

IDEAS FOR SERMON NOTES

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Topics of personal opinion are difficult to address because, after all, they are personal opinions. How a preacher prepares his sermon notes is a case in point. Most men upon graduating from seminary put very little thought into how they prepare their sermon notes. They merely try something, or are told to do something, and they stick with it until their dying day. Their method might not be the best way for how God has made them, functionally speaking, or even the most efficient way, but it is their way and they are going to take their method to the grave. Once they have labored over a dozen or so sermons it is very hard to get some preachers out of their sermon note style rut. It does no good to tell them they are wrong, because they are not wrong. It is even hard to argue functionality or efficiency because any method one has used repeatedly seems like the most efficient method, because it is the method that can be done without thinking about it much or at all.

I have discovered that if you suggest to some preachers that they should change the way they do their sermon notes, it is like telling them they aren't raising their children correctly. My purpose in writing this paper is to get you to think about the way you do your sermon notes, why you do your sermon notes the way you do, the implications of the way you do your sermon notes, and finally how others put their sermon notes together, so that you might improve your preaching by the way you use, or don't use sermon notes.

What If You Believe Preachers Should Never Preach With Sermon Notes?

Let me just tackle this subject up front. Okay, don't use sermon notes then! There, you are off the hook, but I would encourage you to read this article anyway because it might convince you that having some degree of sermon notes is a good idea, even if you don't bring them into the pulpit, and even if you are one of the rare individuals who can preach a decent expository sermon with no notes at all.

When I was getting my doctorate in preaching one of our assignments was to preach six sermons with full notes; six sermons with detailed outlines, kind of a half manuscript approach; six sermons with a detailed outline i.e., one page with a few extra reminders; six sermons with a bare outline on a 3" x 5" card; and finally six sermons with no sermon notes at all. Some of you, I am sure, have sweaty palms just reading about that assignment. You are those who probably most need to preach with no notes at all, at least for a while, because your sermon notes have become your lifeline. You fixate on your lifeline while in the pulpit instead of your people. Your people see more of the top of your head than your face because you are always looking down reading your notes. Looking down and constantly reading your notes isn't good for a variety of reasons, but let me encourage you to try different approaches to sermon notes and find out what works best for you. I am not saying make a permanent change, but I am saying give each method a good try so you know *for certain* what works best for you. You may be surprised!

Back to the no-notes or bare outline approach. Often preachers who say they preach with no notes actually preach with an outline. Charles Spurgeon was one such preacher. I recommend you read the chapter from his excellent work, *Lectures To My Students* entitled, "The Faculty Of Impromptu Speech." Spurgeon is a no-notes advocate, by which he means study diligently and create an outline to take into the pulpit. Some teach that when you preach with no notes, you allow the Holy Spirit to work freely in and through you, which produces the best sermons. No-note advocates often argue that by using notes you quench the Spirit or hinder the "unction of the Spirit." Sounds scary, but such a notion cannot be found in the pages of the Bible. I have read the Bible quite a bit and have not read a single text on "unction" yet, though I have read texts about walking in the Spirit, being filled with the Spirit, being empowered by the Spirit, and am convinced that the Holy Spirit empowers preachers as they preach. Yet to say that notes turn off the power is to step outside of holy writ.

However, there is something to be said about not using sermon notes. Without notes you tend to look your people in the face more and this helps secure their interest. Most tend to be more natural and extemporaneous sounding when they don't use notes, since they are not reading anything. I would also affirm that when you are preaching off the top of your head, hopefully a well-studied and prepared head, the Holy Spirit guides your thoughts at the very moment of sermon delivery. So yes, no notes has some advantages. I also realize some great expository preachers of the past and present preach with no notes.

Yet it can also be argued that a preacher with a full manuscript can look his congregation in the face almost as often as the no-notes guy. Yes, he may glance down now and then and look at his notes to keep pace, read quotations, and remind himself of key cross references, but having a full manuscript doesn't mean you have to read the manuscript word for word, *in fact you shouldn't read it word for word*, unless of course you don't have the gift of preaching. If you must read your manuscripted sermon word for word you shouldn't be in the pulpit for you are laboring outside of God's appointed sphere for you. The same is true about sounding extemporaneous and allowing the Holy Spirit to guide and direct. You can sound extemporaneous and have the Holy Spirit guide and direct you with a full sermon manuscript, half a sermon manuscript, a detailed outline, or bare outline.

Think about it, the Holy Spirit knows the future. He can guide a preacher just as well in preparing his sermon notes during the week as he can at the moment of his sermon delivery with no notes. Also, the Holy Spirit can guide, direct, or move the preacher who has a full or partial set of sermon notes to deviate from his notes just as easily as the preacher with no notes at all. He has done it for me on a weekly basis. Is anything too difficult for the Lord? No! The Holy Spirit is all-powerful. If the Holy Spirit can redirect and change the message of Balaam, whose intention it was to curse Israel, so that he gave Israel a blessing three times instead, he can get any preacher to say what He wants—notes or no notes. This of course is no excuse for not diligently studying to prepare to preach, it is merely to say that the Holy Spirit has no problem getting Spirit filled preachers to preach what He wants, regardless of their sermon note preferences.

If you are enslaved to your sermon notes, always looking down as you preach, I would strongly recommend that you wean yourself off of them, at least for a time, until you

learn that when you enter the pulpit well studied the information is in your head and reading your notes word for word is not necessary. Try various approaches to sermon notes. Preach with a full manuscript for a few weeks, preach a few weeks with a half manuscript, then the next two weeks preach with a detailed outline, then preach with just a bare outline for several weeks, and finally preach with no notes at all for a while! It won't kill you and in fact you will learn valuable lessons you can't learn any other way. You will learn that if you are faithful to study, the information is in your head. It is fresh on your mind and most of it will come out, maybe even too much. But what it will teach you is that you don't need your notes if you are well prepared. After the experiment, even if you go back to the way you have always done it, you will have learned important lessons. If you have always used a full manuscript and read from it frequently, you won't feel afraid to not look down at your notes every second. The exercise is sure to give you greater confidence to preach to your people from the abundance of a well studied and prayed up heart, rather than from your notes.

When I was trying out different approaches to sermon notes I learned other helpful lessons. When I don't have notes I tend to ramble more, which isn't preferred. I often repeat myself too much, not a good thing. I usually say too much on the first outline point for fear of running out of material and then I have to speed through my last point or two seeing that time is short. My sermon pace or progression through each point is often uneven when I don't use notes. I can't quote people because I don't have time to memorize quotes. I don't remember exact cross-references, but do my best to try and remember the general location of cross-references and usually end up paraphrasing what the Bible says. I am not as precise in how I say things when I don't use notes. And if I don't craft a full manuscript I lose most of my research and forget what I believe about a text. Yes, eye contact and an extemporaneous delivery is at its height when I don't use notes. But I am unwilling to sacrifice giving good quotes, cross-references, precision, and balance for a little more eye contact and extemporaneousness. I think I have a good amount of extemporaneousness and eye contact even though I preach with a full manuscript. Again, I am not arguing for my method, just arguing that your method, whatever it might be, might not be the best for you and the way God has gifted you. Try other methods and make sure your method is the best for you.

