The Evangelistic Sermon – Part 1 Day 20 April 10, 2021

Simple Speech; Clarity of Expression—The Lord wishes you to learn how to use the gospel net. Many need to learn this art. In order for you to be successful in your work, the meshes of your net—the application of the Scriptures—must be close, and the meaning easily discerned. Then make the most of drawing in the net. Come right to the point. Make your illustrations self-evident. However great a man's knowledge, it is of no avail unless he is able to communicate it to others. Let the pathos of your voice, its deep feeling, make its impression on hearts. Urge your students to surrender themselves to God.... Ev 174.4

Make your explanations clear; for I know that there are many who do not understand many of the things said to them. Let the Holy Spirit mold and fashion your speech, cleansing it from all dross. Speak as to little children, remembering that there are many well advanced in years who are but little children in understanding. Ev 175.1

By earnest prayer and diligent effort we are to obtain a fitness for speaking. This fitness includes uttering every syllable clearly, placing the force and emphasis where it belongs. Speak slowly. Many speak rapidly, hurrying one word after another so fast that the effect of what they say is lost. Into what you say put the spirit and life of Christ.... To those who hear, the gospel is made the power of God unto salvation. Present the gospel in its simplicity.—Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students, 253-255 (1913). Ev 175.2

Attention to Sermon Preparation—The discourses given upon present truth are full of important matter, and if these discourses are carefully considered before being presented to the people, if they are condensed and do not cover too much ground, if the spirit of the Master goes with the utterances, no one will be left in darkness, no one will have cause to complain of being unfed. The preparation, both in preacher and hearer, has very much to do with the result. Ev 175.3

I will here quote a few words that have come under my notice just now: "I always know by the length of Cannon's sermon whether he has been much from home during the week," said one of his flock. "When carefully studied, his discourses are of a moderate length, but it is almost impossible for his hearers to forget the teachings conveyed in them. When he has had no time for preparation, his sermons are unreasonably long, and it is equally impossible to get anything out of them which will stick to the memory." Ev 176.1

Another able minister was asked how long he was accustomed to preach. "When I prepare thoroughly, half an hour; when only partially, an hour; but when I enter the pulpit without previous preparation, I go on for any length of time you like; in fact, I never know when to stop." Ev 176.2

Here is another forcible statement: "A good shepherd," says a writer, "should always have abundance of bread in his scrip, and his dog under command. The dog is his zeal, which he must lead, order, and moderate. His scrip full of bread is his mind full of useful knowledge, and he should ever be in readiness to give nourishment to his flock."—Letter 47, 1886. Ev 176.3

Guard Spiritual Digestion—"I do not like to go much beyond the half hour," said a faithful and earnest preacher, who certainly never gave to his hearers that which cost him nothing in the preparation. "I know that the spiritual digestion of some is but weak, and I should be sorry for my hearers to spend the second half hour in forgetting what I had said in the first, or in wishing that I would cease when I had given them as much as they could carry away."—Letter 47, 1886. Ev 176.4

Cut Down Your Lengthy Discourses—Some of your lengthy discourses would have far better effect upon the people if cut up into three. The people cannot digest so much; their minds cannot even grasp it, and they become wearied and confused by having so much matter brought before them in one discourse. Two thirds of such long discourses are lost, and the preacher is exhausted. There are many of our ministers who err in this respect. The result upon them is not good; for they become brain weary and feel that they are carrying heavy loads for the Lord and having a hard time.... Ev 176.5

The truth is so different in character and work from the errors preached from popular pulpits that when it is brought before the people for the first time, it almost overwhelms them. It is strong meat and should be dealt out judiciously. While some minds are quick to catch an idea, others are slow to comprehend new and startling truths which involve great changes and present a cross at every step. Give them time to digest the wonderful truths of the message you bear them. Ev 177.1

The preacher should endeavor to carry the understanding and sympathies of the people with them. Do not soar too high, where they cannot follow, but give the truth point after point, slowly and distinctly, making a few essential points, then it will be as a nail fastened in a sure place by the Master of assemblies. If you stop when you should, giving them no more at once than they can comprehend and profit by, they will be eager to hear more, and thus the interest will be sustained.—Letter 39, 1887. Ev 177.2

Reputation of Being an Interesting Speaker—Put into your work all the enthusiasm that you can. Let your discourses be short. There are two reasons why you should do this. One is that you may gain the reputation of being an interesting speaker. Another is that you may preserve your health.—Letter 112, 1902. Ev 177.3

Sermons With Fresh Ideas—Never weary the hearers by long discourses. This is not wise. For many years I have been laboring on this point, seeking to have our brethren sermonize less, and devote their time and strength to making important points of truth plain, for every point will be assailed by our opponents. Everyone connected with the work should keep fresh ideas; ... and by tact and foresight bring all that is possible into your work to interest your hearers.—Letter 48, 1886. Ev 178.1

Apply Truth to Heart—In every address given, let there be an application of truth to the heart, that whosoever may hear shall understand, and that men, women, and youth may become alive unto God.—Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers, 258 (1896). Ev 178.2

Easy to Comprehend—Preach the Word so that it will be easy to comprehend. Bring the people right to Jesus Christ, in whom their hopes of eternal life are centered.... As you bring to them the Word of God, presenting it in a simple style, the seed will grow, and after a time you will have a harvest. The seed sowing is your work; the propagation of the seed is the Lord's divine work.—Letter 34, 1896. Ev 178.3

Practical Godliness in Every Discourse—It is harder to reach the hearts of men today than it was twenty years ago. The most convincing arguments may be presented, and yet sinners seem as far from salvation as ever. Ministers should not preach sermon after sermon on doctrinal subjects alone. Practical Godliness should find a place in every discourse.—The Review and Herald, April 23, 1908. Ev 178.4

Preach Realties of the Message—On a certain occasion, when Betterton, the celebrated actor, was dining with Dr. Sheldon, Archbishop of Canterbury, the Archbishop said to him, “Pray, Mr. Betterton, tell me why it is that you actors affect your audiences so powerfully by speaking of things imaginary.” “My Lord,” replied Betterton, “with due submission to Your Grace, permit me to say that the reason is plain;

it all lies in the power of enthusiasm. We on the stage speak of things imaginary as if they were real; and you in the pulpit speak of things real as if they were imaginary."—Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students, 255 (1913). Ev 179.1

No Compromise—We are not to cringe and beg pardon of the world for telling them the truth: we should scorn concealment. Unfurl your colors to meet the cause of men and angels. Let it be understood that Seventh-day Adventists can make no compromise. In your opinions and faith there must not be the least appearance of waverings: the world has a right to know what to expect of us.—Manuscript 16, 1890. Ev 179.2