

A Guide to Recording Videos

First, let me just say that recording videos and publishing them on various forms of social media, particularly Facebook, seems to have great potential for reaching new people with the true gospel message in 2017. In generations past, our brothers utilized the print press, and then radio, for similar purposes. Folks in my generation are much more inclined to subscribe to a podcast or blog than they are to tune in to a radio program at a certain time each week or to pick up and read a newsletter. Christ never told us to *stop* fishing for me, so we must go where the *fish* are, so to speak.

One useful tool is video. While Youtube is the top choice (many children watch this over TV), a new channel would struggle to find viewers. My suggestion is to build an audience through Facebook, and then also upload any video you produce on a Youtube channel as well. Most church Facebook pages already have far more subscribers than you'd get in several years' time on Youtube.

There are two types of videos you can produce: Short videos and full length sermons.

Short Videos

This is a great place to start, and in all honesty probably going to be more effective at sharing distinctive doctrines to newcomers than a full length sermon would be. The average American lacks the attention span to give a random stranger on the internet 30 minutes to an hour. 1 to 3 minutes is ideal. In this case, remember the words of Shakespeare: brevity is the soul of wit. Our goal is to make a disciple, the in-depth training comes later.

Equipment needed:

- Smartphone, digital camera or camcorder
- Tripod with appropriate mounting bracket
- Microphone (optional)
- Editing software (optional)
- An internet connection

Step by step guide

1. Plan your subject matter. Streamline it as much as possible. Plan it out and practice it a few times. A video is unlike a pulpit sermon. Pretend you're doing the work of a news reporter or a speaker on a commercial. Yes this matters.

2. Set up the tripod level (using its bubble) and position the tripod so that the camera's eye is about level to your own. You may need someone to help you aim the camera, though I have done this with no help, using a couple of test runs. The 66" tripod I bought was less than \$40 at Wal-Mart and came with a smartphone mounting bracket.

3. Plug in your microphone. Technically, you don't need a microphone; but, an external mic will give you a much better recording and eliminate background noise and any reverb from the room you're in. For speaking in a room, a simple lapel mic will suffice. Consider one powered by a battery. Other

options, especially for outdoors, include directional microphones with larger windscreens. About anything is better than the phone's microphone.

4. If you're using your smartphone (which works surprisingly well in good lighting), simply use your camera app. You (or your helper) just press record and go. I take a few deep breaths which I edit out later. Make sure to stare directly into the camera eye (not at the screen or at your helper). Looking around is fine, if relevant, but you need to keep eye contact with the camera. If you mess up, no big deal! Start over! Take 2, and action! When you're finished, be sure to pause a few seconds before moving. Stop the recording, and check your work.

5. If you're satisfied, there are some **optional** steps to take before uploading. I download the video file onto my laptop via an aux cable and edit it in Windows Movie Maker. It's free, limited in ability, but works well for a simple video. I cut everything before and after the message. I also add an intro and outro graphic. If you have access to Photoshop, it is ideal to make a simple PNG or JPG file with the video's title and speaker. Otherwise, Gimp is a free, open source alternative. Make your image and save it. Then, you import the title image into Movie Maker and place it before the video footage for the desired duration (3 seconds is what I use). To transition between the intro image and video, add a fade in effect with a 0.50 second duration to your video. If you have an outro image, add a 0.50 second fade to it as well. Save your movie and then publish the finished product in HD quality.

If you have a friend who can press record and stop for you, it's possible to record your video without needing any trim on the beginning or end. In which case, you would skip the editing step and go straight to uploading your video, if you wanted to do so.

6. Upload your video! Whether it's still on your smartphone or on your laptop, upload your finished product to the appropriate Facebook page with a good description. Folks will share it, and it will get many views. I noticed a spike in new people following our church page after sharing my first video.

Since you already have a video, you might as well share it to an official Youtube channel, but don't hold your breath waiting on views. For example, my first video got over 3000 views on Facebook, but the same video uploaded to Youtube has 35 views. It's all about how many subscribers you have and how many share your post. On Facebook, our church page has 640 "likes" whereas the Marchtozion Youtube channel has 18 subscribers. It's much easier and quicker to build a Facebook audience. However, uploading to Youtube is worth the extra time since the work of producing the video is complete. Plus, uploading to Youtube allows you to embed the file elsewhere. It's worth the extra 5 minutes.

Live Streaming on Facebook

The mindset for this is quite different from producing a short video. Basically, the intent is to give access to your services for those who are shut-in, and also to leave a copy of the sermon online for others who are either curious about your church or hungry for a message. Unlike with a short video, the camera basically serves as a window into the church service for people not present. Some who live stream on facebook (megachurches, celebrities, news personalities, etc) have very complex ways of producing a TV quality live feed, with multiple cameras hooked to a switcher, multiple microphones

hooked to a soundboard, and a high powered computer to pipe all of this onto the internet. In fact, some modern church buildings have media rooms which would make a TV station seem modest. Since that would likely be irrelevant for us as Primitive Baptists, I intend to share the simple way we are presently live streaming our services at Flint River.