Please don't think I am arguing against preaching with no notes. I have seen some men do it with amazing dexterity and faithfulness to the text. I have known preachers who meticulously manuscripted their sermons, but didn't bring their notes into the pulpit. They did this in an attempt to receive the benefits of both methods. I, however, am but a lowly preacher with only a fragment of the gifts of other men. God has given me a small cranial engine and so I find it more useful to preach from sermon notes. It is what works best for me and the resources and gifts God has given me.

Make Sure You Are Comparing Apples to Apples

Every preacher eventually settles down into the notes or no notes camp. Those who use notes in the pulpit come in all shapes and sizes as I will show you at the end of this paper. I'm not sure why this is, but I have found among the "no-note preachers" a prevailing sense of pride and superiority. They are kind of like rabid 1611 King James Bible users who insist that all preachers should preach with no notes! In fact they scold and look down upon those who use notes because—what? They don't use notes? Or they know of other great preachers who didn't use notes? Or their seminary taught them

not to use notes? Well, I would humbly remind such men that the Bible is our standard, not the fallible opinions of men, or personal experience, and to elevate our opinions or experiences to the same authority as Scripture is a form of legalism or mysticism to be avoided at all costs. I earned degrees from two different seminaries and one advocated using notes while the other advocated using no notes. I have heard both sides of the argument and have practiced both. It is a matter of personal preference and conviction. Great Bible expositors can be found on both sides of the sermon note fence.

I have heard some no-note preachers appeal to the promises Jesus gave to His disciples, "*When they bring you before the synagogues and the rulers and the authorities, do not worry about how or what you are to speak in your defense, or what you are to say; for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say*" (Lk. 12:11-12 also Mk. 13:11). Yet this only reveals faulty hermeneutics, bad exegesis, and a lack of understanding of what the New Testament teaches. All promises in the Bible are not universal promises to every believer. Yes, every text is profitable for the believer, but every text is not directly applicable. The timeless principle to take away from Lk. 12:11-12 is that God always provides sufficient grace for whatever ministry He calls us to perform. The text is not a universal promise to all preachers that they don't need to diligently study to prepare their sermons.

The Holy Spirit speaking through the Apostle Paul in II Tim. 2:15 commands us, "*Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.*" Diligent study is the universal command for all who preach and teach God's Word during the church age. We dare not take a specific promise, given to a specific group, at a specific time, for a specific circumstance "*when they bring you before the synagogues and rulers and authorities*" and turn a specific promise, "*do not worry about how or what you are to speak,*" into a universal promise for all preachers to preach with no notes! To do so would be to sin against the command of II Tim. 2:15.

I have also observed that some no-note preachers, not all of them, use the gift of gab and rely on their oratorical prowess to get them through the sermon time without faithfully addressing the authorial intent of the text they are supposedly preaching from. Granted, this is true with those who use notes as well. Yet there is the preacher who has received some training, knows some doctrine, and cycles through his limited but shallow toolbox of good things to say like the cycles of the moon. His sermon repertoire consists of sermons on giving to the Lord, not sinning, reading the Bible, serving in the church, and sharing the gospel. It matters not what text he is preaching from, he is able to press those good doctrines out of it like a child presses Play-Doh through a Play-Doh machine. If this is the case you can see why he doesn't need to prepare much for he can speak with fluency on the small collection of doctrines he knows so well. I would love to take a preacher like that and have him preach a sermon on concurrence, the two wills of God, immanence verses transcendence, or any other doctrine outside his mental resource pool and see how he does without notes. It is more difficult to preach on a doctrine that is new to you and do it well without any notes.

I bring this up because some no-note preachers, who are quick to scold note-using preachers, are being unfair, if not flat out disingenuous. They are comparing their recycled sermons from their limited doctrine pool, which they have been preaching for 25

years, to the young man who is just starting out and is trying to be faithful to preach all the doctrines of the Bible; this is not an apple-to-apple comparison.

Another often overlooked fact is that preaching a 20 minute sermon with no notes and preaching an hour long sermon with no notes is not an apple-to-apple comparison either. I have known men who boasted how many times they preached a week, only to discover they preached 20 minute topical sermons relying mostly on the gift of gab to see them through. They read a text, extract a few ideas, and talk about what they have studied in the past. Yet they scold the faithful preacher for using notes, though he is preaching through books of the Bible verse by verse in an expository fashion and accurately handing the Word of truth so that the doctrines are made clear and practically applied to his congregation. Charles Spurgeon, a strong advocate of no-note preaching said:

If we can study and do not, if we can have a studious ministry and will not, we have no right to call in a divine agent to make up the deficits of our idleness or eccentricity. The God of providence has promised to feed his people with temporal food; but if we came together to a banquet, and no one had prepared a single dish, because all had faith in the Lord that food would be given in the selfsame hour, the festival would not be eminently satisfactory, but folly would be rebuked by hunger; as, indeed, it is in the case of spiritual banquets of the impromptu kind, only men's spiritual receptacles are hardly such powerful orators as their stomachs.

Gentlemen, do not attempt, as a rule, to follow a system of things which is so generally unprofitable that the few exceptions only prove the rule. All sermons ought to be well considered and prepared by the preacher; and, as much as possible, every minister should, with much prayer for heavenly guidance, enter fully into his subject, exert all his mental faculties in original thinking, and gather together all the information within his reach. Viewing the whole matter from all quarters, the preacher should think it out, get it well masticated and digested; and having first fed upon the word himself should then prepare the like nutriment for others. Our sermons should be our mental life-blood—the out-flow of our intellectual and spiritual vigor; or, to change the figure, they should be diamonds well cut and well set—precious, intrinsically, and bearing the marks of labor. God forbid that we should offer to the Lord that which costs us nothing.¹

I give my hearty, "Amen!" to Spurgeon! Yes, yes, let me address George Whitefield who reportedly preached 10 times a week, but let us keep in mind that: 1) He rarely preached over 30 minutes and advised other preachers to preach less, 2) He often preached the same message over and over again during the week as he traveled. He was not preparing and preaching ten different sermons every week. And 3) He didn't have the constant care of shepherding a local congregation with all of its problems and challenges. Yes, he had other challenges, but as the Apostle Paul made clear after listing all the things he suffered, the care of the church was his greatest burden (II Cor. 11:23-28). Yes, Whitefield was used greatly by the Lord and in my estimation he was the greatest evangelistic preacher the world has ever known, but let us not take the example of George Whitefield and use it as a biblical rule. If we make George Whitefield

¹ Charles H. Spurgeon, *Lectures to My Students*, Volume 1 (Kindle Edition, Locations 2690-2700).

