

How to prepare sermons and gospel addresses

William Evans



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How to Prepare Sermons

Instructions for the course.

- Minimum attendance for each lesson in the How to Prepare Sermons course is 1 week.
- Minimum attendance for the entire How to Prepare Sermons course is 18 weeks.
- There is no maximum attendance. This rule of no maximum attendance is true in all of our courses.

You may take as long as you need to thoroughly study the material. In addition, if other pressing duties keep you away from your studies you may come back to them at a convenient time and suffer no penalties for taking a longer time to complete the lessons. The lack of a maximum attendance requirement is for the express purpose of facilitating both thorough study of the materials as well as allowing those with pressing time constraints that causes them to study at an unavoidably slow pace to still complete the courses without penalty.

- **Credits:** This course is worth 2.5 credits.

- **Final Test:** You will be eligible to take the Final Test on or after the 1st day of the 17th week after your Begin Sign In date for the course. You must keep a record of the date of your Begin Sign In for this and all other courses because you will be required to enter that date on your Finish Sign In form when you complete the course. You will also need it on the Password Retrieval form which you must submit in order to receive the Password for the Final Test.

- **Course Record Form:** This form (the link is found on the course main page) is a page that you can print out or, alternatively, you can keep it in your computer for use via your word-processor, that you will use to record all necessary information about this course. You will need the information later. If you use this form then you will have all of the required information in one place handy for use. This form will also allow you to keep track of which lesson tests you have already successfully completed which will serve to help you keep track of which lesson in the course you are currently studying.

- **Scriptures in the textbook:** You must look up and read in your KJV, every scripture referenced in the textbook; even if it is wholly or partially quoted in the textbook. This is required in this course and every other course offered by the college. If the actual reference is not given but only a quote of a verse or a portion thereof, then you are required to find the verse in your KJV and read it there. This usually is done through use of a Concordance or by running a search on a computer Bible program, such as the free one we offer from E-sword, keyed on the portion of the scripture quoted in the textbook.

- **Outlines:** There will be several outlines required for this course. Instructions concerning what types of sermon outlines and when you are required to write and submit them will be included in the lessons.

Dr. T.E. VanBuskirk

LESSON ONE

**HOW TO PREPARE SERMONS
AND GOSPEL ADDRESSES**

How to Prepare Sermons and Gospel Addresses

BY

REV. WILLIAM EVANS, Ph. D., D. D.

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"The Great Doctrines of the Bible," "Personal Soul-Winning,"

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CHICAGO

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FOREWORD.

This volume is not an attempt to present a complete and exhaustive treatment on Homiletics—the science and art of preaching, for there are already on the market larger and more comprehensive works on the subject. This book is prepared not only for theological students but also to supply the need of such as find themselves denied the privileges of a regular ministerial training, but who, nevertheless, feel themselves called upon to preach or proclaim the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Indeed the lectures herein printed are in substance the same as delivered to young men and women preparing themselves for Christian service in a Bible training school. This fact accounts for their conversational style, which the author has not deemed wise to change.

Christian laymen, even though not preachers in the accepted sense of that term, desiring to be able to prepare brief gospel addresses and Bible readings, will find the help they need in this volume. Those seeking help in the preparation of “talks” for young peoples’ societies, conventions, leagues, etc., may receive hints and suggestions in this work.

The book contains theory and practice. Part One deals with the method of constructing various kinds of sermons and Bible addresses. Part Two is composed of outlines illustrating Part One.

The closing chapter on “Illustrations and Their Use” has been found so helpful wherever delivered that it is thought advisable to give it a place in this volume.

WILLIAM EVANS.

CONTENTS.

