

*L. O. L. L. L. L.*

"SERMON BUILDING SIMPLIFIED"

By Milton E. Truex  
2551 Oxford Ave.  
Memphis, Tenn.

A COURSE OF STUDY AND EXERCISES FOR PREACHERS

## PREACHING

Some preachers have never learned to really outline their own sermons. They preach the sermons of others. They take someone's sermon or outline and write down on paper a few sentences as they read through the material, and from this they preach a sermon. Some may say, "I have developed some very good messages in this way, so I believe it is a good plan." It is true that sometimes sermons which are developed in this way are very good. While at other times, sermons developed by this method are very poor. If the thinking and arrangement was good in the material used, the preacher presenting these borrowed thoughts might preach a good sermon; but if the thinking and arrangement was poor in the other fellow's sermon then the preacher following that pattern will deliver a very poor message. Of course, we know that the thoughts which are taken from some other person's sermon had to be thought out. Some other preacher has done the thinking in such a case. Was his thinking the best, or could it be improved upon? Again, we should remember that others can not always do our thinking for us. We must learn to think for ourselves. Really, do you not believe that it would be better for us to be able to do some thinking for ourselves? This method is a lazy man's system and it requires many books. It may require books that you do not have. It has a tendency to lead away from Bible study. Because one reads the writings of others and not the Bible. However, it is necessary to read many books but the Bible should be first. Remember, the Bible is the fountain of pure water. Again, we all realize that this method may save preachers some work once in a while, but will the borrowed message fit the occasion? Is it what the congregation needs to hear? Will it do the most good?

### A BETTER WAY

This new method of sermon building will enable you to use your Bible and to build your own sermons which will fit the occasion and get good results. It will accomplish all of this and more. First, it follows the normal process of the thinking of your audience and motivates the people to respond to your purpose. It is a process of leading the congregation in their thinking and not trying to force them arbitrarily. You can lead people a lot farther than you can drive them. Second, it is a better type of arrangement. You need a bird's-eye view of your subject so that you can see where you are going. The audience also needs to see where they are being led. This type of arrangement will enable you to see where you are headed. It is more like your natural thinking. This method is easier for you to follow, as well as the people of your audience.

The people of the congregation should be considered when you build your sermons. Anything that makes it easy for the people to remember the sermon and carry away the lesson should not be neglected by you. It is a proven fact that the average audience can carry away a lesson that is well planned, or that is outlined according to their natural way of thinking a thousand times better than a sermon that is poorly arranged. Good arrangement of the sermon material is absolutely necessary for good following on the part of the hearers. If the thoughts presented in the sermon are not clearly defined, the listeners will not be able to clearly define either the thoughts of the message, or the duty that should arise therefrom; and as a result the sermon is a failure. You have wasted your time and the time of the audience. Many an audience can truthfully say, "We have learned very little from that sermon."

This method also opens up new fields of thought, and makes old sermons mean more to you and to your audience. The attention step, the need step and the satisfaction step will do this very thing for you. The attention step will bring new thoughts as you deal with it. This step will open up a whole new field of thought. When you begin to think about the need step, many new thoughts will also come your way. The same will be true when you deal with the satisfaction step. This new system will put new life into your sermons. For as you arrange your thoughts according to this method new thoughts will come to you and these new thoughts will

help to round out your subject. Each particular thought, when put in its proper place, will help to develop your sermon into a better message. It will also help you to think for yourself. This is something that everyone needs to do.

### ARRANGEMENT

Surely there is not a preacher who would not agree with us that sermon materials should be properly arranged. Good arrangement is very important. Very often the only difference between a powerful sermon and one lacking in power is a difference in the arrangement. It is still more important when regarding the effect upon the hearers. It is necessary in order to make the sermon intelligible. Many think that intelligibility is altogether an affair of style, when really it is a matter of clear thinking and good arrangement as much as anything else. Many sermons remind us of a lot of building materials piled on a lot ready to build a house. There is no order to it. These piles of different kinds of building materials resembles many of the messages that we hear today, because they lack arrangement. Carelessness in the matter of arrangement is one of the most common faults of preachers today. It ought to be considered inexcusable because it implies a lack of labor, and an unwillingness to spend time on the sermon. Laziness is a sin that many preachers need to repent of and turn away from. The preacher who neglects good arrangement in his sermons will rapidly lose instead of improving his ability to preach powerful sermons. Good preachers are not born but they are developed by much training and many years of experience. The preacher who neglects good arrangement in his sermons is not growing but is going backward. Many older preachers have not gone as far as they could have because they have neglected the arrangement of their sermons.

