



PREACHING

Finally, Preaching – a quick-access guide to preparing and delivering Christ-centred, biblically faithful, Spirit-empowered preaching.

I'm not totally convinced that preaching can be taught. God's gracious gifts include (among others) prophecy and teaching; so, without the Spirit's anointing, such notes may only help us to become better public speakers. Pneumatic integrity (a previous month's *Finally* topic) is essential here above and beyond our up-front skills.

Proceed with caution.

1. What Preaching Is

- **Proclaiming God's Words.** Not opinions, theories, or clever ideas, but Scripture faithfully taught.
- **Revealing Christ.** Every sermon ultimately points to Jesus – His person, His work, His kingdom. Not always literally, but in the context of God's Kingdom culture.
- **Equipping God's people.** Preaching feeds disciples, strengthens faith, and forms Christlike character.
- **Hosting a divine encounter.** The Spirit takes the *preached* Word and reveals an aspect of the *inspired* Word afresh to the hearer.
- **A partnership between preparation and inspiration.** Study the text deeply whilst staying open to the inspiring Spirit.

2. The Preacher's Heart

- **Humility.** You stand under the Word, not over it.
- **Holiness.** Your life offstage shapes your authority onstage.

- **Love for people.** Preaching serves the congregation, not the preacher's ego.
- **Dependence on the Spirit.** Without Him, sermons may be accurate but lack the fire to refine.
- **Courage.** To speak truth with grace, even when uncomfortable. This point is often abused under the banner of 'showing tough love' – therefore, never forget the need to be humble and the truth that 'mercy triumphs over judgment.' James 2:13

3. A Biblical Vision for Preaching

- **Kingdom-focused.** God's will and purposes on Earth need to feature, implicitly or explicitly.
- **Expository clarity.** The meaning of the text shapes the message, not the other way around.
- **Christ-centred.** Whether in the Old or New Testament, your testimony must always point to Jesus.
- **Gospel application.** Every sermon requires an awareness of God's 'good news'. Don't confuse this with the mechanics of traditional evangelism; rather, the 'good news' of the Kingdom's presence. Mark 1:15.
- **Spirit expectation.** Scripture is God-breathed; preaching ought to be Spirit-enabled.

4. The Role of the Prophetic Word

- **Prophecy complements, never replaces, Scripture.** Prophetic insight illuminates the written Word; it does not compete with it.
- **Often comes as an emphasis.** A particular phrase, theme, or truth highlighted by the Spirit for *this* moment.
- **Sometimes arrives during preparation.** A strong sense that "this is the direction" or "this is what the church needs to hear."
- **Sometimes during delivery.** A timely insight, question, or encouragement that wasn't in the notes. All prophetic input must allow for informed feedback.
- **Always tested.** The prophetic word must align with Scripture, honour Christ, and bear good fruit.
- **Handled with humility.** "I sense the Lord highlighting..." rather than "Thus says the Lord."

5. Preparing to Preach (Study + Sensitivity)

Study: The Foundation

- **Read the passage repeatedly.** Let it shape you before you shape the sermon.
- **Understand context.** Historical background, genre, structure, key words.
- **Define the main idea.** What is God saying through this text?

- **Outline clearly.** A simple structure aids clarity.
- **Apply faithfully.** Ask: What does this text mean for our church today?

Sensitivity: The Wind in the Sails

- **Pray before planning.** Ask God what He wants to emphasise.
- **Listen for an impression.** A burden, a warning, an encouragement, or a promise may arise.
- **Hold your notes lightly.** Preparation is not a prison.
- **Be attentive to the Spirit during delivery.** He may highlight individuals, emotions, or moments.
- **Prepare space.** Build room for reflection, response, or ministry. To paraphrase Socrates, “A life without reflection is a life wasted”, similarly, a message without a response is a message without value.

6. Crafting the Sermon

- **Keep the main point central.** Everything should serve the theme.
- **Use clear language.** Avoid jargon; speak to the whole congregation.
- **Include story and imagination.** Jesus taught with pictures, metaphors, and everyday images.
- **Show your workings.** People grow when they see how the text unfolds.
- **Use foreground as well as background.** We often explain the background (context) of a passage. But what of the foreground? Attempt to put yourself ‘into the story’ for integrity and application.
- **Make application specific.** Move from theory to practice.
- **Build toward encounter.** Preaching should lead people to hear God for themselves.

