

The Pastor's Research Assistant User Guide

A complete guide to studying, coaching, and building sermons with The Pastor's Research Assistant

Welcome to The Pastor's Research Assistant

The Pastor's Research Assistant is your companion for the work of the study and the pulpit. It is built for pastors who love the text and want to handle it well: to trace every word, hear how the Church has read the passage from the Fathers to the scholars writing today, and weigh it all before they preach. The Pastor's Research Assistant gathers that work into a single, focused study on your passage.

There are four things The Pastor's Research Assistant does for you, and they fit together as one workflow.

- Deep biblical study: it examines a passage from many scholarly angles at once, the way a room full of specialists might if you could gather them around your desk.
- A step-by-step Sermon Coach: it walks you through building your message one stage at a time, with research support at every step.
- A Sermon Builder: it gives you a flexible editor where your sermon takes shape as movable blocks you can rewrite, reorder, and expand.
- Tools to preach: it helps you carry the finished message into the room, with outlines, slides, a speaker's card, and a podium view for the moment you stand up to speak.

Here is the conviction that shapes everything The Pastor's Research Assistant does: the study is part of the ministry, and the deeper it goes, the better the people are fed. So it does the gathering, the language work, and the historical digging, and puts the results in front of you, so your own study begins further in: weighing it, praying over it, and shaping the sermon. The research informs your judgment; it does not stand in for it. The Coach helps you shape the structure. And the message that emerges carries your voice, your convictions, and your knowledge of the people you serve, because it was formed in the work that only happens between you, the text, and the Lord.

Getting started

Getting into The Pastor's Research Assistant takes only a moment. You create an account, sign in, and you are ready to begin your first study.

Create an account

Start by creating your account. Once it is set up you can begin studying right away.

The 4-day free trial

New users get a free trial so you can see what The Pastor's Research Assistant does before you commit. The key terms are simple and worth knowing up front:

- It lasts 4 days.
- No credit card is required to start.
- You can run up to 4 analyses and do a limited amount of sermon building during the trial.
- It is for one individual: one trial per person and per network.
- It is not available on the Teams plan.

The trial is meant to give one minister a genuine taste of the full workflow, from a first study through the beginnings of a sermon.

Signing in

After your account exists, you simply sign in to return to your work. Everything you create stays waiting for you in your Library and Notes.

The main navigation

Once you are signed in, you move through The Pastor's Research Assistant using the main navigation. Each item is a doorway into one part of the workflow:

- Study: start a new analysis of a passage, subject, or lectionary reading.
- Sermon Coach: build your sermon step by step across ten stages.
- Sermon Builder: shape your sermon in a block editor and expand it with ready-to-preach material.
- Synthesis: combine two or more completed studies into one.
- Library: read, manage, and export your completed studies.
- Notes: keep fragments and observations as you go.
- Learn: the Learning Library, lessons in exegesis, interpretation, and preaching.
- Guide: this user guide.
- Account: manage your plan and profile.

The Study: starting an analysis

The Study is where every piece of work begins. You tell The Pastor's Research Assistant what you want to examine, and it produces a thorough scholarly analysis you can read, export, or carry into the Sermon Coach. There are three ways to start, depending on how you are thinking about your text.

Your starting point

▣

 Passage

🔍

 Subject

📅

 RCL

Romans 8:28-30

Translation

ASV

NASB 2020

ESV

NIV

NKJV

KJV

NRSV

NRSVue

CSB

NLT

NET

CEB

RSV

MSG

YLT

HCSB

WEB

BSB

Name the passage (or a subject, or the lectionary readings) and choose the translation.

Passage mode

Choose Passage when you already know the text you want to preach or teach. Enter a reference such as Romans 5:1-11, and The Pastor's Research Assistant studies exactly that passage. This is the most direct path: you have the verses, and you want them examined.

Subject mode

Choose Subject when you are working from a theme rather than a fixed text. Enter a subject, such as forgiveness, the kingdom of God, or suffering, and The Pastor's Research Assistant selects the most significant passages on that theme and studies them. This is useful when a topic is on your heart but you have not yet settled on where in Scripture to land.

Lectionary (RCL) mode

Choose Lectionary when you preach from the Revised Common Lectionary. The Pastor's Research Assistant treats the appointed readings as a single unit and studies them together, so you can see how the Old Testament reading, Psalm, Epistle, and Gospel speak to one another for a given Sunday.

What happens after you begin

When you start an analysis, The Pastor's Research Assistant does the work in the background. You do not have to sit and wait, and you do not have to keep the page open the whole time. You can watch the progress as the study comes together, and once it is finished it appears in your Library, ready to read and export. If you want to start another study while one is running, you can.

Choosing a translation

You choose the translation for your study. This matters both for how you read the analysis and for what appears when you export it, so pick the version you actually preach and teach from.

The Pastor's Research Assistant can print the full passage text within your study and your exported documents for the translations below. Some are in the public domain; the NASB 2020 and NIV are reproduced under license, so they print in full as well. These are:

- NASB 2020 (licensed)
- NIV (licensed)
- KJV (public domain)
- ASV (public domain)
- WEB, World English Bible (public domain)
- BSB, Berean Standard Bible (public domain)

Other translations (for example ESV, NKJV, and NRSV) are under copyright and are not licensed for full reproduction in The Pastor's Research Assistant. For those, The Pastor's Research Assistant references the text by citation rather than printing it in full. The analysis still engages the passage thoroughly; it simply points you to the verses by reference instead of printing the whole copyrighted text. If you want the full Scripture text printed in your study and exports, choose one of the translations listed above.

The 21 research agents

Behind every The Pastor's Research Assistant study is a panel of research agents. Each agent is a distinct scholarly specialty that examines the passage through its own trained eyes, the way a particular professor or commentator would. One agent watches the original languages; another watches the historical world behind the text; another watches the witness of the early church, and so on. Together they give you the breadth of a seminary faculty focused on your single passage.

Exegetical/Analytical agents · 6 of 21

A1 · Linguistic Hebrew / Greek analysis	A2 · Historical-Cultural Background & context	A3 · Grammatical Syntax & structure	A4 · Synthesis Theological integration
A5 · Church Fathers Patristic reception	A6 · Socio-Rhetorical Texture & rhetoric	A7 · Charismatic Pneumatological reception	A8 · Reformed Calvinist-Reformed tradition
A9 · Remonstrant Arminian-Wesleyan tradition	A10 · NT Use of OT Intertestamental hermeneutics	A11 · Second Temple Jewish background 300 BC-200 AD	A12 · Theology of Prayer Canonical prayer theology
A13 · Missiology Missio Dei & world mission	A14 · Feminist / Gender Gender-critical scholarship	A15 · Jewish Interpretation Rabbinic & modern reading	A16 · Global Hermeneutics Majority World reading
A17 · Ethics Applied & social theology	A18 · Canonical-Narrative Biblical theology depth	A19 · Practical Theology Worship, liturgy & practice	A20 · Soul Care Christian psychology & care
A21 · Sacramental Theology Ecumenical sacramental reading			

Hermeneutical lenses · L1 always active

L1 · Grammatical-Historical ✓	L2 · Cosmic Conflict	L3 · Biblical-Theological	L4 · Canonical
L5 · Christological	L6 · Covenant Theology	L7 · New Creation	L8 · Typological
L9 · Narrative	L10 · Sociological	L11 · Intertextual	L12 · Speech-Act
L13 · Christus Victor	L14 · Spiritual Formation	L15 · Moral/Ethical	L16 · Cultural Engagement

Turn on the agents and lenses your passage needs. Linguistic and Synthesis start switched on, and the Grammatical-Historical lens is always active.