### PERSUASIVE SERMONS

Many preachers know the Bible well but they are very poor at preaching because they have not learned the methods of persuasion. We often hear people say concerning some preacher, "He knows the Bible, but he cannot preach." This new method is the persuasive type of sermons that will help the person who knows the Bible to become a powerful preacher. Do you know that persuading is influencing? Persuasion in one form or another plays a part in our everyday lives. Business cannot succeed without persuasive sales forces to dispose of the merchandise manufactured. People of every walk of life have learned that persuasion in some form or another is necessary in everyday life. Preachers must also carry on their daily work largely in terms of persuasive techniques. Persuasion is a means of molding feelings, convictions, and actions. By the use of persuasive sermons we are able to lead people to change their feelings and attitudes through which their conduct is motivated. Followers of false doctrines are persuaded to drop their false religion and to accept the truth. Through persuasive sermons they are induced to refrain from sin and to live righteous lives. We might say that influence through persuasive sermons is the power that moves men and women on to greater things.

## CHOOSING A TITLE FOR YOUR SERMON

In this day and age all realize that a good sermon title is very important. Preachers are continuously asking themselves the question, what are the requirements of a good sermon title? There are three important things to keep in mind while choosing the title for your sermon. First, it should be fitting; second, it should excite interest; and third, it should be brief. To be fitting, a sermon title must have something to do with the sermon. Or in other words the title of a sermon is any statement of its central idea. It should never be misleading. Remember, that above all things, a preacher should be honest.

An exciting title will make the audience sit up and listen to the sermon. Such a title will always help the preacher to get the favorable attention of his audience.

A title should never be long, but very brief if possible. Long titles may give away the whole sermon. Almost every sermon has some teaching in it that must be hidden until the right time. If the title reveals things that some people do not want to hear they will stay away. Hence, the title should be as short as possible, and not reveal too much.

All know that a wise choice and proper wording of a sermon title is a matter of great importance. A title is a phrase chosen to attract attention to the sermon. Or we might say the main purpose of the title is to advertise the sermon, because it is to attract and interest the people.

A good sermon title is just as important as a good book title. A sensational title of a book is many times the greatest factor in its sale. In fact it has been said that the failure or success of a book is often determined by its title. This is also true with the title of a sermon. A good title will make people want to hear the sermon. When the title has aroused the interest of the people they will tell others about the sermon and bring others with them to hear it.

When one looks around he finds all kinds of sermon titles. Some of these are poetic, some are very simple, some are positive and unadorned, some are dull titles, while others are sensational titles. However, we sometimes find sensational sermon titles that promise more than the sermon gives. This type of a title is really false advertising. We should remember that there is not an audience that likes to be misled by the preacher's sermon title; people do not enjoy false advertising.

One of the sermon titles given in the newspaper was "The Crown of Thorns". The details about this theme would be interesting, but there is not enough material to constitute a full length sermon. It would be better to preach about our Lord, who wore the crown of thorns. Preach on important themes. Do not waste time by preaching on themes that the congregation does not need.

You should choose a title that has weight and dignity. The title should express the central idea of the sermon. Often a good title can be chosen after the sermon has been outlined, but it is better to choose a title at the start and then try to improve on the title after the outlining is done. A good title is always rich in positive suggestion and it will make people want to hear the sermon. A poor title, on the other hand, may keep the people away. A good title may be in the form of questions, exclamations, prepositional phrases, contingent clauses, single words, and short dogmatic statements. Not every preacher can choose a good title for his sermon because it is a rare gift that enables a preacher to select good titles, such as will be interesting, vital, timely, a title that conforms to the laws of good taste and one that will get action.

1. A good title should suggest but it should not reveal the main idea or say too much.
2. A good title should be in line with the type of the sermon.
3. A good title should excite curiosity.
4. A good title should picture ideas.
5. A good title should, if possible, make the people think about themselves.

Let us all try to improve on our sermon titles so as to do more toward spreading the Gospel to the very ends of the earth.



## A METHOD OF OUTLINING YOUR SERMON

By Milton E. Truex

One of the first things you must remember is that a minister cannot cram his thoughts down the throats of his audience. You must lead the thinking of your audience naturally, rather than try to force them arbitrarily. This leading should follow the normal process of the thinking of the audience, because this normal process of their thinking is sufficiently uniform, that in spite of the variations in different people, we can outline a form of speech structure that will conform to the audience's normal process of thinking rather closely on nearly all occasions. This type of sermon building is called the "Motivated Sequence", because of the sequence of ideas which by following the normal process of the thinking of the audience, motivates the people to respond to the minister's purpose. This new method of outlining will serve as the backbone for all types of sermons. And it will also improve all of your sermons.