² Charles H. Spurgeon, *Lectures to My Students*, Volume 1 (Kindle Edition, Locations 2797-2798).

the standard then let us all preach in the open air, abandon our flocks, and travel back and forth across the Atlantic Ocean in masted ships so we can be like George Whitefield. He had his way before the Lord and you need to have yours.

The fact is longer sermons require more notes or larger brain capacity. It has been my observation that no-note preachers often preach 30 minutes or less. In fact, the seminary that taught me to preach with no notes also encouraged me to preach sermons that were 30 minutes or less in length. I do know a few men who regularly preach hour long expository sermons with no notes, but the vast majority preach sermons in the 30 minute range. I, on the other hand, have almost always preached an hour, if time permitted, and I am able to do that because I use notes.

The length of sermons is the subject of an entirely separate paper, but let me digress just a bit. First, I recommend to preachers that they only preach as long as they can hold people's attention. If people are asleep it does no good to keep preaching at them. You have two options when people become sleepy during your sermon, either learn to wake them up, or shut down the sermon. But let's say you can keep the majority of your congregation awake and interested for an hour; why not preach to them an hour? Are you afraid they might receive too much truth? I am not.

I did receive a call to pastor a church that during its interim time of searching for a senior pastor became used to 15 to 20 minute sermonettes. I started out preaching 45 minutes and after six months switched to an hour and kept on preaching an hour for the next 11 years. Yes, many came to Christ. Yes, the church grew. Yes, the majority of people in the congregation were younger 45 years or less. However, you should have heard the loud complaints when transitioning from 15 minute to hour long sermons! "Preacher, your sermons are really long!" "Your sermons have way too much information in them!" "You know the previous pastor only preached . . ." People get used to the length of sermons they hear most often. If you preach 15 minute, doctrinally void, topical sermons, your congregation will get used to bringing their thimbles to have a few drops of watered down truth placed into them on Sunday morning. Yes, when you radically change the length of the sermons they are used to, they will often whine like babies—*but only for a time*. If your sermons are well prepared and delivered well they will very quickly get used to the bigger bite. In fact some will begin to complain that even the hour sermon is too short if you do your job well.

I once was preaching to about 200 singles on the sovereignty of God at a retreat. They were very engaged and interested in the topic. The pastor who invited me, said after my first sermon on Friday night, "Preach as long as you want." I took him at his word and preached 2 hours and 15 minutes! It was/is the longest sermon I have ever preached and yes, I deviated from my notes significantly as I had only prepared to preach an hour. It was about 10 pm in the evening when I finished. To my surprise they asked me if I could do a question and answer time that night. It was my normal bedtime, but I agreed as I could see they were very interested and didn't want to pass up the opportunity. I went to my room, got my computer, came back at 10:30 pm and taught them until 2:15 in the morning! No one fell asleep, though most were tired as it was late Friday night and most had jobs. I told them they could leave at any time they felt tired and a few did, but most stayed. Why? Because they were interested in learning about the sovereignty of God. They were hungry for the truth. They were being fed and liked it!

I mention this because spiritual hunger is a factor in how long you should preach. People who are on fire for the Lord can hardly get enough good preaching and Bible teaching. But if you have a congregation of professing Christians who are spiritually dead, or who have been trained to sleep during the sermon time because the content of the previous pastor's sermons was shallow, boring, and innocuous, you can't expect them to hang on to every word of your sermons at first. They will be saved and engaged.

One more word about sermon length before we move on. How I proportion my sermons, in general, is I count on about 15 minutes for introduction, background, context, and conclusion, and 15 minutes for each sermon point in my outline. This means if I have a 3 point sermon, I need an hour to preach. Each point is expounded from the text; the doctrine is developed, illustrated, and applied. This takes about 15 minutes. Somewhere in the sermon I like to preach the gospel well enough so someone can get saved and that often takes about 5 minutes. Yes, I can preach single point expository sermons and do a pretty good job in 30 minutes. I think that is what many expository preachers do, especially those who like to preach with no notes. However, if I used that approach I would either be very slow in preaching through books of the Bible, or would be forced to skip much of the truth in the text. This is why I am a strong advocate of hour-long sermons. Again, if you don't have the gifts, training, experience, or skill to keep people awake, then don't preach to sleeping people. Either learn to keep them awake or preach shorter sermons. Once a man visited the church I was pastoring. He came up after the sermon a bit annoyed that I preached at him for an hour. He gave me some of his sagest advice, "You know," he said with an air of authority, "once you strike oil, it's best to shut the rig down." He looked down his nose at me, turned, and walked away. I thought about what he said and concluded that once you strike oil, it is time to get all the oil pumped out of the well! Back to unfair comparisons.

Another apples and oranges scenario that is often overlooked in the notes or no-notes debate is the circumstance a preacher sometimes finds himself in when asked to preach multiple times the same day. It is one thing to start studying a text early in the week, return to it again and again, study it diligently, then having stuffed your head full with information about the text, unload the truck on your people Sunday morning. It is more difficult to have to prepare two full-length expository sermons for Sunday morning and Sunday evening. In fact, to do so requires 30 to 40 hours of time for most seasoned preachers. The leadership must realize this, protect their preacher's time, and not overload him with extraneous busy work. But let's say you are asked to preach at a men's retreat. They want you to preach twice Friday night, four times Saturday, and once Sunday morning. I have been asked to do this many times. You have seven sermons to preach. There are very few no-note preachers who could preach 7 quality, hour long, expository sermons in near proximity without any notes. In fact, I have never seen it done.

Often times, when I am asked to preach at a conference or a retreat of some sort they want me to preach multiple times, sometimes multiple times back to back with no ability to study in between. I am sure there are a few gifted men out there who might be able to preach back to back hour long expository sermons on different texts with no notes, but I think it would be the rare exception indeed. Notes are sometimes necessary. If I am preaching at my church through a book of the Bible and someone asks me to preach at a marriage conference for instance, I may slowly get prepared over a several month

period and eventually have multiple expository sermons on marriage ready to go. I have full manuscripts of each sermon. However, while I'm doing that I am also preaching through a book of the Bible at my own church. Maybe I am preaching Sunday night as well. Maybe I am teaching a mid-week Bible study and an early morning discipleship group that I also have to prepare for. When the marriage conference arrives, I may be able to read over my notes early in the morning to get ready for the day, but the fact is, without my notes I would tank as I can't keep that much information in my head in order to preach multiple hour long expository sermons back to back.

I know that some of you may be thinking to yourself, "Then preach shorter sermons!" Yes, that is the easy way out, but I don't think it is what is best for Christ's Church. People are not getting too much good preaching these days. Granted, there are some preachers who are so ill prepared it would be best for them not to preach at all, but for those who have something to say, from a text well studied and understood in its context, 30 minutes is a drop in the bucket. I have at times given 30 minutes of background and context to the text I am preaching in order to orient people to the complexities that surround the text and its various contexts. All this to say, if you see me preach at a conference where I am asked to preach multiple times back to back, you are going to see me look at my notes more than if you see me preaching a single message to my congregation on Sunday morning in which I have spent all week preparing.

