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## The Mechanics of Preparation

*“Because of the ease with which good speakers talk, some people mistakenly believe that such men spend little time in preparation. Nothing could be further from the facts. The very ease with which a speech is given often indicates the thorough preparation behind it” —Alan H. Monroe*

*“Men give me some credit for genius. All the genius I have lies in this: When I have a subject in hand, I study it profoundly. Day and night it is before me. I explore it in all its bearings. My mind becomes pervaded with it. Then the efforts that I make are what people are pleased to call the fruits of genius. It is the fruit of labor and thought” —Alexander Hamilton*

### The Importance of Preparation

The mechanics of the sermon can be divided into several elements, the first of which is the mechanics of preparation. In order for the student to realize the inestimable value of preparation, read what Martin Luther advised. *Bene orasse est bene studuisse* (To speak well one must prepare well). To have something to say requires hours of study.

Dr. John Henry Jowett correctly observed: "Preaching that costs nothing accomplishes nothing. If the study is a lounge, the pulpit will be an impertinence." A pastor cannot simply pray and then ask the Spirit to fill his mouth. It doesn't work that way.

Proper preparation produces perspiration. That may be hard to say, but it is true. Preparing a sermon properly is hard work. It can't be done in a Saturday night fever, nor in a Sunday morning flurry. We must have something to say. When the congregation asks: "Is there any word from the Lord?", we must be well prepared to give them God's Word.

### What Really Is Preparation?

"There is a story of a young minister who, concerned about the apparent failure of his preaching, consulted Dr. Joseph Parker in the vestry of the City Temple. His sermons, he complained, were encountering only apathy. Could Dr. Parker frankly tell him what was lacking?" "Suppose you preach me one of your sermons here and now", said Parker; and his visitor, not without some trepidation, complied. When it was over, the Doctor told him to sit down. 'Young man,' he said, 'you asked me to be frank. I think I can tell you what is the matter. For the last half-hour you have been trying to get something out of your head instead of something into mine'! That distinction is crucial. Wrestle with your subject in the study, that there may be clarity in the pulpit. 'For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?'"<sup>1</sup>

This incident illustrates the fact that many sermons are delivered without proper preparation. Many pastors do not prepare and it shows in their sermons. They have not realized that sermon preparation is more than gathering material. Granted, material must be gathered, but true preparation requires thinking, brooding, selecting, assembling, adding, subtracting, rethinking, reassembling, etc. In the preparation of the earth, the Spirit of God "brooded" over the face of the deep (Gen. 1:2). This same process must be ours in the preparation of speeches and sermons. We must mull over in our minds that which we want to say. This requires time.

<sup>1</sup>Quoted in James S. Stewart, *Heralds of God* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1946), pp. 123-124.

There are seven elements in the preparation of a speech or a sermon. They are as follows.

1. **Determine the purpose of the speech or sermon.** Unless you have the purpose of your sermon clearly and constantly in mind during preparation, it will sound as if you have no purpose when you deliver it. Frequently a speaker rises and delivers a speech and you have no idea why he ever rose. His purpose is not clear in his mind and certainly it is not clear in yours. It is not enough to merely pick a subject for a sermon, you must organize that sermon for a desired response. Keep asking yourself: "What is my purpose?"

2. **Analyze your audience and occasion.** Preaching on the concerns of the elderly to a teenage audience is less than wise. You must take your audience into consideration when preparing your message. Consider their ages, likes, dislikes, problems, and needs. Included in a check list for audience analysis by Loren Reid is: size, occasion for gathering, significant environmental factors, customs or taboos, nationalities, races, education, social level, economic level, attitude toward subject, attitude toward speaker, etc.<sup>2</sup> It is not wise to preach an Easter sermon on Christmas morning. Some preachers think this is "cute" saying that the Word of God is relevant all the time. But the people have been primed by the season to hear a Christmas message on Christmas Sunday. Don't disappoint them.

3. **Narrow the subject of your sermon.** It is not practical for you to speak on the subject of "God." Such a subject is too broad. You cannot say anything significant about God in one sermon unless you are selective about what you say. A narrowed subject is called a theme and will be dealt with in greater detail later.

4. **Gather sufficient material.** Once you have analyzed your audience and the occasion, picked a subject and narrowed it, you will begin to gather material for your theme. This is where the work begins. Material can always be found but only through intelligent research and laborious digging. When the material is gathered from many sources, primarily the Bible, it will have to be brooded over, correlated, brooded over again, added to, weeded out, assembled, etc. One of the hardest tasks of the preacher will be to discard material which cannot be used in this sermon.

