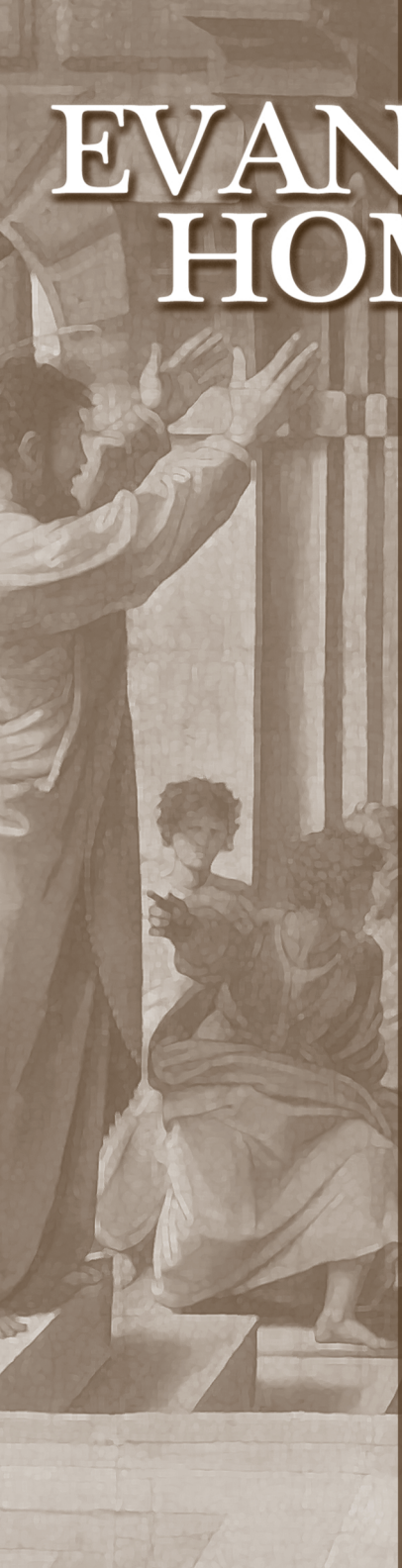

THE JOURNAL OF THE

EVANGELICAL HOMILETICS SOCIETY

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Manuscripts: Though most articles and book reviews are assigned, submissions are welcome. They must by typed and double-spaced. All articles will be juried to determine suitability for publication. Please send articles to the General Editor, Scott M. Gibson, at scott_gibson@baylor.edu. Letters to the editor are also welcome. Those who have material of whatever kind accepted for publication must recognize it is always the editor's prerogative to edit and shorten said material, if necessary.

Publishers should send catalogs and review copies of their books to Gregory K. Hollifield, Memphis College of Urban and Theological Studies, 2181 Union Avenue, Memphis, TN 38104.

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Please note: Although the articles in *The Journal of the Evangelical Homiletics Society* reflect the general concerns of the Evangelical Homiletics Society, some details in the articles may not reflect the position of the Editorial Board.

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The Journal of the Evangelical Homiletics Society is the publication of the Evangelical Homiletics Society. Organized in 1997, the Evangelical Homiletics Society is an academic society established for the exchange of ideas related to the instruction of biblical preaching. The purpose of the Society is to advance the cause of biblical preaching through the promotion of a biblical-theological approach to preaching; to increase competence for teachers of preaching; to integrate the fields of communication, biblical studies, and theology; to make scholarly contributions to the field of homiletics.

Statement of Faith: The Evangelical Homiletics Society affirms the Statement of Faith affirmed by the National Association of Evangelicals. It reads as follows:

1. We believe the Bible to be the inspired, the only infallible, authoritative Word of God.

2. We believe that there is one God, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

3. We believe in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His virgin birth, in His sinless life, in His miracles, in His vicarious and atoning death through His shed blood, in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and in His personal return in power and glory.

4. We believe that for the salvation of lost and sinful people, regeneration by the Holy Spirit is absolutely essential.

5. We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a godly life.

6. We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost; they that are saved unto the resurrection of life and they that are lost unto the resurrection of damnation.

7. We believe in the spiritual unity of believers in our Lord Jesus Christ.

PREACHING PLUS

SCOTT M. GIBSON
General Editor

There might be variations of homiletical math. In my teaching of Haddon Robinson's philosophy of preaching I instruct my students that to get the idea of a passage one uses the following homiletical math formula: S + C = I. That is, subject question plus the complement answer equals the exegetical idea.

But it strikes me that we can apply homiletical math to other areas of preaching. We could call this formula "preaching plus." That is, preaching can be considered as an addition to a given area of study. For example, preaching plus history directs us to discover how and if preaching has had an impact in historical development in any culture or context. Preaching plus psychology may help us to discover how preaching intersects with the field of psychology. Further examples may come to your mind. But the point here is to help us to see that the intersection of preaching with other fields and situations or contexts is far-reaching.

We see this in the editorial that Gregory K. Hollifield and I include in this edition of the journal. Hollifield is the Book Editor of the *Journal of the Evangelical Homiletics Society*. While discussing the opportunities and challenges of our society, Dr. Hollifield and I hashed out features of a possible editorial, that would challenge us as a society to see where preaching can be added to the various formulae of intellectual exploration.

The plenary sessions from our November 2021 annual scholars gathering at Baylor University's George W. Truett Theological Seminary are included in this edition. Matthew D. Kim's plenary presentation on "Preaching to People in Pain," as well as Ken Langley's plenary address on "Preaching Hope and

Lament from the Psalms," helped attendees to appreciate the intersection of preaching hope and lament, the theme of the gathering, as well as an example of preaching plus.

Included in this edition is an article on "The Culture of Note-Taking and Effective Sermonic Technique" authored by Ezekiel Ajibade, lecturer and partnership coordinator of the Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, Ogbomoso, Nigeria. Ajibade explores the nuances of note-taking. He explores the biblical and theological justification for note-taking, the relationship between note-taking and listening, methods for effective note-taking, and the present practice of note-taking. His insights help readers explore this oft-used practice and its place in terms of the plus of preaching.

Please note, Dr. Ajibade will be one of the plenary speakers at the upcoming October 2022 scholars gathering at Moody Bible Institute in Chicago. He will be joined by Dr. Sam Chan (from Australia) as they present on "Engaging a World Homiletic."

The sermon included in this edition is by Dr. Jesse L. Nelson, immediate past-president of the Evangelical Homiletics Society (2021-2022). As is the practice at each annual meeting, the out-going president preaches to the gathered society on Saturday morning. "The Christian's Hope" was Nelson's sermon title, with the text, 1 Timothy 1:1. His sermon provides readers with deep-rooted hope—preaching plus hope.

Lastly, the Book Review Section, edited by Gregory K. Hollifield, is always a strong way to conclude an edition of the journal. The books are reviewed by our members. Their insights provide a huge plus to us as a society. The thoughtful engagement with a variety of books as demonstrated in this edition, reveals the breadth of the preaching plus component that we share as a society.

Adding together all the elements in this edition of the journal underscores the plus advantage that preaching brings to our thinking and to our field. We can be encouraged by the practice of preaching plus.

Thanks to Daniel J. Gregory for assistance in article editing for this edition of the journal.

EDITORIAL

WANTED: CATFISH FOR OUR THINK TANK

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Perhaps you have heard, if not retold, some version of the following story from Chuck Swindoll's devotional *Come Before Winter* (Portland, OR: Multnomah Press, 1985):

> In the northeastern United States, codfish are not only delectable, they are a big commercial business. There's a market for eastern cod all over, especially in sections farthest removed from the northeast coastline. But the public demand posed a problem to the shippers. At first they froze the cod, then shipped them elsewhere, but the freeze took away much of the flavor. So they experimented with shipping them alive, in tanks of seawater, but that proved even worse. Not only was it more expensive, the cod still lost its flavor, and in addition, became soft and mushy. The texture was seriously affected.
>
> Finally, some creative soul solved the problem in a most innovative manner. The codfish were placed in the tank of water along with their natural enemy—the catfish. From the time the cod left the East Coast until it arrived in

> its westernmost destination, those ornery catfish chased the cod all over the tank! And you guessed it, when the cod arrived at the market, they were as fresh as when they were first caught. There was no loss of flavor nor was the texture affected. If anything, it was better than before.[1]

The moral of the story is obvious, if not its historical accuracy, helpfully reminding us that adversity, tension, resistance—call it what you will—is actually good for us. It keeps us from becoming soft, mushy, and bland. For this reason, writes Paul, "[W]e rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character" (Rom. 5:3-4a). According to James, trials produce steadfastness that makes us "perfect and complete, lacking in nothing" (1:4). To put it bluntly, resistance builds resilience, and resilience fosters excellence.

This same principle carries over into numerous areas of life. Note the domain of athletics built on the premise of resistance, resilience, and excellence. Biologists, for example, claim that young children's immune systems are strengthened by exposure to everyday germs, by which their systems learn, adapt, and come to regulate themselves. The right amount of exposure before age two lessens inflammation in their bodies as children grow into adulthood, thus lowering their risk of developing diabetes, heart disease, and Alzheimer's later in life (https://www.webmd.com/parenting/features/kids-and-dirt-germs). Too much handwashing and hand sanitizer in a child's early life, it seems, lowers the child's resistance, thereby creating subsequent health risks.

Sterility has its place. Medical labs, for instance, must be constantly scoured to prevent cross contamination between samples and specimens. There only women are allowed to type an embryo's sex; otherwise, a male technician's own DNA might skew the test's results. Ultra-cleanliness and hyper vigilance are a must in medical labs.

In other places, sterility and strict restrictions are not only unhelpful but detrimental. The 2020 Netflix documentary *The*

Social Dilemma (directed by Jeff Orlowski, Exposure Labs) examines how social media nurtures addiction, manipulates users in various ways, modifies human behaviors, and erodes mental health. One of the film's contributors, Justin Rosenstein worked as a product manager at Google and program engineer at Facebook before co-founding the software company Aswana. In a segment of the documentary exposing how search engines' algorithms determine what types of information to display to users based on their past search histories, clicks, likes and dislikes, etcetera, and how those search results foster polarization in our society, Rosenstein observes, "You look over at the other side, and you start to think, 'How can those people be so stupid? Look at all of this information that I'm constantly seeing. How are they not seeing that same information?' And the answer is, 'They're not seeing that same information.'" Moments later, Senator Marco Rubio addresses the political aspect and social fallout of this polarization: "We are a nation of people… that no longer speak to each other. We are a nation of people who have stopped being friends with people because of who they voted for in the last election. We are a nation of people who have isolated ourselves to only watch channels that tell us that we're right."

What is needed are holy healthy places for thinking, interaction, and engagement without intellectual prejudice or divisiveness. We need think tanks more than we need labs.

Our Evangelical Homiletics Society is not so much a lab as it is a think tank. A think tank consists of a body of experts who share ideas and advice to advance a chosen field of research and application. Unlike medical labs, think tanks are messy places. Not all ideas gain traction there. Advice can come off as criticism. Sacred cows get slaughtered. Presuppositions are called into question. Novelty is neither embraced for novelty's sake nor rejected on the same grounds. Catfish swim freely in healthy think tanks. By their presence, resistance, and "convince me" attitudes, they keep their colleagues' minds from growing soft and mushy.

Sadly, and to their detriment, academic societies and their memberships can easily morph into scholastic aquariums—permitting no room for critique, disagreement, or new ideas. The same could be said of colleges, universities, and seminaries or even denominations. They have their own ways of viewing the world and feel comfortable, thank you very much, in their placid waters. When they foresee they run the risk of encountering a catfish outside their own aquarium, they stay home with their colleagues to continue swimming in their preferred school of thought.

The Evangelical Homiletics Society was founded not to be an intellectual carapace, shielding ourselves and our homiletic from critique or thoughtful interaction. Instead, the society was established to bring together the best evangelical minds to engage the issues of our day that intersect and engage with the field of homiletics—with a distinctive evangelical perspective.

Along with the others who engaged in discussing the establishment of the Evangelical Homiletics Society at its very beginning, Keith Willhite and I sought to gather homileticians from across the continent, and around the world, to bring to bear in the society spirited research and thoughtful discourse. We have made advances. But we can do better. After twenty-five years we can recommit ourselves to our founding principles as noted on our website:

> The Evangelical Homiletics Society is an academic society formed for the exchange of ideas related to the instruction of biblical preaching. EHS's goals are as follows: to advance the cause of biblical preaching through the promotion of a biblical-theological approach, increase competence for teachers of preaching, integrate the fields of communication, biblical studies, and theology, and to provide scholarly contributions to the field of homiletics.

We want to commit ourselves as a society to be an engaging, thoughtful, biblical, intellectually-stretching think tank that makes a difference in the teaching of homiletics, the

theology of homiletics, the intersection of various disciplines with homiletics, the practice of homiletics—and so much more. There are vistas of potential research for established scholars as well as burgeoning student-scholars in this ever-expanding field of homiletics.

No one should misconstrue what is being said here as a call to abandon our society's Statement of Faith or commitment to Scripture. These are anchors from which we dare not come untethered lest we make a shipwreck of the faith. That said, the call here *is* an invitation for more critical engagement by our society's membership with theories and presuppositions that have received little attention heretofore and with discoveries outside the field of homiletics that intersect with our field.

A handful of papers on speech-act theory have been presented to our conference in recent years. While this theory seems to apply well enough for the interpretation of meaning on a sentence level, no one among us has yet to analyze whether it works on a larger scale. Does it apply for the interpretation of an entire epistle or psalm? Or even has anyone provided a critical assessment of the presuppositions of speech-act theory and its implications for homiletics and theology—positive and negative?

We assume that every pericope has only one authorially intended meaning. What then are we to make of archaeological discoveries that suggest texts like Genesis chapter one may be understood on multiple levels? (See, Gregg Davidson and Kenneth J. Turner, *The Manifold Beauty of Genesis One: A Multi-Layered Approach* [Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2021].)

What are the strengths and weaknesses of the theological interpretation of Scripture movement? Do practitioners of TIS assume too much?

Historically, the study of homiletics has been dominated by Western patterns of thought. How might a more comprehensive world homiletic challenge or reshape our Western presuppositions and practices?

Technological advances are affecting our society in a plethora of ways. The aforementioned *Social Dilemma* indicates that computer processing speeds have increased, roughly

speaking, by a trillion percent since the 1960s, whereas our automobiles' speeds have only doubled over the same time. The documentary also refers to a MIT study that found fake news on Twitter spreads six times faster than true news. Powerfully persuasive technologies vie with the pulpit every week. What hope does preaching have to continue persuading social media-saturated hearers? Is it not past the time for homileticians to rethink the art of persuasion in the maelstrom of an emerging metaverse?

Advances in neural imaging and brain mapping have spawned a number of advocacy groups that are now demanding we no longer think of what were formerly termed "disabilities" as deficiencies but as differences. How does that paradigm shift challenge our views of sin, what it means to be human, how we view the body of Christ and its preaching, how to invite the neurodiverse into a relationship with God, what sanctification looks like for the empathically-impaired, the place of guilt and shame in today's pulpit, etcetera, etcetera?

Consider the arts. The Bible makes much of food, clothing, architecture, music, and story-telling. How do we keep these artistic passages artsy in our sermons? How do we avoid discussing them in dry propositional terms?

What about the recent studies in the use of eye contact, voice and body and its impact on preaching and delivery? How can we leverage these discoveries and apply them to preaching?

Preaching's history is punctuated by great pulpiteers—from the golden-mouthed John Chrysostom to the late E. K. Bailey. Who are the great pulpiteers today? How and should they be emulated or recognized? Are there any? While the traditional Black church still appreciates grand oratory, why do White congregations only seem to appreciate it when it is done by a visiting Black minister? Must all White preaching be so conversational?

Perhaps some of the foregoing topics and questions have grabbed your attention. You may be thinking, "I'd like to explore that." Or, you may feel your blood boiling as you think, "That's just wrong!" Either way, great! You just may be one of the catfish

that our EHS tank desperately needs. So, do some reading outside your preferred waters, start a conversation with someone with whom you disagree, propose a paper, submit an article, show up and speak out during our annual conferences, learn to disagree agreeably, become a true scholar and gentleman/gentlelady, stretch your thinking, and, in the process, stretch your colleagues' as well. All of us will be better off for it.

NOTES

1. Chuck Swindoll, *Come Before Winter* (Portland, OR: Multnomah Press, 1985), 335.

PREACHING TO PEOPLE IN PAIN

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INTRODUCTION

For this conference, Jesse Nelson asked me to speak about a new publication, *Preaching to People in Pain*. This book released in May of 2021 with Baker Academic. It's a book that has long been on my heart as someone who has pastored people who are broken and hurting. How many of you have broken and hurting people in your churches today? I can assure you that all of us do. I remember pitching the book idea to Baker initially proposing the title of *Pain-Full Preaching: Sharing Our Suffering in Sermons*. For whatever reason, the marketing team relayed back that *Pain-Full Preaching* may not sell so why don't we title it *Preaching to People in Pain: How Suffering Can Shape Your Sermons and Connect with Your Congregation.*

Steve Norman is a pastor who has been writing thoughtfully about preaching. In his new book, *The Preacher as Sermon*, published by *Preaching Today*, he shares a mantra for his ministry which is this: "Never underestimate the pain in the room." This evening I don't want to underestimate your pain or the possible pains that you've been going through over the past two years or more. They've been a very difficult two years for many of us. Ministry has not looked the same for any of us.

COVID-19 has been very difficult for all of us. Who taught us in seminary how to preach to a green dot on our computers? How many of us have been struggling with trying to get people

to simply attend church? The fighting over regulations and what's allowed and what's not allowed has worn us out and has hampered our ability to concentrate on ministry. We're grieving; we're mourning.

Many preachers assume that people in the pews are doing fine, because it's not easy to consider the varied forms of suffering in a congregation. But, in fact, Steve Norman's correct in assuming that we should not underestimate the pain in the room. A similar concept was shared by a professor at Denver Seminary where my wife was taking counseling classes when I served as a pastor in Denver. In one of her classes, the professor shared similarly that "People's pain is people's pain." The point is that whether I deem another person's pain to be painful or not, their reality is that they are experiencing pain. So, we should never minimize someone else's pain. We shouldn't say: "Your pain is not as painful as my pain; I'm the only one who understands suffering." Rather, we are to assume that people's pain is people's pain whether we legitimize their pain or not. They are going through some type of suffering in their lives which requires our attention, care, and empathy.

MY STORY

How do we as preachers address the pain in the room? We're currently going through a season of COVID-19 that seems like it will never go away. Since we last saw each other, George Floyd was murdered and many others in our nation. Asian American Pacific Islander hate crimes have risen to an all-time high. Some people tell me that I've never experienced racism in my life because I'm Asian. "You really experience racism? I thought you were like us." The assumption is that Asian Americans do not encounter racism, prejudice or hatred.

Part of my session this evening will be autobiographical in nature sharing some of my own painful moments and chronic issues. I want to encourage you to share in that pain. If it is painful for me, then we all mourn and suffer together. And

something is painful for you, then I want to come alongside and mourn and grieve and lament with you as well.

Ever since COVID happened, racism in my town of Beverly, Massachusetts, toward my family and me has escalated. COVID has ramped up racial hatred and violence. After everything shut down in March of 2020, my three children and I went for a walk in our neighborhood. There's been so much hatred in people's eyes toward people who look like me. So, when we didn't return for over thirty minutes, my wife was scared thinking that something terrible had happened to us. I've experienced racism and prejudice my entire life. It's not new to me. However, I'm more afraid now of racial hatred and violence than I was as a child. Since March of 2020, I haven't gone out for a walk by myself or with my kids. I wonder how many of us could understand what it's like to be a marginalized person in the United States fearing for your safety and the safety of the people you love. It doesn't matter what your credentials are. It doesn't matter if you are a professor or someone who writes books. If you look like me, you are marginalized in the United States of America. Asian American Pacific Islander hate is at an all-time high.

WE ARE SUFFERING

We, as a global society, have also suffered from the loss of lives, loss of jobs, loss of homes, and marriages. So many marriages have ended in divorce in our town just this past year among couples we know. Natural disasters, hurricanes, tornadoes, and flooding. It seems like every week there's another destructive hurricane. For example, Hurricane Ida has taken so many lives and ravaged so many homes and communities. People are devastated today. And what about political division? We can't say enough about that. Impatience and hatred based on our differences; there's no patience today, there's no empathy. Even in our churches, any form of disagreement puts us in the enemy category. Loneliness is at an all-time high. Toxic use of social media. No explanation necessary. Depression, mental illness,

addictions, mandates and restrictions, and there's so much more pain that we could talk about. It has been a very painful last two years.

So, my question to you is this: How are *you* suffering today? And if you would be so bold, I want to ask you, would you please raise your hand if you are suffering in some shape or form? Thank you for raising those hands. We're suffering. The second question is: how is your family suffering? Do we take time to lament and think about this collectively as a family? These are all things that we want to be able to talk about in our time together in the days going forward in this EHS conference on Hope and Lament.

