

The Development Of Expository Sermons (Steps 5-6)

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I want to back up and get a running start and go back over the steps leading up the first four steps just briefly in the development of an expository sermon and remind you that the development of an expository sermon is a subjective matter. Even as blessed I am as how Tim approaches his development, and he puts his sermon together, it's very different than from what I do. There's no cookie-cutter pattern, and it's kind of like you have to learn by trial and error. That's one of the reasons why I mentioned the Warren Wiersbe "BE" series being like helper wheels that you stick on your bike and use them until you get kind of going and then they fall off.

My wife handed me her "With The Word" this morning. She uses it for her devotions, and she gave me a little devotion for the book of Zechariah. As I was looking at this little section in Zechariah, I thought, That's a great sermon right there. You could steal that. There's a lot of information, and one of the reasons why I'm such a big book guy is because it stimulates and brings so much information into my mind, my heart, and I'm always looking for sermons. Any preacher will tell you that if you're teaching on a regular basis, you're always looking for sermon ideas in the text, and they pop out. Sometimes I'll make a little note.

I have a notebook right on the shelf above my desk, and all it is is whenever I get a thought or an idea for a sermon, I pull it down and note it in there, the text, and I can come back and develop it. Sometimes a single point that has good subpoints, I see that that's a great sermon in itself, just that one point and the subpoints, and I'll make a note in my booklet and be able to develop it some day.

We talked about choosing the text, getting a text, and being bound to the text, that you're there to preach the text; you're not speculators, that you're expositors, so the whole idea of preaching from a text. Then, reading your text and meditating on your text and soaking in your text. Spurgeon liked to lie in it like a bathtub and just let it permeate you. Spurgeon used to use the expression about reading the Word of God until your blood is bibling, you're just full of the Word of God.

Thirdly, we also talked about studying the passage, that we look at the historical background of the book, and we talked about introductions. I mentioned the introduction set of three volumes by D. Edmund Hiebert. If you had a class like this, and all you did was talk books all week, really that would be cool. I'd love to do that—have a room full of books and just talk books all week and books you can read. You're probably going to go home, some of you married guys and say, "Honey, we have to sell the house, mortgage the house, to buy the books that Pastor Miller and Tim Anderson told us to buy." So, you want to study the background. I do, again, want to recommend Robert G. Gromacki's New Testament Survey. I don't have any specific recommendation for Old Testament survey other than Talk Through The Bible, it's very good, and there's plenty of them out there you can check out. So, study the passage, look for the thought unit, relate the passage to the book and chapter that you're in.

Just a quick thought in context and book you're in, the Word-Faith teachers, the health and wealth prosperity guys, they love to preach on the Scripture in Galatians where it talks about that we're the children of Abraham, and they think that because Abraham was rich that we should all be rich because we're his children. They forget the fact that Galatians is written about justification by faith and that Abraham was justified by faith, and like Abraham, we're justified by faith. It has nothing to do with claiming for a Cadillac, but they just so take it out of context, so keep the text in its proper context and what kind of genre and literature that you're preaching from.

Study the key words and grammar. I mentioned the Word Meanings In The New Testament, by Ralph Earle, and the fifth subpoint to that was study the passage to determine the exegetical idea. Read a good exegetical commentary and then read a homiletical commentary to see how they outlined it. Which, by the way, as we start the outlining note today, I do do that. When I'm teaching a book of the Bible, say Luke, I have at least 15-20+ commentaries, individual commentaries, on Luke and I try to read as many as I could. Typically, in one week preparing for a sermon, I'll probably get read about six or seven, but that's plenty of information. So read both homiletical and exegetical commentaries. Keep a notebook, like the one I gave to Cisco. Cisco pointed out that I gave him one of my notebooks of notes that I was taking in Genesis back in 1990, so he has that; but that's step 4, determine the big idea, and the sermon should be a bullet not a buckshot, the authorial intent, the main idea.

We're going to show you a little video clip today, I'm not sure where I'm going to fit it in, this first session or second maybe, of Erwin Lutzer talking about how to put together an outline. His information is fantastic, and I'll make some comments about it as well.

