

**Carey Nieuwhof:** Hey podcast listeners, I've got a special live recording of this show coming up in Atlanta at the end of the month. If you want to jump the queue, I'll give you details at the end of the episode, but if you want to jump the queue, go to [cnlp.live](http://cnlp.live) and secure your spot today. That's [cnlp.live](http://cnlp.live) and I'd love to see you in Atlanta at the end of April.

The Art of Leadership Network

**Carey Nieuwhof:** Welcome to the Carey Nieuwhof Leadership Podcast, it's Carey here and I hope our time together today helps you thrive in life and Leadership.

Well, I am thrilled to have Albert Tate back on the podcast. We're gonna talk about crafting a world-class message, we're going to dissect his sermon and talk preparation approach and how to read people rather than your notes when you're speaking. If you're a preacher, you're going to love this. If you're a CEO or a communicator or business leader, this will improve your communication skills. And today's episode is brought to you by Compassion.

Compassion partners with over 8,400 local churches in the developing world to break the cycle of poverty. Visit [compassion.com/carey](http://compassion.com/carey) to check out what compassion has available for your church.

And by Overflow: the days of giving the church the leftovers are behind us. It's time to empower your donors to give from their overflow. Go to [overflow.co/carey](http://overflow.co/carey), that's .co not .com to learn how.

Well, Albert Tate. I think a lot of you know him, he is the founding and Lead Pastor of Fellowship Church in In Los Angeles County, California. It was actually there that we met. I was speaking at his conference in LA, and we took a nice lunch break to go into a back room. We also filmed this episode. I love it when I land in a city and people are like, man, I watch your podcast. You know, for the very first time starting to hear people saying I'm watching the podcast, not just listening. I know, the vast majority of people listen. But if you do enjoy watching, we shot this in LA and you can find that at Carey Nieuwhof on YouTube. Check out my Youtube channel, it's super easy to find.

Albert is the founder and the CEO of The Greatest Story, Inc. He's the President of Haram B. Ministries? He recently published his first book entitled, "How We Love Matters: a call to practice relentless racial reconciliation." You can search the archives for our conversation around that as well. Albert's one of the best communicators. I know it was a real joy to be with him. I think you're gonna enjoy this episode. By the way, if you're new here, welcome. We're really glad to have you. We pick up new listeners every single month and every year. And if you haven't subscribed yet, please do so. You can do so for free wherever you get your podcasts, and we also have show notes and a whole lot more for you for free over at [careynieuwhof.com](http://careynieuwhof.com) so make sure you check that out. Well I want to highlight a ministry that is all about the local church, and that's Compassion International.

You probably know that Compassion's mission is to release children from poverty in Jesus' name. I have been a supporter for years. I've been with them on so many trips and you may already be familiar with them, too. But did you know that every single sponsored child, all 2.2 million, are cared for by and through a local church in their community. Every single child. There's no, "just come to the compassion office," no it's all through the local church.

So as a result, Compassion partners with over 8,400 local churches in the developing world to break the the cycle of poverty in their communities. That means when your church partners with Compassion, you are helping a pastor and church reach their community with the love of Jesus. So, if you're a church leader, Compassion also provides engaging resources for your people as a pastor, Compassion offered opportunity for everyone in our church when I led it, and we still do this, to be personally engaged in missions and they made it easy for me as a lead Pastor. So I'd love for you to check it out.

When I let it and we still do this to be personally engaged in missions and they made it easy for me as a lead Pastor so love for you to check it out.

Go to [compassion.com/carey](http://compassion.com/carey) and explore the resources has available for your church. Again, that's [compassion.com/carey](http://compassion.com/carey).

And, question for you. Are you leaving money on the table? If you're only accepting cash donations at your church, this could be the case.

And I've seen the stats on this most churches are still like Hey where's your cash? Where's your check? Did you know that 90% of wealth is actually in non-cash assets? So you're like, "well we have electronic giving." Not enough. When cash is the only giving option, in other words you can give electronically out of your bank account, you put a lid on generosity. Overflow is here to lift that lid, and unlock more ways to give. Overflow is an online software that empowers donors to easily give non-cash donations like stock to churches in minutes in what otherwise would take months..

So why is this important? Well the average cash donation whether that's electronic or otherwise in the U.S. is \$128.00. The average stock donations through overflow? Over \$10,000.00. The days of giving the church the leftovers are behind us. It's time to empower your donors to give from their overflow. So if you're ready to unlock more giving channels for the kingdom, go to [overflow.co/carey](https://overflow.co/carey) carry.

And now my conversation with Albert Tate.

Albert, it's good to be together.

It's good to be back again.

Welcome back to the podcast. So we're here at a three-day preaching masterclass. I'm really honored to be a part of. I would love to start here. What makes for great preaching in your mind?

**Albert Tate:** Clarity; being a good Storyteller. Jesus was a phenomenal story teller and he was also very relevant. So it was really big for him for you to understand what he was saying. So much so. Think about how hard it is to explain the kingdom of God to people who've never heard anything, and you're a Rabbi coming to talk about it. But he'd look at them and say you guys all work in the fields, agriculture.

The kingdom of God is like that plow right there. You start on that plow, you've got to keep going straight at them lies. You can't touch it and turn back around. That's the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God is like that. You can't start and turn back around. So he was very applicable. It was important for it to make sense, sometimes preachers, we think it's important for people to know how much we've studied.

We think it's important for people to know how much we

Or we think it's important for people to know intellectually all of the theological underpinnings of all these things. At the end of the day, Jesus says, I want you to understand what the kingdom is. And I want you to understand who I am. And good preaching, should help people fall more in love with Jesus and fall more in love with the Bible.

**Carey Nieuwhof:** So Clarity, storytelling, any other features in your mind that you're like, I'm thinking about connection with the audience. Which it is something that's really hard to do. And you either have it or you don't.

**Albert Tate:** Good storytelling helps with that. Good storytelling helps connect with the audience. Studies; being a student of God's word. The Dr. E Dewey Smith pastors an amazing church out in Atlanta.

