

PREACHING WORKSHOP

Tools For The Job



Preparing and Presenting a Bible Talk

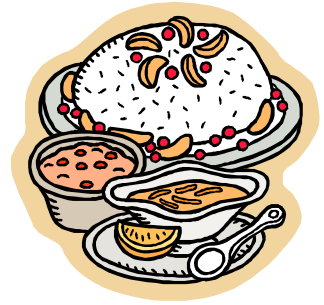
David Balzer



Preparation

“Hey, what’s the big idea?”

Have you ever heard a sermon that gives you too much information to digest? It’s like the speaker is presenting people with a wonderful smorgasbord. However, there are two problems with a smorgasbord – there is always too much food, and people only choose the bits they like! And that’s often not the things that are best for them!

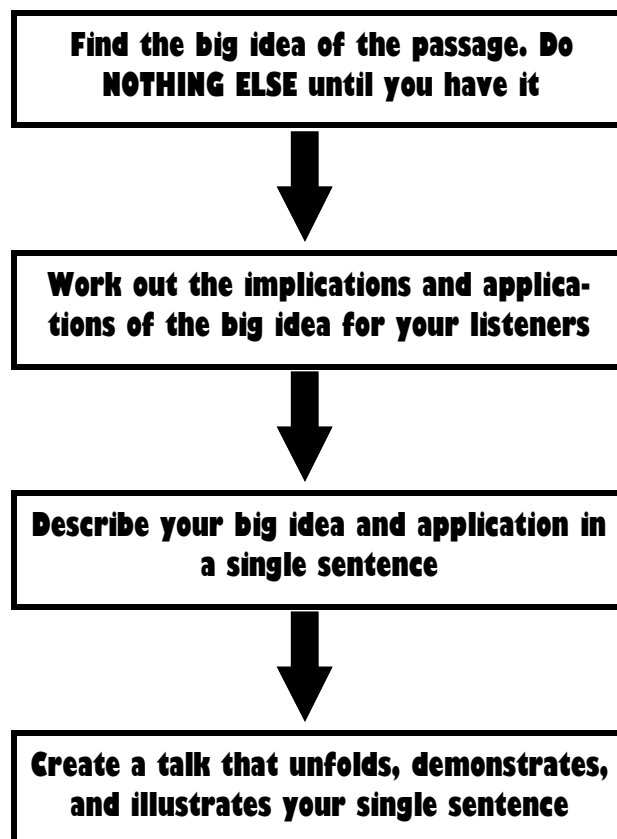


It’s important for US to decide what the listeners take home. This means we need to identify the BIG IDEA of the passage, and then make that the big idea of the talk. The big idea of the passage is the one which drives through the whole section and ties everything else together. The question to ask is “What is the main idea God wants to teach me from this passage?”

Bible passages are often complex, with MANY ideas and themes. If we can’t identify ONE big idea, we should generally choose one, and leave the other for the next time we look at the passage.

A good bible talk will be based on the big idea of the passage, with no distracting ideas, which shows how everything fits together within the big idea, and which highlights the implications for us as Christians.

The process looks like this:



Quote:

“I have a conviction that no sermon is ready for preaching ... until we can express its theme in a short, pregnant sentence as clear as crystal. I find the getting of that sentence is the hardest, the most exacting and the most fruitful labour in my study... I do not think any sermon ought to be preached, or even written, until that sentence has emerged—clear and lucid as a cloudless moon ... [Then] there will be no danger of unscrupulous text-twisting... The word of God will dominate our mind, set fire to our hearts, control the development of our exposition and later leave a lasting impression on the congregation.”

