



# **Teaching on Preaching**

**by Dr. Jack Hyles**



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## **DEDICATION**

To my Saviour, Whose message I preach.

## INTRODUCTION

In Anchorage, Alaska; Albuquerque, New Mexico; Atlanta, Georgia; Atlanta, Texas; Abilene, Texas; Akron, Ohio; Altoona, Pennsylvania; Allentown, Pennsylvania; Amarillo, Texas; Asheville, North Carolina; Atlantic City, New Jersey; Augusta, Maine; and Austin, Texas.

In Baltimore, Maryland; Bangor, Maine; Barbados, West Indies; Baton Rouge, Louisiana; Beaumont, Texas; Bemidji, Minnesota; Benton Harbor, Michigan; Bethlehem, Pennsylvania; Billings, Montana; Binghamton, New York; Birmingham, Alabama; Bloomington, Illinois; Bloomington, Indiana; Boise, Idaho; Boston, Massachusetts; Bradenton, Florida; Bridgeport, Connecticut; Brownsville, Texas; Buffalo, New York; Burlington, North Carolina.

In Casper, Wyoming; Carbondale, Illinois; Canton, Ohio; Cedar Rapids, Iowa; Champaign, Illinois; Charleston, South Carolina; Charleston, West Virginia; Charlotte, North Carolina; Chattanooga, Tennessee; Cheyenne, Wyoming; Chicago, Illinois; Cincinnati, Ohio; Cedar Lake, Indiana; Cleveland, Ohio; Colorado Springs, Colorado; Columbia, South Carolina; Columbus, Georgia; Co- Columbus, Ohio; and Corpus Christi, Texas.

In Dallas, Texas; Danville, Virginia; Danville, Illinois; Dayton, Ohio; Daytona Beach, Florida; Decatur, Illinois; Decatur, Georgia; Denver, Colorado; Des Moines, Iowa; Detroit, Michigan; Dothan, Alabama; Dubuque, Iowa; Durham, North Carolina; and Durango, Colorado.

In Edmonton, Alberta, Canada; Elkhart, Indiana; Elmira, New York; El Paso, Texas; Erie, Pennsylvania; Eugene, Oregon; Evans- ville, Indiana; and Evanston, Illinois.

In Fairbanks, Alaska; Fayetteville, Arkansas; Fayetteville, North Carolina; Flagstaff, Arizona; Flint, Michigan; Ft. Lauderdale, Florida; Ft. Worth, Texas; Ft. Smith, Arkansas; Ft. Sill, Oklahoma; Ft. Wayne, Indiana; Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada; and Fresno, California.

In Gainesville, Florida; Gainesville, Texas; Goose Creek, Texas; Grand Bahamas; Grand Junction, Colorado; Grand Rapids, Michigan; Greensboro, North Carolina; Greenville, Texas; Greenville, Mississippi; Greenville, South Carolina; and Gulfport, Mississippi.

In Hammond, Indiana; Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada; Hamilton, Ontario, Canada; Harlingen, Texas; Harrisburg, Pennsylvania; Hartford, Connecticut; Honolulu, Hawaii; Hollywood, Florida; Houston, Texas; Huntsville, Texas; Huntsville, Alabama; and Huntington, West Virginia.

In Indianapolis, Indiana; Islamorada, Florida; Iowa City, Iowa; Irving, Texas; Ingram, Texas; Italy, Texas; and Itasca, Texas. In Jackson, Mississippi; Jackson, Tennessee; Jacksonville, Florida; Jacksonville, Texas; Johnson City, Tennessee; Johnstown, Pennsylvania; Joplin, Missouri; Jacksonville, North Carolina; Jasper, Alabama; Jacksboro, Texas; Jacinto City, Texas; Jasper, Texas; Jefferson, Texas; Jasper, Indiana; and Jeffersonville, Indiana. In Kahului, Hawaii, Kalamazoo, Michigan; Kansas City, Missouri; Kansas City, Kansas; Kinston, North Carolina; Knox- ville, Tennessee; Kokomo, Indiana; Karnack, Texas; Kaufman, Texas; Knox, Indiana; Kilgore, Texas; Kernersville, North Carolina; and Kankakee, Illinois.

In La Crosse, Wisconsin; Lake Charles, Louisiana; Lansing, Michigan; Lancaster, Pennsylvania; Laramie, Wyoming; Laredo, Texas; Las Vegas, Nevada; Lincoln, Nebraska; Little Rock, Arkansas; London, Ontario, Canada; Long Beach, California; Long Island, New York; Longview, Texas; Los Angeles, California; Louisville, Kentucky; Lewisville, Texas;

Lubbock, Texas; and Lynchburg, Virginia.

In Macon, Georgia; Marion, Ohio; McAllen, Texas; Medford, Oregon; Melbourne, Florida; Memphis, Tennessee; Monterrey, Mexico; Miami, Florida; Midland, Texas; Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Minneapolis, Minnesota; Moline, Illinois; Montego Bay, Jamaica; Monterey, California; Montgomery, Alabama; Montreal, Quebec, Canada; Morgantown, West Virginia; Muscle Shoals, Alabama; Marietta, Ohio; and Muskegon, Michigan.

In Nashville, Tennessee; Naples, Florida; Nassau, Bahamas; Newark, New Jersey; New London, Texas; New Orleans, Louisiana; New York, New York; Norfolk, Virginia; Newport News, Virginia; North Chicago, Illinois; North Aurora, Illinois; New Boston, Texas; Nederland, Texas; Niagara Falls, New York.

In Oakland, California; Odessa, Texas; Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; Omaha, Nebraska; Ontario, California; Ontario, Canada; Orange County, California; Orlando, Florida; Oak Forest, Illinois; Oak Ridge, Tennessee; Ottawa, Kansas; Oshkosh, Wisconsin; Oxnard, California; Ottawa, Canada; Olney, Illinois; Olney, Texas; Orange, Texas; Oak Park, Illinois; Oak Lawn, Illinois; and Ottawa, Illinois.

In Paducah, Kentucky; Palm Beach, Florida; Panama City, Florida; Pensacola, Florida; Parkersburg, West Virginia; Pasco, Washington; Pascagoula, Mississippi; Peoria, Illinois; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Philipsburg, Pennsylvania; Phoenix, Arizona; Pittsburg, Texas; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Port Arthur, Texas; Portland, Maine; Portland, Oregon; Poughkeepsie, New York; Powell, Tennessee; Pueblo, Colorado; and Port Huron, Michigan.

In Raleigh, North Carolina; Rapid City, South Dakota; Redding, California; Reno, Nevada; Richmond, Indiana; Richmond, Texas; Roanoke, Virginia; Rochester, New York; Rockford, Illinois; Rock Island, Illinois; Rock Springs, Wyoming; and Rowlett, Texas; Rockwall, Texas; Rockaway Beach, Missouri.

In Sacramento, California; Saginaw, Michigan; St. John, New Brunswick, Canada; St. Joseph, Michigan; St. Louis, Missouri; St. Paul, Minnesota; St. Petersburg, Florida; Salisbury, Maryland; Salt Lake City, Utah; San Antonio, Texas; San Diego, California; San Francisco, California; San Jose, California; San Juan, Puerto Rico; Sarasota, Florida; Sarnia, Ontario, Canada; Savannah, Georgia; Seattle, Washington; Sheridan, Wyoming; Shreveport, Louisiana; Sioux City, Iowa; South Bend, Indiana; Springfield, Illinois; Springfield, Missouri; Springfield, Massachusetts; State College, Pennsylvania; Stockton, California; and Syracuse, New York.

In Tacoma, Washington; Tallahassee, Florida; Tampa, Florida; Temple, Texas; Terre Haute, Indiana; Texarkana, Texas; Texarkana, Arkansas; Texas City, Texas; Toronto, Ontario, Canada; Tucson, Arizona; Tulsa, Oklahoma; and Tyler, Texas.

In Urbana, Illinois; Utica, New York; University Park, Texas; and Uvalde, Texas.

In Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada; Vale, Colorado; Vicksburg, Mississippi; Victoria, Texas; Visalia, California; Valley Forge, Pennsylvania; and Vincennes, Indiana.

In Washington, D.C.; Waco, Texas; Watertown, Wisconsin; Waterloo, Iowa; West Palm Beach, Florida; White Plains, New York; Wichita, Kansas; Wichita Falls, Texas; Williamsport, Pennsylvania; Wilmington, North Carolina; Windsor, Ontario, Canada; Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada; Winston-Salem, North Carolina; Winona Lake, Indiana; and West Hollywood, Florida.

In Youngstown, Ohio; York, Pennsylvania; and Yuma, Arizona, and in many other cities,

villages, towns, hamlets, neighborhoods and countrysides across the United States I have preached the blessed truths of God's Word. In addition, I have opened His Word and preached from it in many foreign countries.

In December of 1985 I preached my 43,000th sermon. It seems that with the passing of each year I feel I know less about preaching. This is because perhaps I have learned more. With the opening of every door; there are many more doors to open; with the exploring of every cave, there are many more caves to explore; with the climbing of each height, there are many more heights to climb; and with the plunging into each depth, there are many more depths in which to plunge.

The first little church that I pastored had 19 members. The church which I now pastor has tens of thousands of members. The smallest crowd to which I have ever preached was seven. Now each Sunday I have the responsibility of preaching to thousands at the First Baptist Church of Hammond, Indiana. During these 43,000 times I have represented my Saviour before His people and before those who know Him not. I have observed some things. Some of these I have remembered. Some of the remembered ones I share with the reader in this sincere effort to be a help to God's servants and those who speak for Him.

I make no attempt at being original. I have often said that the definition of leadership is, "One who goes from follower to follower collecting ideas, compiles them, puts them in a book and sells a copy to each follower." It has been my privilege for many years to travel the length and breadth of my country. I have met many men of God who have influenced me in my preaching. I have collected from them ideas and methods, and now I have compiled them. I share them with you, my readers.

Someone has said that preaching is pouring back in a flood what you receive from the audience in a vapor. Thank you for the vapor. I trust that you are refreshed, and blessed and helped by the flood.

## **One Great Truth a Sermon**

A preacher lives with his sermons all the time. After the Sunday evening service ends, I spend 15-30 minutes in my office alone reflecting on the day I relive the services and try to figure the needs of my people for the next week. Usually before I leave the study on Sunday night I know the general direction of my sermons for the next Sunday. From that moment forward, I am planning next Sunday's messages. They are constantly on my mind as I prepare my mind and heart to meet the needs of my people on the next Lord's Day.

I must remember; however; that my people do not live with the sermon. They spend only 30 minutes to an hour a week on each message; whereas it is in my mind constantly. Because of this, I will remember the sermon for many days to come.

A preacher has no choice during the delivery of the message but to think about it; the people do not have to listen. The preacher's mind is totally occupied with what he is saying; whereas the minds of those who hear him range from being totally aware of what he is saying to being totally unaware of what is being said. During the course of a sermon most of the people will no doubt at least partially listen, but their occupation with the sermon can in no way compare to that of the preacher.

These things mean that the preacher may never forget the sermon whereas most of the people will soon forget it. Therefore, I believe that the fondest hope that a preacher can have concerning retention of his sermons is to attempt to leave one great truth a sermon in the minds of his people. The average person will not remember much of what the preacher has said. Most people will not remember his outline. The preacher has done well who leaves one great truth in the minds of his people as they leave the service for their dwelling places. This is my goal when I preach.

How may this be done? This chapter is totally devoted to methods and means that will cause the people, the congregation, to carry with them from each message one great truth which they will never forget.

1. Picture the invitation and the one thing you want to happen. Decide on the one thing that you want the members of the congregation to do or to begin to do because of the message. In other words, plan first the destination. Then plan the best way to arrive at that destination. It may be a message on stewardship, the purpose of which is to inspire the people to be good stewards of their lives, their time, their talent and their money. Maybe it will be a message on faithfulness, the goal of which is to inspire the members to attend faithfully the services of the church. It may be a message on prayer during which the pastor wants to impress his people to make definite decisions concerning their prayer lives. The wise pastor will decide early the one thing he wants his people to do, the one decision he wants them to make, and the one destination to which he hopes to take them. This, I think, is necessary to the delivery of a good sermon. The purpose of preaching is not that of delivering a good sermon. The purpose of preaching is that of delivering a great truth that will inspire the parishioners to perform a great service.

2. Decide what truth will make it happen. You have already decided the destination. Now choose the vehicle and the route that will properly take you to that destination. This is the truth that must be emphasized over and over again during the message so as to imprint indelibly in

the minds of the hearers the one great truth that will convey them to the destination you have chosen for them.

3. Write it down and look at it. Confirm to yourself that the decision that you want the hearers to make can be inspired by the truth that you plan to deliver. Be convinced that the truth will be the proper vehicle to deliver the congregation to the desired destination.

4. Decide what you think that truth will make happen. First you have chosen the desired goal and from that choice you have chosen the truth that will lead the congregation to the desired goal. Now forget the goal-- look only at the truth. Decide to what destination that truth will lead. If this destination coincides with your original destination, you have no doubt chosen the proper truth.

This is like checking mathematics. When a person multiplies 3 times 9, he gets 27. When he divides 3 into 27 and gets 9, this proves that his multiplication was proper. When the pastor starts with the destination and determines what truth will lead him to that destination, then takes the truth and determines to what destination it will lead, and finds that they coincide, he no doubt has found the one great truth that he should emphasize throughout his sermon.

5. When convinced both ways, decide on the truth to be delivered.

6. Use the time between this decision and the time of the preaching of the sermon to convince yourself of the importance of the truth that you have chosen. By the time the sermon is delivered the pastor must be totally sold on the fact that he has the answer. He must be totally convinced that the truth he is going to deliver is desperately needed by his people and that their lives will not be complete without the absorption of this great truth. This is perhaps the key to the delivering of a message. The pastor must be consumed with the idea that this is the answer and without it his people will flounder in at least one area of their Christian lives. It must be life or death to him! He must feel that the delivering of this truth is the most important thing going on in the world at the time of its deliverance. He must magnify this truth in his own mind all week so that when he stands to speak he will be consumed with its importance.

The person who sees a burning house has no problem or thought of his delivery when he warns the inhabitants of the danger they are facing. No preacher has preached well until his message becomes in his own mind life-changing and life-transforming to his people. Hence, he must utilize wisely the time between the choosing of the truth that he will soon deliver and the delivering of that truth. He must be totally consumed with the importance of the message.

7. Write the truth and place it at several well-traveled places. If, for example, the truth is "Total surrender to God brings happiness to the individual," he should write those words, make copies of them and have them at well-traveled places. Put a copy on the door of the refrigerator; at the telephone, on the mirror in the bathroom, on the windshield of the car; near the dial of your watch and other places that are a part of your daily schedule.

8. Set times to do nothing but think of the importance of the truth to be delivered on the Lord's Day Perhaps at least 15 minutes several times a day should be given to such meditation. At this time sell yourself on the importance of the truth you have chosen to deliver; dwell on it, convince yourself that it is vital to the spiritual well-being of your people.

9. Place the truth at the top of your prayer list. Every time you go to the throne of grace you will be reminded of your sermon for Sunday and you will pray fervently for God to help you to convey properly to your people the truth that He has led you to choose in order for them to



arrive at the destination which He has chosen for them.

10. As you pray, picture in your own mind the invitation on Sunday Picture one person kneeling at the altar to make the decision that you feel he needs to make. Fervently ask God to lead you to present the truth in such a way that this picture in your mind of the invitation can become a reality.

All of the things that are being listed now are parts of a recipe that is to convince the preacher of the importance of the sermon he is going to deliver. He must be consumed with the desire to help his people. He must be carried away with the awareness that the truth that he has chosen is the vehicle that God can use to give this help. He must be lifted out of himself and above himself and be swept up by this great truth caused by a burning desire to see his people make the decision in their hearts that he feels is so necessary to their lives and spiritual growth.

11. Choose a song that conveys the chosen truth, and sing it often throughout the week. It could be a familiar song. For example, if the destination chosen is that of leading your people "to decide to be unselfish" and the truth chosen to lead them to that destination is "living for others," the pastor could have as his theme song for the week that beautiful little song, "Others." He could sing throughout the week those beautiful words, "Lord, help me live from day to day in such a self-forgetful way, that even when I kneel to pray, my prayer shall be for others. Others, Lord, yes others. Let this my motto be: Lord, help me live for others that I may live like Thee." This song can be used of God to help His man to lose himself in the message he is to deliver to His people the next Lord's Day

It has been my policy for many years now to choose a song for the day Early in the morning I choose a song that I plan to sing all day I hum it, whistle it and sing it throughout the day until it becomes sometimes even a subconscious activity. Usually this song will be one that deals with the truth of my message for the next Sunday For example, if my message for the next Sunday is on total commitment, I may sing all day one day, "Jesus I my cross have taken, all to leave and follow Thee." The next day I may sing, "All to Jesus I surrender." These songs lead me to dwell on the truth that I have chosen as the vehicle to lead my people to the destination that I feel is best for them.

Sometimes I will make up a little song that will help me to think about the truth I am to deliver. Recently I was going to preach on Proverbs 3:6, "In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths." I wrote a little chorus using the words of this great verse. Once I was going to preach on coming boldly to the throne of grace. I wrote a little song entitled, "Come Boldly" This helped to keep my mind on the truth that I want to transfer into the minds of my people on the Lord's Day

12. Read all you can about this truth. Acquaint yourself with every tool possible that will enable you to convey better this chosen truth to your people in order that they may arrive at the chosen destination.

13. Think of its greatness. Many years ago I had an assistant pastor who came to me and said, "Preacher; you play up your sermons too much. You make them appear to be more important than they are." Months later he returned to me and said, "Preacher; I was wrong. You don't play up your sermons too much. You simply don't play them down."

The Bible has the answer! The truths of the Bible are ingredients of that answer. They are life and death. The preacher does not have to build them up; he has to dwell on them in such a

manner so he can build himself up to realize the magnitude of his preaching and the importance of Bible truths being conveyed to his people. There are no live preachers and dead preachers; there are preachers who convince themselves of the urgency and greatness of their calling and there are preachers who do not!

14. Repeat the truth over and over again. You have meditated upon it, you have placed it at well-traveled places, you have sung about it, you have prayed about it, and you have read about it; now repeat it over and over and over and over. Let it have the front seat in your mind so that by the time you walk into the pulpit to deliver it, it will be the most important event going on in the world at that time.

15. Think of the ways it can help your people. Picture the ways it will transform their lives. Think of what they can be and do if they absorb this great truth. This will enable you to realize more and more the importance of the sermon and its delivery. It will put an excitement in the voice, an urgency in the message, an electricity in the delivery and an attractiveness to the audience!

16. Remember that you have only one chance. This will be perhaps the only time you will preach this sermon to this congregation. They must get it now or perhaps they will never get it. Many of them will be hearing this truth for the one and only time in their lives. This realization should lead you to do your best and give your best as you preach it.

17. Avoid complicated outlines. For example, avoid outlines that would have Roman numeral one, four subheads; then Roman numeral two, and under that, four subheads; and Roman numeral three and four subheads. Such outlining may help to deliver a good sermon but it gives the people too many truths to retain, and there is too little emphasis on any one truth in order to force its retention. If, however, such an outline is chosen, each point should be connected to the main truth being conveyed. If you have several points, repeat the great truth as you give them. For example, suppose the sermon for the day is taken from Psalm 1:1-3, "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in His law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." The truth could be "how to prosper always." Now there are five things listed in these verses that are necessary for our prosperity: (1) not walking in the counsel of the ungodly, (2) not standing in the way of sinners, (3) not sitting in the seat of the scornful, (4) delighting oneself in the law of the Lord (the Bible), and (5) meditating in the Bible day and night. As each of these points is delivered, the congregation should be reminded of the truth that we are trying to present; that is, how to prosper. The preacher could say something like this, "I am preaching this morning on the subject, 'How to Prosper.' There are five things listed in these verses that are essential for prosperity. (1) Not walking in the counsel of the ungodly If you want to be prosperous, you cannot walk in the counsel of the ungodly If you walk in the counsel of the ungodly, you will not be prosperous." Notice the constant mention of the word "prosperous" or some form of it. Always in every point come back to the truth that has been chosen as the vehicle to take us to the destination.

18. Have the truth that is being emphasized written boldly somewhere in the outline. Have it underlined or encircled so that one glance at the outline will allow you to see the truth upon the slightest glance at the outline. This will keep the main truth before you while delivering the

message.

19. If for any reason, there is no central truth given in the sermon, have something very memorable to present. If there is no reemphasis of the same truth over and over and over again, driving that truth like a hammer on the head of a nail in the minds of the people, there should be something in the sermon that the people will never forget. This could be a startling illustration. I have accepted the fact that the people will not carry much home with them. One central truth would be a worthy goal. If there is no such truth emphasized in the message, there should be something somewhere in the delivery of the sermon that is startling enough to remain in the minds of the hearers as they leave. It could be one statement of truth. It could be one illustration that is very memorable.

In my sermon, "The Dignity of Man," I build the message around a man dressed in rags who came to my office the first day that I was Pastor of the First Baptist Church of Hammond. I tell in that message the thoughts that went through my mind and the lessons that God taught me through the old man. As I begin each point, I describe again the old man. He was a man who had long, shaggy hair that was dirty and matted. His face was dirty and ill-shaven. His neck was caked with filth. His shirt that once had been white had become yellow. His trousers were too big and were held up by a rope inserted through the belt loops. The trousers had patches at the knees. His shoes were worn and old, and there was a slit across each toe to widen them. His odor was obnoxious!

In this sermon on "The Dignity of Man" from the eighth Psalm, I list probably a half dozen things that God taught me through that man. Before each of those points, I describe the old man again as mentioned before. People who heard that sermon 25 years ago still remember the old man. It was not a sermon that left one truth, but they never forgot it because of this one illustration repeated throughout the sermon.

20. If you have a sermon with points, repeat all when the new one is given. In my sermon, "God's Calls to Soul Winning," the outline is as follows:

1. The call from within.
2. A call from without.
3. A call from above.
4. A call from beneath.

As I give each point, I remind the listener that each is a call to us beckoning us to soul winning. When I mention point 1, I simply say, "There is a call from within." When I mention point 2, I say, "There is a call from within and a call from without." When I mention point 3, I say, "There is a call from within, a call from without and a call from above." When I mention point 4, I say, "There is a call from within, a call from without, a call from above and a call from beneath." People who heard that sermon a quarter of a century ago always remember the outline. In my sermon entitled, "Others," the outline is:

1. Jesus died loving others.
2. Jesus died caring for others.
3. Jesus died saving others.

When this outline is used, not only do I repeat the previous point or points when I introduce

another one, but I also use the song, "Others," as mentioned earlier in this chapter.

Repetition is one of the most important things in preaching, or for that matter; in any public speaking. A famous preacher from Scotland said that the curse of the Scottish ministry is its unwillingness to be repetitious. Brother Bill Harvey, who was my music director for two years, in describing my preaching once said, "Jack Hyles is willing to be repetitious of the obvious." This is why I think that one-point sermons are so effective. The same point is hit over and over and over again. Each time it is hit, it drives itself deeper into the heart and mind of the hearer.

21. It is often advisable to have the people repeat the points aloud. This will help them remember the outline if there is more than one point in a sermon. For example, I have a motivational message I preach called, "Seven Steps to Success." The outline is as follows:

1. A dream.
2. A desire.
3. A decision.
4. A dare.
5. A direction.
6. A dedication.
7. A devotion.

When I bring this message I ask the people to repeat the outline with me as it unfolds. For example, if I am on point 5, "a direction," I will have them repeat the first four points along with the fifth point. Not only do they remember the points, but they remember their order.

22. Do not change your direction while preaching a sermon if you are feeling like it is a failure. You may be equating failure with cloudiness of mind. Sometimes you're not following yourself well, but the people are following you well. A few months ago I was preaching in a southern state. For the first 15 or 20 minutes of my message I felt that I was not succeeding. My mind was not clear. I was tempted to change directions but did not. Soon something happened that got my attention and something I said excited me and pulled me into the sermon. After the service the pastor of the church, who is a dear friend, said to me, "Dr. Hyles, I have heard you preach hundreds of times, but that is the greatest message you have ever preached in my presence!" Little did he realize that I almost ditched the sermon in order to flee to another.

One Sunday morning several years ago I was preaching in my own pulpit. About ten minutes into the sermon I went totally blank. I simply could not think! For some reason or other I was just unaware of what I was saying. I became frantic but kept right on plodding through the outline. To be quite frank, I was afraid I was having a mental problem. When the invitation came, I was barely aware of where I was. After the service I fled to my study, threw myself on the floor and begged God to give me a clear mind. By the time the evening service rolled around I had returned to normalcy. Several months passed. I was preaching in Atlanta, Georgia. Our oldest daughter; Becky, and her family were living there at the time. They asked me to go out to eat with them after the service. While we were fellowshiping, Becky said, "Dad, I recently heard a sermon of yours on tape that was the best sermon I ever heard you preach on tape."

I said, "Well, thank you, Puddin'."

She said, "Dad, it was not only the best sermon I ever heard you preach on tape; it was the best sermon I ever heard anybody preach on tape."

Well, I increased my expression of gratitude to her.

Again she said, "Dad, it was not only the best sermon I ever heard anybody preach on tape, but it was the best sermon I have ever heard anybody preach on tape or in person."

"Well," I said, "Puddin', I guess I better know what sermon that is so I can preach it again." She gave me the title. Was I ever stunned! It was the sermon I preached a few months before when I lost my coherence. I could not believe it. I returned to my room that night and praised God well into the night that He can use simple things to confound the wise and that it is still true that when we are weak, then we are strong.

Of course, every preacher has his own style of outlining and his own style of preaching. To be sure, each of us will, on occasion, preach sermons of different types, but it is the opinion of this preacher that the most effective preaching is that of determining before you choose a topic or a truth where you want to go. Picture the invitation. Decide what you want the people to do. Then find the truth that can be used as a vehicle to take the hearers to the desired goal. Then over and over again in the sermon emphasize the same truth, driving it deeper and deeper and deeper into the hearts and minds of the hearer until it is so indelibly and firmly positioned in his mind that he not only will respond as you had planned, but he will never forget the truth and the sermon.

## The Outline

There are two things that the preacher sees as he delivers his message. He sees first his people and second, his outline. Only one of these can he control-the outline. Sometimes the people will inspire him as he speaks; sometimes they will not. So the only predictable thing that catches his eye as he speaks is his Outline. Hence, it is vital that the outline do the purpose that it is intended to do. Different preachers use different types of outlines.

One day I was sitting talking to Mrs. Billy Sunday, whom we affectionately called 'Ma' Sunday. She was telling me about Billy Sunday. I asked her what kind of outlines he had. She told me that each letter in his outline was an inch tall. I asked her why, thinking perhaps that he had poor vision. She told me that his letters were so big because: (1) He seldom came near the pulpit, and as he would run by he glanced at his outline. The letters had to be big in order for him to read them while running by (2) The big letters made him speak louder. In other words, the fact that the letters were written an inch high put him in the shouting mood, and he liked to preach With enthusiasm and a loud voice.

For 22 years I traveled extensively with Dr. John R. Rice and shared pulpits across America with him. Over 2200 times he and I have sat on the same platform together and preached on the same program. Dr. Rice did not use old outlines. He would use sermons that were old, but right before each sermon he would outline his message again! It would be the same outline that he had used many times and the same sermon that he often preached, but he always outlined it again just before preaching it. We were in Ohio together. I was noticing just before the service that he was outlining his sermon. I asked him why he did that. He replied that it helped him to keep his mind on the sermon and to remember the outline if he wrote it down right before preaching it. It made it fresher in his mind.

