



Without a Net: Preaching in the Paperless Pulpit

William H. Shepherd

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Does the idea of speaking without a manuscript in the pulpit make you feel like a trapeze artist trying to negotiate a high wire without a net? There you are, balancing delicately in the stratosphere and holding on for dear life with nothing but you and your ballet shoes, wondering Why, oh why, didn't I bring even a sliver of paper up here to catch me when I fall?

For many pastors, preaching without notes is a terrifying prospect -- yet reading verbatim from a manuscript prevents a sermon from being natural and spontaneous. This book shows how you can learn to preach freely without needing the net of written reminders, while still retaining full control over your material. It presents a concise and workable method for creating memorable sermons that connect with listeners. By focusing on delivery, Shepherd casts the entire sermon preparation process, including both study and composition, in a completely new light. Using this approach will make it easy to preach sermons without notes, because they were *meant* to be preached in the paperless pulpit.

Featuring a user-friendly design, ***Without A Net*** is a convenient, instructive text for both beginning and experienced preachers. In addition to a complete system for constructing and delivering a sermon from start to finish, there's a brief outline of the entire process that allows you to quickly locate more details on specific topics. A concise nutshell summarizes each chapter's highlights, and there are plenty of pithy hints and tips to help you with the essential steps. Several sample sermons are also included so you can see how this approach actually works.

Preaching without a net may seem like magic to congregations. But there's no real secret; the answer is right here in this book. With a little practice, one day they'll be asking you too, How do you do that?

Praise for William H. Shepherd's previous books:

No Deed Greater Than A Word: A New Approach To Biblical Preaching

An approach to preaching that respects both the sanctity of everyday life and the profound otherness of the divine which turns a sermon into an experience of the holy. Shepherd is a scholar who knows what hard work a deft sermon requires. He is also a disciple who understands that, in the end, effective preaching of the gospel is always God's surprising gift.

Barbara Brown Taylor

Experience, scripture, theology, literary studies, performative views of language, and understanding the difference between written and oral communication all meet in this book and talk to each other. It is quite evident that here is both a teacher and practitioner of preaching. He respects the task of preaching and the reader who is called to preach.

Fred B. Craddock

If A Sermon Falls In The Forest: Preaching Resurrection Texts

Shepherd knows the scripture and he knows how to preach.

Luke Timothy Johnson

William H. Shepherd is an author, teacher, biblical scholar, and Episcopal priest who currently serves as an Interim Ministry Specialist in the Diocese of Connecticut. In addition to 19 years of experience in parish ministry, he has taught preaching and biblical studies at Candler School of Theology, Virginia Theological Seminary, George Mercer Memorial School of Theology, and Immaculate Conception Seminary. Shepherd's writing has appeared in *Christian Century*, *Anglican Theological Review*, *Emphasis: A Preaching Journal for the Parish Pastor*, and several other publications. He is a graduate of the University of Georgia, Yale Divinity School, and received his Ph.D. in New Testament studies from Emory University.

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