Here we come to step 5, outline your sermon. When I say outline your sermon, I don't mean that you just do an exegetical outline, you could go to V. Raymond Edman, and you could go to some of these outline books, every good commentary has an outline in it. The Erdman Commentaries have outlines in the books. This is not just a theological exegetical outline, this is a sermon outline. This is a homiletic outline. There's a big difference. Sometimes guys will just take an exegetical outline and try to just preach that. What you're doing—listen to me carefully—is you're turning your Sunday morning sermon into seminary, into a theological classroom, which is good, but the people need, I think they need it packaged and presented.

It's like a chef making a meal on a plate and he garnishes it, sets it up, and makes it look real good so the people will eat it. He doesn't just throw it on a plate, "Here's your food." They try to make it look really good. So, what you're doing is you're giving them the food but you're dressing it up to make it look good so that it's palatable and easy for them to take in, and they're going to desire it. They're going to want it.

The outline that we're talking about is a sermon outline. It's not just a textual exegetical outline, it's a sermon outline. This is how you're going to take the text and package it to be able to present it to the people. H.B. Charles, and I'm going to show you a video by him today, too, and we're going to make comments on that, says, "Every sermon should have a destination. It also

needs a clear path to get there. A sermon outline charts the path for the sermon to reach its intended destination.” That’s really good. So, your sermon has a destination, and you need a path to get there, so you want to...you know with the GPS that we have today. You hit the GPS and it tells you how to get to where you’re going. That’s all fine and dandy, but I’m kind of like an old school guy, I like to see a map.

Several months ago, when we were going up to central California to visit my son and daughter-in-law and the grandkids, I didn’t want to just have the GPS telling me, “Turn left, turn right,” I wanted to see the big picture. I wanted to see the freeways, and what freeway options I had and how it played into the surrounding area. That’s what a sermon outline does, it kind of lays out your whole path—where you’re going, how you’re going to get there, and how you’re going to arrive—so you want to see it all kind of come together.

Someone said, “Some sermons are like the dawn of creation as recorded in Genesis 1, ‘They were without form and void,’” that is so true. Vance Havner who Billy Graham said was the most quotable preacher in America, and you can get a heap of Vance Havner books, by the way, you ought to grab some of those, and they’re full of great quotes. There’s a Vance Havner quote book that’s excellent. Vance Havner said, “Pity the preacher who uses a text only as a launching platform from which to blast off into space departing therefrom and never returning thereunto. There is a power in the direct preaching of the Bible that attends no other pulpit exercise.” I love that. Pity the preacher that uses a text only as a launching pad and takes off in his sermon.

I’ve had so many times I’ve been listening to a sermon, they read the text, Oh, that’s a rich text, that’s great. And then he starts to speak and never the twain shall meet again. His message and the text have nothing to do with each other. I feel like standing up and saying, “What happened to your text?” I know the ushers would carry me out, and I’d probably be in big trouble. You feel like standing up and saying, “Whooo weee! Did you forget that we’re supposed to study the text? What happened to the text?” I was visiting a church one time with my kids. My wife wasn’t there—thank God—my kids were there. This is what happened in the sermon and I was, (heavily breathing) and my kids were, “Dad, please calm down. Dad, please calm down.” They were afraid I was going to just blow up, “Dad, Dad, calm down, calm down.” God had mercy when the preacher goes to visit other preachers on Sunday and doesn’t hear the Word of God properly taught. It’s crazy.

Jerry Vines says, “Outlines are the burrs that lodge themselves in the minds of the listeners.” It also really helps people that you’re preaching to to remember, so let me give you a list of advantages of outlining your sermon. When you outline your sermon, I see some guys’ sermon notes and they’re just a bunch of information. There’s no Roman numeral I, you know, Roman numeral II, Roman numeral III. Under Roman numeral I, there’s A- B- C-, and under A there’s 1- 2- 3. I mean, they’re not laid out like that. We gave you those sermons on Peter. They’re not all perfect. They’re not all consistently the same, but at least it gives you a feel for how I outline package the expository sermons that I preach.