<sup>2</sup>Loren Reid, *First Principles of Public Speaking* (Columbia: Arcraft Press, 1960), p. 60.

You cannot bring all the fruits of your labor to the pulpit. If you do you will sound like a preaching encyclopedia. Luther Burbank said: "I have often produced a million plant specimens to find but one or two superlatively good ones, and have then destroyed all the inferior specimens." The sermon needs this same type of weeding. Gather sufficient material but discard all but what is needed.

5. **Outlining the sermon.** It is extremely important that the material you have gathered be put into a logical form. This means you must engage in proper outlining. The outline must exhibit all the important elements of the sermon without being too detailed. The procedure of outlining will be discussed in greater length later.

6. **Wording the sermon.** This sixth element is one in which many preachers fall short. They feel they will be artificial if they word their sermons beforehand. Actually, if they don't, they will be very dull. People remember well what is worded well. It is not necessary for you to memorize every phrase or line of the sermon, but it is wise to lay your outline before you and "talk it through" several times. This way you compose orally what you have conceived in your mind. Such a practice will be a tremendous aid when it comes to actually delivering the sermon.

7. **Practice aloud.** The final element in preparation cannot be stressed too heavily. Effective delivery is not achieved simply by applying a set of rules to our speaking. Effective delivery is largely dependent upon practice. It takes practice to be natural before an audience. Study the careers of famous speakers and you will find they have one thing in common, i.e. all of them practiced.

George Whitefield was one of the most impassioned evangelists ever to deliver a sermon. He claimed he could not do justice to a sermon until he had preached it fifty times. After all, if a sermon is delivered better the tenth time, why should we not preach our Sunday sermon nine times in front of a mirror on Saturday? Singers practice. Actors practice. Football teams practice. Why shouldn't a preacher practice? It is not unspiritual to practice a sermon as you still pray for the power of the Holy Spirit when you deliver the sermon. In fact, it appears to be unspiritual not to practice, if practice makes us more effective in the service of the Lord.

A very helpful hint in the preparation of a sermon is to develop a reservoir of knowledge from which you may draw facts, figures, ideas, Scripture, etc. To develop such a reservoir requires that you be widely

read. This will broaden your background of knowledge and make it possible for you to be conversant with a wide variety of subjects. It will require that you read the evening newspaper and listen to the evening television news; read popular magazines like *U.S. News and World Report*, *Time*, or *Newsweek*; read Christian periodicals (e.g. *Christianity Today*, *Moody Monthly*, *Christian Herald*, *Eternity*, etc.); read general material such as biographies, novels, fiction; read the classics. With a background of knowledge you will rarely be at a loss for what to say.

### Sources for Preparation

Getting material for a sermon takes two approaches. First, you must be constantly gathering material with no specific sermon in mind. Second, you will need to do specific research for the sermon at hand. Where does one go to glean this material? There are many places.

1. **Scripture.** The most obvious place for the preacher of the Word to gather material is the Word of God itself. I say this is obvious, yet note how frequently Scripture is missing from the sermon. Our primary source for sermonic material must be the Word. This is true not only of specific preparation but also for general preparation. The daily reading of Scripture will provide the preacher with an unfailing supply of themes on which to preach as well as illustrative material. In preparation for the Sunday sermon the pastor is well advised to seek the explanation of Scripture by other passages of Scripture.

Christ's preaching is characteristic of the type of preaching we should use. He frequently used Scripture for His subject matter. As my former theology professor Roger Nicole points out: "More than ten percent of the New Testament text is made up of citations or direct allusions to the Old Testament. The recorded words of Jesus disclose a similar percentage."<sup>3</sup> With this example, it is surprising how many preachers do not rely on the Scriptures for their sermon material. Even many who have graduated from Christian colleges and seminaries are so sadly deficient in general knowledge of the Bible that they must look elsewhere for material. What a tragedy.

<sup>3</sup>Quoted in *Revelation and the Bible*, edited by Carl F. H. Henry (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1958), p. 138.

2. **Systematic Theology.** This is an area in which few pastors find help for sermon material. Yet it is an area rich in such help. Next to the Scripture itself, the systematic theology text should be a prime source of sermonic material. Being acquainted with biblical truth gives the preacher confidence. A systematic theology text will present biblical truth in a logical fashion. This is important in the pastor's sermons.

