

## **Sermon Delivery & Public Speaking Techniques and Tips**

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### **Outline**

Sermon Delivery

Public Speaking Techniques and Tips (with Anita Savage)

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### **Required Reading**

Haddon W. Robinson *Biblical Preaching – the development and delivery of expository messages* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books House, 1980). Chapters 9-10.

### **References**

Tim Hawkins *Preach like a Train Driver - How to give Bible talks that challenge and inspire* (NSW: Disciples Unlimited, 2013). Section F.

Gary Millar & Phil Campbell *Saving Eutychus- How to preach God's word and keep people awake* (Kingsford: Matthias Media, 2013). Chapter 6.

Clifford Warne & Paul White *How to Hold an Audience – without a Rope* (Sydney: AIO Press, 1982). Chapters 8-9.

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### **Set-up:**

- Projector/PC/Speakers
  - Bring Portable Lectern surface.
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- *Pray to begin*
- *Get a student up and ask them what they are doing in ministry in their church.*

### **Introduction**

- Prayerfully, you have done the work on the text, and worked out the central truth, the structure of the talk is in place, there is a captivating introduction, several illustrations, good explanations, challenging applications, and a dynamite conclusion. Now to preach it!
- Many a good sermon is lost because the presentation and delivery of the sermon was lacking. I know there are many times when I have dulled the impact of a good sermon because I have delivered it poorly.

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- By God's grace we want to move people – to stir the soul, to call people to think, feel and act.

### **The place of emotions in preaching**

- Let's start with the place of emotions in preaching.
- Cleopas and Simon on the road to Emmaus had an encounter with Jesus (Luke 24:13-32). The events that had occurred over the days before - Jesus' arrest and crucifixion and then the reports of Jesus resurrection had left the two bewildered. Jesus appeared and walked with them explaining:

*'...Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?' And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets he explained to them what was said in all the scriptures concerning himself.'* (Luke 24:27).

- Must have been a long walk!
- Over dinner following, their eyes were opened, they recognized Jesus and then he disappeared.
- At that point the two turn to one another and said...  
*'were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us and opened the scriptures to us?'* (Luke 24:32)
- Now I know we are not Jesus, but would it not be great if we left our listeners with hearts burning? It is that verse which gave John Chapman the title for his book of preaching - *Setting Hearts on Fire*<sup>1</sup> – that's what we want to do.
- Preachers need to preach to comfort *and* to disturb those who come to hear what God is saying. In this course we have talked about the need to, under God, preach to people minds and hearts – to address their intellect and their emotions.
- Aristotle famously argued that there are 3 components of a persuasive message:

**LOGOS**

**+**

**PATHOS**

**+**

**ETHOS**

**=**

**PERSUASIVE RHETORIC**

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<sup>1</sup> John Chapman, *Setting Hearts on Fire – a guide to giving evangelistic talks* (Kingsford: Matthias Media, 1999).

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1. Logos: is the verbal content (the word) of the message, including its structure and logic.
2. Pathos: is the emotive features including passion, fervour, feelings.
3. Ethos: is the perceived character of the speaker, especially shown in empathy for the listener.

You can see this in Paul's words to the Thessalonians:

*...Our gospel came to you not simply with words (logos), but also with power with the Holy Spirit and deep conviction (pathos). You know how we lived among you (ethos) for your sake. (1 Thess 1:5)*

- Our *logos* is in hand if we are preaching from the Bible,
  - our *ethos* (the character of the preacher, we will talk about in the coming weeks),
  - but the *pathos* is the deep conviction that we stir up in the listener by the power of the Holy Spirit. We want to help people to feel the importance of responding appropriately to God.
- John Piper in his book *Brothers, We are not Professionals* – has a chapter where he exhorts pastors to 'feel the truth of hell'.
  - On your outline, I have quoted him at some length because he powerfully reminds us of the important place of feelings in preaching – but also because what he says, itself, is powerful preaching – listen to the metaphors – the use of language – even as he writes we feel the force of what he's saying.

