

# TIPS FOR PREACHING A BIBLE STORY

In preaching a Bible story, the storyteller-preacher tells the Bible story that is the text to his sermon; afterwards, he develops selected life-lessons discovered in the story as the divisions of his sermon. The preaching application is delayed until after the telling of the story.

The Preaching Plan is often called the sermon outline. The **Preaching Plan** will include:

- 1<sup>st</sup> **THE BIBLE STORY**
- 2<sup>nd</sup> **DIVISIONS**
- 3<sup>rd</sup> **CONCLUSION**

## 1<sup>st</sup> THE BIBLE STORY

The sermon begins with the telling of the story. Begin with the initial-situation and then narrate the sequence of events:

- Describe the initial-situation (context). Explain background information that help the listeners understand the historical circumstances surrounding the story.
- Narrate the sequence of events of the Bible story in their chronological order. Be

sure to include the facts that identify the initial-problem. Continue narrating the sequence of events in chronological order until the final-situation of the story has been told.

Attention: While telling the story, do not explain the story and do not mention life-lessons.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> DIVISIONS

### Use the Preaching Cycle With Each Life-lesson Selected for the Sermon

The storyteller-preacher needs to select appropriate life-lessons for his listeners. He should consider all the life-lessons discovered in the story and select the ones that most meet the needs of his listeners. I recommend that the storytelling-preacher choose only two or three life-lessons to develop.

After selecting the life-lessons he wishes to communicate, he will use the **Preaching Cycle** with each one.

The **Preaching Cycle** requires three activities for each life-lesson selected to become a sermon division:

- **Explain** the life-lesson;
- **Illustrate** the life-lesson;
- **Apply** the life-lesson to the lives of the listeners.

### 1. Explain the life-lesson

Some of the things the storyteller preacher does while explaining the life-lesson are:

- Clarify details and present facts about the Bible story that make the life-lesson more understandable.
- Explain the historical and cultural context of the Bible story.
- Define or clarify words that might be better understood.
- Use other Bible texts that help explain and reinforce the life-lesson.  
Events from the story, that is the text to the sermon, help explain the life-lesson.

The Bible interprets itself. Therefore, the preacher can use other teaching texts to explain the life-lesson being emphasized. For example: Psalms, Proverbs, Jesus' teachings, Paul's letters, the General Epistles and Hebrews can be used to explain a life-lesson.

### 2. Illustrate the life-lesson

Each sermon division may be illustrated with events from other Bible stories or from

stories outside the Bible.

Types of Illustrations:

- Examples
- Stories outside the Bible
- Jokes
- Comparisons
- Other Bible stories
- Personal experiences
- Sport events
- Historical events
- Contemporary events

Attention:

- A good sermon illustration is usually short and simple.
- Use illustrations that link to things the listeners know and have experienced. Don't use illustrations from the farm life with people who only know the city life.

A storyteller is successful when entertaining, but a storytelling-preacher is effective only when stories help communicate biblical truths.

### 3. Apply the life-lesson to the listeners' lives

An application establishes what God desires the listeners to know, to be, or to do as a result of understanding the life-lesson discovered in the Bible story.

All life-lessons presented in a sermon should have change as a common goal. The preacher wants his listeners to change in one or more of the following ways:

- Believe a truth they haven't believed.
- Trust a promise they haven't trusted.
- Understand something they haven't understood.
- Obey a command or law they haven't been obeying.
- Become something they haven't been.
- Do something they haven't been doing.

Application explains how the listeners should change by putting the life-lessons presented into action.

### Example of the Preaching Cycle

**Story:** The Temptation of Jesus

**Text:** Luke 4:1-13

**Life-lesson converted into a sermon division:** Satan is the one who schedules the temptation.

Explanation:

Satan is the one who schedules the temptations that each person must face. He schedules the time, place and kind of temptation without informing the person to be tempted.

After Jesus had fasted forty days, Satan came to tempt Him.

Illustration:

The Dallas Cowboys have a schedule of when and who they will play, and are able to prepare in advance for each game. Yet, if Satan were scheduling the games, the Cowboys could be preparing to play the Denver Broncos on Sunday, but on Wednesday receive a call saying, "Time to suit up. The game begins in thirty minutes." To the Cowboys' surprise, when they suit up and run out to play, the playing field is a basketball

gymnasium and their opponents are the Chicago Bulls.

Application:

Satan is going to schedule temptations for each one of you. You need to be prepared at all times because you never know when the temptation will come nor what the temptation will be. You can know only that Satan is scheduling temptations for you, and you always need to be prepared.

---

The **Preaching Cycle** touches the listener's:

- Brain (*explanation*)
- Heart (*stories that illustrate*)
- Personal life (*application*)

The preacher who touches all three in a rhythm that explains, illustrates and applies will keep his listeners tuned in to his sermon.

### 3<sup>rd</sup> CONCLUSION

The conclusion should summarize:

- Principal facts of the Bible story
- Life-lessons (divisions of the sermon) treated

All sermons should have a common goal: to get the listeners to change. The conclusion should invite the listeners to change by putting the life-lessons presented into action.

The conclusion should be short and powerful, similar to New Orleans' "espresso coffee." The conclusion should be:

- Strong (powerful),
- Hot (animated),
- Sweet (leave a good taste),
- Little (short).