

I. Introduction [Goal—get them to like you]

A. The things people say

1. I think the thing that people say to me that bothers me the most, the thing that I find both hurtful and humiliating, is when folks come up to me after a sermon and say, “You’ve really gotten a lot better.”
2. I know it says a lot about my insecurities, but that kind of comment really stings
 - a) *This is what I want to do*
(1) Gif kick
 - b) *This is what I actually do*
(1) Triple H
 - c) *And this is what I am doing on the inside*
(1) Middle school van
3. I think what gets me about it is knowing how hard it is what we do every Sunday
4. I’m among other preachers, so I’ll brag on us a bit
 - a) *We have to do this every Sunday, no matter what*
 - b) *Same texts year after year*
 - c) *No off-season*
5. Politicians don’t do this; stand-up comics don’t do this
6. And we have to fight against being compared with celebrity pastors
 - a) *I wish you preached more like X guy—why aren’t you as good as him*
What I want to say is, “Why can’t you be better-looking? I wish you looked like Robert Redford”
 - b)

At our church, 48% of our members didn’t come from a previous affiliation, so I’m having to preach to people who don’t agree with me—how do you do that?

B. Easter Sunday

- a) *This is just what it takes*
- b) *Time to be a big boy and learn to live with it*

C. These are things I’ve had to do myself

1. I offer them to you humbly, if they are helpful
2. When I am feeling overwhelmed or uncertain, these are the basic practices I fall back on
 - a) *I’m actually not ready to preach on Sunday yet, and so I’m going to have to go back to these rules to help me put together a sermon worth preaching*
3. www.andrewforrest.org
 - a) *notes will be available there starting at 11:45 AM*

D. 4 Preaching Rules

II. **Create Tension** [Goal—the overarching theme]

- A. At Dinner...and then I saw him
- B. The most important thing you can do: CREATE TENSION
- C. By tension, I mean the kind of suspense that we all want to see resolved.
 - 1. Mozart
 - 2. Knock-knock joke
 - 3. Splinter in the brain
- D. What is the question they will want me to answer?
- E. The best way to create tension is to state what's at stake
- F. Do the hard work of being interesting
- G. Not BAD tension
 - 1. Smile
 - 2. Be warm and pleasant

III. How to FIND the tension

- A. What would an ordinary person be thinking about this passage?
- B. Does the passage address something that ordinary folks want to know about?
- C. What are the cultural hot topics that this passage might address?
- D. The best tension comes from within the text itself
 - 1. What's the overall context?
 - 2. Why is this here? Where does it come from?
- E. Why does anyone care?
 - 1. The Jebusites—nobody cares aboutm the Jebusites!
- F. Use a Framing Story
- G. Begin in Medias Res
- H. Ask a Question
- I. Make a Bold Statement

IV. ~~Avoid Moralism~~ — **preach the gospel**

- A. At dinner...and I saw Jesus
- B. Moralism: be a better person
- C. The Gospel: 1 Corinthians 5—God has done something in Jesus that you cannot do for yourself
 - 1. The problem with moralism
 - a) *It's boring*
 - b) *Like going to a financial planner or diet coach: I already know what you are going to tell me*
 - 2. The second problem with moralism is that it is NOT the gospel
- D. If I'm not careful, my sermons can easily slide into moralism, and moralism is spiritual poison. Why?

1. Either people feel beat down—I can never be that good
 2. OR—more likely, it leads to Pride and Pharisism
 - a) *Thank you that I'm not that kind of person*
- E. The Bible is NOT about moralism
1. This is not some kind of spiritual gloss on the scripture, this is a conclusion you draw if you just read the Bible itself
- F. The Bible Project stuff is SO SO SO GOOD
1. <https://thebibleproject.com>
 - a) *Read Scripture videos on every book of the Bible*
 - b) *Theme videos on lots of other topics*
 - c) *Bible Project podcast*
 - d) *Tim Mackie "Exploring My Strange Bible"*
 2. Blog
- G. What's the Gospel in Nehemiah?
1. Nehemiah 6:1-4
 2. Stay on the Wall
 3. Nehemiah 13—IT ALL FAILS
 4. The message of Nehemiah is that even the best of us can't save us
 5. We need the Messiah!
- H. What's the Gospel in the Good Samaritan?
1. Luke 10:25-37
 2. Is the message of the Good Samaritan that you need to be good like the Samaritan?
 - a) *If that's the case, Jesus was a failure as a teacher*
 - (1) He was on the cross
 - (2) And not only did people walk on by, but they ridiculed him as they did so`
 3. I'm not the Samaritan, I'm the man in the Jericho Road who needs help!
- I. If we're not careful, our preaching will be a way for us to feel spiritually superior toward other people, and that kind of superiority is a sure way to hell.
- J. An example: Jesus and the Tax Collectors and Sinners
1. Mark 2:13-17
- K. So, what's the solution? To work people back against themselves

V. Find the Pharisee

- A. *At dinner...and Jesus invited me over to sit*
- B. The best sermons are the ones in which you surprise people with themselves
- C. Do not EVER preach on politics unless you also hit hard the idea that Jesus died for our political enemies

D. The gospel is not about being RIGHT—the Gospel is about dying for people who are WRONG

E. If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am NOTHING

F. 1 Corinthians 13

VI. **Make their hearts burn** Use Emotion

A. At dinner...and Jesus wants me to eat with him

VII. **Did Not Our Hearts Burn Within Us?**

A. People don't learn they feel

B. I know that the best sermons are the ones that get people to FEEL that they need Jesus and are desperate for his work in their lives

1. Luke 24:42—it was the EMOTION of hearing from Jesus that caught their attention

VIII. At dinner...and this is what I get to talk about

IX.