

Improving The Quality of Effective Sermoning: Through Spiritual Direction, Material Preparation, Personal Readiness

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Abstract

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Sermons play an important role in Christian worship, where sermons are an educational medium to proclaim the truth of God's word. The sermon highlights important aspects of Christianity. According to the theory of homiletics, a sermon is a profound theological work and must adhere to the Bible, with the power of the Holy Spirit as the main authority in the power of preaching. Elements of effective preaching include spiritual and theological direction through the true word and the power of the Holy Spirit, preparation of material and structure through biblical exegesis, thematic outlines, contextual illustrations, and the use of creative technology, as well as personal and communication readiness that includes mental-emotional-spiritual aspects, training, voice intonation, body language, and overall thoroughness. The research method uses qualitative approaches, literature review, and Research and Development to compile a systematic blueprint to help assess and improve the quality of the sermons. This research aims to develop effective preacher models in the contemporary world.

Keywords: Sermon, Homiletics, Preparation

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INTRODUCTION

Preaching is one of the main means in congregational life to convey the message of God's Word. Of course, with the Sermon, it will encourage God's people to have practical life changes. The quality of the sermon is not only determined by the theological content, aspects such as the quality of delivery, the use of easy-to-understand language, the relevance of the topic to the life of the congregation are very important to be considered (Piter Yan, 2024).

The need for effective preaching is increasingly important and urgent in this digital age, due to a shift in the pattern of attention of the heart community from Christian worship services. Several recent studies have analyzed homelithic teaching paradigms and recommended the formation of preachers who are not only intellectually competent but also trained to interact with the context of the congregation.(Clark, 2024)

In terms of process, systematic sermon preparation (exegesis of the text, development of application points, selection of illustrations, and delivery exercises) is closely related to the effectiveness of the preacher's communication, in addition to cognitive and technical competence, affective aspects such as submission, empathy, and the regulation of the preacher's emotions play an important role in shaping the appeal and transformational power of the sermon. Cross-disciplinary

studies of the effectiveness of teaching and the regulation of emotions in speakers are an important reference in understanding this affective aspect in the context of the preacher (Aldrup et al., 2024).

The problem that arises in many churches is, is there a guidance and preparation program that is practical, contextual, and can be implemented in every preacher whether a permanent pastor or a minister of the congregation? Many empirical studies examining the relationship between sermon quality and pastoral outcomes (e.g., changes in attitudes, understanding of the congregation) show that interventions at the preparatory and homiletic stages have the potential to increase the impact of sermons; However, effective training models and methods still vary depending on the local context. (Piter Yan, 2024). Therefore, improving the quality of preaching is an urgent need for every pulpit minister. This paper discusses how the quality of sermons can be improved through theological understanding, correct homiletic methods, and spiritual discipline and careful preparation.

PROBLEM FORMULATION

Against the above background, this paper is formulated to achieve the goals that make the sermon effective:

1. How do spiritual and theological direction have a profound effect on improving the quality of effective preaching?
2. To what extent can the preparation of sermon material affect the effectiveness of delivering sermon messages to the congregation?
3. How does the personal readiness of the preacher in communication skills affect the appeal and change in the congregation?

THEORETICAL STUDIES

According to Sibarani, (2020) Sermons play an important role in Christian worship because they are the proclamation of God's word to the people. Demikina is the case Augustine, (2019) argues that Sermons are part of the worship process in the church which aims to provide explanations to the church residents. Thus the Sermon is very important for the needs of the Members of the Church

Why Preaching is so important, Sibarani, (2016) I think preaching is very important because: (1) Preaching is one of the important topics in the convention. (2) Preaching is an effective medium to educate Christians, where by preaching can teach with the aim of educating. In fact, many times, preaching is an effective medium to educate God's people. (3) Preaching is a good opportunity to give apologetics, where apologetics are needed to deal with unfriendly society, so it is hoped that through preaching can convey the truth so that misunderstandings do not occur. (4) The sermon can reach those who do not yet believe in the Lord Jesus. (5) The sermon is a mirror for a society that is getting further away from God. The Church is the conscience of the people. Sermons are a mirror that invites people to be aware of all the untruths and injustices that take place. If the church is silent, it means that the church does not care about the community around it.

