



Provided by the Church of the Lutheran Confession - Board of Missions

Preaching the Word (Homiletics)

Lesson #31

G. A Sermon Checklist

This checklist is based on the checklist by Gerlach and Balge in *Preach the Gospel* (pp. 173-176).

Preparation:

1. Allow enough time to prepare your sermon, if at all possible.
2. Pray for the Holy Spirit to work in you and through you before beginning your preparation.
3. Determine how your sermon text fits into the season of the church year and the rest of the service.
4. Study your sermon text thoroughly, in the language you will be using in preaching, and in its original language, in Greek or in Hebrew, if you have some training in these languages.
5. Read the context of your sermon text, as much as you are able in the time you have.
6. Determine what the main point of your text is.
7. Examine the law elements in your text as well as the Gospel elements.
8. Determine what the main point of your sermon will be.

The Theme:

1. Do your best to come up with a short sentence or phrase that summarizes what you want to say.
2. Make sure your sentence expresses an answer to a question that your audience needs to know.
3. Consider the order in which you plan to discuss your text and get across your main point.
4. Determine how you are going to apply your main point to your audience.

Introduction:

1. Begin on a friendly note.
2. Make sure your introduction leads up to the main point of your sermon.
3. Use life situations, or community or church events, or an example from Bible history in your introduction, but be make it short and simple.
4. Try to use variety in your introductions.

The Body of the Sermon:

1. Check your sermon to see whether it stays close to the main point.
2. Make sure your sermon includes both law and Gospel, and let the Gospel predominate.
3. Refer to specific sins your text denounces, and make sure your audience knows that all of them have sinned in these or similar ways.
4. Most importantly, check your sermon to make sure that you are teaching God's Word, not yours.

5. Make sure you have presented the Gospel (Jesus' life, death, and resurrection for the forgiveness of sins and eternal life) clearly to your listeners.
6. Make sure you have not implied anywhere that eternal life is a reward for good behavior.
7. Check your sermon to see if you have made it clear that Jesus' forgiveness is intended for each person in your audience. The words "for you" are very important.

Conclusion:

1. Make sure you stop when you have nothing more to say.
2. Make it short and simple, and to the point.
3. If you have introduced a question in your introduction, make sure your conclusion answers the question according to God's Word.
4. Try to use variety in the way you conclude your sermons.

Style and Wording of the Sermon:

1. Do not overuse abstract expressions like love or mercy or grace or faith, without explanation, illustration, or example.
2. Use Bible history examples, or other examples to make concepts like love and grace and faith vivid in the minds of your listeners.
3. If you find a Bible story or some other story that illustrates the main point of your sermon, use it.
4. Do not be vague or general in what you say, but specific and pointed.
5. Do not use words or expressions that most of your audience will not understand.
6. Do not try to impress your audience with your superior knowledge, but present the Word of God in the simple language of the common people.
7. Remember that you are not above the people you are addressing, but that you too are a sinner whom the law of God condemns and who needs the Gospel of Christ for forgiveness just like others.

Delivery:

1. Speak freely without reading your sermon or having extensive notes that put a barrier between you and your audience.
2. Use your ordinary way of speaking, without being artificial or official.
3. Maintain constant eye contact with your audience.
4. Make sure your audience hears what you are saying.
5. Do not speak too fast or too slowly for your audience.
6. Let your facial expression and your hand gestures fit naturally with what you are saying.
7. Use variety in your speech. Slow down for the profound. Speed up for the simple.
8. Forget yourself, and think of getting your message across, because it is God's message.