

# TTT 399. "Your Voice Matters" Tips for new and inexperienced speakers. Part 4. 28 January 2025

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## Teaching Tip 399 | "Your Voice Matters". Part 4 - Plenty of Preparation. Tips for new and inexperienced speakers | Malcolm Cox

### Introduction

Last week, we explored the vitality that comes to our preaching when we love Scripture more than speaking. This week's tip builds on that principle.

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### Today's Tip

Today's tip comes from Nick Winn in Lusaka. Nick says:

"Hi Malcolm. Thank you for all you do. TIP: Biblical preaching by Haddon Robinson is a must read for any preacher. One particular key nugget he gives, in my opinion, and has helped me tremendously, is your preparation. For every 10 minutes you speak, at least 4 hours of prep."

Thanks Nick. Your point is vitally important. I reviewed my copy of the wonderful book by Robinson and couldn't find the exact quote, but I know that he agrees with the principal because of this quote from page 56:

"On a cold, gloomy morning a preacher worked on his sermon from breakfast until noon with little to show for his labour. Impatiently he laid down his pen and looked disconsolately out the window, feeling sorry for himself because his sermons came so slowly. Then there flashed into his mind an insight that had profound effect on his later ministry. "Your fellow Christians," he thought, "will spend far more time on this sermon than you will. They come from a hundred homes. They travel hundreds of miles in the aggregate to be in the service. They will spend three hundred hours participating in the worship and listening to what you have to say. Don't complain about the hours you are spending in preparation and the agony you experience. The people deserve all you can give them." W. Robinson, Haddon. *Biblical Preaching: The Development and Delivery of Expository Messages* (p. 56). (Function). Kindle Edition.

I remember delivering a teaching day on expository preaching somewhere around 2005. I was asked by one of the participants how long I spent in sermon preparation and I replied that normally it was between 10 and 15 hours. A collective gasp went up from the group. Almost none of them were on church staff and found that overwhelming.

Before you get overwhelmed, let me give you some tips that will help.

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## Start Early

Decide or discover your text or topic as soon as possible, preferably at least a month in advance. If you can choose, pray and make a decision. If assigned your text or topic, ask the person responsible for plenty of notice.

Starting early means, you can do a little and often rather than cram it at the end. It also means you have time to think carefully about the text or topic thoroughly. Additionally, it means that your text or topic has time to make its mark in your own life—more on this point below.

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## Make your text your devotions as well as your study

I have heard it said that we should separate our devotional life from our Bible study. I think this is mistaken. The intent of such an instruction is healthy if it encourages us not to replace our personal connection with God with further preparation. However, if we want our preaching to have authenticity, the text or topic we are speaking on must have had its prior effect on us before we bring it to others. That means praying about the topic, applying a text to ourselves, and asking God to help us grow spiritually as a result of our sermon preparation.

What does this mean?

- Praying through the text.
  - Praying about the topics in the text.
  - Meditating on the text.
  - Reading it slowly and with the consciousness of God's presence.
  - Asking God to show you how to apply it to your life.
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## Speak as long as you can

No, I don't mean speak for three hours because you are a long-distance lecturer! My point is not to speak longer than your preparation allows. If you only have a couple of hours for preparation, don't speak for 30 minutes. Speak for five or ten minutes. Some of the parables are remarkably short. They are short in length but not short on impact (see list below).

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## Reflection

Read the short parables of Jesus and reflect on the preparation that went into their creation. They may be short, but their profundity is a sign of careful and lengthy preparation.

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## Question

How much time do you have for preparation? Not how much time would you hope to have, but realistically, how much time do you *actually* have?

How can you make the most of that time and what kind of lesson and how long a lesson will it allow?

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## Additional Scriptures

The seven shortest parables of Jesus are the following:

- **The Parable of the Mustard Seed**  
(Matthew 13:31-32, Mark 4:30-32, Luke 13:18-19)
  - **The Parable of the Leaven**  
(Matthew 13:33, Luke 13:20-21)
  - **The Parable of the Hidden Treasure**  
(Matthew 13:44)
  - **The Parable of the Pearl of Great Price**  
(Matthew 13:45-46)
  - **The Parable of the New Wine in Old Wineskins**  
(Matthew 9:14-17, Mark 2:18-22, Luke 5:33-39)
  - **The Parable of the Lost Sheep**  
(Luke 15:3-7, Matthew 18:12-14)
  - **The Parable of the Lost Coin**  
(Luke 15:8-10)
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Please add your comments on this week's topic. We learn best when we learn in community.

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<https://aim.moodlecloud.com/>.

Do you have a question about teaching the Bible? Is it theological, technical, or practical?

Please send me your questions or suggestions. Here's the email: [malcolm@malcolmcx.org](mailto:malcolm@malcolmcx.org).

If you'd like a copy of my free eBook on spiritual disciplines, "How God grows His people", sign up at my website: <http://www.malcolmcox.org>.

Please pass the link on, subscribe, and leave a review.

Keep calm and carry on teaching.

God bless, Malcolm

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