

PREACHERS & PREACHING

A Course on Preaching



Table of Contents:

| | |
|---|----|
| 1. PREPARING THE PREACHER TO PREACH | 2 |
| 2. GOD GLORIFYING CHRIST-CENTRED GOSPEL PREACHING | 4 |
| 3. EXEGESIS OR HERMENEUTICS (the interpretation of the text). | 8 |
| 4. HOMILETICS | 12 |
| 5. STRUCTURING A SERMON | 13 |
| 6. CONTEXTULISATION | 15 |
| 7. PREACHING FOR A VERDICT | 18 |
| 8. PROPHETIC PREACHING | 22 |
| 9. WORKING WITH A TEAM | 23 |
| 10. PREACHING AT SPECIAL MEETING | 24 |
| 11. LEARNING FROM OTHER PREACHERS - HOW TO LISTEN TO A SERMON | 25 |
| 12. PREACHING BLUNDERS - DEALING WITH ISSUES AND LEARNING FROM MISTAKES | 26 |
| 13. PREACHING TO CHILDREN | 28 |
| 14. RULES FOR PREACHING AND TEACHING TEAM FROM HILLSONG | 41 |

1. PREPARING THE PREACHER TO PREACH

2 Timothy 4:1 - 2 “I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching.”

- **Personal Life:** What qualifies (disqualifies) you to preach
- **Understanding:** Your **audience** & understanding your **brief**
- **Hearing God:**
- **Honour:**
- **Study:**
 - **Recommended Reading on Preaching:**
 - I Believe in Preaching by John Stott
 - Prophetic Preaching by Michael Eaton
 - The Supremacy of God in Preaching by John Piper
 - **Recommended Reading on Theology:**
 - Renewal Theology by Rodman Williams
 - Systematic Theology by Wayne Grudem
 - Elemental Theology by Bancroft
 - **Recommended Reference Books:**
 - Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary
 - New Bible Dictionary (IVP)
 - **Recommended Software & Concordance:**
 - E-Sword software
 - Logos software
 - Strongs Exhaustive Concordance:
 - **Recommended Reading on Commentaries:**
 - This is a recommended list by Michael Eaton)

John Stott's View on Preacher Preparation

1. The preacher must live his/her message. Allow the Holy Spirit to work through him/her, and expect such preaching in the power of the Spirit to change lives.
2. What is now needed is a revival of confident, intelligent, relevant, biblical preaching, which will further ... growth and build up mature disciples of Jesus Christ.
3. The contemporary situation makes preaching more difficult; it does not make it less necessary.
4. The contemporary loss of confidence in the gospel is the most basic of all hindrances to preaching.
5. History supplies ample evidence of the indivisible connection between Church and Word, between the state of the Christian Community and the quality of Christian preaching.
6. Certainly, too, the task of preaching today is extremely exacting, as we seek to build bridges between the Word and the world, between divine revelation and human experience, and to relate the one to the other with integrity and relevance.
7. Self-forgetfulness is an unattainable goal, except as a by-product of preoccupation with Another's presence, and with His message, His power, and His glory

2. GOD GLORIFYING CHRIST-CENTRED GOSPEL PREACHING

Galatians 1: 8 - 9 - "But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed."

- Regardless of the Topic, all preaching must Glorify and centre on Christ.
- Preachers are heralds of God's message; they are representing Jesus, not themselves
- How to include Jesus in the preach?
- Asking questions that point to Christ

Review: The Supremacy of God in Preaching (Piper)

- The Trinitarian view of preaching presented in *The Supremacy of God in Preaching* (John Piper) gives a clear God-ward focus to this part of ministry. **The goal is God's glory; the foundation is Jesus' cross-work; the power is the Holy Spirit.** Also, the pairing of gladness and gravity as the two essential things to communicate is a useful guard against both externalism and flippancy. Throughout the book, exhortations to an earnest preaching ministry abound, filling out the practical counsel with solid motivation.

Two parts

Part one: Why God Should Be Supreme in Preaching

- The Goal of Preaching: The Glory of God
 - Romans 10.14-15
 - Isaiah 52.7 - Good news: "Your God reigns."
"The only submission to the Lordship of Christ that fully magnifies his worth and reflects his beauty is the humble gladness of the human soul in the glory of God in the face of his son" (28-29).

- The Ground of Preaching: The Cross of Christ
 - The Cross as the Ground of the Validity of Preaching. “God designed a way to vindicate the worth of his glory and at the same time give hope to sinners who have scorned that glory – and what he designed was the death of his Son” (35).
 - The Cross as the Ground of the Humility of Preaching. “The cross is the power of God to crucify the pride of both preacher and congregation” (36).
- The Gift of Preaching: The Power of the Holy Spirit
 - Relying on the Gift of the Spirit’s Word – the Bible Quote words of Scripture; don’t just summarise passages. “The work of the Holy Spirit in the process of interpretation is not to add information, but to give us the discipline to study well, and the humility to accept the truth we find without twisting it, and often a desperately needed discovery or insight in his providential guidance of our work” (46). Relying on the Gift of the Spirit’s Power in Preaching. Admit to the Lord that I can do nothing without him. Pray for help. Trust a specific promise where I can bank my hope for that hour. Act in the confidence that God will fulfil his Word. Thank God at the end of the message.
- The Gravity and Gladness of Preaching
 - “Gladness and gravity should be woven together in the life and preaching of a pastor in such a way as to sober the careless soul and sweeten the burdens of the saints” (55).
 - “If you don’t give gladness, you don’t give the gospel; you give legalism” (57).
 - Strive for practical, earnest, glad-hearted holiness in every area of your life.
 - Make your life – especially the life of your study – a life of constant communion with God in prayer.
 - Read books written by men or women who bleed Bible when you prick them and who are blood-earnest about the truths they discuss.
 - Direct your mind often to the contemplation of death.
 - Consider the biblical teaching that as a preacher, you will be judged with greater strictness.

- Consider the example of Jesus.
- Strive with all the strength you have to know God and to humble yourself under his mighty hand.

“Choose one great theologian and apply [yourself] throughout life to understanding and mastering his thought” (67).

- Keep God Central: The Life of Jonathan Edwards
- Submit to Sweet Sovereignty: The Theology of Edwards
 - “The goal of all God does is to preserve and display his glory” (79).
 - “The duty of man is to delight in God’s glory” (79).
 - “Preaching is a means of grace to assist the saints to persevere.
 - Perseverance is necessary for final salvation. Therefore, every sermon is a ‘salvation sermon’” (81).

