



10 Mistakes Made in Moving from Study to Presentation Sermon Préparation

Baptist Ministers of Houston and Vicinity

President: Max A. Miller Chairman of the J.J. Roberson Institute: Reverend J.R. Parker

Presenter: Reverend Yuri Solomon

Introduction

Preaching John 3:16 should be the easiest assignment in the world — after all, it's the verse everyone already knows, right? "For God so loved the world" practically preaches itself... until you realize half your sermon sounds like a Valentine's Day card from Walgreens and the other half like a seminary lecture. Somewhere between over-explaining and under-feeling, between dissecting the text and detaching from its theology, the pulpit lost its pulse. Sermons that should burn with divine love too often cool into polite monologues or explode into entertainment. We've built outlines that overshadow Scripture, illustrations that outshine the gospel, and conclusions that end before anyone meets Christ. It's no wonder some sermons finish with applause — when they should end with repentance. The problem isn't the text; it's the preacher who treats revelation like information instead of invitation. As Haddon Robinson said, *"The purpose of preaching is not to fill minds with facts but to set hearts on fire with Christ."* Because a sermon without Christ at its center is like a lamp with no plug — beautifully designed, but powerless to give off any light.

Here's are 10 points on the difference between "Study for Sermon Preparation" and "Preparation for Sermon Presentation." Each section builds from the inner work of the preacher to the outer delivery before the people.

I. THE HERMENEUTICAL SIDE (EXEGESIS)

1. Treating Exegesis as the Sermon

MISTAKE: Mistaking *study notes* for *sermon notes*.

CORRECTION: The hermeneutical outline is a map of discovery; the homily is the journey of delivery. Translate insights into a narrative that feeds souls, not just proves points.

2. Failing to Identify the Dominant Theme (Big Idea)

MISTAKE: Leaving the study with multiple truths but no unifying message.

CORRECTION: Every sermon should have one controlling idea — everything else should serve it (Haddon Robinson).

3. Preaching the Outline Instead of the Text

MISTAKE: Exalting the structure above the Scripture.

CORRECTION: Structure should serve Scripture, not overshadow it. Keep the biblical text central to every point.

4. Losing the Theology in the Transition

MISTAKE: Moving from hermeneutics to storytelling without keeping the doctrine alive.

CORRECTION: Every true homily must still carry the theological weight of the text; explanation must never be replaced by entertainment.

5. Over-Explaining Instead of Proclaiming

MISTAKE: Getting stuck in commentary mode, never crossing into conviction or calling.

THINK YOURSELF EMPTY, READ YOURSELF FULL, WRITE YOURSELF CLEAR, PRAY YOURSELF HOT AND GO PREACH JESUS

CORRECTION: Hermeneutics informs the head; homiletics must inflame the heart. Move from *explanation* to *exhortation*.

🔊 II. THE HOMILETICAL SIDE (PRESENTATION)

6. Disconnecting from the Original Context

MISTAKE: Making the message so “modern” it no longer reflects the ancient intent.

CORRECTION: Application without accuracy is manipulation. Keep the “then” in view while showing its relevance to the “now.”

7. Failing to Humanize the Truth

MISTAKE: Delivering principles without personality or pathos.

CORRECTION: The truth must wear flesh — through illustration, story, and experience that embody the text.

8. Ignoring Movement and Flow

MISTAKE: Stacking points mechanically instead of building momentum logically.

CORRECTION: A homily is a *living argument*. Each point should climb toward the conclusion; every step must feel necessary.

9. Neglecting the Gospel Center

MISTAKE: Preaching moral lessons or motivation but missing the redemptive thread.

CORRECTION: Every biblical sermon must ultimately find its resting place in Christ, who is the center of all revelation.

10. Ending Without an Encounter

MISTAKE: Concluding with knowledge but no summons — information without invitation.

CORRECTION: A sermon isn’t finished when the preacher stops speaking; it’s finished when the hearer starts responding. End with encounter — repentance, faith, hope, or obedience.