Some great preachers use simple outlines of less than one page. Some use many pages of outline. I am thinking of one of America's greatest preachers whose sermons sometimes have thirty pages of outline. My sermons are usually from two to four pages of outlines. They are not usually typewritten but rather are written in longhand.

This is the most important paragraph in this chapter. It deals with the purpose of an outline. AN OUTLINE IS PRIMARILY TO PUT THE SPEAKER IN THE SAME FRAME OF MIND WHILE PREACHING AS HE WAS WHILE PREPARING AND STUDY- ING. A preacher goes to his study. He prepares his message. The Bible begins to burn in his heart. His message baptizes him with its truth. He is lifted to the heavenly places. He cannot wait until the time comes for its delivery so he can share with the congregation the great truths and great experiences he enjoyed while walking with God in his study Then the sermon time comes. He stands to speak. The truth does not seem nearly as sweet; the Scripture no longer burns in his soul; he is disappointed and that sermon that he had so anticipated preaching becomes drudgery instead of delight. What has happened? He has failed to transfer the spirit of his study to the pulpit. He has failed to realize that the only tool he has while he is in the pulpit to remind him of the ecstasy of the study is his outline. Because of this, the outline and its purpose is not only to capture the truths that the preacher learned in study but the spirit and joy with which he learned them. The outline is to remind him not only of what he learned but how he learned it. It is to

carry him back to the same joy and thrill of preparation and transfer it to the delivery. His failure was caused by his unawareness of the purpose of his outline. He thought that the outline was simply to remind him of what he learned. This it did. He did not realize that the outline was supposed to remind him of the spirit he felt while he was learning it. So the outline fulfilled the purpose that the preacher had for it, but its purpose was not large enough.

When the preacher looks at his outline from behind the pulpit, it should remind him of the great truths he has learned, but it also should remind him of the heavenly places in which he walked while he learned those truths so that he may not only transfer the truths he learned alone to the people but he may transfer the heavenly places in which he walked while he learned those truths.

With that in mind we will examine the outline.

1. The first thing at the top of the outline should "grab" the preacher. It must get his attention. The first part of the sermon is not primarily for the preacher to get the people's attention but for the preacher to get his own attention. If the pastor can get his own attention, the people will listen. People love to listen to someone who is listening to himself, someone who is caught up in his message and is totally involved in the truth he is presenting. If he can get his own attention, the attention of the people will come. This is the reason I rarely use humor in the introduction of a sermon. Now I may use it in the introductory remarks before I begin the sermon, but once the sermon is begun I rarely use humor in the introduction. I want to use something that will lift me out of myself and totally involve me in the sermon. It is important that my mind not be on two things. It should not be on the sermon and also wondering how I am doing. It should not be on the sermon and wondering if the lady in the middle section is going to carry her baby out or sit there with him during the entire service. I must be totally lost and involved in the message. If I get involved and the people know it, they will get involved.

In my sermon "Is There Not a Cause?" I begin as follows: "Several years ago I was on an airplane flying to the south. It was a flight with a stopover in Lexington, Kentucky. On the one-hour flight between Chicago and Lexington, I looked across the aisle and saw a familiar face. I turned and spoke to him and asked, 'Sir, aren't you Adolph Rupp?' He replied in a beautiful southern drawl, 'Yes, suh, I am Mr. Rupp.' (Adolph Rupp was for many years the coach of the University of Kentucky basketball team. During his career his teams won more basketball games than those of any other college coach in history.) I said, 'Mr. Rupp, I have been for a long time a fan of yours. My name is Jack Hyles.' He replied, 'Yes, suh. I have read of you. You pastor that large Baptist church near Chicago.' For almost an hour we talked together in a delightful and stimulating exchange of ideas. We landed in Lexington and said goodbye. I got off the plane to take a walk and go to the washroom. I was washing my hands at the lavatory when I looked over and saw that Mr. Rupp was washing his hands at the lavatory next to mine. I said, 'Mr. Rupp, could I ask you a question? I understand that you will soon retire because of the mandatory retirement at the age of 70.' A tear invaded his eye as he said, 'Yes, sub. Soon I will have to retire.' I asked, 'Mr. Rupp, what do you plan to do when you retire?' A tear escaped his eye as he replied, 'Sub, I guess I'll just die.' Several months later Mr. Rupp retired. Not long after his retirement I picked up the sports page of the Chicago Tribune to see the big headlines which read, 'ADOLPH RUPP IS DEAD!' Why did he die? He died because he had lost his cause-that thing for which he got up in the morning, that thing that lifted him above himself that made him forget himself, that pulled him out of himself in which he lost himself-it had been removed. He had lost his cause!"

That is the introduction to my sermon, "Is There Not a Cause?" Now it may or may not be a good introduction as the reader sees it, but it is the kind of introduction that gets my attention. By the time I finish that introduction, I am ready to preach on the subject, "Is There Not a Cause?"

In my sermon, "Others," I get my attention as follows: "Many years ago in the city of London, England, the Salvation Army was conducting its annual convention. The giant auditorium was filled with delegates, but for the first time in the history of the Army its founder and leader, General Booth, was unable to attend. He was old, nearly blind and in poor health. Gloom spread across the floor of the convention as the delegates realized that for the first time they would conduct their annual convention without the presence of their leader and founder. Someone suggested that General Booth send a message to be read at the opening session. This he agreed to do. When the moderator engaged his gavel to the podium he said, 'Ladies and Gentlemen, as I call to order the annual convention of the Salvation Army, I regret to inform you that our leader and founder, General Booth, is for the first time unable to attend. He has, however, agreed to send a message to be read at this time, as follows: Dear Delegates of the Salvation Army Convention: Others. Signed, General Booth.'

Now, this may not get the attention of my congregation, but this illustration always gets my attention. When I use it, I am ready to preach. It puts me in the right frame of mind, captures me and loses me in my sermon.

In my sermon, "The Lust of the Holy Spirit," I begin as follows: "Months ago in the city of Seattle, Washington, I was enjoying a time of Fellowship at a luncheon of Christian workers. After the luncheon there was a question-answer session where the pastors and full-time workers were allowed to interrogate me. One pastor asked this question, 'Dr. Hyles, what in your opinion are the four spiritual highlights of your life?' Now normally I would not answer a question that involved such a lengthy answer, but for some reason that day I did answer that question. I said, 'The first spiritual highlight in my life took place in August of 1937 when I, as a little lad nearly 11 years of age with bare feet and ragged clothes, received Christ as my Saviour. The second great highlight of my life took place on New Year's Eve just before the dawn of 1944 when as a timid, introverted teenager I felt the call of God to preach the Gospel, and now for these many years I have been proclaiming the message around the nation and around the world and, yes, around the block. The third great highlight of my life took place on the grave of my father after he had died a drunkard's death. I returned to the grave and threw myself face down upon the dirt that covered it and stayed there until God did a work in me. I believed then and believe now that that was the first time in my life I was filled with the Holy Spirit. The fourth great event of my life took place when I was a young preacher. I was pastoring a little country church in east Texas. It was 6:05 in the morning. I was standing in an empty auditorium preaching from behind the pulpit on my morning broadcast called, 'The Old-Time Religion Broadcast.' I was speaking that morning on the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. Up until that moment, however, I had never spoken to the Holy Spirit. I had never told Him I loved Him; I had never asked Him to guide me. I knew He lived in me. I knew Romans 8:9; I Corinthians 6:19, 20, etc., so theoretically I knew the truth, but practically I had never experienced fellowship with the Holy Spirit. That morning, suddenly for the first time in my life, the Holy Spirit became more than an influence; He became a Person to me! I began to tremble while I was speaking. When I finished the broadcast I knelt behind the microphone and apologized to the Holy Spirit for neglecting Him through the years and told Him that I would never do so again. I got on my



knees beside my little car that morning and told the Holy Spirit to guide me what route to take home for breakfast. After breakfast I begged Him to lead me to know what route to take back to the office and from that happy day until this, I have never neglected the Holy Spirit in my life, even for one entire day I always talk to Him, tell Him I love Him and seek His guidance."

Now this introduction may or may not capture the attention of the audience, but it captures my attention, and once my attention is captured, the audience will listen.

2. Do not worry about how many points there are in the outline. I am basically a one-point outliner, but I know some great preachers who are not. Dr. John Rice had many points. An example of this is his famous sermon, "The Sevenfold Sin of Not Winning Souls." My good friend Dr. Bob Gray uses points and sub-points. That wonderful soul winner, Dr. Jim Vineyard, often has as many as 25 points. The important thing is that you fit it to yourself with whatever you are comfortable.

3. Use different type outlines as far as writing is concerned. For example, if I preach on Heaven, I make the Outline orderly and beautiful. I may type it or print it very carefully or write it with the best of script. This is because Heaven is orderly and beautiful. If I preach on Hell, I will scribble the outline and make it messy. If I preach a hard sermon, I will often use a bold magic marker to remind me that I am to be bold.

If I preach a soft sermon, I will use a fine-line pen.

If I preach a commencement address, I will make an immaculate outline.

If I preach a sermon in which I want to become excited, and in order to remind myself that I was excited in my study, I will underline the main points or capitalize them. Bear in mind, the purpose of this outline is to carry the spirit that I had in the study to the pulpit. If I was excited in the study, something in the outline should remind me of that excitement. If I was tender in the study, something of the outline should remind me of the tenderness. If I wept in the study, something in the outline should remind me of how I felt at the time I prepared my message and my heart.

When I have an illustration in my outline, I write the abbreviation, "Ill." to remind me that this is an illustration.

If I have an especially good idea that I want to set apart in my outline, I will put a circle around it.

I always put a bold line between points. This line is very bold to let me know that one part of the sermon is ending and another part is beginning.

When listing things, I always number them. This makes it easier for me to keep my place in the list.

When I want to whisper in my message, I use tiny writing. When I want to shout, I use bold print. Bear in mind that the purpose for the outline is to transfer the spirit of the study to the pulpit. It is so much easier to get excited when alone with God and His Word than it is when standing in front of hundreds or maybe thousands of people. This is not being hypocritical or mechanical; it is being honest. You prepared the contents of your message in the study; your outline is to remind you of what you learned. You prepared your heart in the study; the outline should remind you of what you felt, and it should help you to feel that same sweet fervency that you felt when you were alone with God in the study.



When using familiar illustrations, I just put a word or two that remind me of them and circle them in my outline. For example, I have mentioned so many times in my sermons the death of my drunken father, I will just write the words, "Dad's death," and put a circle around them in the outline. I often use the illustration of the Sunday school departmental superintendent who told me when I was five years of age that Jesus loved me. Her name was Mrs. Bethel. When I put that in my outline, I simply write the words, "Mrs. Bethel," and encircle them.

I also write out my text at the top of my outline and encircle it. This is not just the reference but the very words of the text so I can refer to them easily and remember them readily

If I am using a one-point sermon, I will write down that point several times throughout the outline so as to remind me to keep emphasizing and repeating that single point that I am trying to stress.

4. I use an 8 ½ x 11 piece of paper for my outline. I fold it and place it in my Bible. This covers two pages. In other words, when the Bible is open, the page to the left and to the right are covered with outline. Then I draw a bold magic marker line down the center to be sure that the pages are divided in my mind.

5. Let your outline tell you how you felt as you prepared it. If while I was studying, I wept over a certain truth, I may preface that truth in my outline with a statement like this, "Nothing moves me to tears faster."

If I was unusually excited about a truth in my study, I may put in my outline a preface to that truth like this-"Thank God I can still get excited about If something irritated me in my study, such as some sin that is so prevalent, I may preface that statement with, "Nothing upsets me more than.

If I get happy in my study and want to laugh because of the goodness of God, I may remind myself in the outline that I laughed at that particular point.

If at a certain time in my study I was overcome with thanksgiving, I may put in the outline something like this: "Thank God...."

I simply want to deliver to my people from the pulpit what God delivered to me in the study I want them to feel what I felt. I want them to be thrilled as I was thrilled, to be moved as I was moved, to weep as I wept, to rejoice as I rejoiced, and to share with me the ecstasy of the experience that I had of walking with God as He gave me His message for my people.

6. Wait until you are moved and have entered into the heavenly places before you make your outline. No outline should be made coldly, but only after God has moved the heart of the preacher. If you make your outline on the mountaintop, you will identify it from the pulpit with the mountaintop.

Hypocrisy is twofold: If you express something you do not feel, that is hypocrisy Likewise, if you feel something you do not express, that is hypocrisy Not only should the sermon transfer the facts learned in the study but the emotions enjoyed in the study The outline can remind you of both; it should call to your mind what you learned and to your heart how you felt so that you may accurately transfer the feeling of your heart when you became acquainted with the truth to the people so that they may have the same feeling when they become acquainted with the same truth.

7. Outline your sermon no earlier than 48 hours before it is preached. If you do this, it will be

fresher and it will be easier for the outline to fulfill its purpose.

8. If using an old outline, read and reread it right before preaching. As mentioned elsewhere in this manuscript, Dr. John Rice always re-outlined his messages right before preaching. This is a good idea. However, if this is not done, it certainly is wise for the preacher to read and reread his outline so that it may be fresh in his mind when he walks in the pulpit.

9. Use ditto marks in a list. Suppose, for example, that in the outline you are listing some things for which you are thanking God. Do not write for each thing the words, "I thank God." Write the words, "I thank God," for the first one and put ditto marks under those three words down through the outline. This will make the outline a little bit less messy and less confusing while you are preaching.

10. Write yourself instructions on your outline. Suppose you have a certain Scripture in your outline that you feel the people should read with you. Then beside the Scripture write some words, like, "Read in unison," or "Entire congregation to read." Suppose that there is a Scripture that you want the congregation to quote with you. You may forget that while you are preaching. Write it down in the outline.

There may be a Scripture that you want to look up and read to the people. Make yourself a note like this: "Look it up." In other words, if there are certain things that in the study you feel the Lord is leading you to do while you preach, make a note of them. To be sure, while a person is preaching the Lord may lead him to do certain things, but it is my feeling that the Lord can lead better while you are on your face before God in the study than while you are on your feet before your people in the pulpit. This is not to say that God does not lead in the pulpit. It is simply to say that God also leads in the study

11. It is often good to use verses that outline themselves. There are some verses that just form an outline, such as these: II Chronicles 7:14, "If My people, which are called by My name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from Heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land." John 14:12, "Verily, verily I say unto you, He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto My Father." John 5:24, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, bath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." John 3:16, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Psalm 1:1-3, "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in His law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." Romans 8:28, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose."

Each of these verses outlines itself. For example, look at the outline in II Chronicles 7:14.

I. The people's part.

1. Humble themselves.

2. Pray

3. Seek God's face.
4. Turn from their wicked ways.

## II. God's promises.

1. He will forgive their sins.
2. He will heal their land.

The same is true with Psalm 1:1-3. Notice the natural outline.

## I. Man's part.

1. Walk not in the counsel of the ungodly
2. Do not stand in the way of sinners.
3. Do not sit in the seat of the scornful.
4. Delight in the law of the Lord.
5. Meditate in the Bible day and night.

## II. God's promises to that man.

1. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of waters.
2. His leaf also shall not wither.
3. Whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

Now go through John 5:24; John 3:16; and Romans 8:28 and let them outline themselves. Before doing so please note that the purpose of these Scriptures is to try to get God to act. That means the outline should emphasize what man can do in order to propel God's action.

Years ago a very old man was a member of our church, and he passed away I was called to his bedside. The last words the old man said before his spirit was taken to the presence of his Saviour were these: "Thank you, Preacher, for walking with God all these years and telling me on Sunday what God said." This cannot be done unless the walking with God while we are alone is transferred to the pulpit while we stand in front of the people. The only things we have that will transfer the spirit of the study to the pulpit are the memory and the outline. The memory is often clouded by circumstances in the service, but the outline can be and should be a reminder of the heavenly walk that we enjoyed with God during our hours of preparation and research. for the outline to remind us of that walk is not critical; but to deliver with a cold heart and dry eyes the message that was received through tears and a burning may be!

## Preparing to Preach

It is time to preach. In a few minutes I will be representing God as His man before His people. I am to deliver His message. I am about to walk to the platform. I must remember to walk correctly I must remember to stand correctly I must remember to sit properly I am now walking through the door. I am praying a simple prayer. "Lord, help me to preach today as if it were the last sermon I would ever preach."

I must take time to remember how much I wanted this in days gone by I must remember that I am where I wanted to be. I must remember how I felt when I was sitting in the pew. I must remember that I am God's man. I must realize that I may not have many more times to do this. I must give my best. I must give my all. I am about to do something that angels covet. I am appearing in Christ's stead. I am His representative. I am His ambassador. I must not forget it.

I am now standing on the platform. The scene has begun. In just a few minutes I will be doing~ the most important thing that a human being can do on earth, ~so I must spend the time between now and then to prepare.

1. I must examine the pulpit. I must see and decide where I can place my hands or if I can place my hands on the pulpit. I must decide what to do with my hands before I preach. If the pulpit is too high for me, I would be wise just to stand behind it with my hands beside me or clasp behind me; or I could use my hands for gestures, but it would not be a help to me to place my hands on the pulpit if it is a tall pulpit and obviously built for a taller preacher than I.

I am about to represent God. I must do it properly I must not be intimidated by a pulpit.

2. I must observe the platform. I hope it is about six inches high for every ten feet of depth in the auditorium. If it is a low platform, I must speak a bit louder, be a bit more dynamic and more assertive because I will be in a position not conducive to leadership. If the platform is too high, I must say something early in my message that will identify me with the congregation so that I will not feel too far removed from them. I am God's man. I must give my best. I must be my best. I must do my best. I am representing God. I am His ambassador. I must be prepared. In a few minutes I will be standing between the living and the dead. "Oh, God, help me to prepare myself."

3. I must check how far I am from the people. I wish that the front row were within seven feet of me as I speak, for it is harder to interact with the people if they are far from me. It is more difficult for the pulpit and pew to communicate if the people are at a great distance from me. If there are more than seven feet between me and the audience, I must realize that I will not be as aware of their response. I must not plan on a response, for distance has divided the speaker from the people. I must remember that I may not be able to hear their "Amen's." I may not be able to hear their laughter as easily as I could if they were closer to me. If they are ten feet or more away from me, it might be more difficult for me to preach. Maybe I should consider preaching a familiar sermon, one in which I can totally lose myself and be more oblivious to the audience response and participation. I am God's man. I must leave no stone unturned. The time is getting closer when I am to preach. The choir is singing. Soon will come the offering; then the special number; then I will enter into the holy place and represent my God. "Oh, God, may I give my best, be my best and do my best."

4. I must check the lighting. I wish it were a bright, cheerful auditorium so I could easily see the people and feel apart of them, for when I feel identified with the people, I can best represent my Saviour, for He certainly identified Himself with the common man. I must remember that if the lighting is subdued, I will not be able to see the people as well. I will not know as quickly of their laughter. I will not see them nodding their heads in agreement. I must remember that most of my inspiration must come from within because the dim light has separated me from the congregation. "Oh, God, help me to be Your man today This is the only Sunday morning sermon that these people are going to hear today I am their only chance to receive God's message. Please help me. I yield myself to Your Holy Spirit and present my body a living sacrifice. Please use me."

5. I must check the temperature. If it is too warm, I must realize that the people could become a bit drowsy and they may fall asleep more easily while I preach. They will not be as alert as they would be if the building were not uncomfortably warm. No doubt it will be a little more difficult for me to keep their attention. Perhaps I should use a touch of appropriate humor. I must be a little more dynamic in my presentation and delivery, and maybe I should consider keeping my message a little more brief. "Oh, God, do not let the warm building hinder me from delivering Your message, and do not let the warm building hinder the people from receiving Your message. You have given me a truth to give them that is vital. It could revolutionize their lives. Give me wisdom as I seek to blend and adjust to the various circumstances of the service."

6. I must check the shape of the auditorium. I must decide with which people to make eye contact. I realize that if the auditorium is big, there is no way that I can have eye contact with everybody. If the building is very long and narrow, I would be wise to preach mainly to the front half of the congregation. This will keep my eyes pointing toward the entire congregation, but I must be aware mainly of the front half. However, I must be sure to project my voice so that the last row can hear me.

If the building is fan-shaped, my body must not oscillate offensively. I must decide to keep eye contact basically with the two center sections, with an occasional glance to the sides. I realize that it would be unwise for me to constantly be oscillating from side to side, but I must make everyone feel a part of the service. However, for the sake of the message, my main contact will be with the two center sections. If there is a center section and no center aisle, I must then give most of my attention to the three center sections.

"Dear God, if I am placing too much emphasis on mechanics, it is a sincere mistake. I want to be today what You want me to be, and I want the people to hear and understand Your message. I have spent hours preparing my message. I have spent hours preparing my heart. Now I must not allow circumstances to prevent the message from being transferred from my heart to the hearts of the people."

7. I must check the crowd. I must watch during the announcements to see if they are responsive. If they are, perhaps we can have some interaction while I preach. I can ask them questions and expect some "Amen's" and laughter. I am trying to decide now whether it is best for me to use them to help me in the presentation of the sermon. It may be best for me to realize that they are not responsive and not depend on them at all for help during the message. At any rate, I pray, "Dear Lord, I want my inspiration mainly to come from You. May Your Holy Spirit fill me. May Your love engulf me. May Your grace sustain me, and may Your people hear me!"

If the crowd is small, I must not be discouraged, for it is an honor beyond measure for me to

deliver a message even to one person. I must be aware that all of Heaven is watching, that that cloud of Heavenly witnesses is observing!

I must remind myself of what God has done in the past in a small gathering. I must remember that little crowd that gathered in Atlanta, Georgia, many years ago, but one person in that small crowd was named Curtis Hutson, who has become one of America's greatest preachers.

I must remember that small gathering in Kankakee, Illinois, where it would have been easy to be discouraged, but I must remember that one of the few people there that night was a young man named Wally Beebe, who has become one of America's great preachers and has influenced millions to attend church and hundreds of thousands to come to Christ.

I must remember that the great message in John 3 on the new birth was preached to one man. I must remember that the great message of John 4 on the living water was preached to one woman. I must remember the small beginning of the Fulton Street prayer meetings and of Moody's revival in England. I must remember that only 120 prayed before Pentecost. I must remember that the entire destiny of mankind was changed by a little group of disciples who followed Jesus and heard Him speak.

I must not depend on the crowd for my inspiration. If they do inspire me, I must let that be bonus, but I must be inspired by the fact that I hold in my hand the eternal Word of God. There lives in my body the eternal Spirit of God, and I have in my mind and in my heart and in my soul a message from the eternal God, even the true and the living God. I am about to stand between the living and the dead. That is enough to inspire me. If the people choose to add to that inspiration, well and good, but the inspiration of the God Whom I represent, the message which I preach, and the fact that I am standing between the living and the dead is all the inspiration I really need. I must remember not to let the crowd lead me; I must lead them. I must not let them discourage me. I must not let them divide my mind and get it off of my message. "Oh, God, the offering is being taken. The time is getting closer. It is becoming difficult to wait. I long to present Your message. May I do it in Your power, and, dear God, if I am being too finicky, forgive me, but I just want to be sure that nothing distracts or hinders me from conveying the truth that You have for these people to them through Your servant."

8. I must fall in love with these people. I am looking around now. I see down in the front some older ladies. "God, bless them." I wonder what they have done this week. I imagine that this trip to church is the highlight of their week. "May I be what they need." Back in the back I see some teenagers. "Dear God, it will be difficult for them to listen. Please help me to use every tool at my disposal to keep their attention. Some of them may wreck their lives this week if they do not hear Your message. Help me as I present it.

"Dear God, I see numbers of men in this room who are laboring men. They have worked hard this week. This is their only day off They have chosen to use it to hear me preach. I notice that some of them have greasy hands. They have toiled hard all week. They need to hear from Heaven. May I be the vessel this morning that will allow them to do so.

"Dear God, I see a little crowd of people back in the back who are singing with their hands. They are deaf Tell them that I love them. Near them I see some people who have canes, and they don't seem to be facing me exactly They must be blind. Convey to them my love. Dear God, there are some little children. A 45-minute sermon seems like hours to them. Help me to so represent You that it will be easy for them to listen. Let me be simple enough so that the smallest child can understand me, and yet may my message be profound enough so that it will

challenge the most mature Christian. For the next few minutes, God, I will be looking over the audience and loving them. Oh, by the way, I thank You for them. Please help me to be what they need today"

9. I must not be distracted from my message. I must keep on course. I must use that part of the service that will help my message and be oblivious to that part of the service that will not help. I must not allow anything to offend me or upset me. I must not develop a spirit of criticism about any part of the service.

10. I must be careful about my stance. Dear God, sometimes it is easy for me to slouch a bit and oftentimes I shift my weight from one foot to another. I must be careful to stand like Heaven's representative should stand. I must not carelessly lean too much on the pulpit. I am sure that I can better represent You if I stand up straight and equally distribute my weight on both feet.

11. I must be careful with my eyes. I remember how Mother used to tell me to be careful about people who had shifty eyes. I believe that sincerity will care for this, but I must not look to the ceiling while I preach or spend too much time looking to my outline. I must have a straightforward look as I preach.

12. I must be careful about the use of my hands. I must not fiddle with something on the pulpit. I must use my hands for gesturing or keep them comfortably on a part of the pulpit, hold them to my side, or clasp them behind my back. "Dear God, I hope You're not thinking now that I am emphasizing little things too much. I remember reading one time that someone said to Michelangelo, 'You spend too much time on trifles.' Michelangelo replied, 'Trifles make perfection, and perfection is no trifle!'"

13. I hope I am dressed properly "Of course, God, it is too late now, for I cannot change clothes this late, but I hope that I am dressed appropriately I am aware that young men who are God's representatives must be a bit more conservative than the average young man. Help me always to be appropriate in my dress. I have not worn anything new today because I do not want to have my mind on my clothing, nor do I want my apparel to detract from the message that You have given me for my people today"

I must consider my voice, my speech and my pronunciation. I must remember that the larger the crowd the slower the speech should be. I notice that the song leader makes larger gestures as he leads the singing when the crowd is larger.

14. I must be conscious of my facial expressions. I must remember that the smaller the crowd, the easier it is for me to use facial expressions; but in a large crowd, facial expressions are less effective. I also must take into consideration the lighting and the distance of the people from the pulpit. I also must take into consideration the width of the center aisle. If it is too wide, my eye contact will not be as good. I must be aware of this so as not to be disappointed if the response is not what I want it to be.

"Dear God, it is almost time. The people are waiting. I have prepared my heart and my message through the week. I am trying now to prepare myself so that I may be the best representative for You that I can possibly be."

15. I call on someone to pray, I must remember the size of the audience. Can he be heard if he prays from the altar? Can he be heard from the place where he is sitting? If not, I must remember to call him to the platform and have him lead us in prayer behind the microphone. The same is true with testimonies.



16. I must be proper in my pulpit behavior. I must remember to participate in the singing. I must be careful not to talk to those on the platform. It might show an indifference to the service and lack of respect for others who are on the program and a part of the service. I must stand when the congregation stands or I might cause a distance to develop between us.

"Dear Lord, I understand that You can overcome any circumstance, interruption or inconvenience. I just want to be sure that I do not cause a hindrance in the service."

I remember when I used to preach on the streets. We had no pews; we had no piano; we had no organ; we had no public address system; we had no pulpit, and I remember how You blessed. I remember how I used to stand in the back of a little pickup truck and preach to crowds. Ah, what sweet memories!