TRAGEDY STRIKES

Let me just take a little bit of time here to share about my life. Some of you may know me, while others don't. I was born and raised in Chicago to wonderful, godly parents, who emigrated from South Korea in the mid '70s. Overall, I grew up well under Christian parents who raised us in the church, who worked multiple jobs to provide for my brothers and me. Up until the time I was 35 or 36, my life was pretty good. I never had any major physical ailments. I did fine in school. I had a good upbringing. My parents valued education and put us through the best schools.

Yet, something happened in my 36th year of life when I began teaching at Gordon-Conwell after pastoring for several years. On the night that I was installed as a faculty member at Gordon-Conwell in March of 2013, I went to play basketball at Gordon College. If you don't know me, basketball is the third love of my life. It goes God, family, and basketball. I've always loved playing basketball. And so, I celebrated joining the faculty at Gordon-Conwell by playing ball. That evening I played with Gordon College and Gordon-Conwell students. In one game, I didn't see the ball being passed to me at full speed and it hit the left side of my head. Knocking me back, I blacked out temporarily but kept on playing because I love the game.

The next morning, I woke up completely dizzy. I knew something had happened because the basketball had struck my head. But, ever since that day, for the last nine plus years, I've battled chronic dizziness. I have post-concussion syndrome that won't go away. From the moment I wake up until I try to go to sleep, I'm dizzy. That's sixteen to seventeen hours a day, every day. Even now as I'm standing here, my brain feels like it's on a boat being tossed in the ocean and I can't control it. There are occasions when my words don't come out or I can't think clearly. As the doctors were trying to figure out my condition, they diagnosed me with glaucoma which is the reason I couldn't see the ball coming toward my head. I had lost significant peripheral vision. Doctors have told me that in cases of long-term post-concussion syndrome: "Patients rarely get better."

On top of the post-concussion syndrome and chronic dizziness, sixteen years ago I was diagnosed with tinnitus. Not only am I dizzy all day, every day, which is very tiring, I have this constant high-pitched ringing in my ears. All day. Every day. And sometimes I confess that I lament to God: "Why this is happening? Why does this continue? Why does this pain continue in my life?" I'm sure, you have something in your life. You have a lament that you're asking of God: "Why God? Why am I going through this suffering?"

Compared to my physical ailments, however, nothing has been more difficult than a tragic event that took place six years ago on November 7, 2015. My youngest brother called me overnight leaving twenty messages on my phone: "Matt, you have to call me back. No matter what time you got to call me back." Unfortunately, my phone was turned off. When I called him back the following morning, he cried: "You're not going to believe this but Tim died in the Philippines." I said, "No, that's not possible, it's probably someone else." "No, Matt, we have to go to the Philippines; Tim is dead." So, immediately, we booked a flight to Manila. On arrival, we were taken to the funeral home and later read the police report claiming that Tim had died in an accident in his apartment complex. However, after a week of investigating their story and the evidence in his building, it was

clear that this was foul play. This was murder. And he was intentionally sought after for his money because he was making ten times the wage of an average Filipino. We went back to the United States, brought his body back, and tried to figure out what really happened. So, we hired private investigators but after a few short weeks the case was closed with no resolution. We continue to grieve, to mourn, to weep, to lament. Tim died the evening he was celebrating his 36th birthday.

If I can just share briefly about Tim's life, Tim was a wonderful brother. He was a Renaissance person, a member of Mensa. Simply brilliant. He had an IQ of 153 which he loved to tell me about. Not only was he highly intelligent, but he was also gifted at sports, popular, creative, inventive, entrepreneurial, there's nothing he couldn't do. But, more than all of that, Tim possessed a heart of gold. He loved God and loved people. I could go on and on telling you the countless stories of how he helped others. My nickname for Tim is the Good Samaritan. He sacrificed much to benefit others. So, why did God take him? And how do we make sense of such tragic events in our lives? As Christians, as people who profess Christ and claim to love God, how do we comprehend our pain?

A PLAN FOR PREACHING ON PAIN

I begin the book by helping us understand the preacher's pain in chapter one. How do we make sense of our own pain as preachers? We're trained to consider others and how to communicate Scripture effectively to them for the coming week. But do we engage introspectively in terms of how we're doing and what are we experiencing today? What are some personal trials? Once we've established that, we can move into the second realm, which is thinking about the listeners. How are they suffering? What are they struggling with as they enter worship?

During my time in pastoral ministry, I had six people sleeping every Sunday during my sermon. It was like clockwork, as soon as I came up to preach, they started closing their eyes. Six people. I knew exactly which six. Yes, it was the same 6, within a

minute, out. I wouldn't see their eyeballs again for thirty to thirty-five minutes. Now, I could get upset that they're sleeping through the preaching of God's Word. But I could also stop to ask: What are they going through? Do I know? Do I think they're bad Christians because they're not listening to my sermon? What hardships weigh them down? I came to find out later that for some of them they had infants, toddlers, young kids, and they didn't sleep the night before. It's like that every Saturday night for them. Again, we want to know the challenges of our people so that we can acknowledge their pain and preach more appropriately to their conditions.

In chapter 3, I offer a plan for preaching to people in pain. How do we demonstrate empathy for others, lament with them, but also show them the hope of the gospel? What is the sermonic action plan? This is covered in detail in chapter 3.

Then, in the second part of the book, I lay out several major challenges for people. People experience pain in their lives because of various factors: decisions, finances, health issues (including mental health), losses, relationships, and yes, I went for it: painful sins in chapter 9.

So, first, let's talk about the preacher's pain. One learning activity that I have my students do in a course called Cultural Exegesis for Preaching is to have them work through a personal timeline. I ask them to chart out their lives in five-year increments (i.e., a tool that I borrowed from Terry Walling). Something I would encourage you to try with your own church members, pastoral staff, or students is to have them consider "What have been the best moments in their lives?" I ask them to map out their lives in five-year periods. The positive moments in life are written above the line and then I ask them to write down any negative things that have happened to them. They write those below the line. We spend about 15 to 20 minutes asking the Holy Spirit to reveal and remind them: "Holy Spirit, will you please help me recall the positive and hurtful moments in my life—even the things that I have repressed?"

Second, I ask them to journal. Some will give me that dirty look, "Oh, don't ask me to journal." But here are four categories

that we can think about: 1) family dysfunction. What family dynamics, issues, generational sins have caused pain in our family? 2) ethnic background is another topic that many people don't talk about. But how has our ethnicity/race contributed to our suffering? 3) We can consider cultural attitudes that have sparked difficulties, and then 4), general pains. I don't read their journals, but they let me know whether they have completed the assignment. Afterwards, many students will say, "This is the first time I've ever thought about these things intentionally." It's a helpful exercise to help them to reflect, to lament, and be honest with themselves in what they've gone through and how this has an impact on their present and future.

SUFFERING IN SCRIPTURE

Now let's shift gears and briefly consider some evidence of pain in Scripture. I used to rehearse this refrain to myself frequently: "Since I serve God, I should be exempt from suffering." Have any of you ever said that? I really did think that. I never expected all the hardships that would come my way.

But we know from Scripture that many people suffered. And this is just a brief snapshot of the sufferers in Scripture. There's Cain and Abel's suffering immediately after the Fall in Genesis 4. Can you imagine the excruciating pain of the first parents, Adam and Eve, at that point? Another story that's not often talked about is Hagar's pain in Genesis 16. There's so much pain there if you dig into that story: the apparent pain of Sarai, the pain of Hagar, the pain of Abram. Later in Genesis, there's Joseph's story of being rejected by his brothers. King David's pain is well-documented some on account of his own sins. The book of Ruth is steeped in pain and so is the book of Job.

Ken Langley will talk tomorrow about the book of Psalms; the Songs of Lament encapsulate around 40% of the Psalter. The Gospels and Epistles record the immeasurable sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ and Paul's suffering for the sake of Christ which he chronicles especially in 2 Corinthians. And there are numerous other Scripture passages that talk about suffering. So,

the "I serve God so I should be exempt from suffering" excuse does not work. Many who have gone before us in the Bible and afterwards have suffered. And we will continue to suffer. The question is: how do we respond to our suffering?

SHARING IN OUR SUFFERING

Here's my big idea for this talk: Preach on pain to help your congregants identify and share their suffering in Christian community for the purpose of healing and transformation. I want to be a part of a congregation where we can as the body of Christ freely lament and share our pain together. I don't want to be a part of a congregation that conceals our issues from one another especially on account of feeling ashamed. What would a church community look like where people were vulnerable and told each other: "This is what I'm going through, would you pray with me? This is my hardship will you encourage me, pray with me, lament with me, cry with me, and remind me of our hope in Christ?" Will you come alongside me, pastor or professor? Will you create a church culture where we can honestly share our pain together so that we can ultimately exalt Christ together? What church could be like if we could be more transparent?

Some of us may be thinking: "I object! I don't like what's going on here, Matt, and I don't care for your ideas. Preaching and pain are oxymorons. They should never go together." Well, I've anticipated some of your objections. Here are some pitfalls when we think about preaching on pain.

PITFALLS FOR PREACHING ON PAIN

It's an evangelistic turn off. "Hey Sally, how would you like to come to our church for the next six weeks and hear our pastor talk about suffering?" I don't think Sally would want to come to church with you. Taboo in certain cultures and congregations, pain and suffering are not particularly enjoyable subjects.

Self-disclosure may damage listeners' faith in God, especially when we talk about our own suffering and pain.

Maybe some people might start to think "I don't really like the pastor sharing personal struggles from the pulpit."

Self-disclosure may diminish our pastoral authority. I remember playing basketball with a church member one night and we were just playing one-on-one. He looked over and said, "Pastor Matt, your life must be really hard." And I asked why. He responded: "You have to be perfect, but I don't." Pastors are expected, by some, to be perfect or at least close to it. By way of background, this guy has gone through various struggles with the legal system. If we admit our pain or struggles, people may think less of us.

Self-disclosure focuses the sermon too much on the preacher. "Why are you seemingly the subject of every sermon?"

Self-disclosure can make for repetitive sermons. I know a pastor who lost his child to cancer years ago. And in every sermon that I've heard him preach (which is several) he brings up his daughter and what happened to her years ago. Why does he do that? It's because the pain is still raw even decades later. Of course, it's hard and it will always be hard. Sometimes self-disclosure makes for repetitive sermons.

BENEFITS OF SELF-DISCLOSURE

I hear your objections. But, let me ask, are there benefits to self-disclosure? Self-disclosure humanizes us. We don't have to stand on this imaginary platform; we can come down to where the people are and share "I'm a human being just like you. I have my own pain. I have my own struggles." It humanizes us. I don't have to be perceived as this perfect pastor on a pedestal.

Self-disclosure also connects us with people and their pain. I preached at a church for a friend of mine a few years ago. This was after my brother's death. The sermon text lent itself to telling his story. This was pre-COVID and after the service I was about to leave to go to the fellowship hall. A lady came up with tears flooding her eyes. She sobbed saying: "My daughter was murdered two years ago." And for the next 20 to 30 minutes, I prayed and cried with and for this lady in the sanctuary. Her

words are indelible in my mind, "Thank you, pastor, for sharing about your brother. I never knew that other people went through that kind of tragedy or suffering. And you shared that from the pulpit. Thank you."

Self-awareness is necessary for good leaders. Some of you may be familiar with the Johari Window. The Johari Window was a tool created in the 1950s to help people with self-awareness. Basically, it forces us to pause and contemplate: "Who do I think I am, and who do other people think I am?" One would circle beliefs about oneself from a list of characteristics. Then others, members in a congregation or students (for our purposes) would also circle from this list concerning what they thought of us. The purpose of this tool is to show us our blind spots. We want to move from these blind spots to complete openness and knowledge about the things that we are good at and the things we struggle with. The problem is when leaders are blind and continue to be blind to leadership struggles and weaknesses. Perhaps, we can incorporate some principles from the Johari Window in our own teaching and preaching.

What are some of the strengths and weaknesses of your students and congregants? How do we help them see and work on some of their blind spots? I don't know about you, but in every beginning preaching class, students think they're "A" preachers. They've never preached a sermon before, but they all think they're "A" preachers. Can I get an "Amen"? Receiving an A- is the end of the world for so many of them. You're just learning the baby steps! You're not an expert!

Finally, self-disclosure helps us model how to overcome suffering and pain. While many types of suffering will not cease, we can still demonstrate how Christ enables us to live victoriously through suffering and pain. We can try to model for the church what it means to suffer through Christ's strength.

THE LISTENERS' PAIN

Now, what about the listeners' pain? Let's transition to that important subject by beginning with this question: "Do we love

people?" I would submit to you that pastoring and preaching go together. I had a student in my one of my first preaching classes at the seminary raise his hand, almost triumphantly, and ask: "So, professor, would it be okay if I pursued an itinerant preaching ministry? I know this pastor stuff is, yeah, that's fine. But would you mind if I became an itinerant preacher?" I said, "I don't mind, but why do you want to do that?" And his bold statement was "I love to preach, but I don't like people." I don't know how many of you have had students like this. If we're honest, sometimes we may feel like this. So, my question is: "Do you love people? Do I love people? Do I love to preach but not want to pastor them?"

I tell my students regularly that I don't want them just to become good orators and good communicators. I want them to become good pastors. I want them to love their people. I don't know whether that student felt rebuked by me or not. Some people respond like Snoopy in this cartoon telling themselves: "I don't have time to worry about who doesn't like me; I'm too busy loving the people who love me." It's easy to do being surrounded by people we like, but those who are difficult, we marginalize and put to the side because we don't have time for them or want to deal with them. This attitude affects all of us at various times in our ministry and teaching.

FOUR MAJOR TYPES OF SUFFERING

Here are four major categories of suffering: 1) suffering for the sake of Christ; 2) suffering from various illnesses out of our control; 3) suffering because of demands placed on us; and 4) suffering from our own sinfulness, desires, and poor choices. Now there are many other types of suffering, but here are some major categories that I see in our lives that we can address as pastors and preachers.

In addition, here are other common categories of pain: physical health, mental health, relational health, economic health, and spiritual health. These are all important matters to consider. Some of you may be saying to yourselves, "Well, isn't

Jesus enough? Isn't the gospel enough?" And I would agree, "Yes, wholeheartedly, I believe that's true." Jesus is enough and the gospel is enough. Jesus is the answer to every human problem and predicament, including sin. Here's the issue: many Christians don't know how to handle their problems and predicaments right now. I can preach the strongest sermon about the gospel and about who Christ is, explaining and reminding them of the centrality of Christ. I can exalt Christ all I want in my sermons. But if people don't know or understand how to deal with their immediate struggles or at least have them acknowledged by the preacher, how will they come to know the Savior, who seemingly doesn't understand their problems or their pain?

JESUS TOUCHES THE PEOPLE'S PAIN

I'm wholeheartedly for Christ-centered preaching. I am wholeheartedly in favor of gospel-centered preaching *and* talking to people about their current struggles. Why is that? Because Jesus modeled that for us. I studied the gospels and found that time and time again Jesus met people's immediate needs. Here are some examples of passages where Jesus cared for people holistically. This list is essentially exhaustive because there are many passages in the Synoptics that overlap.

So, what did Jesus do? Jesus healed the sick, healed the leper (and here are the references in the PowerPoint slides), healed the centurion's servant, healed Peter's mother-in-law, restored the demon-possessed man, forgave and healed the paralytic, raised a dead girl and healed a sick woman, raised the widow's son, healed the blind and the mute, instructed the disciples to heal the sick, raised the dead, cleansed lepers, drove out demons, fed the five thousand, delivered the demon possessed, fed the four thousand, healed the demon-possessed boy, healed the crippled woman on the Sabbath, healed the ten lepers, healed the two blind men, healed the man born blind, and raised Lazarus from the dead.

Jesus' formula was asking those in need: "What can I do for you?" He reached out his hand and touched those who were sick. He didn't ask: "What's your problem?" and then immediately offer a solution such as: "Yes, I know what your problem is. You have a spiritual problem; you have a sin problem; and I'm going to solve it." No, he inquired: "What can I do for you?" It was open-ended. They could ask for whatever their heart's desired.

For instance, hear this exchange between Blind Bartimaeus and Jesus from Mark's Gospel. Blind Bartimaeus screamed: "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" "What do you want me to do for you?" "I want to see." Jesus met physical needs first and then extended salvation. I wonder if we can replicate Jesus's philosophy of ministry. Yes, I want to urgently preach the gospel. I want to give them Christ. But I also want to give them something that they need, which is responding to their immediate pain and suffering.

I submit to you this evening that Jesus cares for the whole person. And that's why everything matters in ministry: that's why soup kitchens, caring for the least of these, housing the homeless, meeting people's physical needs all matter. Jesus even said it in Matthew 25, "Even if you give a cup of water to someone, you're doing this unto me." Since Jesus cares for the whole person, I want to encourage all of us to care for whole people, too.

PREACHING ON SUFFERING

How do we respond? We can preach to expect suffering. This is radical; I know some of you are thinking, "You're not going to grow a church like this, Matt." Preach to expect suffering. Preach to lower people's expectations about this earthly life and about what they can accomplish. Preach that they're not going to achieve or attain everything that they want in life. Preach against entitlement and ingratitude. Preach a big God and small problems.

For this last one, would you please do an exercise with me? Place your hand in front of your eyes. I can't take credit for this activity because I'm just copying what that person did. Put your hand in front of your face. Can you see much beyond your hand? The hand represents your problems. When we preach like this, when we preach that our problems are so big (like our hand), then we forget that we need to preach about a big God, because we can't see much beyond the problem or crisis. In addition, preach lament without an immediately happy ending.

We're so quick to give the solution of Jesus. The Sunday school answer is Jesus. This happens in our church where my wife teaches children from the Bible. One of the kids, if the answer is Jesus, will always raise her hand because she knows that the correct answer is Jesus. And yet, can we have the courage to linger in lament with our people and acknowledge their trials? We don't always have to give them a quick solution. As pastors, we have this tendency. Perhaps, we need a culture shift where in Christian community we just sit and hear people's pain and let them tell their story. Going further, preach for spiritual maturity. This shaping and pruning of God increases our discipleship and enables us to become more Christlike.

Ultimately, of course, we preach the gospel. The gospel is steeped in pain but rich in hope. We preach Christ: his death, burial, resurrection, ascension, and return. The gospel is painful but also hopeful. How do we help our people understand the fullness of the gospel? How do we respond to their pain?

QUESTIONS FOR PREACHING ON PAIN

So, here are some questions we might consider before preaching on pain.

- Which passage will I preach on regarding the subject of pain?

- Does every sermon need to address pain? No, absolutely not.

- Which type of pain and suffering is revealed in the text? (If there's a moment of pain that I can address from this passage, why not take some time in the sermon to talk about it.)

- How does the Bible character or biblical author deal with the pain?

- How does this pain in the text relate to our listeners' pain? (This is where we're connecting pain in Scripture to current listeners' pains.)

- What does this pain say about God and his allowance of pain? (This question is geared toward skeptics who ask: "If God really loves me, why does he allow this in my life?")

- How does the Triune God help us in our suffering?

- How can our preaching show care and empathy?

- How can we share this pain in Christian community? (Where do we see type of this communal care in the Bible? We want to be an Acts 2 kind of church, where we see the needs of others and care for them.)

- Finally, how will God use suffering to transform us and bring himself glory?

These are some of the homiletical queries of a preacher who preaches to people in pain. We walk through these questions and determine: Does my text talk about these things? Again, I don't submit to you that every sermon needs to talk about pain. Of course not.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES FOR PREACHING ON PAIN

Additionally, here are some general principles:

1. Diagnose the source of the pain. What's going on in people's lives?

2. Preach on pain when the text addresses it.

3. Preach on pain when the occasion calls for it.

4. Help listeners receive comfort from God.

5. Encourage listeners to comfort others in their pain.

6. Give thanks to God in the midst of pain (radical but necessary).

7. Urge listeners to glorify God through their pain.

These are some principles we can incorporate as we try to preach effectively on the difficult subject of pain and suffering. From the pulpit, we can increase our empathy for others. Our society lacks empathy. People don't have empathy for anyone. A gentle reminder is that: Everyone has a story. The question is, "Will I sit long enough to listen to it?" Preaching to people in pain may take a lot of time. As homileticians and pastors, we have papers to grade, meetings to lead, people to minister to, sermons to write and preach, and Bible studies to prepare. When do we have time to listen to peoples' stories? Remember, everyone has a story.