Therefore, throughout the sermon it is very important to make the audience follow your thinking, if you are to get the desired actions or results from your sermon. You should be very careful not to do anything that will take the attention of the audience from your sermon. You must also be very careful not to make the outline or the skeleton of the sermon too prominent, for if you call attention to your outlining you will cause the audience to stop thinking about the subject under discussion, which is paramount, and to think about your outlining instead. You should always keep this fact in mind as you build each step of your sermon. Remember a skeleton must have the right amount of flesh on it. People do not like to see a person who is very thin, nor do they like to see a person who is too fat. There must be enough material to hide the outline, but the outline should not be overloaded with thoughts which do not fit in and that will keep the sermon from getting results.

We might illustrate this new type of sermon building in this way: Before seed can be successfully planted, you must prepare a good seed bed. Planting seed in hard ground will not get very good results. You must also prepare the minds of the audience before you try to plant the seed of the Kingdom in their hearts, or minds. In this type of preaching you are preparing the minds of the people for the body of your sermon, or the visualization step. The introduction, the reading, the text, the attention step, the need step, and the satisfaction step are all steps preparing the minds of the audience for what is coming in the visualization step. All of this is not just an introduction, for it is much more than that.

Before you can get your audience to act, you must get their attention. When you have obtained their attention you then show them that there is a need of doing or of having what you are talking about. Then point out the fact that satisfaction can be obtained in this way. By doing this, you will make the people want to hear what you have to say in the visualization step.

The visualization step is the body of your sermon. It is here that you plant the seed. Or in this step by the means of vivid description, you picture the results that such an attitude will bring, especially the emotional satisfaction to be gained by the congregation.

You may say, as a rule, there are four general divisions to the visualization step. The first division should always answer the question, what is the subject? The second division should answer the question, why is it so, or why should I believe this or accept it? The third division should answer the question, by what method the theme of the sermon may be brought about or under what conditions it may be received or fulfilled. And the fourth division should always answer the question as to, how does it affect or apply to the individual?

The purpose of the action step is to urge the audience to take definite action, such as obeying the Gospel or repenting and turning away from sin, or to get the audience to work more for the cause that Christ died for. This action step is the most important part of the sermon. For it is here that the "final struggle which decides the conflict" is fought. Or in other words it is here that you determine whether your sermon is a failure or a success.

## THE "MOTIVATED SEQUENCE" APPLIED TO PERSUASIVE SERMONS.

1. "Attention step."
2. "Need step."
3. "Satisfaction step."
4. "Visualization step."
5. "Action step."

### INTRODUCTION

The introduction is the first sentences of your sermon. These sentences should give a general idea of the sermon, unless you have teaching that must be hidden until a later time in the sermon. Find some startling statement to include in these first sentences. Also impress upon the minds of the audience that this sermon includes each one of them. Memorize these sentences and then speak these choice sentences slowly and with deliberateness, because the people of your audience are not as yet fully receptive of your ideas and will not be until you get their attention. With these first sentences you should be able to get the attention of the audience.

### THE READING AND THE TEXT

The reading and the text should deal with the subject and be used to prove your arguments later in the sermon. The custom of using a long passage of Scripture in this way, was established by the ministers of the early church and there is no good reason for departing from this ancient practice; because the proper selection of a text is a matter of great importance. A good choice will be a big help to the minister throughout the preparation and the delivery of the sermon. A well chosen text will also help to gain the attention of the audience.

### "ATTENTION STEP"

Before you can get your audience to act, you must get their attention. But just getting their attention is not enough; that attention must be favorable and it must also be directed toward the main ideas of your sermon. Hence, the attention step has a two-fold purpose. First you must get the attention of the audience and then maintain it throughout your sermon. The second purpose of the attention step is to draw the attention of the audience toward the need step.

### "NEED STEP"

The purpose of the need step is to make the audience feel that the need is really vital, or to work up an emotional dissatisfaction with the present situation, through the use of striking facts and illustrations. Hence, in this step we must make the audience see that they really need what we have to offer. Before a person will have an operation he must realize that he needs it. If a doctor can prove to him that he has a cancer and that only an operation will save his life, then he will submit to it at once. In the same way we must make the one outside of the church see that he is lost and really needs the Savior.

There are three classes of need. The first need is to urge a change, such as a sinner changing his life. The second need is to contend for the faith, or to demand the preservation of the faith. And the third need is to inform, or make the audience realize that they need to know more about the subject. Therefore, the kind of need used in your sermon will depend upon its purpose. If the purpose of the sermon is to make the audience realize that a change needs to be made, then make them dissatisfied with the existing conditions. Show them that a definite problem exists and that some thing must be done about it. Or, if the purpose of the sermon is to demand preservation of the faith, then we must show the audience that some are trying to destroy the faith and that they need to do something about it. And last, if the purpose of the sermon is to inform, then we must make the audience feel that they need to know more about the subject and that this knowledge is very important to them.

