

Keep It Simple! ***Preaching with Simplicity***

Workshop 2—Michael Maura

At the same time, pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am in prison - that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak.

Colossians 4:2-4

I. Getting it right and getting it across

- Getting it right is about studying the Word, listening very carefully, sitting at the feet of Jesus, seeking to get very clear on what is the mystery of Christ being presented to me here, digging into the riches. If I don't do this well then I will have nothing to say. Quite simply, to preach the Word I will have to listen very carefully to the Word.
- Getting it across is thinking about how to communicate the Word that I have heard so that people really hear the message. I could understand the passage well but if I don't preach it in a language people understand then I'm wasting my breath. I need to make it as clear and open and manifest as I can.

II. A vertical and horizontal ministry—Col 1:24b-25

Vertically Paul is entrusted by God and commissioned by God and is accountably to God. *Horizontally* he is to serve the Church and gladly suffer for the Church (Col 1:24a) and make the Word fully known to the Church.

III. Please God and love the flock—1 Thess 2:3-8

Our great temptation will be to please men—to flatter, to entertain, to pump egos. Paul is seeking to please Christ and to serve His Church. He communicates out of love and compassion.

IV. A ministry of love—How will love shape our communication?

- Prayer
- Preparation
- Say hard things
- Communicate in a way that people can receive
- Speak patiently
- Work hard at being clear

V. Struggling to be clear

Clear preaching will be hard labor—a labor of love. What elements of our preaching do we particularly need to pay attention to as we struggle and labor for clarity?

- Style & vocabulary
- Avoiding misunderstanding
- Illustrations and visual aids
- Cross-references

- Personal testimony and stories

VI. The value of structure

We don't want to ramble! We want to speak with a clear aim and destination. We want to go on a journey from here to there and we want to take everyone with us.

VII. The structure

We don't want to be prescriptive or restrictive here. There are various ways we can find a helpful structure:

- Follow the structure of the passage
- Break down the big point
- Do 2 or 3 "runs" through the text

VIII. Within each part

STATE - POINT - EXPLAIN - GROUND

- **STATE:** Say what the point is. Work hard on getting a clear, brief, memorable, accurate phrase.
- **POINT:** Show us where exactly in the text you are getting these things from.
- **EXPLAIN:** Make the point clear, showing how the passage works, using illustrations and cross-references if necessary
- **GROUND:** Bring the passage home, apply the point, apply Christ, show how this aspect of the gospel of Christ makes a difference to how we think, feel and live. Help us feel the weight of these things.

And then move on to the next point and do the same again.

IX. Preaching one thing

- With all this talk of structure and points let's not forget that we are trying to communicate one thing.
- We should know clearly in our mind what the whole passage and its details are all aiming at and make that the focus and force of our message.

X. Keeping it together

Above all we want to be clear. We want to be so clear that people go away thinking – “That was obvious. That was deep and powerful but simple.