

Homiletics: Questions Preachers Should Ask of Every Sermon - Part 6

by Tim Conway

Effective preaching requires a deliberate and proactive approach, grounded in Scripture and recognizing the importance of avoiding passivity and personal opinions.

Duration: 2:17:52

Scripture: John 15:5, 1 Corinthians 2:4-5, 2 Timothy 3:16, 1 Peter 1:16, 1 John 2:15-17

Topics: "Biblical Preaching", "Holy Living"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of aligning our teachings and exhortations with biblical truths, cautioning against imposing personal standards as if they were scriptural. It encourages a careful examination of Scripture to define worldliness and holiness, urging listeners to apply these principles to their lives. The speaker shares personal experiences of sermon preparation and the need for reliance on God's Spirit for effective preaching.

Transcript

Okay, well like I said, what I want to deal with this morning is actually preparing and preaching the Bible study, or the sermon, or the exhortation. Guys, some of what I'm going to say here is, there's a biblical precedent, there's a biblical truth for saying what I'm going to say to you, and so it's just simply not optional. I'm going to say other things to you, and I might even be rather dogmatic about them, but there may not be any biblical basis for it.

We can get fired up and stirred up about some things that there may not necessarily be a text in Scripture for, just because we're so persuaded of something. But you guys are going to need to sort through those. I don't know if I'm going to specifically call each one out, I may to some degree.

Some of the things that I'm going to mention are things that Spurgeon or Lloyd-Jones or Piper, somebody may stress that I have always stuck in my mind that I thought are good points and good things to remember, but it's not Bible. I mean, obviously, if there isn't a biblical text for something, then it falls more in that category of liberty, but we want to be wise in our liberties. We want to be wise.

But here's the thing. The first thing that I want to say is, on the one hand, avoid passivity. Just recently in these last days, I've been talking to a young preacher who has admitted to me that when he goes in the

pulpit, he finds it very difficult to confront people directly.

Men, we've got to avoid passivity. When you go into the pulpit, you are being a spokesman for God. That is not a place to be passive.

And you understand what I'm saying by that. What I mean is, you don't say things the way you ought to say them. You don't say certain things at all.

You don't stress certain things the way they're stressed in Scripture. Why? Because you fear men. Look, guys, if you fear men to the place that you won't say certain things from God's Word, when you go into the pulpit, you probably shouldn't be there.

You need to tremble at God and tremble at God's Word. And not let the face of men daunt you from saying what needs to be said. Now look, that doesn't mean that sometimes you may not feel nervous going in.

That may not mean that sometimes you may not feel afraid going in. That may not mean that when certain people... I was telling my wife how when Brother Charles sits there at the conference and he sits like dead center, front row, and sometimes that can be intimidating. And my wife said, well, you know, you sit on the front row and I think the guys are intimidated.

Well, you can be afraid. You can be fearful. Men, when you come to stand in that pulpit, there is no place for passivity where you just basically fall back and you won't say certain things.

But on the other hand, we need to be careful that we don't step in the pulpit and say things above and beyond Scripture as though they're authoritative. And what I mean by this is you can get preachers who have sought to work through certain truths in their own life. And the way they work through those truths, the way they apply those truths.

Let's just take modesty. A man works through modesty. And he comes to the conclusion that his wife is going to wear fill-in-the-blank, whatever it is.

And then when he stands in the pulpit, he basically sets the standard that he's come to as though it's law. Men, we have to be careful that when we have taken certain principles from Scripture and applied them to our own lives or the lives of our family, and we've sought to work these things out, we have to be careful in the practical working out that we don't take our own opinions and our own convictions about where these principles, how far to take them, how far to work them out. We have to be careful that we don't lay that down as law.

So on the one hand, we want to avoid the passivity where we don't press men hardly at all in certain areas because we're afraid. But on the other hand, we have to be careful that we're not pressing men beyond... A man can stand in the pulpit and say, I heard Lester Roloff is gone and he's gone to be with the Lord. I can remember listening to this guy and he's talking about how chewing gum is like some sin or taking aspirin is some sin.

Well, brothers, neither of those are true. Just because he's come to that conviction in his own life, for him to stand in the pulpit and say those things, that's not good. Now, he said lots of things that were good.

And undoubtedly, we can find in almost every preacher where they come to some place and they preach one of their own convictions as though it's dogmatically the Word of God. We just have to be real careful,

brothers, real careful. There is a place to preach the principles and God help us.

I mean, a lot of times in preaching certain principles of the Christian life, like holiness or worldliness. Oh, worldliness! We can come to our own conclusions about what worldly is. You will have some preachers that stand in that pulpit and they will insist that if you go to see a movie, it is worldly.

Or they will insist that if you have a TV, it is worldly. Or they will insist that if you dance... I remember this. I remember... This is another old missionary that went to be with the Lord.

I had him in my home when I was a very young preacher. And he talked to me about another pastor who became a missions coordinator with a very well-known missions agency. And at this second preacher's daughter's wedding, he danced with his daughter.

And this old missionary that was at my house was condemning that and saying how worldly that was. And I said, brother, you can't condemn him for that. There's just simply not a lick of biblical authority to condemn him.

And you know, that old boy, even though I was young, probably in my thirties, he apologized to me. And I believe he asked me to forgive him and he asked me to pray for him. Because in saying what I said, he didn't just, as the very senior, have run with the Lord lots longer than I have.

He was humble to do that. But we have to be careful. We have to be careful.

Now you know what? Dancing could be worldly. Movies could be worldly. TV could be worldly.

But the thing is, to automatically assume, to automatically set up standards that we don't have in Scripture, listen, we need to press people to holiness. We need to press people to lay aside every vestige of worldliness. But we have to be so careful that we don't make ourselves the authorities in defining what worldliness is.

What we need to do is get into the heart and pull out the principles of Scripture as to what... You know, you go there to 1 John 2 and you reach in there and you find out what is John talking about when he's talking about worldliness. And seek to develop that. And what you want to do is you want to so develop it that the people listening can take what you say and they can apply it to certain areas of their life.

And you know what? Every single one of the people that's listening to you, they may apply it differently, but by the Spirit's leadership, they're taking these principles and they're applying them. Not because you legalistically dictated where the line is, but because the Spirit has led them to recognize, you know what? The Spirit may not be leading the guy, like me, who has a TV and comes home on Sunday afternoons and I stick in dispatches from the front. And brothers, that does so much for my soul.

And so you stand up there in the pulpit and you're talking about worldliness. I am not being led by the Spirit to think I've got to get rid of that TV and not watch that on Sunday afternoons. That actually ministers to my soul in a tremendous way.

But somebody else might be thinking, yeah, somebody else might be thinking, you know what? When my wife puts that dress on, it does cross my mind that it's not appropriate. See, we just want to be careful that we don't seek to be the Holy Spirit. So, it's important that we deal with men.

It's important that we're direct with men. We're not passive. Brothers, I have come across several preachers that won't look at the people they preach to.

They look at the back wall. I can think of two preachers. They won't look at you.

And you know when they're preaching, you're always like, who are they looking at? Because they're obviously looking over all the people at the back wall. Brothers, if you've got a message for the people, you should look at the people. You should make eye contact with the people.

Now, I remember John Gerstner talking about R.C. Sproul, and he said, that guy, because Sproul, when he was in seminary, they would have these preaching exercises, and he said Sproul would actually look at a certain person and he wouldn't take his eyes off them for an uncomfortably long amount of time. You don't want to do that. Make eye contact with the people, but don't stare at one individual so long that they're squirming in their seat and they're not hearing anything that you say.

We don't want to be passive. We don't want to be overly aggressive. We certainly don't want to be preaching our own convictions.

Second thing that I want to say this morning. Brothers, when you put together a Bible study, you put together an exhortation, you put together a sermon, have a reason for everything that you say. I remember this.

When I was in engineering school, machine design, Dr. Ari Gur, he was an Israeli. He told us this, when you design... and you know, the last job I had before I went full time into the ministry, I was doing exactly that. Designing automated machinery.

And his words have stuck with me ever since the day he said them. He said, when you design a machine, have a reason for every single aspect of that design. Every single component, every part, every member, everything, have a reason for why you do it.

In other words, you think through every single component, every aspect of that design, and you have a reason for why you're doing it. I mean, sometimes the reason is just to make it look nice. Aesthetics.

Sometimes it's a structural issue. Sometimes it's a function issue. But you need to have a reason.

And I would say that, apply that very same principle to a message. Have a reason for every single thing that you say. Have a reason for every point.

Have a reason for every direction you're going in. Have a reason. And see, the thing is that we're ambassadors of Christ when we go into that pulpit.

We are seeking to preach the Word of God. Know the Word. Know the Word.

Know the Word. Your reasons for doing what you're going to do, so much of it needs to come back to Scripture. Why would you do this? Why would you go in this direction? Why would you use this illustration? Why? Why? Why? Why? Why? You hear about preachers chasing rabbits.

You know what? It's okay to chase a rabbit. But have a reason for doing it. Think through what you're going to do.

Now look, you say, I recognize some things happen when you're preaching that are not forethought. What I mean by this is you didn't plan this in the study. But still, on the spot, you can be thinking, is it wise to go in that direction? Is it going to detract from the main point I'm trying to bring here? There's a nice story here.

You don't want to get to the end, it's like, well, I guess I don't even really know why I told that story. It just reminded me of that and so you told it. But it really doesn't play very much of an essential part.

Don't do that. Don't do that. Don't do things that are empty, that are fruitless, that don't have a part to play.

Brothers, when you're preaching, you want to be deliberate. You want to be very proactive in where you're going. You want to have a plan.