Let me give you a list of advantages of outlining your sermon. First, for the preacher, it gives structure to the sermon. What a skeleton is to the human body, so is a sermon outline to a sermon. Can you imagine a human body without a skeleton? It'd be a mess. Secondly, it helps the sermon follow a logical flow. That is so very important. It helps the sermon follow a logical flow. Your mind wants to flow logically from one point to the next. They need to link and make sense. You've heard of rabbit trailing, you know how rabbits just dart here and there. So many preachers just rabbit trail. Guard yourself of that. When thoughts come into your brain, you don't always need to preach it or say it, and you don't want to go down that trail. It happens to every preacher. You go somewhere and say, "Well, how did I get here? I don't know, where was I?" Sometimes you have to ask the congregation, "Where was I?" and go back. If you're rabbit trailing like that, sometimes people will just turn you off. It's like, "I don't know where he's going, why he's going there. I don't want to go there," and you just shut your mind off and you feel like screaming, "Set the captives free! Get this church over with." It helps the sermon to follow a logical flow and order.

Thirdly, it helps him to see his sermon in its entirety. I love that. It helps him to see his sermon in its entirety. If you have three or four pages with main points/subpoints, you can flip through your sermon and see where it starts, where it's going to go, where it's going to end. You can see the introduction, you can see the transition, you can see the main body of the sermon, you can see where it ends, and how it's going to conclude. This is where it starts, this is where it stops, this is what's in the middle. Instead of, "I don't know. I don't know what I'm going to say. I don't know where I'm going to go."

When you do that, when I'm in that mode where I don't know, then that's similar to what Tim was talking about, you preach extemporaneously, the text becomes your outline. I do love it when the main points of the sermon, say you have four verses and your sermon has four points, and each point is from each verse, those are beautiful. I love those. I praise God for those. I just feel a weight lift off my shoulders when I have a sermon like that because I have verse 1, verse 2, especially if it's verses 1-4 of a chapter. That's unbelievable, you know, verse 1, 2, 3, 4, there's your points, stick right in the text, and you just develop that text that way. It's really marvelous. It helps you see the sermon in its entirety, which, the next point, helps him have a sense of place and pace in the sermon.

Sometimes I've recently found myself doing this, I'm preaching a sermon I've already preached say ten years ago, and I have the notes I used. I listen to the sermon online, the audio, and what I'll do is take my pencil and, in the margin of my notes, I'll write down at what time in the sermon, time wise from the computer, where I reached that point. Then, I'll make another note. If I find that I have a point where there's a lot of time, I want to narrow that down. You want your sermon to be evenly paced as you go along. You have three points, and you're going to preach for say thirty minutes, you don't want your first point to be twenty minutes long and just race through your other points, so it's in balance.

This is one of the big mistakes that I make and preachers make, we make. It's easy for me to analyze when I listen to other people because I can take way too much time in their

introduction, take way too much time in the first point, then they had to race, speed through their last point, and it was a good one. It was a rich one, so be careful that you don't waste up all your time for your last two points or your last one point so that there's evenness and balance there and you're giving the text and the outline due attention and time as you pace your way through the message. That's where some guys say that they preach in front of the mirror and time it and all that kind of stuff. But as Tim mentioned, as you preach more and more, you get a feel for how your time will go.

Nathan can tell you from a worship leader's prospective because he comes up after I preach, and sometimes I'll say, "It's going to be a short one," or "It'll be a long one." How many times though, too, I still say, "This should be a real short sermon," and it's a real long sermon; "Now, this one, I'm pretty sure this will be real...I'm going to burn through this text real quick," you know, and sure enough it's twice as long as I thought it was. It's taken me a long time to learn to preach thirty minutes.