Make God Supreme: The Preaching of Edwards

- Stir Up Holy Affections
- Enlighten the Mind
- Saturate with Scripture
- Employ Analogies and Images
- Use Threat and Warning
- Plead for a Response
- Edwards: “Sinners ... should be earnestly invited to come and accept of a Savior, and yield their hearts unto him, with all the winning, encouraging arguments for them ... that the Gospel affords” (94, from Concerning the Revival, 391).
- Probe the Workings of the Heart
- Yield to the Holy Spirit in Prayer

Edwards: “I spent most of my time in thinking of divine things, year after year; often walking alone in the woods and solitary places for meditation, soliloquy, and prayer” (99, from “Personal Narrative,” Selections, 61).
- Be Broken and Tenderhearted
- Be Intense

“Good preaching gives the impression that something very great is at stake” (103).

Qualification: Piper says that “the cross is a witness to the infinite worth of God’s glory and a witness to the immensity of the sin of my pride” (35), against the idea that the cross is a witness to my worth. However, we should be careful not to minimise the genuine sacrificial love that the cross displayed.

3. EXEGESIS OR HERMENEUTICS (the interpretation of the text).

2 Timothy 2:15 - *“Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.”*

- How to read the text
- Methods of interpretation

What is preaching?

- The New Testament describes preaching in over 60 different ways, but there are 4 classic **Greek words** in the new testament to describe preaching
 1. **Kerusso** (used 60 plus times) means. To declare as a herald does. E.g. kings pronouncement ...simply passing on the king's message.
 - The preacher is not using his words
 - Speak not of your own authority
 - Speaker sent
 - E.g. used with reference to Jonah (Matt 12:41), John the Baptist (Matt 3:1)
 2. **Euangelizo** (get the English word " to evangelise)
 - Bring good news
 - E.g. Angel bringing good news (Luke 2:10)
 - Of Jesus' ministry (Lk 4:18-19), both **kerusso** and **euangelizo** are used with reference to Jesus proclaiming preaching etc
Bringing good news even "to Christians" (Romans 1:15)
 3. **Martureo**: means " to bear witness to the fact". Bearing witness to a fact, giving testimony.
 4. **Didasko**: to disciple, train or teach.
 - It would be a mistake to say these are four different types of sermons. A preacher should be doing all four. He

should be delivering God's message in a way that people hear the good news and mature through it, and he needs to be able to testify that what he is talking about is true.

- Study the case of Timothy. Paul says to him (2 Tim 4:1-5) **kerusso** the word. Why? Because people will not put up with sound doctrine (derived from **didasko**). Then he tells him to do the work of an evangelist (**euangelizo**).
- Our task is to proclaim and apply God's word to the consciences and lives of people before us. So critical is that we get the MEANING of what God has written RIGHT.
- The study brings out the intended meaning of words and sentences is called **EXEGESIS**
- Prayer, time and effort need to be married to sound methods of interpretation. Avoiding any of these is likely to produce less than sound interpretation.

Be wary of the plain/ obvious meaning of the text being relegated by

1. Mystery seekers

- I.e. an inordinate emphasis placed on the meaning of names or the numerical value attached to the Hebrew letters. Always looking for a hidden meaning that no one else has ever seen. This is not bad when it does not contradict the " plain meaning ", or the " obvious meaning" of the text.

2. Allegory: using Old Testament illustration is good. But to replace the obvious meaning with a hidden allegory is dangerous.

- E.g. Abraham's servant bringing back a bride might be a good illustration of the bride of Christ, but it was not the intended meaning of

that text. Illustrations need to be seen as parallels, not the actual meaning.

3. Human Reasoning

- I.e. to rationalise miracles, explain away the complicated.
- A rule of thumb in Preaching is " Don't study to get a sermon". Study, study, study and then the sermon is a small result of the depth of the study.
- Expository preaching:
 - The passage governs the sermon
 - Conveys a big idea, a concept... Which comes from the text
 - The concept is applied to the preacher; if it doesn't work in him, it doesn't work for the hearers
 - The concept is applied to hearers. Practical use.

Questions to ask before you preach on a passage of scripture:

1. What does God expect of me as I preach?
 - Remember, it's His word.
 - Approach the word with amazement and awe
 - Believe all that's written there
2. What do the words mean
3. What is the immediate and wider context
 - In the sentence, in the chapter, in the book, narrative.
4. What is the historical setting
5. What light do other parts of scripture shed on this passage
6. In what way does this passage point to Christ

4 Things to help us improve our understanding of Scripture

1. Be baptised in the Holy Spirit
2. Improve Bible knowledge
3. Read commentaries, systematic theology, biographies etc
4. Know how to use Greek/ Hebrew dictionaries, concordances, Bible dictionaries, interlinear Bibles etc

Preaching with good doctrine will result in the following:

1. God being worshipped and adored
2. The role of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit will be understood in salvation.
3. Believers will know their privileges as children of God
4. Believers will not be confused about HOW to live
5. The church will testify, and their lives will proclaim Jesus
6. The church will know the road to Holiness and how to stay on it
7. Church life will be healthy
8. Prayer life will be deep
9. People will encounter God
10. Signs will follow the preaching of the word.

Even if you are preparing a motivational, topical, or practical message, it is wise to base the message on a passage rather than a concept.

4. HOMILETICS

Acts 21:40 - “And when he had given him permission, Paul, standing on the steps, motioned with his hand to the people. And when there was a great hush, he addressed them in the Hebrew language, saying...”

- **How** we present is as important as what we present
- **Zeal** for God
- **Engaging** audiences

5. STRUCTURING A SERMON

Luke 24:27 - "And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself."

- Preaching **themes**
- Preaching line by **line**
- Preaching with one big **idea** in mind
- Preaching **length**
- **Introductions**, conclusions
- **Moving** from one big idea to another

Preparing a sermon

The study which brings out the intended meaning of words and sentences is called EXEGESIS.

Prayer, time and effort need to be married to sound methods of interpretation.

Avoiding any of these is likely to produce less than sound interpretation.

1. Select passage
2. Study your passage and gather your notes
 - The context: i.e. the passage sits within a chapter or book and has a historical setting
 - The importance of a BIG idea: there can be numerous sub-points, but a big idea is essential. You need to recognise the main subject and how the idea develops in the text.
 - To get the big idea, ask... What is the writer talking about? Then when you develop the idea, ask "What am I talking about with this idea."
3. To understand the meaning of a text - ask 3 Questions
 - What does it mean? What is the original, plain meaning
 - Prove it. I.e. is it true that it means that?
 - Check meaning against sound theology in other texts
 - What difference does that make? I.e. apply it.