You want to be open to the leadership of the Spirit as you're speaking undoubtedly. But you want to be deliberate. I mean, you want to prepare with deliberate purpose so that when you go to stand in that pulpit, you've got something to say.

Brothers, you don't want to sit down at a Bible study or go into the pulpit with nothing to say. Or just to ramble. It's very unclear to people.

Where's he going? What's he saying? Why is he even saying this? I mean, have a purpose. Have a purpose. If you have nothing to say, it's likely the Lord doesn't want you to be speaking on that subject or that text.

So, if you don't have anything to say on any passage of Scripture, you need to have something to say and a reason for saying it. If you don't have anything to say, and you can sit and study the Scripture for endless hours, and you just don't have anything to say. Brothers, I know that oftentimes Spurgeon, he would talk about going to the text and it's like hitting that jewel with the hammer.

And he said he knew when it was the right text because the thing would just break apart in all these beautiful gems. Well, it's kind of like that. If you go and you hammer on that thing and you don't have anything to say, it's very likely the Lord doesn't want you to say anything on that text.

And if you go to any number of texts and you don't have anything to say, it's very likely He doesn't want you preaching at all. Because if He does want you to preach, He's going to give you things to say. He's going to open up passages to you.

So, the third thing I would say, brothers, is this, don't, especially as a young preacher, don't intentionally pick difficult texts. And sometimes you get young preachers who get exposed to some book they read or some sermon they heard on a very difficult subject and they get all stirred up. And they go stand in the pulpit and they get stirred up by some guy that's in his seventies and he's been walking with the Lord for decades and he's been studying the Bible for decades and he's been wrestling with these doctrines for decades and he's been praying to God over them for decades.

And you get this novice preacher who goes in the pulpit and he starts running with all these thoughts and all these things that he really hasn't had the years and experience and pressed through himself. Just be careful. I mean, brothers, if you go into the pulpit and you're in over your head and everybody that's listening to you recognizes you're in over your head, it's just not going to be good.

A fourth thing to remember is this, our opinion about what Scripture means is not equal to Scripture. We need to recognize that. Our logical conclusions about what Scripture means are not equal to Scripture.

Now look, that doesn't mean that you can't go into the pulpit with authority. There are many things you and I can point out to people from Scripture that is not our opinion. You know, people like to say that, right? You get the people all the time today.

Well, that's your opinion. No, that's not my opinion. That's what Scripture says.

Now there are some things that are our opinions. We just need to be real clear that when we go into the pulpit, here's what I recognize. There are some things I can show you from Scripture.

Case closed. Right? I mean, there it is. It's really not up for debate.

It's not like it might have five secret meanings. It means what it means. We all recognize what it means.

Our Lord Jesus Christ spoke that way all the time. He spoke all the time as though people ought to understand what He said. He spoke about Scripture all the time assuming that people ought to have been able to read it and understand very clearly what it said.

Did He not talk that way? Have you not read? Have you not? Doesn't Scripture say? I mean, He would go to these supposed religious authorities and He would say to these guys who were supposed to be teachers, are you a teacher in Israel and you don't know these things? It's kind of like you should have. Scripture's pretty plain. Isn't that one of the things we teach about Scripture? I mean, in many areas, very plain.

What is that, perspicuity? Very plain. Scripture's understandable. But there are places where it's not so plain.

And what you want to do is you want to be an attorney in that pulpit. You want to go up and you want to make a case. You want to study what the possible meanings are.

You want to wrestle through those meanings. And you want to make a case for why you think it means A over B and C. And you want to go into that pulpit and as an attorney, you want to make that case and convince the people and apply it to their souls. And you want to make it as convincing an argument as you possibly can.

And you want to argue from Scripture. But you know what? When you come up against a text like that, you full well know good men, solid men, godly men have disagreed on this place. Why? There's always a reason why.

There's good, solid, biblical evidence usually that indicates why there are other men who disagree. You have to wade through those arguments too. They've waded through the things that you have and they've rejected your position after considering all the evidence.

You wade through it and you reject their position after weighing all the evidence. Good men do that. You just recognize when that's the case, when you go to stand in the pulpit, your opinion, your conclusion is not equal to Scripture.

That doesn't mean that you shouldn't seek to wrestle with Scripture, dig through Scripture, come to conclusions, lay out there your opinion after you have carefully studied through this and seek to make a case. But you just recognize your opinion is not equal. The thing is, we need to bow to Scripture.

I think it's important too when you go into the pulpit when something is your opinion that you let the people know. You know, this is what I think. Brethren, this is what I think this text means.

I'll tell you why I think that. And there may be a place sometimes to say, look, I know good people believe this. I recognize that.

I respect it. I understand why they believe that. But in considering the evidence, I don't think they're right.

Now typically, if you're going to go there and you're going to make an issue, there's a reason you're going to make an issue. I mean, you guys know, you go back and look at the Eschatology series. I took issue with John MacArthur who I respect highly and has had a massive influence in my life.

But I disagreed with him. Basically, in the beginning of that Eschatology series, I hit on five distinct points because I think they're that important. There's things that are important that if you recognize even somebody that's a good brother seems to be missing something and you think it's harming God's people, there's a place to protect God's people and to seek to show and to prove that that position is wrong.

And it's harmful to believe that. I really believe that about some of that dispensational stuff. But still, I have to recognize too that there's things like one of the cases I made was, you know, brethren, we don't have to be looking for an Elijah at the end of time when Jesus clearly tells us, John the Baptist... See, that's not my opinion.

You see, there are things that are clear in Scripture that some people miss. But I don't have to say, well, brethren, in my opinion, Jesus said it. Jesus said John the Baptist is Elijah.

And I can show you where He said it. I don't even have to say, that's my opinion. That's Jesus' opinion.

And it's right there on the pages of Scripture. Brothers, I think it's important that you stress your opinion because if you stand in the pulpit and you preach your opinion as though it's the Word of God, and you've got listeners out there who recognize that's just His opinion and He's preaching it like it's the Word of God, you see, you will lose a degree of authority in certain people's minds. And I've said this before, look, you just have to recognize when you're preaching, when you're speaking, very often you've got people in front of you who have been studying their Bible for decades.

They've wrestled through many of the things that you're dealing with in your sermon. You know what? There are people that are all over the spectrum. But you've got some people who know their Bibles pretty well.

You've got some extremely logical thinkers in front of you, typically. You start throwing your opinions around like they're the Word of God. They're going to see that.

And what's going to happen is suddenly they're going to be questioning whether you really handle the Word. I mean, you do that enough and there's question raised in mind, oh, here's the guy that sets his opinions forth as though they're Scripture all the time. You don't want people to be thinking that.

You want to argue. You want to deal with God's Word with integrity. You want to have a transparency and an honesty when you're in that pulpit.

You want to be the attorney. You want to seek to convince. But you know what you want to demonstrate to the people is a submission to the Word of God.

And what I mean, and we might have talked about this before, but brothers, sometimes we have an idea. Sometimes we get a novel idea in our head. We get some novel idea as we're reading through Scripture, maybe devotionally or something, and some novel thing jumps out at us and we think, oh, that would be neat.

Maybe I'll preach on that. But the more you study, the more you start to recognize, well, maybe that isn't really what that means. Submit.

Or sometimes guys are ready to preach some text or preach some subject matter. And so they reach in and they want a proof text. Here's a text over here.

Here's a text over here. Brothers, look at those texts. When you reach in and grab a single text out, you're in danger.

Dive in there. Look at that context. Look at how the text is being used.

Look at where that thing comes from. And you know what? Sometimes you come to recognize, oh, that doesn't exactly teach what I was reaching in there to pull it out to be the substantiating matter for what I was wanting to say and claim. Where if I just kind of deal with this in a very passing manner and I kind of deal with it in a shoddy proof text manner, it might seem like it's saying, but if anybody... Brothers, I do sit in the front row and when you're preaching, if you have people turn to a certain text and then you have them turn to another text and I don't turn in my Bible, it's typically because I'm sitting there and I'm thinking, I want to get a feel for the text He just mentioned.

And is it really saying? What is God saying here? How does this text really apply? And you know, I get this from some of the brothers. They hear a certain text is preached in a certain way and they say, you know, I never get the sense that that's really the meaning. You know, that text gets used that way all the time.

Now look, sometimes a certain truth is taken by the writers of Scripture and it's used in a certain context. And it doesn't mean that that truth can't be pulled out of that context and used in many other contexts. But there are some truths that to wrench them out of the context now makes them an untruth.

They can't be used in other contexts. That truth applies specifically in that context. And if you don't take it there, you're basically using Scripture to do what it was never meant to be used for.

So just be ready to submit to the authority of Scripture. The best thing to do is not to go in with all your presuppositions. Not to go in thinking, oh, I think I'm going to preach on this and I think I'm going to stress this and I think I'm going to go over here.

What you want to do is you want to go and bow to Scripture. You want to say, okay, let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus. Let's say you want to get there.

Well, as you deal with the text, you want to submit to the text. You want to bow to it. You might have had some ideas about where you wanted to go, but really listen to Paul.

Why is he arguing the way he is? Why is he going where he's going? Let Scripture speak. Let Scripture set the agenda. And that's really bowing to it.

And I recognize not all of us are going to just preach from the beginning of a letter all the way to the end of a letter. There is definitely a place for topical sermons. But even when you deal topically with something, like say you're going to deal topically with Providence, you want to dive into some texts that deal with Providence.

And rather than already having your agenda set, really bow to those texts. See what they're saying. Hear what they're saying.