I remember that time when in an evening service all the lights went out; I preached in total darkness, and over 20 people got saved in a small church in south Texas!

I remember the brush arbors with the mosquitoes and the extreme heat with people sitting in their cars around the edge of the arbor listening to the sermon.

I remember the time when the PA. broke when I was preaching to 5,000 people, yet what a good service God gave us.

I remember preaching at the Bill Rice Ranch years ago, back in the days when their tabernacle was open on the sides. As I stood to preach, a torrential rainstorm came. I remember how nobody could hear, but dear Dr. John Rice simply walked outside and lifted his hands up and the rain stopped. I remember how sweet the service was, and then I remember when Dr. Rice came back in, he looked at me and said, "I took care of it while you were preaching, now you go outside and care for it while I'm preaching!" He had that impish, little-boy type grin on his face. God bless him. I loved him so much, and I have so many sweet memories that are built around him.

I remember that tabernacle in Ft. Worth, Texas, that was built just for revival meetings. Dr. Harvey Springer preached one week, and I preached the other. I remember that night when a cold front came through. My, was it ever cold! The tabernacle had no heat, but somebody borrowed a gas heater and placed it in the back in the middle of the tabernacle. Only ten people showed up that night in that 1000-seat tabernacle, and all ten of them were gathered around the heater, holding their hands over the top in an effort to get some warmth! Nothing went right! There was no piano; there was no pianist; there was no organ; there was no organist! Only the pastor, congregational song leader and I were on the platform, and I remember that I was preaching that night on Hell. I thought perhaps that would warm the service up somewhat. Nobody looked at me! It appeared that no one was listening, but I went ahead and preached the entire message as if the tabernacle were filled, while the little crowd of 10 people gathered around the heater in the back. I remember leaving the service thinking I had been a total failure and that I had wasted my time.

Years passed. I was preaching in Birmingham, Michigan, in an afternoon service. A tall, good-looking young man stood to introduce me. He said, "Ladies and gentlemen, it is my privilege to introduce you to Dr. Jack Hyles. He doesn't know it, but it was through his preaching that I was saved. Years ago he preached a week of meetings in a big tabernacle in Ft. Worth, Texas. One night a cold front came through. Only ten people showed up, and they gathered around a little heater in the back. I was one of the ten. Dr. Hyles did not think that any of us were

listening, because we were all looking at the heater and trying to keep warm, but I'll never forget his sermon! He preached on the subject, 'To Hell and Back.' I got saved that night. I didn't go forward in the service to profess publicly my faith, but I was saved that night. I would like for Dr. Hyles to know that I love him and I would like to thank him for being faithful in preaching in a 1000-seat tabernacle when only 10 were present, and they were gathered around a little heater in the back."

I remember that time in Garland, Texas, when we had a big tent service on a Sunday morning; 3,163 people were there and right in the middle of the sermon the back row of the choir fell off. There had been faulty construction of the risers for the choir!

Then I remember that time when I was preaching to several thousand people at the First Baptist Church of Hammond. It was Sunday night; the building was packed, and suddenly about a third into the message a well-dressed man stood up in the back, ran about halfway down the aisle and made the time-out signal. He called time out! One of the security guards came and took him to the back and asked him what he was doing. He said, "That fellow has preached long enough." In spite of it, God blessed in that service.

Then I remember that tuberculosis sanatorium in Tyler, Texas, where as a young preacher I used to go every Thursday night and preach to the dying. I remember how some Thursday nights we would have conversions and then find them missing the next Thursday night when we returned. They had passed away during the week.

"What I am saying, Lord, is that I know that You can overcome circumstances and difficulties, but in spite of this, I don't want to be a difficulty. I want to be my best. Lord, I have the idea that the only difficulties You overcome are those that are beyond our control. I have an idea that when we cause them You are not as ready to overcome them."

17. I must be very wise concerning any child that might mis- behave or baby that might cry. Of course, the best thing to do is to have adequate nursery facilities and ask the people to please leave the babies in the nursery, to have trained ladies in a clean, sanitary place. I must remember not to let a baby destroy the service. I only hope the pastor has trained the people to remove the child immediately when he misbehaves.

I hope that the children have been trained not to walk in and out of the service while the sermon is being delivered.

I trust that the ushers have been properly trained to sit down during the sermon, for they, like all of us, need preaching too. I hope that they will not disturb by moving around during the sermon. I hope they will not be doing such unwise things as counting the attendance while I'm speaking. I trust the pastor has not been so unwise as to have someone out of the services counting money "Oh, God, I want everybody to hear my message, or should I say, Your message."

I hope there is not a telephone nearby that when it rings can be heard in the auditorium.

I hope that the people are trained not to interrupt the service by calling folks out of the auditorium. I hope that they realize the most important thing in the world is the preaching of God's message and that nothing should interfere with that preaching.

"Dear God, I hope that no one is carelessly using a tape recorder that might interfere with the service. Now, Lord, if any of these things do happen, I'm going to deliver Your message anyway, and I believe that You can and will overcome obstacles unless we are the obstacles.

Don't let me be a hindrance in any way in the delivering of Your message today, and dear Lord, please help the fellow who has that video camera not to be interrupting during the sermon. Help him to sit down and listen like everybody else. There are so many folks behind him that will be distracted if he moves around during the sermon.

18. I must be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. "Help me to use humor in good taste. Remind me to be proper in every way and not to be presumptuous in my opinions of people in the audience."

I remember that time in Mesquite, Texas, while I was preaching, a lady was grimacing on the second or third row from the front. All during the sermon she made faces and grimaced. I thought she was angry. I told the pastor alter the service to watch her. I thought she was a troublemaker. The pastor smiled understandingly and said, "Brother Hyles, that woman is not a troublemaker. She has a husband who beats her every time she comes to church. Tonight he beat her across the back. While you were preaching, her back was bleeding and her blouse was sticking to her back. The reason she was grimacing was that she was in pain." To think I judged her as being a troublemaker when she was simply suffering for her Saviour!

"Now, Lord, if hindrances come, I will accept them. I will not be offended. If I can correct them, I will. If I cannot, I will do my best through them, but I just do not want slothfulness to cause hindrances. This is Your hour. These are Your people. This is Your Word. I am Your man. This is Your message. I believe I have done my best.

The special music is now over. I am approaching the pulpit. I am now standing behind the pulpit. I am now preaching. What joy! What total joy! What ecstasy! What total ecstasy! "Oh, God, use me just now!"

## Keeping a Warm Heart as You Preach

A preacher must realize that crisis preaching will last only so long. Issue-oriented preaching will take the church just so far. Sooner or later, warmhearted preaching must take over. A preacher must have his heart warm at all times especially those times when he stands before his people to proclaim to them the truth that God has given him for them. Perhaps we can discuss some things that will enable the preacher to keep a warm heart. First we will explore ways to keep a warm heart while preaching.

1. Use words that warm your heart. Each of us has a little special vocabulary of words that are very dear to him and that move him to certain emotions. For example, I like the word "Mama."

When I speak of my mother, it warms me if I call her Mama. When I speak of the Bible, it warms my heart if I say, "the Book." While I am preaching, the little statement, "Thank God!" moves me to emotion. I can simply say, "Thank God for all He has done to me. Thank God for all He has done through me. Thank God for all He has done for me." Just the repetition of the little phrase, "Thank God!" warms my heart. I also love the words, "our Lord." There is something about the possessive pronoun before the name of Jesus or before the words, "God, Lord," etc. that moves me. I especially love to say "our Lord." I also love the word "wonderful." It has a ring to it that warms my heart when I use it. When I speak of my people I like to use the words, "precious people." When I pray for a group of people I often say, "God bless these precious people." Another statement that stirs me, especially to excitement, is the phrase, "the army of people," or "an army of people." The wise preacher will learn the words that are very sweet and dear to him. He will use them often. They will help to warm his heart.

2. Use superlatives that warm your heart. When used honestly, superlatives are a great aid to a speaker. Such statements as "the most amazing thing I ever saw," "the greatest day of my life," and "the most wonderful thing in the world," if spoken in truth and not through exaggeration, can be used to warm the heart of the speaker.

3. Use experiences that warm your heart. Each of us has stored away in his mind some wonderful memories concerning events that have transpired in our lives. Just the thought of some of them can move us to excitement or move us to tears. There are about a dozen things that have happened to me, the thought of which always warms my heart and makes me a better preacher. I have a list of those. When I find myself preaching with a heart less than warm, I revert to one of them. Sometimes when I am preaching I feel so ashamed, I often think while preaching, "How can my heart be less than warm when I am preaching about such a marvelous truth? How can I preach on Hell without tears? How can I preach on Heaven without shouting? How can I preach on salvation without weeping for joy? Yet, there are times when I do. At such times I pull out of my bank of memories an event that will warm my heart, and I speak of it. For example, it doesn't matter where I am or what I am doing, if I think about how good God has been to me through the years, my heart warms and my eyes moisten. When I think of my childhood when poverty was mingled with the love of my mother, and add to that what God has done for me, through me and with me through the years, I am always moved. When I remind myself that I owned my first pair of new shoes bought for me at the age of 14, I ate my first hamburger at the age of 14, I ate my first egg when I was 14 years of age and remember how

God has cared for me through the years, I find it easy to weep and to shout at the same time. If I am preaching a sermon and find my heart a little cold, I simply begin to speak about one of these subjects. It always gets me in the mood to preach, and then I can revert back to my sermon and go at full speed.

4. While preaching, mention names that warm your heart. I often mention the name, "Proctor Boyd," my Sunday school teacher while I was a teenager. He was the best Sunday school teacher I ever had! Just the words, "Proctor Boyd," give me a warm heart. I often mention the name, "Dr. Rutherford." He was my Sunday school teacher when I was a junior high lad. I can see him now standing in front of the class with tears streaming down his cheeks saying, "Boys, I'm not going to let the Devil have a one of you" Just the thought of that dear man standing before my class warms my heart. I often mention the name, "Jesse Cobb," the Chairman of the Board of Deacons at the Hillcrest Baptist Church in Dallas, Texas, and the man who introduced me for the first time to soul winning. Just the mention of his name warms my heart. I use their names often. It gives me the kind of heart that my people deserve for their pastor to have-the kind of heart that will help me to preach with fervor and compassion.

5. While preaching, look at places that warm your heart. Glance at the altar and think of all the marvelous things that God has done there. Look down to the place where you are standing and realize that that is the place where God has put you to proclaim His truths. Let your mind think of the privilege of standing there to preach. Every Sunday I look to the fourth row from the front near the center aisle where my mother used to sit. My heart is warmed to think of her and her faithfulness to church as she came when she felt good and when she felt bad and sat there listening to and praying for her boy. Let places become important to you Have many little sacred shrines where you can go to remember. While you are preaching you cannot go physically to those places, but in your mind you can go anywhere you want to go that will warm your heart.

6. Remember those who once were with you. The pastor who wants to have a warm heart must remember those people with whom he once served who are now in Heaven. A part of the pastor's schedule should be a time to remember. As I preach, I often look back to the spot where Bill ballade used to sit, and I love him for awhile. I then glance to the place where Henry Rose once sat, and I love him for awhile. During the Lord's Supper, I always remember George Disengage, who was the deacon in charge of serving the Lord's Supper. During the Lord's Supper, I always look at the place where Blanford Duff used to sit; he was a loyal, faithful deacon. Every month I take time to love him for a few minutes. When I walk through the choir ready room behind the choir loft, I think of Mr. Brueck, one of our men who had cancer. He became so weak that he could not walk, stand or even sit. He would crawl on his hands and knees into the choir ready room and lie there so he could hear me preach just on the PA system. When I think of those with whom I have served who are now in Heaven, it warms my heart and helps me preach better.

7. Watch your people as you preach. Look at the widows who need your encouragement, the elderly facing the sunset years of life who need courage, the young people who need strength to resist temptation, the bus kids who need love and others who need you As you watch them, realize their need of you It will warm your heart, give you a purpose in preaching and throw you at the mercy of the Holy Spirit that He may help you to be what your people need you to be.

8. Develop rituals that warm your heart. Every Saturday night before I go to bed, I take a picture

of my father, who died without Christ in 1950, put the picture on the floor; make an altar of it and kneel before it, asking God to help me to preach with the same fervor that I wanted my pastor to have the first and last time that my dad ever sat with me in church.

It was a Sunday afternoon. My father announced to me that he was going to church with Mother, my sister, Earlyne, and me that night. My little seven-year-old heart leaped with joy, and I made a mad rush down to the only house in the neighborhood that had a telephone. I asked the Wyatt family if I could borrow their telephone. I called my pastor and excitedly told him that my daddy was coming to church that night, and I asked him please to do his best to get daddy saved. That night Daddy, Mother, Earlyne and I walked for the only time in our lives into a church building. We walked two miles down Fernwood Street to the Fernwood Baptist Church. We sat on the second row from the back on the left side facing the pulpit. My big 235-pound giant of a dad stood beside me as we sang and sat beside me as we listened. I prayed that God would do something to my dad to transform his life and save his soul. Following the offering, the pastor stood and said, "Ladies and gentlemen, there will be no preaching tonight. This is the night of our annual cantata. The choir will present it to us at this time." My heart broke! I sat during the entire cantata and wept as my daddy slept. I could not believe that my daddy didn't mean more to my preacher than that! That was the only time he ever sat in church with me. I think of this every Saturday night and ask God to help me not to disappoint the little seven-year-old boys whose daddies are in the service.

There are other rituals that I have that warm my heart. As I walk into the auditorium I always pray the same prayer.

Every Monday morning I leave the office to go to the airport to fly somewhere across America to preach Monday night and Tuesday night. Before I leave the office I go into the waiting room and look at a big picture of Dr. John R. Rice on which he wrote, "To my buddy, Jack Hyles. Signed, John R. Rice. Psalm 126:5,6." I look at the picture and relive the 22 years that we traveled together and shared pulpits across America. I tell him that I miss him. My heart is always warmed as I think of this great giant with whom I traveled and whom I loved.

Weekly I go to the mausoleum at Memory Lane Cemetery, which is owned by First Baptist Church of Hammond. Just inside the door on the left there is my mother's burial place. When I go there, I have a ritual. I read her favorite chapter in the Bible, Psalm 103. I take out her picture and tell her that I love her and then I sing the song that she sang as she rocked me to sleep when I was a boy, "Brighten the Corner Where You Are." Then I sing the last song that we sang together before she went to Heaven, "The Unclouded Day"

The preacher who has little rituals that help him to remember to love, to appreciate and to think will have a warmer heart.

9. Think of the effort spent by the people who come to hear you. Often on Sunday morning, about 8:00, I stop to realize all the time and effort expended by the people of my congregation, the hundreds of thousands of hours spent in preparation. This warms my heart as I prepare to preach.

10. Think of the labor that went into the offering that is dropped in the collection plate on the Lord's Day. Think of the greasy mechanic, the tired and weary steel worker; the lady that cleans houses, and of all the others who earned their money by hard laborious toil, and your heart will be warmed.

11. Think Whom you represent. II Corinthians 5:20, "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." Pause to realize that you are there in the place of Jesus, representing Him. I John 4:17, "Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as He is, so are we in this world."

12. Be publicly expressive of your love and appreciation. Say, "I love you," to your people. Be grateful to them. Express that gratitude openly. It will warm your heart and bring tears to your eyes as you publicly express your love to the people whom God has given to you and to whom you are a gift from God.

13. Think where you are. You are where you dreamed someday you would be. You are where you will wish someday that you could be again. This is it! This is the culmination of all your study and preparation. This is the fulfillment of all your dreams and plans. You are now there-- God's man, God's representative. Always think of it! It will warm your heart!

14. Think of what "the Book" is. Realize as you preach that you are preaching the very Word of God, the Word that is eternal, which always was and always will be. It is the Book written by your Creator; given by divine revelation, word-by-word. It is God's eternal, never-dying Word, revealing Himself and His plan to man. Think of it! Think of it! Think of it!

15. Think of those watching from Heaven. This will warm your heart as you preach. I never preach on a Sunday morning or Sunday night in my own church or somewhere else around the country on a weeknight without realizing that my mother's eyes are fixed on me. The eyes of my two little sisters join my mother's, there are many other precious saints of God who are in Heaven who watch me in that great cloud of witnesses. There is my pastor; I C. Sizemore. There is my friend, fellow-worker and buddy, Dr. John R. Rice. There are my deacons who preceded me to Heaven and others of my people. They watch me. I must never forget it! It will warm my heart as I preach.

16. Think of those pleading in Hell. In Luke 16 we have the story of the rich man and Lazarus. The rich man is in Hell, first crying for water; then crying for someone to go and tell his brothers not to come to that place of torment.

A few years after my father died without Christ, my sister knocked on my study door one Sunday after midnight and asked me if I would lead her to Christ. This I did. After I led her to Christ, I asked her why she came that night. She said to me that shortly after Daddy died she had a dream. She dreamed that she was taken to the second floor of a big building. She dreamed that she saw that entire building lined with caskets. In every casket there was a body. She was taken by this creature to every casket, and she looked in the face of every corpse. On every face there was a smile of peace until she came to the last one. The creature tried to keep her from the last corpse. She could only see two hands rising above the casket. She said, "Jack, I could tell in my dream that those were Daddy's hands. I rushed to look into his face, and there was no look of peace. There was no smile, but a look of anguish and pain. His hands were raised toward me, and he was crying, 'Sister, sister,' and then he would make some kind of noises that I could not understand. I tried to understand him and begged him to speak more plainly. He just kept crying, 'Sister, sister,' and making those strange noises. Finally, the creature took me away from the casket."

My sister told me that night after I won her to Christ that she had wondered for all those years what Daddy was trying to say to her. Then she told me that that night I had preached on the rich

man in Hell and told how he asked Abraham to send the Gospel to his brothers on earth. Earlyne told me then that she realized that Daddy was trying to tell her not to come where he was. The dream of several years before had been explained in my sermon that Sunday night. Following the sermon she came to my study and was saved. For many years now she has been in full-time service for the Lord.

I have been aware for all these many years that my father died without Christ, and I must tell people that story so that they will avoid and evade the torments of Hell.

The preacher with a warm heart must make himself aware that he stands between Heaven and Hell; yes, even between the living and the dead!

17. in order to have a warm heart, the preacher must remember that someday it will end. Someday he will walk in his pulpit for the last time. Someday he will stand before his people for the last time. Someday he will present the truth of God for the last time. It will end someday. It may be tomorrow; it may be today. May my heart be warm while I have this opportunity, for it too will pass away.

18. Think of the investment that others have made in you. Many a dear Sunday school teacher's rewards will be increased according to your fruitfulness. Others have invested in you; you must use their investment wisely. Think of it while you preach. It will warm your heart.

19. Think of the judgment seat and the fact that someday you will face Jesus. Think of the day when you will face Him concerning the sermon you are preaching. It will warm your heart and stir your soul.

20. Realize all of the work that has gone into the service by those who labor with you. Think of the nursery workers caring for the babies. Think of all the time spent by the choir, the choir director and the accompanists in preparing for the services. Think of the PA men, the ushers, those who work in the baptismal dressing rooms, the Sunday school teachers and the countless others that have spent many, many hours preparing for the service that you are now enjoying which culminates in the sermon which you are now preaching. You will find your heart strangely warmed.

In spite of all the advice given above concerning the obtaining and sustaining of a warm heart in the pulpit, the pastor will not all of a sudden get a warm heart when he enters the pulpit. He will eventually become in the pulpit what he is all the rest of the time, so he must constantly be striving to keep a warm heart 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Whatever spiritual temperature the preacher possesses during six days, he will possess the seventh day. There is also the fact that it will be somewhat hypocritical to obtain a warm heart for the preaching of a sermon and then lose it the rest of one's week. There are some things the busy pastor can do that will help him obtain and retain a warm heart all the time.

1. Schedule time to praise. Have a set time in the schedule for the praising of God. This time should be started by the making of a list. Think of the good things that God has done for you. Make a list of them. Then go back through them one at a time. Think on them and realize the goodness of God. If your mind is fixed upon His goodness and His blessings to you, sincere praise will come. Praise should not necessarily be the result of a spontaneous stimulus; it should be the result of a heart that is aware of God's goodness. This awareness should be scheduled. I have a set time in my schedule when I do nothing but praise God. I make my list of all the things that God has done for me recently; then I go through the list to thank Him and praise Him.



for His goodness. It isn't long until I'm having a "real spell." This sincere praise to God is caused by a planned awareness of God's goodness and blessings on my life.

2. Schedule a time to worship. Praise is thanking God for what He has done. Worship is thanking God for what He is. There should be a scheduled time in the life of every child of God when he comes before his God to be still and know that He is God, to hear the still small voice and to look up to our great Creator and exalt Him and love Him for who He is and what He is. I am not talking here about a formal worship service with chanting and liturgy I am talking about a Christian being alone with his God to worship Him in spirit and in truth.

3. Schedule a time to meditate. It is interesting in the Bible to find how many times meditation is a prerequisite to God's blessings. Psalm 1:1-3, "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." Notice that one of the five prerequisites to prosperity is to meditate in the law of the Lord day and night. When God came to Joshua when he succeeded Moses as the leader of God's people, God listed meditation as one of His prerequisites for success. In order to keep a warm heart, the Christian, especially the pastor, should have a scheduled time of meditation.

4. Schedule a time to confess your sins. Several years ago I was sharing the platform with Dr. John Rice. We were in Atlanta, Georgia, for a Sword of the Lord Conference. It was time for our driver to pick us up for the evening service. I went down to Dr. Rice's room to wait with him for our driver. The door to his room was open and the door to his bathroom was open, and Dr. Rice was on his knees at the commode. I asked him what he was doing. He said, "I'm confessing my sins." Then he tore some paper up in little bitty pieces and flushed it down the commode. I asked him what that paper was. He said it was the list of his sins. I said, "What do you mean, Dr. Rice?"

He said, "Well, I have a set time every day to confess my sins. What I do is write my sins on a piece of paper. Then I go through them one at a time asking God to forgive me for them. Then I tear the paper on which it was written into many pieces and flush it down the commode." I asked him why he did this. He grinned and said, "Do you think I want folks to find out what my sins are?"

I learned something that day I learned that one of the great secrets to the great John R. Rice was the fact that he confessed his sins daily, by schedule, and he listed them before confessing them. The preacher who comes to God asking forgiveness for his sins will obtain that forgiveness, and this is one of the great ways to keep a warm heart.

5. Sing and whistle throughout the week. Every morning I choose a song for the day I sing it and whistle it throughout the day My song for today is, "Jesus, Saviour; pilot me over life's tempestuous sea." I hum it. I whistle it. I sing it. I choose songs that warm my heart. One day I will choose for my song of the day, "God Will Take Care of You." Another day it will be, "Blessed Assurance." Another day it will be "Standing Somewhere in the Shadows You'll Find Jesus." When I sing and whistle some great song of the faith, it helps to keep my heart warm.

6. Do not be around negative people. Make it a habit to avoid fellowship with those who are critical and negative. There is no way my heart can stay warm if I am around those who talk about negatives, who criticize people, who spread bad things even if those things are true. No

- preacher will walk with critics during the week and preach with a warm heart on the Lord's Day
7. Dwell on the effort spent on nice things done for you. When somebody brings me a batch of cookies, I pause to think for awhile as to all the work that entered into their preparation. If someone prepares a meal for me, I try for a time to think of the effort expended in its preparation as well as in its planning. The pastor has many nice things done for him. It is so easy for him to lapse into a professionalism concerning his gratitude. The warmhearted pastor will pause to think of the effort expended by people who love him and are thoughtful of him.
  8. Think for a little while before eating every meal. I never sit down to a meal without pausing to think of those little Egyptian children who begged me for a penny while I was touring Egypt. I see their little swollen stomachs. I see the expression on their faces as they beg for something to eat or a bit of money with which to buy food. I think of the starving people in Ethiopia, and yes, I also think of the poverty that I once knew as a child. No one should ever eat a meal without his heart being filled with praise and warmed before his God because of the goodness of God as manifested in His provisions for us.
  9. Think of the blessing of being able to get up in the morning. When the alarm sounds and you rise for a new day of activity, pause for just a moment to think of those who will never get up again. Think of those in rest homes, in hospitals and in bedrooms in America and around the world who would give all that they own just to get out of bed one more time. When you arise in the morning, lift your heart in holy hosanna and praise to God and say, "Hallelujah, I'm able to get up!"
  10. Praise God as you walk out the door every morning. Think of those whose world is four walls, whose sun is a 60-watt light- bulb, whose sky is a ceiling and whose horizon is a window. Think of those who will never walk neath the stars again. Think of those who will never see another sunrise or sunset. Think of those who will never hear another bird sing or watch the blooming of a rose. Think of those who will never again breathe the freshness of outdoor air. Then lift your heart in holy praises to God with the warmth of gratitude bubbling in your soul.
  11. Praise God as you begin the day's work. Think of the millions of unemployed who would love to have your job. Think of those whose poor health will never give them the privilege of another day's work. Think of those who would give all that they possess for the privilege of being strong enough to work just one day Thank God for work to do, and thank God for strength with which to do it.
  12. Think as your leaders stand before you. When those to whom God has given spiritual leadership stand before you, think of the load they carry, of the responsibilities they have and of the price they have paid. Love them. Spend a few moments thanking God for them and whisper a prayer for God to bless them and to encourage their hearts. This will aid in the developing of a warm heart.
  13. Think of those who follow you. Think of what they mean to you. Think of how hard they worked. Think of times that they pray for you, encourage you and lift up your hands in the battle. Realize that as a pastor you are God's gift to them, and they are God's gift to you. Realize the sweetness and closeness of the tie that binds you as spiritual leader and spiritual followers. Let this awareness of what they mean to you create a stronger tie which will in turn aid you in having a warm heart.
  14. Every day spend some time thinking of the fact that soon you will see Jesus face to face.

There was a day when Dr. John Rice and I traveled together. Now I continue to travel. He is beholding the face of the Jesus Whom he preached. There was a day when my mother and I sat together in the same room and shared a mutual love. I continue to do the work that God has called me to do while Mother is beholding the face of the Christ she loved. There was a day when Brother Lester Roloff and I fellowshiped together and preached together and prayed together. I continue to preach and fellowship and praise and pray He now beholds the face of his blessed Saviour. There was a day when my heart would thrill as I prayed with Dr. Ford Porter. How sweet was his fervency! How close to Christ was his fellowship! How wonderful was his companionship! Now I continue to pray and to serve. Dr. Porter beholds the face of the One with Whom he loved to talk and fellowship. Those who once walked with me now walk with God. Those who once beheld me now behold Him. Those who once fellowshiped with me on earth now fellowship with Him in Heaven. Soon I shall join their number. It is just a matter of a few days. That blessed thought warms my heart and propels me to preach through tears of joy and ecstasy, for soon I shall see Him face to face. I shall see Him as He is and behold Him Who made all good things possible.

15. Visit cemeteries and the gravesides of those whom you loved. I regularly go to a cemetery where many of our people are buried. I go from grave to grave and remember sweet experiences that we shared together. Soon the tears come-tears of joy because of victories we have known, tears of loneliness because I miss them, tears of praise because "there is a land that is fairer than day, and by faith we can see it afar; for the Father waits over the way to prepare us a dwelling place there." The pastor who wants a heart that is warm should often visit the graves of those whom he loved and with whom he served.