A few agents are active by default so that every study has a solid scholarly core. Beyond those, you choose. You can add agents to suit your text and your audience: reach for the historical and grammatical work on a dense epistle, bring in Soul Care and Practical Theology for a pastoral series, or add a tradition-specific agent when you want a particular theological voice at the table. Here are all 21:

- **Linguistic:** studies the original Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic, including key words and their range of meaning.
- **Historical-Cultural:** reconstructs the historical setting, customs, and cultural world behind the passage.
- **Grammatical:** parses the syntax and grammar to show how the sentences actually work and what that implies.
- **Synthesis:** draws the other agents together into a unified, coherent reading of the passage.
- **Church Fathers:** brings the interpretations of the early church and the patristic writers to bear.
- **Socio-Rhetorical:** examines the social setting alongside the rhetoric and persuasive shape of the text.

- Charismatic: reads with attention to the Spirit, the gifts, and renewal-movement concerns.
- Reformed: interprets within the Reformed theological tradition.
- Remonstrant (Arminian): interprets within the Arminian theological tradition.
- New Testament Use of the Old Testament: traces how New Testament writers quote, echo, and fulfill the Old Testament.
- Second Temple Judaism: situates the passage in the Jewish world between the testaments.
- Theology of Prayer: draws out what the passage teaches and models about prayer.
- Missiology: reads with an eye to mission, evangelism, and the church's sending.
- Feminist and Gender: examines questions of gender, women, and power in the text and its reception.
- Jewish Interpretation: brings Jewish readings and the rabbinic tradition into the conversation.
- Global Hermeneutics: reads the passage through the perspectives of the world church beyond the West.
- Ethics: surfaces the moral and ethical claims and implications of the text.
- Canonical-Narrative: reads the passage within the larger story arc of the whole canon.
- Practical Theology: connects the text to the lived practice of ministry and the church.
- Soul Care: attends to the pastoral, formational, and healing dimensions of the passage.
- Sacramental Theology: explores the passage in relation to the sacraments and the church's worship.

The 18 hermeneutical lenses

Where agents are the specialists who do the looking, lenses shape how the passage is read. A lens is an interpretive frame, a set of questions and commitments through which the text is viewed. The same verse looks different through a Christological lens than through a Covenant Theology lens, and seeing it both ways enriches your understanding. You select the lenses that fit the passage and the message you intend to bring.

The Grammatical-Historical lens is always active, because sound interpretation begins with what the words meant in their original setting. Here are all 18 lenses:

- Grammatical-Historical (always active): reads the text for its plain meaning in its original grammatical and historical context.
- Cosmic Conflict: reads the passage within the larger struggle between God and the powers of evil.
- Biblical-Theological: traces the passage's themes across the unfolding storyline of Scripture.
- Canonical: interprets the passage in light of the shape and order of the whole canon.
- Christological: reads the passage as it points to and is fulfilled in Christ.
- Covenant Theology: interprets the passage through the framework of God's covenants.
- New Creation: reads with an eye to renewal, resurrection, and the world made new.
- Typological: traces patterns and types that anticipate later fulfillment.

- Narrative: attends to the passage as story, with plot, character, and movement.
- Sociological: examines the social structures and dynamics at work in and behind the text.
- Intertextual: follows the echoes and connections between this passage and others.
- Speech-Act: reads the text as words that do things, not only words that describe.
- Christus Victor: reads salvation as Christ's triumph over sin, death, and the powers.
- Spiritual Formation: draws out how the passage forms character and shapes the life with God.
- Moral and Ethical: focuses on the ethical vision and obligations the passage sets forth.
- Cultural Engagement: reads the passage in conversation with contemporary culture.
- Reception History: how this passage has been read across church history, from the patristic era through the present.
- Conditional Immortality / ECT: reads final human destiny, the nature of the soul, and the character of judgment, presenting eternal conscious torment and conditional immortality faithfully side by side.

Output formats

One study can be rendered as many different output types, and you pick the form you actually need. The same careful work on a passage can become a full scholarly exegesis for your own preparation, a children's lesson for Sunday school, or a podcast script, depending on what you ask for. The formats are grouped by purpose.

Study & Preparation

- Full Exegesis: the complete, in-depth scholarly analysis of the passage.
- Sermon Essentials: an accessible exegesis that gives you what you most need to preach the text well.
- Preaching Outline: a structured outline ready to shape into a sermon.
- Pastoral Commentary: commentary written with the pastor and the congregation in view.
- Word Study: a focused study of the key words in the passage.
- Canonical Reference: the passage set in relation to the wider canon.
- Series Outline: a plan for preaching the passage or theme as a sermon series.

Devotional

- Devotional: a warm, reflective reading for personal or shared devotion.
- Lectio Divina Guide: a guide for praying the passage through the practice of lectio divina.

Teaching & Care

- Bible Study: material to lead a group study of the passage.
- Leader Guide: notes and guidance for the person leading the study.
- Children's Lesson: the passage taught at a level children can grasp.
- Youth Lesson: the passage taught for a youth audience.
- Catechism Lesson: the passage shaped into catechetical instruction.

- Worship Order: a service order built around the passage.
- Pastoral Care: the passage applied to the work of caring for people.

Academic

- Academic White Paper: a rigorous scholarly treatment in paper form.
- Lecture 45 minutes: a lecture sized for a 45-minute teaching slot.
- Lecture 90 minutes: a fuller lecture sized for a 90-minute session.

Media

- Podcast or Video script: the study shaped into a script for audio or video.
- Newsletter: the study written up for a church newsletter or email.

Reading and exporting your study

Your Library holds all of your completed studies. It is the home base you return to: every analysis you finish lands here and waits for you, so nothing you produce is ever lost in the moment.

At the top of the Library, Across the canon lays out all sixty-six books of the Bible and shades each by how often you have worked in it. Switch between Preached (sermons you built in the Builder or the Coach, recaps, and calendar passages up to today), Studied (completed studies), and Planned (calendar passages ahead and the weeks of your series). Point at a book to see all three counts. It is a simple way to see what your congregation has heard from you, and what it has not.

I. TEXT AND TRANSLATION

The passage under examination is Romans 8:31-39, read from the NASB 2020 as the primary English rendering. This is a New Testament text; the language of composition is Koine Greek. What follows is the Greek text of the critical editions, verse by verse, with transliteration and a working literal rendering supplied for exegetical control. The working rendering is deliberately wooden at points in order to expose Greek word order and clause boundaries; it is not offered as a competitor to the published versions but as a tool for tracking the argument.

Verse 31

Τί οὖν ἐροῦμεν πρὸς ταῦτα; εἰ ὁ θεὸς ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν, τίς καθ' ἡμῶν;

Ti oun eroumen pros tauta? ei ho theos hyper hēmōn, tis kath' hēmōn?

Working rendering: "What, then, shall we say with reference to these things? If God is for us, who against us?"

Verse 32

ὅς γε τοῦ ἰδίου υἱοῦ οὐκ ἐφείσατο ἀλλ' ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν πάντων παρέδωκεν αὐτόν, πῶς οὐχὶ καὶ σὺν αὐτῷ τὰ πάντα ἡμῖν χαρίσεται;

hos ge tou idiou huiou ouk epheisato all' hyper hēmōn pantōn paredōken auton, pōs ouchi kai syn autō ta panta hēmin charisetai?

Working rendering: "He who indeed did not spare his own Son but handed him over on behalf of us all, how shall he not also, together with him, graciously give us all things?"

Verse 33

τίς ἐγκαλέσει κατὰ ἐκλεκτῶν θεοῦ; θεὸς ὁ δικαίων·

tis enkalesei kata eklektōn theou? theos ho dikaiōn.

Working rendering: "Who will bring a charge against God's chosen ones? God is the one who justifies."

A Full Exegesis opens with the text itself: the Greek, verse by verse, with a transliteration and a working rendering.

To read a study, simply open it from the Library. You can return to it as often as you like, read it on screen, and use it as the foundation for your sermon.

