

May 26, 2015 #AskTK

Timothy Keller's Twitter: @timkellernyc <https://twitter.com/timkellernyc>

Q. [@mfreyd](#): How important is it to accommodate differences in generations as it relates to preaching (e.g. between Boomers and Millennials)? [#asktk](#)

A. [@timkellernyc](#): [@mfreyd](#) I take into consideration race and culture, age, education, gender- all of them are important. I do it instinctively as I see them.

Q. [@rdmcclenagan](#): [@timkellernyc](#) [#asktk](#) Is there 'one' big idea in a given text? is that a helpful or not helpful way to preach?

A. [@timkellernyc](#): [@rdmcclenagan](#) You should look for the main theme and focus on that if you can. Not all texts reveal a single main theme.

Q. [@Justin T Cook](#): [@timkellernyc](#) Roughly how much time should young pastors budget for sermon prep/week? [#asktk](#)

A. [@timkellernyc](#): [@Justin T Cook](#) roughly six hours-but not all at once. Spend time pastoring and reading widely and your preaching will improve.

Q. [@MattDampier](#): Hey [@timkellernyc](#) how do you keep your passion for the gospel so white-hot and energy so high when you preach as often as you do? [#asktk](#)

A. [@timkellernyc](#): [@MattDampier](#) 1) reflection/meditation on the Scriptures, particularly the Psalms-taste the beauty of Christ. 2) Exercise (treadmill).

Q. [@michaelscason](#): [@timkellernyc](#) what are the best ways for a young ministry student to keep developing their skills and talents for their future ministry?

A. [@timkellernyc](#): [@michaelscason](#) Never turn down a speaking or preaching or pastoring opportunity. i.e., practice.

Q. [@bpatton10](#): What books are on your nightstand? [#AskTK](#)

A. [@timkellernyc](#): [@bpatton10](#) Bible, LOTR, John Newton letters.

Q. [@ courtneyyyH11](#): [#asktk](#) [@timkellernyc](#) Any advice for young Christians who are going off to college?

A. [@timkellernyc](#): [@ courtneyyyH11](#) Join a community-ask hard questions of your faith and get answers-don't shrink for forgiving/repenting (real relationships)

Q. [@DougSteffy6](#): [@timkellernyc](#) How can we best reach the growing number of people who believe that truth is relative? [#asktk](#)

A. [@timkellernyc](#): [@DougSteffy116](#) This is important-and I have a section in the Preaching book on it. You have to show the assumptions they have in a nutshell

Q. [@jessejosephic](#): [#asktk](#) best way to memorize a sermon? [@timkellernyc](#)

A. [@timkellernyc](#): [@jessejosephic](#) Repetition.

Q. [@jessejosephic](#): [#asktk](#) Use big words and teach them or stick to words your context will know? [@timkellernyc](#)

A. [@timkellernyc](#): [@jessejosephic](#) Yes.

Q. [@lukemiddleton](#): [@timkellernyc](#) [#asktk](#) Is there a typical shell or template that you work from when preparing a sermon?

A. [@timkellernyc](#): [@lukemiddleton](#) I don't have templates, but I do like to show how the text is showing us a problem and then ultimately a gospel solution.

Q. [@JustinDean](#): [@timkellernyc](#) what's your thoughts on live streaming sermons to different congregations of a multi-site church? [#asktk](#)

A. [@timkellernyc](#): [@JustinDean](#) I think you lose not just the personal touch, but the ability to read your audience. The audience/speaker dynamic is complex.

Q. [@lukemiddleton](#): [@timkellernyc](#) [#asktk](#) You use a manuscript, correct? How do you not stay tied to it (eyes down)? Rehearse?