*IS NOT OUR most painful failure in the pastorate the inability to weep over the unbelievers in our neighbourhoods and the carnal members of our churches? A great hindrance to ministry is the gulf between our Biblical understanding and the corresponding passions of our hearts. The glorious and horrible truths which thunder through the Bible cause only a faint echo of fear and ecstasy in our hearts. We take a megaton of truth upon our lips and speak it with an ounce of passion.*

*I must believe in my heart certain terrible and wonderful things. If I am to love with the meek, humble, tender, self-effacing heart of Christ, I must feel the awful and glorious truths of Scripture. Specifically:*

- *I must feel the truth of hell – that it exists and is terrible and horrible beyond imaginings forever and ever.*

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- *I must feel the truth that once I was as close to hell as I am to the chair I am sitting on [KDN - or the pulpit we are preaching from]. Its darkness, like vapour, had entered my soul and was luring me down. Its heat had already seared the skin of my conscience... I was a son of hell (Matt 23:15), a child of the Devil (John 8:44), and of wrath (Eph 2:3).... I must believe that just as a rock climber, having slipped, hangs over the deadly cliff by his fingertips, so I once hung over hell and was a heartbeat away from eternal torment. I say it slowly, eternal torment!*
- *I must feel in my heart that all the righteousness in the universe was on the side of God and against me. In the balances of justice, I was lighter than air. I had not one fraction of right to appeal my sentence of condemnation. My mouth was stopped (Rom 3:19). I was corrupt and guilty through and through...*

*If I do not believe in my heart these awful truths – believe them so they are real in my feelings – then the blessed love of God in Christ will scarcely shine at all. The sweetness of the air of redemption will be hardly detectable. The infinite marvel of my new life will be commonplace. The wonder that, to me, a child of hell, all things are given as an inheritance will not strike me speechless with trembling humility and lowly gratitude. The whole affair of salvation will seem ho-hum, and my entrance into paradise will seem as a matter of course. When the heart no longer feels the truth of hell, the gospel passes from good news to simply news. The intensity of joy is blunted and the heart-spring of love is dried up<sup>2</sup>.*

- Emotive stuff.
- Friends we have emotions for good, God-given reasons. Our emotions move us. And when it comes to preaching we do not need to be a-motional. We can and should aim to move people in what we say and *how* we say it.
- That is not to say that we are to emotionally manipulate people. To massage or coerce the listener in an attempt to force them to succumb to our own position or change their position on the strength of a guilt inducing, heart-string pulling, rhetoric or trickery. That is dishonest and does not honour God or his message.

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<sup>2</sup> J. Piper, *Brothers, We are not Professionals – a plea to pastors for radical ministry*. (Fearn: Mentor, 2008), 113-116.

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- So be prayerful
- Check your motivations
- Be humble
- Preach to save souls by giving God the glory.

You might find this video interview with Peter Bolt on the topic of Emotions in preaching helpful: <http://vimeo.com/72651444>

➤ *COMMENTS/QUESTIONS??*

### **Sermon Delivery**

Let's think together about the art of sermon delivery. To do that I am going to break down some of the distinctive elements which are ultimately part of the delivery.

#### **1. Your Sermon Script**

First – the Sermon Script.

We have talked about the importance of the words you use. So this is a good starting point.

- Be very intentional in what you plan to say.
- Once you have written your sermon, run through your script culling and reshaping:
  - The Central Truth should shape everything you say.
  - The more you say, the less people will remember. Short and snappy is a win.
    - Use the shortest, most understandable words you can.
    - Use short sentences. And no complex clauses!  
You are proclaiming, not submitting a written essay.
    - Verbally paint vivid pictures with your words (e.g. instead of 'he went' use 'crawled', 'stumbled', 'shuffled', 'lurched', 'speed', 'flew' etc.)
    - Boldly start sentences with conjunctions (e.g. But..., So..., Now...)
    - Repeat yourself. Repeat yourself!
    - Translate narratives into the present tense. So tell the story as if it is happening now.
    - Illustrate the obvious.
    - Talk about real people.
    - Use figures of speech – they often pack more into a phrase than a descriptive sentence (e.g. 'it sticks out like snails eyes')
  - But note that metaphors or similes must be fresh and not clichés.

And when it comes to arranging your script – work out the system or preferences which work best for you.

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- Font (I use 'Arial')
- Font size (I use 12 or 14 size font)
- Bullet points/indents
- highlights/underlines/bold/italics
- Personal notes – PAUSE, READ, SLOW DOWN, LOOK AT etc.
- text only on the top 2/3rds of the page.
- folder, pages, tablet etc.
- ensure you number your pages!

### **2. Your Practice**

Second - Practice the sermon – several times.

Your aim is to be familiar not just with the *content* of the sermon but with the *expression* of the sermon.

Our panel looked at this a bit last week.