When you want to take a study out of The Pastor's Research Assistant, you can export it. Three formats are available:

- Word, for documents you want to keep editing.
- PDF, for clean reading and printing.
- PowerPoint, for presentation and teaching.

Your exports include Scripture in the translation you chose for the study, so what you carry out matches the version you preach and teach from.

The Sermon Coach

The Sermon Coach is where The Pastor's Research Assistant becomes a partner in the craft of preaching. It walks you through building your sermon across ten stages, offering scholarly support at each step. It asks the right questions, brings the relevant research to your fingertips, and helps you order your own decisions, so the sermon that emerges carries your big idea, your structure, and your words.



Sermon Coach

Build your sermon step by step, your voice, your judgment, scholarly scaffolding at every stage

PROGRESS1/10

THE TEN STAGES

1The Text

✓Exegetical Foundation

✓The Big Idea

4Sermon Type

5Structure

6Point Development

7Introduction

8Conclusion & Call

9Full Manuscript

10Review & Refine

STAGE 1 OF 10

The Text

• WHAT HAPPENS IN THIS STAGE

Stage 1 of 10: Where every sermon begins. You are at the starting point of the entire journey. Nothing that follows will be stronger than what you establish here. This stage has one purpose: to anchor you in the passage and name the pastoral moment you are preaching into. Every subsequent stage, the Big Idea, the structure, the illustrations, the application, will draw on what you enter here. Take your time.

✦ MENTOR'S CORNER, ROBINSON · CRADDOCK · LOWRY · STOTT · HELM · KELLER · CHAPPELL

THE PASSAGE: YOUR STARTING POINT

Before any analysis, before any outline, before any idea about what you might say, sit with the passage. Read it slowly in at least two or three translations. Let it read you before you read it.

Robinson is unambiguous: the passage must set the agenda. Not your topic. Not your

Ten stages down the left. Each one tells you what it is for, then the mentors weigh in before you write.

Here are the ten stages, in order:

- 1 The Text: settle on the passage you will preach and ground yourself in it.
- 2 Exegetical Foundation: draw on the study so you preach from solid interpretation, not impressions.
- 3 The Big Idea: distill the one central, governing idea of your sermon.
- 4 Sermon Type: decide what kind of sermon this will be.
- 5 Structure: lay out the bones, the movements or points your sermon will follow.
- 6 Point Development: flesh out each point with content, support, and application.
- 7 Introduction: craft an opening that draws people in and sets up the message.

- 8 Conclusion: shape an ending that lands the message and calls for a response.
- 9 Full Manuscript: pull it all together into a complete manuscript.
- 10 Review and Refine: step back, evaluate the whole, and polish it before you preach.

Because you make the choices at each stage, the Coach keeps you in the driver's seat. It is the difference between being handed a sermon and being helped to write one well.

The Sermon Builder

The Sermon Builder is a block editor where your sermon takes physical shape on the page. Your research assistant has brought you the study; here is where you write the sermon, with that study beside the draft. What follows is the same walkthrough that opens on the Builder page itself.



Your sermon is a stack of blocks you can name, reorder, and write in. Everything else on this page exists to feed those blocks.

- Name a block with the dropdown at its top left: Introduction, Big Idea, Scripture Exposition, Point, Illustration, Application, Conclusion, Transition, Prayer, or a custom name. The name does work.

Name a block “Illustration” and a Suggest illustrations button appears for it. Name one “Conclusion” and you get Suggest conclusions. Name one “Big Idea” and its first line shows under the sermon title.

- Write in the block. Bold, italic, and lists are in the small toolbar. Everything saves on its own; watch for “Saved” at the top.
- Drag a block by the grip handle at its left to move it. Use the + between blocks, or type / on an empty line, to add the next one.
- Set the sermon’s title, passage, and target length in the header. The target length drives the minutes count at the bottom of the page and the Podium timer.
- Each block also has Add to slides (include it in the PowerPoint) and Speaker notes (plain text that shows in Podium and the exports).

Notes, Outputs, and Passage: your material beside the page

Three panels open beside the draft so you never leave the page to find your own work. Highlight anything in them and drag it into a block.

By Thursday the study is in one tab, the passage in another, the draft in a third, and the one line you need is in none of them. These panels put all of it next to the sermon.

- Notes opens your saved notes. Search by word or #tag. Add a note as a new block, or copy a line, or drag it into the block you are writing.
- Outputs opens every study you have run. The study this sermon is linked to (see Review Before Sunday) is pinned first and opened for you. Highlight a paragraph and drag it into a block, or Copy, or Add as block. With nothing highlighted, the whole study goes.
- Passage looks up any reference in your choice of translation (NASB 2020, NIV, KJV, ASV, WEB, BSB). It opens on this sermon’s passage. Highlight a few verses and drag them in, or Add as block to make a Scripture block. Exports and Podium insert the passage text with its copyright line for you, so you do not have to paste verses in by hand unless you want them in the draft.
- Drag the left edge of a panel to make it wider. The editor moves over to make room.

Highlight any sentence: the editing strip

Select a sentence, a paragraph, or a whole point, and a strip of edits appears under the toolbar. Each one offers a rewrite you accept or dismiss. Nothing changes until you say so.

INTRODUCTION

B I

Tighten

Expand

Refine

Finish the thought

For the ear

Plain English

In one sentence

Fix grammar

Spanish

Check against the text

Tone

She had written the date in her journal three times. Not because she forgot it, but because she needed to make sure it was real.

The call had come on a Tuesday morning, the kind of call that reorganizes everything. The diagnosis was serious. The timeline the doctors offered was frightening. And she sat in her car in the hospital parking structure for forty minutes before she could drive, because she did not know how to go back to a life that now looked entirely different from the one she had left that morning.

She is not unusual. Most of us know a Tuesday-morning moment. Maybe it was a call, maybe it was a conversation that ended something, maybe it was a morning you woke up and realized that the thing you had been dreading was no longer coming; it had arrived. And in that moment, the question every believer faces is not an abstract theological question. It is personal and it is urgent: does God know about this? And if He does, is He actually doing anything? That is the question Romans 8:28 is written to answer.

Paul does not offer a philosophical argument here. He offers an apostolic declaration, grounded in his own suffering and tested against everything the chapter has already said about the Spirit's interceding, the creation's groaning, and the love of God that nothing can sever. He writes out of experience, and he writes for people in real difficulty. The believers in Rome had known exile. They had known social precarity. They had known the weight of living in a city that was not particularly sympathetic to their confession. And into that reality, Paul sends this sentence.

Here is what I want you to see in it today. This verse makes three interlocking claims, and together they form the foundation of a settled, working confidence for every believer facing hard things. The first claim is about who is acting. The second is about how much He includes. The third is about where He is taking it. Let us walk through each one.

Marked for slide

Speaker notes

Highlight a paragraph and the strip opens above it.

INTRODUCTION

B

I

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SUGGESTED REWRITE

The call came on a Tuesday morning. It was the kind of call that rearranges everything.

The diagnosis was serious. The timeline the doctors gave her was frightening.

She sat in her car in the hospital parking garage. She sat there for forty minutes before she could drive.

She did not know how to go back. The life she had left that morning was gone. The life she was driving home to looked nothing like it.

✓ Replace selection

Keep mine

She had written the date in her journal three times. Not because she forgot it, but because she needed to make sure it was real.

The call had come on a Tuesday morning, the kind of call that reorganizes everything. The diagnosis was serious. The timeline the doctors offered was frightening. And she sat in her car in the hospital parking structure for forty minutes before she could drive, because she did not know how to go back to a life that now looked entirely different from the one she had left that morning.

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Run an action (here, For the ear) and the rewrite appears above your text. Replace selection, or Keep mine.

