

Pastoral Sermon Preparation, A Testimony

by Carl O'Donnell

This sermon shares the pastor's unique approach to sermon preparation by involving a small group from the church in discussing and reflecting on the upcoming sermon topic and related Bible verses. Through this collaborative process, the pastor gains insights, personal connections, and diverse perspectives that enrich the sermon preparation, leading to inspired and relevant messages. The pastor's method fosters a sense of community, shared devotion, and practical application of biblical teachings, resulting in well-prepared and impactful sermons delivered with confidence and depth of understanding.

Scripture: Proverbs 15:22, 1 Corinthians 12:14, James 1:22, Proverbs 27:17, Ephesians 4:16, Colossians 3:16

Topics: "Community in Faith", "Collaborative Worship"

Description

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Transcript

I've been pastoring now about 30 years, and I wish I had known this when I was just coming out, starting at the very first church I was at, but it's been having people help me with my sermon preparation. And you know, you tend to think, well, gee, that's not very spiritual, that's what I get paid for, and blah, blah, blah. But in the last 15 years, every week, almost without exception, I've had a group of about a dozen people in our church, and the church I pastor is the Pembroke Baptist Church in Pembroke, New Brunswick, near Woodstock.

So anyway, every week, there's about a dozen people that we meet on Monday night, and I say to them, this is what I think I may be preaching on this Sunday. Let's discuss it. Let's read the verses that apply about it.

And do you guys have any personal connection to this? How does it apply to you? What does it make you think about? What does it make you ponder? How do you see yourself applying it? So anyway, I don't know how I just stumbled on this. I'm sure there's other pastors do it, but I've never heard of any other pastors doing it, but it works for me. Because so many weeks when I was pastoring, previous to that,

come Saturday night, I mean, I knew what I wanted to say, but to get it all together, to feel like you had the confidence to say it, and you know, Saturday night, Sunday morning, wrestling, what am I going to preach on? How am I going to preach on it? So anyway, the last 15 years, this is what I've been doing.

So we'll get together on Monday night over a cup of coffee in somebody's home or at the church. It's open to anyone in the church. Usually there's about 10 to 12 people show up.

Anybody can do it. And it's become like our small group Bible study. So we'll go around the room reading a verse.

If somebody doesn't want to read, they can just elbow the guy next to him and say, you read. We'll go around and we'll read maybe a half a dozen, 10 verses, whatever I'm going to be preaching on. And then we'll really pray sincerely, Lord, would you please point your finger to me on one of these verses? And then we'll have just maybe a few minutes of silence, a few moments of silence.

And I'll say now, what is God saying to you? Is there a verse here that God is speaking to you about? And someone will say, well, you know, verse three makes me think about something going on at work. And they'll start to say, this is what's happening at work. And I think God could help me with this verse.

Or verse five, you know, makes me think of a rough time that I went through. And I've got my blank piece of paper and I'm just writing notes like crazy. So this is about a one hour small group discussion on this.

And this is how I've been preparing my sermons for the last 15 years. Now, I feel inspired on Monday mornings when I get up, I feel inspired by God. This is the direction to go in.

And in fact, I think it through for a couple hours, Monday morning early. I even share it with a group of people in the nursing home Monday afternoon at 1.30. But then Monday night, I say, this is what I, this is what I feel God's leading me to do, possibly this Sunday. This is what I shared at the nursing home.

Let's discuss it and see what, how, how would that apply to you? And I'm telling you, we have some of the greatest discussions and talk about a grassroots relevant sermon that comes together. And in our group, like we've got two young ladies, Nolly and Anita, they're 20 years old. So I get a whole different perspective from them, right? Then we've got their grandparents who are in their seventies, Norton and Annie.

So I get a perspective from them. Then people from other denominations are there. There's people from different denominations that come to this, you know, and they have a whole different background growing up in a different, different type of a church than that I'm in.

So it's just such a blessing because not only that, but we're all doing personal devotions, but we're doing them as a group. So I'm reading the Bible. I'm saying, Lord, would you speak to my heart from these verses? But I'm doing it in a room full of people.

And they're all doing the same thing. Lord, would you speak to my heart? And yes, sir, here it is. Verse five or verse six.

This is a verse that God is speaking to me about today. We pray, we talk about it. And then we say, now, what would God want us to do about this? So I'm reading a verse that says something about treating people as I should.

So I share, you know, gee, this makes me think about this. But here's what I should be doing about it. So I just hope that that would be some little help to pastors.

There's a pastor that I really respect, Harry Wilson. And we were talking about this one time at a conference. And Harry said, gee, how do you keep it from turning into a stew, you know, a sermon stew, like just a whole bunch of stuff all thrown in together.

But that's not the way it goes, actually. It's really amazing how the Lord helps us in studying these verses, talking about them, applying them. And so I leave Monday night at eight o'clock from somebody's home or whatever, and I'm ready to preach Monday night for Sunday.

I really am. I've been up early Monday morning in my own devotions. I've done the thinking about it.

I've spoken at the nursing home. We've discussed it as a group. And Monday night, I'm ready to go to preach.

So I haven't had to try harder to be prepared for a sermon for the last 15 years. That's how it all comes together. And I hope that's of some help to somebody.

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