It is also very helpful to use notes when preaching technical sermons. Granted, we don't always preach on technical or hard to understand doctrines, but when we do, sermon notes are essential if we are to communicate clearly. I am thinking right now of a few select sermons that were mind bogglingly complex, even with notes. I have preached a sermon surveying the entire Old Testament. It would be an understatement to say notes were very helpful. I preached a sermon for Resurrection Sunday explaining why Jesus ate Passover with His disciples on Thursday evening, and yet was crucified during Passover on Friday evening! I studied my guts out to harmonize all four Gospels, what they said, the key Old Testament texts on when the Passover was to be observed, etc. Notes were essential. I remember a sermon I preached trying to explain the Day of The Lord and if there was a difference between the Day of the Lord and the Day of God, and the Day of God Almighty, the Day of Christ, and the day of Christ Jesus. It was very complex. Granted, only a small percentage of the sermons I have preached fall into this category, but some do, and I believe they can be better preached with notes, than without notes.

Finally, I believe preaching on problem texts is often best done when using sermon notes in the pulpit. When you get into a debated text, a text that has a zillion interpretations that hinge on minute details, notes save the day. Yes, you will be looking down more in order to keep your words and thoughts precise. Yes, you will be losing some eye contact, but it is more important that you accurately communicate the text, than have an extemporaneous style or good eye contact. Well, enough said about these things, let me explain how I prepare my sermon notes and why. Again, this might not be your way, but it is my way and may provide you with some ideas to try.

A Summary Of How Jack Hughes Prepares His Sermon Notes

My way is not the inspired way, but it works best for me. I can say that I have given a variety of other ways a good try. I have also made improvements in how I construct my

sermon notes over time, but still, even now they could be improved upon. Surely *my method* is not for everyone. Here is a condensed description of what I do: I type out a full manuscript of my sermon notes using MS Word for Mac. I use a custom page size that just happens to be the same size as my iPad screen. I use 15 point Arial font for most of the manuscript except for the parts I intend to read verbatim, like cross references and quotes. The parts I intend to read I have in 12 point bold. I have various custom shortcut keys that enable me to type in different colors and I also use bold and italics for specific things. After I have my sermon notes refined and ready to preach, I save them in PDF format. All my files are automatically saved to Dropbox, an online cloud storage service. Then from my iPad, using PDF Expert, an iPad App for reading, editing, and marking up PDF files, I open up my sermon notes and preach from my iPad.

I have done this since about 2011 and never had a failure preaching multiple times a week. I always have a paper Bible with me in the pulpit just in case lightening strikes my iPad. If you are afraid of tech failure, don't worry about it. Let's say your iPad does get struck by lightening as you ascend the pulpit, but you miraculously escape. Just preach with no notes. God's grace is sufficient. If you have read the text many times, outlined it, done word studies, read commentaries, written and refined your notes four to six times, you will be able to preach the text just fine even with no notes if an emergency were to happen. If you want to know more about how I use my iPad to preach from, I will post a separate document eventually that you can look at called "Preaching From An iPad." Before iPads were invented, I preached using half-sheet 5 ½" x 8½" paper, printed on both sides. I liked half sheet paper as it allowed for my sermon notes to fit into my Bible.

Let me begin by giving you a bit of history about how I eventually came to fully manuscript my sermon notes. When I was in seminary I typed slowly, about 25 words a minute. My wife was kind enough to type all my papers and in many cases retyped them several times as I edited and made improvements. However, after seminary I realized that I could only write by hand about 18 to 20 words a minute if I really worked hard. My writing was hieroglyphic, like drunk chickens walking on greased paper having had their feet dipped in ink. I realized I could already type faster, even though I typed slowly, than I could write by hand. I decided to stick with typing knowing my typing speed would improve over time. And it did. Now I can type like an over-caffeinated maniac. When I am typing off the top of my head I can probably type about 80+ words a minute. This is good for several reasons.

First, it helps me to get the thoughts out of my head quickly. Often when studying I am so excited about the text I am studying that my mind is racing with observations, thoughts, illustrations, cross references, openers, etc. I love being able to type like a maniac and get all that out of my head and on the screen. Granted, it is sometimes unrefined when it first comes out, but at least it is out of my head and preserved. I am sure you have had the experience of thinking of something amazing and then telling yourself you need to include that bit of wonder in your sermon, only to forget your amazing insight. For me, typing reduces the chances of that happening.

Second, writing out my notes helps me preserve my research. I remember when first starting to preach I tried the detailed outline approach, usually one or two pages of notes, some cross references, a quote or two, and marginal notations like "ILL--blue

truck.” At the time I understood and remembered what the “blue truck” illustration meant, but a couple months later, I forgot. If I had to preach the same sermon I would have had to study it all over again. Yes, my exegetical outline and cross references would be the same, but my thoughts, interpretations, observations, etc., would all be lost.

However, by writing a full sermon manuscript, though I don’t read my manuscript verbatim, all my thoughts, interpretations, ideas, and illustrations are preserved intact. I could return years later, read through my notes and get back to where I once belonged Jo-Jo. I can modify them for a blog post, journal article, book, or steal, copy, and paste part of one set of sermon notes to use in some other work. It is great! And with the search features available on computers today, very handy. I can do a search of all my sermon notes and find a phrase, word, or illustration from years ago because I have manuscripted my sermons.

I will mention here, for I think it is of some importance, that most of the great preachers manuscripted their sermon notes. This proves no definitive point and is not to arm twist you into preaching from a full manuscript. Granted, a few great preachers have preached with a bare outline or no notes at all, but most had detailed notes of some sort. Spurgeon is probably the most well known preacher who preached from a bare outline on Sunday mornings (see example at the end of this paper). During the week, for shorter sermons or devotions, he would preach with no notes, but only when preaching on subjects he knew very well. He would still prepare, consider what he wanted to say, and then say it extemporaneously. He didn’t advocate the “no preparation” approach that many associate with “preaching with no notes.”

Let me be clear—preaching with no notes is not a synonym for preaching unprepared. All God honoring preaching requires preparation. Subjects, texts, or doctrines you know very well don’t require as much preparation. I would think it obvious that any preacher should be able to preach the gospel extemporaneously on the spur of the moment if called upon to do so. Some preachers, however, have the gift of gab and they can talk about religious things with no preparation week after week—and do! This is not expository preaching. Failing to diligently prepare for your sermons is a clear violation of the Word of God. God commands preachers to study diligently, take pains with, be absorbed in, give close attention to themselves, their doctrine, and the preaching and teaching of God’s Word (I Tim. 4:6-16; II Tim. 2:15). Spurgeon commenting on the need to study diligently if we are to preach extemporaneously said:

Ignorance of theology is no rare thing in our pulpits, and the wonder is not that so few men are extempore speakers, but that so many are, when theologians are so scarce. We shall never have great preachers till we have great divines. You cannot build a man-of-war out of a currant bush, nor can great soul-moving preachers be formed out of superficial students. If you would be fluent, that is to say flowing, be filled with all knowledge, and especially with the knowledge of Christ Jesus your Lord.²

² Charles H. Spurgeon, *Lectures to My Students*, Volume 1 (Kindle Edition, Locations 2797-2798).