16. Savor the "now." How often do I hear people say, "I didn't appreciate her until I lost her!" or "I didn't appreciate him until he was gone!" I vowed years ago I would never have to say that. I did not wait until my mother was gone to appreciate her properly I did not wait until the years during which I traveled with Dr. John R. Rice were gone before I appreciated him. Through these years I have savored the present and realized what I have, not just what I used to have! Be aware. Stop while you are having fun and realize how much fun you are having. Stop while history is being made and realize that history is being made. Stop while God is blessing in mighty power and realize that God is blessing in mighty power. Do not wait until the history of this generation is written to know what happened! Know it now. It will warm your heart.

17. Read the Psalms. There are three books from which I read every day I read some of the Psalms every day, some of the Proverbs every day, and some of the book of Acts every day The Psalms give me love; the Proverbs give me wisdom; the Acts give me power. These three things top my prayer list-love, wisdom and power. If your heart is a bit cold, hear the Psalmist say, "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." If the tears do not come easily, read, "The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want." Live in the Psalms, and they will help you to have a warm heart when you come before your people to deliver the truth which God has given you for them.

18. Pray for your enemies. There is a unique warmth that comes only to the child of God who loves those that hate him, blesses those that curse him and prays for those who despitely use him. There is a certain taste about forbearance, patience and love for enemies that nothing else can give!

19. Think of good things to do for your enemies. Realize that people may not be all bad because

they dislike you. Look upon them as being broken rather than being bad. I have a watch on my wrist. Sometimes the battery gets weak and it begins to lose time, or perhaps it will stop running altogether. I do not get mad at the watch; I realize that it is broken. I do what I can to fix it. When somebody does not like me, it may be that the battery is weak. I should not give him my hatred, vengeance, revenge or vindication. I should rather look upon him as being broken and not bad so that I may love and not hate him, do good to him and not ill! There is nothing that quite warms the heart like this, and once you have tasted the heavenly manna of forgiveness, you'll never again enjoy the bitter taste of revenge.

20. Look for people to help. "Look all around you, find some- one in need. Help somebody today Though it be little, a neighborly deed. Help somebody today Help somebody today Somebody along life's way Let sorrows be ended, the friendless befriended. Oh, help somebody today!"

Seven times a day I bow to my knees and lift my heart to God asking Him to let me cross the path of those who need my help and the path of those whom Jesus would help if He walked in my shoes. It is an amazing thing how the Holy Spirit can cause those to cross your path if you make yourself available to live for others.

When I get in my car in the morning, I always pray and ask God to help me to know what route to take to church. I rarely ever take the same route. It is amazing how He directs me to those who have need of help. Recently I prayed that prayer before I left in the morning, asking the Holy Spirit to direct me as I chose the route to church. I took a new route. A few blocks down the road there was a lady trying to fix her car. She was alone and frightened. It was my privilege to push her car several miles to the place where she had purchased it. On another occasion, on a morning when it was -12°, I found a lady whose car was stalled. We found the problem, and a few minutes got her on her way There are many people in need, and God wants to help them if He could only find somebody to be His hands, to be His feet, to be His tongue and to do the work that He would do if He were here on earth.

Every person who sits in a pew on the Lord's Day has a God- given right to have a man of God appear before him with God's message and with a heart that is warm and spiritual. If the pastor enters the pulpit with a warm heart and retains that warm heart while he preaches, it will be on purpose. It will not be spontaneous. He will not stumble into a warm heart. He will so live, so think and so love all week so that when he enters the pulpit, his heart is overflowing with the goodness of God and with a desire to speak of that goodness to his people and to impart that goodness to their lives!

## Choosing a Sermon

This may be the most difficult part of the preparation of a sermon. Especially is this true for the busy pastor who preaches to the same people week after week, month after month and year after year. It is no doubt much like the dilemma that faces the busy housewife who must prepare meals for the same people year after year. However, the preacher faces an even more difficult decision than does the housewife, for the housewife may prepare the same meal over and over again through the years, but the pastor must continually bring something fresh and new to his people, and yet at the same time he must use the new as a cloak and camouflage to cover the same old truths. This chapter is to deal with that all- important subject of how to choose a sermon.

1. Choose according to the needs of the people. The wise pastor will constantly be watching his people and examining them so he can intelligently give them the fulfillment of their needs. This also means that the wise pastor will stay in tune with God and walk with Him so that God can reveal to him the needs of his people in order for him to meet those needs from the pulpit.
2. A sermon is a tool. It is not an end in itself. It is a tool with which to fix something.

For a number of years Evangelist Jim Lyons worked with me as an associate. When he left me to enter the field of evangelism, people asked him to appraise my preaching. He very kindly said that the key to Jack Hyles' preaching was that a sermon was not a sermon to Brother Hyles but rather it was a greasy wrench with which to fix something. I have never heard a better explanation of what preaching ought to be. A sermon is not a painting in an art gallery to be admired and complimented; nor is it a relic in a museum to be examined. It is, as Brother Lyons observed, like a greasy wrench! It is not an end in itself; it is a means to an end. The end is to fix something. This means that a good sermon should never be the goal of preaching; it should simply be a "greasy old wrench."

3. A sermon is a prescription. The good physician examines his patient, finds the problem and writes a prescription for its alleviation. This is why I think that Biblical, topical sermons grow healthier Christians than expository sermons unless the expository sermons come from different parts of the Bible as the filling of a prescription to correct the problems found in our people.

When I go to the doctor, he doesn't examine me and then take me to the drug store, find the last medicine I took and give me the bottle right next to it and inform me that he is going bottle by bottle through the drug store! No physician will have healthy patients using this practice.

No pastor will meet all the needs of his people by going verse- by-verse through the Biblical apothecary. It just may be that while the pastor is preaching through Leviticus, his people need some- thing from Nehemiah; or while he is in Daniel, his people need something from the Sermon on the Mount. Some of the driest preaching done in America is done by Bible expositors who mimic the theologian and his method used in the classroom in Bible colleges and seminaries. This is not to minimize the importance of the preacher sitting at the feet of a good theologian. A young preacher would do well to learn the truth about the Bible from a good Bible expositor in school, and he no doubt should take the truths that he learns and preach them to his people, but he should not take the methods used by the expositor in the classroom with which to deliver these truths from behind the pulpit. The pastor is not teaching young

theologians; he is trying to change the lives of carpenters, plumbers, electricians, professional men, factory workers, secretaries, etc. The theologian can teach him the medicine available in the apothecary; but what medicine he administers to his people and the way he administers it should not be copied from the theologian in Bible class.

One of the sad things about training for the Gospel ministry is that the ministry is perhaps the only profession that does not reproduce itself. One is taught to be a plumber by plumbers. One is taught to be an electrician by electricians. One is taught to be a carpenter by carpenters. One is taught to be a doctor by doctors. One is taught to be a beautician by beauticians, and yet one is taught to be a preacher by teachers. Preachers should train preachers in the methods of preaching! I have no scruples with teachers teaching truths to young preachers. I do take issue with those who would make light of old-fashioned preaching while admonishing the young ministerial student to use the methods of the theologian when he goes to his pulpit. The young preacher should admire the Bible teacher, but he should emulate successful preachers and pastors. If he wants to build a church, he should emulate successful church-builders. If he wants to preach great revival campaigns, he should emulate great evangelists.

4. The pastor must know the apothecary; that is, the drug store. If he searches for the needs of his people and doesn't know the Bible well enough to meet those needs, he will not know the joy of pastoring mature Christians. The most important thing about a preacher knowing the Bible is that he knows where to find the particular prescription that will meet the needs of his congregation. Whatever need he sees in the hearts and lives of his people should cause him to rush to the Word of God to find exactly the medicine for the spiritual healing of those whom he leads.

5. The pastor must study his people in order to find their needs. This means that the wise pastor must know the Book and know the people. Not to know the people will prevent him from knowing what to preach. Not knowing the Book will prevent him from being able to find the spiritual medicine with which to satisfy the needs that he has found in the lives of his people. Now in the finding of the people's needs the pastor could do the following:

a. The pastor should diagnose the people's needs on Sunday night. After the Sunday evening service and after I have counseled with those who have needed to see me following the service, I retreat to my study and relive the day I feel that I can know the needs of my people right after having been with them better than I can a few days later. Usually before I leave the study on Sunday night I know the general directions that I will take in my preaching the following Sunday, so the preaching on Sunday is not only a time of administering the proper medicine but it is also a time of diagnosing so that the wise pastor can write the proper prescription for the following Sunday and, for that matter, the following Wednesday night.

b. The pastor should counsel his people. There are three words in the Bible used for what we call the office of pastor: (1) pastor, (2) bishop, and (3) elder. As the pastor, or shepherd, the preacher is supposed to protect, nourish and care for the sheep. As the bishop he is the overseer of all of the work. He is not the dictator, but he is the overseer. Then as elder, he is the experienced one who can counsel his people properly concerning the needs and decisions of their lives. These counseling sessions can be wonderful opportunities for the pastor to diagnose the needs of his congregation. This wise pastor should watch for trends or even epidemics of some spiritual disease or deficiency. I average about 145 people a week who come to my study for counseling of some kind. Some of these come for just a few minutes and some come for

lengthy periods. If, over the period of a week's time, several people come with the same problem or need, I feel that this could represent some kind of trend in the congregation. It may be that I would preach along that line. If 15 out of 150 people were to have the same problem, I would feel that probably hundreds of my people have that problem who did not seek counseling, so I would go to the pulpit for the filling of a prescription from Bible truth.

It is amazing how accurate polls can be. They say that 1500 people chosen carefully from across America can rather accurately reveal public opinion about a matter. This is no doubt true in a church.

It is a wonderful and an amazing thing how God leads His man when counseling. Quite often I give advice and I know that it is God Who is leading me. To be frank, I am startled as He reveals some great truth to me for the strengthening of someone over whom God has made me spiritual overseer. When such truth is revealed, I immediately make a note of it. When the person with whom I am counseling has left, I rush to my desk and outline the advice that God has just given me for them. I then prepare a sermon with that material, for the time will come no doubt when all of my people will need what I just gave to one of my people.

Preacher, don't trust your memory! As soon as the wisdom is given to you from God, write it down, even while the counseling session is in progress, and by all means rush to your desk as soon as the session has ended and capture the wisdom and truths that God has given you in order that you may share it with your people when the need arises.

c. The pastor should check his own feelings. He may have a deficiency himself. If the pastor has a deficiency, no doubt many of the people would have the same one. For example, suppose that a recession comes. Numbers of the people lose their jobs. This means that the church offerings are down. The pastor becomes concerned about these offerings. If he is concerned about his needs during the recession, how much more will the people who are now unemployed be concerned about their needs! Perhaps the pastor should take his own feelings as representative ones and preach to the people Philippians 4:19, "But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus," and Matthew 6:33, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

The pastor is human too. He has his fears and doubts. I often say that preaching is one doubter preaching to another group of doubters trying to convince both preacher and hearer to believe. This, of course, is an oversimplification, but the fact remains that the pastor is human and he has his doubts, weaknesses, trials, testings, problems, burdens and heartaches. When they come, it is probable that his people have had them for some time already. The pastor then may administer to himself and his congregation the medicine needed from the Word of God that will heal his doubts and fears and the doubts and fears of those who look to him for spiritual leadership.

d. The pastor should watch his people as he preaches. The way they respond to certain truths give him an idea of their needs. Then he can flee to the apothecary of the Word of God to find the right medicine that will heal them.

e. In a smaller church, the pastor should visit his people regularly. This visit is not primarily a goodwill ambassage or a pastoral responsibility; but it is a splendid way to find the needs of the people. When I was a young pastor pastoring smaller churches one of the first things I did upon assuming a pastorate was to visit in the home of each family in order to get to know them better. This is just another way to diagnose the patient in order that you may flee to the Bible apothecary for the proper medicine for his cure.

f. The pastor should make a list of all the potential needs of the people. Years ago I sat down and listed all the subjects that I felt my people needed. All of these fell under twenty general topics. Every sermon that I preach is just one of these topics cloaked in a different Scripture with different illustrations and different manners of presentation in order that I may keep my people healthy while at the same time being fresh to them.

g. The pastor should schedule times to think about his people and their needs. While thinking about his people, the pastor should ask God to reveal to him how to meet these needs. The pastor who thinks about his people and prays for his people will learn to love his people. The pastor who loves his people will beyond a doubt find the fulfillment of their needs in the Word of God.

So far we have stressed the importance of knowing two things: the patient and the medicine. If we know the patient as we should know him, we will properly diagnose his case. If we know the medicine, that is the Word of God, as we should know it, then we will know where to find the answer for the needs found in the diagnosis.

6. Never preach to individuals. In 1960 on a Sunday night I preached to an individual. The next Wednesday night I asked my people to forgive me, and from that day until this I have never used my pulpit as a whipping post or a place to single out individuals or a place of revenge or vengeance. If I am preaching on a certain subject and an individual comes to my mind, I immediately jump over that thought to the next one because I do not want to be guilty of using the pulpit with which to carry on a private feud or as a place to retaliate. The wise preacher will never attack someone's sin; he will attack sin but will never attack the individual. The pulpit should be a place of action, not a place of reaction! It should be a place of defense of the truth, but not a place of defense of self.

7. The sermon should not be for the specific purpose of enter- taining. That is, unless the pastor feels that the patient needs some entertainment for his spiritual health. I often say when I stand to preach in different pulpits across the country, "I have not come to entertain, though I do think we will laugh some. I have not come primarily to instruct, though I think we will learn something. I have not come to inspire, though I think we will be inspired some. I have come in order that God may change our lives!" It is certainly not a sin to laugh in church, and laughter is certainly an important part of the Christian's needs, but entertainment should not be the main purpose of preaching.

8. The pastor should keep a list of sermons, ideas and outlines with which to stock the apothecary. I have, at the present time, over 100 sermons already outlined any of which I could preach next Sunday Most of these will not be preached for months or years to come, and many of them will never be preached. They just line the shelves of my spiritual apothecary to remain available in case they are needed. There are numbers of ways that such sermons, topics, outlines and ideas can be found.

a. Read the Bible looking for sermon ideas. This reading is not in preparation for next Sunday's sermon; it is the finding of ideas that can be placed on the shelf of the apothecary awaiting the time when a prescription is written for its administering. Look for verses that outline themselves such as II Chronicles 7:14; Psalm 1:1-3; and John 5:24; 15:7; 14:12; 3:18; 1:14, etc. Then read the Bible looking for statements and verses that lead to good sermon ideas. Some of my most usable and useful sermons have been found in this manner. Such sermons as, "There is No Discharge from This War," "At Even my Wife Died, and in the Morning I Did as I was



Commanded," and "I Sat Where They Sat," have originated from this source of Bible reading. Keep these passages on the shelf of your drug store right beside those that outline themselves and have them ready in case one of them can fill a need of the congregation.

b. Read CRUDEN'S CONCORDANCE for Scriptural phrases that can be added to those aforementioned.

c. Listen to sermons. One of the best sources for getting sermon ideas is that of listening to other men of God preach. When I hear a good sermon, I usually find three or four sermons within that sermon. When a man of God is listening in the Spirit to a man of God who is preaching in the Spirit, the Holy Spirit Who knows the dilemma of the busy pastor can reveal to him many ideas that can be placed on the shelf of the apothecary and can be used when the need arises.

As the pastor searches for those ideas which can in the present and the future add to the spiritual health of his people by means of reading the Bible for verses that outline themselves, reading the Bible for phrases that are "preachy," listening to sermons of Spirit-filled men, reading sermons of Spirit-filled men, searching for the sermon titles in books of sermons in libraries and bookstores, reading CRUDEN'S CONCORDANCE, and most of all, walking with God, he is lining the shelves of his medicine room with prescriptions that may or may not be needed, but there is certainly a peace that comes to both pastor and people by knowing that they are there!

9. The pastor should beg God to give him spiritual guidance as he chooses the spiritual medicine from the Word of God for his people's needs. This is the most important of all methods of choosing sermons. Once the shelf is lined with great truths, Bible lessons, etc., the pastor must plead with God to let him know which is needed by his people at a given time. It is far better for a pastor to plead with God to lead him to know which of the truths he already knows that he should use than it is for him to plead with God for Him to give him a truth when it is 11:00 on Saturday night and the service is only twelve hours away!

10. The pastor should never use or consider such phrases as, "That will preach!" but rather, "That will help!"

11. When the pastor sees the need, he may rest assured that the filling of that need is the will of God. When a child is lost, it is the will of God to try to find him. When I saw a lady fall at the airport one day, I knew it was the will of God for me to help her up. When I saw a wreck take place in front of my eyes one day, I knew it was my job to rush to the rescue of those who were injured. When a Spirit-filled pastor has lived in the Word of God in order to acquaint himself with its every cure and has prayerfully examined his people in order to diagnose them for their needs, and when he has bathed both of these in prayer, he is then able to go to the pulpit knowing that he is going to meet the particular needs of his people through his message and in so doing he can feel that he has chosen the right sermon.

## **The Pastor Holding His Own Attention**

1. The pastor must completely lose himself in the truth he is preaching. One of the most important things for any Christian is to lose himself. The best sermons that are preached are those in which the preacher loses himself in the truth that he is delivering. Hence, it becomes vital for the pastor to capture his own attention. As is mentioned elsewhere in this manuscript, the pastor must capture himself; the truth must hold him hostage. He should not be aware of how well he is preaching, how he looks, the opinions that others hold of him, etc. There are times that he should not even know where he is or be conscious that he exists. He is totally lost, not in the delivering of a sermon, but in the delivering of his soul!
2. He must keep his mind on one thing and one thing only He has people who need him, and he has a truth that will alleviate their needs. He has people who are weak, and he has a truth that is strengthening. He has people who have fallen, and he has a truth that will lift them. He has people that are sad, and he has a truth that will cheer them. He has people who are bereaved, and he has a truth that will comfort them. His total mental occupation should be on the one thing of administering to his people the thing that will satisfy their needs and their hungers.
3. He must not let anything or anybody steal the control of his mind or make him to follow their thinking. It is important that the pastor who has found the message for the hour not allow his mind to be controlled by anything else until that message is preached! He must not allow external stimuli to capture his thinking and take it off of the delivery of his soul through the truth that God has given him with which to meet the needs of his people.
4. The pastor should do his heavy praying earlier and not right before the service. Even such a thing as feeling his need of power can get his mind off of the truth he is about to deliver. Please do not misunderstand me. I believe that every man of God should spend seasons with God. He should walk with God. He should often pray throughout the night, and the rising of the sun should find his cheeks stained with tears. I do, however, believe that the best time for such praying is before and during the preparation of a message. When one has found the message and is waiting to deliver it, he should not be thinking about power for himself but rather meeting the needs of others. Before the message his mind should be totally on his people and their needs.
5. The pastor should go to church early and relaxed. His sole desire should be to feed his people what they need for their spiritual growth and health. He may go to his study early and think of his people as they are now preparing to come to church- they are bathing, dressing, getting in their cars and driving. They are coming to hear God's man give them what they need. In a relaxed atmosphere he must think of them and love them with his mind always fixed on the truth that God has given him for his people for that day
6. He should not allow any friction to exist at home. It is now Sunday morning. Nothing must take his mind off of the surgery he is about to perform. If someone at home starts dealing with something negative, he should deftly avoid it. If there is ever a time when a preacher should agree with his adversary, it is on Sunday morning and Sunday afternoon before he ministers to his people and their needs.
7. The pastor should not be with anyone over five minutes at a time on Sunday morning. A lengthy conversation can be used to capture the mind of God's man and to get it off of the truth

that God has given him to deliver. This does not mean that the pastor should be aloof or sharp; it simply means that he should guard himself to see that he controls his mind before preaching. There is nothing the Devil would rather do than get the pastor's mind off the truth. The Devil does not want God's people to be healthy; he wants to dilute the medicine, to pervert the diagnosis and to prevent the cure. He often uses good things as substitutes for the best in achieving his goal.

8. The wise pastor will not mingle with the crowd for any length of time before preaching. Negatives may be mentioned that could discourage him. Heavy thoughts could be used as a cloud to cover the truth that he must deliver to those whom God has made him the under-shepherd.

9. He should not think or talk business matters within two hours of preaching. The pastor is unwise who has committee meetings or deacons' meetings before services. Dealing with business matters could be used of the Devil to divide the mind of the pastor.

10. He should not counsel before the service. I counsel after every service, but never before a service. This could divert my attention from what God wants me to say and give to my people. This is another way that my mind can be captured and directed away from the truth of the hour.

11. He should not read notes or mail before the service. The worst of these could destroy his spirit, and the best of these could capture his mind. Every Sunday I get dozens of notes and letters, but I never read one before the service. I do not want a burden, a problem, a dissension or a complaint to capture my mind and take it away from the message that I am to deliver from God to my people.

12. He should not read notes placed on the platform or pulpit. At First Baptist Church of Hammond the announcements are placed on the pulpit. When I walk in the first thing I do is pick up the announcements, but if there is a letter or note included, I never read it. Such a note could be of a critical nature and it could capture the mind of the preacher, causing his people to go unfed.

13. The pastor should not check the Sunday school attendance before the service unless he knows for a fact that it is a good one. If the attendance is noticeably down, it could bring the pastor noticeably down and could divide his mind as he takes God's message from God's Word to God's people.

14. The pastor should not listen to anything negative on Sunday morning or within two hours of the Sunday evening service. Sunday is no time for the solving of petty problems or for listening to petty complaints. It is a time for God's man to be absorbed in his people and their needs and in the filling of their needs as God has directed him. No surgeon should go to the operating room with more dedication. No Supreme Court justice should go to his bench with more dedication. This is the highest hour in the life of a human being, when the living God has given to mortal man a message for His people. No responsibility is its equal. No burden carries its weight. No duty deserves more diligence and no heart deserves more devotion than that day chosen by God when that man chosen by God brings that message chosen by God to God's people in order to meet their needs.

15. The pastor should not have a schedule that includes late preparation of his sermons. The pressure could be used by Satan. He should not feel that he has a deadline to meet.

16. The pastor should not wear clothing that would divert his attention. For example, I never

wear a new suit on a Sunday morning or a Sunday night. If I have a new suit, I always wear it the first time to a preaching engagement out of town or where the people will not know it is new and where I will not be self-conscious. I do not wear a new pair of shoes to my own pulpit first. I wear them likewise while speaking out of town so that the people will not know they are new and so that I will not be self-conscious. I must not have my mind on how I look or upon a garment that I am wearing. I must be totally lost in delivering the message from God to His people.

17. The pastor should not develop any ritual on Sunday that depends on others. His Sunday praying should be alone. I know a pastor whose entire day was ruined because he had a Sunday morning prayer meeting with his laymen and very few showed up. He was so discouraged that he did not deliver the message that God had given him, but rather chose the 11:00 hour as a time to use the pulpit for a whipping post, and the hungry sheep went unfed!

18. The pastor should not eat before preaching. On occasion I have eaten, and on such occasions, I have been aware that I was too full and my mind was taken from my message somewhat because of my discomfort.

19. Have self-control rituals before preaching. For example, I look at my father's picture and ask God to help me to preach with the same fervor that I wanted my pastor to have the one time that my father ever sat by my side in church. Before I preach I think of my mother and realize that she is watching and listening as I deliver God's message. I think of my two little sisters in Heaven who died before I was born and make myself aware that they are cheering me as I preach, but these are rituals that are self-controlled and that do not depend upon others who could disappoint me by their ineffectiveness or laxity and thereby capture my mind from God's message.

20. I choose a last thought before walking in the pulpit. As I walk in the door of the auditorium at every service I think of one thought-that this could be my last sermon. I always ask God to help me preach as I would preach if I knew it were!

21. I choose a thought that occupies my mind briefly right before I stand to preach. Just before I walk to the pulpit to begin my message there is a thought that always I place before my mind. I will not share that thought-it is too sacred and too personal, but it propels me to do my best as I preach.

22. The preacher should remember before preaching how badly he wanted to preach before he ever got the opportunity. He should remind himself that this is that to which he looked, for which he longed and of which he dreamed. Now he is God's man, preaching to God's people God's message from God's Word in God's power.

23. The preacher should remember that someday it will end. At this writing I have preached over 42,500 sermons. One day I will preach my last. I am approaching my 59th birthday. By the time this manuscript is published I will be less than a year from my sixties. I do not know how many more times this body will carry me to the pulpit. I must realize every time that it does, it could be my last time and that someday, probably soon, it will end.

24. The pastor should not judge the song service while it is in progress. This too can capture his mind and divert it from the message he is about to deliver. He should not allow himself to critique the song leader or the singing. He should not get up and try to improve the song service. Receive its blessings. Do not indulge in criticism on an ineffective song leader, or an ineffective

song service could be used to capture the mind of the preacher. In principle he would be right, but he would not be prepared to stand in the place of Christ Himself and deliver the message that Christ would preach were He present.

25. The wise pastor will not choose a song leader who preaches sermons or gives devotionals between stanzas of the songs. Such palaver could steal a pastor's mind from God's message for the hour and capture his thoughts. If such a song leader is already employed, the pastor should not allow himself to think negative thoughts about him while he is rambling. Pastor, keep your mind on your sermon. Think of the needs of your people. Do not let your mind be captured.

26. The pastor should not appraise himself while he is preaching. It matters not how good the sermon is. It matters not how well the pastor is doing. All that matters is that there are needy people. The pastor knows their need and has the medicine that can heal them. If the doctor makes a grammatical mistake while he is administering the medicine, it will not harm the patient. It would be better if the grammatical mistake were not made, but the important thing is the patient and the cure.

27. The pastor should make his own announcements in the service. Once again he is controlling his own mind and his own thoughts. If someone else makes several lengthy announcements, the pastor's mind could follow him and detour from the mental path that God has chosen for him to travel that day.

28. The pastor should not give public responsibility in the service to others who would capture his mind from the truth he is about to deliver and from the people to whom he is about to deliver it. A godly associate may read the Scripture, another godly co-laborer can lead the prayer; but this should not be a time for fellow-workers to rise and shine to tell their favorite little joke or preach their favorite little sermonette.

29. The pastor should not try to create a spirit in the service. His mind should not be on the spirit of the service. His mind should be on his people and the spiritual medicine he is about to administer to them. That will take care of the spirit of the service. Sometimes God's men are so busy in the early part of the services trying to create a spirit that they completely lose concentration. Let God create the spirit. The preacher should carry the burden and deliver the message given by God Almighty to His people through His messenger.

30. The preacher should not try to salvage a service. For that matter, he should not even be aware that it needs salvaging. He can destroy the purpose for the entire service by analyzing it, salvaging it, measuring it and weighing it. The important thing about the service is the sermon. If the preacher is alive, the service will come alive. If the preacher is spiritual, the service will become spiritual. If the preacher is totally lost in his ministry of representing his Saviour, the people will soon become lost in the spirit.

I think it is unwise to have testimonies before a sermon. I love testimonies, but the best time to have them is after the sermon. Even a testimony can capture the people's minds and capture the preacher's mind so that he will not control his own destiny and that of the service. This is not to minimize testimonies; they are very important and vital, but at preaching time they can become a competition with the message of the hour and with the responsibility of the messenger.

31. The preacher should have mental pictures of Bible events and Bible stories. This is one of the best ways to become lost in a sermon. For example, I have in my own mind a file of images of every story I know in the Bible. I can tell you what the prodigal son's house looked like. I can

tell you how big his father was and what his brother looked like. I can tell you what Jacob looked like. I can describe Esau to you. I can tell you what Bethel was like. I can

describe Mt. Moriah to you, and I can tell you the features of Elijah. I have in my mind a mental picture of Mary and Joseph and of every other Bible character and of every Bible location. Such a mental file will help the pastor lose himself in his message, for he becomes actually a participant in the Bible story and a witness of all that is happening. He is then not just relating a story he has heard, but he is telling a story that he has seen.