PECULIAR PEOPLE HAVE STORIES

I had a church member of whom I thought was very strange. Anybody have a church member or two of whom you think: "They're *really* strange!"? This strange person would come over to the parsonage every Tuesday evening for the women's small

group led by my wife. This person was a different, peculiar kind of person. She would prance and dance through the kitchen. One evening I saw her in my kids' rooms taking out the toys and playing with them. I kept thinking: "This person is very, very, strange." She would say some immature things, at times. She was direct, blunt, some may consider even rude. Perhaps, most strange of all, she knew Greek and Hebrew better than I did. She had studied the original languages on her own. She loved the Word of God. So, you have this person who knows Greek and Hebrew better than I do, and yet is prancing and dancing around the kitchen, and playing with my kid's toys.

My questions abounded: Why is she like this? Why is she so different? One day, I finally managed to ask her: "Can you tell me about your life?" She said, "Oh yeah, sure. What do you want to know? "Well, what was your childhood like?"

When I was a child, my mom and dad were killed in an accident. I basically raised myself for the last thirty some years." As she continued to talk, it hit me: she's still a young girl at times mentally, because she lost her parents at a tragically young age. She's never been able to move mentally past that part of her life. She still plays enthusiastically with my kid's toys and finds them fascinating because she didn't fully experience childhood.

Once I heard her story, not only did I weep with her, but I also began to treat her like royalty. She eventually because a wonderful ministry partner and I considered her a valuable church member and not just someone who was rude and childish. On my last Sunday, I shared with her how much I valued her as a ministry colleague and friend. Here's a person who's broken, and here I am someone who has lived a rather privileged life. I had two godly parents who loved me and provided for me. And here's this sister in Christ who's raised herself. When we hear someone's story, it changes how we view them—usually for the better.

CONCLUSION

Everyone has a story. Everyone has pain. Everyone can use their suffering to bless others particularly when we've been able to process our pain. As we think about our growing divisions in this country and around the world, I want to encourage us to grow in empathy. I want to encourage us as God's people, and especially as leaders in the church, and leaders of seminaries, to lead the charge in learning to empathize with other people. Empathy takes a lot of time and heart work: it's where we ask the Holy Spirit, "Help me, Lord, to understand another person's life."

Yes, these are difficult topics: ethnicity and race, politics, people's differing views on mandates and restrictions. These are real things in the church that are dividing us: denominational issues and women in ministry. These are at the core of some of our greatest divisions as Christians. But will we listen to other people's stories? Will we hear, learn, and try to understand why they came to think as they do?

Here are two reminders: First, all preaching is pastoral. I want to encourage us to preach with our presence just as much as we preach an eloquent, masterful sermon on suffering or whatever the topic may be. What listeners also want from us is our presence, for us to sit with them, to listen to their stories, to hear their pain. So, preach with your pastoral presence.

Second, pain comes in waves. Just yesterday, I wept because it was my deceased younger brother's birthday who was born on November 3, 1979. Though it's been six years since his death, I still see his body lying in the casket. Pain comes in waves.

But there is hope. God is with us in our suffering. And as much as we lament to God, we also serve the same eternal God who loves us and cares for us. And there is more to this world than just this earthly, temporal life. We live with our gaze toward Christ and eternity with him. These are good reminders. These are words of hope that we can share with our church members and with our students.

I conclude with a quote from Wally Amos Criswell, better known as W. A. Criswell, once the pastor of First Baptist Church of Dallas. He writes in *Standing on the Promises*:

> There is only one joy greater than preaching or teaching the Word, and that joy is this: One day soon we will see the Author of the Word face to face. God Himself will hold us in His arms and take us home. In the meantime, all He asks of us is that we go on loving the Word and sharing it in our own ways, that we remain faithful to the Word, that we win the lost to Christ. And when our trials come, when we feel pain and suffering, when our tears flow again, it is our joy and comfort to lift our faces heavenward and to go on standing on the promises of God.[1]
> We serve a great and glorious God. That is our hope, and until we see Jesus, face to face, we can pray this prayer by the Puritan Robert Hawker. Will you pray with me?
>
> So when my poor heart is afflicted, when Satan storms, or the world frowns, when I suffer sickness, or when all your waves and storms seem to go over me, what relief it is to know that you, Jesus, see me. And that you care!
>
> So help me, Lord, to look to you, and remember you. And oh! That blessed Scripture: "In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them; in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old."[2]

Come quickly, Lord Jesus. Amen.

NOTES

1. W. A. Criswell, *Standing on the Promises* (Dallas: Word, 1990), 248-250.

2. Robert Hawker, "A Prayer in Time of Suffering," Lexham Press (blog), March 20, 2020, https://blog.lexhampress.com/2020/03/20/a-prayer-in-time-of-suffering. The Bible verse Hawker quotes is Isa. 63:9. The language in the prayer has been updated for a modern audience.

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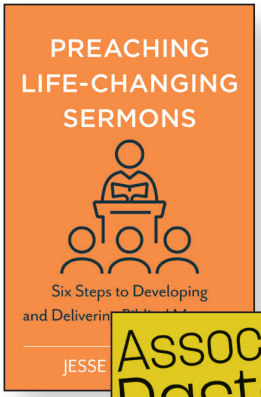

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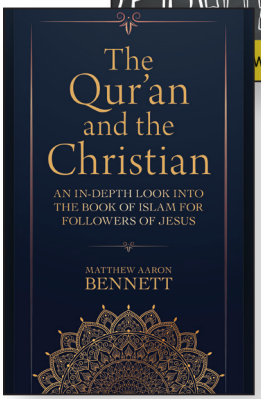

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PREACHING HOPE AND LAMENT FROM THE PSALMS

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INTRODUCTION

"Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God. My soul is downcast with in me; therefore I will remember you from the land of the Jordan . . . Deep calls to deep in the roar of your waterfalls; all your waves and breakers have swept over me" (Psalm 42:5-7). Hope and lament.

Usually, the order is reversed, as in Psalm 130: "Out of the depths I cry to you, O LORD," verse 1. Verse 7: "O Israel, put your hope in the LORD, for with the LORD is unfailing love and with him is full redemption." Lament and hope.

In psalm after psalm we find this pattern: the petitioner begins: "How many are my foes! How long will you hide your face from me? Why do you stand afar off? God, I don't understand, I don't like, and I'm not about to acquiesce to this current state of illness, distress, injustice, persecution, danger, loss. But—(so much Gospel in that little word!)—I trust you. I know you are faithful to your promises. I wait in hope for the LORD, he is my help and shield. I am confident of this: I will see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living. Be strong and take heart all you who hope in the LORD. Lament and hope.

What homiletical significance might there be to this blending, this mix of hope and lament in the Psalms? And what homiletical significance might there be to the fact that the Psalter is not, like modern hymnals, arranged topically? Happy songs

are not grouped together, sad songs are not grouped together; we do not find wisdom psalms, royal psalms, historical psalms and torah psalms grouped by mood or subject matter. If you read a psalm every day as part of your devotions (which I recommend), and if you read them sequentially (as I recommend) you'll encounter hope and lament not by deliberate choice or according to your mood but in the same way life serves up joys and sorrows.[1] As Walter Brueggemann put it, "The faith of Israel, like all human experience, moved back and forth between the polar moods of, one the one hand, deep anguish and, on the other hand, profound joy and celebration."[2]

What is the homiletical significance of the mixed way we encounter hope and lament in the Psalter? To focus on this question as I'll do in this lecture, we'll have to set aside other important and related questions:

- What was the original cultic or liturgical setting of these hymns and prayers?[3]
- How should God's new covenant people approach the subset of laments we call imprecatory psalms?[4]
- How do we explain the abrupt shift from plea to praise so characteristic of the lament form?[5]

Worthwhile questions. But so is this one: What is the homiletical significance of the mixed way we encounter hope and lament in the Psalms? That's the fourth time I've asked the question. Now let me try to answer it. I have two main propositions.

GOD WOULD HAVE US PREACH BOTH HOPE AND LAMENT FROM THE PSALMS

Is that too obvious? Do you wonder if you can get a partial refund for the conference? After all, who needs a plenary session to tell us something so basic as "God would have us preach both hope and lament from the Psalms"? Well, here's something even more basic: God would have us preach the Psalms!

If that seems obvious, good for you! It should be obvious. But it's been questioned:

- Bonhoeffer, who loved the Psalms, nevertheless wondered how human words to God can become God's words to us. Form critics said it doesn't happen.[6]
- David Buttrick, in *Homiletic*, said psalms are for singing, not preaching.[7]
- Donald Gowan said "The Psalms don't want to be preached." Pray them, sing them, but don't turn them into sermon texts. Ironically, this advice came in a book, *Reclaiming the Old Testament for the Christian Pulpit*. Gowan, an Old Testament prof at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, pled with preachers to stop neglecting the Hebrew scriptures. But he didn't think we should preach from Psalms.[8]

Other scholars disagree, including, I'm glad to say, some in the Evangelical Homiletics Society.

Granted, psalms are prayer. But as Patrick Miller points out, *how* we pray and *what* we pray indicate underlying beliefs about the one *to whom* we pray and *why*.[9] What is that but theology? Granted, psalms are songs. But songs *teach*. Luther understood this. Support for this claim comes from an unexpected direction: Those who in recent decades have purged our hymnals of unfeminist and militaristic vocabulary display by that project a conviction that songs do indeed *teach*. We don't have to agree with their criteria for expunging some hymns to concur that liturgy *teaches*.[10]

In any case, the Psalms are more than liturgical material. Brevard Childs, Gerald Wilson, Clinton McCann, Mark Futato, and Gordon Wenham, among others, have recovered the pre-critical conviction that psalms are Torah.[11] Their status as Scripture means that they have a *teaching* role. Human speech to God, yes, but canonized as God's speech to us, rich in theological affirmations.[12]

Granted, psalms are not easy to preach; they do not readily lend themselves to "being a text."[13] They're *poetry*, which is one reason Gowan balked at preaching these hymns and prayers: "Unless preachers have special lyrical gifts of their own, how can a sermon avoid sounding very pedestrian and dull in comparison with its text?"[14] He has a point. In the early years of my ministry I tended to not preach psalms. When I did so, I often felt that even if the sermon was theologically sound and pastorally helpful, the "poemness" of the text didn't quite make it into the pulpit. "You can see why some preachers avoid the psalms," Jeffrey D. Arthurs writes, "Their intuition tells them that we murder when we dissect."[15]

But we must make the effort to learn how to preach these poems without murdering them, because, as Elizabeth Achtemeier put it, not only *can* we preach the Psalms, we *must* preach the Psalms. They are indispensable to the life of faith.[16] How can we neglect instructing and encouraging our people from this, the longest book in the Bible, one that's been called the heart of the Old Testament, the Old Testament book cited most often in the New, a favorite of our Lord's, a book Athanasius said contains all of what we find elsewhere in Scripture.[17] As Tremper Longman and Dan Allender put it, "Nothing illuminates the ruling passions of our hearts as dramatically or clearly as our emotions. And no book of Scripture illuminates our emotions as dramatically or clearly as the Psalms."[18] I won't belabor the point. Preach the Psalms![19]

When you do, you'll encounter frequent, passionate, alternating expressions of hope and lament, an ebb and flow of hope and lament; and God would have us preach *both*.

> Where [Luther wrote] does one find finer words of joy than in the Psalms of praise and thanksgiving? There . . . you see what fine and pleasant flowers of the heart spring up from all sorts of fair and happy thoughts toward God. But on the other hand, where do you find deeper, more sorrowful, more pitiable words of sadness than in the Psalms of lamentation? How gloomy and dark it is there. . . . everyone,

> in whatever situation he may be, finds in that situation Psalms and words that fit his case, that suit him as if they were put there just for his sake.[20]

Preach Hope from the Psalms

I believe it was Lewis Smedes I first heard say "Now abide faith, hope, and love, and the greatest of these is hope." This was not a slip of the tongue or an attempt to correct the apostle Paul. Smedes was stressing the importance of hope.[21]

I recall a cartoon I saw in a ministry journal years ago. Above the preacher's head is a thought balloon in which he fancies himself a general, helmet and all, leading the congregational army out to do battle. "Charge!" he cries. But over the heads of the congregation is a different thought balloon: they see themselves lying on the battlefield, desperately wounded. "Medic!" they cry. Our pews are filled with people who are crushed by life, people burdened with guilt they don't know what to do with, people angry at God, people engaged in denial because they think it's unspiritual to talk about their pain. They need hope.

Don't confuse or let your hearers confuse hope with optimism: a belief in progress, a sunny disposition that always looks on the bright side. Sermons faithful to the God-centered vision of the Psalms will never say "Time heals" or "Things will work out." Not long before his death, Martin Luther King Jr. shared with his former Dexter Ave. congregation that though he still had hope he was not optimistic. He did not foresee America getting its act together, but he held on to a God who brings light out of darkness and justice to the nations.[22]

I probably don't need to take any more time convincing you to preach hope, so let me emphasize a different word in my proposal: God would have us preach hope *from the Psalms*. You can preach hope from the resurrection narratives when you get to the resurrection narratives. You can preach hope from Romans 8 when your preaching calendar takes you to Romans 8. But don't think that when you preach psalms you have to prop them

up with New Testament texts. As if the hope of those poor psalmists fell so far short we need to zip ahead a thousand years in order to have something worthwhile to say to a Christian congregation.

John Goldingay, in his provocatively titled book, *Do We Need the New Testament?* Takes issue with the condescending attitude many have toward Old Testament spirituality. "One's response to the account of a relationship with God that is offered in the Psalms . . . [should not be] 'If only they had the real relationship with God that I have after Jesus came,' but 'If only I had the real relationship with God that they had before Jesus came.'"[23] Maybe if Goldingay was here this morning helping us reflect on hope and lament, he'd say "If only we'd embrace the hope the psalmists had." What hope?

- God will be faithful despite our unfaithfulness.
- God will deal with the unjust and the violent.
- All nations will worship him.
- God will redeem Israel from all her sins.
- God is not deaf to the cries of our heart.
- When I awake I will be satisfied with seeing your likeness (Psalm 17:15).
- You guide me with your counsel, and afterward you will take me into glory (Psalm 73:24).

These affirmations are harvested not from the gospels and epistles but from the Psalter.

- The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases (Psalm 136:1).
- The sun will not harm you by day nor the moon by night (Psalm 121:6).
- The trees, the mountains and seas will erupt in praise of the Creator (Psalm 98:8).
- You will fill me with joy in your presence (Psalm 16:11).
- I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever (Psalm 23:6).

This stuff will preach!

Brueggemann, commenting on Psalm 96, says that although Israel is realistic about the world being out of kilter, she ". . . meets regularly in an extreme act of liturgical hope." The LORD is King! The world is firmly established; it shall never be moved. He will judge the peoples with equity. Brueggemann goes so far as to call this the "quintessential statement of the Gospel in all of Old Testament scripture, the ground of Israel's hope . . . the world will eventually be righted according to the intention of the Creator."[24]

Of course, there's progress in revelation. Of course, we know more fully than did David and Asaph and the Sons of Korah. But if we feel compelled to include New Covenant hope in our sermons on the Psalms, we should never do so in a way that sounds like "This old Jewish hope is thin gruel; fortunately we have something more nourishing in Romans."

God would have us preach hope from the Psalms. God would have us preach *lament* from the Psalms.

Preach Lament from the Psalms

If half the psalms are laments (which is true), and if half of each lament psalm is actually lament (the remainder a turn to praise), the lament material in Psalms exceeds in length any of the minor prophets and all but four books in the New Testament. How can we justify neglecting that much of God's inspired word in our pulpit ministry? Especially when people in pain (which is everybody at some point) need to hear somebody legitimize lament.

In the 1970s and 80s Brueggemann lamented (pun intended) that the lament psalms had largely been purged from the life and liturgy of the church."[25] With what results?

- People figure there must be something wrong with them because everyone else in the sanctuary seems to be in celebration mode all the time.

- They turn to psychotherapy for what they might have gotten from psalms.
- And in an essay entitled "The Costly Loss of Lament," Brueggemann noted that victims of injustice are left voiceless when protest praying is disallowed.[26]

This loss of lament has been redressed to some extent over the past few decades in papers, books and conferences. I don't pretend to have compiled an exhaustive bibliography on the subject—someone should do that—but here are some representative attempts to remedy the loss in recent years:

> ***Essays*** like Nancy Duff's, "Recovering Lamentation as a Practice in the Church."[27] Or Calvin Seerveld's "Why We Need to Learn to Cry in Church."[28]
>
> ***Conferences*** like, well, this one, and that of the PCUSA in 2002, "Reclaiming the Text: Recovering the Language of Lament."
>
> ***Books*** like *It's OK to be Not OK: Preaching Lament from the Psalms* by Federico Villanueva (Langham Preaching Resources, 2017); *Preaching to People in Pain* by Matthew D. Kim (Baker, 2021); and *Lament: Reclaiming Practices in Pulpit, Pew, and Public Square,* edited by Sally Brown and Patrick Miller (Westminster John Knox, 2005), in which Brown writes "Today's church needs to reclaim the voice of lament not only in its prayer but in its preaching."[29] Preachers would do well to read not only academic treatments of the subject, but works like Marva Dawn's meditations on the Psalms: *I'm Lonely, Lord – How Long?* revised edition (Eerdmans, 1983); and Michael Card's *A Sacred Sorrow: Reaching Out to God in the Lost Language of Lament* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2005).

I hope this scholarly prompting is bearing its intended fruit in evangelical pulpits. I hope that pastors are taking heed and

preaching lament. But I'm not sure. Decades after Brueggemann's lament, John Mark Hicks could still say "We are dominated by a liturgical style that is upbeat, perky, positive, and celebrative.[30] A lot of churches call their worship hour a "celebration service." Has anyone thought about starting a weekly "lament service," scheduled, perhaps, in the wee hours of the morning when the targeted market niche can't sleep anyway? A church in Denver is named "Happy Church." How would "Lamentations Church" go over? Not well, I'm afraid; there's too much truth in what one observer of our culture said: 'The true religions of America are optimism and denial.'"[31]

"Out of the depths I cry to you, O LORD," says the anonymous song of ascent, Psalm 130. Has the preacher ever so preached as to let people know they can pray out of the depths? Or has the contemporary church's obsession with the positive, the upbeat, the celebratory closed off this possibility for the congregation? Here's a thought experiment for pastors: Suppose someone in your church died in a tragic accident. Would you expect to see the family in church the following Sunday, or does everyone assume they'll take a few weeks off? Honest wrestling with this question might tell you something about congregational culture as it relates to the legitimacy of lament. Do people think of church as a safe place to be sad?[32]

Preachers would do well to mull over Brueggemann's words and not hesitate to preach laments:

> The use of these 'psalms of darkness' is an act of faith. . . . it insists that all such experiences of disorder are a proper subject for discourse with God. There is nothing out of bounds, nothing precluded or inappropriate. Everything properly belongs in this conversation of the heart. To withhold parts of life from that conversation is in fact to withhold part of life from the sovereignty of God. Thus these psalms make the important connection; everything must be *brought to speech*, and everything must be *addressed to God,* who is the final reference for all of life.[33]

Claus Westermann wrote in *Praise and Lament in the Psalms*:

> It is an illusion to postulate that there could ever be a relationship with God in which there was only praise and never lamentation. Just as joy and sorrow in alteration are a part of the finitude of human existence (Gen 2-3), so praise and lamentation are a part of man's relationship to God. Hence, something is amiss if praise of God has a place in Christian worship but lamentation does not. Praise can retain its authenticity and naturalness only in polarity with lamentation.[34]

"Polarity." That leads to my second main proposition: God would have us preach hope colored by lament and lament colored by hope.

GOD WOULD HAVE US PREACH BOTH HOPE COLORED BY LAMENT AND LAMENT COLORED BY HOPE

Doesn't that seem a reasonable inference from the mixed way we encounter hope and lament in the Psalms? The happy psalms we memorize and print on coffee mugs are set smack up against passionate poems of anguish. The laments, almost without exception, turn to hopeful praise. Hope and lament impact each other. Ebb and flow.

By "hope colored by lament" and "lament colored by hope," I don't mean either canceling out the other. I don't mean that we should aim at fifty-fifty balance in every sermon. I certainly don't mean that we're free to distort our psalm texts out of some preconceived notion of what a sermon should sound like. Take Psalm 74, for example. It starts with lament, moves to hope, then back to lament. We might be tempted to preach stanzas one and three together so we can get the sad stuff out of the way and end on a happy note with that middle section. But that's not true to the text, and at least some of our hearers will sense that we're not preaching honestly. The psalm departs from

the normal lament pattern; its development is not tidy, but then neither is life.[35]

Another example: One of my students, preaching Psalm 73, told us in the sermon's introduction where we would end up by sermon's end—confidently orthodox, secure with God as our all-satisfying treasure. This was a mistake. The sermon could *end* that way, but it was a mistake to *begin* that way. Although the student did walk us through the poet's doubts in the first movement of the psalm, this part of the sermon lacked conviction because the he had given away the happy ending—and without a spoiler alert. During our debrief time, I pointed out that the poet arrives where he does only after honest wrestling with the prosperity of the wicked—why *do* good things happen to bad people?—and that perhaps the sermon, too, might let listeners feel this struggle a bit longer before resolving the tension. The student agreed—he'd thought about this when writing the sermon—but he was afraid to let listeners squirm for more than a minute or two with the kind of pained speech we encounter in this psalm.[36]

What I *do* mean by "God would have us preach hope colored by lament and lament colored by hope" will be clear from what follows. I hope!

