalize them.



Conclusion.

Every preacher has their own process. This is one. It's hard work, but it's fruitful work. Please feel free to prepare however you seem fit, and we are looking forward to your sermons.