

SECTION 29

Titles, Series, Schedules

TITLES, SERIES, AND YOUR PREACHING SCHEDULE

“I’ve put everything I can into creating effective titles. I’m not particularly clever, so sometimes I’ll work for hours on the title alone. The title can’t be just cute or catchy; it has to touch a genuine need or interest ...From the very first words people hear about our message, we need to communicate, ‘This is for you. This is something that you’ll want to hear.’” Bill Hybels, “Speaking to the Secular Mind,” *Leadership*, 88 (vol 9), pgs. 30-31.

I. SERMON TITLES

Giving a title to a sermon may be something at which you are either good or bad. It may also be something you should or should not do. A good sermon title can be a plus. No sermon title is better than a bad one. A good title will be an attention grabber, and it should be related to both the text and the Central Proposition of the text and sermon.

A. PITFALLS OF SERMON TITLES

1. Don’t be grandiose
2. Don’t be oblique
3. Don’t be frivolous
4. Don’t be offensive
5. Don’t be blatant

B. QUESTIONS TO ASK TO ACHIEVE A GOOD TITLE

1. Will this title capture the attention of the people?
2. Is the title clear?
3. Is the title good news?
4. Does the title relate to everyday life?

-(“Best titles for sermons” by Calvin Miller and Rick Warren. *Leadership*, Winter 1998 (Vol. 14, No 1, pgs. 93-96)

IN SUMMARY, CHARLES KOLLER SAYS:

1. Keep titles brief.
2. Make titles attractive.
3. Let titles reveal the sermon’s course.
4. Let titles exemplify Christ.

TITLE OF THE SERMON

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1. Pray
 2. Make it interesting, “an attention grabber.”
 3. Relate it, if possible, to the Central Proposition of the Text (CPT) and the Central Proposition of the Sermon (CPS).
 4. Create a title which can be fed by the main points of your sermon.
 5. Make it relevant.
 6. Put it in the form of an imperative (?)

II. PREACHING SERIES

There are a variety of series one can preach. This includes book, topic (eg. the family), doctrinal (eg. the person and work of Christ) and biographical (life of David). All of these should be a part of your preaching ministry. As we move into the 21st century, I have only a few suggestions:

1. Consider the needs of your people.
2. Consider shorter Sunday Morning series (4-8 weeks).
3. If you preach through a long book, don't announce it! Break it into smaller packages. (A book like Revelation with 22 chapters may be the exception due to its interest value.)
4. Promote the series with an attractive, catchy publication. Be creative. Use your "sanctified" imagination.

III. BENEFITS OF A PLANNED PROGRAM OF PREACHING

A planned program of preaching is a schedule of messages to be preached over a certain period of time. Some preachers will plan out their sermons for a year (Dr. Ed Young, 2nd Baptist Houston) while others will plan them out in shorter segments, such as three months.

THERE ARE GOOD REASONS FOR DEVELOPING A PREACHING PLAN:

1. It gives you time to acquire materials such as books and illustrations.
2. It assists you in planning worship that is meaningful.
3. It reduces the weekly anxiety of deciding what you will preach.
4. It frees up more time for study, instead of searching for your text.
5. It gives you time to meditate on the passage and gather materials.
6. It results in your preaching better sermons.
7. It helps you maintain a balanced program of preaching.

IV. HOW TO PLAN YOUR PREACHING

1. PRAY AND ASK GOD FOR DIRECTION.

2. LOOK AT WHAT IS HAPPENING AROUND YOU.

A. WHAT IS THE STATE OF THE CHURCH?

(1) Where is the church at this point?

- a. Is the church growing or declining?
- b. Are there issues that need to be addressed in the church such as immorality, doctrine, division, etc.?
- c. What is the church facing in the future that you need to prepare them for such as building, electing deacons, etc.?

(2) What are the needs of the people?

- a. What problems are they facing?
- b. What circumstances are they dealing with?

B. WHAT IS AHEAD FOR THE CHURCH THIS COMING YEAR? ITS ANNUAL THEME?

C. WHAT ARE THEMES ADOPTED BY THE CHURCH OR DENOMINATION?

D. WHAT IS HAPPENING IN THE WORLD?

E. WHAT ARE SOME OF THE NEEDS OF THE UNSAVED IN MY COMMUNITY?

F. WHAT HAVE I PREACHED ON IN THE LAST YEAR? (THE LAST 5 YEARS!?)

3. MAP OUT A PLAN FOR EACH SUNDAY FOR THE THREE MONTHS OR ONE YEAR PERIOD.

4. ASSIGN THE SUBJECT AND TEXT TO THE DATE YOU WANT TO PREACH ON IT, TAKING INTO CONSIDERATION SPECIAL DAYS AND HOLIDAYS.

5. WHEN EMERGENCIES ARISE THAT DEMAND YOU DEPART FROM YOUR PLAN, SIMPLY MAKE ADJUSTMENTS. (EX. THE COLUMBINE MARTYRS. TO IGNORE THAT TRAUMATIC EVENT, OR ONE LIKE IT, IS SIMPLY FOOLISH.)