32. The pastor should have a list of things that can get his own attention back. Sometimes in a service things happen that compete for the pastor's attention. Perhaps someone is moving, a baby is crying, or some other circumstance has entered the service. The pastor should know and have a list of those things that affect him enough to recapture him for his sermon. I have at least a dozen things that always warm my heart. It matters not where I am or who is present or what the circumstances are. To think of them is to inspire me. When I feel in a sermon that something has stolen me from my message, I use one of these things with which to recapture myself so that it can deliver me again to my mission of the hour.

33. The pastor should turn away from interruptions if they are being solved. For example, if a crying baby is being taken from the service, a pastor should look to the other side of the auditorium and preach. The interruption will soon be over. He should not allow himself to witness it while it is in progress.

34. He should correct those interruptions that appear to be there to stay. For example, if there is a crying baby in the service whose mother is making no effort to remove him, it may hurt the service more to allow the child to stay in the auditorium than courteously to ask the mother to take the baby to the nursery or to the hallway. It is obvious that this problem is not temporary but that it is going to continue to disturb the service. The best thing for the pastor to do is face the problem, correct it and then use one of the aforementioned suggestions of things that always capture his attention to get his mind back on God's message for the hour.

35. The pastor should fall in love with his people. There are many ways this can be done, but one of them is to watch them during the service on the Lord's day. Look at the young people and realize the temptations that they face. Look at the older people and realize the anxieties that confront them daily. Look at the middle-aged people and realize the burdens and problems of life that are theirs. Spend some time on the platform loving your people. This will make you even more desirous to be to them what they need you to be and to give them what God has chosen for them to receive through His servant.

36. The pastor should decide whether or not the song being sung or the special being delivered will help him or hinder him in the delivering of his message and his soul. For example, there may be a song that is sung that is a bit peppier than the pastor needs to feel. Maybe a song has a beat to it that would not enhance the pastor's spirit that he needs to have as he preaches God's message. (I am not saying that the song would be one that is wrong to use, for this should never be done!) It may be a good song that is not exactly appropriate for the mental condition that the pastor needs to pursue.

37. The pastor should never preach to individuals. The very thought of an individual to whom he is preaching and/or scolding could steal his mind and capture it from the truth his people need to hear from him.

38. The pastor should never try to impress when he preaches. The purpose is not to impress; the purpose is to heal and to administer the cure.

Many years ago as a young man in my twenties I was asked to share the platform with Dr. John Rice, Dr. Bill Rice, Dr. Bob Jones, Sr. and Dr. R. G. Lee in a Sword Conference in Lake Louise, Georgia, near Toccoa. It was the first time that I had ever been asked to appear on a program with such men. To be quite frank, I felt totally unqualified and incapable. The first time that I spoke at a Sword of the Lord Conference was following Dr. R. G. Lee's famous sermon, "Payday Someday" I went out beside the lake and wept uncontrollably feeling that I was incapable of filling such a place and pursuing such a mission. Suddenly it dawned on me that if God had me there, He had something for me to say, and if God had me there in addition to R. G. Lee, there was at least something that I could give the people that R. G. Lee did not have for them. He can give them many things; I perhaps could only give one, but I could make my one contribution. This I did, and through these years I have realized that God has a purpose for each of us. It is not our job to impress, and oftentimes our spirit of inferiority is caused by the fact that we feel helpless to impress.

39. The pastor should realize it is life or death! He is standing between the living and the dead as did Aaron of old. He is standing between Heaven and Hell. He is standing at the gates of eternity. Nothing is as important as that!

40. The pastor should preach for a certain result. That result was decided in the early part of this manuscript when he searched to find the needs of his people, and then he searched the apothecary of the Word of God to find the prescription that would heal them.

If the pastor is to be successful in his mission, he must hold his own attention, and his entire focus on the day of his mission should be on that thing that God has called him to do. He is God's man with God's message from God's Word preaching to God's people in the power of God's Spirit, delivering to the people the very message that he feels that Jesus Himself would deliver were He standing before that very congregation!

## The Introduction

The purpose of the introduction is, of course, to introduce. It is to introduce two things to the congregation: (1) Yourself, and (2) Your message. The introduction is not just the first part of the sermon. It is not simply to get the attention of the audience. It is to say to the audience, "Ladies and gentlemen, may I introduce my message to you, and may I introduce myself to you.

Because of this, it should be honest and accurate. It should be in keeping with the sermon content, and it should be in keeping with what the speaker is. It should not be beyond the speaker's ability to perpetuate. It should be simply a sampling of the speaker and of the message. It should project the real you and the real sermon to the people. It should be a specimen taken from the sermon to say to the people, "This is what it is going to be like," and it should be a sampling taken from the speaker saying to the people, "This is what the speaker is going to be like."

First, let us project the specimen of the sermon as we say to the people, "May I introduce you to the sermon.

1. The introduction should be an accurate signpost pointing to the sermon.
2. The introduction should not be a sermon or an outline.
3. The introduction should create a hunger for the rest of the message. For example, I preached a sermon on ingratitude. The introduction was as follows: "A few years ago a poll was taken in America to see which sin does the most harm. To the surprise of many, the sin chosen was the sin of ingratitude."

Today I was in a health food store. As I walked in I saw a little bowl of soy beans. Beside the bowl was a little sign which said, "Take a free sample." I did so, and in less than 60 seconds, I bought a package of soy beans. This is exactly what a sermon introduction should do. It should say, "Here, take a sample of the message and let it whet your appetite for more."

4. The introduction could be a question that needs an answer.
5. The introduction could be a statement that needs a completion. For example, in my sermon on Proverbs 3:6, I begin with the following, "I, like every other sincere pastor, have sought the answers to the oppressions and frustrations of our fundamental people. I, like every other sincere pastor, have sought the answers to the heartbreaks, breakdowns and unhappiness of our fundamental people. I, like every other sincere pastor; have sought the answer to the disappointments with life and the disillusionments of our fundamental people. I have searched and searched for these answers. I think I have found some. One is found in our text." In this case the introduction leaves a question unanswered.
6. The introduction could create curiosity as to where the speaker is going. In my sermon, "The Flesh That No One Knows About," I start by saying, "The Devil is after you He wants to ruin your life with unrighteousness, so he attacks your flesh in an attempt to get you to do bad, but you are a good Christian. The flesh is repulsive to you, and the Devil fails, but he isn't finished in his effort to get you in the flesh. He knows that there is other flesh. So, having failed to get you to do unrighteousness in the flesh, he gets you to do righteousness in the flesh. Having



failed in his attempt to get you to do bad in the flesh, he leads you to do good in the flesh." This is used to create curiosity as to where the sermon is going.

7. in the introduction, there should be a creation of intrigue. For example, I have a sermon that was Dr. Rice's favorite of all the ones that I preached. When I preach it, I always mention the fact that this was Dr. Rice's favorite. I often introduce the sermon by saying, "The pastor requested this one." Still another statement used is, "The sermon that I am preaching tonight is not often used," or I might say, "I am preaching tonight the first sermon I ever preached," or "I am preaching tonight the first sermon that I ever preached here." Such statements generate intrigue.

8. The introduction should lead the people to feel that the sermon has the answer to an individual need. Crisis-oriented preaching can only take a church so far. Preaching will soon become unfruitful if it is not geared to meet the needs of the people. We should preach prophecy, but preaching all prophetic sermons will dry up the church. The preacher who preaches on social issues will someday run out of social issues and will dry up the church. Preaching must be geared to the needs of the people, and the introduction should lead the people to feel that the sermon has an answer to an individual need.

9. The title of the sermon should not be more spectacular than the sermon. Spectacular titles may get a person to come once or twice or maybe a few times, but crowds grown by the advertising of spectacular titles will scatter when all the spectacular titles have been used. The pastor does not realize it, but he is training his people to come only when there is something spectacular in his title. It also requires him to make the content of the sermon just as spectacular as the title in order to be honest.

10. The introduction should not be more spectacular than the sermon. This will cause the sermon to climax too soon. To be quite frank, it borders on dishonesty if he introduces a sermon to be something that it will not be.

11. The introduction should get the people desirous for the preacher to continue. In my sermon, "So Great Salvation," I begin as follows: "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" Now the usual interpretation of this passage is that if one neglects being saved, he will not escape the wrath and judgment of God. I do not believe that this does an injustice to the Scripture, but it is not the primary teaching of Hebrews 2:3." I hope that this introduction creates a desire in the minds of the audience for me to continue.

12. The introduction should be the most articulate part of the sermon. It should not be joke-telling time unless the sermon is very funny. If the sermon is funny, then the introduction which is to be a specimen taken from the sermon, should also be funny. In my sermon, "A Wounded Spirit," I have as my goal the lifting of the spirits of those in the congregation, so I feel it is only proper for the introduction to be a spirit-lifting one.

13. The introduction should not start on a mountaintop unless the sermon is a mountaintop sermon. For example, in my sermon "A Name that is Above Every Name" I preach an entire message just about the person of Jesus. It is in every way a sermon meant to be a mountaintop experience. So, to be honest, the introduction or specimen must be mountaintop.

14. The introduction should get the attention of the preacher. Every sermon introduction should be examined carefully to be sure that the preacher will get his own attention in his introduction.

15. The introduction should make it obvious that the preacher is preaching to himself also.

Often in an introduction I will say, "I am not here tonight primarily to entertain you. I am not here tonight primarily to instruct you, nor am I here tonight primarily to inspire you. Let me make it plain before I start. I am here that by the grace of God, God may use this message to change your life and mine." Notice, I am identifying myself with the audience. I am not preaching down to them, but I am preaching out to them and to myself.

16. The introduction should not include jokes that make others an object. If a joke is used in which someone becomes its object, it should be the speaker himself who is the object of his joke.

Sometimes a joke on yourself is a wholesome thing if it is done in good taste. For example, I often tell the following on myself: "I got up as usual one morning, got in the car, drove to work. On the way to work I made my usual stop at the White Hen Pantry; a little drive-in grocery store, to get my morning paper. It was a cold winter morning; in fact, it was below zero outside. When I got back into the car after getting my paper, I could not get it started. I tried and tried, but the starter would not even turn over or make a sound. I got out of the car and did the thing that all of us do in an effort to repair the problem-I opened the hood and looked at the engine. In fact, I even looked at it twice, but it still would not run. After several minutes of futility, I called the service station where I trade and asked them to come and get my car started. They told me it would be within an hour. I insisted that I could not wait that long and reminded them of my long years of being a customer. Finally, I persuaded them to come immediately. Within ten minutes he was there, got in the car and within just a few seconds he had it started. In fact, he didn't even open the hood. I was amazed at his brilliance. As he got out of the car said, 'My, you are a wonderful mechanic. What was wrong?' With not a smile on his face, with his eyes pointed away from me he said, 'I put the stick in park.' Oh, brother, was I ever embarrassed!"

I often tell in my introductory remarks about the night when Dr. John R. Rice and I were in Latrobe, Pennsylvania. The church met in a school building. The entrance to the building was on the side, so when you entered, half the congregation could see you and the other half was in front of you to your right. This Monday night found me a little late. My plane had had some problems and I got to the church just as the song service had ended and Dr. Rice was beginning to speak. It was a cool night, around 400, and it was drizzling rain. I had no coat or hat, and as I approached the door the usher said, "I'm sorry, mister, but you can't come in!" I asked, "Why?" He replied, "Because the preaching has already started and nobody goes in once the preaching has started." I said, "Look, mister, it's drizzling rain out here, and it is cold!" He said, "That doesn't matter! You can't come in!" I said, "What do you mean, I can't come in?" He said, "I'll tell you again, sir. Nobody enters once the sermon has started!" I said, "Let me tell you who I am." He said, "I don't care who you are. You're not coming in! The rule is that no one enters after the speaker has started speaking, and I'm going to enforce the rule." I looked at him and said rather tersely, "That's a dumb rule." He said, "Sir; I agree with you. I don't like the rule either. We haven't had it very long. Our pastor got it in Hammond, Indiana, where he attended a Pastors' School."

Oh, brother, was I ever embarrassed! For 45 minutes I stood out in drizzling rain on a cool night without a coat and hat. When Dr. Rice heard about it, he laughed and said, "If I had known that, I would have preached for three hours!" I replied, "I thought you did!"

17. The introduction should convince the people that you are on the same level with them. If the speaker feels a little beneath the audience, he could perhaps quote a poem or briefly give a little

philosophical thought. If the speaker gets the idea that the people feel he is a little above them, he could say something that would be perhaps a little revelation of his humanity and of the fact that he too is flesh and a common person. I often use the following, especially if people think I am somebody special just because I pastor a larger church: "Perhaps some of you tonight have heard about the First Baptist Church of Hammond and Hyles-Anderson College. You wanted to see what this fellow Hyles looks like. You got here early and focused your eyes on the door to watch him as he walked in. In Hyles walked. You looked to your wife and said, 'There is the custodian-now when does this fellow Hyles come in?'"

I was down in Mt. Vernon, Illinois, several years ago. A little lady about 35 years of age came to me and asked, "Are you the real Jack Hyles?" I said, "I'm the only one I know." She said, "I've heard about you all my life, but you just don't look like what I thought you would look like." I smiled and said, "You're not very pretty either."

Above all, be honest. The introduction is to introduce first, the sermon, and second, yourself. The introduction should say, "Good evening, folks. Let me introduce you to my sermon and let me introduce you to myself. Here is a specimen or a sampling of what I am going to be like and what my message is going to say I hope it will make you want to listen."

Now that we have introduced the sermon, let us spend a few moments discussing the speaker introducing himself. Bear in mind that this is a specimen of what he is like and of what he is. It should be an honest presentation so the people will be able to see and hear a sample of what is to come. Do not forget-this should be the real you, just like the introduction introduced them to the real sermon.

1. Dress like the real you. Dress properly to suit the occasion. Let your dress reflect yourself, a person of propriety
2. Walk like the real you. A preacher should walk like himself. He should walk on the platform like he walks anywhere else. It should not be some kind of a pious prance, but a simple, earnest walk. Every week I go to the auditorium when it is empty and practice my walk from the door to my seat and from my seat to the pulpit. I do not practice some strange new walk but just my usual walk so that when the people see me walking in they will see the real Jack Hyles walking.
3. Sit like the real you. Sit like a man with dignity and propriety, not with legs straight and together like a woman in a dress, not slouched with a pronounced crossing of the legs, but sit like a man. Sit up straight with both feet on the floor and some space between the knees, or with one leg slightly crossed over the other.
4. Be courteous like you. Before the sermon do not talk to others on the platform. Participate enthusiastically in the singing. Look at others and listen to them when they speak. Be ethical with other speakers concerning time, etc.
5. Speak like you. The introduction, as well as the rest of the sermon, should not be another speaking voice that you borrowed for the occasion. It should be your voice-the same voice and same type of speaking that someone would hear if they were with you for some time. When you get loud, get loud like you would if you were excited somewhere else. Be yourself Speak sincerely and speak earnestly
6. The introduction should not be a time of sarcasm. Of course, there might be an occasional exception to this rule. For example, sarcasm would not be in bad taste if it were done lovingly by a guest speaker who had often spoken at the church and was a very warm and close friend of

the pastor; and mild sarcasm would not be in bad taste if used by a pastor who had served in the church for many years and had established his love for his people. Even then, care must be taken as to the objects of the sarcasm. There are some people who simply cannot absorb someone being sarcastic to them.

7. If a preacher is a visiting speaker, he should take time in his introductory remarks to compliment the church, the pastor, the city, the buildings, the area, the music, etc. This should not be done with humor, but with a sincere heart and a sincere spirit. Before the sermon, the speaker should spend some time in meditation thinking of his love for the pastor and his admiration for the church so that his comments will be sincere ones. The common man has a way of denoting sincerity, and it is very difficult to fool him.

8. Do not try to impress or startle. The introduction is not a time to win friends and influence people; it is a time to get the people to know the real you. It is a "get acquainted" time when you meet them and they meet you. If the introduction does not give to the people a true idea of what is to come, it has failed. It is a brief time when a sincere preacher reveals a brief example of his sincerity, when a loving preacher presents a sample of his love, when an earnest preacher reveals a sample of his earnestness and when the speaker says to the people, "Let me introduce myself to you. This is what I'm like. Let me introduce my sermon to you. This is what it's like. I hope you will want to continue listening as I preach it."

## Subjects on Which to Preach

II Timothy 4:2, 5, "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry."

Years ago I sat down and listed twenty themes that I thought were necessary for the spiritual growth and maturity of my people. All of my sermons deal with at least one of these twenty themes. Though I have never shared them, I have on occasion explained the process by which I arrived at them. That process will be the content of this chapter. I chose the twenty themes from II Timothy 4:2, "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine." In this passage God tells the preacher what he is supposed to do when he stands before his people. I listed these things and from these things arrived at the themes I thought necessary for my people's spiritual growth and benefit.

I. PREACH. The word "preach" here means "proclaim the victory." From this I get encouragement. My people need to be encouraged by the Word of God. I am to "proclaim the victory of the Word." The doors open on Sunday morning. The crowd flows in. All week they have been facing a Christless and Godless world. They have heard His name profaned. They have faced criticism, mocking and even hatred. Now it is Sunday These wounded warriors come from far and near to sit in the pews in order to hear God's man. He must take God's Book, open it and proclaim the victory of the Word of God. He must encourage their hearts. Though this is not one of the themes that I have listed, it nevertheless is the source of one of my themes. God's people need to be encouraged.

2. WORD. This is Jesus. John 1:1, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." John 1:14, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." So the second theme that I find here is the theme of Jesus! Preach the person of Christ. Preach Him, exalt Him, magnify Him, teach Him, honor Him, praise Him, worship Him, adore Him. Preach Jesus. Years ago when our oldest daughter, Becky, was just a tot, I was preaching one Sunday morning and, would you believe it, I forgot my sermon! I was at I John 5:12, "He that hath the Son hath life," and to save me I could not think where I was supposed to go from there. So I stepped back and I hollered, "He that HATH the Son hath life!" I still drew a blank. I stepped back and shouted, "He that hath THE Son hath life!" Still! could not think of my sermon. I stepped back again and said, "He that hath the Son HATH life!" Still I forgot what I was to say I stepped back again and shouted, "He that hath the Son hath LIFE!" Finally I came out of my tailspin before I crashed. When I got home that morning, Becky grinned and said, "Daddy, the record got stuck this morning, didn't it?"

I hugged her; and through tears I said, "Yes, Puddin', but what a wonderful place for the record to stick!" It was stuck on Jesus! Jesus should be the center of our preaching, and the person of Christ should always be a part of the message that we deliver to our people from our God on His day

3. BE INSTANT The word "instant" is translated at other places "set upon," "be present," "be at hand." It implies faithfulness. Be predictable, be faithful. Here we have another theme that

should be emphasized. As the Apostle writes young Timothy, he reminds him that Jesus should be a theme for his message, that encouragement should be a theme of his message and that faithfulness should be a theme of his message. Also from this statement could come the theme of total commitment.

4. IN SEASON, OUT OF SEASON. This leads us to another theme-perseverance. This also is to be a part of the preaching of God's man, as Paul commanded Timothy. Our message to the people should be, "Don't quit! Persevere! Hang in there! Don't turn back! Finish what you start!"

5. REPROVE. This word is also translated at other places, "refute." This means that the preacher is to expose false teaching. Here is another theme that should be included in the preaching of a pastor.

6. REBUKE. This word implies to "honor, then rebuke." It could be translated "to scold in love." On occasion the man of God will have to scold his people. This scolding should not be in hatred or with malice. It should be done with a heart filled with love for the very ones whom he is scolding.

7. EXHORT The word comes from the same word that is used in I John 2:1, "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." The word "advocate" means "to run to one's side and pick him up." It deals with the theme of salvaging. One of the preacher's ministries and one of the themes of his preaching should be to salvage what he can from all of his people. There are those in the congregation who have been wounded by the Evil One! They are vessels that have been marred in the hands of the Potter; and they wonder if they can ever be used again. Paul tells Timothy that salvaging them should be a part of his message. Here is another theme that the preacher may include in his repertoire of sermon themes.

8. LONGSUFFERING. This word is also translated "even temperature." It has to do with having a Christian spirit. From it comes the word "temperance," which means "proper restraint." Here is another theme that the Apostle admonished Timothy to use.

9. DOCTRINE. The word means "teaching." The preacher should include Bible teachings and truths in his preaching. Add this to your list of themes.

10. WATCH. Most people feel that this means "moral watching." In other words, the preacher should fight sin. Sin-fighting should definitely be a major part of the pastor's ministry. He should warn his people of the evils and temptations that lurk in the shadows that will destroy their lives and their testimonies.

11. ENDURE AFFLICTION. This word means "suffer with." This implies sympathy and understanding. The wise preacher must include in his ministry and in his preaching sympathetic understanding. He must remember that his people are flesh, and as does God, he must remember that his people are dust. They must feel the sympathy. The preacher is not a righteous judge to stand on Sunday to condemn his people. He is a righteous physician to stand up to encourage, strengthen, rebuild and love his people. Now in this loving, rebuilding and strengthening, there must of necessity be some hard preaching, some scolding, rebuking, etc., but it must be done in the spirit of love, of sympathy and understanding. He must suffer with them, hurt with them and feel their burdens, their weaknesses, their heartaches and, yes, even their failures.

12. THE WORK OF AN EVANGELIST This means soul winning. It means getting people saved. One of the pastor's themes should be salvation, preaching with evangelistic fervor.

13. FULL PROOF OF THY MINISTRY This means the total preacher who has it all! Paul is telling Timothy that he does not want him riding a hobbyhorse or spending all of his time on one theme. He wants him to make full proof of his ministry. He wants him to proclaim the victory, to preach Jesus, to preach total commitment, to preach faithfulness, to preach perseverance, to expose false teaching, to scold in love, to salvage those who have fallen, to teach Christians to have the proper spirit, to heal and mend, to preach doctrine, to fight sin, to sympathize and suffer with his people, to be a soul winner and train soul winners, to be an evangelist, and in summary, to wrap it all up and to be in one package all of these things

The things that I have listed are not the exact words that I use on my list of twenty themes, but it was from this passage that I made my list in order that I might give to my people all that they need, and be to my people all that they need me to be. From the twenty themes that I have listed in a private place come all the sermons that I preach. I feel that these twenty themes cover all the needs that my people could have. These are the different prescriptions for the various illnesses and deficiencies that my folks may have.

## **Preaching to Everybody**

I Corinthians 9:22, "To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some."

There is no public speaking as difficult, as challenging and, when done properly, as artistic as that of preaching. Most public speakers speak to a certain group who share similar interests. Sometimes, for example, I will preach to a group of young people. On other occasions, I speak to ladies. There are times when I speak just to men. I often speak at conventions for Christian educators, and nearly every week I speak at some special meeting for preachers. All of these are challenging, but none is as challenging as the time when I walk in the pulpit on Sunday morning to speak to little children, to senior citizens, to the rich, to the poor; to the educated, to the uneducated, to the young and to the old, and I try to adapt the same sermon so it will fit and feed every person in the congregation! This is the hardest of all public speaking, and yet, it is the most blessed, the most challenging and the most wonderful because it is a miracle! The Holy Spirit takes the same truth and applies it through His servant to various age groups, to various social standings and to those hundreds and sometimes thousands of people whose life styles, backgrounds and interests are of the greatest variety possible.

1. The preacher should learn to speak to each group. He should be able to hold the attention of a group of children, keep the interest of teenagers at a rally just for them, and be able to hold the attention of each group when speaking to them separately. The best worker with beginner-age children in the church should be the preacher! The best youth worker in the church should be the preacher. The best Bible teacher in the church should be the preacher. It is wrong for the preacher to excuse his deficiencies by saying he does not have the gift to speak to children or the gift to speak to young people or the gift to speak to any other special group. Sometimes there are ways to get abilities without getting them as a gift. They can also be earned and can be obtained by toil and diligence.

2. The pastor should be around children and should force himself to speak to them and learn to do it effectively. For 37 years I have conducted the Vacation Bible Schools in all of my churches. I conduct a 30-minute opening assembly where I lead the children in singing and join in their enthusiasm and laughter. Then, in a 45-minute assembly later in the day I lead in teaching them. I crown the king and queen for the day, and I introduce the special programs. I have had to learn to hold their attention and to work diligently to learn to be a children's worker. The wise pastor will be around children, learn how to reach them and to lead them.

3. Be around teenagers. Get to know them. Find out how to be a successful youth worker.

For several years I have conducted a nationwide Youth Conference. Thousands of teenagers come from all across America. I speak to them, instruct them, joke with them and relate to them. Recently after one of the sessions in our Youth Conference, a pastor came to me and said, "I wish I had your gift." I replied, "Brother, it's not a gift! It is something that I worked hard to get, and it is just as available for you as it is for me.

4. Be around senior citizens. Get to know them. Feel their burdens and their problems. Learn their frustrations, and train yourself to be able to work with them.



5. Identify with the poor, the rich, the educated and the uneducated. Learn to feel at home with each group and to know how to make them feel at home with you
6. Watch carefully those who are successful children's workers or youth workers or adult workers. Learn what makes them successful. Incorporate it in your own life. Be a student of every age group and of every facet of your church's society
7. Be a childish, juvenile adult. By this I mean when a person comes to adolescence, he should not exchange his childhood for adolescence, but he should add adolescence to his childhood. When a person becomes an adult, he should not trade in his childhood and adolescence on his adulthood. He should add adulthood to childhood and adolescence. We should retain our childhood enjoyments that are right and proper. Likewise we should retain the enjoyments of adolescence that are right and proper and add them to the behavior of adulthood. If you will listen carefully to every great preacher, you will see his childhood shine through and his adolescence flicker, and you will notice that added to these will be the maturity of adulthood. Every man of God should be a childish, juvenile adult.
8. Read a variety of things. Read books that children like to read. Read books that teenagers like to read. Fill that computer called the human mind with every bit of proper and decent material possible. One day it will become usable to you and for you. Then read all you can about reaching each and working with each. Learn the physical and emotional makeup of each age group.
9. When speaking to teenagers and children who are seated by age, have the teenagers in front of you so that your eye contact can be with them. Let the children be on the sides. Often I preach on a Tuesday morning to preachers, to laymen, teenagers and children in the same building. I always ask the pastor which group he wants me to reach. Then I ask him to put that group in front of me so that my eye contact will be with them.
10. When speaking to a strictly children's group, the pastor should move a lot. He should ask questions that require brief and concise answers, and he should use the microphone heavily.
11. When speaking to a group which includes a group of children sitting together, it is often wise to begin by bragging on the children. Following is a good way to do it:

"Adults, have you noticed these children over here? Have you noticed how they sit still and listen? It's an amazing thing! Sometimes during the sermon, glance over to them. I guarantee they will be still and quiet. You'll be amazed to see what good children these are."

This gives the children a reputation that they want to uphold. Then, on occasion throughout the message, stop and ask the adults if they have noticed how good the children are. This lets the children know that you haven't forgotten them, and it keeps in their minds the goal of pleasing you and upholding the reputation that you have set for them.
12. When teenagers and adults are present in the same audience and are sitting in groups, preach to the teens. Start off by being honest and telling of your predicament. Then tell the teenagers how you felt when you were their age. I may start off with something like this:

"Kids, what do you say that we make peace with each other and that we decide to endure each other during this message! I know we are both stuck here! You had to come because it was a school requirement, and I need the money, so all of us are stuck. Why don't you just look at me and say, 'Well, he doesn't look like much, but I'm going to hear what the guy has to say I may as

well listen to him. I've got to be here.' Then, kids, I'll look at you and say, 'Well, they don't look like much but they are part of the crowd this morning, so I'm going to see if I can get something through to them.' Probably you've already looked at me and asked, 'Can any good thing come out of that?' and I've looked at you and said, 'Can any good thing go into that?' but I'll make you a deal, kids. Give me a good hearing, and I won't preach long at you or hard at you"

When preaching to teenagers, it is always good to make them feel adultish. After all, a teenager is more adult than he is a child, though it is hard for us to believe because we have recently known him as a child and have never known him as an adult.