Preach Hope Colored by Lament

A few weeks ago, my devotional reading plan brought me to Psalm 91: "If you make the Most High your dwelling, no harm will befall you." Four days later a 23-year-old mother was shot dead a few blocks from my house. A bullet from a street rumble went through the window and into her head as she sat reading Bible stories to her seven-month-old. Our town is no stranger to crime, but this one shook the community. If I preach Psalm 91 as if bad things never happen to God's people, my congregants will conclude that I'm out of touch with reality.

The Hebrew poets were *not* out of touch with reality. They didn't have their heads in the sand. They'd seen young mothers die. They'd witnessed injustice, experienced pain, known aching

loss. When they penned hymns like Psalm 91 (with poetic hyperbole), they weren't guaranteeing "Your best life now!" In fact, they weren't really talking about the kind of life we can expect; they were talking about the kind of God who has us in his grip. He can and does (when it so pleases him) reach down his hand to stop the bullet, or feed the hungry, or bless the barren woman with children. We can preach these hopeful psalms, and do so with joy, but with what John Piper calls *brokenhearted* joy. We won't sound like a motivational speaker. We won't overpromise. Tumors may grow, injustices might not be righted until the return of the King, and until that day, all of us will walk through the valley of the shadow of death.

Notre Dame's Mary Catherine Hilkert, one of those scholarly voices insisting that lament needs to be part of our pulpit speech, notes that the hope-filled gospel we preach, the good news our people long for must not be spoken in a way that rings hollow, disconnected with the harsh realities of life.[37]

How, practically, can we preach hope colored by lament? Three suggestions. You can probably come up with others.

- Periodically remind your people that the prosperity gospel is heresy.
- Include some sermon illustrations of unanswered prayer.
- Now and then include a comment like "The psalmist was not Pollyanna; he knew that God does not guarantee a pain-free life, even though this poem shows we have good reason for the hope that we have."

What did Westermann say? "Praise can retain its authenticity and naturalness only in polarity with lamentation." So, God would have us preach hope colored by lament. The opposite is also true.

Preach Lament Colored by Hope

It shouldn't be too hard to do this, since, as has been said, almost all the laments turn to praise.[38] In fact, as Sally Brown points out,

laments are in a sense psalms of trust because the petitioner counts on God to hear and answer.[39] Even the bleakest of all, Psalm 88, begins with a *glimmer* of hope; this heart-wrenching prayer begins "O LORD, the God who *saves* me."

To baby boomers whose worship emphasizes celebration to the exclusion of lament, John Mark Hicks responds that lament is not a "downer," but an expression of faith. "Lament transforms," he writes, "Lament enables perseverance. Lament empowers. Lament gives hope, because embedded in the lament is an appeal that arises out of trust in God whose love is forever. Lament is the mode by which hope is reborn."[40] Federico Villanueva goes further: "The hope is the lament itself."[41]

How, practically, can we preach lament colored by hope? Again, three suggestions. *First*, preach whole psalms, not just psalm snippets. If you preach a lament, and don't quit half-way through the text, your listeners *will* hear hope.

Secondly, know that honest lament does not entail blurting out whatever you're thinking or feeling at the moment. Perhaps one layman went too far when he said, "I wish preachers would keep their doubts to themselves; we have enough of our own," but I don't want to dismiss his perspective too readily. Self-disclosure should always be in the service of the Word and of the people; the pulpit is not the place for the preacher to work on his "issues." The poet of Psalm 73, a worship leader, recognized that his bitter resentment was beast-like (verse 22) and that if he had spoken his thoughts in the assembly he would have betrayed God's people (verse 15).

Lastly and most importantly, "Delight yourself in the Lord." Don't just preach these poems, seek grace to *live* them, to face the ebb and flow of life with the psalmists' confidence in God, so that despite your own troubles, you can truly say "Earth has nothing I desire besides you." Your people should be able to sense that even though you do not trivialize pain—your own or theirs—you are glad in God.

Gandalf is a good example for us (and so, of course, are the psalmists). In a desperate, dark hour, Gandalf laughed, and stood beside Pippin, putting his arm about the hobbit's

shoulders. "Pippin glanced in wonder at the face now close beside his own, for the sound of that laugh had been merry. In the wizard's face he saw at first only lines of care and sorrow; though as he looked more intently he perceived that under all there was a great joy: a fountain of mirth enough to set a kingdom laughing, were it to gush forth. (*The Return of the King*, chapter 1). "Though you have made me see troubles, many and bitter, my lips will shout with joy when I sing praise to you" (Psalm 71). "Weeping may remain for a night, but joy comes in the morning" (Psalm 30).

The shift from plea to praise in the laments may puzzle scholars, but it's a gift to God's people. It demonstrates conclusively that for one who trusts God, lament is colored by hope. Let no one take this familiar feature of laments take this characteristic of lament for granted: It is unique to Israel in the ancient world.[42] The context for Israel's hopeful lament was its covenant with Yahweh.[43]

There are more laments than any other type of psalm, suggesting perhaps that lament is the dominant mood of the book. But a canonical reading of the Psalter gives us hope: The way the collection came to be a collection suggests that *praise* dominates.

There's the Hebrew title for the Psalter: "praises" (*tehillim*). There's the fact that each of the five books of the Psalter ends with a doxology.[44]

There's a shift from lament to praise not only in individual psalms, but in the collection as a whole. Without retracting the observation on which this lecture is based – that hope and lament come at us *mixed*—we also observe that the mix *is not uniform throughout.* There are proportionally more laments in the first half of the Psalter, fewer in the second, which leads to a climactic final doxology, five "halleluia" psalms.[45] It's as if the compilers were saying "the longer you pray and sing these psalms, the more you let your life be shaped by them, the more your pain will be caught up—not denied, suppressed or delegitimized, but caught up—all in good time, and after honest experience—but caught up in praise.[46]

And then, too, there's this: The Psalter preserves for the post-exilic community hopes wrapped up in a future ideal King.[47] Back in the land but under Gentile overlords, these Jews prayed and sang:

- Psalm 2 with its promise of an Anointed One, a Son who would inherit the nations and rule them with an iron scepter;
- Psalm 18 with its vision of God giving great victories to David and his descendants forever;
- Psalm 72 with its portrait of an ideal monarch;
- Psalm 110 with its hope that The LORD will extend the king's rule from Zion, crushing enemies and judging the nations.

Why did the compilers and editors of the Psalter retain and use these after the apparent demise of the house of David? Merely out of antiquarian motives, to document what Israel *used to* hope for? Brevard Childs says no: "Although the royal psalms originally arose in a peculiar historical setting of ancient Israel . . . they were treasured in the Psalter for a different reason, namely as a witness to the messianic hope which looked for the consummation of God's kingship through his Anointed One."[48]

CONCLUSION

I'm not convinced by the arguments of some scholars that the Psalms tell a story.[49] But the postexilic shaping of the Psalter does tell us that Israel's story is not yet finished.[50] I do not believe that every Old Testament pericope is *about* Jesus. But the Old Testament (including Psalms) does *point to* Jesus. Certainly, the unfulfilled hope of the Psalter looks forward to the ideal Davidic king, the Christ we gladly acknowledge as Lord of all. Lord of Israel? Yes. And Lord of the church. Lord over cancer? Yes. And Lord over COVID. Lord over everything we might lament—fire and flood, enemies and liars, persecution and failure, Satan, sin, and death—and injury.

Several years ago, the worship leader in a church I was visiting began the service with announcements, including an update on his personal crisis. A few months earlier his arm had been badly mangled in a piece of machinery on his fishing boat. He'd had several unsuccessful surgeries, and was still in constant pain despite powerful drugs. "The bottom line," he said, "next week they're going to amputate my arm. Now let's stand and sing "All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name." It's not often that this old preacher is at a loss for words, but I could hardly sing. My wife, too was choked up.

If that layman, a commercial fisherman, can preach lament colored by hope, so can we.

"Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I WILL YET PRAISE HIM, my Savior and my God."

NOTES

1. John D. Witvliet speaks of "Psalms and the basic grammar of Christian worship," noting that in Psalms as in life, praise and petition ebb and flow. So praise and lament in the Psalms are "intimate partners." *The Biblical Psalms in Christian Worship* (Eerdmans, 2007), 23-25.
2. Walter Brueggemann, *The Psalms and the Life of Faith*, edited by Patrick D. Miller (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 67.
3. Attempting even a sampling of scholarly bibliography on the original setting of the psalms is beyond the scope of this essay. Tremper Longman in *How to Read the Psalms* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 1988), briefly sketches some of the festival settings proposed by scholars; he is rightfully skeptical (pp.48-49). C. John Collins contends that though psalms were used for private devotions, their primary purpose use was in corporate worship: "Always Alleluia: Reclaiming the True Purpose of the Psalms in the Old Testament Context," chapter 10 in *Forgotten Songs; Reclaiming the Psalms for Christian Worship*, edited by C. Richard Wells and Ray Van Neste (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2012), 18-

24. "The Psalter is obviously and self-consciously a book of corporate worship. Those who penned, edited, and collected the Psalms clearly expected them to be used by God's people gathered in his presence. To preach them is to say, 'Let's take a closer look at these songs we sing and these prayers we pray. What is God saying to us in these words we say to him?'" (Kenneth J. Langley, *How to Preach the Psalms* [Fontes, 2021], 146).
4. William A. Holladay writes about "censored texts" in *The Psalms Through Three Thousand Years* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 304-315. Book-length treatments of imprecatory psalms from an evangelical perspective include James E. Adams, *War Psalms of the Prince of Peace* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1991), and John N. Day, *Crying for Justice* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2005), which includes a discussion of the various "solutions" to the problem of imprecation and a fairly extensive bibliography.
5. "Among the crowded field of interpretive alternatives attempting to explain the transformation of pain into praise in the Lament Psalms, no single option has been able to win the day." (Daniel J. Estes, "The Transformation of Pain into Praise in the Individual Lament Psalms," chapter ten in *The Psalms: Language for All Seasons of the Soul*, edited by Andrew J. Schmutzer and David M. Howard, Jr. [Moody, 2013], 153).
6. David G. Firth, "The Teaching of the Psalms," in *Interpreting the Psalms: Issues and Approaches*, edited by David Firth and Philip S. Johnson (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2005), 160.
7. J. Clinton McCann, Jr. and James C. Howell, *Preaching the Psalms* (Nashville, Abingdon, 2001), 15.
8. Donald Gowan, *Reclaiming the Old Testament for the Christian Pulpit* (John Knox, 1980), 146.
9. Patrick Miller, "The Psalter as a Book of Theology," in *Psalms in Community: Jewish and Christian Textual, Liturgical. And Artistic Traditions,* edited by Harold W. Attridge and Margot E. Fassler (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), 87-98.
10. Gordon Wenham, "The Ethics of the Psalms," in *Interpreting the Psalms: Issues and Approaches*, edited by David Firth and Philip S. Johnson (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2005), 176-177.

11. Mark Futato, *Interpreting the Psalms* (Kregel Academic, 2007), 183: the primary purpose of the Psalter is in one word, instruction. See, too, Gordon J. Wenham, *Psalms as Torah: Reading Biblical Songs Ethically* (Baker Academic, 2012); Gerald Wilson, "The Structure of the Psalter," in *Interpreting the Psalms: Issues and Approaches*, edited by David Firth and Philip S. Johnson (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2005), 96-98; and J. Clinton McCann, *A Theological Introduction to the Book of Psalms: The Psalms as Torah* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1993).
12. John Goldingay asserts that "Theologically, the Psalms are the densest material in the entire OT. There is a greater concentration of statements about God here than anywhere else." *Psalms, Volume 1*, (Baker, 2006), 69.
13. Walter Brueggemann, "Psalms in Narrative Performance," in *Performing the Psalms*, edited by Dave Bland and David Fleer (St. Louis: Chalice, 2005), 9.
14. Gowan, *Reclaiming the Old Testament for the Christian Pulpit*, 146.
15. Jeffrey D. Arthurs, *Preaching With Variety: How to Re-create the Dynamics of Biblical Genres* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2007), 39. Ellen F. Davis says she preaches from Psalms more than any other book of the Bible, but recognizes why many steer clear of the book: preachers don't know what to do with poetry (*Wondrous Depth* [Westminster John Knox, 2005], 17). Thomas G. Long includes a chapter on genre-sensitive preaching of psalms in his groundbreaking *Preaching and the Literary Forms of the Bible* (Fortress, 1989). His chapter on Psalms builds on the first two chapters, which are must reading for preachers who would let the form of the text help shape the form of the sermon.
16. Elizabeth Achtemeier, "Preaching from the Psalms," *Review and Expositor* 81:3 (Summer, 1984), 443.
17. Harry P. Nasuti, "God at Work in the Word: A Theology of Divine-Human Encounter in the Psalms, in Rolf Jacobson, ed., *Soundings in the Theology of the Psalms* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2011), ix. Martin Luther called the Psalter "a little Bible." In the preface to his 1528 translation he wrote, "I have a notion that the Holy Spirit wanted to take the trouble himself to compile a short

Bible . . . so that anyone who could not read the whole Bible would have anyway almost an entire summary of it, comprised in one little book" (*Luther's Works*, volume 35 [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1960], 255-256).
18. Dan B. Allender and Tremper Longman III, *The Cry of the Soul: How Our Emotions Reveal Our Deepest Questions About God* (NavPress, 1994), 25.
19. Someday I'd like to research the history of preaching the Psalms. A starting point would be the brief overview in McCann and Howell, *Preaching the Psalms*, 20-32.
20. Martin Luther, "Preface to the Psalter," in *Luther's Works*, vol. 35 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1960) 255-256.
21. The remark has also been attributed to Augustine and Jaroslav Pelikan.
22. McCann and Howell, *Preaching the Psalms*, 76-77.
23. John Goldingay, *Do We Need the New Testament?* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2015),100. For the record, Goldingay says "Of course we need the New Testament" (page 7).
24. Walter Brueggemann, "The Psalms as Limit Expressions," in *Performing the Psalms*, edited by Dave Bland and David Fleer (St. Louis: Chalice, 2005), 45-47.
25. Walter Brueggemann, *The Psalms and the Life of Faith*, 84.
26. The title of chapter 5 in *The Psalms and the Life of Faith*, 98-111.
27. Nancy J. Duff, "Recovering Lamentation as a Practice in the Church," in *Lament*, edited by Sally A. Brown and Patrick D. Miller (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), 3-14.
28. Calvin Seerveld, "Why We Need to Learn to Cry in Church: Reclaiming the Psalms of Lament," chapter 10 in *Forgotten Songs; Reclaiming the Psalms for Christian Worship*, edited by C. Richard Wells and Ray Van Neste (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2012), 139-157.
29. Sally Brown, "When Lament Shapes the Sermon," in *Lament*, edited by Sally A. Brown and Patrick D. Miller (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), 35.
30. John Mark Hicks, "Preaching Community Laments," in *Performing the Psalms*, edited by Dave Bland and David Fleer (St. Louis: Chalice, 2005), 69.

31. James L. Mays, *Preaching and Teaching the Psalms* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2006), 16.
32. Kenneth J. Langley, *How to Preach the Psalms*, 80.
33. Walter Brueggemann, *The Message of the Psalms* (Fortress, 1984), 52.
34. Claus Westermann, *Praise and Lament in the Psalms*, translated by Keith R. Crim and Richard N. Soulen (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981), 64ff.
35. Kenneth J. Langley, *How to Preach the Psalms*, 39-40.
36. Langley, *How to Preach the Psalms*, 127
37. Mary Catherine Hilkert, *Naming Grace: Preaching and the Sacramental Imagination* (New York: Continuum, 2000), 109, 116-118.
38. Exceptions are Psalms 44, 74, and especially 88, the darkest of them all.
39. Sally Brown, "When Lament Shapes the Sermon," in *Lament*, edited by Sally A. Brown and Patrick D. Miller (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), 31.
40. John Mark Hicks, "Preaching Community Laments," in *Performing the Psalms*, 79.
41. Federico G. Villanueva, *It's OK to be Not OK: Preaching the Lament Psalm*s (Langham Preaching Resources, 2017), 123.
42. Harvey Guthrie, *Israel's Sacred Songs* (New York: Seabury, 1966), 145-147.
43. Walter Brueggemann, *The Psalms and the Life of Faith*, 95.
44. In a couple of cases the doxology follows immediately after a pained petition, presenting a jarring contrast if you read the doxology as part of the poem.
45. David Howard argues that the fifth book of the Psalter actually concludes with Psalm 145:21 as its doxology, and that Psalms 146-150 are to be viewed as a conclusion to the entire collection.
46. As Emily Dickinson put it, "Pain—is missed—in praise." Poem #18, also known as "Unto my books so good to turn," *The Complete Poems of Emily Dickenson* (Little, Brown, and Company, 1924), 74.

47. James Hely Hutchinson, "The Psalms and Praise," in *Interpreting the Psalms: Issues and Approaches*, edited by David Firth and Philip S. Johnson (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2005), 96-98.
48. Brevard Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Fortress, 1979), 517. David Howard, too, thinks that when we pay attention to the shape of the Psalter, we will be encouraged by its eschatological hope. "The Psalms and Current Study," *Interpreting the Psalms: Issues and Approaches*, edited by David Firth and Philip S. Johnson (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2005), 40.
49. Scholars who think efforts to discern a story line or comprehensive unifying structure in the Psalter are unconvincing include John Goldingay (*Psalms, Volume 1*, [Baker, 2006], 36-37), and Tremper Longman ("From Weeping to Rejoicing," chapter 15 in *The Psalms: Language for All Seasons of the Soul*, Andrew Schmutzer and David M. Howard, eds. [Moody Press, 2013]), and Norman Whybray (see note 50 below).
50. Norman Whybray, though unconvinced that there's an intentional editorial over-all arrangement in the Psalter, agrees that the presence of royal psalms shows that the compilers still hoped for a revival of the David dynasty (R. Norman Whybray, *Reading the Psalms as a Book*, JSOTSup 222 [Sheffield Academic Press, 1996], 94-98). In "The Return of the King: Book V as a Witness to Messianic Hope in the Psalter," Michael K. Snearly summarizes his doctoral dissertation in which he argues that Book 5 of the Psalter, in particular, is purposefully arranged to signal a renewed hope in the royal/Davidic promises (chapter 14 in *The Psalms: Language for All Seasons of the Soul*).

THE CULTURE OF NOTE-TAKING AND EFFECTIVE SERMONIC COMMUNICATION

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ABSTRACT

Sermon note-taking has long been practiced in various "church cultures," and some may wonder about the future of the practice. Challenges to note-taking include secondary orality, the emergence of the *digitoral* generation, and the technologization of the world. This paper, engages with homiletics, systematic theology, communication studies, and discipleship studies to demonstrate the relevance of note-taking for enhancing listener engagement during the sermon. First, ,this paper will suggest a biblical and theological premise for note-taking. Second, it will investigate the relationship of note-taking to good listening and journaling. Third, it will describe methods of effective note-taking for both oral and digitoral-sermon hearers. Fourth, it will discuss the criticism that note-taking is a distraction to the listeners. This paper will show that note-taking is still practiced by church-goers, and that while it should be encouraged, it should not be forced on worshippers in any way.

INTRODUCTION

There is a long tradition within Christianity of believers carrying a Bible, a hymn book, and a jotter with them to church. Younger children grew up meeting in this culture. This practice affects children as they engage in it by producing a sense of

responsibility, and a commitment to God and things of the Spirit. Indeed, even when they have yet to experience salvation, they commit to the practice of note-taking at one level or another. Sermon note-taking is a practice that has persisted for many years and does not show signs of fading away anytime soon.

One might think that sermon note-taking would be at risk of fading away as the world becomes more and more paperless and many are going digital. However, this reality has not necessarily led to a reduction in taking notes because that can be done effectively on phones, laptops, and tablets with convenience. Nevertheless, the arrival of a new generation that questions practices like note-taking which have been helpful to previous generations, may challenge the future of such practices. Alongside this is the arrival of the *digitoral* generation. They are digital but oral. Being oral, they prefer to talk and listen rather than to read and write. Being digital, a record of any event—either audio or video suffices for them, and they do not need to carry any notebook to church to jot.[1]

However, these developments do not seem to be on the way to killing note-taking during sermons. Given the perennial significance of note-taking, this paper examines how it can enhance effective sermonic communication. First, it builds a biblical and theological premise for note-taking during sermons; second, it investigates note-taking as a function of a journaling culture and encouraging good listening; third, it proposes processes and methods of effective note-taking and note-keeping for both oral and digital sermon hearers; fourth, it demonstrates that sermon note-taking is very much alive, and suggests that a better–understanding–of the concept and contemporary not-taking methods will strengthen the practice and deepen the spiritual life of its practitioners.

A BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL PREMISE FOR SERMON NOTE-TAKING

Note-taking is an age-old practice. The Bible is replete with commands by God to "write." God told Moses several times to

write or write down (Exodus 17:14, 34:27; Deuteronomy 31:19). Isaiah was told to write (Isaiah 30:8). So was Jeremiah (Jeremiah 36:2, 36:28), Ezekiel, and others throughout the scriptures. While they were not in a formal preaching situation, the concern of God for the preservation of His very word is noteworthy. God is speaking, and He does not want these servants to forget, trivialize, or lose the content without giving it to the end-users or future generations. This principle is foundational to the argument that Christians should engage in note-taking during a sermon.

Mark and Patti Virkler strengthen this foundation by describing the experience of Habakkuk and John. While the Virkler's write about believers hearing God's voice personally and individually, the principle they shared is equally relevant to those listening to sermons. They identify four keys to hearing God's voice in Habakkuk 2:1-3: stillness, vision, spontaneity, and journaling.[2]

First, Habakkuk stands ready. He was still, stationing himself, waiting for God to speak. Secondly, he "watched to see." Keeping watch could also mean looking out, observing, giving attention to, or gazing at. Third, he hears God's voice within, that "still small voice of God that is registered within us as spontaneous thoughts that light upon our mind."[3] Fourth, Habakkuk records the vision. He writes down the thoughts and pictures as they flow to him from God.[4]

John also exhibits this model of hearing God's voice and documenting it. Revelation 1:10-11 states, "On the Lord's Day I was in the Spirit, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet, which said: 'Write on a scroll what you see…'" According to Virkler and Virkler:

> Being "in the Spirit" suggests that John had quieted himself down. He heard a voice—in this case the voice of an angel—and it is not quite so soft as the "still, small voice" of God. "Writing in a book" is journaling, and "what he sees" indicates the use of vision. So once again we see a prophetic writer in Scripture using all four keys

> at one time to receive revelation from God—and, in this case, two visions that last 22 chapters![5]

It follows, therefore, that the value placed on God's written Word is expected to spur those who hear sermons to want to document the message, revise it, personalize it and live it out. Sermons are preached by men and women to whom God has given a particular word from scripture and are saddled with the responsibility of expounding it. They stand as God's oracle or spokesperson at that particular point in time. This is why expository preaching of God's Word remains sacrosanct. Once a preacher is faithful to the text and allows the text to speak, God is speaking, and as such it must carry weight before the hearers. David Allen emphasizes the authority of the biblical text when he submits that:

> In Paul's final charge to Timothy he said: "Preach the Word!" (2 Tim 4:2). Three principles critical for homiletics emerge from this understanding of biblical authority: 1) Scripture is the very Word of God; 2) Scripture is inerrant and thus totally trustworthy; 3) Scripture is sufficient for the faith and the life of the church and for every Christian. The biblical and theological foundation for text-driven preaching is the fact that God has spoken in Christ and in Scripture, and the nature of this revelation itself demands a text-driven approach to preaching. The authority, inerrancy, and sufficiency of Scripture serve as the theological grounds for text-driven preaching.[6]

Albert Mohler draws out the implications of biblical authority for preaching when he states:

> If God has spoken, we too must speak. There is a command here to preach and teach. Again and again, Israel receives this order to speak, and in like manner, the church also is under this standing order. We preach and we teach and we speak, because God has spoken. Because

> God has spoken, we dare not remain silent. There is a task here. There is urgency here. We are to be the speaking people of a speaking God. The people of God are not to be marked by their silence, but by their speech.[7]

This view is shared by Martin Luther and John Calvin. As Mark Jones notes, Calvin celebrated God's gift and consecration of the mouth and tongues of humanity so that they could re-echo his voice.[8] Moreover, Luther held that the preacher's words are not human words, but God's Word.[9]

These convictions undergird the reverence with which Christians listen to God's Word in the form of preaching. This is the reason he or she considers preserving it for a use that transcends the number of minutes the preacher has used in delivering the message.

Note-Taking As A Process Of Journaling

Closely related to the idea of inscripturation is the concept of preserving God's Word or message through the process of journaling itself. Journaling is an age-old spiritual discipline– men and women write about their encounters with God as they walk with him daily. It involves keeping notes and documenting experiences, interactions with scriptures, impressions and visions, prayer and answers.[10] Donald Whitney defines journaling in this way:

> A journal (a word usually synonymous with diary) is a book in which a person writes down various things. As a Christian, your journal is a place to record the works and ways of God in your life. Your journal also can include an account of daily events, a diary of personal relationships, a notebook of insights into Scripture, and a list of prayer requests. It is where spontaneous devotional thoughts or lengthy theological musings can be preserved. A journal is one of the best places for charting your progress in the

> other Spiritual Disciplines and for holding yourself accountable to your goals.[11]

Journaling has great benefits, such as fostering spiritual growth, aiding spiritual self-discipline, maintaining concentration and focus when studying the Bible, meditating or praying, and serving as a permanent reminder of God's activities in one's life.[12] Whitney adds that journaling helps in self-understanding, meditation, expressing one's thoughts and feelings to the Lord, remembering God's work, and creating and preserving a spiritual heritage. It also helps clarify and articulate insights and impressions, monitor goals and priorities, and maintain other spiritual disciplines.[13]

While journaling can be done independent of sermon-note taking, the benefits one may derive from journaling are transferrable to sermon note-taking. Some keep separate notes for sermons, while others include jottings of sermons in their journal. In the words of Whitney:

> Journaling is an effective way of teaching the things of God to our children and transmitting our faith into the future… Never underestimate the power of a written record of faith acting as a spiritual time capsule. The writer of Psalm 102:18 recognized it when he said of his experience with God: "Let this be written for a future generation, that a people not yet created may praise the Lord."[14]

Many of the resources Christians enjoy today are products of documentation, journaling and sermon-note keeping which have lasted for generations and continue to bless the body of Christ. Examples are some of the books authored by Watchman Nee. One likely finds information like this in some of the prefaces or introductions to the books:

> The greater part of this book derives from a series of addresses on the subject of "the word" given by Mr.

> Watchman Nee (Nee To-Sheng) of Foochow to Christian believers in Shanghai city in the early period of the Sino-Japanese War. To them have been added other talks on the same general theme given at various places and times during the period 1938-41. I am indebted to several friends for the notes which have supplied the book's source material.[15]

It is, therefore, evident that certain books are products of note-taking efforts, which has lasted beyond both Nee and his followers.

Note-Taking As A Function Of Good Listening

When preachers preach sermons, they expect that the congregation will listen, so they can hear and act on God's Word. Listening, in this regard, has two dimensions. The first dimension is an agreement that the sermon is the very Word of God to those under it at a particular point in time and that it demands their full attention. As Charles Stanley opines, "God doesn't speak frivolously. He doesn't joke around. God means what He says, and He will do what He says. He doesn't speak to you in idle term. He expects you to respond to His voice, heed His word, and act on it."[16] So, God would never intend to waste His word under any circumstance, and a listening ear will gladden his heart and profit such listeners.

The listener to God's Word understands that God speaks both in general and absolute terms, and he speaks to each person as an individual. There are times to receive the word as a group. However, many times when the Word of God profits a people, it begins with a sense of responsibility on the part of each individual. In the words of Stanley:

> When God speaks, He is speaking to you. Everything in the Bible applies to your life in some way. Every message that is based on the Word of God has truth embedded within it that is for you. There is no such thing as a chapter

> in the Bible, a sermon based on God's Word, or a book that expounds and explains God's Word that is not for you. Each of us must take God's Word personally![17]

An index of good listening is note-taking. Stanley further shares that:

> When I am preaching, I can always look out at the congregation and tell the people who are attentively listening for the Lord to speak to them personally. They often have a notepad open and a pen poised to take notes. They are diligently looking for God's directions. To be attentive means literally to attend, or to pay attention, to each word. This is more than expectancy that God is speaking. It is listening to each word for all nuances of meaning, all aspects of the message that God is giving. When we truly listen attentively, we don't miss a thing![18]

This does not mean that those who do not take notes are not listening, but it establishes that note-taking may indicate good listening.

John Piper warned that inattention is Satan's game. When people come to church, they should be careful about Satan's strategies to distract them from giving "serious attention to God's word."[19] Some of those strategies include making people stay up too late on Saturday night so as to begin to sleep on Sunday while the sermon is on, bringing different distractions during the service so they ~~as~~ cannot ~~to~~ concentrate on the message, and bringing thoughts about things to do in the new week during the sermon.[20] That is why Piper himself encourages note-taking as he preaches.[21]

The second dimension to listening in relation to sermon note-taking is communication. There must be good listening in any good communication where the sender encodes a message to a receiver, and the receiver decodes the message and sends feedback. Yet listening is different from hearing. Stephen E. Lucas distinguishes between hearing and listening. Hearing,

according to him, "is a physiological process, involving the vibration of sound waves on our eardrums and the firing of electrochemical impulses from the inner ear to the central auditory system of the brain."[22] Listening, however, "involves paying close attention to, and making sense of, what we hear."[23] Ronald W. Johnson adds that "listening is a proactive response. You have to get involved with another person to really listen to her."[24] Lucas adds that as much as people would think they are listening, they only grasp about 50 percent of what they hear. They also "remember only 10% of the original message" by the next day.[25] That is why he suggests some steps to becoming a better listener.

The first step Lucas suggests is to take listening seriously. It is to take it as an active process. It is not listening to the radio while studying or listening to the television while searching for something from room to room. The second step Lucas notes is to resist distraction. It is impossible to remove distractions in a real world, but it is possible to discipline oneself to concentrate. It involves a conscious effort to pull the mind back to hear the speaker and compel it to stay there. It may involve attempting a mental review of what the speaker had said to assure that it is well understood. One other way to do it is to listen between the lines. Listening between the lines could help assess the speaker's verbal and non-verbal language.[26]

The third suggestion Lucas offers is to avoid being "diverted by appearance or delivery."[27] Some are not impressive in their personal presentation or looks but are good speakers. Some are "unusually attractive" while others are not. A "polished delivery" or "speaking eloquently" does not guarantee they are good speakers.[28] So, it is often safer to respond to "the message" rather than "the package" it comes in.[29] The fourth suggested by Lucas is to suspend judgement.[30] While one may not agree with everything a speaker says, good listening involves "hear[ing] people out *before* reaching a final judgement."[31] It is not good to block people out before their point of view, that is, "their ideas…evidence....[and]…reasoning have been heard and processed.'[32] The fifth suggestion by Lucas is to focus one's

listening.[33] A listener does not need to absorb every word of the speaker. A good listener focuses on the speaker's specific points, and on the "accuracy, objectivity, relevance, and sufficiency" of that evidence.[34]

The last step Lucas recommends to become a better listener, which is most crucial to this discussion, is to develop note-taking skills. According to Lucas, "when note taking is done properly, it is a surefire way to improve your concentration and keep track of a speaker's ideas."[35] Good note-taking is neither writing down everything the speaker says, nor picking on one fascinating fact or the other to jot down intermittently. There are several ways to take notes, but according to Lucas "the keyword outline" is the "best for listening to…formal speeches."[36] This involves jotting down the "speaker's main points and supporting evidence in rough outline form."[37]

Ellen Range discussed that visual listeners might want to put down his or her impression of a message. They may make sketches or drawings on paper. He or she may draw pictures, make a map or create a flowchart. They may want to compare two or more things by drawing overlapping circles (also called Venn diagram). They may use web-shaped drawings called mind maps, word webs or graphic organizers.[38] So, it is not all about writing; each listener can decide the best and most convenient way to keep a record of the sermons they had and place it in their memory for as long as they can.

It follows, therefore, that note-taking is one function of good listening. If someone expects that a sermon would benefit him or her, that person is likely to develop listening skills that will help one grasp God's Word as it proceeds from the preacher's mouth. Applying the art of listening to sermons, Nicholas Davis Friday suggests the need for hearers to prepare for a sermon by listening ahead of time. It is helpful to prepare the heart and mind one day or several days before Sunday worship, and to get enough sleep on Saturday night to avoid exhaustion on Sunday morning. It is also good to read the preaching passage ahead of time if that information is available.

He adds that jotting down the sermon outline and related biblical text is critical for later reflection. It affords the opportunity of getting back home to study more, meditate and ask such questions as, "Did the preacher stick faithfully to the text?" "What insights did he have to leave out for the sake of time that might illumine the text and deepen your understanding of God's word?"[39] It is difficult to discuss good listening without asserting the importance of note-taking or jotting.

PROCESSES OF EFFECTIVE NOTE-TAKING

There are several tips can help in effective sermon note-taking. First, listen to sermons with the proper writing tools—pen or pencil and jotter. Some churches provide these tools, and some leave spaces in their weekly church bulletin for jotting. Some jot right in their Bible. Each of these methods has its advantages and disadvantages.

Second, avoid transcribing everything the preacher says. The danger is to miss out on some of the things the preacher is saying or get distracted from thinking about what the preacher is saying. It is better to summarize the key points and grasp the structure of the entire message. Third, write down related passages. Even if the preacher uses a single passage, he or she will likely refer to a few other passages along the line. It is good to note them for further study as they might help illumine the sermon better.[40] Fourth, look up from time to time. This allows one to pause, take a step back, "make new connections, glean new insights, and ponder new applications related to the biblical text," as the focus remains on listening to the message.[41] It also encourages the preacher. Good communication requires eye contact, and the preacher may think everyone is bored or distracted when their eyes are away from him or her.

Fifth, note the date and speaker. Connecting a sermon with a date and speaker is an excellent reminder of when the sermon was given and who delivered it. This practice, like journaling or as a part of journaling, helps people record what they learn in the various seasons of life. Sixth, write down a one-

sentence summary of the entire sermon before it ends. That is a way of solidifying one's understanding of the message and relating it briefly to anyone who asks about the sermon.[42]

Seventh, avoid the distraction that comes from wanting the best-taken notes. The goal should be communion with God, not achieving "perfect accuracy, comprehensive details, [and] beautiful penmanship" in one's notes.[43] Eighth, revisit the sermon throughout the week. There is no point taking sermon notes only to shelve it somewhere and one day discard it. It may not be convenient for some to review it every day, but it should be done at least once before the next sermon.

Subsequently, sermon note-taking has many advantages. It helps to put a message in one's own words for better understanding. It can be re-read in the following days and meditated upon. Furthermore, it keeps the message in one's memory, helps the person jotting to pay full attention during the sermon, and enables one to resist the temptation to sleep. Likewise, it is also easy to share sermon notes with others – either for further clarification or during such a person's time of need.

HELPING ORAL LISTENERS RETAIN SERMONS

As a writer observed, "taking sermon notes may not work for everyone. Some people get more out of sermon if they are just listening, or if they doodle or something. What's important is being open to try different things and find what help you benefit the most from your sermons."[44] This observation is apt when one considers the influence of secondary orality and contemporary listeners. Orality is simply the preference and reliance on oral rather than written communication.[45] While scholars classify orality into primary, residual and secondary, the common denominator is that oral listeners and learners do not enjoy writing. They prefer to communicate or receive communication through songs, stories, proverbs, folklore, dance, drama, poetry and related forms. Interestingly, several African communities, depending on their level of education, are characterized by their preferences for these forms of communication.[46] It is doubtful

that all preachers would include these forms of communication in their sermons. Unfortunately, it is likely that not very many preachers recognize the need to engage aural listeners. This raises the question of which form of communication is best for reaching aural listeners.

The best form of preaching for aural listeners is narrative, where a sermon is packaged as a story and delivered inductively.[47] Preachers need to engage the communication strategy of aural listeners in this case. Aural listeners benefit from the use of mnemonic devices and formulas, repetition and redundancy, personal relationship, and the active use of memory and memorization.[48] Jared S. Runck summarizes the features of oral communication:

> The first key feature of oral expression is the use of repetition. Of course, this makes total sense. In an oral culture, "there is nothing to backloop into outside the mind, for the oral utterance has vanished as soon as it is uttered." Redundancy "keeps both speaker and hearer surely on track." Secondly, oral expressions are characterized by "larger-than-life" characters. The key figures of the ancient tales were heroes, "persons whose deeds are monumental memorable and commonly public." Finally, oral expression is typically empathetic and participatory. The point of the story was "to sweep the audience up into the rhythm of the song." Thus mesmerized, the audience members "identified uncritically with the action in scene after scene." They literally *became* the characters in the story.[49]

He adds that "memory is basic to oral cultures; language is mythic and narrativized precisely to increase its mnemonic capacity."[50] Yet, it is one thing for listeners influenced by secondary orality to learn this way from a sermon; it is another for the preacher to provide a sermonic experience that the aural listener may benefit from. When an aural listener comes to the

church without a notebook, it does not mean he or she did not listen to the sermon.[51]

As a result of cultural processes (including technologization), digitoral listeners have emerged from the soil of secondary orality. Samuel Chiang observes:

> In the twenty-first century, with social octane through networks and fueling through 24/7 technologies, each powerful story may go viral with digital platforms sustaining and immortalizing the story. From an idea-transmission perspective, and how a story gets moved along, a powerful combination of the spoken and hearing (oral) catalyzed with the technology that tethers social networks together, and 'digitoral' was birthed.[52]

W. J. Moon describes digitoral listeners as "those who have the ability to read and write, but they prefer to learn or process information by oral, rather than written, means, aided by electronic audio and visual communications."[53] Preserving a sermon for this set of people may mean recording the sermon on phones, tablets or iPads, or requesting the CD of a sermon after the church service is over. They love to play messages over and over again on their phone or use their car tapes instead of writing and reading it over and over again.

NOTE-TAKING AND THE DIGITAL GENERATION

Digital technology has produced various alternatives to writing on paper. Today, there are note-taking apps such as Evernote, Microsoft OneNote, Milanote, Simplenote, Zoho Notebook, and Joplin.[54] With an android or Apple phone, a tablet, an iPad, or other devices in their hands, some listeners are ready to take notes during sermons in ways that are more comfortable for them than writing on paper. Those who use these methods are different from the *digitoral* listeners discussed earlier. These are still interested in writing, but they type-write rather than hand-write.

Rachel Macdonald, however, opines that it is still better to write on paper or use handwriting than typing. She gives two reasons for this. First, it takes longer to write than type, especially for those proficient with a keyboard . The listener who is writing is, therefore, compelled to paraphrase what they hear, putting it down in short clauses and as quickly as possible. In this process they use their own words, and summarize their discoveries instead of copying word for word, which enables them to retain the message in their memory much longer.[55]

Second, electronic devices are distracting. Apps are developed to make money, and it is common for adverts pop up when they are in use. This may cause users stop their sermon note-taking intermittently to attend to the advertisements, thereby distracting them. It becomes a real battle to focus on the sermon, and the listener ends up multitasking, ultimately missing out on some of the things the preacher had said. Even where there is no internet connection, there is still a lot to distract listeners who take notes digitally.[56] However, Macdonald concludes that "at the end of the day, any notes—paper or electronic, summarized or verbatim—are superior to no notes. They can be revised and referred to, and help stop the brain from wandering away from the task of delving into God's word. But it turns out that the person who first suggested that their church provide a pencil to everyone present was really on to something."[57]

A CASE AGAINST SERMON NOTE-TAKING

Some have built out-right cases against note-taking during the sermon. It is not uncommon for those who oppose sermon note-taking to begin their argument by quoting Martyn Loyd-Jones. Jared C. Wilson, for instance, begins his argument against note-taking in this way when he quotes Lloyd-Jones' work *The Puritans: Their Origins and Successors*. Loyd-Jones states:

> I have often discouraged the taking of notes while I am preaching… The first and primary object of preaching is

> not only to give information. It is, as Edwards says, to produce an impression. It is the impression at the time that matters, even more than what you can remember subsequently… While you are writing your notes, you may be missing something of the impact of the Spirit.[58]

Wilson also quotes Timothy Keller, who says in one sermon "I don't mind if you take notes at the beginning of a message, but if you're still taking notes at the end, I feel like I haven't brought it home."[59] Wilson discourages sermon note-taking, because he wants people to "see preaching in the worship service, not…primarily [as] an educational transmission to their minds, but as [a] prophetic proclamation aimed at their hearts."[60]

Mark Jones is concerned that note-taking could discourage a preacher who has done so much work in preparing his or her sermon, but is unable to look listeners in the eyeball during delivery. He states:

> I want to make eye contact with my people. Very often their faces tell me a lot, even when I need to re-explain something or when I need to slow the pace down. But it can be off-putting when those you are looking at are never looking at you. Plus, there is something about looking into the eyes of others when you are preaching that can be deeply moving for them, whether a point of conviction or a point of assurance from the word preached.[61]

Jones fears that God's sanctuary may begin to feel more like a lecture hall than a place of worship, and that people can become guilty of a more intellectual approach to the Word of God instead of letting Him touch their hearts.