A. [@timkellernyc](#): [@lukemiddleton](#) I use a detailed outline, and a memorize it-particularly transitions. When preaching be thinking how to say, not what to say

Q. [@echppll](#): [#asktk](#) honestly though, unbiased ranking of Harry Potter, LOTR, and Narnia? [@timkellernyc](#)

A. [@timkellernyc](#): [@echppll](#) LOTR, Narnia, HP. Though I like all three--I read LOTR constantly.

Q. [@curtis_jt21](#): [@timkellernyc](#) what advice would you give to a 22 year old guy who is pastoring a church plant in an inner city??? [#asktk](#)

A. [@timkellernyc](#): [@curtis_jt21](#) Learn your congregation's narratives, don't burnout, ask others who have been there longer, pastoring is more than preaching.

Q. [@Warrior4Jesus](#): [@timkellernyc](#) I am an 18-year-old boy, who has never had a girlfriend. Any advice on singleness and relationships? [#asktk](#)

A. [@timkellernyc](#): [@Warrior4Jesus](#) Read Paige's article on singleness. It's a good start. http://www.unf.ruf.org/great-articles-/attachments/Singled_Out_for_Good.pdf ...

Q. [@eugpark101](#): [@timkellernyc](#) what's the important thing for college ministers to focus on? [#asktk](#)

A. [@timkellernyc](#): [@eugpark101](#) Help students use conflict to bring forgiveness and repentance--which makes the gospel real. Most don't get in conflict.

Q. [@SlamDuncle](#): [#asktk @timkellernyc](#) why do we have denominations? Do you believe they prevent the body of Christ from working at full potential for Him?

A. [@timkellernyc](#): [@SlamDuncle](#) Denoms are the product of our need for purity in the church. Unity and purity are in tension-denoms are the result.

Q. [@CSFchris](#): [#asktk @timkellernyc](#) Compared to the Lord's supper, singing, and other elements in a worship service, how important is preaching?

A. [@timkellernyc](#): [@CSFchris](#) You're asking a Presbyterian this? I would say it is a very important element in the worship service. You can't do without it.

Q. [@Chadwickforfree](#): [#asktk @timkellernyc](#) when preaching Christ how do we not just lecture but show his beauty for the hearers heart to worship on the spot

A. [@timkellernyc](#): [@Chadwickforfree](#) Great point-have to show Christ's beauty and not tell. Engage the imagination. see Edwards on this.

Q. [@AmberStamperPhD](#): [@timkellernyc](#) I have 1 yr old twin boys. I know you have sons too. :-) Any tips for raising them up in the way they should go? :-) [#asktk](#)

A. [@timkellernyc](#): [@AmberStamperPhD](#) Forgive and repent, practice grace, show them not perfection, but humility found primarily in the cross.

Q. [@JasonRomano](#): [@timkellernyc #asktk](#) - I'm preaching my first ever sermon this weekend. Any advice?

A. [@timkellernyc](#): [@JasonRomano](#) Don't put too much weight on it. You're not the Holy Spirit.

Q. [@Justin T Cook](#): [@timkellernyc](#) What are your thoughts on manuscripting sermons, especially for younger pastors? [#asktk](#)

A. [@timkellernyc](#): [@Justin T Cook](#) If it works, fine. Just make sure you memorize and don't read your manuscript.

Q. [@jedwalker](#): [@timkellernyc](#) What do you think is the biggest cultural challenge the church is currently facing? [#asktk](#)

A. [@timkellernyc](#): [@jedwalker](#) In the West, it is critiquing the unspoken assumptions of Secularism, and fixing hypocrisy in the Church.

Q. [@griffingulledge](#): [@timkellernyc](#) Should millennial lay-people care more about the denomination they're in? [#asktk](#)

A. [@timkellernyc](#): [@griffingulledge](#) Yes, generally speaking denominations matter.

Q. [@TomlinMedia](#): [#asktk](#) What's your view on showing film clips, playing songs, and using other visual/audio from pop culture to help prove a point?

A. [@timkellernyc](#): [@TomlinMedia](#) I don't do that. I think good preaching creates the images in the mind and pricks the imagination a la Jonathan Edwards.

Q. [@PopcornTheology](#): [@timkellernyc](#) [#asktk](#) Favorite television show? Should Christians engage entertainment which contains sin/sinful plot devices?