These are the edits a good editor would offer across the desk. They work on what you wrote, in your voice, and they put the result in front of you first. The one in plum, Check against the text, reads your sentence against the study this sermon came from.

- **Tighten:** Cuts the words that are not earning their place. Every idea, reference, and your voice stay. You get back about two-thirds of what you selected. Use it when the minutes count is over the target, or a paragraph reads long. Before: “He says God works in all things, and the working is toward a good He has already defined, and that good includes the healing you asked for this week.” After: “He says God works in all of them, toward a good He has defined, and that good includes the healing you asked for this week.”
- **Expand:** Carries the thought one step further, in your register. It will not invent a new point, a new passage, or an illustration. Use it when a point lands too fast and you can feel the room needing one more beat.

- Refine: Smooths the clunky bits and sharpens a word here and there. Same meaning, same length, same you. Use it for a paragraph that says the right thing awkwardly.
- Finish the thought: Completes a sentence you left hanging, the way you were already heading. A sentence or two at most. Use it select the unfinished sentence and run it.
- For the ear: Rewrites it the way you would say it out loud: shorter sentences, one idea at a time, words a listener catches the first time. Use it any paragraph you wrote at a keyboard rather than at a pulpit. Before: “The eschatological horizon within which Paul situates present suffering relativizes without trivializing it.” After: “Paul is not saying your suffering is small. He is saying it is not the end of the story.”
- Plain English: For the room that did not go to seminary. Technical terms become plain words. A Greek or Hebrew word you named stays, with its meaning beside it. Use it when a sentence came straight from the study and still sounds like it.
- In one sentence: Boils the selection down to the one thing it is saying, the way someone could repeat it in the car. You can insert it below the selection instead of replacing it. Use it for a transition, or for finding your big idea when it is hiding inside a paragraph.
- Fix grammar: Spelling, grammar, punctuation, and nothing else. It will not touch your wording, your order, or your voice. Use it before you export.
- Spanish: Spoken Spanish for a congregation, references kept, quoted Scripture in Reina-Valera wording. Insert it below the English or replace it. Use it for a bilingual congregation, or when you preach in both.
- Tone: Same content, different temperature: Warmer, More direct, Gentler, or More urgent. Use it because the room on a funeral Sunday is not the room on Easter.
- Check against the text: Reads the selection against the study this sermon is linked to and reports three things: what the selection rests on in the study, what it bends or claims beyond the study, and the original word when the point turns on one. It gives you notes, never a rewrite. The fixing stays yours. Use it any time you make a claim about what the passage says. It needs a linked study; open Review Before Sunday once to link one. Before: “...and that good includes the healing you asked for this week.” After: “RESTS ON: the study reads the good of v. 28 through v. 29 and v. 23, present mercy crowned, not denied. BENDS: nothing. THE WORD: ³ ±, ì ½, “good” and filled in by v. 29.”

Every rewrite goes through the same theological guardrails as a study. The editor will not shift the theology of a sentence while it tightens it.

Replace selection puts the rewrite where your selection was. Keep mine closes the strip and leaves your text untouched. You can run another action on the same selection.

Suggest illustrations and Suggest conclusions

Name a block “Illustration” or “Conclusion” and a button appears that drafts options for it, drawn from the point above and the whole sermon.

- Add a block after a point and name it Illustration. Press Suggest illustrations. Three come back: one biblical, one historical, one from ordinary life, each written in full and ready to preach. Press Insert

this on the one you want; it goes into the block. They are drawn from the point directly above, so write the point first.

- Name a block Conclusion and press Suggest conclusions. You get three ways to land the sermon: a call to action, a bookend that returns to your opening, and a vision of what the text makes possible.
- A sermon brought over from the Sermon Coach already carries the illustration you chose for each point, inside the point. You will not see separate option banks any more; if an older sermon has them, the review sets them aside and tells you.

Review Before Sunday

The last step before the pulpit. A colleague who read the same study reads your finished sermon and tells you, verse by verse, where it holds to the text and where it drifts. Then strengths, things to consider, one thing to add, one to cut.

✧ Review Before Sunday



📖 THE STUDY BEHIND THIS SERMON

Romans 8:26-28 · Full Exegesis



A trusted colleague who has read the same study reads your sermon: first where it stays faithful to the text and where it drifts from what the exegesis established, then strengths, things to consider, one thing to add, and one to cut. The sermon stays yours. Edit a block and press refresh to review again.

FAITHFUL TO
THE TEXT

● Attention

BIG IDEA

● Consider

DEVELOPMENT

● Consider

INTRODUCTION

● Holds

APPLICATION

● Attention

3 blocks of alternative illustration options from the Coach were set aside: they are choices, not part of the sermon. Your manuscript already carries the illustrations you chose, so you can delete those blocks when you are done with them.

FAITHFULNESS TO THE TEXT

Start with what is genuinely faithful. Your Point Three is the best part of the sermon and it tracks the study closely. The study's theological synthesis insists that the good God works includes "both His present mercies and the final glory in which every mercy is made whole," and you preach exactly that: "the sustaining, the interceding, the healing, the provision, the conforming, the redeeming, the glorifying. It is all of a piece." The infertility illustration lands this without ranking one gift over another ("She does not say the good was the son while the grief was merely the road to him"). That is careful work and it is faithful. Likewise, your refusal to let the verse become "all things are good" matches the study's caution.

Three places need attention before Sunday.

First, Point One contradicts the study at a load-bearing point. Your heading reads "GOD IS THE ACTIVE SUBJECT, NOT A PASSIVE OBSERVER," which is fine as far as it goes, but you then push it to sole agency: "Not 'God allowed this.' Not 'God redeemed this after the fact.'"

~~God was the active agent all along, working through and not merely~~

The review panel: the study it is reading against, the readiness strip, then Faithfulness to the Text.

It is what you would get if a trusted colleague had done the same exegesis you did and then sat down with your manuscript on Friday afternoon. It can do that because it has your study open while it reads.

- Finish the manuscript first. The review reads what is on the page, so a half-written sermon gets a half-useful review.
- Press Review Before Sunday. The panel opens beside the draft and first links the study behind this sermon: the study on this passage whose verses overlap the sermon's, deepest study first. Change it in the dropdown if it picked the wrong one. A sermon that came from the Coach is linked to its Stage 2 study already. With no study linked you still get a general review (strengths, observations, add, cut). The faithfulness section needs the study.
- Read the readiness strip at the top: Faithful to the text, Big Idea, Development, Introduction, Application. Holds means nothing to change. Consider means worth a look. Attention means fix it before Sunday. It is a map of where to read first, not a score.
- Read FAITHFULNESS TO THE TEXT. It names where your sermon stands squarely on what the study found, where it claims a little more than the text carries, where a distinction the study drew (a word, a tense, a turn in the argument) got flattened, and what the study treated as central that never reached the pulpit. It cites the verse and gives the Greek or Hebrew with the English when the point turns on a word.
- Read STRENGTHS (what not to touch), OBSERVATIONS (big idea, development, introduction, application, whether it preaches for the ear), ONE THING TO ADD, and ONE THING TO CUT. Every note quotes your own words so you can find the spot.
- Edit the blocks, then press the refresh icon in the panel to review again. A review takes a few minutes on a long sermon.

What it will never do: where your own study says serious interpreters differ on a verse, preaching one of those readings is faithful. The review may mention the other reading exists, as something some hold. It will not call that a correction, and it will not treat a contested theological position as a hole in your sermon.

Coach illustration option banks (blocks named "Illustration — Point One" holding BIBLICAL / HISTORICAL / CONTEMPORARY options) are set aside, not reviewed as content. The panel tells you when it has done this.

