

WRITING A SERMON
Developed by Dr. Sydney Greidanus

1. Select the preaching text. Select the preaching text with an eye to congregational needs. The text must be a literary unit and contain a vital theme.
2. Read the text in its literary context. Read and re-read the text in its context and jot down initial questions. These questions guide further investigation and may have to be answered in the sermon.
3. Outline the structure of the text. In the Hebrew or Greek text, note the major affirmations, clausal flow, plot line, scenes, or literary structures. Mark major units with headings and verse references.
4. Interpret the text in its own historical setting. A. Literary interpretation b. Historical interpretation C. Theocentric interpretation Review your results with the help of some good commentaries.
5. Formulate the text's theme and goal. A. State the textual theme in a brief sentence that summarizes the message of the text for its original hearers: subject and predicate. What is the text saying? B. State the goal of the author for his original hearers. What is the text doing? Does the author aim to persuade, to urge, to encourage, to warn, to comfort? Be specific.
6. Understand the message in the contexts of canon and redemptive history. A. Canonical interpretation: view the message in the context of the canon: b. Redemptive-historical interpretation: view the message in the context of redemptive history from creation to new creation. C. Christocentric interpretation: explore the ways of redemptive-historical progression, promise-fulfillment, typology, analogy, longitudinal themes, New Testament references, and contrast
7. Formulate the sermon theme and goal. A. Ideally, your sermon theme will be the same as your textual theme. If Step 6 forces a change, stay as close as possible to the textual theme. Your theme will guide especially the development of the body of the sermon. B. Your goal must be in harmony with the author's goal and match the sermon theme. Your goal will guide the style of the sermon as well as the content of its introduction and conclusion.
8. Select a suitable sermon form. Select a sermon form that respects the form of the text (didactic, narrative, deductive, inductive) and that achieves the goal of the sermon.
9. Prepare the sermon outline. If possible, follow the flow of the text in the body of the sermon. Main points, derived from the text, support the theme. The conclusion should clinch goal. The introduction should expose the need.
10. Write the sermon in oral style. Say it as you write it. Write in oral style, using short sentences, vivid words, strong nouns and verbs, active voice, present tense, images, and illustrations.