PART ONE

Chapter.		
I.	DEFINITIONS	11
	Meaning of "homiletics," "preaching," "a preacher"— Truth and personality.	
II.	THE PERSONALITY OF THE PREACHER.....	17
	Importance of personality—Avoid imitation—Piety— Clean habits — Truthfulness — Spirituality — Gravity — Good health.	
III.	THE TEXT—ITS CHOICE.....	25
	Importance and difficulty of choice—Advantages— Principles that govern choice—Wrong conceptions— Needs of the people—Cycle of preaching—The preacher's ability—Where to get texts—Necessary cautions.	
IV.	THE TEXT—ITS INTERPRETATION.....	39
	Rules for interpretation—Literal or figurative lan- guage—Exact meaning of words of Scripture—The writer and the readers—The analogy of faith. Sources of interpretation—Text—Context—Parallel passages— Helps outside the text.	
V.	THE THEME	51
	Thorough knowledge necessary—Adaptation to audience—Trivial themes—Definiteness of purpose— Sympathy with the theme—Suitability to time and occa- sion.	
VI.	SERMON MATERIAL—GATHERING IT.....	59
	Necessity of constant gathering vs. special prepara- tion—Value of meditation—How to meditate—Reading —Observation—Thought—Gathering and filing for future use.	
VII.	SERMON MATERIAL—ARRANGING IT.....	69
	Value of good arrangement—Necessary for effective- ness—Advantages to the preacher, audience, theme— Qualities of a good arrangement.	

Chapter.

- VIII. THE SERMON ITSELF. A. THE INTRODUCTION..... 77
 Its place and purpose—Interests an audience—Prepares the way for sermon proper. Its sources: the text, its setting and construction—Context—Historical setting—The writer and readers—Geography—Customs of the ancients—Occasion—Subject. Qualities of a good introduction.
- IX. THE SERMON ITSELF. B. THE BODY..... 89
 How many divisions?—Their nature—Should they be announced beforehand? First general division, answering "What?" defining the theme by definition, explanation, relation, comparison, contrast, illustration. Second, setting forth the necessity, reasonableness or proof of the theme—How to prove a proposition, answering "Why?" Third, the manner, method, conditions under which the theme is brought about, answering "How?" Fourth, setting forth the results of accepting or rejecting the theme, answering "What then?" Methods of application—The motives that move men to action—How to appeal.
- X. THE SERMON ITSELF. C. THE CONCLUSION.....107
 Importance—Conception of the Greeks—The form it should assume—How to close a sermon.
- XI. EXPOSITORY SERMONS111
 Why not popular—Definition and distinction—Advantages of this kind of preaching—Possible disadvantages—Hints and suggestions—What to avoid.
- XII. BIBLE READINGS 119
 Definition and distinction—Advantages over other forms of sermons—Helps needed—How to prepare a Bible Reading—Suggestions and cautions.
- XIII. GREAT CHAPTERS AS TEXTS.....129
 Instructions regarding the choice of such chapters—Essential factors.
- XIV. ILLUSTRATIONS AND THEIR USE.....135
 Their importance—Their purpose—How to find appropriate illustrations—Suggestions and cautions.

PART TWO

- OUTLINES OF SERMONS, GOSPEL ADDRESSES AND BIBLE READINGS149
 Specimen outlines of the various kinds of sermons and Gospel addresses.

PART ONE

CHAPTER I

DEFINITIONS

CHAPTER I.

DEFINITIONS.

1. Homiletics.

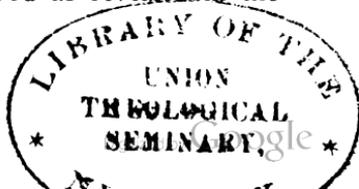
The word *homiletics* is derived from the Greek word *homilia*, and signifies either a mutual talk and conversation, or a set discourse. The preachers in the early church were in the habit of calling their public discourses "talks," thus making it proper to speak of what is in the present day in some quarters called "a gospel talk."

From the word *homilia* has come the English word *homiletics*, which has reference to that science, or art,—or indeed both, which deals with the structure of Christian discourse, embracing all that pertains to the preparation and delivery of sermons and Bible addresses. It shows us how, scientifically, to prepare a sermon or gospel address, and how, effectually, to deliver it. Homiletics, then, is the art and science of preaching.