Regarding spiritual and theological direction in sermons, Indonesian homiletic literature emphasizes that homiletics is not a sermon that can be equated with a speech, but is a profound theological work. Blegur, (2025) argues that preaching should base truth for belief in theological support and not just touch on

psychology that has no theological truth to say. Meriyana, Rikardo P. Sianipar (2024) Recommend that theological sermons should be anchored in the Bible, as expository sermons allow for the interpretation of God's Word. This is important in a spiritual sense because it provides the background to a life of prayer and dependence on the Holy Spirit as the basis of the God-given authority to speak the Word.

In the preparation of sermon material and structure, contemporary homelithic research has found that exegesis is key to sermon preparation. Sold out, (2019) Explains that the preparation of a purposeful sermon requires a biblical analysis, thematic framework, and application objectives in order for the sermon to be systematic and effective. In addition, Marde C. S. Mawikere, (2025) Provide practical guidance on how to choose relevant illustrations and compose a sermon that is contextual for listeners, including those without a theological background. Therefore, the elements of exegesis and contextual illustration are the theoretical basis for the preparation of sermon material.

Regarding the personal readiness and communication of the preacher, the study of homiletics reveals that the mental, emotional, and spiritual aspects have a very positive impact on the quality of communication. Marisi dkk, (2023) It proves that the training enhances the theological skills of the participants but also creates space for creativity and courage to speak in the pulpit through spiritual practice and training. Moreover, reliable theological studies in the digital age conclude that effective communication needs to be equipped with emotional readiness, further Christi dkk, (2022) Discuss the need for preacher readiness in managing stress and emotional expression related to homiletics in preaching strategy.

The aspect of the training model and the context of the modern congregation is an important issue in contemporary homiletics in Indonesia. In the article Presenting Attractive Sermons for Generation Z, we examine strategies for preachers to make their messages relevant to young listeners: using authentic narratives, everyday life, and challenges of faith to make the message more relevant (Halim, 2024). In addition, the study of critical theology Simanjuntak, (2025) highlighting in modern preaching by suggesting an expository homiletics model so that the church can re-convey the theological meaning of the cross with spiritual and social depth. So training models that combine theological, practical, and contextual elements are very relevant to improve the quality of preaching and create transformational impact for today's congregation.

FRAME OF MIND

The thinking framework in this picture shows the Blue Print of the quality of effective sermon delivery.

Figure 1.1



The first thing that is needed in creating effective quality preaching is that the preacher needs spiritual and theological direction that is in accordance with a correct understanding of the Bible. Rogness, (2003) argues that preaching faithfulness must be born from a correct understanding of God's words. Learn More Rogness, (2003) think that the preaching anointed by the Holy Spirit will change the heart, further Hutagalung, (2021b) argues that the Holy Spirit is the power behind the success of the sermon on the day of Pentecost, in other words the speaker or preacher must be dominated by the power of God's Holy Spirit so that the sermon will touch the heart of the preacher and the speaker.

Hutagalung, (2021) conveying a very important point in the morning of the preacher, namely "Let us practice what we preach," so that the spiritual life of the preacher is something that needs to be paid attention to, so as not to become a stumbling block for others. Learn More Setio & Santoso, (2020) The life of a preacher whose morality is not in accordance with the Word is one of the causes of the lack of understanding of God's Word itself. So the preacher must have fidelity to the truth of God's Word, by always studying and meditating on the truth of God's Word and of course must do that Word.

The second thing that is necessary in making the quality of the sermon effective is the preparation of the material and the structure of the sermon. Sold out, (2019) argues that the content of the sermon must be in accordance with the text that is the subject of reflection in the theme of the sermon, so that the congregation is focused and understands what is being conveyed. To obtain a quality sermon content, an in-depth study of exegesis is required, so that the sermon will be presented well. just as the Bible is the living and powerful Word of God, therefore the sermon must live up to the text of the Bible (Meriyana, Rikardo P. Sianipar, 2024)

The themes of the sermon must also be arranged well so that the sermons from each worship meeting will be related, so that the meaning of the sermon will be obtained properly. Therefore, it is necessary for the sermon to carry out the great themes of Scripture, namely: justice, grace, the sovereignty of God, the divinity of Christ, the sinful nature of mankind, as well as the work of mission and evangelism

(McMickle, 2017), so that it is the truth of God's Word that is truly exalted, not the thoughts of men.