When I listen to other guys preach, quite often, I'm sure it has to do with ability of the preacher in what he's doing, at thirty minutes I'm like, Please, wrap this one up; please get to your conclusion unless he's really drawing me in from the text. So, the longer I preach, the more I think thirty, thirty-five, forty minutes max. I used to on Sunday mornings go fifty, fifty-five, sometimes almost an hour. If you're doing running commentary, I can see that, but get to the point, wrap it up, boom! You don't have to go too long. Just work hard at the length of time you preach.

Get some good input from trusted, very trusted people, "Did that go too long? Should I be shorter?" It's better to err on short than long because people will turn you off and you'll lose them. It's better for them to say, "Oh, I wish you would've kept going. Oh, I wish you would've kept going," instead of "Oh, I wish you would've stopped. Oh, I wish you would've stopped." I was talking about the conclusion, "You know, when you said that one point, oh if you'd have stopped right there, that would've been a perfect spot." How many wives tell their pastor, "You should've just shut up right there. You had it wrapped up, baby, and then you took off again and didn't land the plane. Man, you messed everything up." It's like, "Oh, praise God." Then you feel lousy until the next week when you get another chance to redeem yourself. I go, "Oh, man, I hope I can redeem myself next week." You almost feel like calling everybody, "Hey, come back next week, I promise I won't go that long. I won't preach that long. I'll set the captives free." It's so crazy. So, it helps to have a sense of the pace and place of the sermon.

What about for the congregation? What are the benefits for the congregation? I might have already touched on some of them. First, it's easy to follow. It's got a logical flow. It's easy to follow. Some pastors will print the little outline sermon and put it in the bulletin or they'll actually print it in the bulletin. I mean, I've done that in the past. I don't do that really now. I don't think it's necessary, but that can be helpful as well. We put our main points sometimes on the screen, similar to what we're doing here, and it helps; but I don't want people looking up at the screen too much. I want them looking in their Bibles. I don't like to put Scriptures on the screen, I like to just put my points. I like them to come to the text and see the Scripture there in

their Bible. So, it's easy to follow for the congregation, it's easy to understand, and thirdly, it's easy to remember. A question there in light of "easy to remember," should we number our points, 1- 2- 3-?

Chuck Smith in his Sunday morning sermons used to preach without, "Point number 1," he would just make the point, and then he would make a second point, then, he'd make the third point. He wouldn't say, "One, two, three," so you don't have to do that. Whatever you're comfortable with. It can help to be clear and kind of helps people to know where you're at, "I've got three facts I want to tell you about Joseph," or whatever. Boom, boom, boom, people know that, "Okay, he's got three, he's only done two, and we still have a long way to go." Your timing, your timing. Isn't it funny when you tell people how many points you've got and then they're like, "Whoa, dude, he just took forty minutes in his first point and he's got four points. We're in trouble." So, you don't need to announce that all the time, just do what you do and, Lord willing, the sermon will draw them in.

It's easy to follow, easy to understand, and easy to remember. The parishioners, or the people in the pew, they'll be able to remember and retain what the four points are, and we'll talk about alliteration, pros and cons, in just a moment, but keep close to the text. Always take them back into the text.

When outlining your sermon, write these down. First, get your points from the text. And, we've been hammering that home all week. When you're packaging your sermon, outlining your sermon, your points should come out of the text. Expository preaching is explaining the text. It's exegeting the text, pulling the meaning out of the text, and it should have unity, order, and progress. So, first, get your points from the text, and preferably your subpoints, if possible, from the text.

When we analyze my Wednesday night sermon on the rapture, and you saw the points, you saw the subpoints, how they came right out of the text. In the Peter outlines, there's a bunch of examples of that in the Peter outline sermons that we gave you as well.

Secondly, there should be logical connection between the points. So, the points should have logical connection. They shouldn't be different subjects going off different directions. There should be a logical flow. It should be answering who, how, what, when, where, and why supporting that main point.

Thirdly, try to make your points applicable. What do I mean by that? The main point should be connected to life. It shouldn't just be information, it should be something that you can use for application. Your points should preferably be more life applicational. If you're preaching a didactic passage like Romans or Galatians or the second half of Ephesians, that's fine because you're going to be preaching theology or doctrine, but try to make it life situational and practical and put it in shoe leather. When we watch this video by Erwin Lutzer, he talks about using plural nouns for the key words which override or tie together your outline.