Exports, Podium, and the week after

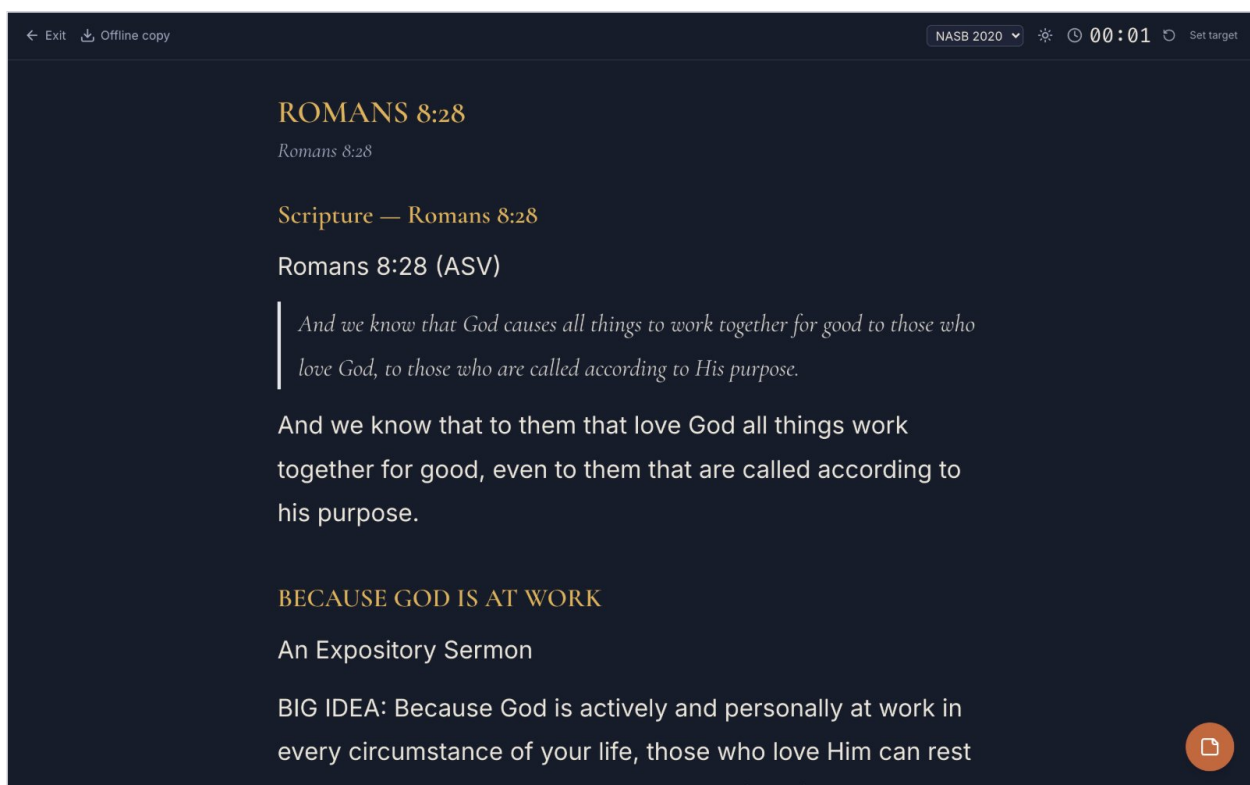
Word, PDF, PowerPoint, a speaker's card, a preaching view for your tablet, and two follow-up guides, all from the blocks you wrote.

- Manuscript: Word or PDF of every block in order. Outline: the same, in outline form; Quick keeps your own words, AI condenses each block to bullets.
- Speaker Card: one landscape page for the pulpit with the Big Idea in its own box. Print it or save a PDF.
- Slides: a PowerPoint from the blocks you switched on for slides, with each Scripture reference on its own slide.

- Include scripture passages adds the verse text of every reference, in the translation you pick, with the copyright line, to the Manuscript and Outline.
- Podium opens a large-type preaching view: light or dark, one continuous scroll, your speaker notes following the block on screen, and a timer against your target that turns amber as you get close. Download one file that works offline at the pulpit.
- Small-group guide and Take-home devotional each open as their own document, written from this sermon, ready to edit and send.
- After you preach, go to Recap in the top navigation, bring in the recording, a YouTube link, or a transcript, and link this sermon. You get a review of how it was delivered and what was said, read against what you wrote and what the text established.

Podium mode

Podium mode turns a tablet or phone into your pulpit. When the moment comes to preach, you no longer need loose pages; your message is right there on the screen, formatted for the room.



Podium, in night mode, with the timer at the top.

In Podium mode you can:

- Scroll through your outline or your full manuscript as you preach.
- Slide out a margin tab to reveal your speaker's notes when you want them.

- Watch a running timer so you stay on pace.
- Switch between day mode and night mode to suit the lighting where you stand.

It is designed to be calm and uncluttered, so the device serves you and then gets out of the way.

Recap: after Sunday

Recap reviews the sermon as it was preached. It reads what you said against the outline or manuscript you wrote and against what the text established, using the criteria employed by major preaching models. Nothing is scored: every section is an observation that points at your own words, and you decide what it means. Recap is included with every paid plan.

Step 1: bring in the sermon

Choose one of three ways. Upload the recording: the soundboard feed, the audio from your livestream software, or a phone recording made near the pulpit. Audio (MP3, M4A, WAV) and video (MP4, MOV) both work, up to 2 GB. This gives the fullest review, because every word comes with its exact time, so pace and pauses can be measured. Trim it to the sermon if you can. Do not use a website that downloads YouTube videos; those files often carry a damaged sound track that cannot be transcribed.

Paste a YouTube link: the review reads the captions YouTube made, in a few minutes. Know its limits. Captions can take a day to appear after a livestream, and some channels turn them off. Private, members-only, and age-restricted videos cannot be read. Automatic captions often mishear names and biblical words. The whole video is counted, music and announcements included. And captions leave out pauses and most ums.

Paste a transcript: any transcript of what you actually said (on YouTube, press “...more” under the video, then Show transcript). Paste what was preached, not your manuscript; link the manuscript in step 2 instead.

Recap a sermon

Two short steps, then press Listen back.

1 Bring in the sermon as it was preached

Choose one of the three ways. Each gives the full review; they differ in how much of the delivery can be measured.

 Upload audio or video

 YouTube link

 Paste a transcript

Choose File No file chosen

The fullest delivery notes: real pace, every pause, and every um and uh, because the words come with their exact times.

HOW TO DO IT

1. Get the recording: the soundboard feed from your sound team, the audio from your livestream software, or a phone recording made on or near the pulpit.
2. Press Choose File and pick it. Audio (MP3, M4A, WAV) and video (MP4, MOV) both work, up to 2 GB. A video is fine; only its sound is used.
3. If you can, trim it to the sermon alone. A whole service works, but the music, readings, and announcements are counted too, so pace and length come out less exact.

GOOD TO KNOW

- Do not use a website that downloads YouTube videos. Those files often carry a damaged sound track that cannot be transcribed. If the sermon is on YouTube, choose YouTube link instead.
- Before uploading, play a minute from the middle. If you can barely make out the preacher, the recap will hear the same thing.
- A large file takes a few minutes to upload. Keep the page open until it reaches 100 percent; after that you can leave.

2 Tell the recap what it is listening to

Four boxes, all optional. You can press Listen back with every one empty and still get a full review. Each one you fill in gives the review something more to work with, as explained beside it. If you wrote this sermon in the Builder, choosing it in the first box fills in the title and passage for you.

Step 1 on the Recap page, with how to do it and what to watch for under each choice.