3. **History.** Preaching material can be obtained from the history of the church as well as secular history. If the preacher is familiar with the events of history and the great empires of the world, his understanding of the Bible will be greatly enhanced. History is also a great interpreter of the providence of God. By looking at history we can see God's providential dealings with His people. Also, the great revival movements of history can add understanding to our preaching. A knowledge of history helps the preacher be aware of the timetable of God and the urgency of the preacher's task.

4. **General Reading.** Reading which is not historical nor biblical in nature can add much to our preaching. Devotional readings, poetry, prose, narrative, fiction, the arts and sciences, geology, archaeology, apologetics, the newspaper, magazines, etc. are all needed areas for the preacher to study. These extra-biblical areas add greatly to biblical preaching for they fill in the voids which are sometimes left between the main biblical facts of a sermon.

5. **Hymnals.** You've heard the expression, "they just don't make them the way they used to." Many people feel that way about today's hymns. Although there is much good Christian music found in our world today, much of what passes for "Christian" music is but a few experiential thoughts strung together by a chorus of "shoo-bee doo-bee doo's." But in the old hymns of the faith there is a lot of good preaching material. Read the hymns of Charles Wesley, Martin Luther, Philip P. Bliss, Isaac Watts, Alfred H. Ackley, William Cowper, and others.

6. **Personal Experience.** Preaching is the proclamation of Jesus Christ and His salvation for us. Acts 4:20 indicates, "We can not but speak the things which we have seen and heard." The preacher's own salvation experience is a strong area of sermon material. It has been said that a man with an experience is never at the mercy of a man with an argument. You need not argue for Christ, simply proclaim Him and your undeniable experience with Him. You need not apologize for a personal reference. After all, who knows you better than you. But be

careful not to punctuate your sermons with personal references. "A wise minister may bring strange grist to his mill from his own experience . . . only take one warning! The Session-clerk of an Edinburgh church used to say that the congregation made it a practice to send their minister to the Holy Land after 25 years' ministry and then they regretted it for the next 25. 'When I was in the Holy Land.' 'I once saw in Jerusalem.' 'I remember in Jericho.' You can imagine how stale and wearisome it becomes!"<sup>4</sup>

7. **Biographies.** Very productive sources for preaching material are found in the biographies of great Christians. They will provide evidences of the hand of God on men's lives, the leading of the Holy Spirit, God's provision in the time of man's need, and faith that has been tested and tried. The biographies of Jonathan Edwards, Evan Roberts, D. L. Moody, Joni Erickson, David Livingston, A. J. Gordon, John Wesley, William Carey, David Brainerd, or Bob Jones, Sr. will all be inspiring and enlightening. They can provide material to which your audience may relate or empathize.

8. **Great Literature.** No less apropos for eliciting preaching material are the great books of literature. Here the classics are especially helpful. A gifted preacher will be even more effective as a herald of God's Word after he has read *Pilgrim's Progress*. He will be a better theologian after he has read *The Divine Comedy*. He will be better equipped to preach of God's remedy to man's need after he has read *Paradise Lost*. Many newer titles, on their way to becoming classics, are also beneficial to the preacher's preaching. All the works by C. S. Lewis, J. R. R. Tolkien, and others in that vein would be helpful. Whether sacred or secular, there is no end to the good reading of which the preacher or speaker may avail himself.

### Borrowing

It is readily seen that not all of these sources derive their material from within themselves—they use other sources. This begs the question of using someone else's material in our sermons. May we borrow from someone else? Most certainly. In fact, many times we ought to borrow.

<sup>4</sup>James Black, *The Mystery of Preaching* (London: James Clarke & Company, Ltd., 1934), p. 78.



Borrowing can be of two extremes. Years ago in seminary a fellow classmate once said to me, "I'm not going to waste my money on commentaries. I'll just buy Greek and Hebrew lexicons and other aids and get into the Word myself." My immediate question was, "Does God give all wisdom to one man?" No, He does not. There is nothing wrong with sharing insights into the Scripture. A person is self-deceived if he denies himself the fruits of other's labors. This should not be the case. His own thoughts may be shallow or even incorrect. He needs the wisdom which God has given to others.