## "SATISFACTION STEP"

The purpose of the satisfaction step is to make the audience realize that blessings, or satisfaction, will be obtained by following this course. One of the strongest ways to induce the audience to accept any proposition is the promise of contentment, peace, joy and happiness. In this particular, nothing excels the Gospel of Jesus. The sweetest pleasures known to man-kind are to be found in living a Christian life. The Gospel alone has promised Eternal Life and the happiness and the sweet joys that go with it.

This is not just an introduction.  
It is more than that, because all of this is only getting the audience ready for what is coming in the visualization step.

Introduction:

Read:

Text:

I. Attention step

II. Need step

III. Satisfaction  
step

## "VISUALIZATION STEP"

- A. Give a definition by answering the question, what is the subject?  
(You may deal with this question in four ways)
  - a. First, you may give a clear definition. At this point you may give the definition given by the dictionary or by a lexicon.
  - b. Second, you may give a clear statement which will set forth the different phases of the subject, or by giving an explanation, but before you undertake to explain any subject be absolutely sure that you understand that subject yourself.
  - c. Third, you may use comparisons or contrasts and relations are also very good. Christ, the Master Teacher defined such terms as the Kingdom by saying, "The Kingdom of heaven is like unto a grain of mustard seed." It would be well if you stopped and asked yourself the question, what can I compare this to? Christ also taught by contrast, as wheat and chaff, or sheep and goats.
  - d. Fourth, by the use of illustrations which will let light in on the subject. Illustrations have been called windows and they are to a sermon what a window is to a house. But you must be careful and not make the house all windows. Christ used many illustrations, such as the story of the rich fool, which is found in Luke 12:16-21, or the illustration of the man building on the sand, which is recorded in Matt. 7:24-27.
- B. In the second part of the visualization step you are answering the question, why is it so, or why should I believe this or accept it? Can you prove that it is so or is it reasonable? Here you are using arguments to prove your proposition. All people make arguments for or against a thing. Too many people today just take things for granted. It is one thing to make a statement and it is another thing to prove that statement to be true. Christ used many arguments and gave much proof. For instance, He gave "many infallible proofs" of the fact that He was raised from the dead.
- C. Next, you are telling the audience how, or by what method the theme of the sermon may be brought about or under what conditions it may be received or fulfilled. For example: you may tell the people how to obey the Gospel.
- D. In this part you are answering the question, how does it affect or apply to the individual? If you do not make the sermon apply to the individual it will not do any good, nor get results. The application is that part of the sermon which begins to make it a personal matter. It is here that you begin to shift to the action step as smoothly as possible.

THE ACTION STEP  
or  
THE CONCLUSION

A sermon should be like a great mountain river which increases in volume and in power as it flows down the mountain side, but many times a sermon is more like the river which flows into the sands of the desert and fades away. Many ministers neglect the conclusion of the sermon, when in many ways the last five minutes of their sermon is more important than the rest of the lesson. This is true, because it is during this time that issues involved are decided, if they are decided at all. The ancient Greek orators expressed their conception of the importance of the conclusion of a speech by calling the ending, "the final struggle which decides the conflict." No part of a sermon requires more skillful handling and more careful study than the action step. Yet this part of the sermon seldom receives any preparation of thought at all. Many ministers reveal this when they have come to the conclusion, for they begin to wander about with a bewildered expression on their faces and thus fail to get results. There is nothing which is more fatal to the success of a sermon than to prolong it unnecessarily by wandering about like a person lost in the great North Woods. Quite often, we hear ministers end their sermon two or three times, and as a result they completely tire out their audience and besides this they have spoiled what might have been a good sermon.

Many ministers have reworked the action step as many as fifteen or twenty times. At this point in the sermon, choice, powerful sentences should be arranged so as to bring the lesson home to the audience in such a way as to get the desired action.

AN EXAMPLE OF AN OUTLINE

TITLE OF THE SERMON

INTRODUCTION:

READ:

TEXT:

I. (Attention step) \_\_\_\_\_

- A. \_\_\_\_\_
- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- (1) \_\_\_\_\_
- (a) \_\_\_\_\_

B. \_\_\_\_\_

a. \_\_\_\_\_

II. (Need step) \_\_\_\_\_

A. \_\_\_\_\_

B. \_\_\_\_\_

III. (Satisfaction step) \_\_\_\_\_

A. \_\_\_\_\_

IV. (Visualization step) \_\_\_\_\_

A. Give a definition by answering the question, what is the subject?

B. Why is it so, or why should I believe this or accept it? (Here you are using arguments to prove your proposition. Be sure that these arguments apply to the individual and not to a straw man.)

C. How may it be brought about?

D. How does this affect or apply to the individual?

V. (Action step) \_\_\_\_\_

A. \_\_\_\_\_

B. \_\_\_\_\_

Milton E. Truex  
2551 Oxford Ave.  
Memphis, Tenn.