- What do modern listeners share with the original listeners
 - can we identify with the original Bible people's responses/ failures
- 4. State the big idea in the most memorable way possible with the audience in mind
 - Make each word count
 - Chose words they will remember
 - In a way, they know you are talking to them
- 5. Determine the purpose of the sermon: e.g. into connect group, saved etc
- 6. Decide how to accomplish the purpose:
 - Story or deductive (proving your thesis), or inductive (develop an argument, build a case)
- 7. Outline the sermon
 - Usually: intro, body, conclusion
- 8. Filling the sermon outline
 - Restate ideas
 - Define, explain
 - Factual info
 - Illustration
- 9. Prep your intro and conclusion
 - Introductions uncover needs, get attention, and introduce the body of the sermon.

Conclusions

- Like landing a plane, are very Nb: summary, revisit the need/ question.

6. CONTEXTULISATION

1 Corinthians 9:22 - 23 - *“22 I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some. 23 I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings.”*

- Understanding the **audience**, reading the culture
- **Reaching** different ages, races, economic strata
- Being **relevant** without diluting the message
- Preaching **platforms** - using media
- Using **illustrations**

Attention, impact, and memorable:-

Consider: "AIDA"- communication model.

1. How did Jesus do it?
 - Signs and wonders
 - John 4 prophecy ...led to the whole town hearing the gospel.
 - Luke 5:15 "But now, even more, the report about him went abroad, and great crowds gathered to hear him and to be healed of their infirmities."
 - Illustration
 - "There was a rich man..."
 - "There was a man who went on a journey.."
 - "Two men died .."
 - "There was a man who had two sons ..."
 - Authority
 - **Matthew 7:28 - 29** - *“28 And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, 29 for he*

was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes.”

- Wisdom (content)
 - **Matthew 13:54** - *“And coming to his hometown he taught them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished, and said, ‘Where did this man get this wisdom and these mighty works?’”*
- Asked questions
 - The "why?" Questions from book of Matthew alone
 - Why anxious
 - Why spec
 - Why afraid
 - Why think evil thoughts
 - Why break commandments
 - Why ask what is good
 - Why put me to test
 - Why trouble the woman

He also asked "where, who, what questions...

- Prayer
 - Luke 5:16 withdrew to pray

2. How did John the Baptizer do it?

- Was himself
 - Wore wild clothes
- Demonstrative
 - Screamed out loud
- Called a spade a spade
 - Not wanting to win a popularity contest

3. How did Apollos do it?

Acts 18:24 - 25 - *“24 Now a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was an eloquent man, competent in the Scriptures. 25 He had been instructed in the way of the Lord. And being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, though he knew only the baptism of John.”*

- Knew word
- Learner
 - Even happy to go home with Priscilla & Aquila to be taught

4. How did Paul do it?

- Learned to speak to a crowd "motioned with his hand."
 - Acts 21:40
- Read the culture and spoke their language
 - Acts 17:23
- Prepared (in isolation)
 - Gal 1:18
- Kept at it

5. Using media

- Are questions better than statements?
- When does it muddy the water?
- How to handle the technology?
- Understanding mood, keypads, lights, videos
- Practice is critical
- When technology crashes
 - Smile
 - Don't blame the tech guy
 - Press on with the least amount of commotion
 - Have a backup plan

7. PREACHING FOR A VERDICT

Acts 26:28 - 29 - " 28 And Agrippa said to Paul, 'In a short time would you persuade me to be a Christian?' 29 And Paul said, "Whether short or long, I would to God that not only you but also all who hear me this day might become such as I am-except for these chains."

- What **change** are you looking for?
- **Facilitating** the response
- Every sermon should have **two** verdicts, one for the unsaved & one for the saved.

Big idea...

- Whether theme or text.

Reasons for a verdict:

- Focus... Bring back on track
- Deal with it properly
- Hang other ideas on
- People don't remember much
- Memory
- Spin off it
 - What's the verdict for the lost?
 - What's the verdict for the saved?
- E.g. mc Holy Spirit helps you live (story) - text
- EG announce... Jethro (story) - text
- EG altar call Devil believes...crown.
- EG "city hill".
 - Holy Spirit uses words to build the church

1. History of the church.....reformed...HS/ word
2. Jesus centred
3. Series
4. Holy Spirit empowered
5. Team
6. Pick & prep
7. Context
8. How prep
9. Landings... Salvation calls

How to make a verdict

- Write down your verdict and work back.

How to make a salvation call:

- Must have presented Jesus
- Wider redemption story...
- Bring Jesus in.....

Revelation 6:1 - 8 - “ **1** Now I watched when the Lamb opened one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures say with a voice like thunder, ‘Come!’ **2** And I looked, and behold, a white horse! And its rider had a bow, and a crown was given to him, and he came out conquering, and to conquer. **3** When he opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say, ‘Come!’ **4** And out came another horse, bright red. Its rider was permitted to take peace from the earth, so that people should slay one another, and he was given a great sword. **5** When he opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, ‘Come!’ And I looked, and behold, a black horse! And its rider had a pair of scales in his hand. **6** And I heard what seemed to be a voice in the midst of the four living creatures, saying, ‘A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius, and do not harm the oil and wine!’ **7** When he opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, ‘Come!’ **8** And I looked, and behold, a pale horse! And its rider's name was Death, and Hades followed him. And they were given authority over a fourth of the earth, to kill with sword and with famine and with pestilence and by wild beasts of the earth.”

Daniel 3:16 - 26 - “ **16** Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said to the king, ‘O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. **17** If this be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. **18** But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.’ **19** Then Nebuchadnezzar was filled with fury, and the expression of his face was changed against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. He ordered the furnace heated seven times more than it was usually heated. **20** And he ordered some of the mighty men of his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and to cast them into the burning fiery furnace. **21** Then these men were bound in their cloaks, their tunics, their hats, and their other garments, and they were thrown into the burning fiery furnace. **22** Because the king's order was urgent and the furnace overheated, the flame of the fire killed those men who took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. **23** And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell bound into the burning fiery furnace. **24** Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished and rose up in haste. He declared to his counselors, ‘Did we not cast three men bound into the fire?’ They answered and said to the king, ‘True, O king.’ **25** He answered and said, ‘But I see four men unbound, walking in the midst of the fire, and they are not hurt; and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods.’ **26** Then Nebuchadnezzar came near to the door of the burning fiery furnace; he declared, ‘Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out, and come here! Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego came out from the fire.’”

