



Advice for the sermonally challenged

A practical guide for listening to sermons

Scripture is the Word of God, with the power to give life and to transform lives. Preaching that is true to Scripture, therefore, is able to convert, convict, and conform the spirits of men and women because it proclaims the very Word of God. This is the power of preaching. This is also the importance of learning to listen to the sermon.

But why teach how to listen to a sermon? Usually advice is restricted to those preaching the sermon. After all, if I'm in the service and the preacher is preaching, as long as I manage to stay awake, aren't I listening to the sermon? It's not as if I have a choice in the matter.

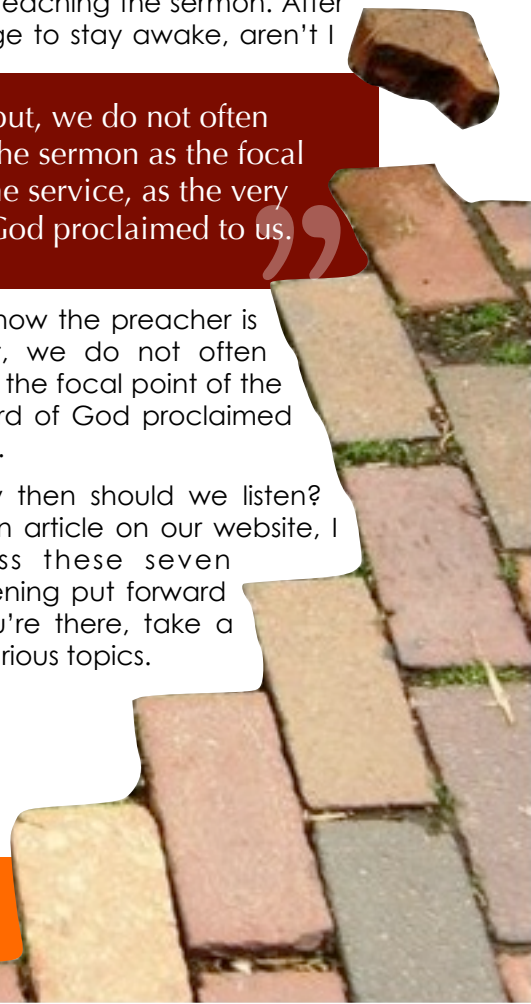
The reality is that we're not very good listeners. Even though bodily present, we tune out and think of other things, like what I'm doing later, the work/homework I need to get done, the cute girl over there, the noisy child sitting behind me, or the string hanging out of the preacher's pocket. We

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might listen for this week's joke or story, or how the preacher is going to mess up this week. Simply put, we do not often approach the sermon as the focal point of the service, as the very Word of God proclaimed to us.

- 1. Expect God to speak**
- 2. Admit God knows better than you**
- 3. Check the preacher says what the passage says**
- 4. Hear the sermon in church**
- 5. Be there week by week**
- 6. Do what the Bible says**
- 7. Do what the Bible says today – and rejoice!**

How then should we listen? In an article on our website, I discuss these seven ingredients of healthy sermon listening put forward by Christopher Ash. And while you're there, take a look at some of the other articles on various topics.



Quarterly Financial Update

Bruce Douglass, Church Treasurer

The church celebrates the particularization and the election of elders. Like any young body, it can be a challenge to establish a firm foundation on which the future will be built. This applies to financial matters as well.

The church has been prudent with its resources. As a volunteer with experience in this area, I have a basis for comparison. While good stewardship of resources is being practiced, certain expenses increase over time. Specifically, taking care of those we have set aside to care for us, the staff. Health insurance premiums have headed up.

Our staff have been generous to us, even absorbing budget shortfalls out of their pay to keep the church open. While food and gas have risen, their pay has remained unchanged since the church started. I have recommended to the session a very modest increase.

July - September 2011	
Income	
Members	\$7,500
Partners	\$13,600
MNA	\$14,400
Plate	\$3,600
Reimb / Refunds	\$800
	\$39,900
Expenses	
Admin	\$10,000
Ministry	\$4,900
Personnel	\$24,500
	\$39,500
Net Income	\$500

Rent is also headed up. Our landlord provided generous terms, far below market value in the early years of the lease and he spent considerably to build a suitable worship space. The time for him to see a return under our agreement has arrived.

What does this mean for us, the people of Free Grace? Providing for the church, just as we have been provided for, remains important. As the funds raised from outside Free Grace are applied and diminish, our personal and collective stewardship is essential for a healthy start to what God has blessed us with in a young and growing church.



Wednesdays, 7:00 PM
Taking the sermon deeper together.

MEN'S NIGHT

November 17, 8:00 PM



November 12
6:30 PM

FREE GRACE FAMILY PRAYER

December 4
6:00 PM



2nd & 4th Sundays
November 13 & 27

Giving thanks as God has called us

November is the month that we think about giving thanks. On the fourth Thursday, many of us get together with friends or family, eat a big meal, and for a few brief moments give thanks for each other and the many other wonderful things we have. And then the next morning (or nowadays sometimes that night) we're off to the stores for more.

However, Scripture has a different idea of giving thanks. In it God calls us to give thanks to him for who he is, for he is the Lord, the God of gods, the Lord of lords, the one who is good. But as Psalm 136 makes so clear, it is also because his steadfast love endures forever.

This refrain finishes every one of its 26 verses. The psalm is calling us to see in no uncertain terms God's steadfast love for us.

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good,
for his steadfast love endures forever.
Give thanks to the God of gods,
for his steadfast love endures forever.
Give thanks to the Lord of lords,
for his steadfast love endures forever.
Psalm 136:1-3

Behind this phrase, "steadfast love," is one Hebrew word: *hesed* (חֶסֶד). This word is translated many ways: steadfast love, faithful love, mercy, and loving kindness. It is the love that is described in Psalm 136. It is the love of God that leads to his creating all things (4-9), his redeeming his people (10-22), and even his care for us (23-25). It is not just love, not just mercy, but covenant love. Love that is guaranteed and demonstrated in every aspect of his being.

This covenant love of God, this *hesed*, is a steadfast love for it endures forever. Literally what the psalmist writes is that "his *hesed* is forever." There is no end to it. It is not only in the good times that we have his covenant love, but at all times, now and forever. It is this love in Jesus Christ that nothing can separate us from (Romans 8). So we are to give thanks all the time, in every situation, for his steadfast love endures forever.

Questions ? Commentaires ?
Contactez-nous !

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How to Give

Checks may be made out to **Free Grace** and sent to the church.
Or you can give online. Instructions can be found at: <http://www.freegrace.us/give>