As I have already stated, I manuscript my sermons, but I don't read my notes verbatim. Yes, I do have a way of marking up the text, which I will get to below, that enables me to glance down and see major outline points, cross references, things I want to read word for word, and the rest I summarize into my own words so I don't "thwart the unction of the Spirit" ☺. Couldn't resist. I have preached the same sermon twice, for two services, every Sunday morning for years. My wife, who occasionally sat through both sermons, tells me that sometimes the sermons are radically different though preached from the same notes on the same text. The reason is that I take a full sermon manuscript into the pulpit, but I don't read it word for word. I glance down at a page, am reminded of what I want to say, and I preach it in a summarized fashion. Thus I get to have good eye contact, a good extemporaneous style, and yet keep my sermon progression measured and balanced. I get to use good quotes and cross-references without having to memorize them. Often during the first service I discover that I wish I would have said something differently and so I make the changes in my mind and sometimes rearrange the second service sermon on the fly.

As an added bonus I can better adjust the length of my sermon using notes. This is very helpful indeed. If you haven't done much preaching you will soon discover the trauma of preparing a sermon for a certain length of time only to discover right before you preach that someone has adjusted the length of your sermon time without asking you. The person giving the announcements rambles a bit, takes up a few extra minutes. The person leading the music is so into his singing that he decides to sing a few extra rounds. The missionary who has been threatened with murder if he goes over 5 minutes takes up 20 minutes, and then you get the leftovers, the crumbs of the service for the most important part!

Preaching is the most important aspect of corporate worship. Sadly, it often gets the leftovers after the optional portions of the service are finished. If you have prepared to preach an hour, and you discover at the last moment that you only have 40 minutes to preach, you have to find out how to lose 20 minutes from your sermon. If you are in a church that only has one service, then you can preach until the job is done and go over the allotted time. After you finish preaching you may be accosted by the people serving in the children's ministry with pitchforks and torches, but they have to forgive you. What often happens when an hour-long sermon must be cut short at a moment's notice is that the application gets lopped off. This is so sad indeed! Maybe you wanted to preach the gospel, but you have to cut that out also. God forbid! It is very sad and moves many preachers to become time Nazis in an attempt to keep their sermon slot protected. Others, like the heart surgeon, keep on preaching until they have finished the job and let the trauma of not sticking to allotted time slots in the worship service be a training tool.

I have found it easier to edit my sermons on the fly if I have a full manuscript. I can sometimes exclude a point and pick that point up the following week if I am preaching through a book. By lopping off the last point I can maintain a non-rushed feel to my sermon. I have discovered that if I prepare to preach an hour, and am only given 45 minutes, if I stick to my notes closely, read them more tenaciously, wander off on fewer rabbit trails, and not extemporize, I can still get through my notes and all the necessary content I hoped to preach. Granted, I have to sacrifice quality of delivery with quality of content, but when you are cheated of some of your precious preaching time, something has to give.

Also, if I travel to another country where I preach through an interpreter, I know that I have to cut my sermon notes down 40 percent. Thus if they give me an hour to preach, and I have to prepare a 40 minute sermon with an interpreter. Preaching through an interpreter is very stilted, difficult, and painful. I have had people hear me preach through an interpreter in their own country and later they visited the states and heard me preach in English. They were very surprised at how animated and lively I was. Of course! When preaching through an interpreter you stand there like a petrified stump and say a sentence and then wait for the interpreter, say another sentence, and then wait, repeat, . . . It is very trying and hard to get into the sermon as you have to keep stopping. For me, sermon notes allow me to adapt a sermon to preach through an interpreter more readily.

Ideas for Your Sermon Notes

Every preacher does his notes differently. Here are some pointers you may want to consider as you try to figure out how you want to do your sermon notes and why. Granted, this is “my way” and I hope you can learn from my way how to improve your way, if you choose to preach with sermon notes.

1. *On the first page of every sermon put the place, date, text, and title of your sermon.* You need to do this because after you have preached for a while you will forget what, when, and where you preached. If you preach a sermon more than once, add the location at the top of your notes. This way you know where and when you preached each sermon.

2. *Try a little bit larger font, 14 or 15 point, instead of 10 or 12.* It makes it easier to read your notes at a glance, when standing back from the pulpit, or in low light situations. Sometimes if you are tall and the pulpit is short, or if the light conditions are poor, you have to concentrate on reading your notes and become a slave to looking down in order to see them. I once was asked to preach at a camp at night and they forgot to have lights. I held the flashlight on my Bible and preached with no notes because there was no pulpit. I preached in Brazil to five churches at one time who rented a school. The pulpit was short and smaller than my Bible when closed. It looked like a post with a flat top. It was a day when I was preaching six times and I needed my notes. In addition to the tiny pulpit, in order to keep the mosquitoes from eating me alive, they positioned a fan behind and to the right of me to keep the mosquitoes from landing on my tender flesh and sucking the lifeblood out of me. I held my Bible with my left hand, put my half-sheet sermon notes on the micro-pulpit, and always kept at least one finger on my notes so the fan wouldn't blow them away. I was glad I had larger font for it made seeing my notes much easier. Now my iPad takes care of many of those challenges. I can preach in the dark; in fact one Christmas Eve service, I did preach in the dark. I started to preach, the power went out in the entire area of the city. However, I had my iPad and was able to preach without a hitch. The sound people had a flashlight and pointed it at me from the balcony as a sort of pathetic spotlight. I finished the sermon and the lights came back on. Fun times!

3. *Try using an easier to read font, like Arial.* Script type fonts and serifed fonts like New Times Roman are harder for some to read from a distance. Serifed type fonts are fonts that have the little hooks on the bottom of each letter. Serifed fonts are designed to help

your eye track along the line you are reading. However some find it easier to read other kinds of fonts. Experiment and see what works best for you. I like Arial font. It is not a particularly pretty font, but it is very easy for me to read, which is good when you want to glance at your notes and be able to read them quickly.

