

# Integrative Preaching Sermon Planning Form

**Preacher** a person gifted and called

**Date** a specific date

**Text** a biblical text

**Theme** Express the message in a single, simple, memorable proposition.

## Instruct - Theme

Now that the listeners are engaged through the story, the second move is to establish the theme through careful instruction from the Bible. The theme is the sermon's center tentpole around which all the other elements are organized.

Instruction addresses problems (human) by means of points (heaven) through use of a profound theme statement. A great theme puts the point to the problem, explaining the relevant scriptures so that the mind of God is known. This is both pastoral and theological work.

Express the theme in as few words as possible (less than nine). Write a complete statement (subject plus complement) that can be stated and repeated in the sermon. Eliminate conjunctions. The result should be something that can be proclaimed and that demands a response.

Develop the theme through a rational argument that displays and explains the biblical text to people. This instruction will develop logically, perhaps through a numbered set of subpoints.

Establish the point, then show how it serves to solve the problem (deduction), or start with the problem and develop the point so that the truth becomes self-evident (induction). Either way, discipline the material so that there is nothing unnecessary to the listener's clarity about and appreciation

## Convict - Gospel

Having established the theme through careful instruction, the sermon now moves toward its climax. Preaching is practiced in the presence of God. It is not enough to know the message. We must be convicted by and deepened in conviction of the truth.

Conviction is the place where the point (head) is put to prayer (heart). This is theological work that leads to worship in God's presence. Information about God leads to an encounter with God.

The underlying truth of every text and theme is the Christian gospel. Every sermon must somehow culminate in the preaching of the cross. This does not necessarily require explicit expression of the gospel narrative, but it does mean that we will always find the place where grace applies.

Identify the place the sermon pinches on the listener's conscience. Why are we struggling to attend to this? Shift to the listener's voice and speak directly to God. What must we say to him, co

## Engage - Story

Our first move is to capture the listener's attention. This cannot be assumed. The most effective way to engage listeners is by telling a compelling story that sets them up to hear the sermon theme.

Engagement happens as we struggle with problems (head) and are captured by pictures (heart). A good story works to paint a picture of a problem. The story grounds the sermon in human life, starting with the listener's subjective experience, before moving to an objective appreciation for the truth.

Find the place where our story connects with their story (the story in the text) and overlaps with his story, the grand story of God's engagement with his people across time.

Shape the telling of the story so that it prepares people to hear the big idea of the sermon.

Imagine ways you can bring the story to life so that it engages the listener both cognitively (head) and a

## Inspire - Mission

The final move of the sermon is to inspire the people to engage in mission. Having met with God, we feel compelled to respond to God in ways consequent to the theme.

Inspiration rises up from prayer (heaven) and results in an altered picture of the future (human). This is where the worshipper becomes a prophet. We gain a vision of what the world could be as we embody God's intention.

Describe a vision of how this investment of time and energy will change us going forward. What will we do with this, perhaps even in this immediate moment? Could we paint a picture of the difference? Could we describe it so that the picture motivates us? Or could we offer an example of someone or some situation that well describes the intended application of this sermon?

Our mission will be fueled by grace. Do not motivate by means of fear or guilt or hype.

God is on mission and so are his people. The sermon serves the trajectory of the Kingdom, advancing the purposes of God until Christ returns. We are looking for more than merely moral application (read the Bible more, pray more, be a better person...). We are looking to describe specific, concrete, measurable ways that we can fulfill the missio dei as it touches on the specific aspects related to this sermon text and theme.