Genesis 32:22 - 32 - “ **22** The same night he arose and took his two wives, his two female servants, and his eleven children, and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. **23** He took them and sent them across the stream, and everything else that he had. **24** And Jacob was left alone. And a man wrestled with him until the breaking of the day. **25** When the man saw that he did not prevail against Jacob, he touched his hip socket, and Jacob's hip was put out of joint as he wrestled with him. **26** Then he said, ‘Let me go, for the day has broken.’ But Jacob said, ‘I will not let you go unless you bless me.’ **27** And he said to him, ‘What is your name?’ And he said, ‘Jacob.’ **28** Then he said, ‘Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with men, and have prevailed.’ **29** Then Jacob asked him, ‘Please tell me

your name.’ But he said, ‘Why is it that you ask my name?’ And there he blessed him. 30 So Jacob called the name of the place Peniel, saying, ‘For I have seen God face to face, and yet my life has been delivered.’ 31 The sun rose upon him as he passed Penuel, limping because of his hip. 32 Therefore to this day the people of Israel do not eat the sinew of the thigh that is on the hip socket, because he touched the socket of Jacob’s hip on the sinew of the thigh.”

Exercise consider the issues and how you’d preach into them and which audience would be struggling with these issues;

- Lotto (Search what Tim Keller has said about gambling)
- Horoscope/fortune tellers etc.
- Smoke/drink/hubby
- Labola/sacrifice
- Divorce
- Kiss_cybersex
- X-rated
- Gun protect

8. PROPHETIC PREACHING

Acts 4:8 - "Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, 'Rulers of the people and elders.'"

- Understanding the anointing in preaching
- Holy Spirit can speak to you months in advance. Changing direction 2 minutes before a message is delivered does not make you more spiritual, it normally means it's taken you a long time to hear God finally.
- Always preach as if it were the last sermon you will ever preach.

9. WORKING WITH A TEAM

Galatians 1:2 - "I went up because of a revelation and set before them (though privately before those who seemed influential) the gospel that I proclaim among the Gentiles, in order to make sure I was not running or had not run in vain."

- Honouring your **fellow** leaders
- Working with those **leading** the meeting

10. PREACHING AT SPECIAL MEETING

- **Weddings** & Funerals (Different cultures demand different approaches)
- **Ordinations** and Dedications
- **Visionary** preaching, inspiring people to go on a journey
- Talking **finances**
- **Hostile** audiences
- Dealing with **controversial** issues
- **Pre-evangelism** environments
- Christmas, Easter and other seasons

11. LEARNING FROM OTHER PREACHERS - HOW TO LISTEN TO A SERMON

2 Timothy 2:2 - "And what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also."

- You can learn from those **most** like you
- Look for the X-Factor, what is **God** using

12. PREACHING BLUNDERS - DEALING WITH ISSUES AND LEARNING FROM MISTAKES

- Recovering from a **mistake**
- “**Monday** morning”
- Handling **interruptions**
- How to improve by listening /**watching** your own preaching

10 Mistakes Modern preachers make

1. Too long
2. No clear verdict.
3. Apologising (filler lines)
4. Read too fast
5. Trying to say too much
 - Talk to fast
 - Listing points
6. Dogma on little, EG: evolution
7. Jumping to irresponsible biblical conclusions
8. Humour
 - Ripping others
 - Asking crowd questions
 - Below belt
 - Politics
9. Jumbled thought
10. Trying to impress with Greek & fancy words.

10 Ways to improve your preaching:

Some people are too hard on selves, and some not hard enough

1. Practice
2. Get audio and video copies of your message afterwards
3. Learn from someone who is like you
4. Energy - get in the zone
5. Explain the main concepts to a kid beforehand.
6. Review your prep through the lens of a thinker, feeler and spiritual person.
7. Start well and end well (impact & memory)
8. Learn to tell a story
 - Not lost in the detail
 - Not too little
 - Punch line... i.e. point
9. Think (BIG IDEA)
10. Pray more

13. PREACHING TO CHILDREN

Introduction to Big Group Preaching:

On Sundays, we preach to children. We preach with a verdict in mind. The message must change their lives. But if we get up and say, “Today, i am going to preach 3 mains parts...” in exactly 17 seconds, you have lost all the children and you are in big trouble.

So we dress our preach up in the form of a story!

“Storytelling” needs a whole new definition! Have you ever wondered why children seem so absorbed and are glued to the TV set when watching the “Lion King” or “The Incredibles”, but when you sit them down on the carpet and tell them a Bible story, they just seem to switch off! By Storytelling, we need to redefine it as meaning to bring the Bible to life! As Aaron Reynolds says, the Bible deserves that! Not sitting with a group of children reading a book but dramatically bringing stories in the Bible to life in such a way that they are deeply impacted by the message and live life differently on Monday because of what they experience on Sunday. The following are some really basic guidelines for storytellers. The best way to grow is to watch someone else in action, but I trust these written guidelines will help.

A. Props and Visuals

Props and visuals are essential aids (even the simplest prop can multiply your effect). Use a projector if you have one, DVD's, costumes, anything. I was informed once that children learn 30% by what they hear, but another 30% by what they say. If all you are doing is talking....good luck because you are going to need it! Visuals will also help you to transport the children into the story, making them feel more like they are actually there! The problem is that some storytellers think they are more riveting to listen to than they actually are, and dismiss the importance of visual aids.

B. Audience Participation

Any opportunity you have to bring the children into your story, do it. Children often love acting, or seeing their friends act, and you'll have their attention so much easier. But if you do bring children in, make sure you direct them strongly with their role, otherwise they can become a distraction to your story. For example, if you are ending off your story with Jesus' crucifixion, you don't want little Johnny who was a Roman centurion in your story, now bored sitting at your feet and tying your shoelaces together. If you use them, direct them strongly, and send them back down if you don't need them, rather than them distracting from your message. Also, don't army volunteer; pick those that will be responsive to your instructions. I once picked a girl for the story who, only once the story was in full swing, did i discover couldn't speak English!