4. *Develop a system of emphasizing or highlighting key items in your sermon notes.*

Some do this with a color printer, others use highlighters, I use this method:

a. **CAPITALIZE AND BOLD ALL MAJOR OUTLINE POINTS.** This helps me spot the major divisions in my sermon quickly.

b. **Bold other key sections like opener, background context, and conclusion.** I also like to **bold all the key words and verse references.** I sometimes mark up my notes after I download them to my iPad using PDF Expert, an iPad App that makes editing and marking up a PDF document very easy.

c. I do my sermon notes in Arial 15 point font. However, everything I intend to read verbatim, quotes and Scripture references, I use **Arial bold 12 point font.** The reason for this is that when I see in my notes any smaller bold font, I know it is time to read a quote or Scripture reference.

d. *I put translated Greek or Hebrew words, word definitions, or monologues in italic.*

e. *In addition to the markings above, I also emphasize things with various colors to make them stand out.* As I said earlier, I have created some shortcut keystrokes to change the color or size of a font quickly. I hardly think about it any more. Here is a quick explanation that may help, but I don't want to get into all the "how to" details here. You create a Macro using the record macro feature that changes a font to the color you want. I have macros created that turn the normal black font to red, blue, green, purple, orange, and back to black again. Once you create the macro, then go into customize keyboard settings and assign the various Macros to keystrokes. I have a Mac so I assign my "change to red colored font" macro to command/r, for blue I use command/b, etc. When I want to change the color back to black again I use command/u. In my mind "u" stands for "undo." I also create a macro to change the font size to 12pt and have that macro assigned to command/t, "t" being the short for twelve. And finally I have a shortcut key to change back to 15-point font and assign that macro to command/f keystroke. You can very easily mark up your text with color, highlight, and add additional text using iPad Apps like PDF Expert or Good Reader. I realize not everyone has an iPad. Before iPads came along I only used black and white font as I didn't want to mess with the cost of color printing. I never print my notes out anymore because I preach from an iPad.

5. *If you print your sermon notes on half-sheet paper and print them on both sides, try this trick.* Right before preaching, when all your sermon notes are stacked and in order, bend the top right corner of your notes down so that there is about a 1" triangle bend in the corners. This serves two purposes. First, it lets you grab the page and turn it easier. Second, it lets you know if you need to flip that note page over or slide it out of the way. If the tab is up and on the right, then I know I need to turn the page over to use the notes on the other side. If I get to the bottom and I look up and the tab is pointing down

and to the upper left, then I know I need to move that page aside and start on the next half sheet of sermon notes.

6. *Make sure you have an organized system for keeping track of all your sermons so you can find them quickly.* If you print out paper notes, three hole punch them and put them into binders so you can put them in your library and get to them easily. Because I used to use half sheet paper, I purchased half sheet binders, three hole punched them, and labeled the spines creating my own custom commentary on whatever book I was preaching from. Now I look at my notes via my iPad or computer.

7. *Create a custom sermon note template.* Most preachers preach every week, often multiple times a week. To save time, create a custom sermon note template. My custom template has my sermon title, place, date, and text in prompt or fill in boxes. When I am ready to preach, I open the template, fill in the boxes, and then save the sermon. It is way quicker than formatting your sermon notes from scratch every week. I do this for Bible studies, letterhead, and person notes as well. If you have a PC, sadly it doesn't work on a Mac, you can create a macro to open your sermon note template, then you can assign that macro to a keystroke. When I used a PC and Word Perfect I had my sermon note template assigned to the F10 keystroke. When I was ready to write a sermon I hit F10 and the template opened with one keystroke. It was smoking fast! However, now I use MS Word for Mac, which is lagging behind in some features I used to use frequently.

8. *Make sure you make your paragraphs small.* When using half sheet paper or an iPad I like to have three or four paragraphs per page. Smaller paragraphs reduce having to focus on a page. If you have a block of text with no spaces it forces you to look closely and is harder to read and find things.

9. When quoting someone, create a brief annotation system. If I quoted Louis Berkhof I might have at the end of the quote (Berkhof, S.T. 98). This is enough to let me know that I got the quote from Louis Berkhof's *Systematic Theology*, page 98. It is amazing how quickly we forget things, so annotating is helpful down the line if you convert your sermon notes into an article or book that needs footnotes.

Regardless of the way you do your sermon notes, your notes should aid you in delivering an accurate, spontaneous, and well-organized sermon.

Examples Sermon Notes To Learn From

Below are some examples of sermon notes that I have collected on the Internet to show you some examples of what preachers who use notes are doing. They may provide you with some ideas of how you may want to prepare your notes or adjust them to make them better. Of course I like my way the best, but it is only my opinion, and you will probably like your way better.

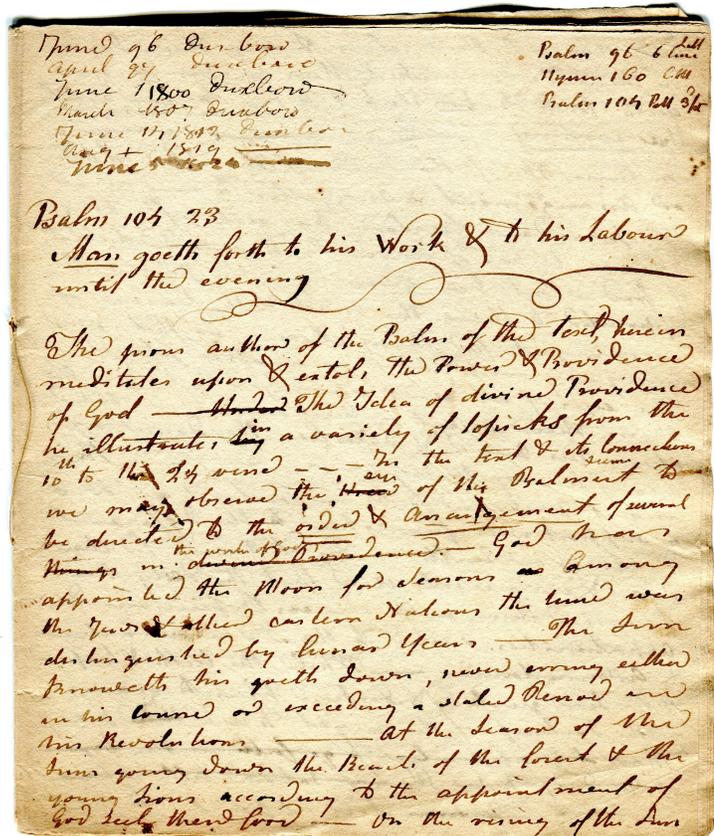
Jack Hughes' sermon notes for iPad are first. The notes below are taken from screen shots of my notes in Word before converting them to PDF format for my iPad. I have included four different pages of my sermon notes. This is a full sermon manuscript. For the first two pages I have the sermon title, place and date preached, sermon text, pages numbered bottom center. This is a custom page size, the size of my iPad screen. I have

key sections and verse references in 15 point bold. I have Scripture text in 12 point bold. I have definitions in purple italics. I colored some key phrases so I don't miss them. On the second set of two pages (pages 8-9) you can see one of my monologues in purple italics, warnings in red, text I am commenting on in 12 point bold blue, a major outline point in bold caps, etc. Notice the paragraphs are smaller, three or four per half sheet.

