

(Sermon Preparation) Lecture 03

by Alan Redpath

Alan Redpath's sermon focuses on the essential qualities and attitudes required for effective Christian service and ministry.

Duration: 48:59

Scripture: 2 Kings 4:4, Matthew 6:33, Luke 6:12-13, Acts 13:44, Acts 13:48-49

Topics: "Sermon Preparation"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the power and authority of the word of God. He highlights how the word of God spread and had a profound impact on people's lives. The preacher also discusses the importance of having a strong attitude towards sin and not compromising with it. He emphasizes the need for personal holiness and warns about the dangers of money and sex. The sermon concludes with a reminder of the significance of making wise choices, particularly in choosing a spouse, as it can greatly impact one's ministry.

Transcript

We would just be still in your presence for one moment, dear Lord, and thank you for this day. Thank you for the peace that you can give in our hearts as we look away from ourselves to you and ask that we may be in your training school today, that we may learn more of you and more of how you want us to be and what you want us to be in this world in which we live. We ask it for your namesake.

Amen. I have put a list up on the board this morning for anyone who would like to come to Willowbeck. It's to be, I'm afraid I've had to change the day, Thursday of next week.

That's today week. Immediately after this second lecture, it's especially for those who have questions to ask, not necessarily theological ones, but some things that they would like cleared up, because I just can't cope in the time available now, one by one. I'd be so glad to see as many of you as possible.

It's 21. We could squeeze in about 22, but that'll be the limit today week, about nine o'clock in the evening, as soon as possible after evening lectures. Okay.

Thank you. Now I'm in a real bind about this homiletic situation, because I need about 20 more hours and I've just got three. So today we're concentrating still on the witness, the person who's giving testimony, the preacher, what have you.

What kind of man or woman does God need? That's our subject for this morning. What sort of person must I be? You remember how solemnly, prayerfully Jesus made his choice of 12 people. Luke 6 verse 12, he left the crowd and went up into the mountain and spent all night in prayer.

And then he came down and chose 12. So the first thing I want to say about this subject is that each one of us, whatever we're going to do or be, must be called to it. Verse 13 of Luke 6, he called to him the 12.

In other words, I've got to ask myself, and you have, why do I decide to be a teacher, a farmer, a missionary, what have you? On what did I make the decision? Was it at the suggestion of friends, or because I had certain gifts, or because it would be a very satisfying job, etc., etc.? None of those reasons are adequate. The only justification for being anywhere in Christian work is because God has put you there, and you know it. The only justification for being anywhere in Christian work is because God has put you there.

And how do I know that? Well, the answer is not simple. God spoke to Moses out of a bush. He spoke to Balaam out of the mouth of an ass, and God has used many an ass since.

And, uh, excuse me, God spoke to Gideon, Gideon, by using a fleece. But you can't wait for that kind of thing before we know we're called. A call comes by a sense of conviction.

It comes by a sense of conviction. Just let me read to you from Acts 16 a moment. Acts 16, verse 6. Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia.

And when they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to. One paraphrase of that last sentence says, the Spirit, the Holy Spirit, put his foot down and said, no. I wouldn't know how he did that.

During the night, so they passed by Mysia. They passed by. Interesting, literally, that would read, they plodded through Mysia.

They plodded through. They just kept going. One door after another had shut, and they just kept going.

They plodded through. They'd been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia. They were anxious to get to Ephesus, but Ephesus wasn't ready for them, and they weren't ready for it.

So the Holy Spirit shut one door. Bang. And then they came to the border of Mysia, and they tried to get into Bithynia, but the Spirit put his foot down and said, no.

Another door shut. Bang. So they plodded through, just kept moving, with every door shut in their face.

That's a great thing to do. God can guide by closing doors as well as shutting them, opening them. They passed by Mysia, and they went down to Troas.

And during the night, Paul had a vision of a man in Macedonia standing and begging him, come over to Macedonia and help us. And that's how the gospel came to Europe, by every other door being shut. So we're having to be afraid or concerned when God closes doors.

The almost terrifying thing is that there are about a hundred possibilities that confront each one of us, and 99% of them are wrong. Only one is right. And it's rather frightening.