So, ask questions about your text. Someone said, “I had six faithful friends who taught me all I knew, their names were How, What, and Why and When and Where and Who.” If you want to see some classic examples of this, look for the sermons—I say “look for” because they’re long out of print but they’re out there—by Clovis Chappell. He was a Methodist preacher in the south back in the 40s and 50s, kind of light theologically and doctrinally, but they’re masterful sermons. So many of his sermons he would just ask questions and answer them all the way through from the text. He’ll ask a question, pull the answer out of the text; ask another question, pull the answer out of the text; ask another question, pull it out of the text. I talked to Dr. Wiersbe about Clovis Chappell and he agreed and liked him. That was his comment was only that they’re light theologically and light doctrinally. I knew that, that’s fine, especially when it comes to character studies. We’ve talked a lot about being in a historical narrative genre and you’re preaching on Moses or David or Elijah, Clovis Chappell’s Bible characters are fantastic. They’re just a storehouse of wisdom, and his sermons are fantastic. So, check that out.

Fourthly, be careful with alliteration. Alliteration, I used it in my sermon Wednesday night. Again, what I say is you don’t use it unless it says what you want to say, what the text says. Jerry Vines is a big one on alliteration in his commentaries, but I think it’s overdone, overcooked. He ends up stretching the alliteration to force it and to push it into the text. He must spend hours and hours and hours trying to think of how to alliterate his points rather than just teach the text. I don’t think you should abandon that, I think if you can package it and phrase it that way, I think that’s good. Again, as we watch this Lutzer video, we’ll see he talks about having a key word. The key word is not the big idea or the key thought, it’s a key word that is used to tie your outline together.

When I preached Wednesday night on the rapture, I had five facets of the rapture. It could’ve been five facts, but I thought “facets” was at least variety and change—five facets of the rapture. That’s the key word. Each one of them was a different facet as we examined the rapture. Key words can be stuff like “aspects,” “reasons,” five “truths,” five “characteristics,” three “ways,” three “features,” three “blessings,” three “benefits,” three “realities,” three “steps,” three “rules,” three “principles,” to make your outline more connect to life, rather than just being academic it’s more life situational. Be careful with alliteration, and I’m sure a lot of you guys who are just getting started are not lying awake at night just thinking about how you can alliterate a text, right? You just would like to know what it means. You’d like to just figure it out, and you’re still working on your theology and working on your doctrine.

That’s another benefit of having preached for many years, not that you’re not still growing, not that you’re not still digging, not that you’re not still learning, but you preach with more convictions. When you’re a young preacher, you’re just introduced to theology and doctrines, it’s like, “Uhhhh, I don’t know,” but when you’ve been around a lot longer, you’ve had a lot of years to mull over that, and when I say a lot of years, sometimes we need a lot of years to be able to really have a grasp of theological truth. It doesn’t mean you can’t preach as a young man, don’t let anyone despise your youth and be faithful to the text, but it helps as you make sure to have your convictions deepen and be able to speak what you know to be true from years of study.

Let's go to step 6, I'm hoping I know what to say about this, filling in the sermon outline. Haddon Robinson calls it making dry bones live. It's filling in the outline with supporting material for clarity, to amplify, to apply the points. Often as you are preaching, the people listening will be asking several questions. First, they'll be asking, "What does he mean by that? When he says hypostatic union, what does he mean by that? When he says propitiation, what does he mean by that? When he says, reconciliation, what does he mean by that?" By the way, there's a great sermon series, I've never done it, I'd like to do it, called key words of the Bible. Can you imagine just preaching one week on "election," one week on "redemption," one week on "propitiation," one week on "atonement," one week on "substitution"? That'd be a great topical series, and we're going to talk about topical series today as well. So, making dry bones live—filling in the outline with supporting information that brings clarity, amplify, apply the points.