He's saying one of his big concerns is that we live in such a tweet culture that we are starting to write "tweet sermons," and writing sermons for reels on Instagram and not writing sermons for real people in our audience. So this 30-second, writing something to go viral, you end up at a very shallow end of the pool and you never really leave there. And he just said, I'm just concerned, because people are so highly incentivized to get something to go viral that we are missing the opportunity to get something that's deeply formative for people in their soul. So for the preacher, stepping your game up and studying, investing in the Word, and presenting something that has been in the crockpot. Not something that's been in the microwave, because you can taste the difference.

**Carey Nieuwhof:** How is effective preaching different from effective communication? For example, TED Talks, we've had Chris Anderson on the podcast, etc. There's a lot about effective communication and I think you could make the argument that clarity, and storytelling, and connection with the audience is a really important part of communication.

But is there anything that makes preaching, other than the fact that you're preaching the Word of God, that makes preaching distinct. A quality in a preacher that may not be present in a quality communicator.

Hmm, I'm not sure.

**Carey Nieuwhof:** Yeah, I wasn't sure either. preaching is driven by

**Albert Tate:** Preaching is driven by proclamation and bringing them to a place of transformation. And I think that's the main difference.

A lot of preachers go into businesses and give inspirational talks. I've even been asked to come. "We just we just like as a communicator. Can you just talk and encourage our leaders? We're not Christian, and we don't want to..." I really struggle with that because when I communicate I have an agenda, and the agenda is the gospel of Jesus Christ, and I want to bring you to that place of decision, of wrestling, of coming before God, like, "God, what do I do with you?" After hearing this sermon, I need to do as the old preacher would say, "do business with God," so I think there are a lot of transferable skills, but inevitably, the preacher's agenda is driven by the Book, not some late latest theory or theme, or some way.

**Carey Nieuwhof:** So I come from a really sort of interesting tradition; Presbyterianism, Calvinism, etc. I'm non-denominational now, but one of the things that was interesting in the Reformation is the Roman Catholics, and I might get this number wrong. The Internet will correct me, they had seven sacraments, and Protestants as a rule have two. We have baptism and we have communion. But in the Presbyterian tradition, you are a pastor of the Word and sacrament. It's really interesting because you have to be authorized to preach the word. But if you look at what happens functionally, it's like we guard the sacraments like crazy. You're not ordained, get your hands away from there, do not touch. But it's like, "hey, you want to preach this weekend?" We're not as serious about that. And it always made me think, like there's something that happens, not every Sunday, definitely. But as someone who preached for 25 years, every once in a while feels sacramental.

You ever had that? Where you think something bigger than the words is happening here?

**Albert Tate:** Oh yeah. Well, that's what we live for. We live for that. Some people describe it as an out-of-body experience. It's as if God is doing something so profound in the room, it's as if I've stepped out of my body and I am watching God do something in me and through me that's just unimaginable. So there is this bigger moment, and that's

what you, that's what you want to swing for. That's the best of the best.

**Carey Nieuwhof:** So let's break that down a little bit because I can think about the number of times and it's not definitely not every Sunday. So think about, if you're going for that viral moment. So you're trying to blow up on TikTok, trying to blow up on reels, or whatever.

I think this might be Charles Stanley, I can't remember who, but, the best thing I can do, when I'm really in the zone, I am not thinking about how I'm doing. What are you thinking about when you have those transcendent moments? Like, what happens when I'm not thinking? Like, I bet you everybody's going to tweet this. I bet this going to blow up on TikTok. What is happening inside you when you hit those transcendent moments?

**Albert Tate:** I am in awe of the reality of the presence of God. and I can feel it as if it's just tangible. So usually I'm thinking, "stay out of the way." God, get all the glory.

There have been times when I've just released my sermon notes. Where we've had a service where I didn't even preach the whole sermon. We just did ministry at the altar because people had come down and we had responded doing worship, and worship had just become so overwhelming that people had come forward. And we were just in intercessory prayer. Or God would just speak a word over people, usually it's a word of encouragement, usually it's people that are in pain. Usually it's people that just need to be encouraged. And we've just had those moments where the Holy Spirit would just take over the whole thing. And the cue sheet is no longer relevant. A clock is no longer dictating the time. God's doing something supernatural. So I'm usually thinking, stay out of the way and begging the question, "Lord, What do you want to do?? And there's all song that I love. It captures the heart says, "Lord, whatever you're doing in this season, don't do it without me."

So, it's a plea to say. Lord, if you're moving, please can I be a part of it? Please, would you use me? Because that's the only place I want to be used. That's the only place I want to be Lord. If you're doing something, don't leave me out, don't do it without me! And that helps me bring a posture to that space to be available to him and that's spiritual. You know, freshly confessed sins, freshly forgiveness

extended. And Lord, I don't want anything to be in me that's not like you, that would then hinder my ability to be used by you. So it's really a lot of "Albert Tate, get out the way."

**Carey Nieuwhof:** Yeah, I think back as a preacher myself.

You know, I think getting out of the way, forgetting about yourself, is really important and yet that self-awareness is always with me heading in to step on the stage or just stand behind a pulpit or that kind of thing. And I think there are days where I really was expecting God to do something and that it felt like nothing happened.

And there are other days where I thought oh this is like a B- halfway through, or whatever, and then something really erupts, something really happens.

How do you, and this again, we may have a lot of unanswerable questions here, because there is a mysterious component to preaching that I haven't fully figured out. But how do you position yourself so that those transcendent moments happen more regularly, not less regularly, do know what I'm saying? Because I don't think you can plan "Revival at 11:10 a.m." You can't schedule it.

You've gotta trust the Word to do it's work.

So you be diligent. You be faithful. But when I stand up there, Lord, all the expectation is on you. Because if I look at the crowd and I'm depending on them and they quiet on me, then all of a sudden I've been discouraged? No, let the Word do it's work, and don't depend on the response of anyone or anything. Other than God to be your source and your inspiration. Now I get it and I love the crowd response. I love engagement. I love interaction, but sometimes God's doing something different in the room. So you've just gotta trust, because there are times when I walk away and I'm like, "yeah, can we take that offline? I know I preached in the room, but can it not live in effigy forever online?" But even then, it's God's Word. if it was God's word, it's not gonna return void.

So trust the trust the text to be faithful and put your expectation on God and that's a discipline. That's a discipline.