2. What is Preaching?*

Preaching is the proclamation of the good news of salvation through man to men. Its two constituent elements are—a man and a message—*truth* and *personality*. The gospel proclaimed by means of the written page or the printed book is not preaching. There is no such thing as seeing "sermons in stones." Again, the proclamation of any kind of message other than the gospel message, which is the truth of God as revealed in the

* Cf. *Preaching*, by Phillips Brooks.



Bible, and in Jesus Christ especially, is not preaching. Much of what is heard from the so-called Christian pulpits of today is not real preaching. The discussion of politics, popular authors, current topics, and kindred themes may rightfully be called addresses, and may result in the emulation of the orator, but such efforts can in no sense of the word be called preaching, and such men have absolutely no right, so long as they continue to deliver such addresses from the pulpit, to the honored name of preachers of the gospel. The message of the very truth of God through man to men—that is preaching.

3. What is a Preacher?

The preacher, he who is separated by God for the specific work of the preaching of the gospel, is a man who, from one side of his nature takes in the truth from God, and from the other side of his nature gives out that truth to men. He deals with God in behalf of men; he deals with men in behalf of God.

This truth must not be mechanically expressed. It must not be merely truth through the mouth, over the lips, in the intellect, or by means of the pen, but truth through his character and personality. Every fibre of the man's moral and spiritual nature must be controlled by the truth. The force of a blow is measured not by the arm only, but also by the weight of the body behind the arm. And just here is the difference men instinctively feel between one preacher and another. The hearer is persuaded that the truth which is being proclaimed from the pulpit has come over one preacher, whereas it has come through the other. Consequently the preaching of the one is tame and uninteresting, while that of the other is strong, fascinating, and convincing.

The preacher must not be a mere machine, an automaton; he must be a real man—a good man, and full

of the Holy Spirit and of faith; and the effect of such a life and such preaching will be that much people will be added to the Lord (Acts 11:24).

The personality of the preacher has very much to do with the effectiveness of his message. An artist may be a profligate and yet produce a picture or a statue which will call forth the admiration of the people; an author may be dissolute in morals and yet produce a book that will set the world aflame with his popularity. These are works of art and can be considered apart from the man himself. But not so with the preacher and his sermon: it is a part of himself, indeed it must be the expression of his very life and experience. If such is not the case, then, what is called preaching will be nothing but "sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal."

Personality counts in preaching. Is not this one of the reasons why many sermons do not usually make good reading?—there is the absence of the personality of the preacher. Of course, there are some very splendid exceptions to this fact, but often, alas very often, the sermon is but an echo of the man. Have we not more than once wondered at the dryness of a sermon we were reading when at the time we heard it we were moved to the very depths of our being? What was lacking? The personality of the preacher, that is all—but how much is wrapped up in that personality!

The root of the matter must be in the preacher himself before he can proclaim it with convicting force in and through the sermon. Given a man who is a born artist and you have only to supply the palette and brush, or chisel and mallet with mere technical skill, and you have a statue or a picture. And if you have your preacher—a man with the root of the matter in him—you will find very little else is needed to set free the sermon that is in him.

From this it is clearly evident that true preparation

for the gospel ministry does not consist in mere tricks in sermon-making, or delivery, but in the development of true personality. Such a man in the pulpit will surely prove to be a preacher who will reach the masses.

We hear complaints on every hand to the effect that people do not want gospel preaching today. This is a mistake. There never was a day when people wanted it more than now. What they do object to is a gospel read or declaimed and not preached. In other words, they ask for a consecrated personality in the pulpit. Look abroad today, and what do you see?—that wherever the gospel is preached by consecrated personality, there are found men and women to hear it.

Return to course main page and
take test: "Intro & Lesson I."