A. [@timkellernyc](#): [@PopcornTheology](#) I'm liking Elementary and Broad Church right now.

Q. [@loudmouthpastor](#): Dr.Keller are you a naturally organized person? Or did u learn it? [#asktk](#)

A. [@timkellernyc](#): [@loudmouthpastor](#) I'm naturally organized, but talk to organized people for pointers.

Q. [@robertgall](#): [@timkellernyc](#) After you'd prepared your sermon, and were standing in the pulpit, have you ever significantly changed direction? [#asktk](#)

A. [@timkellernyc](#): [@robertgall](#) Yes, but not usually.

Q. [@awulff](#): [@timkellernyc](#) what 2 non-preaching books have helped u become a better communicator? [#asktk](#)

A. [@timkellernyc](#): [@awulff](#) Mere Christianity by CS Lewis

Q. [@jasonlee81](#): [@timkellernyc](#) is the practice of meditation such as transcendental meditation inconsistent with Christianity? [#asktk](#)

A. [@timkellernyc](#): [@jasonlee81](#) Yes. Biblical mediation is filling your mind with Scripture, not emptying it.

Q. [@lukemiddleton](#): [@timkellernyc](#) [#asktk](#) What's the role of the individual preacher's personality in the pulpit? Does it have a place?

A. [@timkellernyc](#): [@lukemiddleton](#) If you are not too nervous or affective, your personality will come out and will naturally have a place.

Q. [@EricTGuthrie](#): [@timkellernyc](#) how do you guard against despair after preaching? [#asktk](#)

A. [@timkellernyc](#): [@EricTGuthrie](#) By not getting your identity from your reputation as a preacher. That sounds simple, but it is so important.

Q. [@gradywsmith](#): [@timkellernyc](#) How do we balance staying informed through news and media with living/caring about our immediate surroundings? [#asktk](#)

A. [@timkellernyc](#): [@gradywsmith](#) Read hard copy newspapers that way you stay informed, but you don't spend too much time "elsewhere."

Q. [@loudmouthpastor](#): Hey Tim what is your favorite movie? [#asktk](#)

A. [@timkellernyc](#): [@loudmouthpastor](#) Black Stallion, The Iron Giant, Babette's Feast.

Q. [@abrahaMichael](#): What lead you to start [@TGC](#) with Dr. Carson? [#AskTk](#)

A. [@timkellernyc](#): [@abrahaMichael](#) [@TGC](#) Don and I thought it would be a good idea. You could say our friendship is what lead us to start it.

Q. [@chughes](#): [@timkellernyc](#) How do you promote your own work (books etc) in humility and in light of Pro 27:2 ? [#asktk](#)

A. [@timkellernyc](#): [@chughes](#) Proverbs is right, you should tell people about your book, but not praise yourself.

Q. [@jacobasaf27](#): [@timkellernyc](#) it is possible to stop sinning now? In this world? [#asktk](#)

A. [@timkellernyc](#): [@jacobasaf27](#) No, not at all.

Q. [@m91villegas](#): [@timkellernyc](#) is it possible to love Jesus but be afraid of the father? [#asktk](#)

A. [@timkellernyc](#): [@m91villegas](#) Not if you understand the doctrine of the Trinity. What one does they all do.

Q. [@Kevin D Sprague](#): [@timkellernyc](#) How do you determine which details of a passage you will not go into? How do you safe-guard from rabbit trails [#asktk](#)

A. [@timkellernyc](#): [@Kevin D Sprague](#) You should only have one or two main points. Details that get you elsewhere should be avoided even if they are interesting

Q. [@TheSlambert](#): [@timkellernyc](#) I got feedback that my sermons are good but too long at 45 min. I want to be humble. I want to preach well. Thoughts?[#asktk](#)

A. [@timkellernyc](#): [@TheSlambert](#) 45min is way to long for most audiences and for most preachers. I shoot for 28min. [#alwaysleavethemwantingmore](#)

Q. [@KateSchaff](#): [@timkellernyc](#) Have wondered if you've been influenced/read much of Scottish preachers of the last century? e.g. William Still. [#asktk](#)

A. [@timkellernyc](#): [@KateSchaff](#) William Still, James Philp, Sinclair Ferguson have all been helpful.

Q. [@trevorcox](#): [@timkellernyc](#) You have a group of five new believers in front of you. What do you say first? What do you say next? Next? [#asktk](#)

A. [@timkellernyc](#): [@trevorcox](#) Hello Why is it hard for you to believe in Christianity? Tell me what the very best answer to your own objection would be.