Hear what's being stressed. Lloyd-Jones says this, we all therefore have to face this ultimate and final question. Do we accept the Bible as the Word of God? As the sole authority in all matters of faith and practice? Or do we not? Is the whole of my thinking governed by Scripture? Or do I come with my reason and pick and choose out of Scripture and sit in judgment upon it? Putting myself and modern knowledge forward is the ultimate standard and authority.

The issue is crystal clear. Do I accept Scripture as a revelation from God? Or do I trust to speculation, human knowledge, human learning, human understanding, and human reasons? Or, putting it still more simply, do I pin my faith to and subject all my thinking to what I read in the Bible? Or do I defer to modern knowledge, to modern learning, to what people think today, to what we know at this present time which was not known in the past? It is inevitable that we occupy one or the other of these two positions. Like if you're going to preach on Scripture, dive into Scripture itself and look at what God says about Scripture.

If you're just going to preach a topical message on the infallibility of Scripture, the inerrancy of Scripture, look at what Scripture itself says. Develop your points from what God says. Not ahead of time saying, oh, well, I think I'd like to deal with these six things and now, okay, now let's go to Scripture and find out where I can substantiate those.

That's not what you want to do. You want to let Scripture speak. Let Scripture speak.

Now that doesn't mean that you can't say, you know what, a big error in our day is this. And it doesn't seem to be an error that was directly dealt with anywhere in Scripture, but we need to deal with it because it's an error today. I recognize there's things for looking at the errors that are prevalent and that we need to go after.

And still, you're going to find some kind of biblical principles in Scripture that even indicate to you that what is prevalent now is error. How do you know it's error? Well, because something in Scripture is giving you the indication it's error. So you can go back and you can certainly draw on those realities.

But bowing to Scripture, bowing to Scripture, bowing to Scripture, that can be harder than you think because we so often have an agenda. We so often have our own motive for where we want to go and why we want to do what we want to do. And one of the things I do love about this expositional approach from the beginning of a letter to the end of a letter is because that kind of preaching often forces a continual submission to the Scripture.

Because I can't even emphasize things... well, you can. You can still emphasize things out of balance just basically based on what you stress from the text. But if you're constantly really thinking what is Paul saying? What is Paul stressing? There in the book of Ephesians.

What is it he has on his mind? Where is he going with this? Why is he saying this? How does it fit in his argument? If you just constantly are coming back to that, coming back to that, coming back to that, then I let Paul, but more so, I let God indicate the thrust of what's being said. That's bowing, bowing, bowing, bowing. Brothers, don't miss this for the simplicity of it.

Preach the text. That may sound so simple and so reasonable, but I cannot tell you how many times I hear people preach and I'm just thinking, they're not preaching what the text says. And it becomes really apparent.

They had an agenda. They had an agenda and they went to that text to support their agenda, but they did not preach that text. They really didn't say what God said.

And brothers, when I say preach the text, I mean this too. I'm amazed at this. And this is common among young preachers, among novice preachers, among those who are just starting to cut their teeth.

They read a text. They take the church to the text. They take the Bible study to the text.

And rather than diving into the text deeply and bringing out the meaning and unfolding it, unwrapping it like Spurgeon, hitting it to where all the diamonds just break apart, and now going and plucking up all those different diamonds from that text. I cannot tell you how often a guy will read a text and say it has to do with sanctification. And now you know what he wants to do? He wants to take you on a journey through 27 verses that have to do with sanctification.

And he doesn't deal with any of them to any depth. All he does is shoot from the hip. Bang, bang, bang, bang, bang.

One after another after another after another. Listen, typically you don't need to do that. Why? Because the initial text you dealt with substantiates the reality of sanctification.

You don't need 27 more verses to substantiate it. Everybody's convinced from the first one. You don't need to go to the 27.

In fact, as I've said before, or maybe you've heard this, when they train men in the Far East, he tells men, beginning preachers, I want you to bring a message on this passage and I don't want you to quote a single other passage. Train yourself. Discipline yourself there.

Don't go to other places unless it's really helpful. Unless it's necessary. Charles Simeon.

Charles Simeon believed, and I don't believe this, but Simeon was an outstanding preacher. He believed that when you preach the text, you should never go anywhere else. He never went anywhere else.

He never cross-referenced in a sermon. He believed unpack the text before you. Say what the text before you is saying.

You know what? I think there's a lot to learn from that. I'm not saying we shouldn't cross-reference. And one of the biggest reasons I would disagree with him is because I find that when the New Testament preachers preached, they referenced the Old Testament.

To me, that's good enough. Cross-referencing can be really helpful. It can be really valuable.

But only cross-reference if it's necessary. Don't do it just to do it. Listen, I know when I'm preaching through Ephesians, there are similar texts over in Colossians.

But I don't read them just because they're similar. I go over there when the Colossian passage says it in a way or gives some detail that helps us to more fully understand what I'm dealing with in Ephesians. See, that should be your purpose.

Here I've got a text. I want to unfold this thing. And I'm only going to go other places as they help me to immediately come back to my original text and develop it and unfold it and give it meaning and show what it means.

Brothers, sometimes young preachers, they give you the initial text and they go on their 27-verse trail and then they finish the sermon. They didn't use a single one of the other 26 verses to help explain the first passage. If you put together a sermon or a Bible study and basically all you're doing is articulating 16 verses on limited atonement, you're probably going about it all wrong.

Remember, brothers, back in Nehemiah what those priests did. They gave a sense to the text so that the people understood. That's what you want to do.

You want to take a passage and you want to so attack that passage and only reach out and pull in other texts as they help you to attack that passage. Now I recognize, when you're dealing with a topical message, it's going to be a bit different. I recognize that.

There, what you want to do is now your topic, and it's a biblical topic. You've got a passage that gives you the validity that this is a biblical topic. And now, perhaps, it's the topic you want to attack.

Charles just did this message on Providence. That was a topical message. But the same thing, you're going to go out and you're going to grab this verse only in as much as it helps you attack that subject and develop it.

You're trying to develop this thing. It's like that diamond again, this big diamond. You hit it, you hit it, you hit it.

You're looking for it to break into all these beautiful pieces that are going to make up the whole of this sermon or this exhortation. Don't try to cover too much. Brothers, if you try to cover too much, if you try to do too much, you will not do it well.

You'll go too fast or you'll go way too long. Be careful. And just because you had an agenda when you started, doesn't mean you have to stick to that.

Again, bow to this thing. But be careful that you don't cover too much. Be careful.

And in some of that, sometimes as you begin to prepare, you recognize you bit off much more than you should chew. Shorten it. I mean, draw back.

You meant to cover Providence in all these different areas. Or you meant to deal with Scripture in all these different areas. Don't do it.

Deal with it in one area. I mean, I do that all the time. I look at the text and I think, you know what, I'm going to cover this verse.

Or I'm going to cover these three verses. And I get going and it's like, I can't do that. There's no way I can cover that much.

Okay, I cut it short. Now, I may have to go back and retitle it. Sometimes I start the message and at the top I say three points.

This, this, this, and this. I'm developing point one and I recognize four pages for me is approximately an hour. An hour.

Four pages on my notes is approximately an hour. And here's my first point and I'm through the end of four pages. Well, that doesn't mean because I started out saying I'm going to cover these three points, now I'm going to go give you seven pages and preach for two hours.

I recognize, I go back up and it's like, okay, retitle. I'm not dealing with those points. Now I'm dealing with this one point and the sub-points are the main points now.

But don't bite off more than you can chew. Read the audience. Bob Jennings said something to me one time about this.

He actually quoted from Daniel about the fourth beast. He shall speak words against the Most High and shall wear out the saints of the Most High and shall think to change the times and the law and they shall be given into His hand for a time, times, and half a time. Anyways, beloved Bob, he used that fourth beast as the kind of preacher you don't want to be.

And don't wear out the saints. Brothers, I can tell you this, you get in a situation where you preach after somebody just ate a meal, you should preach different. Shorter.

Tell more stories. Be aware. Listen, if Spurgeon recognized the signs of if people began to nod off, people began to look out a window, people began to be distracted, people were weary, read the people.

You know what? You guys know what it is to be a listener. You know what it is to be tired. You know what it is to have a mind that begins to drift.

Do you know as a preacher, sometimes if you just stop and you give a pause, people's minds snap back. You know why? Because it's not just the drone. Blah, blah, blah, blah.

You stop. That's an interruption. Suddenly, people become aware of the silence.

Spurgeon was a master at storytelling. When you've got a guy that has eight simultaneous thoughts going through his mind about what he should say next, he's got the ability to probably pick from one of four different stories. Plus, he's thinking about what he's going to preach next week.

And who knows? But eight simultaneous thoughts, that's pretty good. I don't even know how he can think. For him to have eight simultaneous thoughts, then he's thinking to himself about the fact that he's having eight simultaneous thoughts.

So that's a ninth simultaneous thought. But you know, you start telling a story. You've got to have some light on your feet from the Spirit of God if you're going to tell something right at that very moment that's actually going to be applicable and fit to the whole thrust.

But I've known men that stop and pray in the middle of a message. They just discern things. They need help.

The congregation needs help. That kind of thing will bring people to attention. Read the people.

Read the people. Listen, you do not have to finish all 14 points of your message just because they're in your notes. I mean, you know you're going long.

Stop. Just stop. You don't have to finish.

How many times have you heard a sermon and you thought, he could stop right here. But he goes on for 20 more minutes. Well, he thinks it's critical because he sat in his study and he went through all this and he thinks it's absolutely essential.

Well, you preach a message and just go ask all the people that listen to you a week later what you preached on. I mean, maybe you do need to finish. But maybe you don't need to finish.

But read the people. Read the people. Hey brother, I had a thought.