But that is why each listener who takes sermon notes must perfect the skill and not divorce heart from head. Moreover, preachers must be conscious that someone who desires to preserve this precious Word of God coming from their mouth is following their sermons by jotting for future reference and action. Sermon note-taking may be encouraged, and advice

offered so that individuals may decide what they want to do and how best to do it within their capacities.

CONCLUSION

This paper examined the practice of sermon note-taking in the church. Note-taking was found to have its roots in the value attached to the Word of God as delivered during the preaching of Scripture. This value inspires its hearers to preserve the message of the sermon for reference, review, and communication to others who need to hear it. Sermon note-taking is also a process of journaling and a function of good listening. Like every other profitable practice, sermon note-taking has specific processes and methods. Note-taking is not a verbatim transcription of the preacher's words. Instead, there are gems that the note-takers must record so they will not be bored or miss out on essential aspects of the sermon, while keeping eye contact with the preacher. In anticipation of Sunday, listeners may pray for the pastor's preaching by asking God to bless his sermon preparation and delivery. Preachers, for their part, must be conscious that many listeners are trying to take notes about the gems in their sermons.

Yet not all listeners love to write. Some are aural listeners, and some are *digitoral*. They have distinct ways they listen to and record what they hear. So, there is no one-size-fits-all for note-taking. Each individual must find the best way to preserve the precious word of God for their future use. In an increasingly digital, paperless society, some listeners prefer taking notes with different apps on their phones and tablets. However, some discourage note-taking, because they consider it distracting, and charge that it turns the worship process into an academic exercise. Furthermore, they assert that it prevents people from maintaining eye contact with the preacher. Nevertheless, these reasons are insufficient to discourage sermon note-taking. The advantages far outweigh the disadvantages, and some of the challenges note-taking creates can be addressed with the right skills and a proper attitude towards note-taking.

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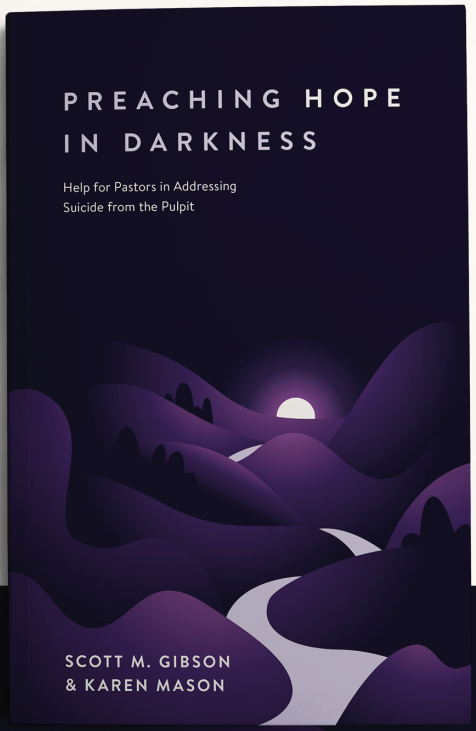

How can a preacher best address suicide from the pulpit?

In *Preaching Hope in Darkness*, two practitioners in fields that do not typically interact—homiletics (Scott M. Gibson) and psychology (Karen Mason)—work together to support the preacher in this difficult task. The authors offer wise advice on a range of topics such as suicide prevention, post-crisis care, and funeral sermon preparation.

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THE CHRISTIAN'S HOPE

JESSE L. NELSON
Immediate Past-President of the Evangelical Homiletics Society
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1 Timothy 1:1

"Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus according to the commandment of God our Savior, and of Christ Jesus, *who is* our hope…"

SERMONIC PRAYER

Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope. This is my comfort in my affliction: for thy word hath quickened me. The proud have had me greatly in derision: yet have I not declined from thy law. I remembered thy judgments of old, O LORD; and have comforted myself.
Psalm 119:49-52

INTRODUCTION

Today is not the first time I have preached this text. In 2016, I preached this text in an attempt to give hope to a hurting mother during the funeral service for her son. The young man was murdered during a drug deal that turned into a robbery. He was killed for eighty dollars of marijuana. As a new pastor at the church, I lamented this death because this nineteen-year-old young man grew up in our church. I also lamented over the ones who murdered him because their grandparents were members of our church too. So many people needed hope, and I believe the words of Paul were the words God wanted me to share with them.

The second time I preached this text was in October 2017, a couple of weeks after our Evangelical Homiletics Society Annual Conference was held at Gordon-Conwell. I preached the funeral of another young man that was murdered at a gas station. He was leaving the store and was ambushed gunfire. His mother called me and asked "why did God let this happen?" I did not have answer for her, but I tried to give her hope from God's word. So, what is hope?

WHAT IS HOPE?

In 1965 Paul Tillich preached at Harvard's Memorial Church. The message was entitled *The Right to Hope*. Tillich opened with these words:

> A few years ago the humanist and Marxist philosopher Ernst Bloch became famous through a two-volume work about hope, the hopes of men in their, personal lives and as members of social groups and movements. He recognized to what degree hope is a permanent force in every man, a driving power as long as he lives. We must agree when we look both into ourselves and at human history, and we may wonder why it is so seldom that philosophers and theologians speak about it, its root, and its justification. They don't ask what kind of force it is that creates and maintains hope, even if everything seems to contradict it. Instead, they devaluate hope by calling it wishful thinking or utopian fantasy. But nobody can live without hope, even if it were only for the smallest things which give some satisfaction even under the worst of conditions, even in poverty, sickness, and social failure. Without hope, the tension of our life toward the future would vanish, and with it, life itself. We would end in despair, a word that originally meant "without hope," or in deadly indifference.

What is hope? Hope is a unique word. It is a noun and a verb. As

a verb, hope means "to cherish with anticipation." As a noun, hope means "someone or something on which hopes are centered our only hope for victory." So, what is hope? For me hope is putting your trust or confidence in someone or something with the expectation they or it will fulfill your desires.

Hope is the foundation and inspiration of our dreams, goals, and future. Without hope-Dreams die! Without hope-Future fades! Without hope-Spirits shrivel! Without hope-Visions vanish!

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said, "We must accept finite disappointment, but never lose infinite hope" and "Everything done in the world is done by hope."

President Barack Obama made the following statement during his first presidential campaign:

> Hope is not blind optimism. It's not ignoring the enormity of the task ahead or the roadblocks that stand in our path. It's not sitting on the sidelines or shirking from a fight. Hope is that thing inside us that insists, despite all evidence to the contrary, that something better awaits us if we have the courage to reach for it, and to work for it, and to fight for it. Hope is the belief that destiny will not be written for us, but by us, by the men and women who are not content to settle for the world as it is, who have the courage to remake the world as it should be.

The Apostle Paul said: Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit (Romans 15:13).

With all of this hope, why do we experience lament? We are disappointed in life because we put our hope in the wrong places. We put our hope in people that are imperfect, places that are organized by people, churches that are led by people, conventions that are directed by people, a country founded by people and a constitution written by people. All of these are the wrong places to place our hope for lament. So, where should we find hope?

FINDING HOPE

That leads us to our Scripture. Paul is writing to his son in the faith, Timothy. Paul was Timothy's mentor for ministry. Paul had left Timothy with the responsibility of leading the churches in Ephesus while Paul continued his missionary work to the other churches surrounding the Mediterranean Sea. Paul was in Macedonia when he wrote this letter to Timothy. As a young man, Timothy was experiencing conflict as he led the church. Paul wrote this letter to give Timothy encouragement and instructions for leading the church.

Oftentimes when we study the letter of 1 Timothy, we relegate the book as a resource for ministerial ceremonies, like licensing, ordination, pastor's anniversaries, and thus limit our reading to the third chapter of this letter, which is a source of exegetical and ecclesiastical debate. I think we should read chapter one before we jump to chapter three. The first words Paul tells Timothy are so important…Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus according to the commandment of God our Savior, and of Christ Jesus, *who is* our hope…

Paul told Timothy Jesus is our hope. This simple statement was packed with power. This simple four word phrase revealed Paul's trust and confidence. Timothy knew Paul's hardships in life. And based on Paul's experiences, he should have been hopeless. Listen to what Paul endured.

> But in whatever respect anyone *else* is bold—I speak in foolishness—I am just as bold myself. Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they descendants of Abraham? So am I. Are they servants of Christ?—I speak as if insane—I more so; in far more labors, in far more imprisonments, beaten times without number, often in danger of death. Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine *lashes*. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep. *I have been* on frequent

> journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from *my* countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren; *I have been* in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure. Apart from *such* external things, there is the daily pressure on me *of* concern for all the churches (2 Corinthians 11:22-28).

And after all of that Paul was able to tell Timothy Jesus Christ was his hope. Christ is our hope. Jesus Christ is the Christian's hope. So why should we place our hope in Christ?

At this point, I am supposed to explain what Paul meant in this text? However, instead of looking at this text from an exegetical perspective, I want to layout this Scripture theologically. So why should we put our hope in Christ? We should put our hope in Christ because of who he is…the person of Christ, what he has done…the power of Christ, and what he will do…the promises of Christ.

Who is Jesus Christ? Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Mark 1:1 reads, The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. What does "Son of God" mean? First, "Son of God" means that there is a unique relationship between Jesus and God.

All Christians have a relationship with God. He is our Father and we are His children. However, we don't have the same unique relationship with God that Jesus has with God. The phrase "Son of God" refers to the unique relationship with God and Jesus.

The phrase "Son of God" also means that Jesus IS God. Jesus is more than an angel. He is more than a man. Jesus is fully God and fully man. The Bible affirms this several times. John 1:1 says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." John 10:30 reads, "I and the Father are one." And Colossians 2:9 says, "For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form." Jesus is God; therefore, He has the same attributes as God. This means that Jesus can do what God do because he is God. So put your hope in Jesus Christ because

he is God.

We should also put our hope in Christ because of what he has done and can do. I am referring to the power of Jesus. The power of Jesus is demonstrated in the Gospel. The following texts underscore Jesus' power:

Philippians 3:10—that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death;

Romans 1:16—For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

1 Corinthians 1:18—For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

We see his power in the gospels. Jesus turned water into wine. This miracle defied science and nature. He fed 5000 men with two fish and five loaves of bread. He had power in the strings of his clothing to heal a woman with a long-term blood disease. He gave sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, speech to the mute, and strength to the weak and paralyzed. He raised Lazarus from the dead. What has Jesus done and continues to do? He gives people hope!

We should also put our hope in Christ because of what he promised to do. He promised to make us fishers of men if we follow him. He promised to take care of us if we put his Kingdom first. He promised to give us rest if we come to him. He promised to build his church if we allow him. He promised to take us with him if we come after him. He promised to send help if we trust him. Jesus gives us promises.

I believe we should put our hope in Jesus because of the person of Christ, the power of Christ, and the promises of Christ. So where is your hope?

I put my hope in Jesus because of the person he is. I put

my hope in Christ because he is human and divine. According to John 1:1, he is the embodiment of God. He is the physical manifestation of our Eternal Heavenly Father.

I put my hope in Christ because of what he can do.

Jesus has the power to turn our affliction into affirmation.
Jesus has the power to turn our bitterness to blessings.
He has the power to make our confusion our comfort.
He can turn our defeat into dominance.
Jesus has the power to turn our exhaustion into exaltation.
He can turn our failure into faith.
He has the power to transform my guilt into glory.
He has the power to take my hurt and heal it.
He can take the insecurities about myself and make it into ideas for his glory.
He can turn my joyless spirit into jubilant praise.
He has the power to take those who try to kill me and make them kind.
Jesus turns my lament to laughter.
My misery into majesty.
And my naysayers become my nominators.
Jesus can make my oppression and opportunity.
He can turn my pain into praise.
My quitting can become quintessential.
He can make my rejection my redemption.
I was a sinner but now I am a saint.
My trials become my triumph.
People's undermining becomes my uplift.
I was a victim but now I am victorious. Victim to victor
He has the power to turn my worry to worship.
My anxieties become my axioms.
My yearnings turn into my yields.
My zilch becomes zeal because of the power of Jesus Christ!!

I put my hope in Jesus Christ because of his person, his power, and promise.

My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus Christ, my
righteousness;
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
But wholly lean on Jesus' name.

On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand,
All other ground is sinking sand.

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BOOK REVIEWS

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Book Review Editor
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Simplify the Message: Multiply the Impact. By Talbot Davis. Nashville: Abingdon, 2020. 978-1-5018-8460-3, 116 pp., $17.99.

Reviewer: *Christopher Priestaf, Mt. Bethel Lutheran Brethren Church, Mt. Bethel, PA.*

One of the most immediately noticeable elements of Talbot Davis' *Simplify* is that it is written by a preacher who loves to preach. Davis' love of preaching was fostered by listening to and emulating the likes of Chuck Swindoll and Rick Warren, but then was radically transformed by an auditory introduction to Andy Stanley and his powerfully moving one-point sermons. Davis' preaching would never be the same. *Simplify* succinctly walks the preacher-reader through the benefits and process of developing and delivering one-point sermons, considering topics ranging from the exegesis of both text and audience, to the preparation of a manuscript, to preaching without notes. There is also the unique inclusion of a section devoted to preaching at funerals.

One of the benefits of *Simplify* is its brevity. The busy pastor can easily read this book in a day or two, although the implementation of its lessons will take much longer. Davis does not dwell on any aspect of persuasion or instruction long, content to say what he needs to say and then support it with ample illustrations from past sermons. While the sheer quantity of illustrations seems at times excessive, they ultimately serve as a powerful reminder of that which is possible when sufficient time and energy are devoted to the task of sermon development.

As can sometimes be the case in a book's creation, a clear strength can simultaneously be a challenging weakness. Such is true of *Simplify*'s brevity. Unlike seminal textbooks such as Haddon Robinson's *Biblical Preaching* or other more thorough textbooks written in a similar vein, the preacher looking to transition to the creation of one-point sermons may need more help in navigating the process than *Simplify* provides. To be fair, the same could be said of Stanley's *Communicating for a Change* or Keller's *Preaching*. In the end, these works whet the appetite more than serve as a complete meal, but they do so incredibly effectively and in so doing, achieve their intended purposes.

Ultimately, that which Davis proports is not new. It comes in a long line of preaching texts advocating the power, process, and benefits of preaching one-point sermons. For the preacher trained in such a philosophy, *Simplify* is a good library addition that will stir up by way of reminder the benefits and beauty of such an approach. For the preacher trained in a different philosophy and perhaps looking for an alternative, *Simplify* will provide a persuasive option that could radically change how sermons are prepared and more importantly, received.

Preaching for a Verdict: Recovering the Role of Exhortation. By J. Josh Smith. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2019. 978-1-4627-8123-2, 180 pp., $29.99.

Reviewer: *Jody Alan Wolf, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, New Orleans, LA.*

J. Josh Smith clearly states his desire that *Preaching for a Verdict* "might be the beginning of a conversation about the distinct role of exhortation in preaching" (2). He references foundational and influential written works which, with minimal deviation, describe the standard three-fold components of a biblically exposited sermon: explaining the text, illustrating the text, and applying the text. Smith's desire to establish a conversation that

would reinstate the element of exhortation in biblical exposition to those three areas stems from his concern that many preachers and writers have allowed the structure and function of the application in a message to supplant the necessary element of exhortation. Smith contends that there should be a clear demarcation between application and exhortation when he states that "exhortation must stand alone as a distinct and necessary practice in preaching" (9). This clarity is illustrated in Smith's definition of exhortation: "persuading the listener to respond to the call of the text through proclaiming the point of the text in the voice of the text" (93). He concludes that the necessity of exhortation is of such importance that "no faithful text-driven preaching exists without text-driven exhortation" (19).

In his first chapter, Smith provides a brief history of preaching that culminates in what he describes as a twenty-five-year absence of homiletical writings on exhortation (10). He views this current void in light of the history of preaching. Preachers such as Augustine, Luther, Fenelon, Edwards, and Spurgeon, emphasized the appeal to the hearer in their writings. Smith contends that "exhortation is a necessary element of preaching and needs to be restored to its rightful place" (18).

Upon showing the emphasis of exhortation throughout preaching history and the lack of its prominence in current discussions, Smith builds both a theological basis and a biblical basis for the necessity of exhortation. His theological basis is that God's word is inspired, authoritative, sufficient, and powerful. As such, the exhortation is not only necessary but essential to reflect the purpose of Scripture (34). To provide the direct support of a biblical basis for exhortation, Smith provides a summary word study of *parakaleo* in the pastoral epistles.

To elucidate further the place of exhortation in sermons, Smith briefly examines the characteristics of preaching events in Scripture. He engages in a brief sermonic analysis which includes three of Moses' messages in Deuteronomy, the Sermon on the Mount, and the structure of the Epistle to the Hebrews. Smith concludes that both Old and New Testament preaching

demonstrate that "exhortation is not seen as an option, but as a necessary element to preaching" (92).

Smith's methodology of putting exhortation into practice is derived from four convictions: 1) the text drives everything in the sermon; 2) the appeal is found within the text; 3) the exhortation is driven by the text; 4) the exhortation is related to, but distinct from the application (93-95). Those four convictions produce four steps to discovering the exhortation in any given passage: 1) find the point of the text; 2) find the voice of the text; 3) find the call of the text; 4) clarify the exhortation of the text (97-106).

To display the practicality and consistency of finding exhortation in every passage, Smith models his vision by choosing passages from the seven genres in Scripture (109). For each passage, Smith lists the point of the text, the voice of the text, and the call of the text, followed by word-for-word exhortations of each passage. He concludes his book by noting that regardless of the passage of Scripture preached, the objective of every preacher should be that the hearer leaves the sermon knowing what the text says *and* knowing the response required by that text (153).

Smith rightly identifies the connection between exhortation driven by the text and the authority of Scripture. He states that "application without exhortation makes proclamation more like a suggestion" (6). Smith's high view of Scripture necessitates a clear exhortation "for a response that the text itself demands" (34). For preachers or teachers of preaching, this book is a pertinent reminder to convey the intrinsic authority of God's word to the hearers.

Smith's work is equally valuable to those beginning a preaching ministry and those desiring to hone a seasoned preaching ministry. Even though he does not address the catalyst for the twenty-five-year neglect of exhortation, Smith tasks text-driven preachers with separating the role of application and exhortation as necessary distinctives of faithful text-driven preaching. Smith's work is a positive contribution to the field of

homiletics, and this ongoing conversation will significantly profit expository preaching.

Preaching to People in Pain: How Suffering Can Shape Your Sermons and Connect with Your Congregation. By Matthew D. Kim. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2021. 978-1-5409-6129-7, 223 pp., $24.99.

Reviewer: *Jeffrey Arthurs, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, South Hamilton, MA.*

Preaching to People in Pain is a fine example of practical theology. Matthew Kim thoroughly covers the Bible's teaching on suffering and shows how to convey those texts and theology to the people in the pews, especially the people who are hurting. Kim does not soft-sell or dumb-down the Bible's teaching, acknowledging that followers of Christ *do* suffer and *will* suffer. Kim does not promise more than God promises (such as a health and wealth preacher might), but neither does he promise less. To help us in our suffering, God offers things like the example and sympathy of Christ; the presence of the Holy Spirit; the promise of eternal life and reward; the reminder that suffering can sanctify us; and the strength of the body to weep with us as we weep. God does not offer a pain free existence, and I appreciate how Kim stays true to the Word.

This is a medium-length book (223 pages), but it covers a lot of ground. In addition to topics you would expect such as "Painful Health Issues" (Chapter 6) and "Painful Relationships" (Chapter 8), we also read about things I had not considered before such as "Painful Finances" (Chapter 5) and "Painful Decisions" (Chapter 4). Kim is not afraid to name the elephant in the room—that much of our pain comes from our own sin and foolishness.

Four worksheets in the Appendix take the theology and make it practical. The worksheets help the preacher name his or her own pain and the congregation's pain. Particularly helpful is

the worksheet that offers nine analytical questions to help the pastor teach and preach about painful finances, painful decisions, and so forth. Kim uses those questions in each chapter and then presents sample sermons on each topic to provide models for preaching with high pastoral relevance. In passing, I should note that I have a small bone to pick with the sermons. I feel that a few of them stretch the biblical text to fit the topic. Those sermons could be classified as "principle-driven" (not a term that Kim uses) rather than strictly "expository." Christ-centered expositors will probably pick the bone even cleaner because those sermons have little Christology or historical-redemptive grounding.

I will conclude by mentioning two more strengths of the book. The first is cultural awareness. Matthew Kim is an expert in homiletics and culture, and that comes through in consistent but subtle ways. For example, those of us from a majority culture (racial, socio-economic, and so forth) might not think of how suffering is often experienced by minorities *because* they are minorities; but Kim does not miss this. Along with examples of suffering such as dementia, cancer, and betrayal, he mentions prejudice and discrimination. However, one cause of suffering, quite prevalent in the Bible, receives just a passing reference in the book (p. 15): persecution.

