

Garlock, JohnKeys To Better Preaching

10. How Do I Prepare?

This chapter walks through how a preacher gets ready to preach, covering both spiritual and technical preparation. It stresses that both matter and must stay balanced, then surveys the practical tools and habits that make preparation effective.

Key takeaways

- Preparation is both spiritual and technical; neglecting either throws off the balance.
- General preparation is your lifetime background of study and past sermons ('money in the bank'); specific preparation is the extra work for one occasion ('pocket money'). Every sermon still needs specific preparation—leaning only on your general 'deposit' makes preaching stale.
- Divine guidance comes first. Let God shape the subject rather than asking His blessing only after you've decided everything yourself.
- The Bible is the main tool: own several versions, compare them, and prefer a fairly literal one (KJV/NKJV) for preaching over a paraphrase, so your points rest on the real text. Mark up your Bible freely.

- Keep a simple system for storing and retrieving notes—a shoe box beats an elaborate file. File by likely use ('Easter Material'), not by source.
- Other tools: an exhaustive concordance (every word, plus Hebrew/Greek), a Bible dictionary, and commentaries—used with discernment, since your own Spirit-led reading may be better.
- Meditate on Scripture ('chewing' on it) and interrogate the text: who, why, when, what attitudes.
- Discipline before preaching: eat light, avoid stress and conflict, guard quiet solitude, and pray.

Passages worth keeping

| *“Every sermon deserves specific preparation.”*

Guards against experienced preachers coasting on old material.

| *“Your own Spirit-led interpretation may be better.”*

Sets the limit on trusting commentaries.

Scripture referenced

- **Joshua 1:8** -- Command to meditate on God's Word for good success.
- **Colossians 3:16** -- Letting the word of Christ dwell in you richly, likened to meditation.