I think one time Spurgeon said he compared it to rain falling on plants. And he said if there's too much of a flood, it'll actually harm the plants. And I guess likening that to maybe preaching trying to get too much done at once.

Right. Strive to say old truths in new ways. This is something that really stood out to me that Piper said.

And Piper was the master at it and is the master at it. Trying to use the English language to the full. Be creative in the way you say things.

I remember a pastor. I had a pastor in the past. He was preaching through Romans.

Every single week, he would review. And every single week, he'd say the same thing. You can review.

But here's the thing, even when I want to review what I might have said last week, I will make an effort to say it different than I preached it to you last week. Why? Because people turn off. If people believe they've heard it before and it's just all repetition, they turn off.

So, be creative. I typically have my thesaurus open when I'm preparing for a message. Why? Because I don't want to say everything the same way.

I want to use the fullness of the English language. Don't stand in the pulpit and say awesome 16 times. You talk about a word that is so flagrantly misused and overused today and it's been so cheapened.

Don't say it. People say it as though it comes across as this, you know, oh, it's going to produce awe in the people because I used that. It's overused.

It's cheap in our day. Say it a different way. Say it differently.

Look how other people say things. Take note when you listen to a sermon and you hear somebody say something. Learn from it.

When you hear something said in a very powerful way, learn from it. Seek to imitate that. But be creative.

Hey, brother, I think when I listen to Stephen Lawson, he's kind of like that. He says some words that are overused. And listen, on that note, I'm not saying to say words that the people don't know.

Brothers, when you speak, a good preacher preaches to people so that they understand. I remember hearing a preacher. You can hear it.

I remember hearing this preacher. And he's preaching along. And I know the guy.

And he starts preaching about pericope. And it's like why is he saying that to the people and he doesn't define it? We should be expanding the vocabulary of our hearers. But you know what? Come down to their level.

Come down to the level of the people that you're dealing with. I know some people may understand high language, but speak the common man's language. Do you know Spurgeon was faulted? You go back and look at his sermons, you'd hardly believe it was the case.

But he was accused of being vulgar because he spoke in the common man's language. You remember the kind of Greek that was used in the New Testament. It was the common man's Greek.

It was the spoken Greek. How'd Spurgeon say it? Sixteen ounces to the pound. Full Anglo-Saxon.

He gave it to the people in the common man's language. And all these guys with degrees behind their names found fault with him. Brothers, when a man stands in the pulpit and he uses language that I know the people do not understand and it's just going over their head and they're not understanding what the guy's saying, that's just a demonstration of pride.

Because he's speaking in a way where he wants to awe people by his vocabulary. We should stretch our hearer's vocabulary. But we should be very specific to define if we're going to use some vocabulary.

We should strive to do that. Because if you're saying things from the pulpit that people don't understand, throw it out the window. What good is it? It's no good.

Those priests were very specific in giving the people a sense of the meaning that they might understand the law of God. You were going to say? Yeah, they said of Jesus that the common people heard Him gladly. Yeah, that's a good example too.

I think he said, this was hard when I heard it, but he said you ought to be able to preach in a way where a child is able to understand it. And at the same time, you should not simply preach on the level of a child. What you should be seeking to do is bring those children up, up, up, ever, ever upward.

You want to preach certainly simple enough that they can understand. The truth is you are going to say some things that the child doesn't understand. It's kind of like the people, I've got certain things that I would like to say to you, or I can't feed you with meat.

But the reality is when you've got this mixed assembly, the truth is that you are going to throw meat out there and there are some people not ready for it, but you're hopefully bringing them along where they're growing and they're becoming more and more able to take that. Yes, sir. My question may not have a biblical answer, but I'll try to be as clear as I can and ask a question.

If you listen to like a political speech or a state of the union, there's like a cadence and a style. It doesn't really matter who the politician is. You know that they're giving that sort of speech.

And I've noticed with preachers and teachers that there's a group of people who have a certain preacher style as a cadence to the way that they deliver the words. And then there's other people who basically sound exactly the way that they sound when you're having a conversation with them. And my opinion is those seem to be the better ones.

Like they're talking the way that they normally would talk if you were just in their living room. And I was just curious, what is your thoughts or opinion about a certain style? I think we kind of all know that cadence when you know somebody's preaching. Well, let's talk about voice.

I have that in here. We're going to get to it, but since you bring it up, let's deal with it right now. I specifically threw that in my notes this morning.

Let's think about the voice for a second. What should be the things that you think about? Brothers, don't be monotone. Don't kill people with your voice.

Show some degree of passion in your voice. Brothers, we're dealing with words of life. We're dealing with the most essential things that matter to people.

I hope you can get at least somewhat excited about the things that come forth from Scripture and you can communicate that in the tones, the inflections. Be aware of your voice. Guys, have you ever heard somebody... I mean, it's like every sentence they say, you've heard... that's poor communication.

If something is happening, you're using a repetition of a word. You ever hear when young people use the word, like, 25 times in one sentence? Well, there's some preachers that speak like that. And you have to watch yourself because even as you go through life as a preacher, you can get to where you like certain words and you start to use them.

And if they're coming out too much, chop it off. Change it. Listen to yourself sometimes.

Listen to your voice. Listen to how you're communicating. You ever notice how some people kind of have a nervous cough? Don't do that in the pulpit.

It's like Andy talks about preaching and you've got something to say where it's everything just for the words you're saying right now to get out of the way to make room for the words that are coming next. If you're pausing, stuttering, don't stutter. Don't stutter.

The voice. I can think of a distinct preacher that many of you would know if I brought up his name. But it's like when he's in the pulpit, he speaks with this tone or as Andre says, a cadence.

It's not him. When you sit down with the guy at a meal or you just sit on the sofa and cross from each other and have a discussion, his voice doesn't sound like that. There are some circles where it's expected that you're going to sound a certain way when you're in the pulpit.

If you go back, speaking of Brother Andy, if you go back and you listen to a lot of sermons by Al Martin and then you listen to the young Reformed Baptist preachers that were in the generation just below him, which Andy is part of and many others, those guys sound like Martin. Spurgeon said in his day there were a lot of young preachers running around that sounded like McShane. I noticed that when you go up and

when I would visit Piper's church, there are guys that sound like Piper.

I think that the guy that's up there now sounds a whole lot like Piper. Sproul sounds a whole lot like Gerstner. If you go back and listen to Gerstner, it is not surprising that we end up sounding like the people that had lots of influence on us.

It is not surprising. You take a person from Michigan and you move them down to Georgia and let them simmer and bake in that culture for two years and put them in a workplace and surround them by that southern drawl. Typically, the people from Michigan will have more of a southern drawl in the end.

Why is that? Well, there's that kind of influence. Is it necessarily wrong? I don't think you can say that it's necessarily wrong. But to me, I guess I have somewhat of a feel like Andre has that it's not authentic.

The guy is going into a different mode that almost seems put on. And maybe it's just totally subconscious. I mean, he comes from circles where when you get in the pulpit, you speak that way.

I don't know. Yes, we don't have a specific biblical passage, but it is definitely something to think about. I would agree.

Sound like yourself. I can't imagine our Lord Jesus or the Apostle Paul putting on some kind of ora about themselves. I think most of their preaching was done... They raised their voice.

There's a place for raising your voice. You want to be heard, especially in the day when there was no amplification. Certainly, you want to do that.

You want to be heard. We're all about communicating. The thing that we want to think about is this.

We don't want to unnecessarily put obstacles in people's way. Like even the motions, even the gestures. I get people that say on a regular basis that I tend to look left a lot more than I look right when I preach.

Well, I want to change that. I don't just say, oh, you know, just live with it. Because here's what I don't want people on the right to think.

That I somehow have something for the people on the left and more concerned about them than the people on the right. I do want to make eye contact with people, but I don't want there's certain people that I never make eye contact with. When I was first preaching, I would bang my wedding ring on the pulpit.

Bang, bang, bang, bang. I didn't notice it. It was something I was subconsciously doing, but somebody brought that to my attention.

Or even, I don't know why, but I pulled up a sermon of myself in video and I watched some of that. And I saw that I was straightening my papers all the time and that bugged me. And I thought if it bugs me, it probably bugs somebody that's watching.

And so from that point on, I made a point not to do that. But I don't do that. Well, I mean, come on.

I probably haven't even done it a handful of times in my whole life. And I don't want to do that. Mona even commented when I was chewing gum at one baptism.

And yeah, it's obnoxious. I actually put in this garden in the back. I was looking up organic gardening.

And I saw that this guy that's on the radio here in San Antonio, he had a class on organic gardening. And I was watching it. I thought, who's that guy in the background chewing gum like that? It was just really irritating to me.

And it was me. And I remembered, oh, my brother-in-law Sam and I went to that like seven years ago and here it was online. Okay, I don't want to chew gum in the pulpit.

But just don't do obnoxious things even though it may be subliminal. I mean, it may be something that you're subconsciously doing. The big thing is this.

We don't want to create obstacles. That's the thing. Look, if somebody's mind immediately goes to that action, to that nervous tick, to that nervous thing you do, if something is drawing their attention away from the message, it's not good.

And we all have our own personalities and our own flaws and our own whatever. We can't help if that hair's sticking up. Things happen.

Sometimes the collar isn't just right. Sometimes the wire is strange or whatever. Who knows? Every once in a while, it's almost like I'm convinced Beelzebul, the lord of the flies.

It's like you get this fly. It's like this thing is possessed. It just means to interrupt my preaching right now.

The big thing is this. We don't want to create obstacles. We need to be ourselves.

