

Preaching notes

Your preaching is pivotal.

You can literally build your church, and grow your church, on your growing preaching gift.

Undoubtedly, much of the forward momentum of a church happens through the regular Sunday preaching slot.

It's a big reason people keep on coming back. They need to be fed with the Word. This clearly includes "prophetic" preaching, where a person receives a "now" and relevant word that speaks into their lives, giving direction, comfort, guidance and encouragement to them.

The biggest churches have the most powerful preachers, and that's not by accident. This is a skill that can be constantly honed over the years – and carries some basic dynamics that need to be mastered.

Good preaching flows from the heart of the Father, by the Holy Spirit, straight into your heart and mind. From there it engages your personality, style and gifting – and becomes seeds that get sown by you as the farmer.

The process starts as you spend time with the Lord, and He drip feeds into your spirit by His voice and the Scriptures. Your preaching content isn't limited to what you read, but also to what you perceive, hear and feel. The Lord uses all of that to get His word across.

Little things to watch out for:

- Lazy prep – just taking the notes of others
- Getting at individuals through the preach – people do pick it up
- Taking your current mood into the pulpit 0 some self control is a good thing

1. Sound words

This section covers accurate content. Always remember that you are a mouthpiece long before you are an ‘opinion’ or an echo of someone else.

Your sound words and sense of conviction – your ‘fire’ if you like – comes straight from what you truly believe about (1) God’s plan and (2) your mission.

a. What we preach

Your content needs to be accurate, and soaked in the plan of God for planet earth.

Some basics that you need to be convinced of:

- The big picture of how God’s story fits together. Creation, Fall, Redemption, Resurrection.
- The key “life” themes of brokenness, hopelessness, love, passion, direction, hope, family, eternity, meaning etc will infuse your content in a way that enables you to connect with those the Lord brings to you to hear what you have to say.
- The key biblical themes of relationship, judgment, salvation, sacrifice, atonement, grace, mercy, love, hope, redemption, eternity, forgiveness etc become the main themes of your preaching.
- Your preaching is always lifting the supremacy of Christ – who He is, why we need Him, how we respond to Him, what He demands of us etc
- The eternal realities of heaven and hell, acceptance or rejection with God is carried in your heart and mind – so that you never lose the focus and urgency of your call.

b. How we preach it

Your notes lean heavily into expository preaching, and I fully agree.

Too many preachers lean into favourite or comfortable themes, and neglect the great themes of the Bible.

Let the Bible text give the points, the emphasis and the direction of your preach.

The anointing flows when you simply endorse what God is already saying – and faith is released into your hearers that way.

Study properly. There are no short cuts to preaching.

My experience is that no sermon can be prepared in less than 8-12 hours.

Your research needs to follow a combination of what you prophetically feel the Lord is saying and hours of research on the text you're using.

Read good commentaries and sermons already preached by others of good reputation. Consult Bibles, Bible dictionaries, commentaries and devotionals that cover that theme. Read widely so that you have your facts straight.

Have an interest in current affairs, read the news and good articles on current ideologies.

Always be reading a couple of theology and leadership books, at least a chapter a day.

2. Powerful words

Preaching is a mystery, and used so powerfully by God. Trust the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit to be operating as you faithfully feed His flock.

Learn the difference between gratitude and expectation very quickly! Don't put too much pressure on yourself to perform in a way that isn't you – and don't let people's responses, or the lack thereof, determine your sense of self-worth after a preach.

Trust the anointing of the Holy Spirit. Don't try too hard in your own flesh and don't undercook it either. There's a fine balance between not leaning on the Lord at all, and backing yourself in Him, and with His help.

At the same time, “read” or “discern” your audience/congregation, trying to pick up what the Lord is doing while you’re preaching. Godly humility is a joy to watch...

It’s very hard to listen to someone, or receive from them, if they really don’t sound convinced.

Like Wesley said when asked how to preach a good sermon, *“I set myself on fire and let people watch me burn!”*

Insincerity, exaggeration, docile speaking, conversationalism etc just doesn’t help. If the Lord has called you to preach, then preach! Don’t hold back, and don’t hide behind personality type.

(I’ve heard Ronnie Barnard, who stutters, doesn’t stutter when he preaches)

Remember that people receive what you say when they believe in your life and you carry credibility with them.

Always be genuine and real, and invest plenty in their lives outside of the pulpit in order to build bridges of trust with them.

Be respectful of the time allocation given to you, and remember, always be too short rather than too long.