In building a sermon outline, first use the above example to make a skeleton outline, then put the meat on it. When doing this you will take nine sheets of paper and then put the introduction, reading and text on the first sheet. Next, put the attention step on the next sheet. You will do the same with the need step and satisfaction step, but when you come to the visualization step, use four sheets of paper. Use one sheet for each sub heading. You will use the last sheet for the action step.



## ARGUMENT

By Milton E. Truex

Many preachers feel that there is not any place for argument in their sermons, that they can do more by appealing to the emotions, and by the use of authoritative assertions, but they are wrong about this matter. For there is really great use for argument in every sermon, because all things cannot be taken for granted. Some things must be proven. All would realize that this is true, if they would stop and think a moment for we are confronted by argumentation on every hand throughout every day of our lives. We hear argumentation used by those on the radio, we see it in our news papers and magazines, we find it on our billboards and we can hear it used daily in every shop and office throughout this great country of ours. Why is argumentation used so widely? Because every person realizes that the expression of opinions proves nothing. Hence, it is as important to learn to use argumentation so as to reach sound conclusions as it is to learn to read and write. And when we have learned this lesson, we will realize that we cannot successfully cram our thoughts down the throats of an audience by the mere use of persuasion or by appealing to the feelings of the audience or by authoritative assertions. But we must lead the audience according to their normal process of thinking, if we are to get results.

One means of leading the audience is by presenting clear, understandable arguments, which prove to their minds the truth of the sermon or of the proposition. People are better educated today than they were a few years ago. For this reason and many others, they are demanding proof for what we say. And again, there are thousands of doubters that must be convinced in regard to the truth of what is presented to be Christ's teaching and the need of accepting this truth. There are also many Christians whose faith can be strengthened by the many proofs that are presented in argument. In the case of Christians the object is not so much to prove everything as it is to fill their minds with the evidences and thus make the truth stand out so as to make their faith stronger. Therefore, argument, as to the truth of Christ's teaching and the value of obeying the Gospel and living a righteous life needs to be used in each sermon. Because plain, clear, understandable reasoning will make the audience feel their guilt and the peril of their position and will arouse the desire to obey the Gospel and do God's will. The Scriptures commands us to "contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints." -- Jude 3. From this Scripture we can see that the Lord expects Christians to use argument to prove the truth of Christianity. Christ, Himself has also set the example along this line, for He gave "many infallible proofs" of the fact that He had been raised from the dead. All can see that argument is necessary, but we must be sure that it is sound logic. For sometimes those who do teach the truth support it by very unsound reasoning and thereby permit some shrewd, unsound person to overthrow their arguments and then make it appear that they have overthrown the truth. For this reason, we must be very careful to develop very sound reasoning and to make the argument clear and plain so that the audience can understand the reasoning. Many arguments are made which go over the heads of the audience and they do not understand the line of reasoning. This kind of argument only leads to disgust and weariness. Hence, it does more harm than good.

We must always argue for the truth rather than for victory, because if we argue for something that we really do not believe, our love for the truth will inevitably be impaired. For this reason we must learn the truth and then form the habit of reasoning soundly. Remember, God will punish those who lead people astray. Every minister should make it a point of honor not to mislead his audience by arguing for falsehood or by using unsound logic.

In building the argument, we should use some facts already known to be true to the audience and then reason from the known to the unknown. It is better to use the familiar lines of reasoning. Great multitudes came out to hear Christ, because He used arguments that the people could easily understand. If possible, we should rely upon Scriptural reasonings, for such arguments are the most convincing.



When building an argument, we must remember the law of cause and effect. There is always a cause and then the effect. For nothing is without cause. We all know that when anything is done somebody or something must do it. If a baseball comes flying through the air we all know that some force had to send it flying through the air. If we hold a half-dollar above our head and then let loose of it, it drops to the floor because its weight must make it drop. Again, we will say that which does anything is the cause; and that which is done is the effect. Maybe we did not see our automobiles made but we are just as sure that somebody made them as if we had seen them put together. The automobile is the effect of the cause.

Here are some types of argument, but not all of them, for it would be out of the question to try to list all of them here. The following seven are those most commonly used. They are: "Testimony", "Induction", "analogy", "deduction", "refutation", "Experience", and "authority".

1. Argument from testimony.
2. Argument from authority.
3. Argument from induction.
4. Argument from analogy.
5. Argument from deduction.
6. Refutation
7. Experience

#### Testimony

Testimony is one of the methods of argument very commonly used today. It is one of the easier ways of establishing truth in the minds of an audience. In this form of argument we are putting before the audience facts for the people to weigh and then accept or reject. Hence, in this method of reasoning we must be very careful to distinguish between facts and mere opinions, or our judgments, because the audience will do that very thing. And if the evidence put before them is only man's opinions they will reject the argument.