The other strength is the author's personal transparency. This may be the most outstanding feature of a book filled with good features. Matthew shares his own pain, and it is moving. Somehow, he is able to walk a tightrope of honest lament without being maudlin, and candid revelation of health and family tragedies while still expressing trust in God and the hope of eternal life. Highly recommended.

Apostle of Persuasion: Theology and Rhetoric in the Pauline Letters. By James W. Thompson. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2020. 978-0-8010-9972-4, 320 pp., $36.99 (hardback).

Reviewer: *Timothy S. Warren, Dallas Theological Seminary, Dallas, TX.*

Paul, the apostle of persuasion, was at the same time both theologian and rhetorician. His letters addressed specific yet different situations demanding rhetoric that strategically summoned his various readers to enter his rhetorical-theological vision of Christlike maturity. "Starting with his basic convictions, he both makes theological arguments and speaks for rhetorical effect with the larger aim of ensuring the transformation of his churches into the image of Christ" (271).

Those who read Paul to discover a systematic theology and those who seek to trace apparent inconsistencies in or a development of his theology by tracing theological themes through a chronological reading of his letters will be disappointed. Thompson argues, correctly, that the apostle's theological themes were expressed only in light of the rhetorical situation of the churches and individuals he was seeking to persuade. "His treatment of these [theological] topics corresponds to his rhetorical aims in each letter" (124). "Paul demonstrates rhetorical competence in his invention and arrangement. The argument employs numerous features that were commended in the rhetorical handbooks . . . and the arrangement corresponds in some ways to ancient ideals for speech. . . . He employs premises based on the witness of Scripture and on the traditions that he received from earlier believers. He not only articulates theological ideas but also crafts them to fit his rhetorical and pastoral needs" (218).

Thompson labors, not without result, to validate his claim. His arguments are both extensive and effective, providing hundreds of insights into Paul's pastoral aims, rhetorical strategies and vision, and theological themes evoked by his readers' situational challenges. His text overflows with intellectual and spiritual stimulation. Readers would not be disappointed reading chapters devotionally. An extensive Bibliography, helpful Name Index, exhaustive Scripture and

Ancient Sources Index, and slight Subject Index add value for the scholar.

The preacher's intention today replicates Paul's first century intention: "the moral formation of the community" (104), moving believers toward maturity in Christ. We would do well to consider how the apostle employed the tools of rhetoric (specifically invention and arrangement) to persuade his readers of this theological vision. As rhetoricians we must grasp the current theological "situation" of our hearers. Only then will we understand what theological themes must be envisioned and how to persuade our hearers to enter that ideal world. If nothing less, this volume should encourage us to choose strategically the pericopes we preach.

To sum up: James W. Thompson, distinguished senior scholar of New Testament studies, has gifted the church with what should prove a seminal work expounding Paul's interweaving of theology and rhetoric.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the Theology of a Preaching Life. By Michael Pasquarello III. Waco: Baylor University Press, 2017. 978-1-4813-0751-2, 296 pp., $39.99 (hardback).

Reviewer: *Alex Kato, Trinity Baptist Church, Renton, WA.*

When my heart to preach faltered this year, *Dietrich* revived me. Through Pasquarello's survey of his homiletical theology, Bonhoeffer reminds the church that preaching has a power beyond success: the power of fidelity to Christ.

Though both the right and the left in America often claim this Confessing Church leader, readers across the theological spectrum likely will find in Pasquarello's *Bonhoeffer* both encouragement and critique. Many EHS readers will appreciate his focus on Christ before culture, Scripture over human musings, and the urgency of preaching. That said, these emphases grow from a less familiar—though perhaps timely—

Barthian and sacramental homiletic. He recognizes the church as really Christ's body and preaching as really Christ's word. Because Bonhoeffer treasures preaching, he challenges it, especially when it resembles political trends or religious proclivities more than Christ's call.

Bonhoeffer's broad theological relevance is rooted in Pasquarello's adherence to primary sources, leaving some sections comprised almost entirely of quotes and paraphrases. This maintains a certain rigor, making the book useful for historians and theologians, but also separates it from squarely homiletical or pastoral literature. The dense prose will tax the theological literacy of many seminarians, pastors, and even homileticians. Many will wish Pasquarello had added more biographical context and commentary on the contemporary relevance of Bonhoeffer's homiletic.

For all that, the weight, creativity, and courage of Bonhoeffer's thought charge the book such that homiletical sparks can fly from any page. Throughout, with wisdom and tenacity, he critiques not only the culture but also the body of Christ, for the sake of the body of Christ and for Christ himself. As Pasquarello writes, "This meant showing the church how to read Scripture against itself rather than in support of its own desires—as an external word" (104). In America today, most Nazi comparisons are hasty and inflammatory. Nonetheless, attending to Bonhoeffer for courage and clarity is always worthwhile. Preachers and homileticians willing to engage this serious text will find both insight and inspiration to persist in preaching, especially in challenging times. As Pasquarello and Bonhoeffer declare, even if preachers face opposition, even if the church appears to be dying, we can look to Christ and remember: "the church is always dying; it is joined to him in his death and resurrection" (102).

7 Lessons for New Pastors: Your First Year in Ministry, 2nd ed. By Matthew D. Kim. Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2021. 978-1-7252-6857-9, 140 pp., $25.95 (CDN).

Reviewer: *Blayne Banting, Briercrest College and Seminary, Caronport, SK.*

Matthew Kim has updated his primer for new pastors from the previous edition (2012) with additional material as well as by reflecting the seasoned perspective of one who has gained more pastoral experience and who now trains pastors as a seminary professor. This edition reflects a sensitivity to the rapidly changing context of pastoral ministry and draws upon voices from a broad diversity of denominational, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds and genders. He has written this guide during the COVID-19 pandemic, so it reflects some of the contemporary challenges faced by those heading into the pastorate for the first time in this unprecedented season. Wise young pastors will seek out seasoned guides to help them navigate the important transition from the world of the seminary into that of congregational leadership. Kim's book serves this purpose well.

After addressing seven common misconceptions of pastoral ministry, Kim develops his content in respective chapters, each dealing with a particular theme relating to issues of pastoral identity and ministry. Two additional chapters are included in this second edition, giving the reader more than the title of the book suggests. And who doesn't like getting more than he/she expected? The chapters address the issues of calling, candidating, acclimating to the pastor's life, creating healthy habits, cultivating leadership skills, compassion, and capacity to deal with the unexpected, respectively. The two bonus chapters address issues of character and a call to practice important pastoral skills.

Kim develops each chapter with a combination of biblical input, support from varied secondary sources, personal

experiences, and an empathetic and culturally sensitive perspective for which he is becoming well-known. The chapters vary in length and detail, but each contain sage advice and direction for those transitioning into the pastorate. The tone of the book rings with a sense of one "who has been there" and is invested in helping others "get there" as well. Kim's use of pronouns reflects the inclusion of women in pastoral roles as well as men but does not venture into any of the specific challenges that women might encounter as they move into these roles. There is also an implicit assumption that new pastoral candidates have attended a residential seminary for a season and then must acclimate to the role of pastoral leadership. A growing number of seminarians, however, take their education in non-residential formats and often are practicing pastors while taking their courses. This might affect the process of transition from class to congregation, especially in the current circumstances affected by the pandemic.

Kim has written, and now rewritten, a helpful book to give the novice pastor needed guidance in the critical shift from student to shepherd. This work is a helpful guide to that end and makes an excellent book to require for courses in pastoral theology (which this reviewer has done already).

1 & 2 Timothy, Titus: A Theological Commentary for Preachers. By Abraham Kuruvilla. Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2021. 978-1-7252-7517-1, 261 pp., $33.00.

Reviewer: *Gregory K. Hollifield, Memphis College of Urban and Theological Studies at Union University, Memphis, TN.*

1 & 2 Timothy, Titus is the fifth title in Abraham Kuruvilla's ongoing series of theological commentaries, following *Mark* (2012), *Genesis* (2014), *Ephesians* (2015), and *Judges* (2017). Readers familiar with those earlier volumes will find the same depth of scholarship, attention to detail, elevated diction, and

arrangement of contents here. His purpose to establish and explore the theological focus of every pericope as the bridge between text and application remains unchanged. Those unfamiliar with Kuruvilla's previous commentaries may turn to Don Sunukjian and Greg Scharf's reviews of the same in past editions of this journal for excellent summaries of the author's aims, methods, resources, etc. Much of what they said there applies here.

As to the particulars of his newest commentary, Kuruvilla divides Paul's pastoral epistles into eighteen pericopes—1 Timothy into ten, 2 Timothy into five, and Titus into three. He tags the first epistle "Shepherding the Saints," the second "Completing the Course," and the last "Exemplifying the Excellent." His bibliography includes two hundred forty-three sources; his Scripture index lists multiple references to twenty-six Old Testament books, every book of the New Testament, and five books from the Apocrypha; while his ancient sources index cites contributions from more than fifty different authors. A scholarly work, indeed! But Kuruvilla's commentaries, this one being no exception, are more than that. They are fine examples of scholarship in service to the pulpit, the academy in service to the church. Any preacher developing a stand-alone sermon from one of Paul's pastoral epistles or a series covering any or all of these three letters would do well to read Kuruvilla's insights, consider his suggested sermon maps, and drill down into the various supporting materials for further research included throughout the book's footnotes.

For this reviewer, what sets this commentary apart from those that have gone before is its potential as a supplemental source for assigned reading in a seminary course on pastoral ministry. Instructors looking for a resource that will unpack how Paul in his own words conceived of this sacred calling and what he said to his young associates as he guided them in the fulfillment of their individual ministries in Ephesus and Crete need look no further. Kuruvilla's commentary provides that information here, while simultaneously modeling how a preacher might fulfill the apostle's charge to "rightly divide the

word of truth." As with all of this author's works, highly recommended!

Ethical Approaches to Preaching: Choosing the Best Way to Preach About Difficult Issues. By John S. McClure. Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2021. 978-1-7252-7453-2, 152 pp., $21.00.

Reviewer: *Scott Lucky, Parkway Baptist Church, Clinton, MS*.

Preachers play an important role in shaping the thoughts and behaviors of their congregations. Their listeners regularly face challenging moral issues and take their cues from preachers about how their faith should impact their lives and the choices they make. Since people are increasingly divided over moral issues in the public sphere these days, it is essential for preachers to handle moral issues with care and skill. John S. McClure (Ph.D., Princeton Theological Seminary) wrote *Ethical Approaches to Preaching* to be an accessible guide that helps preachers discern the best ethical approach for handling a variety of issues and contexts.

McClure is the Charles G. Finney Professor of Homiletics, Emeritus, at Vanderbilt Divinity School and served as the past president of the Academy of Homiletics (2003) and the co-editor of the Academy's journal, *Homiletic*. His many books include *The Four Codes of Preaching: Rhetorical Strategies* (1991), *The Roundtable Pulpit: Where Preaching and Leadership Meet* (1995), and *Other-wise Preaching: A Postmodern Ethic for Homiletics* (2001). McClure's research interests of ethics and homiletics are wed together in this introductory handbook that summarizes and organizes the various ways preaching is currently being demonstrated to be an ethical practice.

McClure believes different ethical situations demand different homiletical responses. Christian ethicists help homileticians to understand their task as an ethical practice. McClure says, "My overarching purpose for writing this book is

to provide an overview of four kinds of ethics that have been shaped by contemporary scholars into ways to help working preachers approach difficult ethical issues: (1) communicative ethics, (2) witness ethics, (3) liberation ethics, and (4) hospitality ethics" (xiv). McClure does a good job defining each approach. A communicative ethic is an intersubjective ethic "focused on searching for and applying universally acceptable moral norms" (2). A witness ethic is a virtue ethic that hopes "to construct a countercultural community of Christian virtue" (37). A liberation ethic is a social ethic aimed "primarily at the unmasking, critique, and change of current social systems (economic, political, religious, educational, health care, etc.)" (61). A hospitality ethic is an interhuman ethic focused on "cultivating relationships grounded in moral reflection" (90). McClure applies four questions to each of the four kinds of ethics: (1) How do preachers theologically frame an ethical problem so listeners can identify the best *way out* of the problem? (2) How do preachers create a personal and communal experience of this problem and provide the best *way into* understanding and engaging it constructively? (3) What signposts help the preacher organize the best *way through* the problem or issue? (4) How do preachers articulate a final destination and the best *way toward* it?

The structure is one of the book's strengths. Every chapter offers a description of the ethic, applies the four questions to each ethic, provides a sample topical sermon on immigration from McClure, explains the situation most suitable to the approach, and gives a situational sermon best exemplifying each approach. The additional reading at the end of each chapter is helpful and allows readers to engage McClure's sources. Additionally, McClure is to be commended for challenging his readers to mirror God's care for the least, lowly, and too often ignored people in the world.

Evangelical homileticians will have a number of fundamental disagreements with McClure's work. Among these, he uses the word "convert" to mean a change of mind or perspective, rather than regeneration (5, 40, 68, 76); some of his exemplary sermons advocate non-evangelical views, including

those of liberation theologians; the topical sermon examples are neither text-driven nor expository—revealing an important difference in the author's conception of preaching; McClure encourages reading the Bible through "the christological lens of the non-violent character and paradigmatic witness of Jesus" (53), suggesting his understanding of Christ-centered preaching differs significantly from that of most evangelical preachers; the author encourages preachers to utilize a hermeneutic of suspicion toward biblical texts and commonly accepted theologies (65, 70) and to fill their bookshelves full of commentaries "written from many perspectives informed by critical theories: feminist, postcolonialist, queer, and others" (65); and he calls the task of preaching into question when he says, "Homiletical forms themselves have a hegemonic aspect" and that exploring new forms of preaching "can disassociate the pulpit from practices of oppression" (64).

Anyone involved in weekly pastoral preaching knows that the world our congregations inhabit is broken and ravaged by the effects of sin. Important moral issues continue to be raised as Christians seek to live for Christ in an increasingly hostile world. Preachers are responsible to help their congregations think through these difficult issues. Unfortunately, preachers need to look beyond McClure for help with this important task.

Third Voice: Preaching Resurrection. By Michael P. Knowles. Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2021. 978-1-7252-6579-0, 263 pp., $34.00.

Reviewer: *Jeremy McClung, Wycliffe College, Toronto, ON.*

In *Third Voice*, Michael P. Knowles offers an extended reflection on the theological implications of Christ's resurrection for the act of preaching. Decades of preaching and training preachers have convinced Knowles that over-reliance on human agency is a widespread phenomenon and a hidden danger to the souls of preachers. In response, he shines the light of resurrection into the

nooks and crannies of the homiletical world, exposing human presumption and turning attention back to God's singular power to raise the dead. Addressing a diverse theological audience, he interacts with a dizzying range of material—including biblical studies, homiletical scholarship, ancient and modern theologians, linguistics, postcolonial theory, popular music, poetry, and literature. Yet again and again he returns to his central thesis: "Spiritually transformative preaching depends above all on divine power, not human agency alone" (xiii).

After establishing the physical resurrection of Christ as the necessary foundation for preaching, Knowles begins by problematizing the concept of authority in the pulpit. Calling into question the Reformation assertion that "the preaching of the Word of God is the Word of God," he turns to missional theology to suggest that *participation* in the *missio Dei* is a better way to understand the preacher's task. Because of this, "preaching must always be a kind of humble listening even as it is more obviously a form of speaking" (57).

He then explores speech-act theory, concluding that, while preachers may have some control over words (locution) and their intent (illocution), they are powerless when it comes to their effect (perlocution). Instead, preaching may be seen as "a form of 'appropriated discourse,' one which embraces the words of Scripture in its own attestation of Jesus as the embodied Word of God, and on this basis becomes liable to appropriation by God" (80).

Though the spread of the gospel has always depended, in part, on human testimony, preachers must turn attention away from themselves and invite their listeners to respond to the Risen One directly. The use of threats, coercion, and verbal violence in the pulpit are not in keeping with the cruciform way of Jesus, thus preaching must non-coercively "invoke rather than to impose or impel, relying for affirmation solely on God's own gift of life" (150).

Preachers, Knowles insists, perform their task in what postcolonial theorist Bhaba described as a "Third Space"—the unique cultural reality of immigrants, who do not fully belong to

their place of origin, nor to their new home. Because Christians live in an in-between space, neither fully at home in this world, nor yet a part of the next, so "preaching in a 'Third Voice' is always poised between cultural particularities and the Christocentric relativizing of all cultures" (188).

In his final chapter, Knowles engages Barth to argue that, since human agency cannot prove the truth of God, create the reality of God, nor bring forth the Word of God, preachers can do no more than "create space" for the Word to speak. Preaching is therefore "an assertion of trust and expectation: trust in Christ to supply our lack, accompanied by a robust expectation that Christ and the Spirit will continue to work out God's purpose in the space we have vacated" (207).

Third Voice (the third volume in a loosely-related series) does not offer commentary on methods or techniques. Rather, its burden is for an inner transformation of "spirituality, identity, and existential orientation more than of language, method, or homiletical technique alone" (231). Knowles is more concerned with the heart-posture of the preacher—humility, dependence, and trust—than the "proper" form of the sermon. It is up to readers to decide how the implications of resurrection will concretely affect their own preaching.

This is not light reading, but a work of serious theology. The journey, while worthwhile, can be winding and arduous. Knowles is not always explicit about where he is leading the reader, or why. Yet, with each new turn the resurrection sheds new light on both long-standing and recent homiletical conversations. *Third Voice* is an important—and humbling—contribution to homiletical theology, as it gradually but persistently exposes the degree to which contemporary preachers have strayed from dependence on God's power in favour of their own efforts. For preachers burdened by the power of death they see all around them, and discouraged by their own inability to produce new life, Knowles' vision of resurrection preaching is good news for the poor. It is an invitation to repent of self-reliance, to trust fully in the power of God, and "to rest

with [Jesus] in the assurance that he does not need them to accomplish his finished work all over again" (215).

What's Right with Preaching Today? The Enduring Influence of Fred B. Craddock. Edited by Mike Graves and André Resner. Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2021. 978-1-4982-9501-7, 238 pp., $31.00.

Reviewer: *David Reese, Evangelical Seminary, Myerstown, PA.*

What's Right with Preaching Today? is a subtle festschrift in honor of Fred B. Craddock, the wise sage of inductive preaching. In true Craddockian style, the book is a collection of ten essays on various aspects of modern preaching interspersed with personal remembrances of Fred; in other words, it tells a story. The chapters are a relatively quick read, but why rush? It is best to linger over the essays on preaching, marinating in their claims, and taking nourishment from their encouragement that there is, indeed, something right with preaching today.

This is not the first volume to honor Fred Craddock and his contribution to homiletics. In a similar festschrift-like compendium, Gail R. O'Day's and Thomas G. Long's *Listening to the Word: Studies in Honor of Fred B. Craddock* (Abingdon, 1993) provided a focused look at inductive preaching. Graves and Resner, however, offer a more cohesive narrative of Craddock's continuing influence on preaching. As a counterpoint to Harry Emerson Fosdick's 1928 *Harper's Magazine* article, "What Is Wrong with Preaching Today?" familiar homileticians such as Debra Mumford, Dawn Ottoni-Wilhelm, Luke Powery, and Ron Allen, among others, write to encourage and affirm preachers.

Each contributor, in turn, addresses those elements of narrative preaching that characterize the best of Craddock's call to upend the direction of the sermon, moving it from a set of "universal principles illustrated in particular cases" to concrete, familiar experiences that reveal the larger truth of the gospel (107). The reader will find here familiar themes, such as the

power of imagery, the auditory nature of the sermon, enlivening delivery with a soulful appeal, and keeping the sermon relevant to the context. These themes are undoubtedly familiar to preachers, but the essays offer a new, encouraging perspective on them.

What distinguishes *What's Right with Preaching Today?* is the interweaving of "Craddock encounters" offered by pastors and less familiar homileticians. Most recount meeting Craddock at a conference or worship service, sharing in warm tones how Fred inspired them, encouraged them, or, at times, gently admonished them. These reminiscences add depth, warmth, and color not necessarily found in a staid festschrift. They serve to invigorate the book's subtitle: "the enduring influence of Fred B. Craddock." Thomas Long captures this sense of a cohesive narrative between academic essays and home-spun stories in his Foreword. He uses the metaphor of an elliptically-shaped room in which "the acoustics are such that if someone whispers at one end of the oval it can be heard perfectly by someone at the other end. Just so, to speak in this book of what's right with preaching at one focal point resonates fully with Fred B. Craddock at the other, and *vice versa*" (xii-xiii).