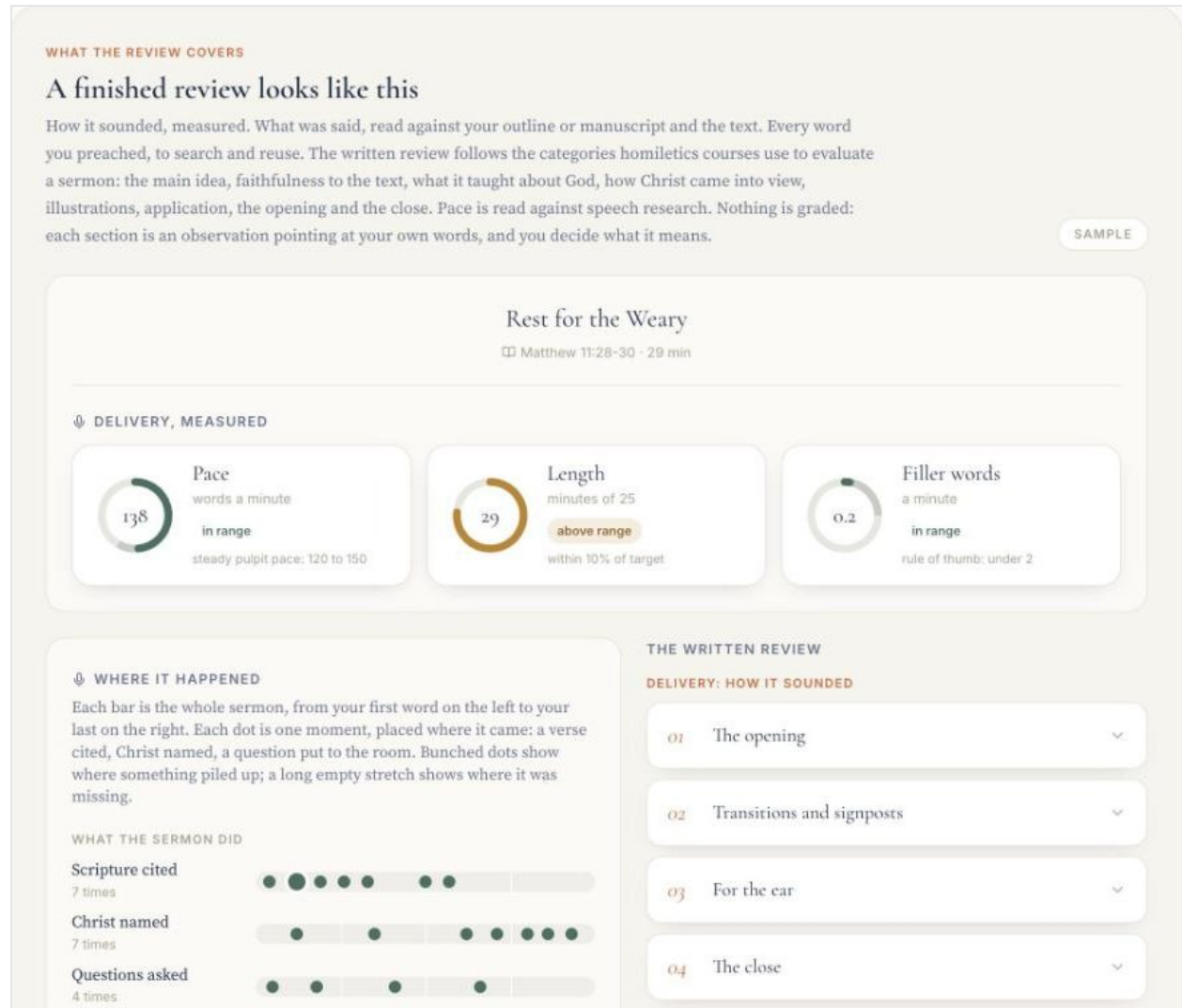
Step 2: tell the recap what it is listening to

Four boxes, all optional. The sermon you wrote: choose it from your Builder, and the review compares what you preached with your outline or manuscript and reads it against the study behind it; its title, passage, and target length fill in for you. Title: a name you will recognize later. Passage: the text you preached; the review reads your sermon against it, and for an uploaded recording it also helps the transcription spell biblical names. Target minutes: how long you meant to preach; the Length meter shows the real length against it.

Step 3: press Listen back

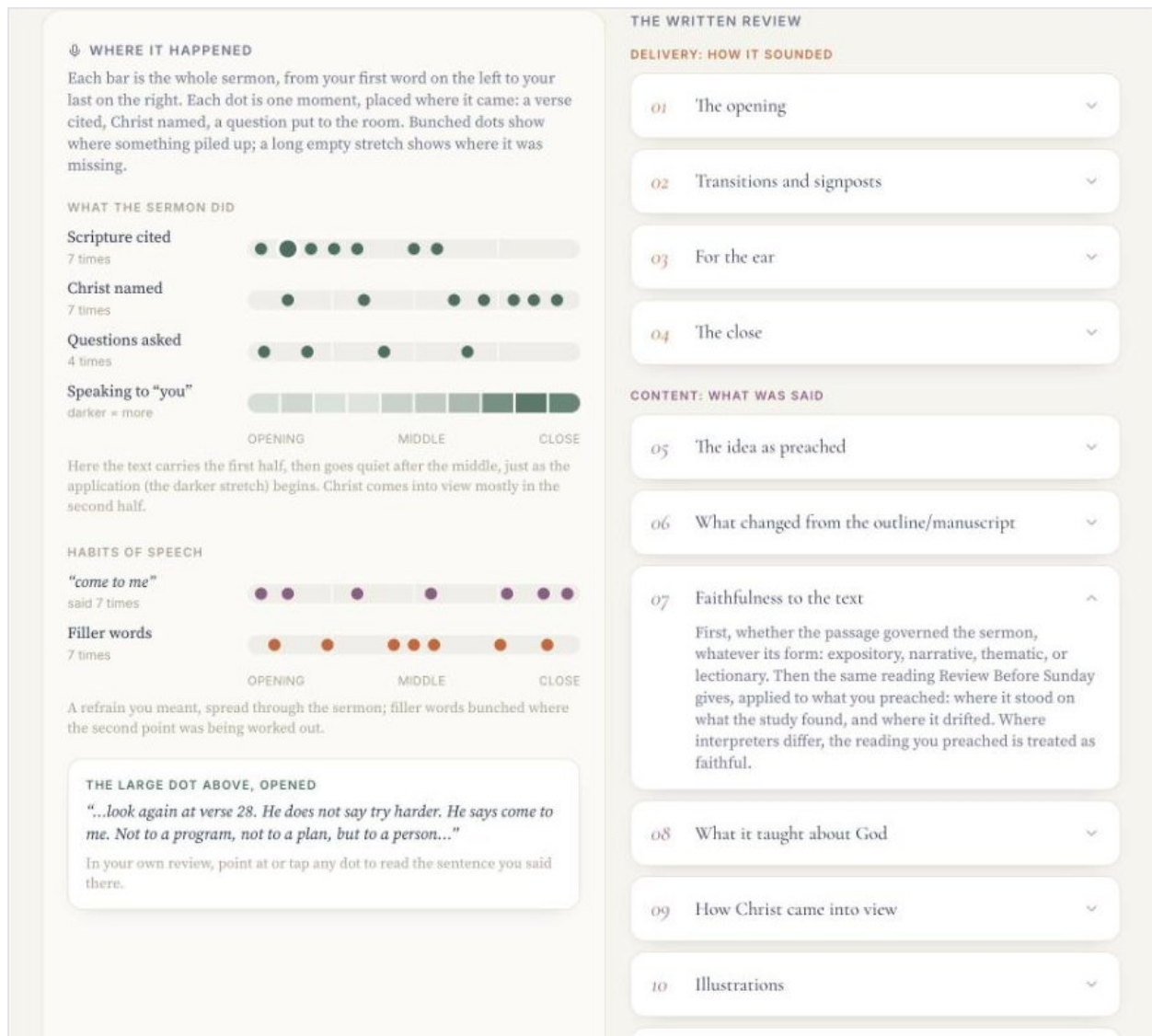
An upload first shows its progress in percent; keep the page open until it reaches 100. Then the recap's own page opens and shows each stage: Received, Writing out every word (about five minutes for a forty-minute recording, seconds for a link or a transcript), Listening back (several minutes), Ready. You can close the page; the recap waits under Your recaps.

