



BAYLOR TRUETT SEMINARY

Kyle Lake Center for Effective Preaching

Winter 2015

7 Actions to Help You Improve Your Preaching

Welcome to the first edition of The Kyle Lake Center for Effective Preaching's *The Preacher's Briefing*. All of us know that there are many great resources out there, but who among us has the time to search them out and read them all?

Enter *The Preacher's Briefing*. Each quarter we curate a list of summarized articles that are especially focused on the preaching task. *The Preacher's Briefing* will feature helpful hints, tips, and stories that will help feed your creative side and serve as potential fodder for your future sermons.

One of the articles in this edition features Hal Seed, founding pastor and lead pastor of New Song Community Church in Oceanside, California. Hal shares 7 actions that have helped him improve his preaching. It is a quick, but valuable read. Here are 3 things that caught my eye:

First, write out a full manuscript: While many push back on this, Seed argues that "Writing a full manuscript will force you to choose your thoughts carefully, deal with transitions, and tailor the length of your message to the time allotted. Even if you don't take the full manuscript with you on stage, the discipline of thinking through every word before you get on stage will improve your word choice."

Second, never preach a first draft: Get in the habit of pre-preaching your sermon to a small group no later than Friday. If you can't get a group together, preach it to yourself (out loud) two or three times. Average preachers are often impressed by the effortlessness of great preachers. Great words just seem to flow out of them. I know a few of those great preachers. The truth is, the words just flow out of them because they have poured over their manuscript beforehand.

Finally, get to bed: Rested preachers are better preach-

ers. Go to bed early on Saturday nights. Your brain will work better, your heart will be lighter, and your motives will be more Spirit-led. It's hard to be godly when you're exhausted! You want a full night's sleep, and you want to go to bed in close communion with the Holy Spirit, with God's Word and your sermon foremost in your mind.

That's just a taste of Seed's exhortation. Common sense, you say? Yes, but is it common practice?

Some articles will remind us of things we already know. Some will present fresh, new ideas to spur your thinking. Some will be stories from real life that you'll want to file away for future use (there's an article on how to easily do this as well). Whatever the article or story, it has been chosen with the preaching task in mind.

Personally, I have benefited greatly from this first edition. Our prayer is that you will too and you will become a regular reader and share the news about it with others. We believe that *The Preacher's Briefing* will be an invaluable

tool as you prepare your sermons and stay connected with the Kyle Lake Center for Effective Preaching. So, my preaching colleagues, *Tolle Lege*. Take and read!

Yours for more effective preaching!

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College Student Hid Depression on Social Media

Madison Holleran always presented her best side on Instagram. The University of Pennsylvania student had been a regular in the local paper because of her dominance in track and field, and she always seemed to have lots of friends. However, Holleran was hiding a deep struggle with depression, and the college student took her life one evening by jumping off the top of a parking garage. A recent survey found that 74% of girls think that Instagram is used to present yourself as "cooler" or "better" than you really are. Few people saw Holleran's depression based on her social media posts.

Source: <http://es.pn/1bV2Os1> | ESPN

North Korean Orphan Found Help at Buildings with a Cross

Joseph Kim grew up in North Korea and had a happy childhood until a famine in 1995 killed his father and prompted his mother to sell his sisters as child brides in China. When authorities captured his mother crossing the border to China, Kim was left without a family and escaped to China. No one would help him until someone told him to look for a building with a cross. At several churches the believers, who were living in virtual poverty, took great risks to give him money, food, and shelter due to laws that forbade taking in North Koreans. Kim eventually received asylum in America.

Source: <http://bit.ly/1J3fTfP> | Christianity Today

Two Sisters Unite Despite Differences Over Same Sex Marriage

Sisters Elizabeth Corey and Mary Campbell co-write in an essay that they disagree over same sex marriage and LGBT relationships. However, they have found they still have much more in common than not, and they can enjoy each other despite their differences. They both write that their friends can't understand how they have such a positive relationship, but they are able to see each other separately from the larger social issues between them.