Let me suggest at this point that the reader get a copy of my book, HOW TO REAR TEENAGERS and read carefully the chapter on communicating with teens.

13. When speaking to teenagers alone, don't bend all the way to meet them. Let them know that you are aware of the fact that they are nearly adults. (They will like this.) Let them know that you don't plan to treat them like little children, but like the near adults that they really are.

When speaking to teens, love must be shown and sincerity must be obvious. Teens are very adept at reading a speaker's intentions. They can spot insincerity as well as sincerity. To them, the real you will shine through!

One of the most important things in speaking to teens is to not be defeated before you start. Convince yourself that you can hold their attention. Many speakers are defeated before they begin when speaking to teenagers. If you are defeated at the start, you will be destroyed by the end. When preaching to a crowd of preachers, lay adults, teens and children, preach to the teens on behalf of the adults and let the adults identify with you as you preach to the teens. Preach to them a truth that all the adults there would like to tell them. Become the representative of all the adults present. Let the adults identify with you as you speak to the teens.

I have a sermon entitled, "Let's Hear it for the Other Son." It deals with the brother of the prodigal son. It is a sermon that reminds the young people that though the prodigal son's brother did not cooperate in the welcome-home party, he nevertheless was a man of character. It is said of him by his father; "Son, thou art ever with me." The son said to his father, "Lo, these many years do I serve thee." He also said that he had never once transgressed his father's commandments or disobeyed. I remind the teenagers that the fellow was probably a pretty good guy who had character and decency, and I would rather have them be like him than be like the brother who went into the far country and became a prodigal. While I'm preaching this sermon, I can see the adults nodding their heads up and down in agreement. I am saying to the teenagers what the adults would like to say, and they are identifying with me. In a sense, we together are preaching to the teenagers.

14. When preaching to several different groups who are sitting together as groups, preach to the crowd most obvious. Don't try to reach all. In a sense, get alone with one group and let the others listen in. It is enjoyable for an adult to watch a preacher preach to young people. They can learn from him how to do it. It is enjoyable for them to watch him handle children. This can be an education to them.

Again, it is important to have the group to whom you are primarily speaking in front of you so that you can make eye contact with them.

15. Have a list of sermons that are basically for children. Have another list of sermons that are basically for young people. Have another list of sermons that are basically for preachers. I have

a list that I use for Christian educators. Then, choose a sermon or a few sermons that you would use in the presence of children and teenagers; likewise, sermons that you would use in the presence of teenagers, preachers, children and adults. Have special sermons that you could use for any combination of groups.

16. Have one truth to put across. Hit it over and over and over again! Remember, you are dealing with minds of various abilities to retain and to comprehend. A profound truth presented in a simple manner is perhaps the best when you speak to a group of groups.

17. When speaking to a group of groups, make mention of each group in the sermon. Let them know that you are aware of their presence, even if you are not addressing them primarily

18. Include something for all emotions-- for tears, for laughter, for sobriety, for excitement.

We have been dealing rather extensively with preaching to different groups or to groups of groups. However, most of our preaching is to a mixed congregation on Sunday morning, Sunday night and Wednesday night. Therefore, the following should be remembered:

1. Preach mainly to adults, but if you have become a childish, juvenile adult, even the adults will enjoy seeing your adolescence and your childlikeness. The main thing is to become what you ought to be and then when you are what you ought to be, it will manifest itself in your preaching.

2. Check your sermon for milk and meat in the same message. Remember, you are preaching to new Christians and to mature Christians and to Christians at every place on the spectrum of Christian growth.

3. Mingle old truth and new truth. By that I mean, keep fresh and new for the people who have heard you for years, but don't neglect to teach the simple and old truths, for the new Christians need them!

4. Fit profundity into simplicity True profundity can be transferred only from one mind to another through the vehicle of simplicity The vehicle of simplicity can appeal to the youth, to the children and to the new Christians, whereas the truth of profundity can appeal to the mature Christians and older people. When profundity is transported in simplicity, it has a way of appealing to everybody and reaching everybody.

5. If what you say is over someone's head, reach them with how you say it. You can feed a heavy piece of meat to mature Christians and yet the way you feed them can be enjoyable to young people and to baby Christians.

6. Think all week of the various groups in the congregation. Every week, sometime during the week, I pause to think of my teenagers. I pray for them and spend some time loving them. I pause to realize that they are growing up in the generation where the Devil is most active in trying to destroy them. Every weapon in his arsenal is pointed toward them.

I then spend some time thinking about my senior citizens. I pray for them and love them. I hurt with their pains and mourn with their sorrows.

Every week I spend some time during the day thinking about my men who are at work, and for that matter, the ladies who work in public. I spend some time loving those men who are working in the blast furnaces of the steel mills. I think of their getting up in the wintertime before daybreak; fighting the traffic, the zero weather and the snow to go to work; them

working in the blast furnaces all day long, only to leave work after it is already dark, again to fight the traffic, the snow and the cold to come home weary and tired. I often think of them late at night gathered around in the family circle, leading their families to pray for their preacher.

Every week I take a few minutes to stop up my ears so that I cannot hear. I walk in silence for sometimes as much as thirty minutes in order for me to identify with those whom [serve who are deaf.

Each week I take time to blindfold myself. I try to shave wearing this blindfold. I try to dress wearing the blindfold. This enables me to identify at least for awhile with those whom I serve who cannot see.

At certain intervals each week I also think about the educable slow, the poor' the bus kids. I try to make it so that by the time I walk into the pulpit on the Lord's Day I will have such a love and compassion for all of my people that I "preach to everybody"

## Compassion in Preaching

Jude 22b, "And of some have compassion, making a difference."

First came the light. Then the firmament. Then God lit the starry host. Then He made the fish of the sea and all the tribes of the animal kingdom. After that God was ready for man. He made man in the image of Himself. It was marvelous. Every tree that grew was pleasant to the eyes. Rivers flowed peaceably through verdant valleys. Every sound was a melody. Every scene was a delight. There was no war to unrest the breast; no sickness was there to cause a fear of death. The leaf never withered; the wind never chilled. No perspiration ever moistened the brow. There was no profanity to curse the ear. There was no weariness, no heat, no cold. No blossoms were smitten by a tempest. Man had not learned to sigh or weep. There was no withering frost to chill the rose. There was no shadow of guilt ever known. For Adam there were choirs of birds to sing to him.

Yet something was missing! Adam needed someone to share with him. He yearned for companionship. He longed for communion with a kindred soul. He needed one whose wants and joys were like his own. The virgin world was cold and blank.

HERE SHE COMES! Dressed in all the beauty for a human being to possess! Milton said, "She was adorned with what all of heaven and earth could bestow to make her amiable. Grace was in her steps. Heaven was in her eye. Every gesture possessed dignity and love. Perfection was stamped upon her. The sons of God shouted for joy, the morning stars sang together, and Eden was transformed! The earth was sad, the garden wild, the hermit sighed, until woman smiled."

Not a creature since Adam has escaped that need for companionship. The weary housewife, the trudging laborer, the busy student, the aged mother, the harried boss and, I must confess, the preacher behind the pulpit-all have a need for someone to offer to them compassion.

Compassion is the nurse given to mankind. Compassion cares for the helpless. It mothers the orphan, feeds the hungry; clothes the cold, helps the helpless and raises the fallen. Compassion shines upon coldness and warms it. Compassion shines upon suffering and relieves it. Compassion shines upon sorrow and cheers it.

God has given us His men and has called them from the north, east, south and west to stand behind pulpits to have compassion upon mankind.

Her name is College Wife, USA. She was married to her childhood sweetheart. They lived in an apartment and sacrificed for years. Finally they were able to buy a little house. A small down payment was made, and monthly payments were paid. They drove an old rattletrap for years; now finally they are able to get a small new car. Things are looking up! Her husband got promoted at work. She sings in the choir; he is an usher. They both teach Sunday school classes.

One Sunday night her husband walked the aisle during the invitation. She wondered why. When they got home, he said to her that God had called him to preach. Suddenly all of her dreams were ended; the air castles were broken on the pavement of providence! They put the house up for sale. They sold the new car and bought an old one and put what belongings they had in a U-Haul trailer and came to Hammond, Indiana, to attend Hyles-Anderson College. They couldn't afford a little house like they had back home. They couldn't even afford one of the nicer

apartments. The little house has now been traded for an attic apartment. The shiny new little car has now been sold, and an old one has taken its place. Her husband enrolls in college. He goes to college at 7:00 a.m. in the morning and gets through just in time to go to work. He works into the night and gets home and has a few hours to sleep. She hardly sees him. Oh, by the way, she has a few children for whom she cares. No longer does he come in at 5:30 after a busy day's work to spend the night with the family. She who was Miss Typical Housewife now is Miss Typical College Student's Wife. There are four years, maybe five, maybe six, maybe more before it will all be over. She needs a man of God to stand behind the pulpit on the Lord's Day who feels her heartache, who feels her loneliness and who really cares and offers compassion.

Her name is Grandma. She has seen her last child leave the marriage altar. Her husband was taken to Heaven. She tried to keep house as long as she could, but she began to fall. She couldn't see too well. Her hearing was failing. Her hands were trembling. Her brow is furrowed, her face is wrinkled, her shoulders are stooped, her steps are uncertain. One day the children had a meeting. They had to do something with Grandma. She suggested that they put her in a rest home. Ungrateful children said, "Well, if that's what you want, that's what we'll do, Mother;" and there she sits with hands that never open a letter, ears that never hear the ring of a phone, cheeks that never feel a kiss, feet that never take her outside, eyes that never see loved ones or friends. She hardly knows her grand-children, and there she sits fellowshipping with her memories- memories of days when she washed and ironed and cooked and cleaned house and was in the busy activities of rearing a family, but now those days are gone!

A church group came by the rest home. They said they were running a bus to church. Now she can get on the bus and ride to church. There she sits in the auditorium. She needs a man of God to walk to the pulpit, to open the Book and offer her compassion. She needs to feel that someone cares, for compassion makes a difference!

His name is Johnny. His address is Ghetto, USA. He is a bus kid. He doesn't know where his daddy is. One day his parents called him in and told him that Daddy was leaving. His only Christmas is if the church remembers. He has never had a birthday cake or seen a new pair of shoes on his feet. He has never heard, "You are a cute little fellow." Such words as steak, love, peace and kindness are part of a foreign language as far as he is concerned. He didn't know he wasn't normal until he saw other boys and girls that had nice things. His mom leaves for work every morning early and comes back home late at night. He may suspicion you at first a little bit, and he may disturb your worship service, but he needs somebody to care. Oh, I know, buses are expensive. Your auditorium is pretty. You now have a good drive-in crowd, and Johnny is a financial burden, but there he sits covering up a hole in his pants. Little Johnny needs someone to care. He needs a pastor who has compassion which makes a difference!

I can relate to little Johnny. The first toy I ever owned the church gave to me. The first hamburger I ever ate was bought for me by the church. The first balloon I ever blew up I got at church. I know!

I will never forget the day that I walked into the Fernwood Baptist Church as a five-year-old lad. The Beginner Superintendent whose name was Mrs. Bethel, took me to the Beginner Department. She put me on her knee. My little bare feet were obvious. My knees were showing through the holes and through the patches of my pants. I had on a little white T-shirt, and I noticed that all the other little boys and girls had on shoes and the boys had white shirts and ties. Mrs. Bethel put me on her knee. She said, "Boys and girls, we have a visitor this

morning. His name is Jackie-boy Hyles. Aren't we glad to have him?" Nobody said a word. Then Mrs. Bethel looked at me and said, "Jackie-boy, Jesus loves you" I'll never forget how I felt! Mama had told me that, but nobody else had ever told me! I looked up and said the first words that I had said that morning. I asked, "Mrs. Bethel, does Jesus love me as much as He loves the little boys and girls that have on shoes?"

A tear escaped her eye and invaded my brow as she said, "Jackie- boy, He probably loves you more than He loves anybody here this morning." The joy of Heaven flooded my soul as I heard my teacher tell me that Jesus loved me.

There are millions of little Jackie-boys all over America who need to be contacted and brought to church, to sit in a pew and look up and see a man of God walk to the pulpit who has compassion which makes a difference.

Oh, someone needs to care Someone needs to offer compassion to the one who cannot hear the whippoorwill, to the one who has never heard the church choir or the voice of the preacher, but who sits in his world of silence while dedicated fingers reveal to him what is being said. He needs compassion; it will make a difference!

Someone needs to care about the one who has never seen a sunrise or a sunset, who has never seen a rose or a daffodil, who has never seen a meadow or a forest or the dogwood or the azalea. He has never seen a rainbow. He has never seen his own mother and father. He lives in a world of darkness following a white-tipped cane. He needs somebody to love him. He needs to feel that somebody has compassion that will make a difference!

He lives at the rescue mission. His world fell apart many years ago. He was too weak to face reality and now he sleeps on a cot with others who share his plight. His family has left him, his children do not want to see him, but he is still a creature of God, made in the image of God! He is the object of the love of God, Christ died for him, the incarnation was for him, Bethlehem's manger was for him, the shepherds watching their flocks by night were for him, the wise men from the East bringing gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh were for him. Mary brought forth her firstborn Son and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes and laid Him in a manger for him. Jesus lived for him. He lived a perfect life for him. He went before Pilate and on to Herod and back to Pilate for him. He was beaten with a cat-o'-nine-tails for him. He carried His cross up Golgotha's hill for him. He was crucified for him. He rose again after 72 hours for him. He ascended back to Heaven for him. He is now doing His priestly work at the right hand of the Father for him. He is going to come someday for him. Just a rescue mission man, and some folks would call him a bum, but God loves him! There needs to be some place where he can go and sit in a pew and look in the pulpit where somebody loves him and where a man of God can have compassion on him that makes the difference!

He lives in Back room, USA. When he was born he brought the same joy and happiness to his mother and daddy that all babies bring until one day they noticed he was not developing as he should. He had a look on his face that was different from other children. Finally the doctor told the bad news to the parents that the child was not normal. He would never be able to learn like other children. He would join the special classes for the educable slow. Physically he will grow like others, but mentally he will never develop! He sits over on the left in the First Baptist Church auditorium with scores of others just like him. He is a teenager now. He looks to the pulpit. He needs to see a man walk in that pulpit who loves him, who hurts because he hurts and cries because he cries. He needs a man who has compassion that makes the difference!

Several years ago a lady came to our church to visit. She did not like me and she voiced her displeasure at my preaching. However, to my surprise she came back the next Sunday! She returned that night and the next Sunday and that night and the next Sunday and that night. I couldn't believe that she kept coming. Finally one day I saw her in the line outside my door after the Sunday morning service. She had a harsh look on her face. I found out later that she had come to rebuke me and to criticize me to my face. Finally it was her time to enter my office. She walked into the office; her lips began to quiver and she said, "Reverend, I came this morning to tell you all the bad things I could think of that I think about you, but I have been watching the people who come into your office. I saw you as you wept when you said, "Good-bye," to a college couple who was leaving to go out into full-time work. I saw your lips quiver and your eyes fill with tears as you talked to another one who had a burden, and then it dawned on me why I keep coming to your church. I don't like your preaching; I never have, but something draws me back Sunday after Sunday. It just came to me what that something is. Reverend, it's that moist spot in the corner of your eye. It's always there. That's the reason I keep coming."

Ladies and gentlemen, that moist spot is a sign of compassion. Oh, for preaching that is strong, hard, straight and Spirit-filled! Oh, for preaching that challenges, scolds, rebukes, chastens and reproves! Oh, for preaching that is a warning against sin! Oh, for preaching about judgment, Heaven, Hell, righteousness and holiness, but may God help us to always have that moist spot in the corner of the eye! Oh, men of God, have compassion that makes the difference!



## **Preachers, Let's Lengthen the Cords and Strengthen the Stakes**

Isaiah 54:2, "Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes."

In an American Legion Convention in New York City, a strange man wandered out on the platform, looked out to the delegates and asked, "Would somebody please tell me who I am?"

I wonder if maybe independent, fundamental Baptists don't need to ask ourselves, "Who are we?" God has singly blessed us. He has commanded us to enlarge our tents, and we have dutifully obeyed. We have built the largest Sunday schools in America. We have the largest buildings and the largest budgets. We are building the largest Christian schools. We have the largest bus fleets and the largest outreach. We have large staffs. We are sought out by the press. We sit with senators and shake hands with presidents. The lights of television cameras expose our freckles. Our auditoriums have become chancels. Our "Brother" has become "Doctor." Our lightbulbs have become chandeliers. Our Sunday school buildings are now Christian family centers. The preacher is now called the senior pastor. The custodian has become the maintenance engineer. The secretary is now the administrative assistant. Our mimeograph machines are now off-set presses. Our choirs have learned to sing "The Messiah." Neon signs have replaced hand-painted ones, and "good will" is now an attitude instead of our favorite clothing store. We meet the press and greet the mayor. Yes, our tents have enlarged.

Now the fiercest winds from Hell blow to topple our tents! Spring winds have become tornadoes. Summer breezes have become hurricanes. Warm air has become a winter blast. Our enlarged tents are the objects of Satan's most deadly storms. The sharpest swords are thrust at us. The most delicate microscope examines us. The sharpest minds plot against us. The most poisonous pens write of us. The most incredible accusations are railed at us. We are called "hate mongers." We are called "shallow." We are called "cultists." The truth is that winds are blowing in an effort to topple our tents. Our brethren are actually going to jail. Our churches are actually being padlocked. Many of our brethren are commuting between the church house and court house. FOX'S BOOK OF MARTYRS seems to be an incomplete manuscript, and "Give me liberty or give me death" is no longer just a high school declamation but a definite possibility! Prison walls seem as imminent as Holiday Inns and Howard Johnsons. Martyrdom seems more prophetic than historical. Freedom is only a slogan used by the liberal to gain liberty to enslave the fundamentalist. Détente with Russia is more popular than détente with God's people. Some are declaring us insane, and many have had to leave the mourner's bench for the judge's bench. Some have left the prayer room in order to go to the court room. Ladies and gentlemen, basic training is now over; this is war! We are off the rifle range; we are in battle!

Yet, sad to say, some of our tents have toppled. Some have been toppled by financial winds; some by winds of immorality; some by winds of compromise.

Our text reminds us that as our tents enlarge, we need to strengthen our stakes and lengthen our cords. Many a church has fallen as the tent enlarged and the wind increased. Many a preacher topples as the Sunday school grows, the offerings increase, the school is open, buildings rise, the staff is enlarged and outside invitations come, for he has a larger tent without

stronger stakes and lengthened cords.

Watch it as your work grows! Watch it as you become more affluent! Watch it as you get more education! Be careful as you get busier in God's work and as you get more power and authority! It is so easy to have a larger tent without lengthening the cords and strengthening the stakes!

We had better strengthen our stakes of the Word of God. A few borrowed outlines won't do when the storm wages. Fifteen minutes a day at the throne of grace won't hold back the hurricane. Warmed-over stories and a borrowed illustration will not stand the tornadic enemy. We have larger tents now. The stakes must go deeper. Devotionals, tirades, lectures and book reviews are not enough! As the tent grows bigger, the stakes must be driven deeper and the cords must be longer!

We had better strengthen the stakes of our walk with God. When the tent is larger, ten minutes a day won't do it any more. Grace at the table and five minutes of reading a page from a devotional book is not enough now. Our folks need to know how to get things from God. We must teach them about walking in the Spirit. Somebody has to pray all night. Somebody has to pray down fire. The tents are bigger. We must go deeper, and our ropes must be longer!

We had better strengthen the stakes of our convictions. The power of positive thinking won't do; the wind is too strong. Possibility thinking won't make it; the storm is too great. This new fundamentalism with no invitation will not withstand the storms that are upon us now. Religious rock won't hold back tornadic winds. Sharing the platform with cultists and false teachers won't stem the hurricane.

We need to strengthen the stakes of honesty. We must not spend what we cannot afford. We must not borrow on projected income. We must not over-build and extend ourselves beyond our ability to pay. We must not start things we cannot afford. We must not sell bonds that we cannot redeem. When the winds of temptation come, we had better have stronger stakes and longer cords. When the winds of discouragement come, we had better drive our stakes deeper and have longer cords. When the winds of persecution howl, we had better be sure we have made the length of our cords and the depth of our stakes commensurate with the size of our tents. When the winds of materialism blow, we will wish our stakes were deeper and our cords were longer.

Oh, men of God, some warmed-over sermons won't do! A little outline borrowed from a book is not enough! We must walk with God! We must be men of God! We must walk to the pulpit before the people of God with the message from God! May God help us as preachers to lengthen our cords and strengthen our stakes as our tents enlarge!

## The Invitation

Immediately when we think of the word "invitation" we think of a song such as "Just As I Am" or "Softly and Tenderly" or "All to Jesus I Surrender." We think of folks coming forward to receive Christ as Saviour or to present themselves for church membership or perhaps believer's baptism. However, the invitation starts a long time before the end of the sermon. Basically, the invitation is the response of the audience to the service and message. This response should begin before the service ever starts. Consequently, the invitation begins before the service ever starts. Following is a step- by-step explanation of what the invitation really is.

1. The invitation begins when a hand of welcome is extended at the door. When a member of the church reaches forth his hand, he is asking for a response. When the visitor extends his hand for a warm handshake, he is responding, and the invitation has begun! This is why it is so important for there to be a friendly, relaxed atmosphere in the early part of the service. This beginning of the invitation is hindered in churches that do not encourage fellowship before the services. There seems to be a certain kind of feeling that the church building is where God lives and that we come by to see Him every week. Therefore, the church house is a place of austerity and quietness, and to fellowship and shake hands is irreverent. Nothing could be farther from the truth! Spurgeon called the church building simply a meeting place. God does not live inside the church building any more than He lives inside your home.

To be sure, there was a Shekinah Glory that dwelt over the Holy of Holies in the temple and in the tabernacle. This Shekinah represented God's presence with His people. There is still a temple, but that temple is not a church building.

The temple today is the body of the believer. I Corinthians 6:18-20, "Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body. What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." The church building is not a temple, or for that matter even a sanctuary, which means a place where God dwells. It is a meeting place where God's temples come to meet each other. A warm handshake and a "God bless you" are always in order. When a friendly greeter or usher or a happy member extends his hand to a visitor, the invitation has begun! He is beginning to respond. We trust that this will lead to total response which will lead to responding to the invitation of receiving Christ as Saviour.

2. The prelude is apart of the invitation. It, too, should invoke a response. For this reason, it should be familiar hymns or Gospel songs. It should not be classical music. Now I'm not criticizing the classics. I love them, but a church service is no place for them. There is no way that it can lead to a response, but if the organist or pianist is playing "Blessed Assurance" or "Leaning on the Ever- lasting Arms," people can hum along, at least in their hearts. Even thinking of the words that are being played is a response. Hence, it becomes a part of the invitation.

3. The song service is a part of the invitation. When the song leader announces the number and the audience turns to that number; it is responding to the song leader, and the spirit of responding is being increased. When the song leader asks the congregation to stand for the next

song, the fact that they grant his request and stand is in itself a response and becomes a part of the invitation. The singing itself is responding. It is the audience participating. It is used by the Spirit of God to make responding easier and to make the service conducive to a response when the invitation song is sung. This is the reason that familiar songs should be chosen-songs that sing easily and that people enjoy singing. Songs such as "At Calvary;" "At The Cross," "The Old Rugged Cross," "Amazing Grace," "How Firm a Foundation," "Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing," "Rescue the Perishing," "Sweet Hour of Prayer" and other songs that speak to the heart and evoke a response both in the heart and in the singing are certainly apart of the invitation.

4. The opening remarks by the pastor are a part of the invitation. Perhaps he says something that prompts a smile. This too is a response and helps to create a spirit of responding. This means that a warm introduction that causes the people of the audience to even have a nice thought is a part of the invitation. The people become participants with their thinking and with their acting. This Will make it easier for them to participate throughout the service and especially at the end of the service when they can find the spirit of responding an asset to their responding to the call of Christ to receive His gift of eternal life.

5. The recognition of visitors is apart of the invitation. The fact that they are asked to stand gives them an opportunity to respond. Of course, by this time they are accustomed to responding. They responded to the handshake at the door. They responded to the congregational singing. They responded to the pastor's opening remarks. Now they are more likely to respond by standing as visitors.

In a smaller church the visitors may be asked to give their names and home town. This will be difficult for them if they have not been in a service where responding is convenient and easy, but if throughout the service there has been an interaction between the pulpit and the pew, the visitor will find it far easier to give his name when he is recognized as a guest.

6. The offering is a part of the invitation. When the plate is passed and the guest accepts it and passes it on, he is responding. When he places a gift (regardless of the size) into the plate, he is responding.

7. Responsive reading is a part of the invitation. At the First Baptist Church in Hammond we always do this in our Sunday morning and Sunday evening services. The people stand and read either responsively or in unison a portion of Scripture. This is apart of the invitation. We have invited them to respond, and they are responding. They do so readily by this time, if the service has been one conducive to response.

8. Humor is a part of the invitation. Humor, in good taste, is an excellent way to invoke response. Something is said from the platform, and people smile, chuckle or laugh. They are responding. This is one reason that humor is such a vital part of a church service. It is simply another way for the platform to seek a response and for the audience to grant it.

9. identification with the speaker is an important part of the invitation. If the congregation feels that they are part of the sermon, if illustrations are used that pull the congregation into the speaker so that they can identify with him, it becomes easy to respond in one's mind. One of our members once said to me, "Pastor, I feel like you and I have done so many things together because the illustrations that you use are illustrations with which I can identify and I feel like apart of you when you preach." This too is apart of the invitation.

The sermon is now over. The unsaved person entered into the church and responded by extending his hand to a friendly greeter. He responded to the usher by following him to his seat. He responded to the song director by opening his song book to the number announced. He responded during the singing of a familiar song. He responded in his heart to the opening remarks. He responded with a smile or chuckle to some well-chosen humor. He responded at offering time. He responded at the recognition of visitors. He responded during the responsive reading or the reading in unison of the Word of God. For an hour or more he has been responding. Now it is time to respond to the Gospel. He is comfortable. He feels at home. The service has not been starchy or ritualistic. The Holy Spirit speaks to him. Response has not been difficult thus far; it will not be difficult now. The invitation is begun. A song of invitation is being sung. Soon there are tears and conviction and then, praise God, a response. He is now in the aisle. He is coming to the altar. He is now kneeling with a soul winner. He is praying the sinner's prayer. He has received Christ as Saviour! He is born again! He has escaped the fires of Hell! He is on his way to Heaven! His name is written in the Book of Life! He is a new creature in Christ Jesus, and to think, even the usher at the front door had apart!

## **The Preacher Must Be Stable**

Genesis 49:1-4, "And Jacob called unto his sons, and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall YOU in the last days. Gather yourselves together, and hear, ye sons of Jacob; and hearken unto Israel your father. Reuben, thou art my firstborn, my might, and the beginning of my strength, the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power. Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel; because thou wentest up to thy father's bed; then defiledst thou it: he went up to my couch." Psalm 112:7, "He shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord."

