

Review
2/6/5/8

Deacon/Elder Lecture Outlines

Lecture 4

How to Give a Sermonette or Sermon

I. Introduction

- A. "Talk is cheap," goes the old saying, and many times it is true. People too often have a lot to say but say little of value, or do indeed say important things but say them poorly.
- B. But the time allotted to a speaker for a sermonette or sermon is far too important to be wasted because of improper preparation or delivery.

II. SPS

This lecture will explain how to properly prepare and give a sermonette or sermon.

III. Need

- A. A speaker is using the important time of many people and must not waste that time by doing a poor job.
- B. The truth of God is a precious commodity and must not be used haphazardly or without proper thought or skill (II Timothy 2:15, II Peter 3:16).
- C. The job a speaker does -- be it good or bad -- reflects upon him and will enhance or deter from his effectiveness with the congregation in other areas.

IV. A Reminder

Each local church pastor has been given authority by Headquarters to schedule speakers for sermonettes and, occasionally, sermons as he deems appropriate to the needs of the congregation and the abilities and talents of the speaker.

It is important for each man to realize that he may not speak as often as other men in other areas or even in the same church area. Nor will every man, or perhaps most men, ever give sermons. Therefore men should not judge, envy or compare among themselves about speaking opportunities they do or do not have (II Corinthians 10:12, Philipians 2:1-4).

V. Purposes of a Sermonette

- A. In Sabbath services, the sermonette serves as an introduction to the services. It gets the minds of the people off the physical and onto the spiritual, and prepares their minds for the sermon.
- B. It serves to edify the audience on a limited subject (more on this later).
- C. It serves as speaking practice for the speaker. †

CLUB
WHENEVER
PRACTICAL,
EVEN AS
GUEST.

VI. Purpose of a Sermon

The sermon is the main teaching or preaching session on the Sabbath.

VII. Length of Sermonettes and Sermons

- A. For Sabbath services, unless the minister in charge allots extra time, 10-12 minutes is a good length for a sermonette, and 15 minutes should be the maximum.
- B. For a sermon, the usual time is about one hour and 15 minutes, but may be slightly more or less. Split sermons are usually about 40-45 minutes.
- C. Going overtime on the length of Sabbath services is to be avoided. This means that time limits for both sermonettes and sermons should be strictly observed.

VIII. Selecting a Topic

- A. Selecting a good topic is the first step in preparation for speaking. Unfortunately, many new speakers make mistakes at this critical point and cannot help but give poor messages as a result. Here are some important don'ts regarding the selection of a topic for a sermonette.
 - 1. Don't select a topic that is too broad -- i.e., one that tries to cover too much material in too little time (e.g., "The Scope of God's Plan From Adam Till the Return of Christ" is too broad).
 - 2. Don't pick a corrective subject. Within the short time limit you would only offend the audience. Besides, correction is not your job, but the pastor's.
 - 3. Don't come up with a new topic that you have not heard expounded before or one that is speculative (it may be heresy!).

4. Don't pick a subject that is grandiose or incomprehensible and make it into a big production. No matter how eloquent you are, the sermonette will be a flop if no one understands or is helped by it.
5. Don't pick a subject that is rightly one that should only be given by the pastor (e.g., it would be wrong for you to speak on a subject that the Pastor General's Report instructs the local pastor to give unless he assigns all or part of the topic to you).
6. Don't pick an extremely sensitive subject or one that might offend new people. Such subjects require greater experience and skill to present than you may now possess (e.g., a sermonette on homosexuality would be a poor choice for these reasons).

B. Here are some dos when picking a sermonette subject.

1. Do pick a narrow subject that can be handled within the time limit.
2. Do pick a subject that the congregation seems to need and not merely one you wish to give. Still, it is important to feel strongly about a subject, and the two factors of their needs and your feelings must be balanced.
3. Do remember that some in the congregation are new and would like to hear basic explanations on various practical topics.