Obviously, we're going to live with one another's flaws, but we don't want to so speak in a way that there is this grating distraction of some sort. Another thing, guys can hold their pen, click their pens, or do different things. If you watch yourself, listen to yourself, watch yourself, that can be a pretty painful exercise, I recognize, but it's often a profitable one.

There's a guy I love to listen to, but I can't watch. Have you ever watched a sermon by... He's wonderful to listen to, but he's almost like a conductor the whole time he's speaking, and I can't watch him. He's wonderful to listen to, but I cannot watch him because he's literally conducting the orchestra the whole time he's preaching, and it's terribly distracting.

What do you think of his voice? I have a hard time listening to him because the voice feels put on. Sometimes it sounds like it's... Yeah, sometimes it sounds... His inflection, I think... It sounds unnatural. Yeah, it's over the top, I think, sometimes.

Okay. So you don't like his voice sometimes. I have a lot less problem with the voice than with the going like this as he's speaking.

So maybe it's just me, but I can't watch the guy. Listen, yes, but I can't watch him. You mentioned the voice.

I remember Charles' comment about some people have a weak point and they yell really loud. Hit the pulpit to subtly deceive people that they have something good to say when they don't. Yeah, that's another thing.

And I do remember that. I remember listening... Piper said that the other day. And I have listened... I remember as a young Christian... I'll give you the example.

I had all these Reformed preachers that would have me to believe that I should be Sabbatarian. And I was minded in that direction. But when I became a pastor, I wanted to preach what God's Word says.

And I'm looking for where is the biblical evidence for the position that's held? And I listened to sermon series after sermon series after sermon series to seek to convince me that the fourth commandment is binding in its Sabbath observance sense as they did in the Old Testament where that's binding on us as Christians today. And I felt like in those series that kind of thing, where they didn't really have a substantive point from Scripture. They just yell all the louder as though being emphatic makes it so.

I mean, look, I think we should preach with passion. Don't get me wrong. But the sense that a guy raises his voice because he doesn't really have a biblical basis to stand on, but he just wants to get loud to intimidate you into believing his point is true or something.

Yeah, don't do that. If you want to get stirred up, get stirred up about what is obviously in God's Word. That you can get really stirred up about.

It's there. Brothers and sisters, it's there. We need to live in light of that truth.

But kind of going back, brothers, don't speak above people's heads. My wife tells me about a reformed pastor that she had. She said the way she spoke about it, it was like going to church was like sitting before a college professor in a Greek class.

Don't do that. And in fact, let me just say some things about the Greek and about the languages. And I'm going to read from Lloyd-Jones.

What is the place of a knowledge of the original languages? They are of great value for the sake of accuracy. No more. I think he's spot on.

They are of great value for the sake of accuracy. No more. That is all.

They cannot guarantee accuracy, but they promote it. This is a part of the mechanics of preaching. It's not the big thing.

It's not the vital thing. But it is important. The preacher should be accurate.

He should never say things that some learned member of his congregation can show to be wrong and based upon a misinterpretation. Knowledge of the original languages is important in that way. But let us never forget that the ultimate object of this man's training is to enable him to preach, to convey the Bible message to the people, the vast majority of whom will not be experts on languages or on philosophy.

His business is to convey the message to them, to be understood of the people. The object of the training is not to make the student a great expert in linguistics so much as to make him an accurate man. Brothers, the best preachers are not Greek scholars.

They may be Greek scholars in their understanding of the languages, but they don't come across that way in the preaching. They come across in the common man's language. They only resort to the original languages when it is necessary to bring out some aspect of the meaning.

Brothers, this is right on. You want to be able to get into the languages to the point of accuracy so that when you say something from the pulpit, it's accurate. You don't want to stand up there and say something

like he says, like your more learned members recognize that's not right.

I mean, that's not right. He missed it. Well, one thing that you don't want to do is what my wife was exposed to where you go in and what the guy basically does is he gives you a lesson in Greek.

You don't want that. Apply the message to their souls. You're there to be a vocal piece for God and you want to communicate like Spurgeon said, 16 ounces to the pound, pure Anglo-Saxon English.

You want to speak to people in a way that they can understand. Listen, clarity in the message. You want to be real.

You want to hit people where they live. People don't live in Greek. They don't live in the Greek world.

Some guys stand in the pulpit and they get into the Greek like all they want to do is impress people by their knowledge of the language. That is so wrong. If you stand in the pulpit to basically bring some notoriety to yourself and your high learning, it's bad.

It doesn't convict people. It doesn't grab hold of their consciences. Don't speak above their heads.

Don't act like a Greek scholar. You know what? The vast majority of what happens in the original languages should happen in your study and you should not take it into the pulpit with you. The people don't need to hear it.

They just don't need to be. Look, it's not like you defining every single word in the Greek is somehow now going to grab hold of their conscience. That's not it.

Especially in English. We have the best translations in the history of mankind in the English language. The translational teams for the English Bibles are second to none.

I'm not saying that other languages don't have really great translations. But brothers, if you take the New American Standard, the New King James, the Old King James, the ESV, the Holman Christian, Tyndale, Geneva, I mean, you take these translations... You know what? If you come along and think you know a little smattering of Greek and you're not going to come along and correct the most eight used English translations and that your Greek knowledge is far superior to them and you're going to bring all this incredible light out that those eight translations don't bring out, you are sadly misguided. And the last thing you want to do, look, I can tell you this, if you're constantly stepping into the pulpit implying that grandmother over there with her King James Bible doesn't know the Word of God and can't know it unless she knows Greek, you're wrong.

You are so wrong in your approach to God's people. You want to give people confidence that they have the Word of God and in fact, that they have an anointing from God, that they can see things in this Word that they don't even need a teacher to be able to see. And I can tell you this, that when many of the New Testament authors quote from the Greek Old Testament, which was a translation, they didn't run around hollering out Hebrew all the time.

Oh, you've got to know the Hebrew if you're really going to get to this. Jesus and the New Testament authors used that Old Testament Greek as though it was absolutely authoritative. You can use the English as though it is absolutely authoritative.

Like Lloyd-Jones says, there's a point for accuracy. Being able to say to people, look, do you recognize that when Jesus and Peter are dialoguing here and He says, Peter, do you love Me? When Peter answers and says, Yes, Lord, You know I love You. He's not using the same word.

And the third time, Jesus changes His Word to match the one that Peter's been using. To bring that out, even though this might not be exactly an accurate way to describe what's happening, it comes close. Peter, do you love Me? Lord, You know I like You a lot.

Peter, do you love Me? Lord, You know I like You a lot. Peter, do you like Me a lot? And it just drove the knife in. See, He came down to Peter's term.

You can't see that in the English. That would be a place to bring that out and develop it. Why? Because there's something special.

There's something deep and cutting in that that would help people to see that. But there's a whole lot that you can do with the Greek that the truth is it's not going to help anybody. It simply isn't going to help.

I thought another help at the end of John 2. Many believed in His name, but Jesus didn't entrust Himself to them. The same word. Yeah, things like that are very helpful.

And see, the thing is that you don't have a direct correlation from one language to another. You never do. It's not like there's a word-for-word equivalent in every language.

Some languages don't even have words for certain concepts. You talk about missionaries being confronted by very difficult situations. You get some essential core word used in the Gospel, and this language over here doesn't even have a concept for it or a word for it.

It's like, what do you do? You get the feeling sometimes that the authors of Scripture invented words. Our situation is to communicate. And so, sometimes because you don't have direct equivalence between the languages, you have a lot of ways that this Greek word could be translated.

And sometimes, for no other reason than just variety, the translators interpret this Greek word this way over here and this way over here. Sometimes there's nuances in meaning. Sometimes it's just they're taking their linguistic liberty in doing that.

And if you can draw something out to where people are going to have a clear idea about something, if it helps in the argument that you're seeking to make, don't just stand up to be a Greek scholar. Our job is to convey the message of the word and to apply it. Would you say like maybe arbitrarily defining a word that has no... like you say, you have this diamond.

You're kidding me. You define this word and it does nothing and you break out any time? Yeah, it does nothing. I mean, again, we go back to Dr. Ari Ger.

Have a reason for why you're doing everything. If you're going to go into the Greek any time, any place, have a reason why you're going there. Okay, brothers, when you speak, this is a huge thing.

You need to have an end in view. Where are you going? Why are you even preaching this message? You want to be headed somewhere. What is it that I'm trying to prove? What point am I trying to make? What is it that I want to do? Now, the objectives can be different.

I mean, we may be wanting to do nothing but unpack a text like Charles did where you just want to make God big in the sight of people. Or you may unpack a text because you want to convict men that they need to love their wives. There's different objectives.

But brothers, we need to have an idea where we're headed. And so what we need to be asking is if I'm going to do anything with the Greek or I'm going to make any argument whatsoever or I'm going to cross-reference or whatever, have a reason for everything that you're doing. Again, it all has to do with I'm wanting to get at this.

You can get a guy that will give you a Greek lesson but then he never unpacks the text itself. It's like you just gave me a Greek lesson. I mean, I got all sorts of questions about the text as I find it in English.

And you didn't even answer them. How do I apply this to my life? What does this mean for me? What does this look like in 2017 in San Antonio in my life as I go forth day by day? I mean, yeah, you came across very scholarly. And you know, maybe some people are interested in that.

You've got to deal with God's people. You're called to shepherd them. You're called to lead them.

You're called to guide them and feed them. Man shall not live by bread alone, but from every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. Give them the words of God in the English language primarily.

I mean, the whole thing is if you're going to bring out the Greek, it's to bring it all back into English. Back into English. Back into a way that they perceive it.

Back into a way that's comprehensible to them. Brother, you had your hand up. Yeah, about five or six years ago, I can't remember if I read it or not, but I thought it was pretty helpful.