(J.H. Jowett, *The Preacher: His Life & Work*, (New York: Doran, 1912), 133

PREACHING PYRAMID

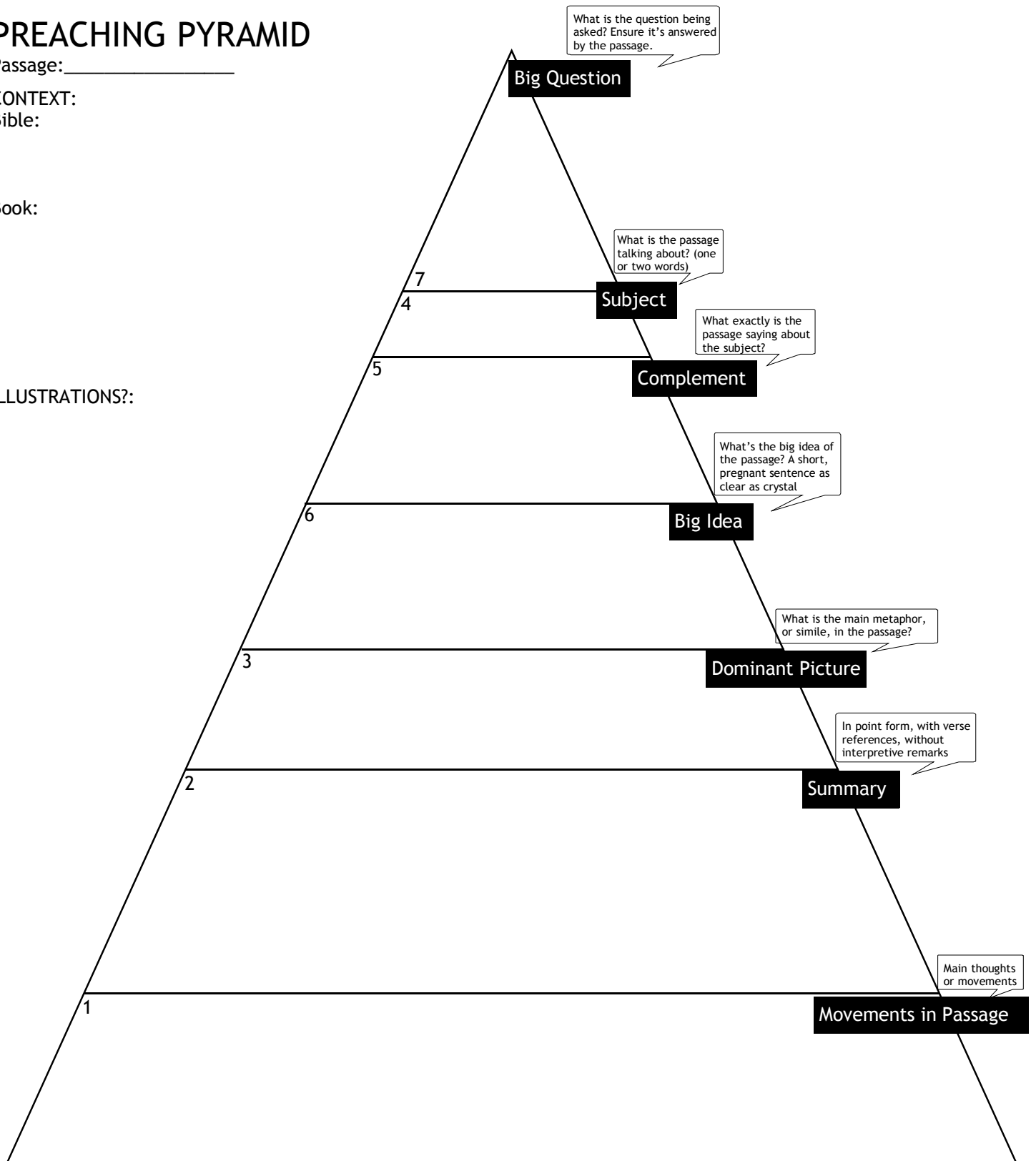
Passage: _____

CONTEXT:

Bible:

Book:

ILLUSTRATIONS?:



Application: (What does it tell us about;)

GOD:

US:

Necessary (always necessary for all people)

Possible (sometimes possible for some people)

Impossible (How the passage cannot be applied)

Presentation

Listening is Hard Work:



You might think good communication is hard work... but listening is even harder. It's far easier to drift off than it is to stick with it. It's up to us to make the listener's job as easy as possible.



You will hear preachers blame the listener. 'They're not spiritual enough, or educated enough, or committed enough' But the reality is that it's up to YOU to hold the attention of the listeners

Getting a Better Connection:

How do preachers lose connection with listeners?

Think about the last time you lost track of what a speaker was saying. List the factors that contributed. For the purpose of the exercise, let yourself off the hook, and blame everything else!

"Preaching without connecting is like talking on the phone without dialling the number"



Hints for Getting a Better Connection:

1. **The more you say, the less people will remember.** Most preachers say more than people are willing to hear. The goal is to say LESS by sticking to the main point.