C. Try to pick a sermonette topic from one of the following categories.

1. Difficult scripture explanation
 - a. Example: I Timothy 4:4 -- Does it justify eating unclean meats?
 - b. Example: John 14:2 -- Does it prove heaven is the reward of the saved?
 - c. Example: Luke 17:21 -- Is the Kingdom of God in the hearts of men?
2. Instructive
 - a. Example: How to use your second tithe.

- b. Example: Should you accept birthday or Christmas gifts?
- 3. Exhortative (to correct some minor problem or exhort in a positive way)
 - a. Example: Be on time to services.
 - b. Example: Too much noise during services.
 - c. Example: Get in your prayer at the Feast of Tabernacles.
- D. Topics for sermons will probably be of the same general types but can be more comprehensive and detailed.

IX. Preliminary Considerations

- A. Even before setting a pencil to paper, a speaker should analyze his audience so his talk will relate to the people, occasion and mood.
- B. The speaker should remember that his talk will be worthless unless inspired by God. He should therefore pray about it before he composes it and before he gives it (Proverbs 3:6).

X. Organization of a Sermonette

A. SPS

After deciding on a topic, write out the Specific Purpose Statement, which states the one point that you want to get across to your audience.

B. Body

- 1. In a sermonette, the body should consist of only a few (from one to three) points or thoughts that are part of the main point.
- 2. A sermon will be more complex, having more thoughts or points, all of which should relate to the main theme.
- 3. All points or thoughts should be organized in a logical manner (such as chronologically, historically or geographically) and be of the same type and of the same general weight or importance.
- 4. Remember that the basis of the talk should be the Bible and not outside material such as poetry, psychology, philosophy, "success" literature or

even your own pet ideas. Of course, some outside research material or supporting quotes can be proper in balance.

C. Conclusion

1. Summarize by giving the SPS in different words or by phrasing it differently than you did before.
2. Make an appeal for action on the exhortation or instructions you have given.
3. Plan your last sentence. Memorize it if necessary.

D. Introduction

After planning the SPS, body and conclusion, now go back and plan an appropriate introduction. A minister must have a type of salesmanship. He must make a sermon interesting if he expects people to accept it and listen -- even as a man selling merchandise has to sell people on it.

1. It must be related to your main point in such a way that it logically leads to the SPS.
2. It must grab the audience's attention and make them want to listen.
3. Some types of effective introductions are:
 - a. Use a short anecdote or cite a recent happening or news event.
 - b. Give some startling facts or figures.
 - c. Ask a moving question or questions.
 - d. Present a challenge.

XI. Delivery of the Sermonette or Sermon

- A. In your delivery, try to include the following qualities:
1. Warmth and friendliness.
 2. Intensity to drive home the point (but don't overdo it or be artificial).
 3. Show a zeal and interest in the topic.

4. Use humor if you are able and it is appropriate to the topic at hand.
 5. Strive to be natural and sincere.
- B. Try to avoid these common pitfalls:
1. Avoid dirty jokes, off-color stories or allusions to sex.
 2. Although ridicule and sarcasm has its place and can be effective in the hands of a proficient speaker, it can easily be overdone and cause negative reactions.
 3. Don't use negative examples of people in the congregation.
 4. Don't speak evil of world leaders in a belittling sense (Romans 13:1-7).
 5. Don't use yourself as an example. If you show yourself as a good example, you will sound self-righteous. If you use yourself as a bad example, you may lower your credibility in the eyes of the audience.
 6. Don't sound superior or self-righteous.
 7. Don't try to impress everyone with your speaking ability. You are not an evangelist and cannot speak like one! Don't think you should try to "save" the audience in this one talk.

XII. Conclusion

As stated at the beginning, the proverb that "Talk is cheap" can indeed be true. But with proper preparation and delivery, a sermonette or sermon in the hands of skillful person, led by God's Spirit and armed with His perfect truth, can be like "apples of gold in pictures of silver" (Proverbs 25:11).