Often as you preach, people are going to be asking, "What does he mean by that? What evidence does he have for this statement?" So you want to be able to back up your statements with Scripture. And then, "Sounds good," they'll be saying, "but does it work in real life?" So, you want to be able to apply the text as well.

Now, how to fill in your sermon outline. How do you fill in your sermon outline? First, restatement, it's called repetition. In Peter, I've been preaching through, it's been interesting Peter talking about, "I'm going to remind you what you already know. I'm going to remind you of what you've already been taught." Don't be afraid to repeat. Let me repeat that: Don't be afraid to repeat. When you do repeat, it's kind of good if you can restate it in a different way—you're saying the same thing in a different way, so you're not just saying the same thing over and over. Restatement, the skill of a preacher is to learn to restate a point several times in different ways. That's a gift.

Secondly, definitions—define words and terms. I've already touched on that quite a bit. It means you have to learn it yourself. You have to learn what does it mean to be justified. I've heard Calvary guys teach for years sometimes, "Justification, just as if I'd never sinned." That's not necessarily what justification means. It means that God declares you righteous. It's a legal standing, and we kind of miss the real point of what justification means. Be careful you really know what you're talking about, you're not just parroting what you've heard other preachers say but you've done your own homework and you know what you're talking about.

You can use facts. I'm not big on this, but statistics, examples, observations, newspaper articles, clippings and so forth. Tim talked about that. Make sure your facts are true and up to date. Make sure your facts...there's a lot of handed down sermon illustrations that are told as true stories that are made up, so find out if your story is true. Find out if it's real or not.

Quotations, get a good book of quotations. There's a lot of books out. I don't have any recommendations written down here for you, but a lot of books on just quotations; and then illustrations. So, you use restatement, definitions, facts, quotations, and illustrations to fill in your sermon outlines—put flesh on the skeleton.

There is a book I noted this morning when I was going through this at home called Ten Thousand Illustrations From The Bible, by Charles Little. It's by Baker Books. What I like about this book is that it's set out topically, and then to illustrate those topics, the illustrations are taken from stories in the Bible. It might say, "humility," and will give you biblical stories that depict humility, which is why my fifth point, illustrations, do everything you can to use Bible illustrations, that is the cream of the crop. That's the class way to do it. You can use contemporary stories, you can use your own life stories, you can use stories about your kids, your grandkids, make sure you don't embarrass them or your wife or friends, but the best thing to use is the Bible illustrates the Bible, to use stories about the life of David. If you're going to talk about adultery, don't read an article about some movie star committing adultery, talk about David. If you talk about humility, talk about Moses. Use the Bible to illustrate the Bible.

I'm not a big fan of trying to illustrate a biblical truth with words from a Beatles song or a scene from a movie. My wife and I are always kind of wondering about that, you're in church, you're watching the preacher preach, and he goes off twenty minutes talking about the latest Hollywood movie. It's like, "Dude, I didn't see the movie. I don't want to see the movie. I've never seen that movie, so I don't know what you're talking about." Everybody's, "Yeah." What do all these Christians do, go to movies all the time, watch Hollywood all the time? I don't need to come to church to hear a bunch about all the liberal movies that I have nothing to say. I mean, I know Alistair Begg would quote Beatles songs, and that was stuck in his brain, but that was always kind of strange to me—you've got Alistair Begg quoting Beatles songs all the time.

(Question asked) Charles Little, Ten Thousand Illustrations From The Bible.

Just be careful with your illustrations. Charles Spurgeon said, "Illustrations are like windows in a house to let the light in." Here's Spurgeon, illustrating illustrations. What are illustrations? They're like windows. We've got windows covered up front because we're capturing it on the cameras. But windows...you guys sitting by the windows back there, you've got it made. You get to look outside. When it gets boring up here, you can watch the birds fly by, see who's parking their car, who's walking down the street. But windows let light in, right? That's the idea that he's using to illustrate light. But you don't want a house all built out of glass. It's a great illustration about illustrations. Illustrations are like windows, they let light in, but you don't want a house that's all windows and all built out of glass. You've got to be careful. Don't use too many illustrations.

