

When the Sermon Preparation Is Finished, One Essential Still Remains

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There comes a point in the sermon preparation when the exegesis and crafting of the sermon has been completed. After a week of study, the outline is done, the sermon is full of flesh, muscles and bones, and the content is well structured and well argued. The gospel is clear and application runs throughout. But there comes that point when the message is done and the preacher must quiet himself before the Lord and beg for God's help, God's strength, God's enabling, God's empowering, and God's unction.

1. ILLUMINATION.

Pray for the illumination of the hearers as the Word of God is preached on Sunday from the pulpit. Pray for the Spirit of God to shed light upon His truth as the believers hear it heralded. Pray for the unfolding of God's Word to give light to His people. Beg that the Spirit of God would do what only He can do — give much light to the pure Word as it goes forth.

2. TRANSFORMATION.

Earnestly ask God to transform the hearers as they come face to face with the Living God through the preached Word. Pray for the Lord to work through the proclamation of divine truth to change the heart, capture the mind, win the affections, and conform the life of each hearer to Christ and His image.

3. REVIVIFICATION.

Wrestle with God in fervent prayer that He might grant revival. Only God can give revival and bring newness of life to the lost. Only God can revive the heart, bring change, give life to those swallowed up in coldness. Pray and pray on and pray believingly that God would rend the heavens and descend to bring revival.

4. REGENERATION.

○ that preachers would spend as much time crying out to God to save souls as he does exegeting the text. He should pray with passion and fervency for the Lord to awaken dead souls to new life. Unless sinners are born again, they cannot see the Kingdom of God.

5. UNCTION.

Unction describes that act of the Spirit where He powerfully comes upon the message so that it goes forth with life-giving power, soul-transforming grace, and heart-wooing beauty. Pray for the Spirit of God to grant unction as you preach God's Word. What you've worked hard to prepare all week, entreat the Lord to take the Word like a sword and thrust it perfectly and precisely into the hearts of the hearers precisely where needed.

6. PROCLAMATION.

○ that men would preach with urgent proclamation and passionate pathos! Pray that you would stand in the pulpit and proclaim with verbal strength. The minister should storm the throne of grace with confidence and ask the Lord to aid his proclamation. He must ask for clarity, passion, order, heavenly-mindedness and confidence in his preaching.

7. AFFECTION.

Men must feel what they preach. If ministers are not affected in their own hearts by what they preach, there is no way his hearers would be stirred to action. If a man does not feel his text, and preach it from the bowels of his heart, then his preaching will be lifeless, apathetic, and futile. Let a man pray for affection, drive, pathos, and zeal.