What the review covers



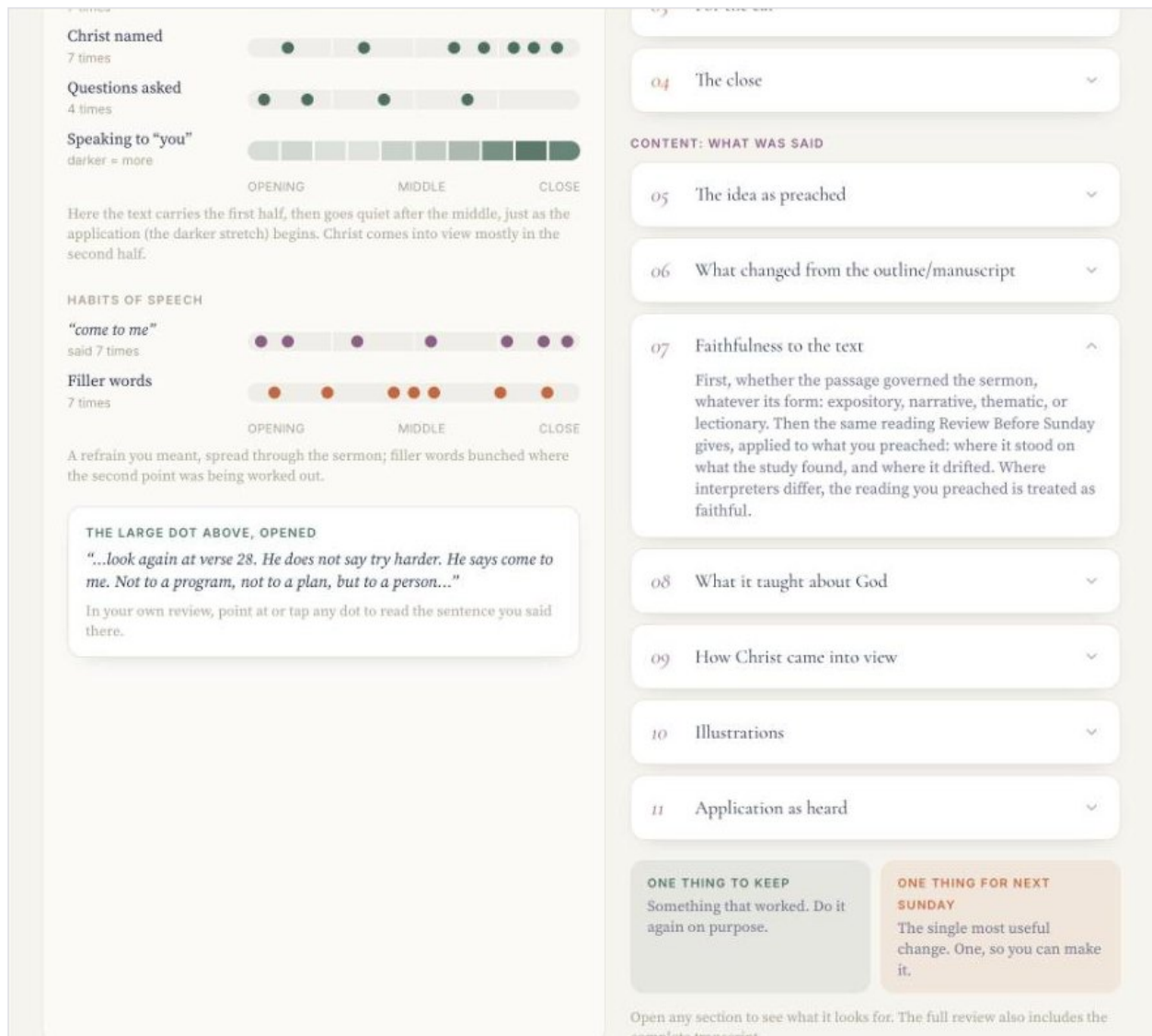
The sample on the Recap page: the three measures at the top of a review.

At the top sit three measures, each a count or a rate shown against a range, never a score: your pace in words a minute (a steady pulpit pace is 120 to 150; average English speech is about 150), your length against your target (within ten percent counts as on target), and filler words a minute (under two is a rule of thumb).



Where it happened: each bar is the whole sermon, opening to close; each dot is one moment.

Below them, timelines run from the first word of the sermon to the last. Scripture cited marks each time you named a reference or pointed back into the text. Christ named marks each mention of Jesus, Christ, the cross, the resurrection, or the gospel; it counts words, not theology, so read it as a prompt. Questions asked marks each question put to the room (YouTube captions usually carry no question marks, so this may be empty for a link). Speaking to "you" shades ten stretches of the sermon by how often you addressed the listener directly; application usually lives in the darker stretches. Then two habits of speech: phrases you came back to, and filler words. Point at or tap any mark to read the sentence you said there.



The written review, in two parts. Open any section to see what it looks for.

The written review comes in two parts. Delivery, how it sounded: what the room heard, the numbers read for this sermon in particular, the opening, transitions and signposts, sentences built for the page and not the ear (each with a spoken rewrite), the close, one thing to keep, and one thing to work on next Sunday. A recording cannot show eye contact or gesture, so the review never comments on them.

Content, what was said: the idea as preached; what changed from the outline/manuscript, and whether each change helped; faithfulness to the text, beginning with whether the passage governed the sermon, whatever its form (expository, narrative, thematic, or lectionary); what it taught about God, judged against the passage and your study, never against one tradition's checklist; how Christ came into view, with no forced connection asked of an Old Testament text; the illustrations, and whether each shed light on the text; the application as heard; and one thing to say more clearly next time. Where interpreters differ, the reading you preached is treated as faithful.

When a recap needs attention

If a recap cannot be finished, it is marked Needs attention in Your recaps. Open it: the page says in plain words what happened and lists what to do, most likely first, with a Try again button. A long recording that comes back with almost no words is tried a second time with a different transcription model before you are asked to check the sound, use the YouTube link, or paste a transcript.

Synthesis

Synthesis lets you take two or more of your completed studies and bring them together. Sometimes a message is not contained in a single passage: it spans several texts, or it draws a few subjects into one thread. Synthesis is built for exactly those times.

You can use it in two ways:

- Combine your studies into one unified study, which you can then carry into the Sermon Coach as a single foundation.
- Summarize your studies into one tight digest, when you want the essence of several studies in a compact form.

This is especially helpful for a sermon or series that moves across multiple passages or themes, letting you weave separate pieces of study into one coherent whole.

Notes

Notes is a place to keep the fragments and observations that come to you while you study. A turn of phrase, an illustration you do not want to lose, a connection you noticed, a question to chase down later: jot it in Notes and it is held safely until you need it.

What makes Notes more than a scratch pad is that your notes are ready to drop into a sermon. As you build, you can reach for the pieces you saved and place them where they belong, so the good thoughts you had on Tuesday make it into the message on Sunday.

Finding a note: search and hashtags

A search box sits at the top of the Notes page. Type any word and it pulls up every note whose title, body, or passage contains it, so even a large collection is searchable in a keystroke.

For grouping, use hashtags. Write a #hashtag anywhere in a note (for example #prayer, #grace, or #romans8) and that note is tagged. Type a #hashtag into the search box to see only the notes that carry it, or combine a tag with words to narrow further; for example, #faith healing finds notes tagged #faith that also mention healing.

