

## “APPLYING THE TEXT”

Neh 8:13-14

*My interest in preaching began with trying to work out why some men were effective some were not. One thing that makes preaching effective is when you are able to apply the text. Our scrip: The word of God is declared, and the people understand what they are supposed to do with it.*

### I. APPLYING TRUTH

#### A. Preaching is not just truth declared – it is truth applied

1. It is not just true – it has a purpose for being said *Application: Putting something into operation*  
*a. Acts 2:37 when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?"*
2. Some men preach without application: Various thoughts on a religious subject  
*a. God is love... what difference does that truth make? What are you supposed to do with that?*
3. Preaching without application is usually unclear preaching: You don't have a goal in mind

### II. QUESTIONS THAT BRING CLARITY

#### A. Who are you preaching to?

1. Your audience may change the application  
*a. New converts vs. older Saints b. Single vs. married*
2. Especially if you are preaching an older/already preached sermon!  
*a. I preach a sermon to my church – then preach that sermon to Pastors: Different application/emphasis*

#### B. Where are your people at?

1. **Proverbs 27:23** *Be sure you know the condition of your flocks, give careful attention to your herds;*  
*a. Never experienced breakthrough? Discouraged? Excited but shallow?*
2. Knowing your flock means you work out what they need  
*a. Encouragement/rebuke/stirring/foundations...*

#### C. What are you wanting to achieve? This is important in choosing a text

1. Choosing an inappropriate text will make it hard: Encourage – so you choose Judas hung himself

#### D. What have you been preaching?

1. You have to make sure you are not simply being repetitive – especially b/c of irritation!  
*a. Live clean, live clean; That's all I hear around here!*
2. You need to keep records – and honestly reflect/gauge your sermons  
*a. If you've been jamming – you might want to mix it up! b. If only been encouraging: Challenge!*

#### E. What does the text say?

1. Good preaching is not simply using the Bible to say what you want – it is letting God speak!  
*a. Irritated Pastor using Demas: People who have moved away from what they're supposed to be... not what text says*
2. Having chosen a text – follow the logic of the text! God is smarter than you are!

#### F. What do you want the people to do with this truth? Wise preaching has practical goal in mind of action

1. What is it that the people are to do with this information?

*a. Neh 8:13-14 Now on the second day the heads of the fathers' houses of all the people, with the priests and Levites, were gathered to Ezra the scribe, in order to understand the words of the Law. 14 And they found written in the Law, which the LORD had commanded by Moses, that the children of Israel should dwell in booths during the feast of the seventh month.*

2. These are questions you should ask yourself when preparing a sermon

*a. Why am I preaching this? What's the practical application?*  
*1. Encourage? Warn? Repent? Give? Help? Prepare? Inspire for calling?*

#### G. What is the motivation for the action you are preaching for?

1. Sanctified self-interest? *Blessing if you give...*
2. Gaining God's help?
3. Saving from destruction?
4. Honoring God?
3. The impact on your testimony? *What it will do for others...*
5. Destiny in God? *What disciples should do to prepare...*

#### H. What if the text is difficult?

1. It may leave no hope/positive action
2. Your audience may hear this text not as good news...
  - a. You may have people who have failed: *What will this truth do to them?*
  - b. You may have people struggling to do right: *You simply depress them into giving up*
3. Be deliberate about giving them hope
  - a. Remind them of the Gospel: All things become new...you can start again
  - b. Show them God: Good preaching is not just showing people – it's showing God
    1. Many scriptures are God revealing who He is: *Because that is the answer for all problems!*

### III. THE SUPERNATURAL DIMENSION

#### A. Our confidence is that preaching is a supernatural work: More than words

1. When we wisely/faithfully declare the Word of God – God does more than we can do  
*a. I want you to know your preaching is having impact: I see it! I don't have to put up with this! I'm a child of God!*