Q. [@RealOwenHarris](#): [@timkellernyc](#) what is the message of The Gospel? What is Jesus' mission statement? Isaiah 61:1? [#asktk](#)

A. [@timkellernyc](#): [@RealOwenHarris](#) Jonah 2:9--Salvation is from the Lord.

Q. [@CMEman](#): [@timkellernyc](#) - What r da best scholarly resources one can consult with a limited knowledge of Greek/Hebrew? Best Bible commentaries? [#asktk](#)

A. [@timkellernyc](#): [@CMEman](#) [@Logos](#) is the best way to interact with the text in the original with limited knowledge of languages.

Q. [@DZRishmawy](#): [@timkellernyc](#) [#asktk](#) which preacher of a prior generation had the biggest influence on you? & what's the biggest change since their time?

A. [@timkellernyc](#): [@DZRishmawy](#) Answered the first half already. London listeners in their day still accepted more basic Christian assumptions than now.

Q. [@jdbautista](#): [@timkellernyc](#) full manuscript or outline when preaching? [#asktk](#)

A. [@timkellernyc](#): [@jdbautista](#) Detailed outline, but that is just me. Everyone is different.

Q. [@CharloGillaspie](#): When you were a young pastor...what did you find most difficult about preaching? [#asktk](#)

A. [@timkellernyc](#): [@CharloGillaspie](#) Having to preach every seven days whether you were ready or not.

Q. [@Troy_Cook](#): [@timkellernyc](#) What advice do you give to young preachers who tend to imitate their favorite preachers? [#AskTK](#)

A. [@timkellernyc](#): [@Troy_Cook](#) The more favorite preachers you have, the more you will develop your own voice, though it will take a while. Get more voices.

Q. [@DavidJosephNoe](#): [@timkellernyc](#) In what ways, if any, would you preach differently if serving in the Bible Belt? [#asktk](#)

A. [@timkellernyc](#): [@DavidJosephNoe](#) For nine years I was. Unbelief is not as conscience or overt there.

Q. [@MarcSims](#): Should pastors have a group of people offer him critique after he preaches? [#asktk](#)

A. [@timkellernyc](#): [@MarcSims](#) You should have people that you trust critique you.

Q. [@greenpun](#): [@timkellernyc](#) [#asktk](#) should a pastor try and reach unbelievers, young Christians and mature believers in every sermon?

A. [@timkellernyc](#): [@greenpun](#) Absolutely unless you have a very unbalanced church because they are all out there.

Q. [@joshyboyrules](#): [@timkellernyc](#) how do you balance looking at commentary for help on interpreting bible text versus coming up with your own thought? [#asktk](#)

A. [@timkellernyc](#): [@joshyboyrules](#) Don't go to commentaries first and write down the things that strike you first. Then go to others.

Q. [@THECHANNINATOR](#): [@timkellernyc](#) do you experience the post-preaching crash? how do you deal with it? [#asktk](#)

A. [@timkellernyc](#): [@THECHANNINATOR](#) I preach four times on a Sunday. Afterwards I do no work and go to bed early.

Q. [@BretNicholson](#): [@timkellernyc](#) [#asktk](#). What's the most significant change you've made to your preaching over the years / why?

A. [@timkellernyc](#): [@BretNicholson](#) I have become more Christ-centered than in my first 10-15 years of preaching, and I see how the whole Scriptures speak of J.