And it may be an overgeneralization, but the statement was made is that your exegesis is not your sermon. And I think there's a lot of value in that. And providentially, right after that, I sat through a sermon on Zechariah.

And the guy got up there and did what Tim was talking about. Did all these detailed Hebrew word studies, these detailed cultural studies, these detailed historical studies with maps and everything. And it was an absolute train wreck.

There was absolutely nothing to it. There was a lot of exegesis there, but there was absolutely no sermon. Something on the use of the original that I found kind of distracting and it kind of comes to that point, like have a reason for saying what you're saying.

It's just saying the Greek word just to say it. You brought out, like talking about the power of God. You bring out dynamite, the Greek word.

And it's the word that we use to get dynamite. And that helps. It's like, oh, wow.

But then you have folks that just say the word just to say it. And you're like, they're not bringing out a nuance. They're not bringing out an accuracy.

They're just saying the word to say it. You just kind of get to the point like, well, why are you saying that? And it's either just to say it because you looked it up or some kind of prior element to it. But I think that's kind of a helpful piece of the use of that language versus just saying it.

Timothy. Well, this one is something that Spurgeon said. He stresses this one.

And it's always stuck with me. He says, surprise people. Use the element of surprise.

He stresses that you should do it in the whole service. But he stresses it in the sermon too. Say the unexpected.

And based on this point, the thing is when you say the unexpected, people stay awake. When you say the unexpected, it works the brain. People tend to go to sleep.

People can get distracted, especially in our church where there's so many children. I mean, I sit up front. But the further back you sit, the more distractions there are.

I don't like it. I don't like to sit too far back. If you're behind that mid-aisle, forget it.

It's like that back there where the long sit a lot of times. You guys have been moving forward a little bit more, but that's just chaos back there. It's like so many distractions.

I think Spurgeon's right. Surprise. I often think when I'm putting together, I want to say something right here that nobody could have anticipated.

Nobody could expect. When you get certain preachers and they're preaching along, I can pretty much know what they're going to say. You start going ahead.

This is what they're going to say. This is where they're going to go. This is what they're going to say.

I'm not saying invent something new to say. I'm just saying if you seek to stick the element of surprise... See, that's right where I was thinking. Somebody's going to ask for an example right here.

Without being inventive in a way that's harmful to people. Is it like a thesaurus? Is it using a different language? Yes, it might be saying something in a way that they didn't expect. Go ahead.

I got an example of something you did that I thought was really good. It was an ask Pastor Tim and someone was asking, I guess kind of faulting our church, kind of like, I hear you guys say things all the time like look to Christ or go before the throne. What do you guys mean when you say that? And you said you were going to deal with that.

I was thinking, okay, Tim's going to go through and just kind of try to explain what all these things mean. But you totally redirected it to basically make the guy look like the reason he can't see that is because he's not converted. I wasn't expecting that at all, but I thought that was real.

And on that note, think about our Lord. Think about the times they asked Him questions. And think about His answers.

Can anybody give me an example where somebody asked Jesus a question and He didn't answer the question? He rather went in His own altogether different direction? Paying taxes to Caesar? The woman caught in adultery? Yeah, there's numerous times when it's like Jesus surprises you by how He answers. One of the things that you have to be thinking about is what is the deepest issue? You really have to be trying to sense what are some of the distractions? People often want to talk about things at a surface level. Or people have these agendas concerning these truths and sometimes you just want to hit the thing from

a direction that people aren't necessarily expecting.

One of the things can be in your study is collect around yourself teachers who say surprising things. Like in my study, if I come across something that is really surprising. Somebody said about a text, that is so spot on and I never thought that about that text.

I just learned something. And now for sure, I'm going to take that and go to the pulpit with it. Sometimes it's a matter of I'm praying through it and God gives me a thought like, wow, that's an unexpected thought.

I love that. Throw it in there. Sometimes it's not just direct from the Spirit of God.

Sometimes it's being influenced by the different things that I study or I look at. But yeah, you recognize sometimes that look at some of the best preachers. Make an exercise of this.

Look at some more novice preachers. Listen to them speak. Try to anticipate what they're going to say.

Listen to some, especially what I would call some of the more prophetic preachers like Piper and Washer, Lloyd-Jones. Try to anticipate what they're going to say. You can't.

It's just like they're constantly blowing you away by thoughts that you did not anticipate. Brothers, I've said this often, you go take the chief seat in a Bible study or you stand in the pulpit, you don't want to just give people thoughts, the old average thoughts or the any day regular normal thoughts that just any Christian when they study their Bible devotionally are going to have. You want to take them deeper, further, expand them, stretch them, surprise them.

That's what I want to do when I stand in the pulpit. I want to so unwrap this text that I want to try to take as many people as I can further in that text than they've ever gone before. I want to make them think about that text.

I want them to see how it's fitting into the whole flow and the whole glory of the Gospel. You want to take it to the biggest picture. You want to take it to the deepest level.

You want to get away from the surface so much shallowness in Christianity. You want to try to explode the thing open and go as deep as possible. You've got this guy like Conrad Merle who is very prophetic.

Go back and listen to some of his messages. Try to anticipate what that guy was going to say next. It's like you just can't.

So much of it has to do with the Spirit of God and working in our life and gifting us and giving us thoughts and helping us. But look, those guys study other men too. I would say this, brothers, read.

Read, read, read, read. Two things, exercises for every good preacher. You listen to the best preachers.

They are profoundly given to reading. Reading, reading. I heard Brother Charles say it in his lectures there that if you're not a reader, you shouldn't preach.

And listen to good preaching and dissect it, critique it. Go back, lots of people very much affected by Brother Charles' message on providence. Go back and look at that.

What was it about that? Maybe you say, well, the many stories that he told. It was filled with many stories. Was that what made it powerful? Well, it was part of it.

Let's talk about that. Illustration. Jesus used illustration all the time.

All you have to do is think about his parables. Charles Spurgeon in his lectures to his students, one whole book. You can get the whole thing in one book today, but it was originally done in smaller volumes.

And one whole original book, I think seven chapters and two appendices given to illustration. He was a master. Again, eight simultaneous thoughts.

I'm sure he had different ones and a photographic memory. That's one of the things about Charles. He can talk about all these stories and give them such detail.

My memory is not... I can't do that. I just cannot remember the detail like Charles can. But when you hear a message like that, look, in one sense you can say, well, if you ask Charles, that was a message that he's preached before.

If you ask Charles about messages that he's preached and re-preached, JNR preached it over and over. If you ask him, does God come sometimes and not at other times? He'll tell you, yeah. Sometimes He has phenomenal liberty and everybody's blessed, and other times it feels much colder and drier.

So much of it has to do with the Spirit of God. But that doesn't take away from putting the work in to have the kind of illustrations and the kind of stories. Brothers, it's just a fact that if you ask people about the sermons that they can remember from ten years ago, volumes could be written on what they can't remember.

But if you even think about what you can remember, if you think about what you can remember from Charles' message, even though it hasn't been even a week yet since you heard it, what stands out? So often, that story is what pins or that illustration is what really nails that truth home and people are able to take it away and they can remember it for years afterwards. Whereas if you just gave the theology of it, you just laid the doctrine out there, they wouldn't grasp it. Now I know, some are more technical, some are more illustrated.

Paul, more technical. Paul was not all flowery with a bunch of pictures. He wasn't.

He thinks like I do. Jesus, He painted with a whole lot more pictures. John, been described as kind of a bee buzzing around a flower.

Kind of circles. Just covers new ground a little bit each time. Just repeats some things, but new things.

Different styles. But illustration takes work. Stories take work.

You don't want to be cheesy. You think about the ones Charles told. They fit.

They fit. They weren't misplaced. They weren't forced.

They helped bring the sense out in a way that was convicting, in a way that was powerful. Let's talk about something else. This is huge.

This comes into play all the time. Notes. What time we got? But notes.

Now guys, I know, I know, I know, I know. It's historically recorded for us. Jonathan Edwards read the manuscript off the page, centers in the hands of an angry God.

The time when it seemed God came and there was a movement. And if you want to use that to justify reading a sermon, I guess more power to you. But I suspect that the average guy is just going to kill his hearers if he does that.

Brother Andy describes what a place looks like when bad preaching takes place. And he says all the people are laid out and it's like the plague came through. That's what you're going to do to most people if you read your sermon directly from the manuscript.

I don't advise that you do that. Here's the thing. Don't let your notes be a distraction to your hearers.

If they are to every degree to which there are distractions presented, it's going to take away what people are able to glean from your preaching. Don't unnecessarily let your notes be a distraction. John Piper writes out his whole manuscript and he says he's able to preach from that manuscript in a way that the people don't know.

How are you able to do that? Well, for one, you put the manuscript together and you put it together recently, so you've got a good idea of the material that's there. So when you glance down, some people have more of a photographic memory. They can look down at a page.

They can see the things in their mind. They put together the manuscript so they know what comes next. They've already developed this whole thing in their mind.

Brothers, Lloyd-Jones, he would say in his preaching and preachers that as you become more and more mature, acclimated to preaching, your notes should grow shorter and shorter and shorter. He was of that mindset. Jim Elliott, I believe his father, stressed that to him.

He was of the same mindset. Shorter and shorter and shorter notes. Many men advise short, brief.

You look at some of Spurgeon's, he had a basic outline and some scribbled notes. In fact, the dentist that we used to use was a dentist from Believer's Fellowship and he has an original page in his office of Spurgeon's notes. And I even knew which sermon it was from.