- Set-up a make shift lectern and preach the sermon (aloud).
- Experiment with the way you say things – find the most economic and catchy expressions.
- Practice the way you use your hands and body language.
  - I have often found watching weather reporters helpful when it comes to using your hands. Intentional, but not overdone. Keep in mind that the larger the setting the larger the physical movement required.
- If you can, practice in more than one sitting.
- Abandon the idea that 'It will be better on the day'.
- Note the time – it will often be faster in the study than on the day.
  - In practice it may be helpful to record the timing in the margin e.g. 5 mins...10 mins...15mins etc.
  - This means on the day you have a gauge of where you are at – especially if you have to cut something.
- Practice will help you memorize the key moments of the talk – so that on the day you can be eyeballing the listener when you deliver.

### **3. Your Voice**

Third - Vary your voice – in pitch, pace, volume and pause.

Your aim should be to emphasis the Central Truth.

- The *Pitch* – is the high to low register you use in your voice. Often it is linked with pace (i.e. the higher the pitch the faster the pace), but does not need to be.
- The *Pace* – is the speed in which you deliver your words. Fast or slow can both have effect – the key is variety.

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- Don Carson is a preacher who tends to speed up when he is making his most important points.
  - Peter Adam is a preacher who tends to slow down when he makes his most important points.
  - Mark Driscoll typically clocks in at a lively 175 words per minute. Tim Keller varies between 162 and 177 words per minute. Interestingly neither Driscoll nor Keller sound rushed—just energized.<sup>3</sup>
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- The *Volume* (Robinson calls it ‘Punch’) – is how loud or soft you speak. With the blessing of microphones we can shout and we can whisper and everyone in the building will still be able to hear. Volume, if used well, can help to emphasize the main points.
  - The *Pause* – this is the often forgotten tool in the preachers verbal tool bag. PAUSE - The Pause can be used to great effect. PAUSE The Pause can be very helpful for giving the listener time to catch up and digest what you are saying. PAUSE!
    - as a preacher you don’t want to verbally vomit all over your listener – so give time to allow reflection and decision.
    - Peter Adam is a master at the preaching pause.
    - And here is a tip – plan the pause. Write it into your notes, practice it, and ensure that the pause is actually a period of silence (as opposed to a pause for breath!).

The key in all of this is: *Agility* in switching between pitch, pace, volume and pause – in a way that draws attention to *what* you are saying as opposed to *how* you are saying it.

- Dull preaching is characterized by Monotone delivery—where pitch, pace, volume drone on with little variety and a consistency which is better placed in a bed time story – it is hypnotic. The listener has a bed – do what you can to ensure your sermon is not preparing them for it!!

Gary Millar and Phil Campbell in *Saving Eutychus* are very helpful in the way they suggest a preacher uses his/her voice. They even give you a tool (a three dimensional sphere) to analysis the way you use your voice (Millar & Campbell, Chapter 6).

And that said – be you! You are not an actor. Be natural.

#### **4. Your Physical Presentation**

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<sup>3</sup> G. Millar & P. Campbell, *Saving Eutychus- How to preach God’s word and keep people awake* (Kingsford: Matthias Media, 2013), 107.

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Fourth – the way you present yourself.

Robinson notes that when you address a congregation, three different communication forms operate at the same time: your *words*, your *intonation*, and your *gestures*. (Robinson, pg 193). But note - the listener 'hears' what is said in the opposite order – non-verbal comes first. (*Illustrate by nodding 'no' but saying "I totally agree with you"*) A lot of what I say here is basic second nature kind of things.

- Dress – dress fitting for the occasion. If you don't know - ask.
  - a good rule of thumb is to dress one step above what the congregation is wearing. (*Illustrate - my first day at Naremburn – turning up in a suit*)
  - what you wear should not be a distraction. (*Illustrate - the 'Faith No More' T-Shirt or the time that ?? pierced his tongue the week before preaching*)
  - generally lighter, not patterned colours on the top half of your body works well.
- Poise – carry yourself calmly yet confidently.
  - The rush, the exasperation, the quick breathing will send a message that you are out of control or unprepared – that will work against your message.
  - Be calm (even if you don't feel it). Walk slow (even if you feel like running the other way). Breathe (even if you feel the air is being sucked out of you).
  - Rid yourself of annoying habits—scratching, rubbing, jingling keys, playing with a pencil, picking your nose! (Tip: Video yourself and watch).
- Vocal Chords – they give way especially when overused or nervous.
  - Have water nearby. Avoid drinking caffeinated drinks before speaking.
  - Take the drink after the instruction (e.g. Look at verse 4...[Drink]...then read the verse). You are giving the listener something to do while you have a drink.
  - If pausing to drink embarrasses you, here is a handy quip (from Clifford Warne, pg 44): *'This is a prepared talk. All you need to do is add water!'*
  - If you still lose your voice – take it as a sign from God that he doesn't want you to speak that day!!
- Movement
  - Hand movements
    - Movement creates animation as long as you don't fly away!
    - Open palm/closed palm
    - Up palm = positive. Down palm = negative.