Good use is made of this method of argument in the New Testament. Such as, what was the testimony of the Apostles concerning Christ? Or, what did those Jews, who hated Christ most, have to say about Him? Remember that almost everyone will accept what the Bible says about a matter. Therefore, the use of Scriptures is testimony that an audience will accept as proof.

Testimony, which is effective, depends upon three things.

First, is the character of the witness unimpeachable? The testimony of a witness whose integrity cannot be questioned is of more value than one whose reputation is open to suspicion.

Second, a great number of witnesses testifying to a fact would mean much more than just one witness testifying to the same fact. For example in the New Testament we have many witnesses testifying to the fact that Christ is God's Son.

Third, much depends upon the character of the fact which we bear witness to. Something that is not out of the ordinary does not need as strong evidence or as much testimony for its proof as some extraordinary fact would. Natural facts do not need as much testimony for their proof as do the supernatural facts.

#### Authority

First in this respect comes the authority of the Bible. When it comes to Christianity the New Testament is the only source of authority. It is the court of final appeal. Much Scripture should be used in every sermon as proof of the proposition. A sermon without Scripture is like a mouth without teeth.

#### Induction

This kind of argument has been defined as, "The process of a general rule from a sufficient number of particular cases. Finding something to be true of certain individual objects, we conclude that the same thing is true of the whole class to which these individuals belong, and afterward prove it to be true of any new object, simply by showing that that object belongs to the same class." This type of argument is probably the most used and yet is filled with the greatest error and danger if not properly used. Therefore, care should be exercised when using this form of argument. However, if it is carefully used, it gives the surest knowledge.

An example of this would be to show many cases of how God has punished people when they sinned and then to point out how He will punish people when they sin today, unless they repent.

#### Analogy

Analogy is a likeness between two things quite different in their nature; as between a hive of bees and a village with people living in it. The Century Dictionary defines it as "a form of reasoning, from the similarity in other particulars is inferred. Thus the earth and Mars are both planets, nearly equidistant from the sun, not differing greatly in density, having similar distributions of seas and continents alike in conditions of humidity, temperature, seasons, day and night, etc., but the earth also supports organic life; hence Mars (probably) supports organic life." When people argue and say that it is unjust of the Lord to punish them for violating His laws, when they do not believe in God we can point these unbelievers to the fact that the same is true concerning the physical laws. For we all know that if a person takes deadly poison that this person will certainly die, even though he did not believe that it was poison.

#### Deduction

Deduction is the mental process by which we argue or infer from a more general truth. Or it is the inverse process of inferring a particular case from a law of cases thought to be of like nature, or something derived as a result from some known fact, or a necessary inference. As an example, suppose we say of a person, "He thinks that everybody is against him, because his mind is warped." This argument is based on the general assumption that any person whose mind is warped will take such a view of other people. This type of argument is not very effective in the pulpit.

#### Refutation

Refutation is not like the other forms of argument, for it is a tearing down process. It is easier for preachers to refute error than proving the false doctrine to be wrong, inasmuch as it is easier to wreck than it is to build up. However, such a course will not always meet the issue. To start with we should remember that some objections are not worth refuting. Again, preachers should not create objections for the purpose of refuting them. Some arguments of false teachers must be met, and objections to the truth must be removed if possible. Refutation whether of a false doctrine, or of an objection to the truth, can be accomplished by showing either that the terms are ambiguous, the premises false, the reasoning is unsound, or that the conclusion is irrelevant. One can also show how a false teaching originated and in this way refute the false doctrine. But in refuting it, state the false teaching fully and fairly so that those who believe it will be able to say, "Yes, that is a full and fair statement of the case, and if that preacher answers it satisfactorily, it will help me." Christ used this type of argument in Matthew, chapter twelve and verse twenty-seven, when He said, "If I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out?"

#### Experience

In 1st Corinthians the fifteenth chapter, the Apostle Paul appeals to experience in his great argument for the resurrection of God's Son. In the seventeenth verse, he says, "If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins." These Corinthian Christians knew that their sins had been forgiven. They knew that their faith was not vain and that they were not still in their sins, for a power, far greater than any human power or self-imposed reformation, had enabled them to overcome and to live righteous lives. Again, when Christians pray and their prayers are answered they know beyond all doubt that God is. An answered prayer is the best argument for the existence of God and the deity of Jesus lies in the Christian's experience of these facts. These Christians knew that Christianity was real and many of them died rather than give up Christ.

As you begin to work on the arguments for your sermon, plan to place your strongest point first, unless there is some special reason for doing otherwise. Experience has proven that a strong argument placed first rather than last makes a greater impression on the listeners. Good understandable arguments strikes the

audience much the same as any strong stimulus does. They also help to hold attention. When using the best argument at first, you strike the audience while their minds are fresh. But if you save the best argument until last, the people may be tired by that time and it will not mean so much to them.