7. Delivery: Preaching with Clarity and ‘Fire’ (2 Timothy 1:6-7)

- **Be yourself.** Authenticity builds trust.
- **Speak with warmth.** Shepherd the flock; don’t lecture them.
- **Use Scripture aloud.** Let people hear the Word with their ears, not only see it on screens.
- **Leave room for silence.** Give the Spirit space to work.
- **Follow prompts gently.** If the Spirit (of prophecy) nudges you to pause, pray, emphasise, or minister—do so calmly and biblically.
- **Maintain order.** Spirit-led preaching is passionate but never chaotic.

8. Making Space for the Spirit During Preaching

- **Ask God quietly throughout.** “Is there something more here?”
- **Notice the room.** Sometimes hearts are tender, hungry, fearful, or resisting—respond accordingly.
- **Allow prophetic encouragement.** A short, edifying word can reshape a moment.
- **Invite response.** Through prayer, reflection, repentance, or ministry time.
- **Stay aligned with leadership.** Spirit-led preaching thrives in accountable environments.
- **Keep Christ central.** The Spirit always leads people toward Jesus. Revelation 19:10

9. Handling Difficult Themes

- **Truth with tears.** Hard words should come from a soft heart.
- **Grace with clarity.** Encourage without diluting the standard of Scripture.
- **Courage and truth without harshness.** Confront sin as a doctor confronts disease: with the hope of healing. Redemption! We are redeemed! Forgiven, renewed and restored, not abandoned and condemned. Romans 8:1 & 2 Corinthians 5:17
- **Prophetic challenge.** Sometimes God highlights a sin, attitude, or cultural lie to confront – do so humbly and biblically.

10. Preaching in a Charismatic Context

- **Normalise prayer ministry.** A message without a response can feel unfinished.
- **Encourage openness to the Spirit.** But avoid hype, pressure, or emotional manipulation.
- **Discern corporate moments.** Sometimes God wants to heal, convict, deliver, or restore during the sermon.
- **Be flexible.** The Spirit may redirect the ending or extend the response.
- **Stay grounded in Scripture.** The Word keeps the wind steady.

11. Acknowledge the Ministry Gifts (Ephesians 4:11)

I’ve written extensively on this subject in other publications. The ministry gifts highlighted by Paul in Ephesians 4:11-16 are to equip the church. The pulpit needs to be home to the congregation’s apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. There’s not enough space here to expound on this.

- **Apostles** – bring inspiration as they share the wonders and extent of God’s Kingdom.
- **Prophets** – bring insight as they discern the ‘now’ message for the local church.

- **Evangelists** – bring an invitation (to taste and see) as they explain and refresh our minds concerning God’s Good News!
- **Pastors** – bring identity ‘in Christ’ as they heal and restore broken hearts and lost ‘sheep’.
- **Teachers** – bring instruction. Hopefully, for our spiritual formation, not simply more Bible information.

RESPONSE: The next time you preach, ask yourself in your preparation which of Christ’s ministry gifts you’re exercising. Also, be aware: if we’re all so-called ‘Bible teachers’, is the church being equipped as Christ intended?

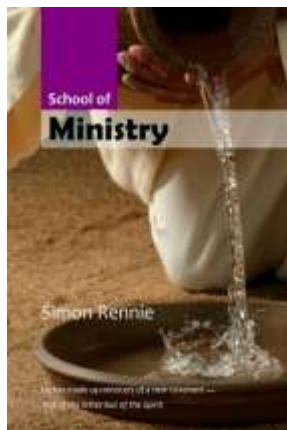
12. After Preaching

- **Debrief with honesty.** What resonated? What felt forced?
- **Invite feedback.** Mature voices sharpen your preaching.
- **Give thanks.** God moves through imperfect vessels.
- **Pray for listeners.** The Word often germinates after the service.
- **Release the outcome.** You preach faithfully; God brings fruit.

13. The Goal of Preaching

- **Transformation, not information.** Hearts changed, lives aligned with Christ.
- **Revelation, not performance.** God speaking freshly through His Word.
- **Obedience, not applause.** A congregation shaped into Christlikeness.
- **Encounter, not entertainment.** People hearing the voice of God for themselves.
- **Glorifying Christ.** Preaching begins and ends with Him.

And finally, preaching is where **the timeless Word meets the timely work of the Spirit** – here, Scripture is explained, Jesus is revealed, and God’s people are awakened to His voice.



[School of Ministry](#)

This new publication for 2026 approaches many of these topics from different angles, including my own personal journey in pastoral ministry. Highly recommended.