C. Be relevant

Engage them at their level. Know what kids are watching on TV. What sort of music do they listen to? What technology? What words are cool? If you get up and tell them about a program you watch in the 1980's, don't expect to win them over. Or talking about being careful about what music they listen to, and you use Guns 'n Roses as an example. They haven't a clue who they are. When you show them that you know a bit about their world, they will respect you and listen to you more.

D. Know your 'bottom line

What exactly is your message? Sometimes a storyteller raps on for so long about so many different things, you don't actually know what the point is. Then they say, thanks and step down and everyone's thinking, "What was that about?" Now the MC gets up and dismisses everyone into their small groups and the small group leaders have so much work to do, basically having to retell the entire story with the message for that day. Instead, the kids should be running back into their small groups so amped by the story, with so many questions and things to talk about. Comments like, "Did you see that...?" are good indicators that a good story was told. Once a storyteller knows what the bottom line is, i.e Prayer is a 2 way conversation or, you can't run away from God's call on your life, it becomes easier to work back from there, creating the message and medium to best get that bottom line across. I often ask myself what picture best describes the bottom line? Then I will work towards painting that picture, because 'a picture speaks a thousand words!' At least then when the child goes home, I have left a vivid picture in their mind of what the story was.

E. Practice

A well practiced story is a pleasure to watch, and so easy to learn from. Fruit of not practicing is doing things like saying, ummmm a lot, waffling, going off the topic, losing the bottom line, frustration etc. Part of that is knowing what your train of thought is from start to finish. Why do you start by telling that funny story? Did it add to your message or take away from it? Also, practice how you will transition from the story to the practical implication it has into the child's life. You might think that practicing will take away the anointing of the Holy Spirit. Actually, I think it's the opposite. And don't think that a practiced story will come across as boring...when you know where you are going and this is the first time your audience has ever heard your story, you will play with them, feeling a sense of power in your delivery, because you know where you are going and the emotions you want them to experience.

F. Body Language

Use body language and the stage. A good storyteller uses the whole stage when telling the story. Never stand in one place, move around. It's far more engaging and exciting to watch. They'll be thinking, 'what's he going to do next?' other good methods are to use your body language to help your message and create the mood you want. It's no good trying to describe how fast the horses were running, when you are standing still with your hand in your pocket. When you are getting to a more somber part of your message - whisper it. Avoid drifting - that's where you aimlessly walk up and down the stage or from side to side for no reason and it becomes distracting. If you have a poignant point to convey, stand dead still and speak s - l - o - w - l - y. It will sink in better. My basic rule would be, when you are telling necessary but arbitrary information in the story, liven it up by moving around. If you are telling really important information that drastically impacts your message, slow down, stand still and speak slower. That way, either through your spoken word or body language, you keep them focused and engaged.

G. Be teachable

Ask others to critique you on how you went. It's better to do a pre - Sunday critique than a post Sunday critique. Do your story in front of others just as you would do with the children, and let everyone dissect it afterwards. You have to be tough though! Better to do that before the Sunday and make the improvements, than after Sunday when the critique is too late actually.

H. Cool flows downward

A lesson I learned through the coaching manual of 'The Fabulous Reinvention of Sunday School' by Aaron Reynolds, was this principle that 'cool flows downward.' By this is meant, aim your story to being more cool to the older kids than the younger. If the older kids enjoy it, then the younger ones will enjoy it too, as they look up to the older kids. But if you aim at the younger kids, you will lose the older kids because it will be childish and uncool. I realise that puppet shows are only effective for the 3 - 6

year olds; from 7 upwards, the kids feel like they are being treated like babies. You also have to be careful that you don't speak in a childish or babyish way, OK little boys and girls, come together now and let's read a nice little story, will not be cool. But, alrighty then, listen up you funky people! Come parke here in the front because i have got something totally awesome to tell you, will go a lot further. And the 5 year old and 13 year old will love you equally...

I came up with a basic guideline for our storytellers, in terms of how their time on the stage should start, and all the way to when they get back down. After looking at the different important elements, i came up with an acronym: HASTA

H = Hello

This sounds really basic, but it's so important and so often i see storytellers leave this out! Your shouldn't get up onto the stage and begin with, OK, this is the story for today... what happen to a good old fashioned greeting? I would prefer to start of with something like, 'Hey there everyone, how you all doing today? Great! Cool, i'm feeling great too!' Feel the difference? I'm connecting with them. Look and talk as if you like them and like being with them.

A = Anticipation

Once you have greeted them, don't launch straight into the story. Build some anticipation first - wet their appetite. Say something like, 'Well guys, i am soooo excited to be here, because today's Bible story must be the most BODACIOUSLY AWESOME story ever! This whole month of learning that God is our Father has been amazing, and i'm just so amped to tell you something else about our awesome Father God....(drop your voice) so listen up carefully...because you are not going to want to miss this...'

S = Set the Scene

I know you want to tell the story but wait! You need to set the scene first. Don't start telling the story in the same posture - move to different part of the stage, or sit down; anything different. By doing that, you are showing that we are no longer just here talkin, but a story - no wait - a BODACIOUSLY AWESOME story is about to be told. You want to set the scene, so don't just tell them no about David and Goliath. Put the

stor into context: a long time ago the people of God, the Israelites stood facing their enemy - the Philistines. The Israelites knew that God had promised them the land of Canaan, but right now - on that very day - something was going on that shook the foundation of their faith. And it was on THIS day, that the Bible records a story that would be told for generations...

T = Tell the story

Now, having pulled the excitement and anticipation back like the rubber of a catapult, you let loose on them with this BODACIOUSLY AWESOME story. Make the children feel as if they are seeing the whole thing really happen before their very eyes. Don't get too caught up in the details; stick to what is important to get your bottom line across at the end. I have seen storytellers tell the lesson when they haven't even told the story! It's not the time yet to tell them what the lesson is, just tell them the story! It's important that the children know that this lesson is not some half - baked thing we dreamt of one day. It comes from the BIBLE! And the Bible is not filled with fairy tales, but carefully recorded stories of real men and women who experienced God in so many different ways.