Source: <http://theatlntc/1LJ77U5> | The Atlantic

College Student Wants to Rent Family for Birthday

After growing up in foster care, Natalie Carson, 19, had spent far too many birthdays alone. So the Colorado college student turned to Craigslist and posted an ad asking to rent a family for her birthday celebration. So far the ad has resulted in several offers from families who want to accompany her for her birthday.

Source: <http://bit.ly/1SUgsAs> | Turn to 23

Tears Of Grief, Change and Laughter Are Different On A Molecular Level

New research, explained by Henry Cloud, shows that all the tears we shed are not created equal on the most basic of levels. Tears of grief, change, laughter and even those shed as a result of cutting onions are as drastically different under a microscope as the situations that draw them from our eyes.

Source: <http://bit.ly/1RRQgg8> | Willow Creek Association Blog

Parents Grieve Stillborn Babies

The parents of stillborn babies shared their stories in a recent article for the New York Times, and the majority shared that few people truly understand what the parents of stillborn children go through. Many of the comments and attempts at sympathy were more hurtful. These parents wrote that parents of stillborn children need time to grieve and to be with their children. They also had the acute pain of noiseless birth that is difficult for anyone outside their experiences to imagine.

Source: <http://nyti.ms/1E4MYD3> | NY Times

Seattle Seahawks Offer Uniquely Positive Message

The NFL usually focuses on turning boys into men and treating mistakes harshly with shouting and demands to improve. However, the Seattle Seahawks have taken a more encouraging approach where players are offered instruction and correction, but they are not berated and swearing is extremely rare. Coach Pete Carroll believes that the players don't have to prove they are men, but he treats them as men and expects them to meet that standard.

Source: <http://nyti.ms/1isuPLd> | NY Times

100-Year-Old Track Star Committed to Practicing

Don Pellman has consistently broken records for men in the 100 and over age group for shot put, discus, and long jump in the San Diego Senior Olympics. During the most recent Senior Olympics, Pellman was particularly frustrated that he wasn't able to score better in the long jump, and walked away committing to keep practicing. Pellman currently holds five world records in his age group.

Source: <http://nyti.ms/1NMObyg> | NY Times

Charles and Andy Stanley's Road to Reconciliation

When Charles Stanley faced the divorce of his wife Anna, many members of his church turned against him, calling for him to resign. When his son Andy, on staff at a satellite campus, suggested that he let his church decide on his future, he felt betrayed, while Andy believed he was offering the only path to end the ongoing conflict. The two were hardly on speaking terms with each other, but they continued to meet for dinner every week, saw a counselor, and kept inviting each other to their respective churches.

Source: <http://cnn.it/1QFvhR7> | CNN

Baylor Student Raises \$5,000 for Classmate

When Baylor University freshman Taylor Ernst saw fellow freshman Tony Zhang struggling to get to class with a walker due to his struggles with cerebral palsy, he offered Zhang a ride and found him to be extremely positive and encouraging. Ernst launched a GoFundMe fundraiser in order to buy a scooter for Zhang. The fundraiser surpassed the \$750 goal with over \$5,000 that covered the scooter's cost and will be put toward other special needs students at Baylor.

Source: <http://bit.ly/1Lh1x1s> | KWTX



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Upcoming Events

January 2-5, 2016

National Festival of Young Preachers – Co-sponsor for this Academy of Preachers event in Lexington, KY.

February 2, 2016

Spring Pastor of the Day featuring Dr. Bill Shiell, First Baptist Church, Tallahassee, FL

February 29-March 1, 2016

Annual E. K. Bailey Conference featuring Dr. Melvin Von Wade of the Mount Moriah Missionary Baptist Church, Inc., Los Angeles, CA.

March 29, 2016

Spring Pastor of the Day featuring Dr. Preston Clegg, Second Baptist Church, Little Rock, AR

Spring 2016

The Preacher's Workshop webinar continues featuring Dr. Joel Gregory with a discussion of sermon illustrations for preaching.

Are You Giving Visitors a Reason to Return?

When your church welcomes visitors, are you offering them a typical church experience or are you going beyond their expectations for your message and the welcome they receive in a service? Chris Huff writes that he was recently so impressed by the attentiveness and information provided at his local recycling center that he even added their contact information into his phone.

