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## **Bishop Craig A. Satterlee's—Pulpit Boundaries**

Preaching is another sacred trust for pastors. The pastor is responsible for the preaching of the Gospel in the community in which they serve. Therefore preparations for the proclamation of the word are vital to its hearers. Bishops do not take kindly to reading on Facebook on Saturday evening, “ Just looking at the Gospel for tomorrow. Hope the Spirit brings me a sermon.”

In the preaching of the word, these boundaries should be observed:

### 1) Inappropriate self disclosure

Does the sermon or illustration have to be about you? Can you make your point without being the example of good or the illustration of the bad? Using a generic illustration draws attention away from the pastor and keeps it on the Good News. Your family and current parishioners should be off limits. If it has to be a church member, let it be “in a pervious congregation, far, far, away.”

### 2) Sharing of doubt or need for therapy

If the preacher is struggling with a personal issue, unless it relates to the text or is good news, it does not belong in the sermon. Don't lead the people into the woods and then have the preacher admit that they don't know the way out. The sermon is to be “Good News” and should not leave the people more troubled.

### 3) Defending or attacking

The sermon is not the place to defend the pastor's position in a personal or political argument. It is not a place to attack others who criticize the pastor. It is not the place to lobby for better compensation. The sermon can be challenging in a prophetic way as long as it is grounded in scripture. It is better to let Jesus do the talking. Jesus takes stands on the use of money, possessions, helping the poor, and welcoming among many other topics.

4) The pulpit s not a place to preach about personal gain; either the pastor's or the hearers. The prosperity Gospel is a perversion of the words of Jesus, and in the end just another route to mammon and treasurer which will steal one's heat from Jesus.

### 5) The sermon is the pastor's own work

Plagiarizing is unacceptable. One can site short quotes from sources as long as the whole sermon is not one quote after another. The congregation will know, when a sermon is not genuine. They can Google just as well as the pastor.

This famous painting from the Reformation artist Cranach illustrates it best “ Sir, we wish to see Jesus.” Preaching through the cross.