But the thing is, you can't steer a ship unless it's moving. And God cannot guide a life unless it's plodding along, keeping going. The fatal thing after leaving Capernaum would be to put your feet up on a bed and relax.

I mean, that's as necessary for 24 hours, of course. But to settle just, and forget it. That's the real fatal thing.

Keep plodding along. A call comes from a sense of divine urgency, from a sense of divine urgency in your heart, from which there's no escape. However you try to reason against it, you cannot silence that voice.

However you try to reason against it, you can't silence the voice. A sense of urgency, from which there's no escape. And you cannot silence it.

And here are some simple tests which possibly can help you to decide. One, can you accumulate evidence over the past six months, eh? Can you accumulate evidence that there's fruit from your testimony? That's to say, that God's hand is on your life in blessing. That God's hand is on your life in blessing.

I don't mean by that that you've led scores of people to Christ. I don't mean that at all. But over the six months, as you look back, has your love for the Lord deepened? Has your concern for people widened? Has your love for prayer and God's word increased? Can you accumulate evidence that God's hand is on your life? Only you know that.

Though it may be evident to other people, but you alone really know. Okay? Second. Too quick? All right.

Second. What kind of witness does God want you to be? Of course, a good one. But read 1 Corinthians chapter 12, and Ephesians chapter 4, and Romans chapter 12.

And when you've read them, read 1 Corinthians chapter 12, and Ephesians chapter 4, and Romans chapter 12. And when you've read them, read 1 Corinthians chapter 12, and Ephesians chapter 4, and Romans chapter 12. And read them over, and over, and over, and over again, till they've really got hold of you.

Not all will be evangelists, not all will be pastors, not all will be teachers, but all will have one or other of the gifts of the Spirit. You can't have them all, but you'll have one or more. If you're determined to be a pastor, and God doesn't want you to be one, you'll soon find how uncomfortable you are in it, and you have no peace, no sense of ability to the task.

What kind of service is God fitting you for? It'll be one where the gift that he has given you is used. None of the gifts in Ephesians 4, and Romans 12, and 1 Corinthians 12, none of them are natural gifts. They're all given you by the Holy Spirit.

Other people may be able to help in advising you about that, as to what you have. Now, I was going to take a whole session, but I decided I can't afford the time, um, on platform manner, and sermon preparation. I'll try and do a bit, deal with that a little, on the last two, but I was going to get somebody up here to give a testimony, or somebody to read, and assess it, and criticize it, and kindly, of course, but I

have to let you off that.

Sorry about that. But, um, it's terrific when you go to meetings, and you hear people trying to do something, and not doing it properly. I mean, when the last six rows of a congregation can't hear a word, because the person doesn't speak up, and, uh, when they can't hear a thing, that's desperate.

And therefore, if the Lord is calling you to speak in public, you need to speak up, and not be afraid to use your voice. But be sure you're using it properly. I would like to get each one of you by yourself, and ask you to say to me, and keep on saying it, when.

Just that one word. How would you say it? Yes. I would need to be a bit closer to you.

But you can say, when. Or you can say, when. You can say, when.

Or, when. When. In one case, you're speaking from back here, back of your throat.

In another case, you're speaking from, through your nose. Do you get me? You won't think about this, perhaps, before, at least you remember I said it to you, but maybe too late. I lost my voice when I was in my forties.

George Verver has done the same, but is recovering. And certain other people I know. Because they shouted from the back of the throat.

You can't go on like that. You sort of take it, and then go, here. And it ruins your larynx.

The thing is, you've got to take in a deep breath. Like that. And then, say, when.

When. That's it. And that's coming from down here.

The first time I had to get taught this, a man stretched me out on a bed, and knelt on my tummy, and pushed every bit of air out of me. And then said to me, say, mama. And, you know, you think it's incredible, but it's true.

For three days, I went through Richmond, in London, on a golf course. And I said nothing else. Never said another word.

Didn't speak to my wife, for three days. And said, mama. I'm finished yet.

All I said was, mama, want to be a baby. That's right. He said, it's like being born again.

