

# Brad's Simple\* System\*\* of Sermon Preparation

\* There is no such thing as "simple" when it comes to sermons. There are so many variables that preaching is more art than science.

\*\* In real life preaching escapes systematic formulation because we're dealing with a God who refuses to be boxed in. The following "steps" often occur concurrently and are presented to help you begin to get a handle on a very fluid process. There are many good ways to construct and preach biblically-based sermons This system is designed to help you get started.

## #1 EXEGETE THE TEXT

- Choose the text you are planning to preach from.
- Dig into the text asking all of the important hermenutical questions – who, what, when, where, how, why?
- What was the message of this passage in the original context? Summarize that message in a single sentence.

## #2 EXEGETE THE CONTEXT

- Who are the people that will be listening to the sermon?
- Culture?
- Education level?
- Biases?
- Formal or informal setting?
- Age group?
- Language issues?
- Their relationship with you as a person?
- Their collective and individual relationship with God? What are they struggling with these days?
- Emotional issues such as grief or joy?
- High energy or low energy people?

## #3 LISTEN FOR GOD'S MESSAGE

- Spend time thinking about and praying about what it is that God wants to say to these people.
- Perhaps bring other people into the process of listening.
- Assume that the point of the message will be consistent with the single sentence summary from #1 above.
- Craft a single sentence summary expressing the "key point" or "big idea" of what of you think God has to say to your listeners. Keep it simple and memorable.

## #4 COMPILE THE SERMON

- Write out either a manuscript or detailed notes of what you intend to say. You may or may not want to simplify your notes as a final task before actually preaching.
- Create a short introduction – the more memorable the better.
- Express and engage the tensions.
- Based on the text bring out a few points which point to or support the key point.
- Illustrate the points with short stories, quotes, or object lessons. Or perhaps tie it all together through some type of narrative.
- Keep it simple and make sure that your key point is very obvious.
- Summarize by showing how the message of the text – the key point – deals with the tension.
- What is it that you want your listeners to do, think, or feel?
- Conclude with a strong story, quote, song, or exhortation – the more memorable the better.

## #5 PREACH THE SERMON

- Be yourself – be confident.
- Refer to your notes – but don't read them.
- Look at your listeners. Maintain as much eye contact as possible.
- Speak loudly but don't yell.
- Talk a little slower than you think you should.
- Keep in mind as you are preaching that you love and respect the congregation as siblings in Christ and as people made in the image of God. Your attitude toward the people will come through. Even if your sermon isn't perfect people will still hear God's message through you if they sense that you love them.
- Be open to the leading of the Holy Spirit. You may have to make some changes in direction as you preach. This gets easier with experience.