A = Bring Application

So now you have your story. Wow, it was amazing. The children are almost dripping with perspiration from all the excitement. Yet you could nearly hear a pin drop; the atmosphere is electric. Now, the dreaded trap a storyteller can fall into: 'OK guys, wasn't that amazing? Thanks for listening to me, see you next week...' Talk about plummeting from the top of Mount Everest into the depth. What happened there? You didn't bring the point home. The point of listening to the story was not to hear a good story, it was to impact the children in that electric atmosphere at the end, when you can almost hear the person breathing in front of you, you change body position again, coming back out of the story and back to real life, and talk straight to the heart of every child listening. Bring it home. Little Johnny is not going to face a 7 foot Goliath when he goes to school tomorrow, but he might be confronted by a bully or the news of his parents getting divorced, or the test he just failed, and its in those moments that you want Johnny to remember the story he heard of David and Goliath, so that he knows that he can overcome this 'giant'. If little Johnny knows that

he can face his giant, because of what you told him on Sunday, guess what storyteller, you did your job.

THE FOUNDATIONS

Pitch

The 'rise and fall' of your voice. Thinking about pitch, helps us not sound boring. We must be careful of:

- Sounding monotonous
- Sounding like we are on a fun - fair ride.

Tone

The expression of mood or emotion in your voice. You can say one sentence in many different ways expressing different emotions.

“The army of soldiers was fierce and strong”

Volume

This often goes hand in hand with tone to express your emotion, i.e. Angry = High volume, scared = low volume

We can use volume as a tool to capture the audience:

- When we want children to listen closely, you can drop your voice a bit
- It can be used to change the focus from a peak moment to application

A range of volume is vital for a good story!

Timing

Timing is extremely important for a good story. We must think about:

- When to pause (key in bringing across the point of a story/application of the biblical concept)
- When to talk quickly (to build tension)
- When to talk slowly (to build suspense, or too add to the emotion)

Stage Placement

The area you have can be used for many different things. You can use different spaces to represent different things, different people or different emotions. Use your placement on stage with the above to create a picture.

Planning your story from a Script

Every week at uptown you are given a script - but how can you make the text come alive for the children?

We need to identify the nuggets, peaks, valleys and then send them home with a good application.

The Nugget is the main part of the story, the crux of the issue and the central idea or principle that we are trying to get across to the children. Read the story a few times and get a good feel for it.

Once we know the main reason for telling the story, we know what to emphasize, where to apply and how to use tone, pitch, pace and volume to highlight the main idea.

The peak moments in a story are those we should look to build to with our voice and actions, creating suspense/tension and getting to a point where the audience are dying to know what happens next.

This is often accompanied by high volume and fast pace and is often the best place to put a pause.

The valley moment are the opposite of the peaks (surprise!) these can also be a great place to bring in your application or to change the tone of what is happening.

The Application is obviously the most important part of the story, and WHY we tell the story. This is where we explain:

- The biblical concept of the story, i.e giving the children the understanding of what the Bible says.
- How this applies to them, i.e can you go home and implement this today?

Some things to remember when planning your application:

- Don't sound like a teacher! You may do an awesome story and lose the kids when you turn on your teacher voice at the end.
 - It is so important for the kids to know how does this affect me? Give examples they can work with and are relevant.
- Cool flows downhill (aim your examples at the older kids, the younger kids will latch on)
- Keep it short and simple. This should be the part of the story you have rehearsed the most and have thought about the most.
- Practice it on someone.

Tips for your audience:

If you have a wide variety of ages in your meeting every week, this takes more planning. Some points to remember:

- Cool flows downhill, and if you keep your older kids engaged with your language, the younger kids will focus for longer.
- Keep younger kids involved with the visual part of the story.
- Ask questions that are relevant not rhetorical...use funny/ridiculous questions to get their focus.
- Do not rely on the kids to give you an answer to keep your story going.
 - Know the answer you are looking for and give no more than 3 kids a chance to try and answer.
- Do not give attention to a disruptive child.
 - Usually by not reacting to a noisy/naughty child they stop.
 - You can walk up the child and just put a hand on their shoulder.
- Kids will shout out random things
 - Keep to your plan and don't try and address every comment.
- When using audience volunteers, give them specific instructions and remain in control.
 - Be wise about who you choose to help you.

Handles for MCing meetings

These are not a list of must do's but rather my thoughts (and advice from some of the other elders). Remember we are all trying to partner with and hear God's voice for our corporate meetings and during our corporate meetings. Take risks; be prepared to fail, but always willing to learn. Smile. Remember we want to create an irresistible environment where kids want to come back - they have loads of fun, they make friends, they feel safe, they connect with leaders and they encounter God and Biblical truths which shape their lives.

1. **Prepare well**, but hold it lightly during the meeting
 - MC should know the memory verse for the month
 - MC should be familiar with the Bible Story for the day (having read it a few times before the Sunday, asked God for a revelation...)
 - MC should be able to and should recite the bottom line at least 3 or more times during the meeting
 - Come with some relevant research of your own around the topic and keep it in your toolbox (you may need it, you may not - at least you're prepared if need be, example some stories that illustrate the bottom line)
2. Ask God for **purposeful instruction** days before the meeting (what is He wanting to do and say through us). Pray for the meeting, worship, story, group time. Pray for the children.
3. **Be in Charge** - be confident, be the front foot, be purposeful.
 - Lead the children into worship. Ensure kids are engaged in worship. Point them to Jesus by getting in front and reminding them, or sharing a quick story which helps them refocus their attention back on Jesus and to enter into worship.
 - Lead the band (they're looking to you for instruction)
 - Stand up near the front so the band leader can see you (not at the back)
 - Speak well into the microphone
 - Take the lead at the pre - service meeting
 - If kids are distracted you may need to get up and refocus their attention on Jesus (kids are always energetic, but if there is a general disconnectedness with God then bring focus, point them to Jesus)

- Ask yourself: if you had a word would you be unsure who's the MC and who to bring it to? Remove the doubt from people right upfront as it makes people feel at ease when someone is leading strongly.
- Be short and concise, not rambling on for ages, get to the point.
- Just talk with the kids (don't feel you need to have a teacher pose, and manner of speech...just hang with them, but be firm and strong in you leading)
- If words are brought always ask what the appropriate response is (should we be still and listen, or pray, or give a victory declaration shout, invite children to respond by kneeling or sitting quietly with eyes closed and wait on God etc etc)

4. **Remember** the basics

- Smile
- Tithes and offerings
- Welcome visitors (make them feel special)
- Fun icebreaker or game (create the irresistible environment)
- Celebrate birthday
- recap/remind previous topics covered (memory verse, bottom line)
- If God has not redirected the entire meeting by breaking in and children having encounters with God then keep to the time within reason.
- Always bring application to the story if the storyteller hasn't (answer the "So What?" question the kids might ask)

Note: Don't feel you have to "get through the program" for the sake of getting through the program (worship then story the activity etc). If the Holy Spirit wants to do something then take courage and partner with Him. Don't get hung up on always having to follow the program at all costs. If in doubt communicate your thoughts with another strong leader during the meeting.