There is, however, the other extreme. This type of preacher never thinks for himself. He never cracks his Greek text. He never even reads the portion of Scripture which he has selected for Sunday's message until he reads a commentary. His whole life is wrapped up in what others have said. His sermons are one long quote after another. This is a very serious mistake. First, the congregation wants to hear what the Lord has to say through His Word, not what some commentator or theologian has to say. Secondly, such a practice engenders a shallow mind and in turn, shallow preaching. This approach to gathering sermon material should be shunned.

We should not hesitate to legitimately borrow from others, for they undoubtedly have done the same. Dale Carnegie reveals the following anecdote about borrowing which deals with the last line of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address—"and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

It is commonly supposed that Lincoln originated the immortal phrase which closed this address; but did he? Herndon, his law partner, had given Lincoln, several years previously, a copy of Theodore Parker's addresses. Lincoln read and underscored in this book the words 'Democracy is direct self-government, over all the people, by all the people, and for all the people.' Theodore Parker may have borrowed his phraseology from Webster who had said, four years earlier, in his famous reply to Hayne: 'The people's government, made for the people, made by the people, and answerable to the people.'

Webster may have borrowed his phraseology from President James Monroe who had given voice to the same idea a third of a century earlier. And to whom was James Monroe indebted? Five hundred years before Monroe was born, Wyclif had said, in the preface to the translation of the Scriptures, that 'this Bible is for the government of the people, by the people, and for the people.' And long before Wyclif

lived, more than 400 years before the birth of Christ, Cleon, in an address to the men of Athens, spoke of a ruler 'of the people, by the people, and for the people.' And from what ancient source Cleon drew his inspiration, is a matter lost in the fog and night of antiquity.<sup>5</sup>

It is evident that borrowing is widely practiced. Direct borrowing obligates the borrower to credit the source from which the material was borrowed. But indirect borrowing need not so obligate us. Oliver Wendell Holmes once said, "I have milked 300 cows, but I made my own butter."<sup>6</sup> The question is in what cases should acknowledgment be made to avoid plagiarism?

John A. Broadus observes:

When the remark is obvious, or belongs to the common stock of religious ideas, so that it might have occurred to ourselves, although it happens to have been drawn from another, then it is often unnecessary to make any acknowledgment. When the idea is at all striking, so that hearers would give any special credit for it as a good thing, then we must not take a credit which is undeserved, but must in some way indicate that the thought was derived from another.

In what cases shall we mention the precise source? When the author's name would give greater weight to the idea, or in some way attach interest to it. . . . Again, when we may hope thereby to lead some hearer to read the book mentioned. . . . Otherwise it is enough merely to indicate that the thought was derived from some source. Avoid a parade of honesty about acknowledging. . . . Let the acknowledgment interrupt as little as possible the flow of thought, detract as little as possible from the interest which the idea is likely to awaken. If it would decidedly interrupt or detract, then omit the acknowledgment, and the thing borrowed.<sup>7</sup>

It must be realized that we are speaking here of borrowing portions of texts, poems, sayings, etc. and not the practice of wholesale borrowing of entire sermons. We dare not plagiarize, but we dare not allow our blatant honesty to destroy the message we have to convey.

Dishonesty is not being advocated here, just common sense. As Broadus says, "avoid a parade of honesty." No one is impressed.

<sup>5</sup>Quoted in Dale Carnegie, *Public Speaking and Influencing Men in Business* (New York: Association Press, 1953), pp. 345-346.

<sup>6</sup>Quoted by A. W. Blackwood, *Pulpit Digest*, XXXIII, January 1953, p. 16.

<sup>7</sup>John A. Broadus, *On the Preparation and Delivery of Sermons* (Grand Rapids: Associated Publishers and Authors, Inc., 1971), p. 51.

### Notebook and File

A pastor must prepare at least 150 messages every year, and even this does not include the Wednesday evening Bible study or a Sunday school lesson. It should be evident that this is a gargantuan task. To gather and correlate that much material every week is next to impossible. Besides, the less special preparation done for a sermon, the better the sermon. The best sermons are those in which thoughts have been gathered, stored, thought out, and illuminated long before the actual preaching occurs. This means the preacher must be gathering material constantly. The wise preacher gathers material for future use. He finds this material everywhere. This means he needs a notebook handy to jot down all those seed thoughts that come his way, all possible Scripture texts, all illustrations, all poems, etc.

