

In order to effectively preach the Word of God, we must first "allow the Word to feed our [own] souls" and be convicted by it on a personal level.<sup>1</sup> In other words, it is of utmost importance that the preacher set aside time to dwell in the Scriptures on a regular basis. While there is no set metric for such regularity, I hope to spend a consecrated time, even if only a few moments, first thing in the morning and last thing at night before I go to bed, meditating on the Scriptures. My spiritual covenant from SF503, which I took last year, involved meditating on a Psalm in the morning, studying a biblical passage during the day, and practicing the Examen prayer at night. While I have been meditating on a passage, although not necessarily the Psalms, each morning and following the Examen prayer at night, I realize studying a biblical passage in the middle of each day may have been overly ambitious. Thus, I will continue practicing daily meditation on the Scriptures and allow this to be the basis for both personal spiritual growth and preaching. Since preaching is a craft that requires time and skill, however, I will also carve out time in the week to spend in more intentional study and preparation of the passages on particular days of the week, most likely Wednesday and Thursday, rather than daily, so as to leave room to practice on Friday and Saturday.

Dr. Reimer highlights the importance of creating a preaching "rhythm," so as to prevent burnout and maintain spiritual, emotional, mental, and physical health. While he offers his own rhythm as a personal example, he notes that this "isn't prescriptive," but rather "descriptive."<sup>2</sup> In keeping with these words, then, I will adapt his concept of "rhythm" with my mentor's 4 R structure: Rest, Restore, Resist, and Repeat. The first R refers to the fact that we need to first be well-rested before doing anything; this includes getting a good night's sleep, above all else. The

1 Robert Reimer, "The Preacher," CD601: Proclamation and Communication (class lecture, Alliance Theological Seminary, New York, NY, September 15, 2020).

2 Robert Reimer, "Preaching Rhythm," CD601: Proclamation and Communication (class lecture, Alliance Theological Seminary, New York, NY, December 15, 2020).

second R refers to instead engaging in activities and spending time with people who are “fill[ing],” as Reimer also suggests.<sup>3</sup> The third R refers to refraining from activities and people whom may be “drain[ing],” namely creating healthy boundaries and saying “no.”<sup>4</sup> The last R simply refers to the need to repeat this on a daily, weekly, monthly, seasonal, and annual basis, creating varying patterns of rest and restoration. I have included my personal model of the 4R’s, or “rhythm,” as an addendum to this paper so as to protect the three tanks—physical, spiritual, and emotional—to which Reimer refers.

In terms of strengths in preaching, I have heard from classmates and the professor that I am able to communicate complex concepts in simple terms, so that a child could understand. Indeed, this is the age group that I have the most experience working with, that is children, and the target audience for my sermon in this course. While I do have a heart and passion for working with children, I also believe my ability to elucidate complex material can be translated into adult contexts, as well. After all, there are a variety of sensitive, challenging topics relevant to adult congregants that are not oftentimes easily understood or communicated, such as sexuality, money, and mental health. Thus, I can use this gift of communicating otherwise difficult concepts in easily understood terms to all age groups.

Another strength from my sermon was its organization, including a strong introduction, the use of transitions, and clear conclusion. As mentioned earlier, this is in part due to my extensive reading and writing experience; hence, when creating a sermon outline, I view it as I would an essay with all of the above elements. For my introduction, I started off my sermon by asking the audience, “Why are you here?” The imaginary scenario was an ordinary Sunday at church, and I caused them to question to themselves what their various reasons were for being

<sup>3</sup> Reimer, “Preaching Rhythm.”

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

present in this time and place. The chosen passage was 1 Corinthians 8 and after establishing my first point, which was that “True knowledge is loving God and others,” I used the rhetorical question to transition to my second point: “What does it mean to love?” After demonstrating both *what* true knowledge is, that is love, and *how* to apply this knowledge, I posed another rhetorical question, “Why do we have to love, at all?” The answer was, of course, “We love because Christ first loved us.” In other words, I first *explained* what the passage was about (first point), elaborated on its *application* (namely, how to love) and concluded with its *proof* (why we love). Thereby, I incorporated all three functional questions, focusing mainly on the proof and application.<sup>5</sup> In creating my transitions, I utilized both rhetorical questions, anticipating the questions that the audience would ask, and restatement to reinforce my main idea. Finally, in my conclusion, I returned to my initial question, “Why are you here?” and stated that we could go to church every Sunday, do all the “right” things, and have “knowledge” and yet lack true knowledge: to love God and love others. My use of transitions alongside a strong introduction and conclusion can be used to reinforce the main idea of a sermon in a memorable manner.

An area in which I can improve would be the lack of personal illustrations in my sermon. While I did use an image of a balloon and Lego’s to illustrate the differences between knowledge “puff[ing] up” and love “build[ing] up,” namely that knowledge makes oneself bigger whereas love makes others stronger (1 Cor 8:1 [NIV]), I lacked personal stories in which “[my] personal experience overlap [my] listener’s personal experience.”<sup>6</sup> It did occur to me during the preparation of the sermon to include more personal anecdotes, but truth be told, I could not think of any examples that specifically related to my main idea. I believe the reason for this was two-

<sup>5</sup> Robert Reimer, “Preparing Sermons,” CD601: Proclamation and Communication (class lecture at Alliance Theological Seminary, New York, NY, October 27, 2020).