**Carey Nieuwhof:** So you've hinted at something that brings back lots of memories for me, that moment when you're partway into a talk,

could be early on, halfway through, or whatever, and it's just not landing. And you get into that headspace where you're like, wow, they didn't laugh, or they didn't respond or they're not nodding or some guy's on his phone and I don't think he's taking notes. Like, you're in that space and I find I have to be very careful or I go down a very negative spiral quickly where I'm almost like, can we just cut this, we'll just do a four minute message. Do go there? And if so, what do you do to get yourself out of that?

It has definitely happened to me. It hasn't happened in a while, but I remember when I first started preaching.

I just remember preaching and hearing the words come out of my mouth and thinking to myself, "this doesn't even make sense to me." Like, I didn't pull out, I just kind of kept going and I've just found a landing spot and we can always have extended time in prayer. We can always pray a little longer. "You know what, I sense that the Lord wants us to stop and marinate this in prayer. So let's just go into prayer." And prayer is always worthy and able and available. But I do have those moments where it gets a little stale. I'll try to find my way and I've done emergency landings. I'll land early and spend time in prayer and sincerely say "Lord, I said what I said. And it was the Word. Lord, would you use it? Would you minister now more than I obviously can with this sermon?"

So we have a little prayer time. That's my exit strategy.

**Carey Nieuwhof:** Do you find you're a good judge of whether a sermon went well or poorly?

**Albert Tate:** No. I'm not.

**Carey Nieuwhof:** Okay, neither am I.

**Albert Tate:** I'm not. That's why I have to release expectation. Because I'll give you the car and then somebody call crying saying it changed their life forever. And so it reminds you as a preacher, you're not a communicator. You're a preacher. So you're not dealing with an idea that you hope somebody grasps. No, you're dealing with the word of God, which is transformative. It is powerful. It's sharper than a two-edged sword. We are dealing with something that is supernatural. So it's going to do a work way beyond your capacity to interpret, understand, critique or judge at the end of



the day. So God's just saying, "Bro. Your job is to be faithful. And is my job to bring about transformation. So chill. Go to brunch."

So be faithful, study. Now, to flip it, there have been times when I've been ill-prepared. And I feel that, and I lament that, and I try to take that to God. I mean, there have been times when I've just said, Lord, I'm just so unworthy this week. I hadn't studied, like I should, I hadn't prayed like I should. I'm going before your people to preach and I'm just so unworthy. And I can just hear God saying to me so clearly, "Albert, when you studied all week, you still weren't worthy. When you pray it all week, you still weren't worthy. Do you think it is your worst, your study, that that brings you worth in this preaching moment? Did you really think because you studied 18 hours, that made you worthy to stand and hold my word and declare it? Bro, this thing has never been about your worth. It's always been about my grace."

So those little theological gut punches helps me to stay a healthy preacher with a healthy perspective, and a healthy view of what it is that I actually do. And that's really make myself available for God to do the work through me.

**Carey Nieuwhof:** Yeah. So I want to talk about preparation. Yeah. I want to break down your prep style. Maybe how it's changed over the years. When you're preaching at your church, Fellowship Church yeah. How much do you work ahead? How much do you prepare ahead of time versus extemporaneous platform. How does that break down for you?

**Albert Tate:** Albert. You know, I've never been proud. I'm always a little embarrassed because I don't have like this nice clean study. You hear other guys who say, "on this day, I study this and I read these articles, and I read this commentary."

And the first draft is done by 10 on Tuesday.

**Albert Tate:** I've never had that. I was never a good student in school.

The reality is, I'm always writing. I'm always writing. I'm always looking for illustrations of concepts or thoughts. So I'm never not writing. I'm here at this conference now and I'm writing in my head. I'm listening to other people and thinking, ooh, that's good, let me write that down. I'm watching Avatar, and the "I see you" moment. That's a Greek word that

means I'm not looking at you, but I'm looking into you. I can use that in the movies. So I'm always kind of looking for creative ways to say things in a new way that will inspire and hook people. So I'm working on Nehemiah right now. As a church we're preaching through the series. So I will read Nehemiah. Read different translations of it, usually. I would then go to some of my favorite commentaries. Get the historical context, what's happening? I am pretty sure the Old Testament and long time.

So I'm working on Nehemiah right now. As a church we're preaching through the series. So I will read Nehemiah. Read different translations of it, usually. I would then go to some of my favorite commentaries. Get the historical context, what's happening? I am pretty sure the Old Testament and long time.

What's the sequence of events. So Ezra just got done, Nehemiah's picking up. Ezra built the Temple Nehemiah's job is to build the wall.

So getting some of the cultural landscape of the text and then I sit down and I just began to say Lord, what do you want to say with this?

Wayne Cordeiro calls it the Holy Spirit highlight.

What is the Holy Spirit highlighting in this passage? What is Nehemiah trying to communicate? What are the people who experienced this letter, who went through the story. What did they experience? How can I get that in it?

And then I begin to craft the story. I start with the end in mind, my first prayer is Lord, what do you want to do with this message?

How do you want to impact the book?

Carey my hope is to hijack.

One of the worst insults. You can give a preacher is for you to go to lunch after a sermon, and they say "what did he preach about?" And you say, "I have no idea." It's been 18 hours of work, and you have no idea what I said? Uh-huh. So my hope is to hijack lunch so much so that you cannot not talk about the sermon this morning. It's like, okay, get them grits but then I gotta tell you about discernment. So my hope is to make it make it so impactful. So I start with the ending.

Of "Lord, What did you want it to do?" And then I begin to work my way backwards and say, what's the best way to get there. I love to create a problem. Then have Jesus solve it.

Do you come up with the solution first and then the problem? Or the problems then the solution.

**Carey Nieuwhof:** So, when you're taking notes randomly, because I agree, insights hit you at the most inconvenient time. Not just in the shower, but on walks in the forest, when you're at a conference, when you're listening to somebody else, when you're driving to lunch. How do you capture them, or do you capture that?