For a successful ministry; there must be some predictability about the preaching. I have a little saying-it is almost a motto-"I want the services at First Baptist Church to be such that if a visitor comes on any given Sunday, he will find about the same thing that he would find on any other given Sunday" I want there to be a stability, a predictability and a consistency about the services, especially about the preaching. The congregation should not wonder in what kind of mood the preacher is going to be. They should expect him to act, not react! His temperament should lead instead of follow. A trip to church on the part of a parishioner should not be one of investigating whether the pastor is on the mountaintop or in the valley I often say to our people, "Travel as fast as you can continue to travel. Choose a speed that you can consistently continue."

Jacob was dying. He called his sons to his bedside. Reuben was called. Jacob described him. He called him his strongest boy, his most thoughtful boy, his most talented boy, his most gifted son, his smartest, his most intellectual, his most proper, his most mannerly, his best leader, his most personable, and perhaps even his most handsome son! I am not sure that such a description is given about anyone else in the Bible.

Yet Jacob sadly reminds Reuben that he will never reach his potential because he is unstable as water! When the tide of sorrow rises higher, he goes to pieces. When the dark waters overflow in life, he loses control. When the storms of bad news billow over his path, he wavers. When the tempest of testing comes, he is unsure. When the battle comes, he is blown as waves by the wind. When tides of cloudy tidings loom overhead, his mast is torn. When rumblings of recession roar; he is ravaged. When the deep depicts a depression, panic grips him. When venomous, vicious, vindictive words are vociferously voiced about him, he becomes a victim of their vice. Like water above, foul winds move him. Like water beneath, strong winds ruffle him.

With all of his talents and abilities, Reuben was not usable because of one great weakness-instability

Give me the weaker one with less talent, less intellect, less ability and less personality whose anchor holds when his vessel is attacked by watery winds or windy waters. Give me the one who is stable when his soul is concerned but not destroyed by evil tidings, whose work is done midst the storm that idles others, who is not rattled by the morning papers, because he has already read his Bible! Give me the one who feels the wound of pain but it leaves not a scar of panic. Give me the one who possesses trembling but not whining. Give me the one who when his bosom heaves midst the storm, his will is not broken. Give me the one who stands when

winds of disappointments cause his soulish ship to tremble but not to sink. Give me the one whom the storm takes off his calm but not off his course. In trouble he may fold his arms for a moment, but quickly he will take hold of the wheel. When the mountains are moved and cast into the sea, he will not detour to watch them fall. He will stay where he is and do his duty in the midst of the clash. When the death message comes, his heart is smitten but not stricken. His mind may be assaulted by a panic-stricken rumor, yet he fights on! He is undercut by the undercurrent of unemployment, but he is unwavering in his undying faith in his understanding God. Tidings of disease may come, but to him they bring no defeat. Tidings of defeat may come, but to him they bring no depression. Tidings of death may come, but to him they bring no doubt. Tidings of difficulty may come, but to him they bring no despair. Tidings of depression may come, but to him they bring no detour. Tidings of delay may come, but to him they bring no discouragement. Like Obadiah of old when he heard the evil tidings of Edom, he replied with the words, "We have heard tidings from the Lord."

When the evil tidings of recession come, he flees to Matthew 6:33, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." When tidings of depression come, he turns to Philippians 4:19, "But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

When tidings of death come, he reads John 14:1-3, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

When tidings of want come, he reads Psalm 23:1, "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want." When tidings of fear come, he reads Psalm 91:1, "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty."

When tidings of betrayal come, he remembers that there is a Friend that sticketh closer than a brother. When tidings of disease come, he remembers that "He healeth all thy diseases." When tidings of loneliness come, he finds refuge in Hebrews 13:5, "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."

When tidings of weariness come, he finds Isaiah 40:31, "But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint." When tidings of disappointment come, he hides in Romans 8:28, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose."

When times of decision come, he looks to Proverbs 3:6, "In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths." When tidings of suffering come, he races to Philippians 3:10, "That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death."

When tidings of trouble come, he rushes to John 14:1, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me."

When tidings of temptation come, he scurries to I Corinthians 10:13, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful Who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye

may be able to bear it."

When tidings of need come, he nestles in Philippians 4:19, "But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

When tidings of doubt come, he shouts, "I know that my Redeemer liveth!" When tidings of poverty come, he flies to Jeremiah 33:3, "Call unto Me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not." When discouragement comes, he hustles to Revelation 21:1, "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea."

Poor Reuben! Think what he could have done! Lesser men than he have crossed seas, won battles, built cities, marshalled armies and ruled kingdoms; yet one thing held him back! How sad! How tragic!

Though the story of Reuben is such a pitiful one because of his instability, it is infinitely worse for us. Reuben had no Romans 8:28. He had no John 14:1-3. He had no Jeremiah 33:3. He had no Psalm 37. He had no Philippians 4:13. He had no Psalm 23:1. He had no Psalm 91:1. He had no Proverbs 3:6. He had no John 15:7. He had no Philippians 4:19. He had no New Testament church. He had no pastor to preach to him three times weekly He had no Christian school. He had no written promises, but we do! Think how much more stable we should be! We have a full Bible; he didn't. We look back to the virgin birth; he couldn't. We have a record of the life of Christ on earth; he didn't. We know about the sinless life of the Saviour. We know about the vicarious death, the bodily resurrection, the heavenly ascension and His promises to return; Reuben didn't.

Think what might have been for Reuben, and think what might have been for us. May we possess stability, perseverance, predictability and consistency Stability without anything else can have some success. All else without stability will fall. Whatever else you get, by all means get stability.

There are many things that lead to this great trait, not the least of which is schedule. At last count, 507 people are either full-time or part-time employees of the First Baptist Church of Hammond and its related ministries. All of these have a boss on duty; yet, I have no boss! There is no one who makes me come to work on time. There is no one who orders me to study Since I have no boss, I made one-I call him my schedule, and I obey him and follow him faithfully This is so necessary for preaching. There must be a scheduled time for study There must be scheduled time for meditation. There must be a scheduled time for praying for the power of God. There must be a scheduled time for praise, a scheduled time for worship, a scheduled time for confession.

When God chose a name by which He would call His followers, He chose the word "disciples." This is very interesting. He wanted them to be disciples, or disciplined one~ To be successful in preaching, the man of God must be a disciplined one. He must be stable, consistent and, in a true sense, a disciple!



## **Preaching Between the Living and the Dead**

Some of the people rose up against Moses and Aaron. They said that Moses and Aaron had taken too much upon themselves. They would take away from Aaron his embroidered vest, strip him of his mitre, remove the glittering stones that sparkled on his breast, silence the bells that jangled on the hem of his garment, blot out the embroidered pomegranates near the bells and destroy both him and his brother, Moses.

Suddenly the earth opened. An earthquake consumed these rebels. Then the Israelites blamed Moses and Aaron for the death. God was furious. He sent a plague that killed 14,700 people. (Numbers 16:44-50)

Moses said to Aaron, "Quick, take a censer. Put fire in it. Run to the people. Hold it high." Aaron did so, and as he did, the plague was stayed because he was standing between the living and the dead. Picture this old man, probably 100 years old, running up and down between the living and the dead and holding high his censer. This is exactly what the preacher does when he walks to his pulpit. He is God's man standing between the living and the dead. Oh, for a holy awe to grip us as we enter the sacred place, open the sacred Book and preach the sacred message!

Several years ago at the Bill Rice Ranch I was riding on horse- back to the morning cookout breakfast for which the Ranch is so famous. A young man rode up beside me and said, "Dr. Hyles, I'm a young preacher. I'm trying to decide what type preacher I should be-a Hell-fire and brimstone preacher or a deeper-lifer (whatever that is)." He said that he had talked to a deeper-lifer and gotten his advice; now he wanted my advice about the future of his ministry. He said, "Could you counsel with me?"

I asked him, "Young man, is there a Hell?" He said, "Yes, there is, but would you counsel with me concerning what kind of preacher I ought to be?" I asked, "Is there a Hell?" "Yes," he said, "there is a Hell, but would you give me advice?" I asked, "Is there a Hell? Is there a Hell? Is there a Hell?" He said, "Dr. Hyles, aren't you going to counsel with me? The other preacher did." I asked, "Is there a Hell? Is there a Hell? Is there a Hell?" He rode off with a look of bewilderment on his face.

Several weeks passed. I was talking to Dr. Russell Anderson on the telephone. He said, "Dr. Hyles, I heard a young man preach the other day who said that he had talked with you recently at the Bill Rice Ranch." I said, "What was his name?" He said, "I don't know what his name was, but he sure preached a great message. I asked if he knew the title of the message. He said, "Yes, I do. The title was, 'Is There a Hell?'"

It was the same young man. He had made his choice. He had decided to stand between the living and the dead. I ask you that question: Is there a Hell? Is there a place where people are burning right now? Is there a place where they plead for one drop of water to cool their tongue for they are tormented by the flames? Is there a place where the worm dieth not and fire is not quenched? Is there a place where He shall say to those on the left hand, "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels"? Is it true that the wicked shall be turned into Hell, and all the nations that forget God? Is there a place where those not found written in the Book of Life shall be cast into the Lake of Fire? Is the rich man still

weeping and begging? Is it true that my unsaved father who died a drunkard's death is there? Is he burning alter all these years? Was I standing between the living and the dead when I talked to my father that Sunday afternoon, January 1, 1950, and pleaded with him to get saved? He told me that he would, but he was going to wait until the spring-but spring never came because he died and was buried on May 13 of that same year! Is it true that there is a Hell? Is it true that your loved ones without Christ are going to Hell? Is it true that the one who carried you in her womb who is unsaved is going to burn in Hell forever? Is it true that the only man you can ever call Daddy who is lost is going to Hell? Is your unsaved brother really going to a place of torment? Do those who hear you preach and reject the Gospel really die without Christ and go to Hell to burn forever? Is it true that those millions in Chicago within driving distance of my church who live without Christ and die without Christ will burn in Hell forever? If it isn't true, I'm going home! If it isn't true, I'm not walking to the pulpit again! If it isn't true, let's eat, drink and be merry! If it isn't true, let's call the missionaries home! If it isn't true, let's stop the buses from rolling! If it isn't true, let's make a planter out of the baptistry, close the church doors and quit the ministry! If it isn't true, let's make money! If it isn't true, let's live it up! If it isn't true, I've gotten my last lonely boarding pass on an airplane! If it isn't true, I've checked into my last motel room! If it isn't true, I've made my last all-night flight!

But if it is true, get the soul winning organized! If it is true, plead for God's power! If it is true, get the buses rolling! If it is true, let's set our preacher boys on fire! If it is true, let's fill the baptistries every week! If it is true, let's quit trading the prayer closet for the voting booth! If it is true, let's quit turning bus captains into precinct captains! If it is true, let's keep our concern about the murder of the unborn, but be more concerned about the salvation of the born! If it is true, let's keep our burden for the right to life but have a bigger burden for the right to eternal life! If it is true, let's get back to the old-fashioned, window-rattling, shingle-pulling, barn-storming, Hell-fire and brimstone, Bible preaching; to Christ- honoring, soul-winning, Heaven-populating preaching! If it is true, let's dust off some of our old sermons on Hell and use them again!

If it is true, "Let's talk about Jesus, the King of kings is He, the Lord of lords supreme, throughout eternity; the great I Am, the Way, the Truth, the Life, the Door; let's talk about Jesus more and more!" If it is true, let's organize more soul-winning campaigns than voter-registration campaigns! If it is true, let's get back to soul winning, which is really the answer! Soul winning will sober more alcoholics than Alcoholics Anonymous. Soul winning will clean more slums than social programs. Soul winning will feed more hungry bodies than welfare. Soul winning will save America quick- er than politics. Soul winning will do more for educating children than Head Start Programs. Soul winning will keep folks from burning in Hell!

If it is true, let's get back to talking about souls more than about offerings! If it is true, let's get back to talking about baptisms more than about registrations! If it is true, let's do church work more than school work! If it is true, let's make the Sunday school more important than the day school! If it is true, let's make the Sunday school teacher more important than the history teacher! If it is true, let's make the deacon more important than the school board! If it is true, let's make saving souls more important than basketball goals! If it is true, let's make soul-winning clubs more important than fellowship groups! If it is true, let's find the answer in the Father's house instead of in the White House!

All I ask is, "Dear preacher, is there a Hell?" Oh, for old- fashioned preaching about warning people about the wrath of God, the old-fashioned preaching that has a Hell that's hot and sin

that's black and an eternity that's long.

Several years ago a man was dying. I was called to his bedside, and these were his dying words: "Teacher, don't lie to me. I'm dying. Is there really a Heaven? Tell me. Is it true that there's a Heaven?"

I ask you this question: Is there really a Heaven? Is there "a land that is fairer than day, and by faith we can see it afar, for the Father waits over the way, to prepare us a dwelling place there"? Is it true that in my Rither's house are many mansions? Is it true that He has gone to prepare a place for me? Is it true that He will come again? Is it true that He will receive me unto Himself? Is it true that where He is, there will I be also? Is it true that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord? Is it true that John saw the Holy City, coming down from God out of Heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband? Is it true that "when we've been there ten thousand years, bright shining as the sun, we've no less days to sing God's praise than when we first begun"?

Is it true that at 3:37 p.m. on September 30, 1984, my Mama really went to Heaven? Is it true that she is in Heaven now? Is it true that she is with her two little girls who preceded her in death many years before? Can she actually see Lorene, and is she with Hazel now? Is it true that her blind eyes can now see? Are her shoulders really straight? Is she beholding the face of the One she loved more than life? Is her face unwrinkled? Is her brow unfurrowed? Can I really sing, "Tell Mother I'll Be There"? Does she hear me preach? Can she walk? Can she run? Can she jump? Can she hear? Is she watching me now? Was she wrong when she said on her death bed, "There's Lorene; there's Hazel; there's Uncle Harvey and Aunt Jimmie"? Is she really free of pain? Was she right as we talked and held hands and she said, "I'm going to Heaven, son," and we joined hands and sang, "O they tell me of a home far beyond the sky; O they tell me of a home far away; O they tell me of a home where no storm clouds rise; O they tell me of an unclouded day"? Is there a Heaven? Is there a Hell? Will my mother really never hurt again? Is there a city really being built there with streets of gold and gates of pearl? Was I right when I stood beside my mother's bed and told her of Heaven? Was I right at the airport when I called her after she had died, temporarily forgetting that she was gone? The operator said, "Sir, no one answers," and I said, "Oh, I forgot, operator. Last Thursday she moved to a new address." Did she really move to a new address?

Is my good friend, Dr. John Rice, really with Jesus? Is Brother Lester Roloff beholding the face of his Saviour? Is Dr. Ford Porter talking to Him now? Is Dr. Bill Rice actually with Him?

I ask you: Is there a Hell? Is there a Heaven? Do we really stand between the living and dead? Is Jesus really the difference? Is the need of man the old rugged cross? Was Paul's message to the Philippian jailor really right when he said, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved'? Did God really so love "the world that He gave His only begotten Son"? Then what else matters?

Oh, men of God, it is true! There is a Heaven! There is a Hell! There is a Jesus! There is a virgin birth! There is a sinless life! There is a vicarious death! There is a bodily resurrection! There is an ascension! There is a coming back to the earth on the part of the Saviour! There is a rapture! There is a tribulation! There is a millennium! There is a New Jerusalem! It's real! There is a Hell! There is a Heaven! As we stand to preach, we do stand between the living and the dead! May God give us that awareness as we walk to the pulpit Sunday after Sunday, as we hold the censer of the Word of God high to stay the plague, as we stand between the living and

the dead!

## **The Preacher and Language**

There are several things that should be sacred to a nation: (1) Its flag, (2) Its National Anthem, (3) Its landmarks, (4) Its Pledge of Allegiance, and (5) Its language. We cringe at the thought of profaning any of these. Nothing raises to a boiling point the blood of a patriot like seeing his flag abused or profaned. A number of years ago a group of rebels gathered across the street from our church, took an American flag, dipped it in soapy water and washed a car with it. I organized a posse of our men, and we went over and captured the flag from the rebels. We were infuriated, and justly so!

All patriotic Americans are alarmed when people remain seated during the playing of the National Anthem. One fellow mentioned to me that he was at a ballgame. The person next to him did not stand during the playing of the National Anthem. My friend grabbed him by the collar, jerked him up and said, "You stand up, fellow, while our National Anthem is being played!" Whether or not this is the action all of us would have taken, it is the action that all true Americans would like to take!

Not many years ago some hoodlums defaced the Statue of Liberty. All of us who hold the United States dear were shocked and angered by this defamation.

We are equally alarmed when someone refuses to pay homage to our country by refusing to say the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

All of the above abuses are abhorrent to those of us who love America and its heritage; yet people who would not dare profane the flag, the National Anthem, our landmarks and the Pledge of Allegiance, think nothing about defacing the fifth of those things which are sacred to us—our language. Now I am in no way a grammatical Pharisee, nor do I feel superior to those who have not had the opportunity to learn the language, nor do I condemn in the least a faithful preacher of the Gospel whose grammar is imperfect because of interrupted or denied training. Dr. Bob Jones, Sr. used to say, "I would rather a man say, 'I seen,' who has seen something than to say, 'I have seen,' who ain't seen nothin'." I agree with him; yet I believe that the man of God should equip himself with the best tools available. I am not criticizing a person who drives a nail with the heel of his shoe, but a hammer would do better. I am not criticizing a person who eats with his fingers, but a fork and a spoon would be better; nor am I criticizing a sincere man of God who because of circumstances has not been allowed to acquaint himself with the English language as he would like to have done, but I do feel that the best equipment available should be used in the proclamation of the Word of God! If a person is using the best tools that are available to him, he certainly will have me in his corner cheering; and regardless of what language he used to proclaim Christ, I will pull for him and in no way criticize him; but as we have opportunity as God's men, we need to polish our tools as much as possible. One of these tools is our language. The English language is the preacher's trowel, his hammer; his scalpel, his chisel. The English language is the conveyor of his feelings. The more words and phrases that the preacher knows and the more proper his grammar is, the more effectively can he convey his true feelings to those who hear him.

Not only is the language the means of conveying the preacher's feelings, but it is also his means of thinking. We think in the English language, so the better that we know it, the better we can

think. Not to know it well limits our minds, for the language is not only a tool with which to convey thoughts and feelings, but it is a tool with which we exercise and improve the mind.

The language is also the way of communicating truth. It is the vehicle by which truth is passed from one mind to another, so the more of the language we know and the better we know it, the more able we are to communicate truth.

Someone said to a famous preacher one time, "God doesn't need your education." The preacher replied, "God doesn't need your ignorance, either." Bear in mind, we are not talking here about the person with limited opportunity. We are talking about the person who refuses opportunity or squanders it. We are not being critical of those with limited vocabularies; we are simply encouraging God's men to learn better how to communicate, how to think, how to transfer truth and how to express their feelings.

Language is one of the greatest unifiers of people. When the tower of Babel was built in the book of Genesis, it was done so in order that the people might become one, but God looked down and did not want them to become one; that is, He did not want them to have a one-world government, a one-world religion, etc. So God went down and confounded the language. Because of this, they were scattered abroad upon the face of the earth. Their method of unity had been taken from them.

Because of the aforementioned reasons, English is probably the most important subject for a ministerial student to study in college. Immediately the reader may think that the Bible is the most important, and he may be right. However; a successful preacher will study his Bible. A good Christian will read his Bible. God's man will search the Bible for truth and in the years following his college training, he will continually live in his Bible, but he will not continually live in his English book. Certainly he should take all the Bible in college that he can, but he should give unlimited emphasis to the learning of the English language. With it he will preach the Bible. With it he will tell of the grace of God. Whether by pen or tongue, every sermon he preaches or writes will be done in the language. Not to know it and use it well will limit his opportunity of adequately expressing the love of God and transferring from his mind to the minds of the people the great truths of the Bible. If the preacher does not know it well, he should use it in the best way he can, but his best should continually improve! This is not just in order to reach a few educated snobs and grammatical Pharisees. This is so he can more effectively proclaim the greatest truths in all the world-those that God has revealed to man!

Thank God for the English language-that beautiful heirloom handed down from our fathers. May we guard it carefully and hand it down in its purity to those who follow us, and may I while I am its custodian learn it to its fullest so that I may properly express the real "me" to you, and may I so preserve it that I can express to you what I really am, what I really know and what I really feel.

Let me show you the crime of profaning the language. Read John 1:1, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was John." John 1:14, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." Revelation 19:13, "And He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and His name is called The Word of God." You will notice these verses have at least one thing in common. In each of them Jesus is called The Word of God. Why was He called the Word? Because He was God's way of expressing Himself to man just as our words are our way of expressing ourselves to man. Since Jesus is the Word of God, or God's way of

expressing Himself to man, I rebel when He is not expressed properly and when someone mars the perfection of God's expression of Himself to mankind. I rebel when someone refutes and rejects the virgin birth, for the virgin birth is one of the letters in God's Word. It mars God's expressing of Himself to man. I rebel when someone rejects the sinless life of Christ; they are marring God's Word, or God's expression of Himself to man. I feel equal disdain when people deny the vicarious death, reject the bodily resurrection, verbal inspiration of the Scriptures, etc. Why do I have this rebellion and disdain? I have it simply because God's method of expressing Himself to man has been marred.

Man has a way of expressing himself to man. This expression is done through his word, or his language. What a tragedy to mar it and to profane it! Just as a sinful Jesus would be an inadequate expression of God, the man; even so a misused and abused language limits man's expression of himself to man. If one person really loves another; he should have all the tools possible with which to express that love. If a preacher really wants to convey truth to his people, he should have all the tools possible with which to convey that truth.

Now what can the preacher do who has not had the opportunities that he would have preferred? There are several things he can do.

1. He should Learn to spell. He can get a spelling book, just like a child in the first grade, get with a friend who understands, and learn to spell! For the preacher to say, "I never could spell very well," is not a shame. For the preacher to say, "I never will learn to spell very well," is a shame.
2. The preacher should learn new words on a regular basis. Learn a new word a week. It will be another weapon in your arsenal, another vitamin in your menu, and another tool that you can use in the expression of yourself and in your revealing of God's truths to your people.
3. Read. Nothing will substitute for it. One of the reasons we do not know the language is that we do not see it enough. One of the reasons that we do not spell properly is that we do not see words enough. People who read extensively will soon learn how to spell properly. People who read proper grammar will one day use proper grammar. Read, read, read, read, read! Of course, choose carefully what you read, but read! Of course, do not read heresy, but read!
4. Write. Write sermons. Write essays. Write poetry As you write, use a dictionary When you doubt the spelling of a word, look it up.
5. Do not use improper words. It is a shame and a tragedy what this generation has done to its language. Money is "bread"; a good time is "a blast"; an uncooperative person is "a square"; a nice person is "cool." We call young ladies "guys," and in general, we have profaned one of the things that should be most sacred to us our language.

I was in Jamaica preaching. On Monday I checked into the hotel It was a small hotel, so the owner and his wife and five-year-old daughter were at the desk when I arrived. They were so gracious to me. I had never been treated with any more hospitality and courtesy After chatting with them for awhile I looked to their little five-year-old daughter and said, "My, you are a real little sweet- heart!" Immediately their attitude toward me changed! Their treatment of me became cool and distant, and sometimes bordered on being rude. I couldn't understand it. All week they treated me that way While the pastor was driving me to the airport on Friday, I told him what had happened and asked him if he had any idea what caused their treatment of me to change. The pastor said, "Dr. Hyles, you don't know? I thought you knew. When you checked

in on Monday and called their daughter "a sweetheart," you were actually calling her in Jamaican language a prostitute! You thought you were saying, 'You are a little sweetheart.' What you really were saying is, 'You are a little prostitute.' "Think of it! A week of my life was lived in misunderstanding because of a misuse of the language!

On Monday night of that week I preached to a group of Jamaican preachers and missionaries. I kept stressing a truth that Christian people should get out, knock on doors and tell folks about Christ. I noticed that there was a subdued response on the part of the Jamaican people. I could not understand it. I did understand, however, when after the service I was asked by a Jamaican, "What is this thing that you preached about tonight called "knocking on doors"?

I was stunned! Then I told him that that means that we should go out where people are and visit their home and tell them about Jesus. He said, "Oh, you mean hold-doggin'." I said, "What in the world is hold-doggin'?" He said, "That is the same thing to us that knocking on doors is to you." He proceeded to tell me that not many of the homes in his neighborhood even had doors. It was not a door that kept the family safe; it was the dog in the entrance of the house! So when you go up to tell someone about Christ or visit in the home you simply holler; "Hold the dog!" They call that "hold-doggin'." The next night I preached on, "Go into all the world and do hold-doggin'." It was quite humorous as I challenged them to go hold- doggin' and scolded them because they were not going hold- doggin' enough!

The language is important. Of course, no one should be critical of another or think himself superior to another because his gram- mar or use of the English language is superior to that of his friend, but each of us should do the best that we can to learn the language and its use in order that we may better convey to those whom we love our true feelings and to those whom we preach a proper presentation of the truth that God gives us for a message!



## **The Care and the Use of the Preacher's Voice**

The voice of God's man is the thing that is used to transfer what is in his mind to the minds of his people. It is the vehicle which God has chosen with which to deliver His truth to His people. Because of this, the preacher must take extra care of his voice. It matters not how spiritual he is, how sincere he is or how prepared he is; when his voice is gone, his primary purpose is gone. John the Baptist was called a voice. Because of the importance of the preacher's voice, he should watch it carefully and care for it properly. There are four things that cause voice trouble for a preacher.

### **I. STRAIN.**

Strain is almost always caused by improper care of the voice and by improper knowledge of its limitations. There are many things that a preacher can do to prevent this enemy from hampering or eliminating his opportunity for doing the thing that God has called him to do and being the thing that God has called him to be.

1. Perform vocal exercise. Any muscle in the human body needs exercise. Athletic teams must properly exercise before a game or they will damage their muscles. The wise pastor will perform vocal exercises before preaching and, for that matter, make them a part of his regular schedule. Singers are taught to exercise their voices before concerts. Athletes are taught to exercise their bodies before games. Soldiers exercise their bodies before battle. Why shouldn't the preacher exercise his voice before preaching!

When God called me to preach, I saw no way that I could ever be a success at it! I went to the Texas University at Arlington and told the Dean that I was going to be a preacher; so he gave me permission to take an excessive number of speech and public speaking courses. It was there that I learned to exercise my voice, and though I do not have the strongest voice in the world, it has enabled me to preach over 42,500 sermons over a period of nearly 40 years. This I think would not have been possible had I not been taught vocal exercises. In the morning early I use the long vowels preceded by an "h"-like "ha, ha, ha, he~, he~, he~, hi, hi, hi, ho, ho, ho, hu~, hu, hu." I exercise with my voice coming from the stomach and not from the throat. Then I do the same thing with the short vowels, "ha, ha, ha, he, he, he, hi, hi, hi, ho, ho, ho, hu, hu, hu." Then I put my hands on my stomach and do the same thing several times. Then I lay across the bed with my head hanging off the side of the bed and go through the same exercises several times. If a preacher has the slightest voice problem he should, while he is young, take voice lessons and learn the proper care for that part of his anatomy which is the same thing as a hammer is to a carpenter, a stethoscope is to a doctor; a scalpel is to a surgeon, a trowel is to a brick mason and a needle is to a seamstress.

2. Arise early in the morning; drink a big, tall glass of hot water; and then do the vocal exercises. Some people put a little lemon juice in the hot water. This is a good way for a preacher to start the day

3. Avoid lying down and/or taking naps right before speaking.

4. Sing a lot. Singing is good voice exercise. Of course, this should not be excessively loud singing; just sing with a normal singing voice, being careful to sing from the diaphragm or

stomach rather than the throat.

