

BI222 Gospel of Mark (Crossfire) Sermon Preparation Guide

Students will write a sermon based on a passage of the students choice from Mark. The sermon will explain the meaning of the passage in a way that makes it understandable to a modern audience (this includes explaining how it fits in the overall book). The sermon will also explain how the Gospel passage applies to modern life.

A good sermon will consist of three things: 1) An understanding of the passage, 2) an explanation/translation so that people will understand what the passage is saying, and 3) an application so that people are enabled and challenged to apply the passage to their own life.

Therefore, your preparation and delivery of the sermon should consist of three activities:

1. Study the passage for full understanding of the point it made to its original hearers. This may include the following items:
 - a. Describe how your passage fits in the overall historical situation. How would the passage have been understood in the first century? Are there any customs, place names, or worldviews that would be unfamiliar to modern people? Are there any OT quotes? If so, what is the significance?
 - b. Describe how your passage fits in the overall message of the Gospel of Mark. How does this passage develop Mark's themes? How far along is this passage in the process of Jesus revealing who He is and what He is doing?
 - c. Describe how your passage fits in the flow from the passage before and to the passage after. What comes before and after? What is the connection?
 - d. Describe the development of thought in your passage. Is there a discernible outline to your passage? A change of topic, speaker, scene? How are the sentences/paragraphs/topics related?
 - e. Describe the details of the passage. What did Jesus say and do? What did the people around Him say and do? Was he welcomed or opposed? How did the disciples react?
 - f. Describe the point of the passage. What is the point? Why did Mark include this passage in his Gospel? What did Mark expect his readers to think/say/do as a result of hearing this passage?
2. Explain the passage so that it is understandable and accessible to a modern audience. This may be done in the following ways:
 - a. Write a short introduction that both captures the attention of the audience and leads them directly into the text you have chosen. There are many ways to do this, so be creative. But make sure it guides them into the Scripture and topic you have chosen.
 - b. Organize your explanation of the text around the organization inherent in the text itself. For example, if the text consists in two stories with similar points, organize your sermon in two parts based on the two stories. If the

text contrasts the response of three people or consists of four self contained paragraphs, organize your sermon accordingly.

- c. For each part, expose the hearer to the world of the text. Do your best to explain things that may be foreign to a modern hearer. But especially, try to help them hear the text like the original hearer would have heard it. Explain to the hearer what the text tells about who Jesus is, about what the Kingdom is, and what discipleship looks like. This includes describing the emotional impact or mental baggage that would have been experienced.
 - d. At the same time, try to bring the text into the modern world by illustrating and explaining the text using modern examples. Some things, like the political, economic and social situations are more foreign and will need more 'translation' to be accessible. Other things, like common human desires, temptations, struggles, emotions, etc. will not need as much explanation.
 - e. The point of all this is to help the modern hearer to understand and therefore be challenged in the same way that Mark intended his first readers or Jesus intended his first hearers to be challenged. Therefore, you should explain and illustrate so that they can hear the same point in their own lives.
3. Make application to modern hearers that is faithful both to their situation and the application intended in the text for the original hearers. This may be done in the following ways:
- a. Once again think about the application Mark and Jesus expected and commanded from the original hearers/readers. Think and pray how this application would look in your own life. What attitudes, beliefs, and actions should you do as a result of the teaching of this passage?
 - b. Explain to the modern hearer what the intended application of the text was for them.
 - c. If the application is immediately applicable, encourage the listeners to do the same and if possible, give personal examples of how you can and intend to apply it.
 - d. If the application needs to be 'translated', give examples of how the passage might apply to the modern hearer. For example, if there are no lepers around to help, ask the hearer to consider who in their world the outcasts are and how Jesus would respond to them. Be careful to be specific enough to challenge the hearer to change, but still be general enough that God can apply the passage to specific lives.
 - e. Finally, bring the sermon to a conclusion by giving encouragement and direction to the application, by inviting the hearer to accept the challenge and be changed, and by praying that God would use the word to change people.