Equipment needed:

- Smartphone
- Either a sufficient data plan with cell signal, or Wi-Fi
- A tripod
- The Church sound system (at minimum, a microphone)
- A device, such as an iRig, to connect pulpit mic feed to smartphone
- A portable battery charger (optional)

1. Find an ideal location and place your tripod. This should be in a place which doesn't block anyone's view, or obstruct the flow of people during ingress/egress or during the "fellowship handshake." Personally, I prefer against the wall diagonal to the pulpit. Many would discourage this, preferring a location directly in front of the speaker. However, in my opinion, the point is to give a window into the service, but not to be the top priority. If a church's building has a balcony or 2nd story sound room, that's an excellent location. In lack of that, diagonal to the pulpit works well. This is a common location for lectures as well.

2. Connect to the sound system or microphone. Before considering this, you might wonder why this is necessary, since your phone has a built in microphone. Simply put, audio grabbed by the phone's built-in mic is going to be distant with a great deal of echo. Volume levels will be low. Also, you'll pick up as much background noise (coughs, sneezes, babies, pages turning, "amens", etc.) as you do sermon. This will be distracting and detracting. To remedy this, you need a microphone near to the speaker's mouth. Fortunately, many of our churches already have a pulpit mic installed. You simply need to tie in to its output. A device I utilize is an iRig. Originally, this was designed for guitar players to play straight into an iPhone or iPad. But many radio hosts, DJs, and podcasters use them to produce a live feed with high quality audio.

The iRig straps to your tripod. They make models which receive different sized cable inputs and even XLR cables. The output is a standard 4 band 3.5 mm. Once plugged in, your phone should detect it as a microphone. The iRig is also a preamp, and not just a splitter or converter. If your mic takes phantom power, the iRig provides it. They run on a 9v battery.

With a sound system

This is assuming that you have a microphone, sound board, amplifier, and speakers in place. None of these are actually necessary for a live feed, with the exception of the mic. You're going to need to run a mic cable to the tripod, connect the mic cable to the iRig, and then connect the iRig to the smartphone. You can either install a Y Splitter between the microphone and soundboard, running the new splice to the iRig; or, you can run a cable from the output on your soundboard to the iRig. People do both. In my case, I installed a Y splitter and ran it directly to my iRig.

It is also possible to use a wireless transmitter and receiver in lieu of a cable. But this is far more

expensive unless you already have the equipment. Running a cable to the tripod is the least expensive option. You could run this cable in the attic, crawlspace, or even around the perimeter of the building.

Without a sound system

If your facility has no sound system, you simply need to install a mic on the pulpit and then run a cable to the tripod, to connect to the iRig.

3. You'll need someone other than the preacher to serve as your camera man. Open the Facebook app, secure your smartphone on the tripod, plug in the iRig, start a post on facebook, and then click "Go Live." Give your live broadcast a brief description (Sunday Sermon, 1-1-17) and start live streaming. You MUST be connected to the internet, either with a sufficient data connection or Wi-Fi.

An optional step I take is to mount a portable phone charger to the tripod with black "bread ties" and plug it in, so I don't run out of battery during the live stream. It uses quite a bit of juice. These are available at Wal-Mart for less than \$5 and connect to the phone via a typical USB cable.

A note to preachers – ignore the camera but remember it's there. Obviously you don't want to use "old aunt Sarah" as a negative example on a live sermon feed. At the same time, do what's normal and don't let the camera freak you out.

4. As your sermon ends, have your camera man end the live stream and publish the post. During your live feed, you'll probably get feedback from listeners. Be sure to go back and read the feedback and interact with listeners. You can edit the video's thumbnail and title after the broadcast is complete.

Boosting Your Post (Extra)

Before I mention this possibility, let me say that I know some would feel apprehensive about boosting a post, because this is technically taking out an advertisement on facebook. I understand. At the same time, if you read the fine print and details of a radio preacher's contract (broadcast order) with a station, we're actually considered advertisers. While we consider our radio program a ministry, stations consider it an advertisement. A lot of folks probably don't realize that. Boosting a post on Facebook really isn't any different in principle.

After your video is uploaded or your live stream is completed, a blue button appears on the bottom right of the post which says "Boost Post." This allows you to make a paid advertisement from your post. Click that, and you can then decide how much to spend (a dollar a day for a week is a good place to start) and where to target an audience. In my mind, the objective is to share the true gospel with people who live near your facility, who may want to come worship. You can target people in your zip code, or a radius around your zip code. You can also specify ages and then interests, based on keywords.

This is a very interesting prospect. People spend hours a week interacting with others on Facebook. Once you boost a post, it appears in the newsfeeds of random strangers. Have you ever searched for "power drills" on Google, only to see tools magically appear in your newsfeed? Facebook digs into your browsing history, via cookies, to target you with advertisements. Their algorithm has a good idea

of our likes and dislikes, and then shows us ads based on what it predicts will interest us.

Utilizing this feature, people who have never heard of sovereign grace OR a Primitive Baptist could be shown a video on, let's say, election and predestination, while scrolling through Facebook over coffee or before bed.

Again, think of this the way you think of a paid radio program. Only unlike with radio, you can target a specific audience with your media.

Why Bother?

I get it. This seems like a lot of trouble and we're all busy people. Well, why did John Gill bother writing his commentary? Why did C.H. Cayce write all of his editorials? Why do I manage a website and radio program? We do this to teach God's children. It's always worth it. We want newcomers to be exposed to the true gospel. We want existing disciples to be strengthened. Again, Jesus never gave us permission to stop trying to share His glorious gospel. This is one potential avenue for such outreach.