5. Do some public speaking prior to the service in which you will preach. I find it helpful to teach a Sunday school class before I preach on Sunday morning and to speak in some way at an early service on Sunday evening. Since the teaching of a class is not as strenuous as preaching, I find it good vocal exercise for the preaching that is to follow.

6. Stay calm at other events. The preacher should find some way to express his enthusiasm and excitement at a ball game other than straining his voice.

7. Pronounce words distinctly. A mispronunciation of words is usually caused by improper training and will often cause problems with the speaker's voice. The same thing that causes a preacher to mispronounce his words also causes the voice to become strained. The wise pastor will work diligently in an effort to learn to pronounce properly his vocabulary.

8. Do not force excitement. Forced excitement tightens the voice muscles. Let the excitement while preaching come from the heart to the voice, not from the voice to the heart. When excitement comes from the heart to the voice, it is a natural excitement and will aid in taking the voice to the diaphragm. When excitement is not natural, it lifts the voice to the throat and leads to strain. It is usually best for a preacher not to start his sermons with a loud voice. Start with a calm, assured voice. Then when excitement comes in the heart, the heart will send the throat a message and say that it is ready now for volume! The heart has done its work first, and strain is less likely.

9. Start slowly. Have you ever noticed two prize fighters in the ring at the beginning of round one? They spar awhile; each feels out his opponent; and then gradually the intensity builds. This is what the wise preacher will do. He will start gradually, let his voice become adjusted to a certain pitch, and then the volume can be increased without damaging the throat.

10. Stay close to the microphone. Use the microphone! I do not like for the public address men to "ride gain" on me while I preach. By that I mean, if I get loud, I do not like for them to turn down the volume of the public address system. If I get soft, I do not like for them to turn it up. I prefer to use voice fluctuation rather than "riding gain." Because of this, I do not prefer to use a lapel mike. Many splendid preachers use them with great success; however, I would not advise a preacher who has even the slightest problem with his voice to use a lapel mike.

11. You should be able to hear your amplified voice. The public address system should have speakers placed close enough to the preacher so he can hear his own voice easily. Avoid using small speakers throughout the auditorium. The sound should come from speakers near the preacher so he can hear himself. Often I will preach in a church building where the people can hear me better than I can hear myself. This always poses a problem. In an effort to hear myself I speak louder than I should. I soon find myself hoarse and often make the mistake of straining my voice.

12. Use an excessive amount of treble on the PA system with not much bass. Get behind a microphone and test this for yourself. Ask someone to adjust the PA system to be heavy on bass. In fact, turn the treble all the way down and the bass all the way up. Notice how muffled the words seem to be. Then turn the bass all the way down and the treble all the way up and notice how much easier it is to understand the words. This is not to say that the treble should be all the way up and the bass all the way down, but the emphasis should be on the treble rather than on the bass.

13. Do not use an adjuster or a mixer on your PA system. This will lower the volume automatically when you speak loudly and will raise it when you speak softly. This may be good for lecturing, but is treacherous for preaching. Some electronic engineers who have never preached love them, but no real preacher enjoys preaching when the volume of his voice is controlled by a machine. Of all the things that destroy my voice and cause me to strain it, this is the one that does the most damage the quickest!

14. Use a change of pace while preaching. Do not preach an entire sermon at full volume. Give your voice a chance to rest. An athlete does this with his body. A preacher should do it with his voice. This also enables the hearer to have a chance to relax. It provides added effectiveness. If everything is emphasized, nothing is emphasized. For proper care of the voice, there should be some loud speaking, some soft speaking, some conversational tone and a variety of volume.

15. Exercise your voice on days you do not do any public speaking. The voice is like a muscle. It can be sore if it is not used regularly. A preacher who preaches daily and who cares for his voice properly will have less voice trouble than a preacher who preaches one day a week, all other things being equal. So on days when the voice is not used for preaching, it should be exercised on a regular basis.

16. Try to avoid tension while preaching. The more relaxed the preacher can be, the less likely he is to strain his voice. Enjoy preaching. Don't let it be a chore or a time of unnecessary tension. Relax in the Lord while you preach. Enjoy it, and avoid tension as much as possible.

17. Use your voice early in the service so as to test it and therefore learn how to pace yourself and use it when you preach. By that I mean, make the announcements and/or recognize the visitors so that you will know your voice and its condition before you stand to preach.

18. If following another preacher, learn to be yourself. Do not fret if he has taken the congregation to a high pitch and to a lofty spiritual experience. Realize that God has you there for a purpose too. Do not compete with him. Do not fret or try to out-preach him. Just be yourself. Yield yourself to the Holy Spirit and let Him use you for the purpose that He has you there.

19. Do not try to deliver a sermon, but deliver your soul and lose yourself in a truth. The throat loosens when a preacher is lost in his message. When he is totally consumed with what he is saying, there is less strain on his voice.

## II. TENSION.

Just as strain causes voice problems, tension is also a great enemy to preaching.

1. Prepare in advance, and avoid the meeting of a deadline. When a deadline is approaching, the preacher's entire body becomes tense. It affects his voice and will lead him to not having his tool sharpened for its work.

2. Do not discuss problems before preaching. Do not allow church problems or personal problems to be a part of your conversation or thinking process before you preach. Problems will tense up the body, including the voice, and often cause serious voice problems while preaching.

3. Take care of no church business before preaching. Do not have board meetings, committee meetings or counseling sessions that could cause tension.

4. Do not read your mail before preaching. It could bring some bad messages that could cause

you to enter the pulpit with a tense body and a tense throat.

5. Avoid fellowship before preaching. There should be no counseling or fellowship. This too could create tension that could affect the voice.

6. Avoid heavy praying before preaching. This is mentioned in another chapter and on both occasions I approach this point with fear and trembling for fear I be misunderstood. I believe in heavy praying. I believe in all-night praying. I believe in fasting and praying. I believe in supplication and prayer, but I do not believe that right before a sermon is the time for a preacher to become tense. It can affect his voice adversely

Nothing should be done that would take the slightest chance of causing any disagreement before the man of God walks in the pulpit. This will not only affect him adversely in his preaching, but also it could damage his voice.

7. Always preach with a collar that is loose. If you like to button your collar while preaching, then buy shirts that are a half size too large. Do not be timid about unbuttoning your collar and slightly loosening your tie. Of course, there are circumstances when this should not be done. These would include commencement exercises, weddings, funerals, etc., but behind his own pulpit, the pastor should feel free to do what is necessary to care for his voice.

8. Do not preach to individuals. This also is mentioned else- where under another subject, but when a preacher preaches to individuals and uses the pulpit as a whipping post or scolding place, he will more than likely become tense, and his voice could be affected.

All of this is to say that the preacher should avoid tension. Voice problems are caused not only by strain but also by tension.

### III. STOMACH.

Most voice problems are really stomach problems. If the stomach is in good shape, the voice is usually in good shape.

1. Never speak right after eating. I try to leave at least three hours between my last meal and my sermon.

2. Eat very little at bedtime.

3. Wear loose clothing. Tight pants can cause a problem with the preacher's voice while he delivers his sermon.

4. Rely a lot on juices. Many years ago I used to preach revival campaigns. Sometimes I would begin a revival campaign with a hoarseness. When such was the case, I would get off all solid foods and stay on vegetable and fruit juices for the entire revival. Usually my voice was in better shape at the end of the revival meeting than it was at the beginning.

5. Eat plenty of vegetables. Though I do not live on strictly a vegetarian diet, I believe that I could do so because I believe one of the great secrets to health is the consumption of many vegetables. Eat salads that include lettuce, celery, greens, cucumbers, etc. Then enjoy cooked vegetables such as carrots, asparagus, green beans, zucchini, squash, greens and other leafy vegetables.

6. Avoid dairy products within two hours of preaching. Dairy products have a way of causing a congestion in the throat and should be used on a limited basis and not at all near the time of preaching.

#### IV. COLDS AND SORE THROATS.

I travel every week. In January I am in the Florida Keys one week and in Alaska the next week. I go from sub-zero weather to tropical weather within a matter of days. I am in all types of climates, all degrees of humidity, and I must constantly watch myself. Thanks be to God, I have not missed a speaking engagement in over 20 years. Part of this is because I fight constantly to avoid sore throats and colds.

1. Keep your head and feet warm and dry. My mother used to say to me, "Son, the most important thing about being outside in the cold is to keep the extremities warm. Keep your feet warm and your head warm."
2. Avoid drafts. Avoid drafts on airplanes, while driving in a car, while sleeping, and by all means, while preaching. Pamper your- self. When you are in a draft, do whatever you can to have it removed or to have yourself removed from it.
3. Watch auditorium temperature. A building that is too hot or too cold can play havoc with a preacher's voice. Every Sunday morning at 7:45 I go to the auditorium in our church, read the temperature and look at a chart of days in the past when the outdoor temperature was nearly the same. Then my maintenance man and I decide the degree of heat or air conditioning that we will need for the service.
4. You may be wise to wear year-around suits. It may be below zero outside, but the temperature in the auditorium will be about the same in January that it is in July. If the preacher preaches in a heavy wool suit in January and a thin light suit in July in the same auditorium with the same temperature, it could affect his voice and his throat.
5. Always keep a coat, a hat and rubber shoes available. Weather can change. In the fall and winter do not be very far from a hat, coat and rubber shoes. If the preacher must stay late after the service, it might be wise to have some dry underclothing available. If he is perspiring heavily when he finishes his sermon, it might be wise for him to consider changing his undershirt and perhaps his shirt before counseling or fellowship or caring for other duties before he goes home.

There are many other things that a preacher should do or avoid doing, but time and space will not permit us to cover them. For example, it is wise for a preacher to choose a sermon that will fit the condition of his voice. It is wise for him to know the condition of his voice and to decide to keep his sermon within the range of his voice for that particular day.

Perhaps the most important thing that we can say is, let your voice be honest. Let it show your heart. Use the same voice in preaching that you always use. Be yourself and take good care of that part of your anatomy that God has chosen to use to spread His truth, to train His people, and to point sinners to the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world! You have only one voice; it is the only one you will ever have! Take care of it! God needs it!

## **The Importance of Preaching**

Several years ago a poll was taken among preachers concerning the different duties of the ministry: (1) administration, (2) teaching, (3) preaching, (4) pastoring, (5) priestly work, and (6) church business. The question was asked to hundreds of preachers, "What do you think is the most important of these ministries?" Overwhelmingly the response was, "Preaching."

The second question was asked: "Which occupies most of your time?" To that question the answer was overwhelmingly, "Administration," and preaching was last on the list.

How tragic! That which we feel is most important is what we do the least.

Oh, how America needs preaching! When John Knox left Scotland, the country had deteriorated morally and spiritually. Finally John Knox decided to return to Scotland. It is said that on every street corner the word was being spread, "Knox is coming! Knox is coming! Knox is coming!" The entire country was filled with electricity because the preacher was returning. Scotland needed Knox. England needed Spurgeon. America needed Moody, and this old sin-cursed world needs preaching again! In Isaiah 61:1, Isaiah called himself a preacher. In Luke 4:18 Jesus was a preacher. In II Peter 2:5 Noah was called "a preacher of righteousness." In Ecclesiastes 1:1 Solomon was called "the Preacher." In I Timothy 2:7 Paul said that he was "ordained a preacher." In Mark 1:14 we find that Jesus came to Galilee "preaching the Gospel." In Matthew 3:1a we find, "In those days came John the Baptist, preaching." In Jonah 3:2 Jonah was admonished to preach to Nineveh the preaching that God bade him to preach. Acts 8:4 says, "Therefore they that are scattered abroad went every where preaching the Word." In Acts 14:1 we find that they "so spake" that multitudes believed. Oh, how we need some "so-speakers!" Preaching is exactly that. It is "so-speaking."

The most important hour of the week in a nation is the hour when God's men approach the pulpit. Several years ago the mayor of our city called our offices. Our receptionist answered the phone, whereupon the mayor asked if he could speak with Jack. Our receptionist replied that there was no one here who answered to the name Jack. The mayor told her that there was such a person there, and that he was the pastor, and he said, "Let me talk to Jack!"

Our receptionist said, "Your honor; we have nobody here who answers to that name. We have a Brother Hyles, we have a Preacher Hyles, we have a Pastor Hyles, we have a Dr. Hyles, but no one answers to the name Jack."

The mayor told her that he wanted her to know that he was the mayor. She replied that she wanted him to know that she was the receptionist and that she would connect him to my office if he would call me the proper title! Finally he yielded and she put the call through. She was not being stubborn; she was simply giving to the preacher his proper position and to preaching its proper place!

Years ago I was on an airplane flying to Denver; Colorado. I sat down beside a man who appeared to be a businessman. He had on a very beautiful navy blue suit and was very neatly dressed. We talked for some time before we introduced ourselves by name. I finally asked him what business he pursued. He replied that he was a chemical engineer. He then asked me, "Do you know anything about chemistry?"

I replied, "Yes, I know a little." (I did know a little. I knew that H<sub>2</sub>O was water; that AU was gold, and that I dropped chemistry in college for the safety of the student body!) He informed me that he was so impressed that a layman was knowledgeable about chemistry I assured him that I did know a little-a little is exactly what I knew! He called off a long formula and said, "What do you think about that?"

I replied, "I like the good in that formula, but I am concerned about the bad."

He said, "Put her there! That is exactly how I feel. I am so refreshed to know that you know a little about chemistry." He then called off another formula that made the other look very simple.. He said, "What do you think about that one?"

I said, "Well, I feel that we should not make an opinion on that one until we are sure and that a person should not make a hasty decision."

Again, he said, "Put her there! That's exactly how I feel. How refreshing it is to meet someone who is a layman who knows something about chemistry!"

Then he asked me the \$64,000 question: "What is your business?" he asked.

I suddenly replied, "I am an ambassador."

He sat up in his seat and said, "Sir; do you mean that you are a real, live ambassador?"

I said, "That's exactly right."

He said, "I've never met an ambassador before. May I shake your hand?"

I said, "You certainly may" After we had shaken hands, he said, "Sir, let's get this straight. You mean your citizenship is in another country, and you represent a king here in America?" Well, praise God, that's exactly what I've been doing for years, so I said, "Yes, sir. My citizenship is in another country, and I represent a King in America!" He said, "Sir; could I ask you, what country and what king?" I replied that the country was Heaven and that the King was Jesus! He smiled and in fifteen minutes he too was an ambassador and a citizen of my country.

Years ago I read a famous Southern preacher's sermon entitled, "I Magnify Mine Office." How important it is to magnify the office of a preacher!

Preaching is teaching with a tear in the eye. Preaching is truth on fire. Preaching is the Word of God in the hand, the fire of God in the heart and the zeal of God in the soul. Preaching is the gift of God wrapped in an excited voice. Preaching is the moral conscience of a nation. Preaching is the soul of the church. Preaching is the throne room of society Preaching is the scepter and crown of the preacher. Preaching is the moral level of the succeeding generation. It was preaching that originally built our secular colleges. It was preaching that originally built our public school system. It was preaching that originally established our law system, and in the early days of our country, a degree in theology was a prerequisite to a law degree. Every great denomination was founded on preaching. It was John Wesley who said, "I just set myself on fire and folks come to watch me as I burn."

Sam Jones, the famous Methodist evangelist, went to a workers' conference one day with a friend. As they rode their horses home, Sam Jones looked to his friend and said, "I learned something today"

His friend asked what he had learned, whereupon Sam Jones replied, "I learned that my pulpit is my throne, and I am a king." Richard Baxter said, "I preached as never sure to preach again, as

a dying man to dying men.

John Hall said, "A strong and faithful pulpit is the safeguard to a nation's life."

Thomas Betterton said, "Actors speak of things imaginary as if they were real; preachers speak of things real as if they were imaginary"

Philip Brooks said, "Preaching is truth delivered through personality. Preaching is personal counseling on a group scale."

Hugh Latimer said, "Preaching is the delivering of meat, not strawberries."

John Newton said, "Preaching is breaking the hard heart and healing the broken one."

William R. Nicoll said, "Of all vocations, the Christian ministry is the most sacred, the most exacting and the most humbling."

Richard Whately said, "Preach not because you have to say something but because you have something to say"

Abraham Lincoln said, "When I hear a man preaching, I like to see him act as if he were fighting bees."

Preaching is the answer. Let nothing take its place. Let no concert be given at preaching time. Let no cantata be given at preaching time. Let no movie substitute for the preaching of the Gospel. Let no vespers take the place of preaching. Let no play or dramatical presentation be given at preaching time. Preaching is the loftiest of the professions and the greatest of the arts.

Preaching is truth set on fire. Preaching is demolition of error. Preaching is doubt's healing balm. Preaching is the Holy Spirit's amplifier. Preaching is the Saviour's projector. Preaching is fact on fire and truth aflame. Preaching is worship's entree. Preaching is the adornment of the Bible. Preaching is the power of God unto salvation. Preaching is revival's forerunner. Preaching is the church's heart. Preaching is doctrine clothed in excitement. Preaching is love's smile. Preaching is sin's greatest adversary. Preaching is frustration's funeral. Preaching is doubt's demise. Preaching is fear's failure. Preaching is depression's death. Preaching is disappointment's decline. Preaching is faith's food. Preaching is profundity delivered in simplicity. Preaching was the first thing done by the Mayflower pilgrims. Preaching is the mender of broken relationships. Preaching is the healer of broken hearts. Preaching is the revival of broken dreams. Preaching is Hell's greatest enemy. Preaching is the sinner's best friend. Preaching is the saint's diner. Preaching is genius with a halo. Preaching is fire in the pulpit that melts the ice in the pew.

Preaching saved Nineveh, ignited Pentecost and turned the Jude- an wilderness into a Baptist revival.

When the man of God approaches the pulpit, let angels stop flying, let Heaven's hosannas hush, let adults hearken and children listen, let young people be alert, let E. F. Hutton pay attention, let Heaven respond, let Hell tremble, let ushers sit down and listen, let the church wait in holy expectation, let all eternity tremble, let Satan and his angels be anointed with fear!

Oh, how I love preaching! I have preached on street corners. I have preached in jail houses. I have preached in taverns. I have preached in brush arbors. I have preached in tents. I have preached from the back of pick-up trucks. I have preached in city parks. I have preached in barber shops. I have preached in living rooms. I have preached on vacant lots. I have preached



in school rooms. I have preached in city auditoriums. I have preached in coliseums. I have preached in football stadiums. I have preached in gymnasiums. I have preached in opera houses. I have preached in many of our states, including Hawaii and Alaska. I have preached in Canada, Mexico, Jamaica, the Bahamas, Jerusalem, Egypt, Japan, St. Thomas, Cyprus, Lebanon, Germany, Jordan and other countries around the world. Over 42,500 times I have stood and proclaimed the Gospel of Jesus Christ. There is nothing like it! Thank God for preaching, and thank God for making me a preacher!

Years ago I was preaching in the city of Wichita, Kansas, at a convention. The convention was held in a beautiful church auditorium, but the preaching pulpit was over in a corner, and there was another pulpit in the other corner of the platform. I stood in the corner and tried to preach, but I simply could not do it. I had no other recourse. I just lifted up the pulpit and carried it to the middle of the platform and said, "Ladies and gentlemen, I simply cannot preach when preaching is put in the corner. I must preach when preaching is the center and the focal point of the service." Hallelujah for preaching!

Now I am not minimizing social work. I am not minimizing the importance of the Christian being involved in politics. I am not minimizing fighting for righteousness. I am simply exalting preaching. If I had my way, every tavern would be padlocked. If I had my way, prohibition would return to America. If [had my way, to make or sell alcoholic beverages would be a penitentiary of- fence. If I had my way, driving while intoxicated would be a major crime. If I had my way, one who killed another while under the influence of alcohol would be considered a murderer. If I had my way, every package store in America would close, and no stewardess would ever again walk down the aisle of an airplane serving alcoholic beverages! If I had my way, not one sweet woman would be hit again by a drunken husband. If I had my way, not one child would see his dad walk out. If I had my way, not one mother would be left to rear her children alone. If I had my way, no one who sits in Congress would be allowed to drink as he governs the affairs of our nation. If I had my way, no judge on a bench would be allowed to drink. If I had my way, no car would ever swerve, no hotel would have a lounge, no Playboy bunny would take liquid poison to tables of deceived customers, no TV screen would advertise John Barleycorn. If I had my way, not one child would be orphaned by alcohol, and the local tavern owner would not be a respected member of society. Yet, in spite of my hatred for the liquor traffic, we are not commanded in the Bible to work in Alcoholics Anonymous. We are not commanded to work in the Christian Temperance Union, though I am not opposed to those who work in either organization. We are not commanded to give our lives just to fighting liquor; but we are commanded to preach the Gospel and to preach righteousness. Preaching will close more taverns than Alcoholics Anonymous will, and it will dry up more cities than the Christian Temperance Union will.

If I had my way, every adult bookstore would be burned. If I had my way, every Playboy Magazine would be destroyed. If I had my way, all adult movie houses would be demolished. If I had my way, every curse word would be taken from radio and television. If I had my way, no filth would ever appear on television screens. If I had my way, every questionable book would be banned from the school room. If I had my way, every nude painting would be taken from our art galleries. If I had my way, every immoral professor would be fired. If I had my way, books like CATCHER IN THE RYE would be declared unfit for use. If I had my way, every Playboy Club would be closed, never to reopen. If I had my way, Penthouse and all other dirty magazines would be made fuel for a bonfire. If I had my way, all sexy and suggestive shows

would be removed from radio and television. If I had my way, rock music would be banned from the department stores and shopping centers. If I had my way, our newspapers would be free of profanity, and I am for every anti-smut organization in America. I am for the Anti-Defamation League, I am for the Clean-Up Television movements. Yet, we are not commanded just to be moral reformers by supporting organizations that improve society, but we are commanded to preach!

If I had my way, every office in America would be filled by a capable, born-again fundamentalist. If I had my way, Lee Roberson would be President; Tom Malone, Secretary of State; Bob Jones, Secretary of War; David Gibbs, Attorney General; Wendell Evans, Secretary of Education; Bob Gray, Secretary of the Interior; Curtis Hutson, head of the Welfare Department; Gary Coleman, Secretary of Housing and Urban Development; Bill Pennell, President of Cuba; Johnny Ramsey, President of Mexico; Raymond Barber, Secretary of Finance; and John Rawlings, Secretary of Labor; Harold Henniger, Secretary of Agriculture; Bruce Cummons, Secretary of Finance. If I had my way, Bob Jones III would be Vice-President; Buddy Franklin, Governor of Maine; A. V. Henderson, Governor of Missouri; Myron Cedarholm, Governor of Wisconsin; Al Janney, Governor of Florida; Walt Handford, Governor of South Carolina; Steve Byrd, Governor of North Carolina; Bob Kelley, Governor of Tennessee; Cecil Hodges, Justice of the Supreme Court; Tom Wallace, Governor of California; Greg Dixon, Governor of Indiana; Jim Vineyard, Governor of Oklahoma; Ed Nelson, Governor of Colorado; Wally Beebe, Secretary of Transportation; Bill Dowell, head of Department of Physical Fitness; Mrs. John R. Rice, head of National Organization for Women; David Cavin, Speaker of the House; Russell Anderson, Director of the National Budget; and Bob Billings, United States Representative to the United Nations. Every city would have a fundamentalist mayor; every school board would be staffed by fundamentalist deacons, every courtroom would be occupied by a fundamentalist lawyer, the security guards of Hyles-Anderson College would be the Indiana State Police, and the politics of our nation would be run under God; but in spite of this, we are not commanded to clean up politics, to head movements for better government or to head political actions groups, but we are commanded to preach!

If I had my way, not one Communist would ever speak on a college campus. If I had my way, Cuba would be blockaded until Russian troops are pulled out. If I had my way, every Communist book would be taken off the library shelves of every classroom in America, and every person found guilty of spreading Communism would be tried for treason. If I had my way, no Communist would ever again appear on a talk show, and the Communist party would be outlawed in the United States! If I had my way, no pink professor would ever again criticize George Washington; yet, in spite of this fact, we are never commissioned to head the Committee of Un-American Activities and we are never commanded to join the Anti-Communist League, but we are commanded to preach!

If I had my way, a person found guilty of growing or selling marijuana would be placed in prison. If I had my way, never again would a teacher teach evolution in our schools. If I had my way, the classroom would never be a place of profanity again. If I had my way, sex education would be turned back to the parents. If I had my way, it would be illegal to bottle or sell alcoholic beverages. If I had my way, there would not be a coeducational dorm in America. If I had my way, there would not be another half-time chorus line at a football game. If I had my way, no Christian child would be again ridiculed for refusing to dance at the local high school. If I had my way, not one girl would be allowed to attend school in a mini-skirt, shorts or pants.

If I had my way, no Madalyn Murray O'Hare would be allowed to shake the faith of our youth, and yet we are never commanded in the Bible to join "Clean-up America" campaigns. I am for all of them, but there is no Bible command about it. There is a Bible command to preach!

If I had my way, there would be a fundamental Christian school in every city, town, village and neighborhood in America. If I had my way, every child would sit under a soul-winning teacher. If I had my way, no Christian young people would ever go to a heathen school. If I had my way, every school in America would be built on the Bible and its principles and would be bathed in prayer, but we are not commissioned to be educators primarily or to leave our pulpits for Christian education; we are commanded to preach!

If I had my way, America would be the strongest military power in the world again. If I had my way, America would have won the Vietnam War. If I had my way, we would never have relinquished the Panama Canal. If I had my way, not one gun control law would ever be passed in the United States so that only thieves and crooks would have guns and the common citizen would be at their mercy

If I had my way, America would never again enter into an arms treaty with Russia. We would simply become the most powerful nation on the face of the earth and ready to defend ourselves at any cost! If I had my way, the Bay of Pigs would not have failed. If I had my way, America would stand up in defense of Taiwan. If I had my way, America would pull out of the United Nations, and draft dodgers would be convicted of treason. If I had my way, our Navy would be second to none, our Air Force would be the greatest in the world, our Army would be the mightiest on earth, and we would stop Communist aggression in Cuba, Afghanistan, Vietnam, Cambodia, San Salvador; Iran, Poland, Nicaragua, El Salvador and Mexico. If I had my way, nobody on the face of the earth would live in fear of the slavery of Communism, and every free nation on earth would sleep peacefully because of our dedication to their independence and freedom. If I had my way, the mightiest military defense in history would be ours; and yet, we are not commanded in the Bible as God's men to spend our time improving the armed forces, but we are commanded to preach!

The Pentagon needs to be improved, but the hope of this nation does not rest in the Pentagon. The White House needs to be improved, but the hope of this nation does not rest in the White House. God knows the Supreme Court could use a world of improvement, but the hope of this nation does not rest in the Supreme Court. Congress needs improving, but the hope of this nation does not rest in the Congress. Our city halls need cleaning up, but the hope of this nation does not rest in the city halls. The United Nations General Assembly could use some housecleaning, but the hope of this country and this world does not rest in the halls of the United Nations. It was preaching that saved Scotland under John Knox. It was preaching that spared England under Whitefield, Wesley and Spurgeon. It was preaching that spared America under Moody and Sunday, and it is preaching that will save America again if she is ever saved. I Corinthians 1:21b, "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." It was preaching that inspired Pentecost. It was preaching that saved Nineveh. May God take us back to old-fashioned, Spirit-filled, Christ-honoring, sin-hating, soul-winning, Bible preaching! It is the hope of the church! It is the hope of the nation! It is the hope of the world!



## About This Document

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