Every hashtag you have used is gathered into a clickable index of chips beneath the search box, each showing how many notes carry it. Click a chip to filter to those notes, click it again to remove it, and combine several to narrow. A #tag inside a note is clickable too, and a live count shows how many notes match.

To tag a note, simply include #word when you write or edit it; there is no separate tagging step, and your tags are indexed the moment you save.

The Preaching Calendar

The Preaching Calendar gives you a full year to plan every Sunday. Follow the Revised Common Lectionary or keep a traditional calendar for your own series, read it as a list or a month grid, and write a plan for any day. It is free to view and print, and signing in saves your plan to your account so it loads on any device.

Lectionary or Traditional

Choose Lectionary to follow the Revised Common Lectionary (Year A, B, and C), with the first reading, psalm, epistle, and gospel shown for every Sunday. Choose Traditional for a plain calendar year when you preach your own series. Easter and the other holy days are marked for you in both.

List or month grid

The List view shows the year season by season, or month by month, and opens at the current week. The Month grid shows one month at a time as a wall calendar. Use the Jump to controls to move to any date, or to any lectionary Year, without scrolling.

Planning a day

Click any day to open it. Write the sermon title, the pericope or passage(s), and the subject, and add formatted notes with bold, italic, underline, and lists. A color bar on each day lets you code your series and themes. Signed in, everything saves automatically.

Adding a sermon from the Coach or Builder

From both the Sermon Coach and the Sermon Builder, the Add to preaching calendar button lets you pick a date and place that sermon's title, passage, and theme onto that Sunday, so your study, your sermon, and your plan stay together.

Printing and the church-year wheel

Use Print this calendar to print what you see, filled in or blank to complete by hand. On the lectionary view you can also download the church-year wheel, a visual of the seasons sized to the year.

The Sermon Series Planner

The Sermon Series Planner is one organized workspace for planning a whole preaching series: lay out each week's text, do the full study behind every message, and place the series on your Preaching Calendar. Open it from Series on the menu, or start one from a finished Series Outline.

The arc

The arc is the through-line of the series: the way the weeks connect and build, from the opening Sunday to the one that brings it home. A strong arc makes a series feel like one unfolding message rather than a set of unrelated sermons.

Name the series and its scope

Give the series a title and a scripture scope (a book, or a theme such as faith or the parables of Luke), and, if you like, a big idea, a color, and a status. The color marks the series on its cards here and on each of its Sundays in your Preaching Calendar.

Choose your agents and lenses

Before you draft, choose the exegetical agents and hermeneutical lenses you want your research assistant to apply. Nothing is pre-selected; the study reflects the tools you choose. Each option explains itself in plain language. Pick more for greater breadth, or a focused few for a particular emphasis.

Draft the arc, or lay it out yourself

Press Draft the arc and your research assistant surveys the subject across the whole canon and proposes a week-by-week arc, each week standing on its own real passage, which you are free to edit. Or add and order the weeks yourself, giving each a passage, a focus, and a Sunday.

Study each sermon in full

When a week is ready, Study this text gives that sermon a complete exegesis and a preaching outline, the same depth as a standalone study. You only study the weeks you choose to open.

Put the series on your calendar

Give the weeks dates, or Schedule the Sundays from a start date, then Populate the Preaching Calendar to place the whole series on the calendar in one click.

What it uses

Drafting the arc uses one analysis. Fully studying a sermon, a complete exegesis plus a preaching outline, uses two more, and only when you choose to study that week. Nothing is generated for weeks you do not open.

The Learning Library

The Learning Library is where The Pastor's Research Assistant helps you grow as the one who handles the text. While the rest of The Pastor's Research Assistant does the gathering for you, the Learning Library teaches the craft itself, in plain language, so you can keep deepening as an interpreter and preacher week by week. You will find it inside the app under Learn, and it is included with your plan.

It is organized as thirty-five lessons across three disciplines, the three skills that stand behind every faithful sermon:

- Exegesis: drawing the meaning out of the text the author actually wrote, including observation, words, genre, context, and the careful use of commentaries.
- Hermeneutics: interpreting faithfully, including the grammatical-historical method, bridging the gap from the ancient text to today, seeing Christ rightly, and avoiding the common pitfalls.
- Homiletics: turning study into a sermon, including finding the Big Idea, structure, illustration and application, the narrative arc, building a series, and honest self-critique.

Tiered from foundations to advanced

Each discipline is arranged in three tiers, so you can begin wherever you are and grow from there. Foundations covers the essentials in plain terms. Developing builds on them with more skill and nuance. Advanced takes up the harder questions and the finer judgments. You are free to read in any order, but the tiers give you a natural path.

Built to teach, not merely summarize

Every lesson is written to teach the skill, not only to describe it. Each one includes a worked example on a real passage, so you see the technique applied rather than only explained, a key takeaway to carry with you, and a short exercise to try on your own text this week. No Greek, Hebrew, or seminary background is assumed.

Plans, allowances, and fair use

The Pastor's Research Assistant offers three plans so you can choose the one that fits how much you study and preach.

- Premier: \$49 per month, with 40 analyses.
- Advanced: \$79 per month, with 60 analyses.
- Teams: \$199 per month, with 180 analyses shared across up to 5 seats.

What counts as an analysis

An analysis is one generated study, output, or synthesis. Only completed analyses count toward your allowance; if one fails, it does not count against you.

How allowances work

Your allowance resets each billing cycle. Unused analyses do not roll over from one cycle to the next, so each month begins fresh with your plan's full allowance.

Fair use

Accounts are personal and intended for individual ministry use. On the Teams plan, the shared allowance is meant for the seats on that one team.

The free trial

The free trial gives new users a way to try The Pastor's Research Assistant first. The key terms again: it lasts 4 days, requires no credit card, allows up to 4 analyses and a limited amount of sermon building, is for one individual with one trial per person and per network, and is not available on the Teams plan.

If you reach your allowance

Running out before the cycle ends does not stop your work. If you reach your allowance, you can upgrade your plan and continue right where you left off.

Your account

You manage your plan and your profile from the Account page. It is the place to handle the practical side of your subscription.

From Account you can:

- See your plan type, so you always know which plan you are on.
- Use the upgrade option to move to a higher plan when you need more.
- Manage your profile details.

Your login and security are managed separately, so signing in and protecting your account are handled in their own dedicated place.

Tips for the best results

The Pastor's Research Assistant rewards a little intentionality. A few habits will help you get the most from every study and every sermon.

- Choose agents and lenses that fit the passage and the audience. A dense theological text, a narrative, and a pastoral topic each call for a different mix; pick the voices that serve this text and these people.
- Start from a clear passage or subject. The sharper your starting point, the more focused and useful the study will be.
- Use the Sermon Coach to keep the sermon in your own voice. Let it guide and support you stage by stage rather than handing you finished words.
- Revisit and edit everything The Pastor's Research Assistant offers. Treat its output as raw material

for your judgment, not as a final answer. Rework it until it is truly yours.

- Save useful pieces to Notes as you go. The good thought you have now is easy to lose; capture it so it makes it into the sermon.

Frequently asked questions

What counts as an analysis?

An analysis is one generated study, output, or synthesis. Only completed analyses count toward your allowance; a failed one does not count against you.

Does The Pastor's Research Assistant write the sermon for me?

The sermon is yours. The Sermon Coach walks you through ten stages with scholarly support at each one, so the structure, the words, the convictions, and your knowledge of the people you serve are all your own. It carries the research to you; the praying, the shaping, and the speaking are yours.

How does the free trial work?

The free trial lasts 4 days and requires no credit card. It allows up to 4 analyses and a limited amount of sermon building. It is for one individual, with one trial per person and per network, and it is not available on the Teams plan.

Is my work private?

Yes. Your content is private to your account. It is not shared, and it is not used to train AI systems.

Can I cancel anytime?

Yes. Plans are monthly, and you can cancel anytime from your account.