I captured them on my phone in the Notes app. The Notes app has changee the game. I used to have a book that I would just write stuff in, like a little journal type thing. But now that I've got the Notes app, because whatever device I open up, its on it. So I always have access to it. And I just have and if it has a theme or I'll just put at this conference, Carey Nieuwhof is talking, here are some notes. Or then sometimes I'll categorize them "thoughts on culture and church, thoughts on leadership, sermon illustration idea..." and then I just load it up. And then every now and then before I study, I'll just flip through the notes I've written and see if anything springs up. See if it pops up. That's relevant to my current text that I'm dealing with.

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Super nerdy, do you have separate notes for separate ideas like sermon notes or thoughts on culture? Or is it one big document? Mark Batterson has one massive word document that's probably the longest word document in the world. I have an Evernote, because I've been using Evernote for one hundred years before there were Notes and it's like "Sermon Ideas 2023." So I just have it there. And then it's like a dumpster fire once you get below that.

My whole Notes is like that. It's just all the dumpster. It's not one document, but it's just a bunch of them, but most of them are just sermon ideas. It's all searchable. I can type in a phrase and it comes right up and it's so helpful.

Great. So let's talk about how far in advance you work. Okay. That's okay. This can be confession time. Oh Sunday morning 4am, I start the message. How far in advance do you work ahead?

Great. So let's talk about how far in advance you work. Okay. That's okay. This can be confession time. Oh Sunday morning 4am, I start the message. How far in advance do you work ahead?

**Albert Tate:** Post-Covid, we video the sermon, so we film on like, Tuesday or Wednesday. So, I got to be done, which has helped me get my weekends back.

Okay, I know other people who feel the same way. Whereas, I can be done a month in advance and I'm done. No, we're not.

No, I feel like I'm done writing after I've preached it one time, and then I know where everything is, because I haven't had my audience contribute to the sermon yet. So when I preach, even with the video, there's an audience there and there are things that just happened in the room with people for me that don't necessarily happen when I'm writing.

don't necessarily happen when I'm writing. In that extemporaneous exchange and moment with them and their energy, it often adds to my sermon. Not necessarily time with like content or they help me know what's what hits and what doesn't hit.

There've been times when I wrote something, I thought this is going to hit in the room hard this is gonna be powerful. And once I said, it's like

crickets. And then there will be something that was just a cursory, throwaway thought that blows the room. like they're like, whoa. And it's like really? That was good? Okay! So then I take that and then when I come back from their contribution to it, their input

Okay. So how does that work? Then you're filming on a Tuesday night. That is for online, okay.

Yeah. It's a good sermon. It just, when you when you add a thousand people in the room. I'm sorry it makes a difference. The energy, the interaction, and that kind of stuff. Yeah.

I think I can, it could be my Black church tradition experience, it's very interactive. We talk to one another, we preach this thing together. I had an Aunt Vicki that when I when you preach something really good, she would say come on with some more. You gotta watch Aunt Vicki though because, you get to going and then she'd say, "bring it on home now!"

Anywhere from 10 to 20 people. A little studio audience just to get reaction and people mean so much to the preaching moment for me. There's some people that it doesn't matter because they can just look in the camera and they're just preaching. For me, they contribute.

**Albert Tate:** I think, it could be my Black church tradition experience, it's very interactive. We talk to one another, we preach this thing together. I had an Aunt Vicki that when I when you preach something really good, she would say come on with some more. You gotta watch Aunt Vicki though because, you get to going and then she'd say, "bring it on home now!"

Let's see wind it up.

**Albert Tate:** Let's take it on home now!

So there was this beautiful exchange. This interaction. It's kind of like the Seattle Seahawks they call their fans the 12th man. The 12th member.

As if the, the fans of the 12 member of the football team. Yep. Because they've noticed over the years, they really do play a role in the outcome of the game. Yeah, like home-field advantage, and the level of noise that they create and the level of energy that they can create,

they can shift games at the mark of a dime. And I think audiences and preaching is a little bit like that. Obviously your time at a Presbyterian Church, people wouldn't yelling at you saying, "Come on with some."

**Carey Nieuwhof:** Well, they're not asleep if your present experience. Like, okay, we apparently do have some people still awake so it's a good sign.

**Albert Tate:** Right, we're in here, but facial response, energy. It's about managing energy. I think energy sounds spooky to people, but we're managing energy plus, we're doing worship. The room has its own energy. And the sermon moment has energy. So it all depends on what's happened before I get up when I preach, that has an impact on the energy in the room, and how I need to then cultivate. So you pay attention to those things when you're trying to master the craft of communication and preaching in the room.

Well obviously I didn't grow up in a Black church, but I would say the same thing as a communicator. It is you are reading the body language of people. And it may be a much more subdued response in my context. Oh you can tell. Yeah. Like they're they're zoning out. They're leaning in. You know what I look for? I like the houselights to be up a bit elbow pokes when you see when you see couples poking each other going "told ya" or see or "listen up."

Let me tell you some at the black church. Ah. We'd be slapping each other. Oh. You get the preaching. Good. Oh my goodness. We can't just sit still. We slapping, high-fiving and pulling each other. It's a beautiful, beautiful thing, but it's just it's about creating that response, because creating that response because why would not God's word provoke a response.

Whether that response is silence and reflection, tears, a head nod. I think when the word of God hits our body, there's a manifestation to that power and authority, as he's calling us to himself. I think we respond. We've got freedom to respond, nod your head, poke your arm, but I love it when it gets physical, when it gets in the body. And I mean, there are times when somebody and I just I look up and I'm standing up, I don't know when I stood up, I don't know what caused it, but what they said moved me to my feet. Communication has the power to do that.

We've had those moments here at the preaching Masterclass, right? How do you, how do you navigate that kind of audience responds in a multi-ethnic context? Or for example, if you were to speak at the GLN, which is not the home crowd for you, Global Leadership Network, right? How do you, how do you navigate that when it's not one culture or one major tradition that's dictating the way an audience interacts with the communicator.

You know, good communication is just good communication. A good song is just a good song, a bad song is just a bad song. I don't know country music, but I know a good country song. Hey, that's the last thing I'm gonna put on my playlist, but hey, that's a good country song. Girl, you can sing. I didn't grow up with you, but you can sing. So I think, don't underestimate the power of just being good at what you do and being authentic.