And it was, you know. It made me absolutely giddy. I nearly fainted.

Because I'd never spoken that way before. And I nearly killed myself. And if you go into ministry, or public witness, or teaching, or preaching, anywhere, and you don't get that, before long, your voice will be ruined.

So watch it. And George Verber had a terrible voice a few years ago. Perhaps you heard it.

Just with yelling. But he doesn't do it now. He can't.

He had to have surgery. But just practice that. You'd go through the park, all of you.

Mama, I want to be a baby. That would be a great finish to the Bible school, wouldn't it? But you see, there's all the difference between taking a deep breath and saying, when, like that. Or taking a deep breath and saying, when.

Because that's coming down from, through your head, down your nose. And it's never touching your throat. So, always, that's why, always, when people say, at a meeting, about the reading, I say, I'll take that just before I speak.

And because it's so easy to slip back into bad habits. And then when I'm reading the Word, I'm thinking about how I'm speaking. So that my voice does not get back in my throat.

Now, pardon me, that very short, brief, inadequate lesson. And I'd like to hear you all practice it. You come down to Willowbeck and practice it outside the fence.

We'll be glad to hear you. But do remember that. And you would-be preachers are just going to let everybody have it, hot and strong, and give it to them.

Great stuff. Be sure you give it to them in the right way, or else you'll crack. Some of you who love open-air work, watch it.

That's especially damaging. That's a word to Johann, who loves open-air work. But better watch it.

Well, right. Now, third. Am I clear that my message is adequate? Am I clear that my message is adequate? If I've any doubt about that, I'm defeated before I begin.

Acts chapter 13. Acts 13, 44, on the next Sunday, almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord. That makes my mouth water.

And when the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and talked abusively against what Paul was saying. Then Paul and Barnabas answered them boldly, we had to speak the word of God to you first. When the Gentiles, verse 48, heard this, they were glad and honored the word of the Lord.

Verse 49, the word of the Lord spread throughout the whole region. Underline those phrases in your Bible, the word of God, the word of God, the word of God. The word of the Lord had burnt through these men like a fire.

Am I sure that my message is adequate? Have any doubts about the authority and the power of the word of the Lord? Four. Number four. What's my attitude towards sin? Is it total warfare against it? Or do I consciously allow points of compromise? I repeat that.

What's my attitude towards sin? Is it total warfare against it? Or are there any points of compromise of which I'm conscious? My attitude towards sin will decide my attitude towards repentance. Shallow views of sin mean shallow views of salvation. What's my attitude towards sin? Because this is something that you never cease questioning.

Because as you grow older, you ought to be growing more tender and more conscious of what sin is. And you put the label sin on a place in your life when you're 50, which you never put when you were 30, because you're growing more sensitive to what sin is. What's your attitude towards sin? Has your heart kept tender toward God? Five.

What's your attitude toward people? What's your attitude toward people? You're going to spend your life among people, every one of us, all kinds of people. And in Christian work, your reactions to people will very largely decide your success or failure. What's your reaction toward people? Just out down in your notes to read sometime on your own.

First Kings chapter three, which was Solomon's prayer when he was a king out of the line of true succession. God had come to him in verse three of that chapter and said, ask me what I shall give you. That was sort of a blank check on the bank of heaven.

What do you want me to do for you? And it's interesting to read that chapter. I haven't time to turn to it now, how Solomon didn't ask him to do anything. He just reminded God that his father's greatness, David's greatness, was owed entirely to the mercy and goodness of God.

And then he said, Lord, I'm only a little child. He was only about 20, 21. I'm just a little child.

I don't think he ever was quite so great as he was then. He admitted that. Never quite so great.

A man who had a tragic finish to his life, of course, but never quite so great. I am little child and I'm among this great people. Give me, Lord, an understanding heart.

That's what he asked God to do for him. Lord, give me a heart that understands. Give me, Lord, a heart that understands.

Are you easily hurt, easily made resentful? Extraordinary how critical, critical we can be of other people, but my word, quickly on the defense when other people retaliate. Scottish people will forgive me, but the Scottish national motto is a very interesting one. It's a thistle.

