

## **SECTION 25**

### **The Conclusion**

**THE CONCLUSION**  
**“How to Land a Plane Safely”**

*“ More sermons are ruined by a poor conclusion than for any other reason.”*

-(Steven and David Olford, *Anointed Expository Preaching*, 78)

*"An experienced pilot knows that landing an airplane demands special concentration, so an able preacher understands that conclusions require thoughtful preparation. Like the pilot a skilled preacher should never have uncertainty about where his sermon will land."*

-(Haddon Robinson, *Biblical Preaching*, 167)

*“I would urge God's ministers and teachers of the Word in every type of ministry inside and outside of the Church to severely limit their work on the introduction and to devote that time and those energies on preparation to an expanded and clearly-thought-out conclusion.”*

-(Walter Kaiser, *Toward An Exegetical Theology*, 162)

*"A great sermon not only starts well, it ends well."*

-(E.K. Bailey, “Smoothing Out the Landing,” *Leadership* (Fall 1997): 39)

*A good conclusion “storms the citadel of the will.”*

-G. Campbell Morgan

## CONCLUSION

- 
1. Pray
  2. Remember: this is the second most important part of the sermon.
  3. Build towards your conclusion and plan a safe, smooth and timely landing.
  4. Do not have multiple conclusions.
  5. Briefly summarize the CPS and your major points.
  6. Remember the value of a powerful and memorable story.
  7. Keep it between 3-5 minutes.
  8. Highlight points of application.
  9. Plan a smooth, relevant and clear transition into the invitation. Make the turn to the gospel!!!

## **I. THE PURPOSES OF THE CONCLUSION**

1. To conclude, but not just stop.
2. Recapitulate briefly the sermon and its central proposition.
3. To exhort and make final application.
4. To elevate the emotions of your hearers.
5. To bring the message to a timely and appropriate climax.
6. To ask for a verdict.
7. To answer the question, "So what?"
8. To encourage, comfort and guide.

\*In a series of brief, crisp and memorable sentences, you bring the whole thrust of your message to your people for their response.

## **II. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CONCLUSION**

1. It is the best time to drive home the main idea of the message.
2. It is usually (should be!) the last opportunity to drive home the main idea(s) of the message.
3. It is the last thing the audience hears.

## **III. CHARACTERISTICS OF A GOOD CONCLUSION**

1. You finish strong, stronger than you started (crescendo!).
2. It possesses cohesion, drawing the pieces of the sermon together.
3. It has resolution.
4. It should reflect the main points - repeat certain words or phrases that summarize.
5. It should be fitting to the sermon - if on encouragement, conclude with that...
6. It should exhibit clarity of thought and expression.

7. It should exhibit brevity - say it politely – Don't circle the airport several times before landing.
8. It should exhibit the climax of your message - there should be energy in conclusion.
9. Occasionally, it contains an element of surprise.
10. It has a sense of timing.
11. It makes personal application - use 2nd person personal pronoun "you."
12. It makes appeal to individuals for a definite response.
13. It reflects the clear teachings of the text expounded.
14. It has a note of preparedness.
15. It naturally flows out of the body of the message.

#### **IV. SOURCES OF CONCLUSIONS**

1. Prayer
2. Illustration (especially an appropriate story)
3. Quotation
4. Hymn
5. Popular Song
6. Question(s)
7. Summary

\*note also the list for "introductions." They will fit here also.

#### **V. TYPES OF CONCLUSIONS**

1. Summary of main point(s)
2. Specific application/direction
3. Basic appeal: to love, give, obey
4. Contrast: If main thrust has been negative, you may conclude positively
5. Note and respond to potential objections

6. Visualization - picturing a future situation
7. Grand finale (what is called “a roll”)
8. Powerful story

## **VI. NO, NOS OF A POOR CONCLUSION**

1. Never announce the conclusion
2. Never announce the conclusion and then not conclude
3. Never introduce new material
4. Don't go long (never have a conclusion longer than your sermon!)
5. Avoid poor closings (eg. “I'm about out of time; I know the hour is late.”)
6. Avoid moralizing
7. Avoid stopping before you are finished
8. Avoid monotony
9. Avoid multiple conclusions
10. Avoid giving the conclusion before you conclude
11. Avoid the traditional 3 points and a poem
12. Don't ramble
13. Never refer to a watch or clock

## **VII. PREPARING THE CONCLUSION**

1. Plan your conclusion carefully after the work of exposition
2. Script it so you will end exactly like you want
3. Think in terms of how your conclusion can naturally transition into the invitation
4. Challenge your audience to act on what they have heard
5. Develop a clearly focused statement that is the sermon in capsule form
6. Ask the question, “What do I want my people to leave with from this message?”

*“A conclusion must conclude. And in order to conclude well it must include. In order to conclude perfectly, it must also preclude. When we are concluding we are concluding. We are bringing everything to an end A conclusion must include the things which have been said, as to their spiritual and moral impact and appeal; and it must preclude the possibility that those who listen may escape from the message, so far as is possible”*

-(G. Campbell Morgan, *Preaching*, 87)

*“As I approach the end of the sermon, I’m watching and reading the congregation. I’ve been here before, many times, but I know that God may want to do a new thing today. So I watch my people and listen for the Spirit, even as I’m speaking. In the African American tradition, when a preacher strikes a chord with the congregation, he’ll not only get a verbal response, but the body language of the congregation changes. The Spirit may then lead me to develop a thought, because that’s where the Spirit is dealing in the hearts of people. But other times I’ve sensed, It’s time to shut it down and land.”*

-(E.K. Bailey, 40)