And it was like, ah, I want that! Anyway, he has it there in his office. That's really a neat thing. Somebody gave him the original notes to one of Spurgeon's.

Brothers, there's nothing in Scripture that says... In the beginning, I wrote mine out. They were such bondage to me, I had to break those shackles. I just started doing an outline.

Then, I started preaching overseas and I recognized when I just had an outline, I couldn't even remember. Story about the man in the store. What's that? I didn't even remember what that is.

And I got to the point where I have to go to India and I've preached 17 times. What am I going to do? Dig out all these fragments of outlines? And it's like, that doesn't do me any good. And I recognized, if I'm going to be asked to preach in other places, I do not have the time to prepare fresh sermons every place I go.

And so, I actually reverted back to doing the whole manuscript, so that if I come to preach the message again 12 months later, I can go read that and it's like, wow, it all comes back to me again. It's never going to be the same twice. I don't preach the manuscript exactly.

Guys, let me say this. There's nothing in Scripture that says you have to have the manuscript. There's nothing that says you have to have an outline.

I think I saw Brother Kevin the first time he spoke at our church on Mephibosheth. Whether he had notes or not, I don't know, but I think he spoke that whole thing without glancing down once. Maybe not.

But brothers, if you can go in the pulpit with no notes, do it. Just don't let it be a distraction. If you're going to take a computer there, don't let it be a distraction.

Don't make Shane read about him. He would write out his... He kind of became convicted that he was being over-reliant on his notes. And he was having a hard time kicking them.

And on the way to the meeting one day, the Lord had him conveniently lose his notes. And he had such liberty that day that he never went back to the old way. But look, there's not a given way.

Just don't let them be a distraction. Brothers, just because you have six points that you carefully studied through does not mean you have to preach your notes. Do not be in bondage to your notes when you go into the pulpit.

So often, especially the preacher who has more of a prophetic gift, there is a spirit that is real. There is a spirit that will take a man's brain into directions that he was not taken in when he sat there in the study. Go with, Al Martin would call it, light on your feet.

Other men may be more comfortable calling it a prophetic utterance. Whatever you want to call it, I guarantee you that you will be given thoughts in the pulpit when you're teaching that you did not have in the study. Look, you have to process things right at the moment.

There may be things that it's just not profitable to go into and say or chase at that moment. You may have to show some kind of discipline, especially if you're a guy like Spurgeon who's got eight simultaneous thoughts. You've got to have some discipline there.

You can't be just going for all eight of them all the time, which produces another eight on each one. That's endless. But there is a place to be guided by the Spirit.

There is a place. I know this, that some preachers have said that when people come to them and tell them about the portion of their message that was most profound and impacting on them, oftentimes it's not the portion of the message that they studied in the study. It's the part where God just gave them liberty when they're out there.

Do not be bound to your notes. There is nothing that says while you're preaching you've got six points there, you can't drop three of them. Sometimes I just get the point, this guy should finish.

But I recognize he's bound to his notes. He studied them and he feels like now he's got to go all the way through to the end. You do not have to do that.

Your notes are your notes. They're not inspired. It's not what God told you you exactly have to go preach when you take the Bible study or when you take the exhortation.

Don't be afraid to skip whole chunks of your notes. Don't be afraid to leave them all together. Could it be, Brother Tim, that say if you've got a guy where you're studying, say the text he's dealing with, the verses

he's dealing with, and he could form out what he's going to talk about in his mind, but he can't lay it down on paper.

You know what I mean? Like he can't structure it to where he gives it an outline or whatever, write out a manuscript, but he knows the concept of what he's going to talk about, and then he just goes and... That's fine. You know, some are more ordered. I would probably say that to find a three-point Reformed sermon in Peter's preaching, not happening.

You know, if you want to preach a three-point message with application at the end, and God uses you powerfully to do that, great. My wife likes to take notes. And so she likes it well-ordered.

Her greatest criticism of my preaching over the years is that I don't have more distinct points. Some guys like to start them all with the same letter or they all end in Y. I don't, quite honestly, I do not put that kind of effort into my sermons. Lloyd-Jones was totally against people taking notes.

And one of the main reasons was he believed in the work of the Spirit. And he believed that if you're taking notes, you may be writing and you may be concerned with what you're writing and miss what's being said right after what you're recording has been said. Something else is being said that you need to hear, but since you're writing, you missed it.

He was of the mindset, sit there and listen to the whole thing and let the Spirit do His work. Quite honestly, even the people that take notes, who in the world goes back and looks at the notes again? It's like we are being confronted by such a regular flow of preaching, why would you even need to go back to the notes again? And in this day, when you can just listen to it again, I don't get it. But some people, that's how it registers with them.

I would never condemn the practice, but I think Lloyd-Jones I think had maybe some good things to think about there. Do you think that how you handled the whole note thing could be a matter of faith? It can be. It can be a matter of trusting the Lord.

I just ask because evangelistically when I've gone out and preached like on the street, there has been that more like I had a text or I had a point, but I didn't have all these things and there was something there that was different. But with notes, sometimes I can ski towards being like I don't want to stray from these notes because I'm scared that I might say something that I didn't plan that actually might not... I just don't want to err in what I say. I don't want to out in the street either, but there's a feeling of fear.

Some men need notes because without them, they are so unstructured and they will go everywhere. And so, again, each one of us have to think about how we're wired, the way God has made us, the way we think, the way we process, the spiritual gift that God has given, what works, what doesn't work, and seek to use that to the full. I mean, what we're wanting to do is bring home the truth of God's Word to people and we want to be going somewhere.

We want to be making a point. We do need to be asking is there a logical flow? I mean, are we building towards something? Are we making a case towards something? Is the message just random? Again, you guys that have heard the leadership training sessions, you know that he speaks about these guys over in the Far East that preach and it's like, well, they speak about baptism, a little bit about marriage. He said it's like one of those big old pots they throw all this food in and you might have a pig eye or you might have a piece of corn cob or whatever.

It's just all in there. And it's like some preachers are like that. It's like they're all over the place.

It's like, well, what are we talking about? Where are we going? Where is this moving? I mean, is there a thrust? Is there a direction? Is there application? How does this impact my life? I mean, the thing is, we're up there to be bringing, again, this comes back to the passivity thing. We want to lay hold on men's consciences. We want to lay hold on men that like Lloyd-Jones says, where men can never be the same again after they've heard this.

We want to press home truths from the Word of God. These are the questions we need to be asking of the message. Am I going somewhere? Am I actually preaching the text? Am I glorifying God? Am I bringing God out big and putting down man's pride? Is this thing full of Christ? Am I pointing to Christ? Am I exalting Christ? Is it just full? You may remember this.

Spurgeon says you remember the story of the old minister who heard a sermon by a young man. And when he was asked by the preacher what he thought of it, it was rather slow to answer, but at last he said, if I must tell you, I did not like it at all. Now can you imagine that as a young preacher? You go to the seasoned old guy.

You imagine one of you guys preaching. You go to Charles or Mac and they say, well, to tell you the truth, I didn't like your sermon at all. You'd never forget that.

There was no Christ in your sermon. No, answered the young man, because I did not see that Christ was in the text. Oh, said the old minister, but do you not know that from every little town and village and tiny hamlet in England, there is a road leading to London? Whenever I get hold of a text, I say to myself, there is a road from here to Jesus Christ and I mean to keep on His track until I get to Him.

Well, said the young man, but suppose you're preaching from a text that says nothing about Christ. Then I will go over hedge and ditch, but what I will get at Him. So must we do, brethren? We must have Christ in all our discourses, whatever else is in or not in them.

There ought to be enough of the Gospel in every sermon to save a soul. I would just say this, if you're ever preaching through something expositively, the specific text you may be dealing with may not have the name of Christ in it, but I guarantee within about three verses either way from that one, He is there. Look, when you're preaching expositively, that doesn't mean you're limited just to this one phrase or to this one passage.

You have to bring in the fullness of the context. You have to know where the author is going to know where you should be going in the sermon that you preach. There needs to be Christ here.

You know the truth. That is, people behold the glory of the Lord. They're transformed from one degree of glory.

We need to be showing them Christ. We need to be asking ourselves, when I get done preaching this, is it really going to help people understand the Bible better? Am I really helping people? Am I really bringing out something that is going to have application to their life? Does it promote worship? Does it promote awe? Does it promote holiness? Does it promote obedience? Does it shake the unconverted? These are questions that we have to be asking. Is it clear? Is what I'm aiming at clear? Are people following me? They have an idea about where I'm going? What case I'm trying to make here? Is it clear? Brethren, I remember one time when we were meeting over at the restaurant, I was just around the corner there

where the side door is, and I had walked up to that corner, and there was like a plant or bricks that made up like a planter, and I think I was standing on those.

It was like kind of an old part of a fence there. And I came up to the corner, and I looked around, and there were two ladies there. They were ladies that I don't believe were Christians.

They were from the east side. They were down by the light pole there. And I heard the lady say to the other one, you know why I like coming to this church? I can understand what they say here.

And I thought, that's what you want people to be able to say. It's clear enough that they understand what you're saying. What else? One more thing here.

Let's talk about commentaries and sermons from other people. Use them. Don't preach them.

Guys, when you go in the pulpit, be yourself. God has given you gifts. We can sit at the feet of others.

We can learn from others. But you are you, and be yourself in the pulpit. Because again, it's kind of like the guy that puts on the cadence in his inflections or whatever.

They can just be obstacles. If people don't think they're hearing you, if you're coming across in a way that just makes people feel like there's not reality here. This guy is saying what he's heard.

He hasn't really lived these things out. Brothers, there is a glory in the Gospel. There is a glory in the God of Scripture.