Q. [@CharloGillaspie](#): Who are a few of the preachers who you listen to? [#asktk](#)

A. [@timkellernyc](#): [@CharloGillaspie](#) Dick Lucas, Lloyd-Jones, and John Stott.

Q. [@WillRiddle92](#): [@timkellernyc](#) at what point does topical preaching become more harmful than helpful? [#AskTK](#)

A. [@timkellernyc](#): [@WillRiddle92](#) Expository preaching should be the main diet for your congregation. It topical sermons are not the main diet it's fine.

Q. [@mph](#) : [@timkellernyc](#) what ideal % of a sermon should be for Christians vs. unbelievers? [#asktk](#)

A. [@timkellernyc](#): [@mph](#) It depends on the text (whether it has a strong message to non-believers) and the audience before you.

Q. [@djchuang](#): [#asktk](#) [@timkellernyc](#) in the digital age, communication is no longer just in the pulpit, it's 24/7; how much time daily/wkly do you tweet?

A. [@timkellernyc](#): [@djchuang](#) Not a lot DJ. I look at it every once in a while and answer accordingly.

Q. [@johndpham](#): [#asktk](#) Why is it important to contrast the gospel with irreligion AND religion?

A. [@timkellernyc](#): [@johndpham](#) a) So non-Christians know you aren't just calling them to morality b) So Christians don't think the law is not important.

Q. [@DavidQaoud](#) :[@timkellernyc](#) Curious . . . Even though you've done it for a while, do you ever get nervous before you preach? [#asktk](#)

A. [@timkellernyc](#): [@DavidQaoud](#) Interestingly, yes, but like most preachers, not in my home church.

Q. [@ahester45](#): [@timkellernyc](#) heard lecræ talk about reading your books in a song. What is a good book for a young reader to start? [#asktk](#)

A. [@timkellernyc](#): [@ahester45](#) A good short book is Prodigal God.

Q. [@MichaelMcAfee](#): [@timkellernyc](#) [#asktk](#) how do you preach Jesus from historical books besides "true and better _____" is this the only/best way?

A. [@timkellernyc](#): [@MichaelMcAfee](#) I hate to say this again, but I have chapter in my book on this. Briefly, there are other ways besides typology--ie, images.

Q. [@chrisborah](#): [@timkellernyc](#) [@Justin T Cook](#) define "widely?" Examples? [#asktk](#)

A. [@timkellernyc](#): [@chrisborah](#) [@Justin T Cook](#) People you don't agree with, people you do agree with and not just theology.

Q. [@The_Ox](#): [@timkellernyc](#) Do you still outline your sermon before writing (exp/illust/app) or has that become more instinctual for you now? [#asktk](#)

A. [@timkellernyc](#): [@The_Ox](#) I outline it, then I write it, then I redo the outline, then I preach it.

Q. [@rlangehennig](#): What are some tips for effective communication for young pastors? [#asktk](#)

A. [@timkellernyc](#): [@rlangehennig](#) In my book on preaching there are other books listed inside that I think are the best. Link here: <http://amzn.to/1AsiajH>

Q. [@brielleocot](#): [@timkellernyc](#) your thoughts on women preaching? [#asktk](#)

A. [@timkellernyc](#): [@brielleocot](#) See my wife's short book on this issue: Jesus, Justice and Gender Roles: <http://amzn.to/1SAMDIId> It will be better than a tweet

Q. [@mbrunjes](#): [@timkellernyc](#) [#asktk](#) What is the best way to make sermon applications with out moralizing or giving a "new law".

A. [@timkellernyc](#): [@mbrunjes](#) Make sure the application always connects to faith in Jesus.

Q. [@robertgall](#): [@timkellernyc](#) Has pastoring in NYC taught you anything that would change how you would preach to the rural VA church you pastored? [#asktk](#)

A. [@timkellernyc](#): [@robertgall](#) This sounds funny, but no.

Q. [@timkellernyc](#) If you were a new pastor trying to communicate the gospel clearly, would you choose to preach from the NIV? or ESV? [#asktk](#)

A. [@timkellernyc](#): [@robertgall](#) Communicating the gospel clearly does not primarily depend on the translation...but on the pastor's own understanding of gospel