Some guys today have almost abandoned preaching the text, they preach their illustration. They have some big, grand story they tell at the opening of their sermon, and it's really funny, really captivating, and then all they do is keep taking bits and pieces of their story for their entire sermon trying to make spiritual application. It's like, "Close your Bible and put it away and just listen." You're not even going into the text, your sermon is the preaching of a story. That's not Bible exposition. That's why we call this expository preaching. Be careful that you don't over illustrate or that you don't preach your illustrations. Your illustrations are windows.

A couple things about illustrations. First, they add light, I just mentioned that, windows let the

light in. Secondly, they add memory. They grab people and help them to remember. They hold attention—it's kind of like a little commercial break and grabs your attention, let their mind rest—and they stir emotion. Those are four things that good illustrations do—add light, aid their memory, hold attention, and stir their emotion. Remember, we've mentioned all the way through this week *The Treasury Of Scripture Knowledge*. It's introduced by R.A. Torrey where you get all those cross-references, where you can use to look up stories that illustrate points.

Now, I'm going to give you some characteristics of a good illustration. None of these lists on any of these topics at all any time this week are exhaustive. First, it should be tasteful and appropriate. Why do I say that? It's kind of died out a little bit, but years ago it was like the cool thing to do was to be edgy in the pulpit, use almost coarse language, use inappropriate coarse language or tell jokes that were a little edgy. That is never to be found in the pulpit. That's something you don't do. It should be tasteful and appropriate. Always ask yourself before you tell the story, is it appropriate? Is it tasteful for a mixed crowd? Is it tasteful for different age groups, men and women, for children? When you're preaching, and you're looking at your congregation, there might be an 8-year-old or a 7-year-old or a 10-year-old, so make sure you're being tasteful. I can't even relate to you, tell you, some of the distasteful illustrations or stories I've heard because they should never be repeated, yet they were preached from a pulpit.

It should be relevant, closely connected to your topic and to your text. Don't just tell a story to tell a story. It should be simple, easy to understand. If you can't tell your story, then don't tell your story. If you don't know the facts, don't tell the story. It should be simple. It should be well-told. Try not to read your illustrations. I know that Pastor Skip will have sometimes a printout like this or have an article he'll read, I've done that a few times, but it's kind of not my cup of tea. Even though Skip kind of holds it, reads it, the ideal thing to do is to tell it. Tim talked about that yesterday—to be able to get eye contact, to be able to look right at people like you're talking to them, and look right at them and get eye contact and tell it. If you just read from a manuscript your illustration, it's not going to have the impact that it would have if you have eye contact with the congregation looking at them. So, it's well-told. Try to have eye contact.

Some cautions in using illustrations, be careful of illustration books. I mentioned quote books, and I mentioned the book, *Ten Thousand Illustrations From The Bible*, but some of the illustration books are old, cornball stories that you just don't want to tell. I poured through pages of illustration stories and thought, These things were written in the 1920s, in the 1930s. They're using terms that we don't even use anymore. People don't even know what we're talking about. Make sure that it's updated and easy to tell. Be careful of illustration books. The best illustrations are from the Bible or from your own life, just don't make yourself the hero of the story. Then, too many; be careful that you don't have too many illustrations. We've already mentioned that.

Be careful if the story is not true, but you're telling the story as though it was actually a true story. You tell a story as though it was true or you hear another preacher tell a story about his own life and say, "That was a great story. That didn't happen to me, but I'm going to tell it like it happened to me." You're lying in the pulpit. That happens, and it should never happen. You

need to be truthful. So, true, clear, and then the fifth, preach the text not the illustration. I got ahead of myself. Don't make yourself the hero of the story either—always talking about what wonderful things you do and how you're always the hero of your own stories.

Let's stop right here so we can pick this up, and we'll do this next session. The next session we'll start at point 7, which is an introduction and conclusion. We're almost there. This is one of my favorite areas in talking about sermons—the introduction and conclusion. It will be a whole class that we'll go over. Amen? Okay, God bless you guys.