A thistle. Do you know what a thistle is? Scottish people here, you'll have to explain what a thistle is. It's a very prickly plant.

Very prickly, sharp, prickles. Very prickly. And that is in a shield, at the center of a shield.

And around it, there's a motto in Latin. Four words. Nemo, me, impune, lacasset.

Nobody touches me with impunity. That's Scottish temperament. You get a Scot, his heckles up, and you've got something on your hands.

That's why in World War II, Scottish troops always went in to fight first. They had their heckles up. Now may I say that that is not a quality reserved to Scotsmen, but all like that.

And easily get our heckles up. You know what I mean? Yes. Well, what's my attitude toward people? Toward my fellow workers? Toward my roommate right now? Can I be trusted with leadership? Can I be trusted with leadership? Would anybody really ask me to lead a group? If so, this would be a quality they're looking for.

An absence of resentment. An ability to handle people. What's my attitude to my fellow workers? Mark 10.45. Who is greatest among you must be the servant of all.

Cultivate the servant attitude. If I imagine at any time I'm the boss, or I've got the brains, or the know-how, my throne will soon fall. Other people will lose respect for me.

What about my action, reaction to people who oppose me? Who oppose me on committees? I'm sorry, but before long you'll be on some committee or another. It seems to be unavoidable. And you'll find yourself in a situation where people oppose you.

What's your attitude? Look, because there may be in a minority. But that wasn't the Lord's way. Jesus never hit back.

Never hit back. That's not weakness, it's meekness. And there's a mighty big difference between the two.

Try being meek for a week and you'd find that out. Colossal difference between the two. Far better to win people who oppose you by love.

A little special attention and lots of Holy Spirit love will work wonders. Luke 6.28. Pray for those who spitefully use you. And you're going to have to prove this every day of your life.

Almost in every situation. Your attitude toward people. What's your attitude? Pardon me asking this question.

What's your attitude to people of other races and other colors? Superior? The greatest damage on mission fields has been done by white people imagining the superior. 2 Corinthians 5.16. Henceforth I know no man according to the flesh. Color, race, absolutely forgotten.

What's my attitude to people of other races? That's why it's so tremendously important to learn what Don was saying on Sunday evening. He didn't use the word, but it's anthropology really, missionaries call it. That is studying the culture of other people and understanding how to tick.

I blew it at Moody Church by thinking English instead of learning to think American. Tremendous difference. You may not realize that, but it is.

You can see it in the way we put up houses. When an Englishman builds a house, what's the first thing he does with it? Put a fence around it. When an American builds a house, what do they do? Have a yard.

It's wide open to everybody. That's an indication of different temperament. We call it reserve.

Everybody else says it's snootiness. But you've got to think in the culture of the place you're working. What's your attitude? And what's your attitude to rich people? Would I lower my standards to them to secure their favor? Remember that a big house and a Mercedes-Benz car and nice clothes and a big bank balance don't soften God's demands for repentance.

Of course, I shouldn't discriminate against rich people, but I should never cheapen the gospel to win their favor. The Lord has something to say about the Sermon on the Mount and the behavior of stewards in a church. Consider some of those things and weigh them up in evidence of a sense of call.

Deal with these things in your own life. That a Christian needs not only to be called, but he needs to be choice. Matthew 22, verse 14.

Many are called, but few are chosen. Choice. That's the word.

Matthew 22, 14. Choice. An example, Old Testament example in 2 Kings.

Don't bother to look up now, but you can follow up. 2 Kings, chapter 4, verse 4. There was a lass who was walking along the road. A lady and her husband said, Behold, a holy man of God continually passes by.

That's what a Christian is supposed to be. A holy man of God continually. No vacation from vocation.

No vacation from vocation. And as you go into ministry, especially in a pastorate, maybe I shouldn't say that. It's like living in a new house all the time that's got written on it, open for inspection.

Or like swimming about in a goldfish bowl, everybody looking. And a minister, a preacher, a witness, a missionary, what have you, have no immunity from temptation. The experience of temptation and testing daily is necessary to growth.