Source: <http://bit.ly/1P4alj9> | Chris Huff

The Place of the Coffee Break

The coffee break caught on in the early 1900's as packaged coffee and coffee makers became mainstream and the labor movement won rights for workers. As coffee breaks became common in both factories and professional offices, the coffee break became a valuable time to blow off steam, gossip, and connect with co-workers. By the 1960's experts were extolling the virtues of the coffee break.

Source: <http://bit.ly/1QL5YgN> | City Lab

Political Power Couple Left Politics in the Office

Jake Brewer was a prominent member of Change.org and White House Staffer, while Katharine Ham wrote for conservative news outlets. The two met while doing their jobs for opposing sides, but didn't let that stop them from dating and marrying. The two made a point of leaving their work at the office. Brewer recently passed away when he crashed his motorcycle during a charity ride, leaving Ham pregnant with their child who is due in December.

Source: <http://wapo.st/1RrfxSY> | Washington Post

Neighbors Harvest 450 Acres for Farmer With Terminal Cancer

Carl Bates didn't have much time left to live after fighting a battle with terminal cancer, his 450 acres of corn remained unharvested, a necessary income for his family. So, 40 of his neighbors sprung into action and using 10 combines, 12 grain carts, and 16 semi-trucks they did the job Carl couldn't finish to show support for the Bates family.

Source: <http://bit.ly/1Oo7B6v> | Fox 59

When In China... Wear a Bean Sprout On Your Head

No one can pin point exactly where it started, but wearing plastic bean sprouts, clovers, flowers and other vegetation on one's head has become a huge trend in China. "This shows that in China now we'll try almost anything that we see on the Internet," said college student Wang Hao, while wearing a green clover on his head. "Nobody knows what it means, but we do it anyway."

Source: <http://nyti.ms/1Ooeyo8> | The New York Times

Harvard Debate Team Beaten By Inmates

The scene? A debate in New York. The opponents? A team from Harvard vs three violent offenders from New York's maximum-security Eastern Correctional Facility. The Topic? The future of undocumented students in America. The winners? The inmates. The Bard Prison initiative offers inmates a thorough collegiate experience in hopes of changing the trajectory of their future... and it seems to be working.

Source: <http://bit.ly/1R1H8ta> | CityLab

Pastors Offer Support To Umpqua Students

Pastors in Roseburg, OR are understandably experiencing an huge influx of pastoral duties after last week's shooting at Umpqua Community College. Pastors and Counselors spent last Thursday with stu-

dents offering prayer and counseling. "I'm a human being, and so I'm angry," he said. "But I also feel the love of God for the shooter's family and the shooter himself" said local pastor Jerry Smart.

Source: <http://bit.ly/1R1leoE> | Christianity Today



PREACHING TIPS

Keep Track of Sermon Stories and Notes on Evernote

If you're struggling to keep track of stories, notes, and illustrations for your sermons, then Evernote may be the tool you've been looking for. Evernote can run on your computer, tablet, or smart phone and stores all of your information in the cloud so that you never have to worry about transferring information. You can use as many tags as you like for your notes, which makes it easy to dig up notes and illustrations for sermons on specific topics.

Source: <http://bit.ly/1be5oK5> | The Christian Standard

The Most Effective Ways to Improve Your Sermon

By preparing your sermon's first draft three weeks in advance or at least by the Wednesday before you preach, you'll give yourself lots of time to make additions. Never preach a first draft, but give yourself enough time to write out the entire sermon so you can focus on transitions and any other details, especially your main points. You don't have to take the whole manuscript up when you preach. Listen to other preachers and visit other churches to get a sense of how they preach.

Source: <http://bit.ly/1F4KeEE> | Ministry Today

Who Is Responsible for Evangelism's Results?

Liz Curtis Higgs shared that preachers can feel like failures if no one comes forward to be saved after preaching a message. She noted that she has learned that she can get in the way that God wants to love people. Preachers let the love of God flow out to others, but pastors do not lead people to Christ. God calls people to himself as pastors encourage them and are present to love them.

Source: <http://bit.ly/1e20twM> | Church Central

Can Serious People Use Humor in a Sermon?