#### Notebook

Richard C. Halverson suggests that for him, "a common daily record book, one page per day, is reserved for sermonic data and related materials. Sermon themes or topics, with Scriptures, are entered under the proper Sunday, leaving six pages in the day book for related ideas, illustrations, hymns, cross-references, and the like. This is my 'homiletical garden.' It is surprising how the garden grows. Often the sermons seem almost to prepare themselves."<sup>8</sup>

James Stewart suggests: "Again and again in your reading of the Bible, phrases, sentences, whole passages will leap out from the page, each of them positively thrusting itself upon you and clamouring 'One day you must preach on me! This is where your private notebooks come into action. When a text has once gripped you, do not let it escape. Jot it down at the head of a page, and underneath it any thoughts, illustrations, potential sermon divisions it may have brought with it.'"<sup>9</sup>

Most good preachers are in the habit of never being without their notebook. It does not have to be large, but it must be ever-present. What a shame to receive an inspiration and later lose it because you did not have opportunity to write it down. The notebook habit is a good one. It can greatly aid your sermon preparation.

<sup>8</sup>Richard C. Halverson in *How to Prepare and Deliver Better Sermons*, edited by Paul S. Rees (Washington, D.C.: Christianity Today, 1970), p. 12.

<sup>9</sup>James S. Stewart, *Heralds*, p. 154.

#### File

A file is just as important to a preacher as his library. The pastor will undoubtedly be more familiar with the material he has collected himself and put on file than with the books in his library. When you gather sermon material constantly you must have some place to put it. Throwing it into a cardboard box in the attic is not a good place. You need a file at your fingertips.

How did Dwight L. Moody prepare the sermons which stirred the spiritual lethargy of the last generation? He had no special secret. He claimed: "When I choose a subject, I write the name of it on the outside of a large envelope. I have many such envelopes. If when I am reading, I meet a good thing on any subject I am to speak on, I slip it into the right envelope, and let it lie there. I always carry a notebook, and if I hear anything in a sermon that will throw light on that subject, I put it down, and slip it into the envelope. Perhaps I let it lie there for a year or more. When I want a new sermon, I take everything that has been accumulating. Between what I find there and the results of my own study, I have material enough. Then, all the time I am going over my sermons, taking out a little here, adding a little there. In that way they never get old."

#### Filing

You will want to file the sermon you have preached. File it in chronological order with your other sermons. Be sure to keep a record of the sermons you preach. Record the following: (1) date; (2) title of sermon; (3) passage of Scripture; (4) location of sermon delivery; (5) name of pastor if it was not delivered in your own church; (6) hour of service; (7) number in attendance; (8) results from service; (9) comments on the service; (10) your reaction to the sermon and the service.

As your experience in preaching grows, so will your appreciation of a good filing system. It will prove to be vital to your ministry. Buy a good file, one that is well constructed, and use it every day, filing new material and drawing from previously filed material. In their book *Steps to the Sermon*, H. C. Brown, Jr., H. Gordon Clinard and Jesse J. Northcutt include a section entitled "Preserving the Sermon Material" which provides helpful suggestions here.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup>H. C. Brown, Jr., H. Gordon Clinard and Jesse J. Northcutt, *Steps to the Sermon* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1963), p. 79ff.

## Methods of Preparation

There are as many methods of preparing a sermon as there are preachers delivering them. In the preparation of this text I had correspondence with a number of outstanding preachers who are today successful pastors and evangelists. I asked each of them this question: "What is the most essential feature of good sermon preparation?" Their interesting and varied answers follow.

### Dr. Leighton Ford

The answer of Dr. Leighton Ford was: "I like the prescription of the country preacher: 'I read myself full, think myself clear, pray myself hot, and let myself go'! With some, the greatest need is to think, read, and study until there is the real substance to what is to be said. With others, the most essential thing is to take time to achieve clarity of thought and expression. With others, it is to master the material so that it may be delivered easily. Basic to all is the biblical grounding." (Leighton Ford is the Associate Evangelist of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association).

### Dr. W. A. Criswell

With regard to general preparation, Dr. W. A. Criswell says: "When I began preaching, I thought I had to spin everything out of my own shallow, meager resources, like a spider makes its web. From every, any, and all sources gather material. Everything is grist for the preacher's mill. Newspapers, encyclopedias, magazines, books, experience, texts, everything." (W. A. Criswell is Pastor of the First Baptist Church of Dallas, Texas).