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- Hand v.s Finger pointing
  - Contrast (e.g. on the one hand..., on the other... – and note the reverse direction)
  - Use your fingers to notate points (e.g. First...Second...etc.)
  - Ensure properly timed gestures
  - Varied gestures (Tip: Learn Sign language!)
  - Move away from the lectern to connect (e.g. Illustrations/Bible Reading/Q&A)
- Be energized – being interested and energetic about what you are saying.
    - If you are not – don't expect your listener to be.
    - Preach yourself dry. Preaching is hard work.

### **5. Your Techniques**

Fifth – the techniques and equipment you use.

- Microphone Technique
  - Lectern v.s. Lapel/Headset
    - Microphone—correctly positioned, check the volume level, is it unidirectional?
    - hand span away from the microphone.
    - if fixed point to your forehead.
  - Be a friend to the Audio Ministry team – give them warning.
  - Make light of mishaps or technical difficulties – buy time to the audio person to correct.
  - Sneezes!! (*Illustration – Dick Lucas on the freeway listening to Jonathon Fletcher – when Jonathon blows his nose into the microphone!!!*)
- Bible v.s. Bible App!
  - Give time to find.
- Lectern/Pulpit
  - Get to the venue early to check out the lectern and layout (and to find out which lectern you should use – if in fact you will be using a lectern!!)
  - Location—removed from congregation? up high, central, do you need to move your head to scan the audience?
  - Lectern surface – especially the position of your notes (*Illustrate – show my portable lectern*)
  - Height—do you need make adjustment if possible, or get a platform?

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- Other Equipment—is there a light-how is it worked? (*Illustration – hitting the ‘last post’ button at a funeral when looking for the light switch!)* Is there a glass of water and where?
- PowerPoint/DVD/CD – technology!
  - Ensure that any necessary arrangements with IT people have been made. And tested!
  - Help the PPT person by giving the script with marks of when to change slides (avoid that role yourself).
- Recordings
  - If recorded as MP3’s or Video duplication, it can be helpful to be mindful of that listener (and at times make comment towards them) – but remember your first listener is to those before you.
  - The intent and the application of your sermon should be first and foremost for those sitting before you.
- Question time
  - If you have prepared your sermon following the Preaching Model, you will be well prepared for question time – in terms of research.
  - Question time gives you the opportunity to stand behind your words and defend your statements – but drawing people back to the Bible.
  - Very helpful for the unbeliever or seeker – even though they mostly will not ask questions.
  - Involves the thinker who may for dwelling on certain aspects of what you have said.
  - Provides you with the opportunity to clarify things that may not have been received clearly.

There are dangers...

- You answer badly or wrong!
- The questioner introduces a tangent that high-jacks or diminishes your sermon purpose.
- You offend someone because you say something in a way that may not have had the forethought of a scripted sermon.

Tips:

- Live questions vs. text message questions – pro’s and cons.
  - knowing who asks will often tell you more about why the question is asked.
  - the live question at the end, is a question after the sermon – the text message question could come in at the beginning of the sermon, but you have in fact answered it by the end of the sermon.
- Get someone to field the questions – gives you time to think.
- Get out from behind the lectern to answer.
- Try and bring the person back to the Bible passage.

➤ QUESTION/ANSWERS??

**Exercise – My Delivery Wish List!**

1. We have covered quite a few Sermon Delivery elements. What are the top five areas which you want to give attention too?

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**Public Speaking Techniques and Tips**

- *Interview style with Anita Savage and KDN*
- *Aim: To help the student think about communication principles – good and poor.*

**Introduce Anita**

- **Family?**

Married to David with Alana and Mitchell

- **How did you become a Christian?**

- **Ministry?**

Core member at Trinity City – and member of the Trinity City Leadership Team  
Previous member at St Thomas North Sydney.