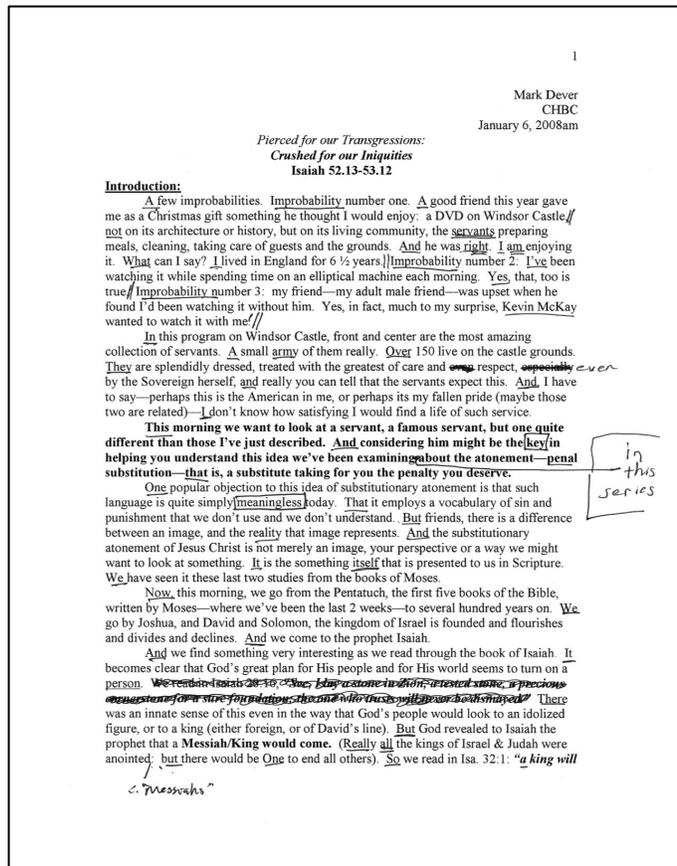
<p style="text-align: center;">LOOK TO CHRIST!</p> <p>SABC 2014 Isa. 45:22</p> <p>Opener</p> <p>Would you describe yourself as an idolater? I imagine most of you would not. You don't bow down to a statue, picture, icon, or praying to a false god. But many idolaters never do any of those things. But biblically speaking, idolatry is <i>giving to anything something that belongs to God.</i></p> <p>It could be a hobby, your job, your TV, yourself, exercise, trying to stay healthy, sports, anything in your life that you give to what rightly belongs to God. That is idolatry. Let me give you one example. In Col. 2:5 the Apostle Paul writes, Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry.</p> <p>Why would those sins amount to idolatry? Because by committing them, you don't glorify God. You give to <u>yourself</u>, become your own master, taking what rightly belongs to God, which is idolatry. Once we understand the Bible correctly we would all have to confess that we are idolaters to one degree or another for we frequently don't give to God what is rightly due Him.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1</p>	<p>Background/Context</p> <p>Our text this morning, Isa. 45:22, comes at a time in Israel's history when Idolatry was rampant, just as it is in our day. There were corrupt rulers, corrupt religious leaders, <u>corrupt</u> businessmen, just like we have in our world today. Yes, there were idolaters who worshiped statues, like the pope who was pictured this Christmas worshipping a statue of Jesus.</p> <p>And there were other kinds of idolaters who worshipped money, power, pleasure, and a myriad of other things just as people do in our world today. Isaiah makes clear in the near context if you want to be saved, The Lord God is the only one, there is no other.</p> <p>Look at Isa. 44:6, 8; 45:5-6, 14, 18, 21, and our text. Isaiah keeps on saying the same thing, but why? Because if they wish to be rescued from God's wrath, they must turn to Him in faith.</p> <p>Look at Isa. 45:18-25 -- 18 For thus says the LORD, who created the heavens (He is the God who formed the earth and made it, He established it and did not create it a waste place, but formed it to be inhabited), "I am the LORD, and there is none else. 19 "I have not spoken in secret, in some dark land; I did not say to the offspring of Jacob, 'Seek Me in a waste place'; I, the LORD, speak</p> <p style="text-align: center;">2</p>
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<p><i>"Oh," but one objects, "I cannot leave port! My tackle is rusty. My sinful soul is laid at anchor so long in sin that coral has grown around it. I cannot leave this place of sinful comfort and refuge." It is true, you cannot do it. It is true, you do not have the strength. It is true, that nothing you possess will let you escape the doom you deserve!</i></p> <p>But what does our text say? It merely says, "Turn to me" or "look to me." Can you turn your eyes to look upon Jesus? <i>Can you look full in His wonderful face, so that the things of this world become strangely dim in light of His glory and grace?"</i></p> <p>Look to Jesus! See Him on the throne, high and lifted up, nail pierced hands extended towards you! Look, just look, right now look! Turn from your sins, from your love of this world, from your sinful pleasures and look to Christ!</p> <p>The moment you do that, grace will oil your tackle, renew your sails, and shatter the coral that has enveloped your anchor. You will find renewed energy to pull the anchor and hoist the sails and leave hell's port! You will find that things begin to work easy with the mercy of God in your sails and you will make haste for heaven's port once you have looked to Jesus Christ! Do it! Do it now!</p> <p style="text-align: center;">8</p>	<p>Look and God's Holy Spirit will transform you by grace! Turn or burn! Look or be lost! Do not procrastinate. Look to Christ now! Stop thinking you are too sinful. Look to Christ! Stop worrying what others may think. Look to Christ!</p> <p>Head the word of Isaiah the prophet who said in Isa. 55:6-7, "Seek the LORD while He may be found; Call upon Him while He is near. 7 Let the wicked forsake his way And the unrighteous man his thoughts; And let him return to the LORD, And He will have compassion on him, And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon." And for what purpose must we look to Christ?</p> <p>II. BE SAVED BY CHRIST</p> <p>Look towards the beginning of vs. 22, and turn from your sins to believe in Jesus Christ, "and be saved." We use the word "saved" so much in Christian circles that has become a meaningless cliché, part of our Christian jargon which means nothing to most.</p> <p>We ask, <i>"When were you saved"</i> as if we are asking, <i>"When did you get your "I am a Christian badge.""</i> The meaning of the word "saved" is lost. We don't even think about what we must be "saved from." We are saved and get to go to heaven because we are saved.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">9</p>
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John Allyn's (pronounced Alline) sermon notes 1796, Duxbury, England. Notice he has the hymns to be sung that morning in the upper right. Spurgeon would write the numbers of the hymns he wanted to have sung on the backside of his sermon notes. In the upper left it can be seen that this particular sermon of Allyn's was preached seven times at various locations. The sermon text, Psalm 107:23 is given, and the text is written out. It looks as if the sermon notes continue to the next page. This worked for Allyn!



