

The Eight-Hour Sermon
Mary Hinkle Shore
Luther Seminary

Workshop Objective:

To imagine sermon preparation in four moments, each taking about two to three hours. The four moments are discovery, development, design, delivery.

Discovery

Reading the Text

To keep you busy while waiting for inspiration:

Zooming In

- Tracing Action & Argument
- Comparing Translations
- Comparing Similar Texts

Looking Around

- Words
- Time
- Place
- Characters

Zooming Out

- Big Picture (looking at contexts)
- Doing Something Creative

Reading about the Text

Some standbys:

- Craddock, Fred, et al. *Preaching through the Christian Year*. Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press, Int'l, 1992-94.
- The Text this Week (www.textweek.com).
- ATLA Serials. Your seminary may offer free access to alums.
- *New Interpreter's Bible*. 12 vols. Nashville: Abingdon, 1994-2004.
- <http://www.workingpreacher.com> A resource from Luther Seminary Center for Biblical Preaching.

Development

Play with the Discoveries

Mind Mapping

Software (or pencil and paper) can help you scribble in order to discern relationships between your ideas.

Software options (most of these are between \$75. and \$125.):

- Smart Draw
- Visual Mind
- Inspiration
- Mind Mapper
- NovaMind (for Mac or PC)

Free, open-source software:

Free Mind (http://freemind.sourceforge.net/wiki/index.php/Main_Page).

Connect Discoveries to Big Questions

- Goal, Malady, Means
- Bad News/Good News
- What Shows forth Christ? (Luther)
- What Demonstrates Love? (Augustine)
- Other?

What Is God Doing? (Or, “Give God Some Verbs.”)

W. Paul Jones, *Theological Worlds* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1989).

- Exile and Homecoming
- Slavery and Liberation
- Emptiness and Fulfillment
- Sin and Forgiveness
- Suffering and Endurance

Other possible dialectics

Richard Lischer, *A Theology of Preaching*.

- Chaos to order
- Bondage to deliverance
- Rebellion to obedience
- Accusation to vindication
- Despair to hope
- Guilt to justification
- Debt to forgiveness
- Separation to reconciliation
- Wrath to love
- Judgment to righteousness
- Defeat to victory
- Death to life

Design

The Text May Help

Thomas G. Long, *Preaching and the Literary Forms of the Bible* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1989), 127-35.

1. Can the *movement* of the sermon follow the movement of the text?
2. Can the *opposing forces* of the text become those of the sermon?
3. Can the *central insight* of the text become that of the sermon?
4. Can the *mood* of the text set the mood of the sermon?

Mark Throntveit: a b b' a'.

Paul Scott Wilson, *The Four Pages of the Sermon* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1999).

- A The world: there's a problem.
B The text: look, there's an analogous problem.
B' The text: here's how God solved the problem in the text.
A' The world: God is solving the world's problem in an analogous way.

Eugene L. Lowry, *How to Preach a Parable: Designs for Narrative Sermons* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1989).

1. Running the Story
2. Delaying the Story
3. Suspending the Story
4. Alternating the Story

Show & Tell

Barbara Brown Taylor, "Preaching the Body," in *Listening to the Word: Studies in Honor of Fred B. Craddock*, eds., Gail R. O'Day and Thomas G. Long (Nashville: Abingdon, 1993).

1. Show, Don't Tell.
2. God Is in the Details.
3. Striking Sparks of Kinship.

Delivery

Preaching from Memory

David E. Deppe, "Preaching from Memory: Forgotten Art or Lost Skill?" *Currents in Theology and Mission* 15 (Feb. 1988): 102-111.

1. Create a concept map/outline.
2. Write a manuscript.
3. Read it with the people in mind.
4. Memorize the outline.
5. Dry run it!
6. Forget it!
7. Risk it!

Process Preaching

Jerome F. Larson, "Developing a System for Preaching in the Extemporaneous Mode," D. Min. Thesis (St. Paul, MN: Luther Seminary, 1998). Jerry Larson offers a course in this method through the Kairos office.

1. Write a purpose statement for the sermon: will you (a) inform, (b) persuade, (c) inspire?
2. Write a manuscript & practice with it.
3. Talk to the people, preferably without the manuscript.

Manuscript Directions

1. Think "moves" not "points" – don't have more than 5 or 6.
2. Try for short sentences.
3. Write direct speech.
Not: "I want to tell you that..." or "The good news today is that..." Lose the "that" constructions.
4. Just say Jesus.
Not: "Matthew's Jesus" or "the Jesus of the fourth gospel..."
5. Try not to reflect on the sermon in the sermon.
Not: "I struggled with the text this week," or "This sermon may seem to be going in circles..."
6. Practice in various ways:
 - a. With the manuscript.
 - b. With a mirror and/or tape recorder.
 - c. In the preaching space.