There is a glory in the Christ of Scripture. You can go sit at the feet of other men, but when you're in the study, you want to so pray and be in the Word and expose yourself to the thoughts of other men to get to the glory. You want to come out of the study having been basking in the glory.

If you have, you're going to stand in that pulpit. You're going to share that glory with other people. That's what you're after.

You want to be believable from the pulpit. Like, this guy really believes what he's saying. This guy has experienced what he's saying.

If they've got this feeling like, it's not really him. When I hear him speak, that's not him speaking. That's Spurgeon speaking.

When I hear him, that's not his natural tone. That's not the way he speaks. That's not the vocabulary he uses.

Who is this guy? I feel like I'm hearing somebody else. Again, I'm just saying, be careful that there's no obstacle. Brethren, every time I am going to preach, I look forward to being able to be a student and sit at the feet of somebody who I just really highly appreciate.

I like that. I like being able to sit at the feet of men who are more gifted than me, who God has given great insights into Scripture. I love to learn.

And so every time I'm going to preach, that's where I go. But you know, when I put together the sermon, I really only want to put the things in that sermon that have been real to me and that have been powerful and that I have felt a measure of glory about and that seem essential to the Word and has come home

with conviction to my own heart is essential from that text and it needs to be said. If you haven't felt it, if you haven't known the glory of it, you're just going to be a scribe in that pulpit.

All you're going to do is you're going to mouth the words of somebody else. You're going to mouth these dry words. You're just going to say stuff and there's going to be no reality and no glory to the people.

The study is not just merely an intellectual exercise. It is that. But it's more than that.

Your study should be the place seriously. If you go into the study and you don't find such things to thrill your souls as to roll out of your chair on your face from time to time, you're just not getting it. I mean, there are such things in this book as to cause us to fall on our face.

And if you're really feeling the impact of it... See, if you've been in the study and you've seen such glories in this book and in the truths of the Gospel, it caused you to fall on your face in the study, that's the guy I want to listen to when he goes in the pulpit. And I know we're different. We have different personalities in how we respond and whether we weep or whether we shout or whether we fall on our face or whatever it may look like.

But I want a guy that's going to stand up there that has experienced reality in the truths of this book that he's going to stand up and preach about. Pray. Pray through it all.

Pray for that reality. Pray for the work of the Spirit in preaching. You're just dead in the water if the Spirit doesn't help you.

Okay, brothers, I think we finished relatively close to two hours. Any other last questions before we close? Yeah, can you comment as to whether there is a difference between a Bible study and a sermon? Is there a difference between a Bible study and a sermon? And that might be like even going into this realm of is there a difference between a teacher and a preacher? I believe that there are... I mean, you cannot study your New Testaments but that you come away with this idea that there are different kinds of speaking gifts. I mean, you have apostles, and you have prophets, and you have evangelists, pastor, perhaps pastor-teacher or pastors and teachers.

You find this idea of exhortation. You find this idea of a word of knowledge, a word of wisdom. Paul will use preaching and teaching or preacher and teacher in the same verse.

Now, is he just simply being synonymous? Sometimes he uses a third word that isn't synonymous with those two. And so does he mean those two to be synonymous or is he speaking about actually two different categories? We can wrestle through these realities, but we do know this. There are different speaking gifts.

And every man is going to have different flavors of the gifting. There's going to be different strengths and different weaknesses in every man. You know that.

You know that David Butterbaugh is basically a man who is well-read in the commentaries. He's going to stand there. You don't get the feeling like he's necessarily quoting commentaries, but you get the sense that it's David Butterbaugh in his style that is telling you and his message is a study that is coming forth very heavily from what he got from the commentaries.

You listen to a sermon by Paul Washer, you get the sense of a man that's very prophetic. And he's not quoting other men. And he's explosive and dangerous and always speaking unexpected things and he can go off at any time.

You listen to a John MacArthur and he is very studied, very orderly, very systematic. His style is, to some people, they think preaching is like when you raise your voice to a certain level. You know, we know that different preachers are different.

You can listen to Lloyd-Jones. You can listen to Piper. You can listen to any number of different men in our church that stand in the pulpit and you recognize everybody's different.

And is there a difference between a Bible study? Well, you know what? You can get a guy in a Bible study that preaches like he's preaching on a Sunday morning. Or you can get a guy in the Sunday morning service, Sunday school or whatever, who speaks as though you're in a classroom. Right or wrong? I don't think it's... Are there differences? There's oftentimes differences in the way different men will do things.

I mean, even the same guy can preach at a certain time or at another time. He can go more into a teaching mode perhaps if we can call it that, where maybe there's less distinct application. Different men, the same men, can do things different depending on how they're dealing with different things or in different scenarios.

And then different men themselves are wired differently. And I guess I would just say this, no matter which one of these environments we find ourselves in, our obligation is to preach the Word. Proclaim the Word.

We have a responsibility to set forth the truth that's found in that book. Now, one man might set forth that truth without bringing a whole lot of application to what he's setting forth. Or another man might be a whole lot more practical in applying what's been said.

Other men may be far more prophetic. You say, what do you mean by that? I mean where they're speaking the right word in season. They've got insights into what the church needs.

The Spirit leads them into saying certain things at just the right time. They've got an ability to look into passages and see something beyond what other men can see. Well, we recognize that variety of gifting.

So I would just say, yeah, there definitely can be differences, but perhaps there aren't differences either. And is there anything in Scripture that tells us, well, if I'm actually just having a Bible study... One thing about Bible studies is they do tend to be more intimate where those of you men that have had Bible studies here, or even like this homiletics thing, it's more open to question. You know, it's a different format than what we would take.

Typically, people don't raise their hand on a Sunday morning. It's happened. But typically, it doesn't happen.

Why, do you have any thoughts on that? Well, no, if you were going to do a Bible study say on Romans 5.1 and a sermon on Romans 5.1, would they be the same message? See, I would probably look at it a little bit different from that. I would probably look at it more like when we do the APTs on Tuesdays. It would be more like I'm probably going to address things on Tuesday that are different from what I would want to address.

I want to address the flow of Ephesians, the argument of Paul, that which he's bringing out concerning the Gospel. And that's basically an expositional movement through a whole book. Whereas on a Tuesday night, I would have a tendency to be far more topical where somebody asked a question concerning head coverings.

So now it's going to be a topical approach that quite honestly, if for some reason I thought it was necessary to bring a message on head coverings at our church, that's the way I would approach it. They would look a whole lot alike. Why? Because on Tuesday, if I'm dealing with head coverings, I'm going to be dealing with what's going on there? What's the meaning behind it apparently? Obviously, you have to deal with what is it for today? The very questions that I would want to answer in a Tuesday study, I would also think they would be the exact same questions you would ask and want to answer if it was being preached as a sermon.

I would say the big difference for me would be generally, I'm not going to go preach on the subject of head coverings at an 11 o'clock service. But that would be something to deal with for maybe 20 minutes on a Tuesday Bible study. So I think it's kind of there where it's got to do with what material I personally would deem appropriate for one setting or the other.

Anybody else have any thoughts? Just real quick, you were kind of mentioning about all the speaking gifts. I find that so much of what you've said here applies to evangelism as well. Yeah, evangelism is one of the speaking gifts.

And so, Lloyd-Jones' wife said she felt like he was primarily an evangelist. Now, I don't know what Spurgeon's wife ever said about him, but all you have to do is look at his preaching to know this guy was an evangelist. And yeah, God wires different people.

You know, one of the things that Brother Paul Washer has said is he told me one time that he feels far more comfortable preaching in Nepal to ten pastors on a dirt floor than to come like in the setting of a big conference here where there's a bunch of young guys that track him around all the time. He really feels like much of his calling is to go into churches like Southern Baptist churches that don't have good theology and need change and need help and need revival and need reform to go in there rather than to come like to our conference here. And so I think different men are wired differently.

I think different men have different gifts and we need to give ourselves. We don't want to try to be something that God has not made us. We want to try to refine and stir up and fan into flame the gifts that God has given, not constantly trying to be what God hasn't made us.

There is a way God has made us. And when we try to stir up what God has given us, it's stirrable. When you try to stir up what's true of another man but not true of you, you'll never do it.

You can pine after and long after and desire after being like somebody else, but if God hasn't made you like them, it doesn't matter how much you want it, you will never be them. And that can happen as a preacher. We become really impressed by the way another preacher does something.

But when you try to be like him or do like him, it's failure. It's utter failure. Because you're just not wired the same.

Right? Yeah, don't do it. Better off you go out with your sling and your stone. What you're used to.

What you're accustomed to. But okay guys, I know we haven't covered everything in depth as maybe it could be, but these are definitely some things to think about. There's undoubtedly more.

Like I said before, you want a rich dose. You want to go deeper. Gardener's Spring, Power of Preaching, Lectures to My Students, Spurgeon, Preaching and Preachers.

Anyway, those are three places to definitely start. Really valuable thoughts. You read those three books, you will not have regrets.

That's time well spent. Father, I pray, help us Lord, help us. We're dependent on You to be faithful.

We're dependent on You to empower. We're dependent on You to show us the meaning of Your Word. We're dependable upon You, Lord, to get to the end of this life and actually if there's any fruit, if there's any good thing that we've done from the pulpit, if there's anything that is commendable, that is praiseworthy, Lord, what do we have that we have not received from You? We know it comes from You.

And Lord, we know that if we're to be fruitful, if we're to bear much fruit in speaking, Lord, it must come from You. We need Your help. If there's going to be a demonstration of the Spirit in power, that power doesn't come from us.

That Spirit doesn't come from us. That's outside us. That's our desperate need in this hour.

And we ask You for it. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.

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