Even if it's not my most familiar culture. People honor your authenticity. So if you're being yourself, it's just something about you being real that then connects with me. And the other thing is, we have to be students around audiences. Yeah. So I need to know, even though it's a diverse crowd, I need to know, okay, what's meaningful to them? And to pull my illustrations, my examples, my stories from areas that they will be familiar with and resonate with, even if their familiarity is "I'm so out of my comfort zone. I don't even know how to exist here."

Just saying that, they are saying, well, "I know what that's like, I've been that way. I was like that when I went to my in-laws house when I first time." So even that I'm giving them something to relate to. I'm finding things for them to relate to. So that's very intentional and you've got to be a student, you got to do the work. Like the Global Leadership Summit is a lot of leader culture, business people, but also pastors, but you also got non-christians and you got Christians, how do you put together a message. And I start where the room is, but when I'm done, we going to be where I am.

**Carey Nieuwhof:** I've seen you do that. I was going to say because we talked about this before in a previous episode, but you're not talking about code switching.

You're talking about exegeting in your audience, the way you would exegete a text to make sure that you understand what you're walking into. So if it's an all-white crowd.

Carey, I've have white people jumping and shouting in the aisles as they respond to the power of God's glory. You just got to give them permission and take them on the journey and if I'm a good driver, people usually will ride along. So my last GLS talk a couple of years ago, I ended with a New Orleans marching band with a whole dance crew, and everybody was standing up. It was like we was in New Orleans. It's like, how did you get this room to do this? Well, we started on a journey and I earned their trust and they went along with me.

Um. And and you know the obvious thing. I think we we know this, but I just want to say it. Just for the record, God's moving. God's moving, the Holy Spirit's moving. God is doing something. And our natural response to the greatness and the glory of God is also very physical. Very physical like you go to a basketball game. I'm sorry. I'm out for reserve you, aren't they? Dunk that ball. You jumping up? You're not gonna always somebody's beer - I mean, their Coke. There's a natural response to God's greatness when it's articulated beautifully. So back to Tuesday. You according on Tuesday. Yeah. Is there a reason you record a separate online version from your weekend experience? Just capturing the first.

So back to Tuesday. You're recording on Tuesday. Is there a reason you record a separate online version from your weekend experience? Just capturing the first message that you do on the weekend? Because I understand why it happened during Covid, but why have you kept that?

You know, we feel like the online experience when it's uniquely designed for people that are watching from a computer or phone or YouTube, to give them that more intentionality. To make them the primary audience. For us, we worship in a high school that we set up and tear down. So we've been a setup and teardown church for 11 years. So to set it up and tear down a full on camera suite every week and get the same quality that we get in the studio. I mean, there's probably a number we can pay to get that, we don't have anywhere near that.



So then you're not doing that level of production on the weekend. That's a good note for portable churches. So then you don't have that pressure on a Sunday anymore.

**Albert Tate:** No. Because to do the live stream like, there are memes about it. That worship leader that the mic is way up over here but all mixed and blended. When you can get that and mix it pre- and then post it and upload it, the quality, the gap is huge. So the go back to a low quality stream after we've given them this full studio experience, I almost feel like it does them a disservice.

Now people want to be in the room and they want to see what's happening on Sunday because we got such a Sunday culture and they want to hear the live music, live worship, and stuff like that, but we just can't. I just don't think we can give them as good of quality of experience on Sunday and I think people that are online and that's all they've experienced which we have, you know, thousands of people that watch online, they love it. They're great and the other thing is, If you want to see it on Sunday because you shall use the chain and on Sunday, come to church on Sunday. Get out of bed.

I think we'd talked about that with numerous leaders as the pandemic was coming into it's final stages. And they were saying, we should keep doing online for the sake of online, because it's a different experience. Are you mixing your music? Because you have a great man. They're leading here. I had lunch with some of them. They're incredible musicians. So you're capturing them in the studio for online. And then they're doing live worship.

Yeah. So it's all mixed and mastered. So the the quality that we're able to give people on the Internet is so significantly way more than what we could get setting up a tear down everywhere.

So, what does the prep process like, you have to be done Tuesday, whenever that is Tuesday afternoon, Tuesday night. So you're clearly probably not starting Monday. Maybe you are, but does that mean you're working a couple weeks ahead?

Yeah, that means I'm sitting on it. I know Nehemiah's coming, I know the first two Sundays are Nehemiah chapters 1 and 2 and then 3 and

4, so I'm studying it, I'm maturing on it, but I'm not sitting down and actually, finalizing and writing it until the night before, got it. So, we filmed Tuesday's actually at like 1:00pm because we change it around a time traveling or something like that. But usually whenever I've got to deliver it, I'm spending the previous 24 hours maturing in it.

Yeah, so if I got to preach Tuesday, night, or Thursday night, I'm not going to sit down and because I want it, I want that burden to be fresh when I deliver it. So I usually black it out. Unless if I'm traveling on preacher, something, I've preached before something like that. But when I'm preaching a brand new, sermon 24 hours, before I say it out loud, I'm mentally sitting in it.

I'm physically writing it out, I'm capturing the outline, I'm doing that, I'm not doing that two or three weeks before. Never, I never do that. How much time do you spend after Tuesday, if you've gotten that feedback or do you just kind of like, take a few mental notes, and bring it again on the weekend?

Yeah, so if I got to preach Tuesday night, or Thursday night, I want that burden to be fresh when I deliver it. So I usually black it out. Unless if I'm traveling or preaching something i've preached before, or something like that. But when I'm preaching a brand new sermon 24 hours before I say it out loud, I'm mentally sitting in it. I'm physically writing it out, I'm capturing the outline. I'm not doing that two or three weeks before. Never, I never do that.

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**Albert Tate:** Yeah, I wake up Sunday morning.

an hour earlier and I watched the sermon while I'm getting ready and I just read it, because they're may have been things that came up that I wanted like, "ooh, that was good spontaneous, I need to lock that in." I'll edit my outline while I listened to myself preach, while brushing my teeth, shaving and get ready or whatever. And I'll just make little notes. And then it's freshening me because in order to preach well, I need the burden to go from my head to my gut. To my soul. So I want

to bring that burden I bear to the people. So I don't wanna just walk up raw. So I'm listening to worship, I'm listening to the sermon, and I've got the problem.

And I've also got the thing that God wants to do with the people, and I walk in the church holding that in my belly.