<sup>6</sup> Haddon W. Robinson, *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014 [3rd edition]), 111.

fold: (1) I do not reflect on my own experiences enough and the valuable spiritual lessons they may provide and (2) I chose a passage that I was familiar with, but had yet to practice in my own life. To address the first factor, I hope to spend more time in self-reflection and perhaps creating a readily available list of personal illustrations that can be applied to a variety of topics. At the same time, I ought not to rely on this list alone, but cultivate a continuous practice of seeking spiritual lessons in my own experiences that can potentially serve as lessons to be shared with others, as well. As for the second reason, I acknowledge and repent of my shortcomings in this respect and will commit to preaching on topics that I have either already applied to my own life or am seeking to apply. This coincides with my earlier commitment to allowing my preaching to flow out of personal meditation on the Word.

Another area in which I hope to grow as a preacher is in my non-verbal communication, specifically eye contact. Eye contact can utterly “transform how a talk is received.”<sup>7</sup> In fact, Reimer goes so far as to say that it may be the “single most effective means” of communication, aside from verbal speech.<sup>8</sup> This is something that I struggle with, due to a combination of my cultural upbringing and naturally shy personality. For instance, in Korean culture, one is taught not to make direct eye contact with one’s elders, meaning I rarely looked into my parents’ eyes even when sharing meals together. My pastor has noted a couple times in my limited preaching experience thus far that I seem to have trouble making eye contact, which is true. In order to practice this particular non-verbal communication, I hope to regularly make eye contact with others in ordinary interactions, such as conversations, meals, and even brief encounters with strangers and acquaintances. In addition to this, I will apply Reimer’s suggestions of avoiding

7 Chris Anderson, *TED Talks: The Official TED Guide to Public Speaking* (New York: Mariner Books, 2017), 50.

8 Robert Reimer, “Delivering Sermons,” CD601: Proclamation and Communication (class lecture at Alliance Theological Seminary, New York, NY, November 3, 2020).

“look[ing] over the crowd” and instead identifying a few friendly faces.<sup>9</sup> He also suggests interaction with the audience, although being careful in choosing with whom we interact so as not to embarrass anyone.. Dr. Soto noted that one of my strengths in preaching was interacting with the audience, so perhaps by keeping in mind a few members whom I know are more prone to participate and engaging them, I can practice and grow more confident in the Eye Factor.

Lastly, one further area of improvement I have identified and hope to grow in is voice and vocal variety. In the same lecture discussing the Eye Factor, Reimer outlines the following four elements of vocal variety: (1) Pitch, (2) Punch, (3) Pace, and (4) Pause.<sup>10</sup> Pitch refers to vocal scale with varying inflections. As I naturally have a high-pitched voice, I hope to practice diversifying my pitch for emphasis. Punch is, essentially, volume. I tend to speak in a rather low volume, which Reimer actually encourages to accentuate certain points, yet I need to practice raising my volume so as to make the lowering of my volume more discernible. Pace refers to speed. My voice is rather slow-paced, which makes my speech easy to follow, but can also cause audience members to lose interest. By increasing and decreasing my pace alternatively, I can more effectively engage the audience. Lastly, Pause allows one to create emphasis via silence. I often forget that Pause itself can speak volumes. Since silence during preaching does not come to me naturally, I shall intentionally include pauses in my sermon outline and practice pausing during my rehearsals. Additionally, similar to the Eye Factor, my reluctance to Pause may also stem from a need to fill silence in my regular conversations with people rather than allowing the Pause to speak for itself. Thus, I will learn to grow comfortable with silences in my everyday life.

<sup>9</sup> Reimer, “Delivering Sermons.”

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

## Bibliography

Anderson, Chris. *TED Talks: The Official TED Guide to Public Speaking*. New York: Mariner Books, 2017.

Reimer, Robert. "Delivering Sermons." CD601: Proclamation and Communication. Class lecture at Alliance Theological Seminary, New York, NY, November 3, 2020.

———. "Preaching Rhythm." CD601: Proclamation and Communication. Class lecture at Alliance Theological Seminary, New York, NY, December 15, 2020.

———. "Preparing Sermons." CD601: Proclamation and Communication. Class lecture at Alliance Theological Seminary, New York, NY, October 27, 2020.

———. "The Preacher." CD601: Proclamation and Communication. Class lecture at Alliance Theological Seminary, New York, NY, September 15, 2020.

———. "The Word." CD601: Proclamation and Communication. Class lecture at Alliance Theological Seminary, New York, NY, September 29, 2020.

Robinson, Haddon. *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014 (3rd edition).

Gloria's Rhythm of Rest and Restoration

Repeat	Rest	Restore	Resist
Daily	Sleep 8.5 hours. 11:00pm-7:30am.	Meditation on Word first thing in morning. Take a shower. Eat 3 meals. Engage in some form of creativity. Family prayer. Examen prayer at night.	Social media for more than 1 consecutive hour. Messaging for more than 1 hour.
Weekly	24-hour Sabbath, or in particularly busy weeks, 2 12-hour Sabbaths.	Exercise 3-4x wk. Eat out. Therapy session. Bible study / prayer meeting (non-leading role).	Overextending self whether in work, school, or church. (Make sure to schedule your week in advance.)
Monthly	(Continue 24-hour Sabbaths.)	Meet with mentor 2x month. Call friends 2x month. Read a book for fun. Worship/praise night.	Organizing birthdays and holiday events (ask others to help). See above.
Seasonally	One weekend trip.	4-hour retreat of solitude. One creative project.	Serving at more than one retreat in a leading capacity. See above.
Annually	One week vacation.	1-day retreat of solitude. Reflect on past year with gratitude and write it down. Try one new hobby or challenge from bucket list.	All of above.