

## SERMON STRUCTURE: Gift Model

*Note: this sermon model was presented at SPOTLIGHT on Ministry conferences in September 2010 as a template to guide preachers in sermon preparation and organization*

Central Thrust: (Meaning [exegesis] and application [homiletics] of the text) *What does this text mean?* (exegesis) *What does this text do?* (homiletics)

Title

Text

Introduction: Grab the hearers by the ears and place them quickly into the context of the Scriptural Word. Orally capture and echo the hearer's likely impressions and immediate perceptions/questions/conflicts *regarding the text*. Link the hearers and their immediate temporal pre-occupations with the timeless and transcendent realities of the Kingdom of God, taking them with you from secular to spiritual perceptions and concerns.

CREEDAL AFFIRMATIONS: Portray the gift God offers specifically *in this text*: do not present abstract ideas, but glorious realities. Show the gift in all its splendor: provide the doctrinal framework in which the hearer needs to *hear the text*, utilizing the analogy of faith, parallel passages, and catechism vocabulary.

PERSONAL FOCUS: We all love to hear about ourselves. Here the hearers and their lives come explicitly into focus - yet with forthright honesty, dispelling all fictions concocted by the old Adam. Place the sinner and his sin under the condemnation of the Law and judgment of God. *Bring the text into focus* from the experiential perspective of the hearers and their daily lives. Anticipate the forensic acquittal of the gospel and the reality of the forgiveness of sins in Christ. Use lively and performative language; don't just tell them, but show them. i.e., Don't just tell them why the *thrust of the text* is important, but help them to see and sense its importance for themselves.

ACKNOWLEDGE THE HURT, HUNGER AND NEED The sermon transitions from Creedal confession, equipping hearers to understand and appreciate how it is that spiritual blessings and gifts not only address sin's guilt but also its residue and fallout: how the gifts of the Gospel are needed to vivify, rescue, renew and free us for life this side of eternity.

OR

CONFRONT THE MYTHS: The sermon transitions from Creedal statements and takes up the task of calling things what they really are. (*theologia crucis*) Fulfillment without Christ is emptiness. Life without Christ is death. Freedom without Christ is bondage to sin...et. al. Cultural lies are unmasked and exposed to holy Truth.

THE SWEET TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL: Proclaim the end of the Law in Christ's active/passive obedience. Preach Christ crucified. Utilize *textually appropriate* dimensions of the atonement (vicarious satisfaction, *Christus Victor*, etc.) Deliver multiple declarations of law juxtaposed with Gospel. Present the hearers with the gift of what our loving Heavenly Father has accomplished through the completed sacrifice of His only Son. Use *pro nobis* and *extra nos* language. Don't simply explain, but proclaim the gospel and its subjective effects in textually informed language. Don't just describe the gifts of salvation, but deliver them: in language *faithful to the text*, show how in Christ sinners are bought back, made heirs, declared righteous, made holy, made alive, freed from bondage, restored, etc.

COMFORT AND CONSOLATION THROUGH THE MEANS OF GRACE: The Means of Grace are the instruments of the Holy Spirit by which He not only offers salvation, but applies it to all who believe. Provide an explicit statement of how it is that hearers take present possession of Christ's gifts offered in God's Word and holy Sacraments using one or more of the following approaches (*again, determined by the text*).

- 1) Proclaim the Gospel as an efficacious Word, accomplishing what it says.
- 2) Demonstrate how God has called believers by name and made them His own in the waters of Holy Baptism.
- 3) Show hearers how in the Sacrament of the Altar they receive the flesh and blood of Christ – the very vehicles of our salvation by which they partake of the Divine Life of the Holy Trinity – for forgiveness, cleansing, and quickening of both body and soul.

NOW WHAT? - WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR ME RIGHT NOW? Prepare the hearers for re-entry. The imperatives of God are fulfilled in His indicatives; what He demands, He also gives. Clearly articulate the explicit new life given by God *in this text* in the face of the very real burdens and challenges faced by hearers in daily life. Grab the hearts of the hearers, wrap up this present and hand it over to them so that they can take hold of it and go with it into life both now and eternally. If appropriate, end on a note of doxology.