"How do you write a great speech? Well, it's easy. First, you write a speech. Then you take out all the bits that ain't great"

US Presidential speech writer



2. **People love to hear about people.** Look at the newspaper, or "A Current Affair". Usually, if there's no people, there's no story. Don't fill your talk with abstract ideas. Use "for example", or "for instance", rather than "in other words". Eg How has this idea affected someone you know?

3. Use **illustrations as rest-breaks** to lighten the talk. They're not just to illustrate abstract concepts.

4. Even brilliant people prefer **simple communication**.

Simple communication uses **simple words**. Never use a long word (like "utilise") when a shorter one like "use") will do. That's a major difference between written and spoken communication. We tend to use smaller words when we speak.

"NEVER use a big word when a diminutive one will suffice!"

5. **Use short sentences.** Ideas are packaged in sentences. You can't process the idea until you've caught the sentence. Aim for 20 words MAXIMUM per sentence.

6. When you write your talk, **write in SPOKEN language** - that is, using small words, and short sentences. Regularly read aloud what you've written, and ask, 'Is that the way I'd naturally SAY it?' This will mean:
- * starting sentences with **AND, BUT, and OR.**
 - * using contractions, like **can't, don't, this'll.** Bad form for writing, but great for speaking!



7. **Repetition is vital.** It seems to help listeners to stay connected if you repeat the first sentence of a new point three times (rephrasing it of course!). This gives people the opportunity to change direction with you without getting lost.

8. **Set the Bible verse up.** When discussing a particular verse, it seems to help listeners to stay connected if you do your talking **BEFORE** you read out the verse, rather than **AFTER** it.

Make the point the verse makes in your own words, then clinch the deal by showing the verse itself. This takes people to the text with the argument in place, and helps their understanding. If you do this the other way around you'll find yourself reading a verse, then trying to say what it said, while people are trying to remember what it said while listening to you ... which can be confusing!

9. **Vary the tone and speed** of your voice. **Use pauses** before or after important words for emphasis. Talk more quickly for less important parts of sentences. **Practice your talk OUT LOUD.**

10. **Use CAPITALS** to help you remember which words to emphasise. Emphasise **CONTRASTS**, or **IMPORTANT WORDS** or **PHRASES**. Eg "SOMEtimes, it's EASY to get up in the mornings. But MOSTLY, it's MUCH better to stay in bed!"

11. **Maintain eye contact.** Look up from your script as much as possible. Hints to help you with this include;

- * Know your talk well
- * Set out one main point per paragraph
- * Use a large, easy-to-read font (eg Times Roman 16 point)
- * Use double spacing.



A Whole New YOU

WBPC 10/6/01: Col 3:1-17

Big Idea: Since you've been raised, put to death the earthly bits, and put on the things above.

Outline:

1. Since

- a) you **HAVE** died (3) and been raised with Christ (1)
- b) your life **IS** hidden with Christ (3),
- c) you **WILL** appear with him in glory (4).

2. Therefore

- a) Put to death earthly things (5-9)

3. Therefore

As God's chosen people

- a) seek heavenly things (1)
- b) think about heavenly things (2)
- c) put on new self (10-17)

Intro:

Weight loss. There's some fine examples here in this church. Like Dave Wise, or Ross. They're not half the men they used to be!

Thousands of people **TRY** to lose weight. And many succeed. For a short time. But a lot of people who go on fad diets and lose weight, put it straight back on when they stop the diet. Because they go straight back to their **OLD** patterns of eating, and their **OLD** methods of dealing with life.

They say diets which are successful **LONG TERM/** are those which you can keep **FOR LIFE.**

It's no good getting to where you want to be, but then gazing **LONGINGLY** over your shoulder. **WISHING** you were back doing what you used to do.

A new "you" demands a new attitude. A new set of desires, and behaviours. When there's a complete re-orientation of life. Old eating habits are **KILLED**, and new ones put on instead.

When your whole **ATTITUDE** to food changes. You don't just eat a carrot, and wish it was chocolate. Or hoe into a Big Mac and imagine it was an apple. But when you **DESIRE** healthy food. When you **SET YOUR MIND** on a healthy life-style. It's a whole new you.

And it opens up a whole new range of possibilities. New things you never used to be able to do. Sports, activities. New clothes you never thought you'd be able to wear.

It's the new **THIN** you. You've killed the old fat you. There's no way you're going back **THERE** again. And so your desires and thought-processes change to reflect that.

And it's the same idea Paul's getting across here. As a Christian, you're not the same person you used to be. You're not **EARTHLY** anymore. So kill the bits that are still earthly. Get rid of them.