- **Current Job?**

Anita presents the ABC weekend news bulletin in South Australia.

- **Journalist History?**

Anita moved to Adelaide from Sydney where she worked as a senior journalist for ABC Television, presenting national news updates and reporting on health issues.

## Intro to Preaching

Week 9

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She joined the ABC in 2004 and reported and presented for programs including **Midday**, **Sydney's 7pm news** (on **Channel 9**), **News Breakfast** and on **NewsRadio**.

Anita also presented business news updates on the **Nine Network**. She spent several years in the United States and was **Bloomberg Television's** first international anchor in New York, presenting rolling news that aired in the US, Europe and the Asia-Pacific region.

She also presented New York updates on **CNN**. While in New York, Anita started Bloomberg's television news service for Australia, New Zealand and Asia.

She anchored Bloomberg's international coverage of Hong Kong's 1997 handover from British to Chinese rule. Anita also was a Washington DC correspondent for an American ABC affiliate on the US west coast and was the US reporter for **Radio 2UE** in Sydney. She has also worked for Sydney **Radio 2CH**.

- Training for media? How did you get involved in Journalism – and then how did that move towards News Reading?

Anita was awarded a Rotary Ambassadorial Scholarship to study for a Masters degree in Journalism at Northwestern University in the USA. She also has a BA (Communications) from Charles Sturt University.

Purpose for today is to talk about Communication and specifically consider up-front public speaking tips and technique.

- Anita – you have experience in this area, both as a speaker and a listener. And in regards to preaching you have sat under some good preaching (and I am sure bad preaching). Given your expertise what would you say were the three best pieces of communication advice you could offer for a preacher just starting out?
  - Clarity
  - Structure
  - Language
- What we thought we would do was show some clips of upfront speaking and then have a bit of a discussion about what was done well and maybe what could be improved. The speakers are all different and not all preachers.
- So we'll watch each in turn and then we'll ask you as a class what you think was good about each.
- And Anita, I'll get you to make some comments along the way.

Clip 1: **Phil Campbell** (Sermon on Acts 8 'Unlikely Friendships') – first 5 minutes.

<http://www.savingeutyclus.com/resources>

Phil is the Senior Pastor of Mitchelton Presbyterian Church.

➤ *Look out for:*

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- *Introduction and link to Bible passage*
- *Setting the context*
- *Use of PPT*
- *Pace and voice*
- *general manner.*

Clip 2: **Di Warren** (Topical Sermon 'Sex in the City' at Equip Women's Conference 2006)  
– 5:43 mins

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NBgNEZjKhvk>

Di is at Engadine/Heathcote Anglican Church (wife of Rector) and on the Executive of Equip.

➤ *Look out for:*

- *Introduction*
- *Engagement (especially for women)*
- *Pace*
- *Address of an awkward topic*
- *Humour*
- *Use of the Bible*

Clip 3: **Mark Driscoll** (Topical Sermon 'The Gospel' at Mars Hill Church, Chicago) – 2:58 mins

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IFTX80TpZ\\_4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IFTX80TpZ_4)

Mark is the Senior Pastor of Mars Hill Network.

➤ *Look out for:*

- *Communication Style*
- *Voice inflection*
- *Phraseology*
- *Pace (and particularly change of pace)*
- *Use of notes (or not!)*
- *Movement*
- *Explanation of the gospel*
- *What he was wearing!!*

Clip 4: **Adam Hills** (Comedy Routine 'Australian Accents' at Melbourne Comedy Festival, 2008) – 3:01 mins (but STOP at the 2.30 min mark – due to bad language)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KpBYnL5fAXE>

Adam is an ABC comedian – known for *Spicks and Specks*.

➤ *Look out for:*

- *Analysis of Australian Language*
- *Use of Humour*
- *Timing (and how he listens to the audience)*

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- *Voice inflection*

- *Connection*

Clip 5: **Richard Coekin** (Sermon 'Repentance and Faith' at Dundonald Church) – 3:38 mins

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c7GV4Q\\_uaZk](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c7GV4Q_uaZk)

Richard is Senior Minister of the Co-Mission Initiative, UK.

➤ *Look out for:*

- *Expression*

- *Language (Jargon??)*

- *Pace*

- *Explanation and Illustration*

- *Hand and Body movements*

- *Teaching Technique*

- *Microphone Technique*

Thank Anita

➤ *Pray to Finish*