Seven Steps to Preaching Expository Sermons

Adapted from Ramesh Richard, *Preparing Expository Sermons*; Robinson, *Biblical Preaching;* and Don Sunukjian (DTS)
See the diagram of these seven steps on page 251

1. **Study** the Text.

   a. <u>Choose the Passage</u> no later than Tuesday in your preaching week, making sure it is not too short or too long for a single message.

   b. <u>Exegete the Passage (Analyze the Parts) and Gather Your Notes.</u>

      1) Pray for wisdom and read the translation most of the church members use. List every question you think the average member would ask. (Otherwise, 15 study hours later you will have all the answers but will have forgotten the questions!) Answer these questions.

      2) Read a few other translations and note the differences and additional questions.

      3) Read the original text if you can; use tools and do brief word studies on important words.

      4) Consult the commentaries if you are really stuck (most of the time I do this after step 5).
         a) Look up difficulties in Greek or Hebrew commentaries (if you can read them!).
         b) See the *Expositor's Bible Commentary* for both the big picture and problem areas.
         c) Read a sermonic commentary (by Stott, Wiersbe, Boice, Criswell, Swindoll, etc.).
         d) Listen to recorded messages on the passage (but this takes much more time than reading).

2. **Structure: Determine the Exegetical Outline.**

   a. <u>Reword</u> each verse in Z_1+X+Z_2+Y form and remove all figures of speech (pp. 33-34). If the text exceeds 15-20 verses or is a narrative then write statements for 2-5 groups of verses.

   b. <u>Group</u> similar statements under main titles to show big divisions ("hunks") in the passage.

   c. <u>Write out</u> each "major hunk" tentatively, then make sure the various subpoints (2.a. above) really do fit under each major hunk. Subdivide the subpoints further if you wish.
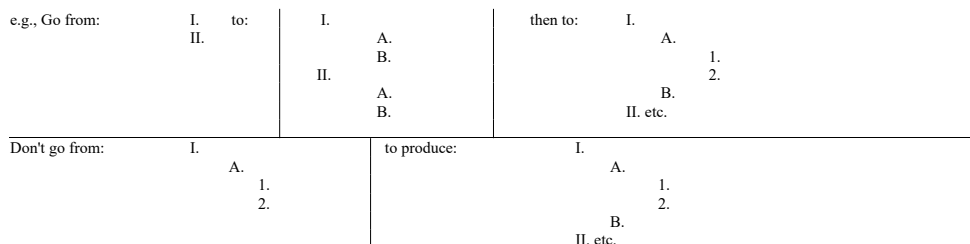
3. **CPT: Summarize the Main Points in a Subject/Complement Sentence called the Central Proposition of the Text (CPT) or "Exegetical Idea" (EI).**

4. **Purpose Bridge**

   a. Submit the Exegetical Idea to <u>Three Developmental Questions</u> (pp. 38-39): Which of the following is needed most in your sermon for your particular audience?
      1) *Explain it:*   What do I need to explain (about the EI/CPT)?
      2) *Prove it:*   Do my listeners believe this idea?
      3) *Apply it:*   Where does this concept show up in real life?

   b. Write the <u>Desired Listener Response</u>: what you want the hearers to know, feel, or do in measurable results (observable behavior) during or after the sermon (pp. 86, 148, 156, 170).

5. **CPS: Write the Central Proposition of the Sermon or Homiletical Idea (HI).**

   a. Think through how *your listeners* need to know and act upon the exegetical idea (CPT).
   b. Convert the exegetical idea into a concise, memorable sentence called the "big idea" (p. 40).

6. **Structure the Sermon.**

   a. Outline the Sermon (pp. 47-50, 138):

      1) Place the Main Idea: Taking into account your purpose on Step 4, have the main idea appear where it should best occur in the sermon.

         a) Deductive: The main idea is given at the beginning, then developed (p. 50).
            i) This outline is clear but less interesting. It closely follows the exegetical subpoints.
            ii) Examples: an idea to explain, a proposition to prove, a principle to apply.

         b) Inductive: The main idea is not revealed until the conclusion (pp. 49, 51).
            i)   This outline is less clear, but more interesting. Exegetical points need reworking.
            ii) This outline is also better for hostile audiences in that it builds up to a conclusion.
            iii) Examples: subject to complete, problem to explain, story to tell, cause with effects.

      2) Place the Application Locations: Taking into account your purpose on Step 4, decide the principles to apply and where they should best occur in the sermon.

         a) Simple: The entire text is explained before any of it is applied (pp. 49-50, top).

         a) Cyclical: Applications appear within the body as the text unfolds (pp. 46, 49 bottom).

      3) Write out your main points with their verse references following the order of the passage.

      4) Develop each of these points with two things in mind: the developmental questions in Step 4 and answers to the key issues you raised in your preliminary questions in Step 1.

   b. Plan for Oral Clarity (pp. 64-73): Remember that you know the sermon in outline form but your listeners don't (p. 67).

* This is what you mean to say…	but this is what the listeners hear…

I.
  A.
  B.
II.
	I.A.B.II.

      To alleviate this problem you must clearly emphasize your major points in several ways:
      1) Add restatements of the major points—rephrasing them to give the same idea (p. 68).
      2) Add transitions in parentheses between the major points (p. 68).
      3) Add illustrations to support and clarify the main points (pp. 64-66).
      4) Add applications to specifically show how the main idea relates to real life (pp. 70-73).
      5) Give the interpretation of verses first, then read them (p. 68, pt. 5).
      6) Underline the verse references wherever you plan to read the Scripture (pp. 87, 157).

   c. Prepare the Introduction and Conclusion (pp. 74-77):

      1) The introduction should accomplish three objectives. It should:
         a) Gain favorable attention.
         b) Create interest in listening further (touch a need or arouse some curiosity).
         c) Orient the listeners either to the main idea or to the subject (or to the first main point).

      2) The conclusion should accomplish three objectives. It should:
         a) Summarize the major points of the message and state (or restate) your main idea.
         b) Apply the passage in areas not already touched upon in the body of the sermon.
         c) Exhort the listeners to obedience (reminding of applications stated earlier).

7. **Preach: Manuscript and Practice the Message until it is Internalized.**

   a. Manuscript the entire message (including the verses) to force the best possible word-choice and to preserve the message for future use (pp. 78-90).

   b. Memorize your Subject, MI, and MPs, and the general flow of the message.

   c. Internalize the sermon by preaching it 6-8 times, each time weaning yourself more from the notes. Practice gestures while standing up with a makeshift pulpit in front of your mirror.