Do not get the idea, since the strong argument should come first that your final argument can be weak. You should never use a weak argument in your sermon. Figuratively speaking, to hit the listeners you must take aim with a rifle, and not a shotgun. Prepare the sermon for that audience and make the arguments fit them. It does not do any good to preach to people who are absent. Dwell on the strong points longest to really get them over to the people.

Watch your time for this is very important. Do not preach too long. Give about ten minutes to the attention step, need step and satisfaction step. Then give about twenty minutes to the visualization step and about five minutes to the action step.



# ILLUSTRATIONS AND THEIR USE IN SERMONS

## I.

### Are Illustrations Important?

Every preacher knows that illustrations are very important, when supporting some truth in a sermon. Christ used many illustrations in His teaching. All of the great preachers have been masters in the art of illustration. Every audience enjoys good illustrations that are to the point. Every child loves stories, and scarcely any person grows so old as not to enjoy a good clean story.

Christ shows the value and needs of good illustrations in preaching. Our Lord's messages abounded in anecdotes and illustrations. No wonder great crowds went to hear His discourses. The preacher who is able to use good illustrations, that are to the point, will always get a hearing. When you hear a preacher say, "Now, to illustrate my point," you pay specific attention. All of us have noticed the effect of an illustration upon an audience when they were drowsy and uninterested. Every face will express interest. Every member of the audience will sit up so as to hear the illustration.

The preacher's work is to make people first see things, then feel them, then act upon them. If you cannot make the audience see the things described, of course they will not feel them, nor will they act upon them. But when hearers see the things in their mind, they will feel them and then act upon them.

Good illustrations will help the congregation to remember the truth. Illustrations are pegs that people hang the sermon on, so to speak. They help to fix the lesson in the minds of the audience. Many an entire sermon, which otherwise would have been forgotten, has been remembered by the means of recalling an illustration used in that message.

## II.

### What Is An Illustration?

An illustration is a detailed instance, true or imaginary, of something which should be familiar to the audience. It is the story of some incident used to bring out the point that the preacher is trying to make. An illustration may reveal the results which have been obtained from the obeying of God's commands which the preacher advocates, or it may describe in detail an individual example of the general conditions that the preacher wants to emphasize. There are two chief characteristics to an illustration. First, the illustration is narrative in form because it tells the story. Second, the details of the story are described so vividly that the audience can see and feel the things described. In other words, an illustration must appeal to the imagination. Your illustration must be incarnated in individuals. The great passions of love and hope and faith, of fear and hate, must be pictured in personalities, so that people who listen to the illustration may see it and in a way live it as they listen. You can never really stir the hearts of the people without this appeal to the imagination. Remember, the Christian's supreme appeal is to the heart of the person.

There are two chief types of illustration: the imaginary and the true instance, which actually occurred. The imaginary tells a story which could have happened or probably will happen. When the imaginary type is used, it must be consistent with the facts. It must be reasonable or the congregation will lose confidence in the preacher. They will say that he is lying. For this reason this type is not so good to use.

The latter type tells a story that actually has happened. This type of illustration is a narrative that describes in detail a specific instance as it actually occurred. This type is one of the most telling forms of support that a preacher can use, for it carries conviction and gets action.

When you are choosing an example that is a true occurrence to support your point, you should ask yourself the following questions: First, is this instance clearly related to your idea? If you have trouble in showing its connection with the point, this illustration should not be used. An illustration should be clear within

itself. Its point should be easily seen by the audience. Second, is this illustration made up of unusual circumstances? If so, it is not a fair example. The congregation is always quick to observe that the illustration is not a good example and it will be less convincing. Last, is this illustration clear and impressive in detail? The real purpose of an illustration is to create a sense of reality. If this is not found in the illustration then it is worthless, and should not be used. Watch to see that your illustrations are to the point, and that they are fair and clear.

### Condensed Illustrations

These are examples that have really occurred that have been shortened. They are examples without a lot of details. In some cases a single example will not do. Hence a large number of illustrations must be used, but due to the lack of time they must be short. In a case of this kind, you are showing your audience that there is a frequency of an occurrence. In this way you are adding more weight to the fact that your point is true. Remember that this type of illustration is not an imaginary story, but an example that has really happened.