### Dr. Jerry Falwell

"I take my responsibility as God's spokesman very seriously. I cannot prepare my people to hear from God until I have first heard from Him. For this reason most of my sermons begin, not in the study or in the office, but in my personal devotion time. Early in the morning, before my family rises, I get up and get alone with God. The sparks for my sermons are usually ignited while I am reading the

Word. Then they are burned into my heart while on my knees in prayer. This leads me to sermon preparation, but sermon preparation must follow that intimate contact with God in which I receive His message and His direction.

Usually my Sunday morning sermons are topical in nature. This is because there are millions of people looking in on the service at the Thomas Road Baptist Church by television. I have to keep their needs in mind as well as those of the congregation. On Sunday evening and Wednesday evening my sermons are textual in nature. This way I can treat those topics which are universal in scope and at the same time teach the Word textually to the local congregation." (Jerry Falwell is Pastor of the Thomas Road Baptist Church of Lynchburg, Virginia).

### Dr. George Sweeting

"My Sunday morning sermons have always been expository. Each message is a unit and can stand alone. After studying the passage at hand, I prepare an outline, so that it is logical. Then I write down all the thoughts that come to me on that text or subject, drawing my illustrations primarily from Scripture. Often I will consult some commentaries for further light or verification. Then I will refer to my file for further illustrations, seeking to be exceedingly practical. Eventually, I write or type out the message word for word. Though I preach from extensive notes, I rarely have to refer to them. Special attention is given to the first two minutes as well as the conclusion. The final moments should be the hour of power." (George Sweeting, former pastor of Moody Memorial Church, is now President of Moody Bible Institute of Chicago, Illinois).

### Dr. Harold John Ockenga

"The sermon preparation involves hard work. First there must be the message itself obtained from the Scripture; then the analysis of the passage which supports it; then the use of other Scripture by the way of analogy; then the use of theology; then of course, illustration and application. In my opinion, the greatest attention should be given to the outline of the message so that it is thorough, logical and an absolute unit in itself." (Dr. Harold John Ockenga, now the retired Chancellor of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, was formerly the Pastor of the historic Park Street Church of Boston, Massachusetts).

**Dr. Stephen Olford**

“My primary method of preaching is expository. In seeking to ascertain what any given passage is declaring, I ask myself two questions: ‘What is God saying to my heart?’ and ‘What is God saying to my church?’ With these two standards before me I commence the actual research and writing of the sermon.

“In the preparation of a sermon I follow this plan: (1) The choice of a subject; (2) The construction of a skeleton, i.e. introduction, exposition, application and peroration. Such construction will carry three main headings (normally) with two or three subheadings. All these are carefully designed to relate to the main theme or subject and carry perfect sequence; (3) The collation of substance. This comes through the study of the text, meditation, reference to commentaries, textbooks, and the addition of suitable illustrations. I am usually in the study from 8:00 A.M. until 12:30 P.M. and spend at least two hours of this time each day in reading . . . (so) that ideas beget ideas, my vocabulary is expanded, suggestions are gathered for outlines, though I refuse to use other people’s sermons or copy their style; (4) The composition of the sermon. When possible, I like to write out or dictate the sermon in full, giving special attention to the introduction and conclusion. I feel that the introduction should be designed to arrest attention, clear prejudice and place the subject in the right perspective. The conclusion should always demand a verdict of the audience. I use alliteration for my main headings and very often for subheadings. This aids my memory, as well as helps the listener to retain the essence of what I have said.” (Dr. Stephen Olford was formerly Pastor of the Calvary Baptist Church of New York City).

It is interesting to note the variety of methods used in approaching preaching. Each of these men has a distinctly different style. Each of their ministries has been unique. And yet from these and other outstanding preachers of this last quarter of the twentieth century we can note special emphasis on specific areas of sermonizing.

1. Personal preparation of the preacher to preach the Word.
2. The primacy of expository preaching.
3. A thorough study of the passage.
4. Preparation of a logical outline.
5. Emphasis on the introduction and conclusion.
6. Emphasis on application and illustration.
7. Gather sufficient material.

Whatever method of preparation you choose in your sermonizing, be sure that it includes the above. These qualities are standard in successful preaching. They will be necessary for your successful preaching as well. For further information on methods of preparation see Clarence Roddy, *We Prepare and Preach*; Donald MacLeod, *This Is My Method*; H. C. Brown, Jr., H. Gordon Clinard, and Jesse J. Northcutt, *Steps to the Sermon*; or Charles W. Koller, *Expository Preaching Without Notes*.