5. **Connect** with the audience - Just talk, don't try and be a teacher when communicating with them. Make them feel they can relate to you as a friend, not a mom or dad, or a scary teacher from first grade! Be real to them. "Hey grrreat to see you at the movies on Saturday Jenny - wasn't that a great movie..." or "Hey guys, i did some bad stuff this week, but God was so good in making me see..." versus "children we shouldn't be unholy..."

- Smile, wear cool clothes that don't make you look like a hillbilly. Look funky. Spike your hair if you feel you need too. Wear an earring, dress different.
 - Be wild, not weird!
6. **Don't try and be too holy** and spiritual - Jesus is on the throne. Smile.
7. Be **situationally aware** - during the meeting you should be think 10 minutes ahead of everyone else. Are the kids still very distracted after that great game they just played and need to get some focus before worshipping?
- Bring the adjustment needed to get kids to enter into worship and not waste 15 minutes and spoilt it for others.
 - What's coming up next and how best can i facilitate that?
8. **Facilitate words** that are brought by leaders or children. Smile.
- You don't have to release every word all the time (it is not possible time wise). Smile.
 - If you prepare well (and with experience) you should know what line to take. Even if words are spot on you can just confirm them from the front that a few words have come saying this and i believe God wants to do this etc.
9. **Communicate** (I would recommend talking the day before the Sunday meeting in case anything needs to be done, arranged, or someone arrives a little late and it throws you etc)
- Speak to the storyteller before the meeting begins (what are they doing, how do they want the MC to follow up etc)
 - Speak to the sound guy or computer person - do they have everything they need for the morning (pictures, sounds etc)
 - Has the band given the song list to the projectionist to display the song words?
 - Speak to the person on the spotlight - give instructions.
 - Speak to the worship leader before hand. Smile. Let them know what you're feeling or think should happen during the meeting (they may not always be able to play a specific song, but it's good they're kept in the loop).

- Speak to the other leaders during the meeting - ask them what they feel God is saying. We are a TEAM and we do TEAM so we should be there for each other and willing at all times to be prepared.
- Bring conclusion/summary/landing to the story (don't just say "okay that was a great story go to your groups now.") Maybe the storyteller touched on something that you feel needs to be explained or expanded. Or maybe something wasn't perfectly clear and it's your job to take that baton and complete the race and run the message home, bring applicability. Ask yourself this question, "how should we respond to this message we just heard?" and then facilitate that response from the children.

10. Smile

11. Try and make the meeting as **seamless** as possible. The gear changes between events (welcome/worship; worship/story; story/application etc) should be as smooth as possible (for example the band/actions team should be ready and run on directly as the MC says "Let's worship!" - there shouldn't be 2 minutes of trying to find the mic, song sheets, projection/sound not working etc - these should be ready to go at all times.)
12. Make sure you know when it is appropriate to talk and when it is best to leave something as is (needless addition of talk talk talk makes the meetings very boring and dull for the kids - they zone out)
13. Know before your Sunday meeting who is doing what during your meeting. Never wait for 15 minutes before the meeting to find out who is doing the story, who is leading worship, where's the props, can you do this or do that - last minute chaos is very poor leadership. People will follow organized, intentional leadership. Make it your role to ensure everyone is in their key positions for Sunday. Smile.

14. RULES FOR PREACHING AND TEACHING

TEAM FROM HILLSONG

Have you ever said something you wished you hadn't? What about in front of thousands of people? Perhaps you don't stand on any 'physical platforms'... well, don't disengage, this blog is still for you!

It wasn't long ago that I presented these key points on Hillsong's Culture for Preaching and Teaching to our Staff, even though many of them don't speak on our platform on a weekend or even during the week. Yet, all of us do have opportunity in one form or another to speak into the lives of others and it's always wise to examine the way we communicate, what we communicate and the impact it has on our audience. I've learned some valuable lessons over 30 years of preaching and teaching in public – many through my own error.

Culture, atmosphere and DNA in a church is not accidental. Just like culture, atmosphere and DNA of your home is not. You have to be deliberate about it - especially from the 'platform'. Leadership in this area is about making intentional and focused choices, and taking a degree of measured risk.

So wherever you have the chance to input into others - take a look at these guidelines to building a strong platform teaching culture in your church or homegroup – many of them can also be applied to your family life or work life. There are 30 points – one for each year of experience!

Every message:

1. IS POSITIVE

- Don't preach to an individual – using the platform to get a personal message across to an individual is cowardly and blesses no one.

2. IS IN LINE WITH OUR BELIEF

- Don't contradict basic fundamentals and doctrine. Make sure you know what they are

3. BEFORE you take the platform.

4. HAS A SET TIME LIMIT

- Hillsong Church typically has a 35-minute time limit on messages.
- Be a good steward of people's time. Be reliable. You can do a lot of waffling in 60 minutes! You are entrusted as a steward of the platform you are on – the moment you go over time, you are outside of your authority!

5. MUST BE PROVEN IN THE BIBLE

- If you can't prove it, don't say it. The platform is not for your opinions, it is God's Word that matters. Every Scripture reference must be in context and within the tenure of Scripture = credibility and respect.

6. MANY HOURS OF MEDITATION, PREPARATION & FAMILIARISATION

- All 3 are important.
- 1) Think things through.
- 2) Get the structure as polished as you can – it must impact.
- 3) Be familiar with your message so you get it across clearly and effectively.

7. CHECKED FOR OVERUSE OF "I"

- It is not about you.
- People will see through a self-focused message and it doesn't build others.

8. FOCUSED ON HELPING, NOT IMPRESSING

- Joyce Meyer once made a comment that really helped me with this, after I had asked her if she ever gets nervous? She said: "I never think about myself, I just think about helping people." This attitude will keep your focus on course.

9. REINFORCING – NEVER CONTRADICTING – OUR CULTURAL VALUES

- Wherever you are speaking, you must respect the cultural values of that platform.
- Encourage the congregation to engage with what is local and relevant.

10. FROM A NEW TESTAMENT PERSPECTIVE

- By all means use the Old Testament, but always through the lens of the New Covenant of grace - through the cross of Christ. Otherwise we are in danger of preaching law and condemnation rather than building people up.

