

Application

Introduction

“The application in a sermon is not merely an appendage to the discussion or a subordinate part of it, but is the main thing to be done. Spurgeon says, “Where the application begins, there the sermon begins.” We are not to speak before the people but to them and must earnestly strive to make them take to themselves what we say. Daniel Webster once said and repeated it with emphasis, “When a man preaches to me, I want him to make it a personal matter, a personal matter, a personal matter.”

- John A. Broadus

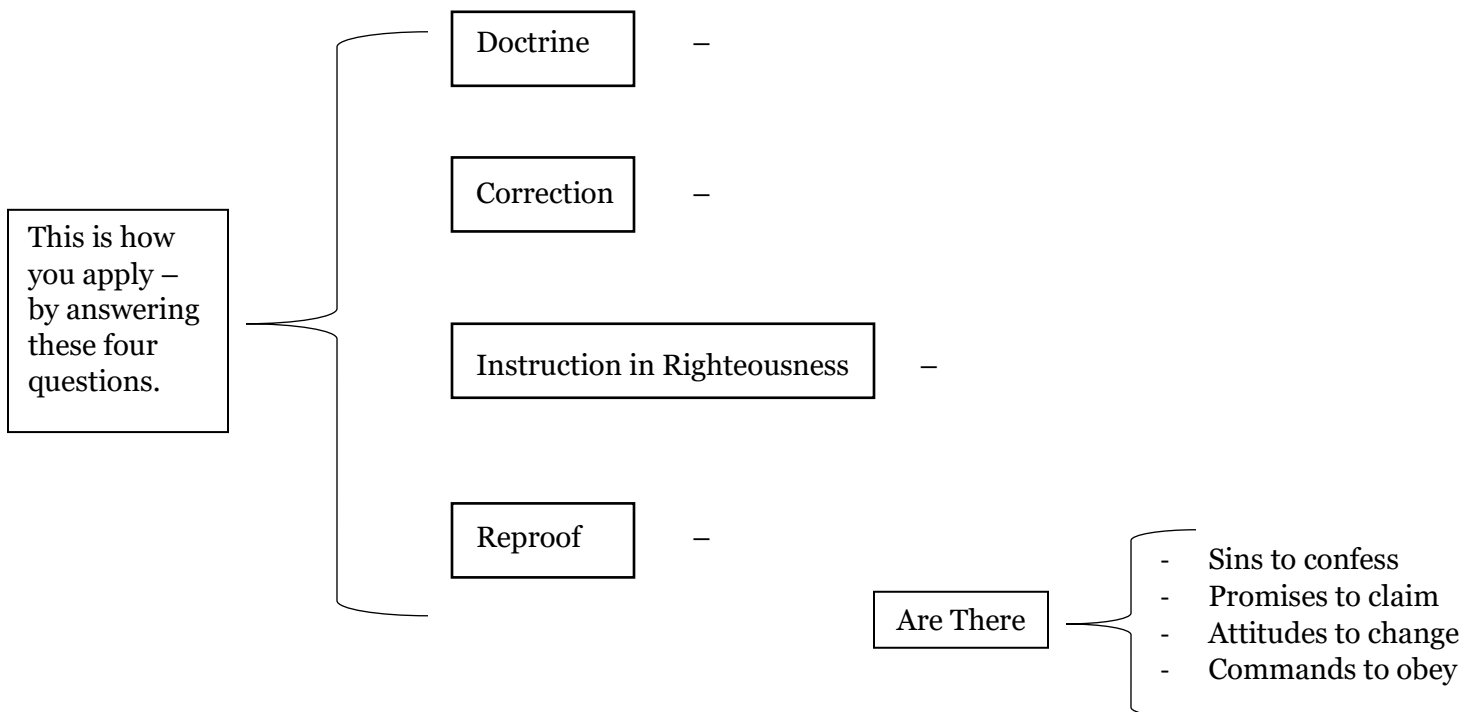
I. The Purpose of Application

The preacher’s goal is not simply explaining the text, it is changing behavior.

A. Two Key Passages

1. James 1:21-25

2. 1 Timothy 3:16-17



B. What happens when we fail to make application?

1. Individuals may make applications on their own – totally unguided, but don't count on it – a high level of maturity is needed.
2. Or, more likely people will substitute interpretation for application – knowledge for experience (becoming forgetful hearers) which is a pure delusion.
3. A lethal pattern is established, suggesting Biblical truth is not important enough to follow.
4. People will often apply the truth to areas where they are already practicing it – but neglect those areas where they are not.
5. Rationalization sets in as people justify why this particular passage doesn't apply in their case. (i.e. cheated the IRS but gave to missions)
6. Emotional experience substitutes for a volitional decision.

(DTS Class Notes)

II. The Principles of Application

Application begins when the listener senses, this truth has direct bearing on my life. They recognize how it applies to their specific situation.

A. Remember your aim

To know God and imitate Him (Ephesians 5:1). Our goal in preaching is not simply knowledge but godliness in belief and behavior.

B. Know your Congregation

Listen, Listen, LISTEN!

C. Use your Imagination (not a dirty word)

D. Read Widely

E. Application begins at Home.

Finding where it applies in our life, gives insight into how it can apply to others.

F. Three Things to Remember about Knowledge

- It is not automatically relevant
- It can gather a crowd
- By itself it “puffs up” producing arrogance and conceit (1 Corinthians 8:1, Acts 17:18)

Conclusion:

Barriers to Application

A. Differences as to what is right or wrong

B. Worldly pressures and societal molds.

C. No clear agreement in applying specific truth

D. Truth and Culture are in constant conflict

“Our expectation as the sermon comes to an end, is not merely that people will understand or remember or enjoy our teaching, but that they will do something about it. “

- John Stott