McClure, (2012) say Illustration is something that "illuminates" or "clarifies" the meaning of the sermon. This means that the illustration does not make God's Word unclear. In the use of sermon illustrations, it should be carefully considered, so that there are no illustrations that are out of sync with the theme of the sermon, or do not choose illustrations that only make you laugh, but let the illustrations bring the listener to understand better what the main message of the sermon is. Through humor, the preacher can lead the listener to understand an essential truth. However, excessive humor can have negative impacts, including: underestimating and weakening the spirit of the sermon, lack of firmness in stating mistakes, potentially causing bias, encouraging preachers to force themselves to become stand-up comedians, and potentially making preachers unable to control the content of the sermon and the words delivered, including those containing SARA problems (Solibut, 2023). So when preparing a sermon to be creative, the preacher should think about how to communicate your message visually (Hutagalung, 2021a).

Solibut, (2023) argues that a preacher needs to use technological media to make his sermon as interesting as possible. With today's technological advancements, preachers need creative ideas that use technology, so that the sermons delivered can be accepted by listeners, in other words a preacher should not be outdated, but need to pay attention to the current situation in order to know every need of the listener.

Setio & Santoso, (2020) argues that the preaching of God's Word is expected to have a positive influence on the spiritual life of the listener, that is, bring change to those who listen to it, in other words the preacher must know the needs of the congregation so that the prepared Word will provide spiritual satisfaction, not just a sermon delivered to fulfill the liturgical event.

The third thing that is necessary in creating effective quality preaching is personal readiness and communication. In sermon communication, the preacher is a communicator who channels the divine message through the medium of language, style, and body expression. Communication barriers such as monotony, lack of confidence, or emotionless delivery can reduce the acceptability of messages. Therefore, effective communication is one of the foundations of high quality preaching. The sermon must be presented with communication that contains art and knowledge. The art and science contained in this homiletics are covered with a mature presentation through preparation (Setiawan et al., 2021), in other words, communication will be conveyed well if it is accompanied by systematic or regular science and has applications from the application of that knowledge.

The voice in preaching is the most important thing, the intonation of the voice must be precise, so that the speaker of the prayer hears clearly and directed. However, preaching is not only about verbal communication (verbal communication), but preaching must have proportional body language, not just eye gaze, but must also be accompanied by hand movements (Palit, 2019). This needs to be considered very carefully, so that the sermon will be delivered properly.

Rogness, (2003) arguing that the clarity of the delivery of the content of the sermon must be clear, so that the listener can understand the main intention of the

sermon, indirectly from this, a preacher must be able to understand the content of the sermon, lest the preacher do not clearly understand what he is preaching himself, further Sold out, (2019) argues that the Sermon must be understandable to the congregation that listens to it, because that is one part of the purpose of the sermon. Therefore, the preacher must be creative and able to relate to the situation and condition of the congregation who comes to worship, so the preacher needs prayer and personal reflection to get an understanding of the content of the sermon.

Personal reflection is also to reflect on the purpose of preaching, where the preacher will reflect that his purpose in preaching is to be able to glorify God, open to glorifying himself and seeking personal gain, but to glorify God's name (Setio & Santoso, 2020).

RESEARCH METHODS

This writing research method uses a qualitative research approach and literature review with model development (Research and Development) (Pintauli, 2023). This method aims to compile a systematic model (blueprint) that serves as a tool to assess and improve the quality of effective preaching. This approach involves identifying important elements, such as spiritual and theological direction, preparation of sermon material and structure, and personal readiness and communication.

DISCUSSION RESULTS

Figure 1.2 model explains that effective preaching is to follow a pattern that includes spiritual and theological, material preparation, personal readiness, and communication. Through a correct understanding of the Bible and the power of the Holy Spirit declaring that Holy Spirit-controlled preaching can change hearts, spiritual direction requires faithfulness to God's word. The life of a preacher must be moral and according to the word so as not to become a stumbling block. Personal readiness needs to involve mental, emotional, and spiritual aspects, with training that enhances theological skills and creativity.

Effective communication requires art and knowledge, with mature presentation through preparation, proper voice intonation, proportional body language, and clarity of representation so that the congregation can understand the message needs to be considered. Personal reflection through prayer and the goal of glorifying God are also very important to pay attention to.

Figure 2.



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