11. A REFLECTION OF THE LIFE YOU ARE LIVING, NOT JUST THE SERMON YOU ARE PREACHING

- Be authentic. The best messages come out of our own struggles and journeys. People sense authenticity as well as a lack of it. No matter how professional or eloquent you are as a speaker, you won't build anything into people's lives if you lack authenticity.

12. A REFLECTION OF YOUR PERSONALITY, NOT AN IMITATION OF SOMEONE ELSE

- This was one of the hardest lessons for me to learn but one of the most important. You'll always be your best if you are being yourself – It's not about being perfect or about a certain 'style'. Be your best self and don't use this freedom as an excuse to support rebellion or negativity.

13. AFFECTS PEOPLE'S MONDAYS, NOT JUST SUNDAY

- In other words, your message needs to be applicable to people's daily lives.
- The greatest compliment someone who is doing well in life can give me is to say, "All I've ever done is to take the principles that have been taught in church and put them into practice." – I love hearing that sort of testimony!

14. NOT STRAYING INTO THINGS YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND

- Stay within your boundaries. Keep learning, but don't preach outside your understanding.
- Stick to what you know but also continue to grow in what you know and in your knowledge of the Word. 1 Timothy 3 in The Message says of the leader, "He must know what he is talking about". Preparation is a discipline.

15. REFLECTING WHAT WE ARE FOR, NOT AGAINST

- Remember, our lives should reflect what we are for and not just what we are against.
- Preaching always against things leaves people feeling downcast.

16. LEAVES PEOPLE FEELING BETTER ABOUT THEMSELVES THAN WHEN THEY CAME IN

- I intentionally approach every service by trying to create an encouraging environment. The world doesn't input positive messages

into people very much - between the newspaper and the television, people are starving for messages of hope and encouragement!

17. EASILY TRANSITIONED INTO AN ALTAR-CALL

- If people are being impacted and reached during your message, then the altar call moment will be a smoother and easier transition. (HOWEVER, you cannot let your confidence be measured by how many people get saved when you speak.)

18. NOTEWORTHY

- Are people taking notes?
- Make sure people understand what you are saying, that there is substance to it, and that you are not boring. Be compelling and helpful to people.

19. SEES HUMOUR AS A BONUS, NOT THE GOAL

- Humour is a tool, but it is not the goal. If you are not good at being funny, don't try.
- Any use of humour should serve the message – but never build your message around a funny story or joke.

20. PREACHED FROM NOTES YOU'D BE PROUD TO SHOW ME

- You should have some content in your notes: Key statements, scriptures, examples.
- Content - not neatness - is the goal. Your notes should reflect the hard work you've put in.

21. EXALTS JESUS AND BRINGS GLORY TO GOD

- Be deliberate about this.
- "God" means many things to many people, so ensure you are presenting Jesus.
- People don't need motivational speeches, they need the Word of God and AN EMPHASIS ON Jesus Christ.

22. REFLECTS YOUR LEVEL OF AUTHORITY

- Speak within your sphere of authority, not outside of your credibility.
- Unless you have the right credibility or platform to confront and challenge people, then don't. It is always better to encourage people.

23. PROJECTS CONFIDENT HUMILITY

- Minimise "I", "me" and "my".

- Be confident, not weak or false.
- I know who I am and that God has entrusted me with the platform. I know I belong here, but at the same time, I recognise I didn't earn the right and I am accountable to Him for how I handle it. It's about bringing glory to God – keep the main thing the main thing.

24. COMBINES FAITH WITH TRANSPARENCY

- It's not about exposing and highlighting our strengths and weaknesses, but balancing these examples to enhance the message – our weakness or strength is not the message.
- It's not about being ashamed of the blessing but people benefit more from understanding the journey and challenges that you had to overcome to get there.
- People relate to and learn more from your struggles – don't present yourself as perfect.
- Conversely, don't be negative and down all the time – people need to be encouraged in their faith; they want to listen to an overcomer.

25. TELLING NOT JUST WHAT, BUT HOW

- It's more challenging to tell people how to outwork the principles we teach. I remember early in my ministry a man came up to me after I preached on loving God with all your heart, soul and strength and he said, "I want to do that, but how do I do it?" It's easy to tell people what they should do but more challenging to tell them how.

26. LEFT BEHIND ON MONDAY

- Don't do post-mortems or beat yourself afterwards... AND be careful not to get too full of how great you think you were.
- Time moves on. Be good at walking away.

27. FOCUSED AS MUCH ON DELIVERY AS CONTENT

- If you aren't good at communicating your message, then no matter how good the content is, it will get lost on people.
- Say it in a way that best connects with the hearts of people.

28. AWARE OF A GREATER AUDIENCE THAN THE ROOM

- The days are long gone when the possibility of being recorded in one form or another is absent - whether by individuals on phones or corporately on cameras or sound-systems.

- Even though you may be speaking to church family, you have to remember your message will more than likely go beyond the family – so nothing is entirely safe in that sense.
- Filter everything you say through this reality.

29. LISTENED TO OR WATCHED BY YOU

- Ask for a copy of your message for review and don't worry about appearing proud by asking – it's a necessary part of growing as a speaker.
- Get used to how you sound and get past the 'cringe-factor'.
- By observing and listening to yourself, you will notice habits and other distractions that you can fix.
- Learn to love the way you sound – if you don't, no one else will.

30. HELPING PEOPLE OVERCOME AND BELIEVE WHAT GOD SAYS ABOUT THEM

- Without exception.
- Remind people about what God says about them – there's a lot of opposition in the world and you have an opportunity to lift people up and speak life to them – maximise it

31. ABLE TO STAND ALONE IN A NEWSPAPER

- Every message should include points that would stand alone in the newspaper. For example, years ago I wrote a book with a controversial title. I was young at the time and thought it was a great idea to use a controversial title. But as Hillsong's profile (and my own profile grew), I may as well have drawn a bullseye on my forehead. It became fodder for journalists wanting to criticise it's content.
- Let's assume everything you say is quotable and can be published in a newspaper – how does it stand then?
- Think about how would you sound without your spirit and physical presence on it - quoted in black and white?
- Always take responsibility for what you say and never assume anything. It is an enormous responsibility that we have when it comes to carrying the message of Jesus Christ to this world.
- Ignorance is never an excuse, so decide today that you are done with excuses.

- Apply wisdom and understanding to the message on your life and the platform you have been given - and the potential and influence on your life will continue to grow and extend well 'above and beyond'.
- Get updates from Let's Talk Leadership