**Carey Nieuwhof:** What level of notes do you carry with you on a Tuesday when you're filming or a Sunday morning? Have you got a full manuscript, bullet points, rough idea where you want to go, like, how much of it is written and rehearsed versus extemporaneous?

**Albert Tate:** I do thought blocks. So I have three big thoughts that I walk up with. I know what those thoughts are and I know the content of those thoughts, but all I'm memorizing, are the thought blocks. And then, I hit the thought block.

And then I just know what makes up this block. It's like looking at a house. I know that this is the living room. I know that over there is a bathroom. I know the over there is the kitchen. Today, I'm doing the the living room, the kitchen and the bathroom. I already know in the living room of my first point there are two couches and a chair. I know that Lazarus got sick, Mary and Martha have to wait, and then Jesus wept. I know that in the kitchen, Why did Jesus weep, and why did Jesus need help moving the stone out of the way when he could have done it anyway himself, but God wants us to participate in the miracle so he invites us to move the stone away. So I know that part is in the kitchen. I know that. Like you see what I'm saying? So once I get those big blocks and then an intro and then, Lord, how do we want to close it? What do we want to do? What's our spiritual response?

Are we singing a song? Are we sitting in prayer? Are we celebrating? What's the response? I got an intro, I know how we're gonna begin. Very practically, like a story or a joke, so a very clear intro. And then a very clear vision of how we're going to end, and the three thought blocks. And that's when I walked to the stage with mentally. But I don't carry any paper or any notes. I memorize that and I go with that.

What happens? And I'm sure it's happened at different points over the years, probably more in the early days. Because people watching this or listening to this are probably going well, I'd love to do that, but what

if I forget the second block. Have you ever had that? I remember the first time I freed myself from notes and I had this little voice in my head that it's like they don't know what you forgot keep going. Are you similar?

little voice in my head that it's like they don't know what you forgot keep going. Yeah. Are you similar?

Yeah, I can't make a big deal. It very seldom happens when it does happen, especially I'm getting old, I'm 45, it's scary, but if I've sat with it and prepared, that usually doesn't happen but if it does I just keep going. I know where the next room is in the house, so I forgot two things that's in the living room but alright. Let's just go into the kitchen. I know what's in there, so I just go to the next point.

**Carey Nieuwhof:** Yeah, nobody ever complains when you finish early. they have no idea what I'm saying.

**Albert Tate:** They have no idea. Nobody's saying, "I felt like you missed the second and third point." Yeah, I just kind of keep going but that's why you got to study and be confident because all I got is the blocks. So I got to I got to remember them. Yeah.

**Carey Nieuwhof:** Multiple services on Sunday. You can have a great message for the first service. Second one to falls flat. I always like it when the first one doesn't quite work because I can top it. But if I'm doing two or three reps on a Sunday and the first one is like I don't know how to make that better, I find that very demotivating.

**Albert Tate:** One of the worst things that can happen, is you have a great first service.

Except if you're there at the first service, that's fantastic.

**Albert Tate:** What I had to learn as a preacher, that was a big problem. Because it's not even about the sermon being good, the sermon was good, probably both times really. Your experience delivering it was better in one of the services.

And you probably hit some things or whatever. But you just had more fun. You had a really good time at the 9, and then at the 11, you just can't do this. You try to chase the fun you had at the 9.

You cannot chast it. You cannot say, well, I gotta remember how I said

that, because of the timing of that... you've gotta start over. You gotta say that was a great experience. I'm forgetting everything that happened and I'm starting to ground zero at the next service. If you don't do that, you are creating just mental despair yourself. You chasing it. You can't. It's a different cry. That is a different people is a different rhythm. I've tried the same little one-two kind of woo. I got that in the next service? Flat. Not there. So you've got to read the room. It's a such a big part of preaching that we don't talk about. We read notes instead of reading people.

So when you can get off your notes and read the people, you give them a fresh encounter, you give them a fresh experience. Don't try to microwave what God did in the last service. God is like oh I can do, I can do something fresh, something new, we don't need to microwave. I'm good at that. Got enough sovereignty and goodness and grace that I can give this second and third service a fresh encounter of my presence and my glory. And by the way, Mr. Preacher, I can give you a fresh encounter and fresh expression of my glory as well. So I've learned just to start from scratch every service.

How did you learn that?

From tracing it and failing, and feeling terrible about a good service that I couldn't match what God did. And so I'm thinking in the second service, okay. I got to kind of add that. I gotta say that. And then what I'm preaching in the second service when I'm not feeling the momentum that I had in the first one, I'm now discrediting what God is doing in the second service.

Because I'm comparing and I'm losing by comparing and this is a good sign. Because in this room, the momentum may show up in a completely different spot because God has assigned 17 people to this service to hear one thing that you don't even know about because of what they're going through, and because of what they're going through, God is going to move this way to capture this audience who wasn't at the previous service. So I just had to stop playing God with his word and just that God you're sovereign, let me start at Ground Zero with this sermon and give you an opportunity to be God afresh and God anew in every service.

**Carey Nieuwhof:** I love that perspective because I don't know if this is your experience or not, but I often find that when I'm done and I sit

down with the production team or other people that we debrief with, the difference in my head, it was like a 3 versus a 9. But probably it was the difference between an 8.2 and an 8.5.

Literally. Because what I discovered is, it was my experience delivering the message. Not necessarily the delivery of the message. Everything clicked inside of me. My comfort level was strong, and I just felt great. I want to feel that again and we struggle when when we felt a little clunky on inside or I stumble. Like if I stutter in the first five minutes, I lose momentum. I hate to fumble a word because now it's not as polished, not as clean. So I had to say, I have to get out of my way and let God be fresh every time, even in me.

Yeah, I got to ask you this and I love asking. This comedy is not my forte. I love watching it, I love laughing at jokes, but like the ability to produce those moments on stage, you're one of the best I've ever heard. You have a way and I've seen you do that. We were at an event Nashville. I was thinking about this years ago remember that at Rocket Town? You got up and roasted me.

We didn't even know who each other were.

**Carey Nieuwhof:** Yeah, totally roasted me and it was hilarious.

I wasn't mean, though.