Mark Dever's sermon notes. At the top of his notes he has page number, his name, place preached, date, time, sermon title, and text. He has marked up his notes after printing them. This is Dever's way.



Ray Ortlund sermon notes. Has sermon series, sermon text, sermon title, his name, place preached, date preached, text being preached on, pretty small font, some extra markups in purple and highlights in yellow. Looks like one page of notes for there is no page number.

with this is God's Word

The Sermon on the Mount
 Matthew 5:8
 Ray Ortlund
 Immanuel Church
 10 February 2008

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

Let's remember what the Beatitudes are. They are not commandments, though they speak with authority. They are not requirements, though they define the kingdom of heaven. **The Beatitudes are encouragements.** The Beatitudes are the congratulations of Jesus, who wants us to walk with a spring in our step and sparkle in our eye and hope in our hearts because God has set us apart to himself and given us graciously *everything worth having forever.*

The kingdom of this world has its own congratulations to pass around and its own promises of reward. Each of the congratulations of Jesus can be turned into its photographic negative, like this:

Congratulations to those who feel entitled, for they grab whatever they want.

Congratulations to the carefree, for they shall be comfortable.

Congratulations to the pushy, for they shall win.

Congratulations to the greedy, for they shall climb the food chain.

Congratulations to the vengeful, for they shall be feared.

Congratulations to those who don't get caught, for they shall look good.

Congratulations to the argumentative, for they shall get in the last word.

Tim Keller sermon notes. Sermon title, text, date preached. Key sections of sermon and key words in bold. Tight, smaller, block of text in one paragraph. My eyes aren't very good and this would be hard for me to use, but it works for Pastor Keller.

THE LIONS OF GOD

Dan 6:1-10, 16-23 21 May 00

Intro: 1) Lkng bk Daniel clues how liv as belvrs in only 1 true God in a pluralist soc commttd princ many gods/religs/moralities, equally valid. For tht is wrld liv in Westrn soc today **2)** Tod 1st/mst fam Dan narrats-- Dan Lions'Den. **3)** I thnk illustrs conert wht JC says lif wrld: **mt.5:11-16**, "blessed you whn peop persec you falsely say all kind evil vs. you...[then] you salt earth...[then] You light world--city on a hill." Three things tht JC calls us to be and expect our lives in the world-- salt, hurt, light.

I. SALT - (Read) vv.1-4. 1st grt princ Xn life in wrld: against sep fr world. We're clid to be salt of earth--deeply with peop wrld, deep engaged earthy city. **A. Text. 1)** v.1 Dan high posit pagan govt.**2)** Wrk3quals: **a)** incorrupt (v.4) in system full corrupt **b)** disc/ v.4-diligent, **c)** bt possib both honest, hrd-wrking, nt effect--*exceptional!* v.3. **ex.** tuf trans: *lit. excellent spirit in him.* Hebr expts: *quality of doing thngs such excellce ev arnd fell into line, inspird did best.* **2)** See again: casestudy lettr Jerem29 Jewish exiles: **a)** 1st exiles--dnt assim, sepl Stay out big city, live in own clod commun, form own littl wrld, own music/art, own scholarship, own assocs, own evl **b)** Jer: *neith assim nor sepl* 3--(1)movin/deep engagd econ/cult/life, soc; (2)yt maint identity my peop; (3)seek nt peacprosp peop, whol city! **c)** Dan--all 3! (1) tho hd gifts be proph, nt full-time Jer, exprssd devot king God sec job! (2) yt both incorruptb, see-publ ident GodIsr, (3) fin, nt jst own trib/persnl advancm, *so king nt suffr loss--sought commn good, peac city.* **B. Salt!** How illust JC means metaphr "saltearth" **1)** Salt disperses--it gets out, gets in. Nt jst stay togeth safe enclaves. **2)** Main anc, preserv, kept meat, etc. whol wld othrwis go bad. **a)** exGen11:4-Twr Babel, com tog use techn, do archt proj--**b)** bt purp? *let mak nam selves!* w/o God hums self-namers! Get ident, sens uniq, signif thro accomp, wrk. **c)** reslt story--nt surprs: Disuni, fight/content, conflict! if going gt very identity how high go, money, recogn, pwr accrue, lead--decay, brkdown, disintegr: (1) conflct empt insecur insid; (2) disord rac/class/grp outside! **d)** Bt Xns salt! name fr God! his grace/don for us/in us--sourc ident, uniuq, signif! We int city, nt driven job, nt traml! get up! **ex1** Whn do art, nt abt makng name, recog, delight art its own sake! work work's sake!
ex2 Meet need customers busnss--*their* sake! **Sum:** Salt! Like Dan--disperse, music int mus wrld, art artwrld, busi, busness wrld-gov't wrld, academ wrld--there, name/God able wrk w/justic, poise, peace, love, wholsom, vital infl--vs. deconstructing forces of self-nam, self-glorific.
*****Ha!** Simp? Abs nt! Bt wht vision! Ther's vision! **B. APPLIC: 1)** To wht Xn do in wrk! career choices--cuts 2 ways: **a)** 1 hnd, went say if really use gifts God, go full-tim min/missionary. Dan nt **b)** 2hnd, nt self-namng job, Xns who know *cl'd* get int highest grad, highest job (min nt anymore) shld consid **2)** To wher Xns do wrk! **a)** Salt goes wher thngs tend fall apart. **b)** Dan corrupt uppr echels govt. **c)** U.S.Xns too mch lik ev els: choose mst comf, mst funct places--schools fine, streets safe, peop

C. H. Spurgeon sermon notes. I have seen several examples of his notes and this is a pretty detailed set. I have seen another example where he only had major outline points and a few sub points. He has his text at the top. Another example I saw had the sermon title. He has some introductory words and major outline points and sub-points. It is good to remember this is the man who championed having "no notes" in the pulpit, by which he meant only an outline with sub-points, not a manuscript. This worked for Spurgeon.

Mark XVI. 14 /
This shows us the way in w^h we must deal with
unbelief in ourselves, & in others. It is a sin
& should be treated as such. Jesus w^d not have
upbraided had not this been the case.
In the case before us they had repeated
testimonies, from their own brethren, & backed by
his own word — but we have even more
guilt for we know him to be risen & yet doubt.
I. Let us consider its evil in itself
Suppose some one doubted us.
Think of who he is & what he has done.
Consider his near & dear relation to us.
The many times in w^h we have doubted
and upon the same matter.
Where his promises forbade unbelief
Despite our own declarations.
What have we believed in, preference?
II. Let us observe the evils w^h it causes
It grieves the Spirit of God.
It causes distrust in our hearts
It weakens us for action or suffering
It depresses others.
It leaves an ill impression
It cannot but gender to bondage.
III. Let us reflect upon its sinfulness where
it reigns
It gives God the lie.
It argues hatred in the heart
It is the sign of utter moral death.
It is the essence of hell.