

Part 1: How can we be engaging in our preaching? What makes a sermon interesting? (10 things that might be helpful)

1 – Purpose matters (Why should I listen?)

A helpful way to clarify purpose is to explain to someone, in normal language, what you are talking about.

Another helpful thing for defining purpose is the prayerful question, ‘What do I hope will happen in the lives of the people listening?’.

2 – Use Tension (Why should I listen?)

Look for tension in the teachings of Jesus and you will find it all over the place!

3 – Be Relevant (Why should I listen?)

4 – Have Fun

5 – Share stories

Shane Snow writes this, “...when we encounter a story that we can relate to, our brains pay attention. We subconsciously grasp onto, gravitate to the familiar. That's not enough to sustain our attention, though, so a good story hooks us with the familiar, and then uses novelty as a mechanism to keep us going.

What's really afoot here: a great story triggers the subtle emotional centres of our brains so we can care enough to keep going. Novelty triggers surprise, delight, fascination. Tension triggers anxiety, curiosity, cravings. Relatability triggers empathy, nostalgia, happiness.

And when you weave those things in combination, you can string together a longer attention span.”

6 – Connect with the mind and emotions

7 – Engage the senses with your language or props

The key question here is whether we are engaging enough for the brains of those listening to stay on topic, instead of wandering elsewhere.

8 – Have a good balance of challenge and familiarity

This is quote from Martin Schleske about how this works in music, “With any music, if the measure of familiarity is too high, we take the piece to be aesthetically trite, unappealing, and crude. We feel insulted because we are not challenged. But if there is too little familiarity, we feel that we have been handed over to a random series of events. We feel humiliated because we are over-taxed.”

9 - Be memorable

Set up, what I would call, teachable moments.

10 – Develop your communication skills

Does your voice have the musical quality that it would when telling a story to a group of friends?

You have learned over a lifetime how to be engaging with people that are close to you. The question is can you bring that ability to communicate into the pulpit?

In groups...

Which stands out to you and why?

When have you seen good or bad examples of any of the points we have looked at?