**Carey Nieuwhof:** You weren't mean. I mean you clearly couldn't have scripted that. That was in the moment. Do you want to talk about your approach, and I've seen you do it at the GLS? Like, I've seen you do in so much of your communication.

You're just masterful at knowing what to say, how to say it committing comedic timing all of the above what goes into that for you? And I know some of that is probably unreproducible. But I just love to break that down, will ya?

Well, thank you for that. I appreciate it. I look for things that are happening in the room that we're all thinking, but no one's going to say. But then I say it then everyone laughs.

Because I gave them permission to call it out. that's what you did in Nashville.

**Carey Nieuwhof:** And that's what you did in Nashville. You made that joke about me flying private.

I don't know what I said because I've never flown private. But it was really funny.

Like it was one of those that you, yeah. Would you please bless me to have as much money as Francis Chan? So I can be that passionate too.

It was something like, wouldn't you like his life?

I was poking fun at the white guy. I did that with Francis Chan one time because he's just so passionate. I was like, Lord, would you please bless me to have as much money as Francis Chan? So I can be that passionate too? I was dying laughing.

And I was like, I love Jesus, two of us own a billion copies of books that know people most people. Now some people were like, you know, he gave most of it away. Very generous. I didn't say nothing about his generosity. The Lord blessed him with some money. I want the same, bless me, Lord. Even me, Lord. Let me sell a million copies and I will give God ten million praises. But I think you take things that are obvious to me that people are thinking. I was at an event the other day and they had this camera production. And I'm in this intimate moment and the camera guy.

I was at an event the other day and they had this camera production. And I'm in this intimate moment and the camera guy got the camera and he just goes to capture this moment right in front of the audience.

And he's like right in front of me and I was like, I think that the camera man thinks he the Holy Spirit. I don't think he think people can see him. He just moved in and I just start moving like him around, like, he does in front of everyone and this lady can't even see my point because he just standing in front of her like he's invisible. And everybody laughed because everybody's thinking that. Because I know that he's coming across so obvious, I can see people checking out on me, and being distracted by that, but nobody's gonna say anything about.

Oh, yes they will. I will, and then it gives the room a release, and then I get to bring them back in, and I get them again and I get to take them where I want them to go. So, I think using comedy very intentionally

physically to make people laugh and literally, physically opens up their chest, and then, once it's open, you take the richness of the word of God and you punch it right in that opening.

And it lands deeper if you're able to master that ratio. I hadn't spent a lot of time thinking about it. To be honest and just kind of something that happens and I just do. But I've seen the fruit of it and people have said Albert, I was laughing but then I was crying. And to allow the word of God to do all of that because it does. I think Jesus had a ball. I think, Jesus and Peter, and James and John that I think they literally gut laughed a ton while hanging out with the water hanging out. At that wedding with the wind. Can you imagine that night, hanging out with Jesus. They were not serious saying, "oh, theologically what a profound experience and the elements of the wine transitioning from water..." no, they would like "Yo! Jesus!"

Let's bring that. That's bring that to the text. Let's bring that to the fellowship there. People need to laugh. People have been depressed, had a hard week. Create some moments from within the laughs. But it can also be very dangerous if you don't know the audience. And I've had some terrible fumbles. I've said things that I had to go back and apologize for. So comedy is hard and it is a little bit risky because everybody doesn't think things are funny. Especially now. So people are super sensitive. So I just make fun of people being sensitive as people are so offended so easily offended. You got offended. You didn't get dead. Nobody stab you. You just got offended, you know, so just get offended and keep going. What are you doing? So I try to do that to help people relax because I know what I'm gonna say in a few minutes is probably going to offend them. But let me give them permission to be offended and be okay. Laughter also helps you talk about really, really hard things in a way that allows people to sit with the capacity to talk. .

Like I talk about race, I'll talk about politics. To use humor to help lay the foundation for that is really, really important.

How much of your humor is pre-planned, pre-scripted, versus spontaneous in the moment?

**Albert Tate:** Maybe 10% is pre-planned.

**Carey Nieuwhof:** Yeah, you're just watching sensitive...



**Albert Tate:** I'm watching and seeing what happens and picking up jokes in the middle of the conversation.

**Albert Tate:** The more prepared I am for comedy, the worse it goes.

Yes. And but with that they'll having the discipline to say, if a comedy is not in the room, don't grab it. Don't try to force it. I never said, I want to go into the sermon and be funny. That is not an intention at all. And I'm not writing jokes in my sermon. I look for opportunities and moments that seemed awkward that I like to call out, you know what I mean? Then I like to say, huh. Like in the book of Acts. The day of Pentecost when Peter grabs the mic to tell everybody, you know, what the Holy Spirit is doing. His opening line to me is hilarious.

His opening line to me is hilarious.

He's like, "hey, hey, we're not drunk."

I've never heard that. , why are you starting there?

Why are you starting there? But then what's even funnier is his reason why they're not drunk. He says, "We're not drunk. It's too early to be drunk."

Not like "we shouldn't be drinking," no, "it just too early."

In other words, if it was 5:00, we could be drunk, but it's 10:00 a.m. We ain't drunk, it's the Holy Spirit. So you know, I just think those are moments that make the the message come alive. And it's just like, he really did say that.

He got everyone's attention.

Right, it got everybody's attention and now we get to talk about the Holy Spirit coming in a way that feels more realistic and more natural. We tend to over-spiritualize the people in the Bible, but they were really people just like us. So to humanize them is to humanize the word of God and it's ability to actually penetrate my own heart.

I feel bad about asking this question because we're on a lunch break while we're recording this. It deserves it's own hour. What can white preachers learn from black preachers? You've got a very multiracial group. I know, this needs more than five minutes.

**Albert Tate:** But I think just that. The curiosity. White preachers need to study great black preachers. They need to study great Latin preachers. They need to study outside of their sphere. But to talk specifically about black preaching some of the best preaching in the history of the world, some of the greatest communicators; E. K Bailey. E.V. heel, Tony Evans, Ralph Wes like oh my goodness.

These people. G.E. Patterson, E Dewey Smith, Bishop Kenneth C Almer, Bryan Loritts, I think, is one of the greatest preachers. There's I mean, Charlie dates Phillip pointer.

