

Worksheet for Sermon Preparation

Having chosen the reading you are to preach on, live with the text starting early in your week. As you study it, prayerfully look for two things in the text: A. The human struggle – struggling with faith in God, struggling with guilt and the need for forgiveness, struggling with loneliness, struggles which most of us experience. B. Look in the text for the divine desire - what God wills for you. This might include His acceptance, His forgiveness, His presence in your life, and/or a deeper hope for the future.

I. The Lead

Choose and name the human struggle you find in the text and how God responds to it, in the person of Jesus.

Find a story. This could be a new story or a story from your own experience. Alternatively, it could be words from a song or a reading that illustrates the human struggle you have found in the text. This is your lead. What your lead is intended to do is to arouse in your listeners a connection between their human struggles and what God's word says about His will for them.

II. The Lection

Retell the story, often the gospel story, in a way that illustrates the human struggle and how Jesus responds to that struggle in the text. Be faithful to the text by checking a good commentary so that you interpret it correctly.

III. The Leaven

Extract, from your telling of the text, two or three illustrations of how the same grace that happens to the people in the text can happen for us as well. This is your take-home. It is the application of the human struggle to God's word and the transformation that results. The leavening is the work of the Holy Spirit. It is the weary being sustained, supported and strengthened by a word from God.

A simple form for this leavening is to ask questions of the text. First, what does it tell us about God? Second, what does it tell us about us, our human condition? And thirdly, what does it tell us to do? What action or decision can we make? Each of these needs to be illustrated.

IV The Lock

This is your summary of the sermon. It is restating your key points – something of the human struggle – something of God's will for our lives – His love acceptance and grace. Conclude with a challenge to do something, i.e. "And now as we come to the Lord's table we can pray, "Father I need you; I need your grace and mercy."