And nobody's exempt from that principle. Every outward profession of faith must be backed by an inward practice of holiness. Every outward profession of faith must be backed by an inward practice of holiness.

You see, what will draw other people to you, as you go on, is that they feel that in you at last they've found somebody they can trust. They'll feel that in you they have found somebody they can trust. That you are what you profess to be.

Be for real. The biggest advertisement for the gospel is a life which is thoroughly honest and good. Therefore, deal with the... Too quick? Sorry.

The last sentence. There is no more telling advertisement or advertisement, depending which side of the Atlantic Ocean you come from, for the gospel than a life which is thoroughly honest and open. Let's therefore be honest with God and deal with the shabby areas in our lives.

Deal with the shabby areas, the things that are doubtful. If I don't quite know whether I should be allowing this or that in my life, give God the benefit of the doubt and kick it out. Give God the benefit of the doubt and kick it out.

The greatest factor for evangelism is personal holiness of life. And let me tell you, and remember this, the two greatest dangers which face everyone in this room will be money and sex. And by the grace of God, and only by the grace of God, can you be beyond reproach.

Remember, other people's eyes are on us. Even the way you speak to a waitress in a restaurant can make its impact. And you know, that consistency, that choiceness will reveal itself in all sorts of ways.

And you must write and tell me about it when you leave school. It will reveal itself first in the choice of a husband or wife. Proverbs 18.22. That's for men only.

Proverbs 18.22. A wife will make or mar your ministry. I'm speaking to the men now. Will make or mar your ministry.

She must be one of the same heart, with the same goals, the same commitment, and be equally called, as you are called, to the same work. So you're in it together. That's the greatest gift God has, this side of heaven.

A godly wife, a godly husband. The greatest gift the Lord has, this side of heaven. And marriage should never be in conflict with Christian service.

It should always be a help to it. And it can only be a help if you're both called to the same task. This is not a marriage counseling class, so I must stop at that.

There's a lot, a lot more I could say, but I'll leave it there. But the chasteness of a man will be revealed in the choice of a wife, and the chasteness of a girl, in the choice of a husband. A good idea, I think, would be to be sure that you get into each other's home before you fix it all up.

And listen how he or she talks to his father, or her father, or mother, or her mother. Because be sure of it, she'll be talking to you like that in five years' time. And of course, it will be shown in the way you conduct family worship.

Choice men. That will never, under any circumstances, be allowed to be crowded out. That's the most important thing in marriage, and in Christian living.

That's the fulfillment of the purpose of God, between man and woman, that they should be helped meet, and should share together. I would just like to bear testimony, if I may, that, I don't quite know how to put this, but my wife has quite a strong will, and a strong won't. And doesn't agree easily, at times.

And we have arguments, and differences. But we have never, in forty-nine years, ended a day without praying together, talking over the day with the Lord, and, if we've had an argument, being sure that our fellowship is restored again. One in Christ.

Absolutely vital. If you miss it for a day, it can be two, three, four, and marriage begins to fall apart. That's what holds it together.

Sharing the day, the events of the day, with each other. Family worship. Not necessarily, of course, at the same time.

Especially when children come, it's very difficult. Maybe the best time of day, then, is when the kids are in bed. But, always sharing.

In other words, learning to disagree agreeably. And a choice person, I think, will be revealed in the way he or she dresses. Say no more about that.

I was tempted to say something else, but I won't now. And, swallow that one. That's not fair, I haven't time.

All I was going to say is, I don't think there's any particular mark of spirituality to go around in sloppy jeans. That's all. You come with me to Japan, Indonesia, Far East, Third World, and they'd put us to shame.

You don't have to go so far as that. This country is a very sloppy country. It's only been that in the last twenty years.

Excuse me. Won't you? Thank you. And, and, oh, it's ten to twelve.

Halt there. And we continue that. I haven't finished that.

You see, what are we going to get to? And we've only two more hours. We'll continue this evening at seven o'clock. Okay? All right? Blessings on you.

Have a good day.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/14/SID14972.mp3>
Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/alan-redpath/sermon-preparation-lecture-03/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net