Sermon Prep Plan

Process	*Tasks*	*Target date*	*Comments*
Investigate	• Pray for the Holy Spirit's guidance every time you begin to read the passage. • Read the entire passage several times a day looking for who is the audience, why were these words important for them to hear, what is the significance of the location or occasion, what is the purpose of the passage? • Read slowly and imagine yourself being present to hear those words. • Look for key points, key words/phrases.		
Interpret	• Do word studies. • Note the meaning of any idioms. • Note similes, metaphors, and analogies. • Refresh your understanding of the context of the passage/book and type of literature. • Gather data about the historical and cultural setting. • Check cross references. • Note the timeless theological truths in the passage. • Only AFTER you've done all the above, consult commentaries.		
Apply	• Apply the truths of God's Word to your own life. • Determine the timeless truths in the passage that apply to the people in our congregation. What solutions does it hold for the challenges in their daily existence? • What are the rebukes, challenges, appeals, and encouragements coming from the passage?		
Unify	• Be clear of the theme. Be able to summarize the message in one sentence. There should be a single dominant idea supported by other ideas. • Be clear on what you want the audience to do based on the sermon. (the purpose) • Think of a tentative title (may change it later).		
Outline	• Create a high-level outline that will guide the listener easily from point to point all related to the theme and purpose. • Think of a transitional statement to make after each key point that helps the listener move with you to the next point.		

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Amplify	Develop supporting material for your outline points. • Look back over your word studies and cultural and historical findings that may support the point. • Think of incidents in your own life that are relevant. • Bring in the applications that you developed. • Add a call to action if appropriate.		
Illustrate	• Gather illustrations to support key points. (Most people are visual learners. A picture can help them understand and remember what you said.) • Pick illustrations that would be easy for your audience to appreciate. • Consider using an epigram to make a memorable point. Ex. "It isn't wrong to have possessions; it is wrong for them to have you." • Use humor only if it relates to your point and if you are comfortable with it. Make it fit your natural style.		
Introduce	• Create an attention-getting introduction that helps your audience want to hear the message. • If you can tap into a need your audience has and indicate you will give them God's view on how to handle it, they will likely pay attention.		
Conclude	• Develop a conclusion that gives a call to action and reinforces the theme and purpose. • Refrain from adding new information in the conclusion. • Develop an invitation that relates to the message you will deliver.		
Incubate	• Continue to read the passage several times a day. • Take at least a day away from the material you have prepared. Do something totally unrelated. • Give the Holy Spirit space to modify what you have prepared so far.		
Compose	• Craft your message. • Do practice sessions to work on timing, flow, and delivery. Get feedback from others on clarity and impact of message. Adjust as the Holy Spirit prompts you. • Prepare sermon guide/media notes for the worship guide.		
Deliver	• Get a good night's sleep before you preach. • Eat a healthy meal before you preach (no junk food, nothing that will make you lethargic).		

Watch Your Framework

We each have a unique framework (theological position, personal experience, cumulative knowledge, prejudices). It can work against expository preaching. When we read the Bible, certain words trigger ideas that we download uncritically into our message. Unless we make an effort each time to critically examine a passage, our messages become predictable reflections of what we've already said.

Not only does this become dull, it does not challenge the church and will not change the world. It becomes IMpository of the preacher's world upon the scripture rather than EXpository of the fundamental meaning of the scripture with all its unsettling and disturbing challenges to our inherently worldly and fallen ways of thinking.