A sermon that breaks most of the rules

Standing up, Paul motioned with his hand and said: ‘Fellow Israelites and you Gentiles who worship God, listen to me!

The God of the people of Israel chose our ancestors; he made the people prosper during their stay in Egypt; with mighty power he led them out of that country; for about forty years he endured their conduct in the wilderness; and he overthrew seven nations in Canaan, giving their land to his people as their inheritance. All this took about 450 years.

‘After this, God gave them judges until the time of Samuel the prophet. Then the people asked for a king, and he gave them Saul son of Kish, of the tribe of Benjamin, who ruled for forty years. After removing Saul, he made David their king. God testified concerning him: “I have found David son of Jesse, a man after my own heart; he will do everything I want him to do.”

‘From this man’s descendants God has brought to Israel the Saviour Jesus, as he promised. Before the coming of Jesus, John preached repentance and baptism to all the people of Israel. As John was completing his work, he said: “Who do you suppose I am? I am not the one you are looking for. But there is one coming after me whose sandals I am not worthy to untie.”

‘Fellow children of Abraham and you God-fearing Gentiles, it is to us that this message of salvation has been sent. The people of Jerusalem and their rulers did not recognise Jesus, yet in condemning him they fulfilled the words of the prophets that are read every Sabbath. Though they found no proper ground for a death sentence, they asked Pilate to have him executed.When they had carried out all that was written about him, they took him down from the cross and laid him in a tomb.But God raised him from the dead, and for many days he was seen by those who had travelled with him from Galilee to Jerusalem. They are now his witnesses to our people.

‘We tell you the good news: what God promised our ancestors he has fulfilled for us, their children, by raising up Jesus. As it is written in the second Psalm:

‘“You are my son;  
    today I have become your father.”

God raised him from the dead so that he will never be subject to decay. As God has said,

‘“I will give you the holy and sure blessings promised to David.”

So it is also stated elsewhere:

‘“You will not let your holy one see decay.”

‘Now when David had served God’s purpose in his own generation, he fell asleep; he was buried with his ancestors and his body decayed. But the one whom God raised from the dead did not see decay.

‘Therefore, my friends, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you. Through him everyone who believes is set free from every sin, a justification you were not able to obtain under the law of Moses. Take care that what the prophets have said does not happen to you:

‘“Look, you scoffers,  
    wonder and perish,  
for I am going to do something in your days  
    that you would never believe,  
    even if someone told you.”’

Create your illustration from

A striking quotation

Create your illustration from

An illustration or story

Create your illustration from

A dramatic description

Create your illustration from

A current news item

Create your illustration from

A true life experience

Create your illustration from

The statement of a problem

Create your illustration from

The use of provocative questions

Create your illustration from

A preview of the content of your sermon