### III.

#### What Is The Purpose Of Illustrations?

1. An illustration is to make the sermon understandable. "To illustrate means to light up, to illuminate, to throw light upon, to make intelligible," says Cowper. An illustration will let light in upon the subject. We might describe it as a window that lets light in. Illustrations are the windows of the sermon that lets the truth shine in. Sound reasoning may lay the foundation and build the walls of the house, but illustrations are the windows that let the light in. Who would want to live in a building without windows? Or again, who wants to listen to a sermon which contains no illustrations to throw light upon the subject and make it enjoyable? To let light in on the subject, you must compare the points to something the audience knows about. Christ compared the truths concerning the Kingdom or the church to things which the people knew about. In this way He made the subject understandable. Why not follow His example?
2. An illustration is also to explain. This is probably the chief use of the illustration. It has a wider meaning than just to throw light upon the subject, for it is to explain the subject. This is done either by giving an example of the point, or by setting forth something similar or analogous to the case in hand that will make the subject plain. Many of our Lord's parables are more than mere illustrations. An example of this is found in the parable of the Pharisee and Publican which is recorded in Luke, chapter eighteen. This parable shows how humility is needed. It also reveals the hidden evil of the Pharisee's heart. The Pharisees professed to be righteous, but they were sinners above all. Christ compared them to "whited sepulchres, which outwardly appear beautiful, but inwardly are full of dead men's bones and of all uncleanness." Matt. 23:27,28.
3. An illustration is sometimes used for the purpose of proving a point. This is true in the case of illustration from analogy. An argument by analogy is an assertion that because two objects or things are known to resemble each other in certain observed respects they will also resemble each other in one or more unobserved respects. This type of reasoning is probably as old as the human race for it relies simply upon the application of our experience in familiar areas to problems in unfamiliar areas.
4. An illustration is used as an ornament. To make the sermon desirable, attractive and pleasing is all right when it is used in the right way. However, one must be sure that a beautiful illustration really adorns the sermon. Sometimes an illustration of this kind can become the center of interest and cause the audience to lose interest in the rest of the sermon. We need to ornament our sermon, but we do not need to construct ornamentation only. In other words, we use illustrations so as to make the style of our sermon more interesting, not merely ornamental. Remember the sermon is paramount.
5. An illustration can be used for the purpose of arousing the attention. Many times a good illustration can be used in the introduction of the sermon. But they are more serviceable further in the sermon as a rule.



## DETERMINING THE PURPOSE OF THE SERMON AND THE SUBJECT

The first step in preparing to preach a Gospel sermon should consist of deciding what subject is needed most and what reactions you want from your audience as a result of your sermon. In order to help you do this, here is a list of things that the minister should consider very carefully before determining the purpose of the sermon and the subject.

1. Ask yourself the question, what kind of preaching does the congregation really need to hear? Study the members of the church very carefully, and consider their physical, mental, moral, and spiritual needs, then make the sermon fit them, so as to help them to live better and do more for Christ. In other words, you must fit your message to your audience. The great sermons of the Bible fit the occasion. Did you ever stop to ask yourself the question, what made Paul's Mars hill sermon great? Paul began with the things his audience needed most. He made it fit the occasion. Or again, what was it that made Peter's sermon, which is found in Acts chapter two, great? The Holy Spirit, who was guiding Peter, made this great sermon fit the occasion. Christ always made the message fit the occasion, or the audience. When the Lord cleansed the temple He did and said the things that the occasion called for. (John 2:14-16). When they asked Jesus who was the greatest in the kingdom of heaven, He illustrated the truth by using a little child. Now suppose that Christ had done as many preachers are doing today when they do not make the sermon fit the occasion, and had set a little child in the midst and then taught the lesson taught in Matthew, chapter eighteen, verses one through six, instead of doing and saying the things He did when cleansing the temple. Christ would have been teaching truth, but not teaching the things needed on this occasion. Not meeting the issue would have also kept the Pharisees from persecuting Him. Preachers who do not love the truth nor the audience might teach a lesson that does not fit the occasion so as to avoid persecution, but not the Lord. He always faced the issue, no matter what it was. You also must preach the things needed by the audience. If they need baptism, you must preach baptism. If there is false teaching, you must preach against false doctrines. If there is sin in the congregation, you must preach against sin. If the people need wisdom, you must preach on wisdom. Remember, it is very important to learn what the need of the congregation is and make the sermon fit that need.
2. What reaction do you want from your audience? Remember the aim of every sermon should be to get a reaction from the congregation, such as: obeying the Gospel, living better lives and helping to build up the church.
3. When you have answered the above questions, then choose a subject that is in keeping with your conclusions. A subject that is interesting to both you and the audience, a sermon that will make the whole congregation sit up and listen. A sermon should be a message straight from the heart of the minister to every soul in the audience.
4. Choose a subject about which you already have some knowledge and one about which you can find much material. Something that you are eager to share with the congregation. Something that you can put all that you have into it.
5. Choose a subject that is not below or above the intellectual capacity of the congregation. A sermon that the audience does not understand will not do any good. Therefore each sermon must be made so that every person in the audience will understand it, and get the lesson or you will not get the desired reactions. If the church is to grow you must get action.