Pastors who aren't used to telling jokes can include humorous stories in their sermons provided they follow a simple rule: tell stories about a personal mistake or misconception. If you make yourself the punchline of the story, you'll make an immediate connection with your audience as they relate to your struggles. In addition, this avoids putting anyone else on the spot or embarrassing them.

Source: <http://bit.ly/1e20QY8> | Crosswalk

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The Keys for Using Sermon Illustrations

Sermon illustrations should draw on familiar stories and examples for a particular audience. The best illustrations require very little explanation or context since they are so well known by everyone in an audience. Illustrations should explain a biblical principle while engaging a listener's imagination. This is especially important for the people who learn visually or will be more likely to relate to a story than principles.

Source: <http://bit.ly/1PM1nW> | Pastors.com

Tips for Effective Sermons

The most effective sermons focus on the here and now, simplify difficult concepts, and invite listeners to make a decision rather than indicting others. It's tempting for preachers to focus on what's wrong, to emphasize Biblical background, or preach in ways that unintentionally leave people confused or feeling like outsiders.

Source: <http://bit.ly/1DcN68O> | Dan Reiland

How to Improve Your Preaching

While most preachers who attended seminary learned to watch videos of themselves, few continue to do this. However, this can be one of the most important sources of feedback for improving your preaching. Pay careful attention to how people listen while you speak, ask for feedback while planning your sermon, and ask others to evaluate your sermon on occasion. You can also follow up each week to see if anyone remembers what you preached about the previous week.

Source: <http://bit.ly/1MWz9f3> | Thom Rainer

How to Include Scripture Reading in Your Service

Before the sermon begins, churches can place a higher emphasis on public scripture reading as a way of teaching members to read scripture on their own and to provide an important time of meditation and quiet before the sermon begins. From training readers to working with artists, churches can elevate the role of scripture during the service by making scripture a special moment of reflection in community.

Source: <http://bit.ly/1MWAX7O> | Christianity Today

How to Evaluate Your Sermons

On Monday morning take a few moments to review your sermon. Ask whether your personal ticks were distracting and if your overall tone was loving and communicated concern for your listeners. Look at the way you presented to biblical story, making sure that you provided the context for it and then provided your own illustrations and takeaway points.

Source: <http://bit.ly/1NT6jyO> | Facts and Trends

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How Do Preachers Improve?

Preachers can improve their sermons by reading books on preaching, watching other top preachers, recording themselves for critique later, and asking staff or family members for honest feedback. Preachers can also include brief questions in the following week's sermon about what attendees may have learned, follow up with staff for feedback, or even ask for more formal evaluations. Lastly, preachers will improve their messages by including others in their preparation in order to provide fresh ideas and feedback.

Source: <http://bit.ly/1FA68Hg> | Facts and Trends

How to Speak to Large and Small Crowds

When you're speaking in front of a large crowd, allow time for people to laugh or respond and minimize your subtle comments or gestures. For smaller crowds you can be a bit more flexible and subtle with your talk. Regardless of the audience size, have fun and focus on a few key people who are having fun and are engaged with what you're saying.

Source: <http://bit.ly/1iliuCE> | Jon Acuff



PREACHING RESOURCES

New Book Unites Pastors and Theologians

Gerald Hiestand and Todd Wilson write in *The Pastor Theologian: Resurrecting an Ancient Vision* that the church has experienced a tragic disconnect between pastors and theologians. Too often churches have made the mistake of dividing the work of theologians from the ministry of pastors, and they suggest while not every pastor is called to be a theologian, it should be an office in the church that is recognized and supported.

Source: <http://bit.ly/1hOxZbX> | Christianity Today

Christians Played Key Role in the Labor Movement

The labor movement in the late 1800's was largely opposed by the church at first. However, a large movement of Christian workers believed that their faith was compatible with the labor movement. These Christian workers gradually won over the clergy and brought greater acceptance to the social gospel, and their story is documented in *Union Made: Working People and the Rise of Social Christianity in Chicago*, Valparaiso University by historian Heath W. Carter.

Source: <http://bit.ly/1RrgKtw> | Religion Dispatches

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