I'm talking about a well of great academic homilititions, that are just all exceptional. So if you're not a student of Black preaching, if you're if you're a preacher or pastor and this is a craft that you want to cultivate, oh please come on over. Come on over, check it out, it will bless your life. Some of the best preaching in the world. The white preachers I would say need to learn to be comfortable with being uncomfortable.

In recognizing that there's a lot that you need to know that you will never know that you need to know it because of the way your world is set up. Does that make sense? There's a lot that you need to know, but there's nothing that's going to come to you and say, you need to know this, because your world is set up to tell and reaffirm that you pretty much got everything you need. But when you seek the kingdom called in the Kingdom assignment, you realize that I'm called to all people, all seasons, and in all stages of life, I need to do the work to sustain that call. So I need to be able to, not just preach to people that don't look like me, don't live like me, don't vote like me, but that aren't in the same generation that I'm in.

How does a Boomer communicate with a Gen Z-er? Because we start this book and we're not calling us to preach to the 60+, we're called to speak to all people. So, being a student of the craft, I think, drives you in places that should make you uncomfortable.

In the empty, preacher is not a good preacher. So I had to find a way to keep my tank filled so that I can preach from a place of overflow and not such levels of deficit.

It's so interesting. I'm growing more now through rest. In finding healthy rhythms to live, and a healthy pace, because I feel like for season I was running in a way that kept me on empty.

And the empty preacher is not a good preacher. So I had to find a way to keep my tank filled so that I can preach from a place of overflow and not such levels of deficit.

Allowing the Holy Spirit to do his work because you can get so busy. You can forget that. It's actually the holy spirit's work. Yeah. Yeah. You think it's my work. So I think finding rhythms of rest to be reminded. Oh, it's God's work, the spirits writing these sermons, The Spirit is moving. The spirit is, saving people, the spirit is building his church, not you. So how do you stay in a posture that reminds you of that, on a regular basis? Lest we forget too often. I think my biggest growth as a preacher is coming from me finding rest as a son.

"It's about rhythms not numbers," is this phrase that I've been holding on to. It's this idea of, how do I get rhythms and not be driven so much by numbers and outcomes but be driven by rhythms of rest, presence and God, presence with wife and family and kids, presence with church, presence with myself, and out of that presence out of that stillness, allowing the Holy Spirit to do his work.

Because you can get so busy, you can forget that it's actually the Holy Spirit's work. You think it's my work. So I think finding rhythms of rest to be reminded. "Oh, it's God's work. The Spirit's writing these sermons, the Spirit is moving. the Spirit is saving people, the Spirit is building his church, not you. So how do you stay in a posture that reminds you of that, on a regular basis? Lest we forget too often. I think my biggest growth as a preacher is coming from me finding rest as a son.

**Carey Nieuwhof:** So people want to learn more. Are you doing the preaching master class again next year?

Yeah, I'm doing it next year.

**Carey Nieuwhof:** I mean, we're just barely at the beginning of 2023. But, where can people learn more

**Albert Tate:** [preachingmasterclass.com](http://preachingmasterclass.com) Check us out there, and then all of my socials are Albert Tate. Instagram, Twitter, TikTok. I had a

twerking video to go viral on Tiktok. I'm just kidding. Yeah. Well yeah, my alberttate.com they can see it.

But the Preaching Masterclass is an exceptional space where it's a multi-ethnic space and also men and women in the same room. Most conferences don't have like women have their own thing on speaking, and a lot of the dominant preaching conferences are just primarily men. Here we've got women and men learning together in the same room, which I think is a beautiful space, and very also valuable. So very diverse. So we really appreciate that. So we appreciate you being here.

**Carey Nieuwhof:** I appreciate it and am floored to be invited. But I am learning loads. Albert, it's a thrill to always sit down and talk with you, so thank you so much.

**Albert Tate:** Always good to be on the Carey Nieuwhof show. By the way, real quick, how's the show going? We never talk about how the show is doing.

**Carey Nieuwhof:** It's it's growing more every year. And I don't fully understand why. We've had hockey stick growth over the last couple of years. 27 million downloads and counting.

I think we'll see 8 million this year based on current trends.

**Albert Tate:** Well, this episode is going to a million.

It'll do million easy. and Friends trans book, you know what I mean? That we go, so we're really grateful also good. Okay,

And Francis Chan's book, you know what i mean? There we go.

**Carey Nieuwhof:** We're really grateful.

Albert never disappoints. Man, I love that conversation. If you want more, you can go to [careynieuwhof.com/episode562](https://careynieuwhof.com/episode562)

You will find the show notes there. You'll also find transcripts free of charge and a whole lot more that's sort of the gateway into everything else I do. And trust me, there's a big world beyond the podcast. I'm loving what's happening in the art of leadership academy. You can access that through [careynieuwhof.com](https://careynieuwhof.com) and a whole lot more.

Hey, when your church partners with Compassion, did you know, you're helping a pastor and church reach its Community with Jesus? Make sure you check out our partner compassion at [Compassion.com/carey](http://Compassion.com/carey) and explore the resources available for your church.

And today's episode was brought to you by Overflow. The days of giving the church the leftovers are behind us. So it's time to empower your church to unlock more giving for your church together. Go to [overflow.co/carey](http://overflow.co/carey) that's overflow.Co not .com to learn how.

Next episode, so pumped to bring you David Platt. David is courageous. I mean, he's a conservative Christian who's calling out his friends and saying, guys, we can do better. Here's an excerpt.

**David Platt:** People would say, I'm deconstructing or deconverting or just leaving the church, leaving Jesus. But what they're leaving is a picture of Jesus in the church that was not biblical in the first place, that was not good. And so that's why I'm eager to to say, let's step into this moment. There's a clear vacuum as long as we are showing the world a picture of the church that reflects the world then, of course, that will be disillusioning and disengaging to all kinds of people. But when we show the distinction that Jesus and the gospel create in a beautiful way, that will be attractive like nothing else in this world can be.

Love it also coming up on the podcast. Gretchen Rubin, Mark Batterson, who also we got. We got Henry Cloud. Man, that interview was so good Jay de Crear. Seth Godin is coming back. Michael Hyatt. Megan Hiatt Miller, Paula Faris and a lot more coming up on the podcast.