Though the book was written before the onslaught of COVID-19 and the ravaging nature of the political and racial strife that marked 2020, the essays nonetheless were prescient in their analysis of the power of narrative preaching during these crises. Resner's concluding chapter provides an insightful, hopeful assessment when he writes of the creativity of preachers in adapting their sermons, their liturgy, and their incarnational theology to the challenges of insulation and isolation (227). To this point, Craddock's insistence on integrating the story of the Gospel with the story of the listeners is paramount.

What's Right with Preaching Today? is a worthwhile and thought-provoking read for preachers and teachers of preaching. Expositors can benefit from the book's insistence on dynamic, relevant preaching that enhances the bridge from "then to now." Inductive preachers will appreciate the affirmations it offers to strengthen their craft. Both will gain encouragement from

learning more about Craddock, who would stand on a Coke box behind the pulpit to tell his gospel-laden stories.

Preaching Christ from Leviticus: Foundations for Expository Sermons. By Sidney Greidanus. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2021. 978-0-8028-7602-7, 313 pp., $35.00.

Reviewer: *Paul A. Hoffman, Evangelical Friends Church of Newport, Rhode Island.*

Greidanus states this is his "final book on biblical interpretation and preaching" (xvii). If that is true, it is the feather in the cap of his illustrious career. This work is clear, thorough, practical, and includes helpful resources such as diagrams, illustrations, and four sample sermons in the appendixes.

Chapter 1 begins by underscoring two "Difficulties in Preaching Old Testament Law:" the issues of "Continuity and Discontinuity" and "Law and Gospel" (2-5). Greidanus argues that the tripartite distinction comprised of the moral law, civil law, and ceremonial law employed by John Calvin and others is insufficient at resolving this longstanding hermeneutical challenge. Instead, he argues it is more profitable to search for "the principles behind the individual laws" (12). He then describes how Leviticus occupies the structural (chiastic) and thematic center of the Pentateuch due to its role in delineating the requirements for Israel to enter and enjoy God's holy presence. Indeed, God's holiness is the main subject of Leviticus. The second half of chapter 1 details the four dimensions required to interpret this Old Testament book (literary, historical, theocentric, and christocentric) and ten steps to preach Christ from Leviticus.

Then, in chapter 2 and going through chapter 11, Greidanus exegetes eight chapters of Leviticus, employing a template he consistently applies to each chapter. This is as follows: Text and Context; Literary Interpretation; Theocentric

Interpretation; Textual Theme, Goal, and Need; Ways to Preach Christ; Sermon Theme, Goal, and Need; and Sermon Exposition. To give an overview of texts and themes, he interprets Leviticus 1 (The Burnt Offering), 8 (The Ordination of Priests), 9 (The Lord Accepts the First Offerings), 10 (The Lord's Judgment on Unholy Offerings), 11 (Be Holy, for the Lord is Holy), 16 (The Day of Atonement), 19:1–18 (You Shall Love Your Neighbor as Yourself), 19:1–2, 19–37 (You Shall Love Aliens and Enemies as Yourself), 25:1–7, 18–22 (The Sabbatical Year), and 25:8–17, 23–55 (The Year of Jubilee). The benefit of this selective approach is accessibility: he avoids the tedious task of exegeting all twenty-seven chapters of Leviticus, which might have produced a massive—even unwieldy—tome.

That accessibility gestures toward one of the notable strengths of this book: Greidanus demystifies Leviticus, taking a book notoriously difficult to preach and making it approachable for pastors and teachers. Furthermore, he pulls a coup by making Leviticus *attractive* and refreshing in its *relevance* for modern people who lack connection to the tabernacle or sacrificial system.

Still, one slight criticism is in order. This book omits a proper concluding chapter. In the final chapter, chapter 11, Greidanus masterfully explores Lev. 25 and the Year of Jubilee. He takes the christocentric turn, contending that we entered the age of jubilee upon the arrival of Jesus Christ (264-270). A key gospel implication is for God's people in the West to "share our wealth and forgive those indebted to us" (269) as those who "represent Jesus (feet, voice, and hands) in spreading the joy and hope of jubilee around the globe" (270). I heartily agree! The final sentences highlight the New Jerusalem in Revelation 21 and encourage us with these words: "Jesus began jubilee with his first coming. Soon Jesus will come again and bring his grand jubilee to completion" (270). While accurate and inspirational, it feels abrupt, not just in terms of this book but also considering Greidanus's long and storied career. He might have given the reader a stronger sense of completion on multiple fronts by adding a formal conclusion, epilogue, or afterward to this

volume. Nevertheless, in the final analysis, this is a worthy work, one that reflects the beauty of Leviticus and Greidanus's faithful and rich ministry to the academy and church.

Tethered to the Cross: The Life and Preaching of Charles H. Spurgeon. By Thomas Breimaier. Downers Grove: IVP, 2020. 978-0-8308-5330-4, 288 pp., $35.00 (hardback).

Reviewer: *Eric Price, formerly, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School.*

Thomas Breimaier, lecturer in systematic theology and history at Spurgeon's College in London, has written a scholarly yet accessible overview of Charles Spurgeon's biblical interpretation and preaching. *Tethered to the Cross* is a revision of the author's Ph.D. dissertation at the University of Edinburgh.

Breimaier summarizes the goal and thesis of his study as such: "The primary goal of this book is to identify and analyze C. H. Spurgeon's approach to biblical hermeneutics. It will argue that Spurgeon...viewed the entire Bible through the lens of the cross of Christ, with an aim to bring about the conversion of sinners" (3). The introductory chapter situates the book within broader Spurgeon scholarship. Each of the following six chapters then surveys an aspect of Spurgeon's life and ministry, with attention to his biblical interpretation. Chapter 1 discusses Spurgeon's family heritage, personal conversion, and theological influences. Chapter 2 focuses on Spurgeon's biblical interpretation in his early ministry, with attention to debates regarding Calvinism.

Chapters 3 and 4 focus on Spurgeon's interpretation of the Old and New Testaments, respectively. In each chapter, Breimaier helpfully situates Spurgeon's biblical interpretation against the backdrop of academic biblical studies at the time. He shows that Spurgeon had some level of interaction with higher critical commentaries. While Spurgeon occasionally found such commentaries helpful, he was also concerned that they

unnecessarily raised doubts about the authority of Scripture and the doctrine of the atonement. "Spurgeon regarded a conservative interpretation of penal substitutionary atonement as equally important to that of plenary inspiration" (133).

In the chapters on Spurgeon's OT and NT interpretation, two conclusions about Spurgeon as a preacher emerge. First, in Spurgeon's sermon preparation, "text selection was viewed with conversionistic intent" (91). Because of this, Spurgeon's sermon texts were usually "drawn from either single verses or small groups of verses," rather than complete passages within their context (91). Second, and related, "Christocentrism was central to Spurgeon's engagement with the biblical text" (91). Consequently, he "would...include discussions of Christ in texts where Christ did not appear either explicitly or implicitly" (91). Comparison with contemporaneous preachers and commentators shows that Spurgeon's interpretation was more christocentric than much biblical interpretation at the time.

While *Tethered to the Cross* is largely a descriptive study, Breimaier offers some evaluative summary: "Spurgeon's interpretative method was not without its drawbacks. His almost singular focus upon the cross of Christ and the offer of the gospel occasionally led him to downplay or sidestep more straightforward interpretations of the biblical text in his insistence upon crucicentric and conversionistic readings" (166). For those of us who seek to learn from the history of preaching, this raises the perennially important question of how we can incorporate canonical insights into sermons while respecting the integrity and particularity of individual texts.

Chapter 6 discusses Spurgeon's biblical interpretation during the Downgrade Controversy, a theological dispute within the Baptist Union that led Spurgeon to depart from the organization. Finally, chapter 7 discusses Spurgeon's biblical interpretation as a teacher in his Pastors' College, which "provided accessible instruction for students for whom the traditional venues of education were out of reach" (240). Spurgeon's work as an educator led to a proliferation of his

crucicentric and conversionistic biblical interpretation among pulpits throughout Great Britain.

In his conclusion, Breimaier notes that scholarship on the history of biblical interpretation has tended to neglect studying "the sermons of influential preachers who were not professional philosophers or theologians" (250). This neglect is a lacuna in scholarship because such preachers "would have in many cases held far more popular influence in their respective times than academic writers" (250). Breimaier's helpful insight in this regard will hopefully spur similar historical studies at the intersection of homiletics and hermeneutics.

Tethered to the Cross is an ideal scholarly introduction to Charles Spurgeon. It would be useful in courses on the history of biblical interpretation and homiletics, as well as in courses on the hermeneutics of Christ-centered proclamation. Breimaier commends Spurgeon's focus on the cross while judiciously noting its potential excesses. Readers will find in this study encouragement and motivation to remain tethered to the cross in their own lives and ministries.

Ephesians: A Commentary for Biblical Preaching. By Gregory S. MaGee and Jeffrey D. Arthurs. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2021. 987-0-8254-5834-7, 281 pp. (hardback).

Reviewer: *Tim MacBride, Morling College, Sydney, Australia.*

This new volume in the *Kerux* preaching commentary series has much to commend it. The collaborative approach, pairing a New Testament scholar with a practitioner in homiletics, provides a solid exegesis of the text of Ephesians as well as ideas for sermonic structure and application.

The commentary divides Ephesians into thirteen preaching units, and helpfully opens with a summary preacher's overview of each: it outlines the exegetical idea of the passage and a theological focus, from which is formed a brief "preaching

idea," in line with Haddon Robinson's approach. A summary of "preaching pointers" bridges the world of the first century with our own and suggests lines of application. This is one of the great strengths of this series, as it provides preachers with an overarching framework for each textual unit prior to their dive into the details of the text.

The introductory section (31-46) argues persuasively for Pauline authorship, before providing a concise and informative picture of the letter's historical and rhetorical setting. MaGee rightly identifies the key theme of Ephesians as being "in Christ," using the language of sitting (our united position in Christ), walking (our behavior as those who are in Christ), and standing (our ability to stand strong in Christ), although the significance of being united in Israel's Messiah at the climax of her story could have been foregrounded a little more in the commentary itself. Pleasingly, the commentary signals its intention to pay attention to authorial doings (45) and evidences rhetorical-critical insights such as Ephesians as a eulogy inspiring us to praise (49).

The exegetical sections are clear and compact—a dozen or so pages per preaching unit—explaining the meaning of the text within a traditional evangelical framework. Being a preacher's commentary, there is not a lot of critical engagement with exegetical alternatives, meaning most preachers will want to supplement this with a more technical commentary, but MaGee provides an excellent starting point. He also includes discussion of the Greek text with some asides about translational issues, making it useful both for intermediate Greek students and busy pastors wishing to maintain their Greek. There are also brief, highlighted excerpts on relevant cultural and theological issues. Each exegetical section ends with several paragraphs summarizing the theological focus of the passage, which function as a bridge to the preaching and teaching strategies.

The preaching sections begin with an articulation of the preaching idea and suggestions on how this idea might connect with contemporary audiences. Arthurs then provides examples of illustrations and lines of application that preachers might take as they construct their sermons. This last section is potentially the

most difficult to navigate for any commentary, as it depends more on the personality and context of the preacher than what precedes it; perhaps inevitably, then, it is where I have most of my reservations about an otherwise useful resource. I also acknowledge that the primary contemporary audience appears to be North American, which may well explain some of my responses as a reader on the other side of the Pacific.

Firstly, the application seemed weighted toward the actions and attitudes of the individual rather than the "both… and…" of Scripture; there was a focus on personal morality without much said about corporate justice. Ephesians 2:1-10 was about how God saves individual sinners like Paul and his readers, rather than how God saves both Paul, a Jew, and his Gentile readers through the sacrifice of the one Messiah. Surprisingly, the application of 2:11-22 was almost silent on race relations in the USA, except when speaking of divisions—such as separate drinking fountains—as a past state of affairs which has been rectified (115). Instead, it was heavy on illustrations drawn from post-Cold War reconciliation. Any challenge to present behavior was again only at the level of individual attitudes and actions. Similarly, the discussion of slaves and masters (6:1-9) acknowledged past slavery and quickly drew lines of analogous application to employers and employees today (240), without reference to the slavery and human trafficking that still exists in many parts of our world today.

Secondly, some of the illustrations sounded (again, from the other side of the world) a little tone-deaf: Arthurs cites Bryan Loritts' discussion of the British colonization of Australia and the imposition of its customs on indigenous peoples as a positive metaphor for how we, as citizens of heaven, are similarly called to take "the culture, customs, and practices of a faraway place called 'heaven' and inject them into a place called earth" (116). Another, in the context of roles within marriage in Eph 5:22-33, suggests visual aids to represent wives and husbands: "a wedding veil and bow tie, or rolling pin and hammer," adding the parenthetical comment, "but we will want to be careful of stereotypes" (237).

At the end of each preaching unit, the commentary provides an up-to-date bibliography for further reading, and a very handy set of discussion questions that could be set for Sunday school classes or home Bible study groups. Overall, this is a worthwhile preacher's commentary that will help pastors understand the text, create a clear sermon structure, and think carefully about what it means for us to walk "in Christ" today.

Ministers of Reconciliation: Preaching on Race and the Gospel. Edited by Daniel Darling. Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2021. 978-1-6835-9477-2, 151 pp., $21.99 (hardback).

Reviewer: *Kristopher Barnett, Clamp Divinity School, Anderson, SC.*

In the foreword to *Ministers of Reconciliation*, Russel Moore relays a conversation with a Christian minister who warned that the topic of racial reconciliation was "perilous waters" for the Christian preacher (ix). Moore agrees but reminds the reader that Jesus often leads his people into and through perilous waters (x). What follows in this thin volume provides insight and encouragement for ministers willing to follow Jesus' lead.

The editor, Daniel Darling, serves as Director of the Land Center for Cultural Engagement at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He has authored numerous books and makes regular contributions to leading outlets like *Christianity Today*, *World* magazine, and *USA Today*. Darling's writings address the local church, politics, and government policy. These interests position him well to edit the current volume. He has assembled a diverse group of contributors who cross demographic, geographic, and ethnic lines. Some contributors serve the church as pastors, while others serve from the academy. The diversity adds depth and substance to the project.

Each contributor provides a chapter. Each chapter analyzes a unit of Scripture, one verse or an entire chapter depending on the author's assignment. Most chapters follow a

similar pattern of introducing the text, providing an exegetical analysis thereof, and then offering potential applications. The exegetical analysis and applications are presented through the lens of racial reconciliation.

The pericopes selected include several that often appear in conversations pertaining to the subject at hand: Genesis 1:27, Psalm 139, John 4, and Acts 10. However, the pericopes also include some "unexpected" passages: Matthew 28:19-20, Jeremiah 38-39, and 1 Corinthians 12. The unexpected passages are one of the book's strengths. Some critics of racial reconciliation claim that preachers should "just preach the text." They warn that considering issues of race and ethnicity will distract from the text. However, *Ministers of Reconciliation* shows that analyzing the Bible through the lens of culture reveals how issues of race and ethnicity permeate the biblical narrative. The authors do not import their discoveries into the text; instead, they make their discoveries in the soil of the text.

For example, J. Daniel Hays points out the ethnic identity of Ebed-Melek the Cushite, who rescues Jeremiah from the cistern in Jeremiah 38-39. Hays provides the reader cultural context to understand the role Ebed-Melek, a black African, played in the Hebrew court. This critical information provides color and depth to the character and reminds the preacher of the value in portraying biblical persons accurately and the danger inherent in painting all biblical characters with the same, often white, brush.

Preachers will appreciate Darling's work, as it provides the reader with thirteen "sermon starters." A preacher seeking to develop a sermon series on racial reconciliation could utilize this volume to launch their thinking on the topic. The chapters could serve as starters for sermons and as examples to help cultivate the ability to discover the ethnic and racial issues organically embedded in most biblical texts. This helps the faithful preacher address issues related to reconciliation, even if that is not the primary focus of the sermon series.

Ministers of Reconciliation provides the pieces and parts for future sermons on each text it treats. However, each chapter

leaves the reader with a question, "How would this contributor preach this passage to their congregation?" The book could have aided readers by providing a sermon brief at the end of each chapter. This suggestion comes with the knowledge that space is limited and giving preachers too many pieces might lead to plagiarism. However, sermon briefs could have at least given readers one more aid in seeing how the exegetical analysis might be translated to the pulpit.

Darling's collection of essays will help teachers of preaching to think deeply on the topic of reconciliation. The principles modeled in this book could easily be incorporated into course content. Some instructors might require this book in an elective preaching course to initiate classroom conversation on the topic.

This small book provides solid insight on addressing racial reconciliation. Engaging and well-written, it deserves a place on the preacher's bookshelf. It both encourages readers to wade into the perilous waters and provides guidance for getting their feet wet.

Theology Is for Preaching: Biblical Foundations, Method, and Practice. Edited by Chase R. Kuhn and Paul Grimmond. Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2021. 978-1-6835-9459-8, 343 pp., $29.99.

Reviewer: *Keith Essex, The Master's Seminary, Los Angeles, CA*.

Theology Is for Preaching was one of the most significant books on preaching published in 2021. The volume had its genesis in the Moore College (Sydney, Australia) School of Biblical Theology in 2019. The papers presented there and resulting conversations were prompted by the desire to address the topic of the significance that theology has for a pastor's preaching. The original essays were augmented by other voices that were solicited by the editors to produce the present written work. "The intention of this volume is to provide a resource to pastors and

students that sets out the theological foundations of preaching, so that we might be more faithful practitioners" (xx). The overarching thesis of the book is that preaching and theology are mutually informed; this basic principle unites the twenty-one authors of the individual chapters. The book is written from and for a reformed, evangelical theological constituency, though any evangelical preacher can find much profit in its pages.

The volume is divided into five parts. The first five chapters constitute Part One, Foundations. Part Two, Methodology, incorporates chapters six to twelve. Chapters thirteen to sixteen comprise Part Three, Theology for Preaching. Part Four, Preaching for Theology, encompasses chapters seventeen to nineteen. Two sermons are presented in chapters twenty and twenty-one in Part Five, Theology Preached. It is impossible in this limited review to summarize and interact with all that is contained in these separate essays and sermons; therefore, only one chapter from each part will be noted.

The first chapter by Chase Kuhn, "Theology for Preaching, Preaching for Theology," introduces the concept of recursion which reoccurs in a few other chapters. Since both systematic theology and exegesis are based on the authority of Scripture, the practical result is that they inform each other. However, theology is preeminent because every interpreter comes to the biblical text with presuppositions which guide the interpretation. Thus, "Systematic theology does not do away with exegesis or biblical theology but works with them to give voice and order to the truths they uncover" (11). Therefore, a theological (i.e., Reformation) interpretation, or ruled reading, of Scripture "will guard against error and serve as the anchor point for faithful biblical preaching" (14). That the aim of the book "has been to argue for the importance of systematic theology and to reflect on the significance of dogmatics for the preaching task" (296) is reaffirmed by Paul Grimmond in chapter nineteen, "Letting the Word Do the Work: A Constructive Account of Expositional Preaching." In response, while affirming the concept of recursion, a better understanding is to begin with an

exegetical theology as the foundation for biblical and systematic theology (see Abraham Kuruvilla, *Privilege the Text!)*.

Daniel Y. Wu's, "Old Testament Challenges: Christocentric or Christotelic Sermon?" (Chapter Eight) tackles the contemporary discussion on how to preach Christ from the Old Testament. Wu gives an outstanding analysis of both the christocentric and christotelic approaches to the Old Testament, concluding that neither is completely adequate as a hermeneutic for every text (he cites Proverbs 19:24 as an example). He affirms preaching Christ in every sermon, noting that a multiplicity of hermeneutical strategies may need to be employed. Wu's essay is a balanced approach which will probably leave the purists on either side of the debate unconvinced.

"The Priority of Proclamation: Preaching in a Liturgical Context" is the contribution of David G. Peterson in Chapter Sixteen. Peterson describes how pastoral preaching developed in New Testament times from the primary task of proclaiming the gospel to unbelievers. Following the synagogue pattern, preaching was associated with the public reading of Scripture and involved proclamation, teaching, and exhortation. As Christian worship progressed, preaching became a part of a liturgical event. For those preachers in a liturgical tradition, it is demonstrated from both the Scripture and tradition that the sermon should have the decisive influence in the service. Those preachers in non-liturgical churches need the reminder that the New Testament puts the sermon in a place of priority that does not negate praise, prayers, and the ordinances. Peterson's essay is biblical and balanced.

The final two chapters record two sermons, one OT and one NT. After the sermon transcripts, the preachers, Simon Manchester and Phillip D. Jensen give personal insight into the decisions made in the preparation and presentation of the messages. This demonstration of the principles and methodology espoused in the previous essays is a fitting conclusion to the volume.

This book is a good addition to any preacher's library. The twenty-one authors present their vision for theological

expository preaching. They interact with both the biblical text and contemporary homiletical thought in an engaging manner. The readers may not agree with the book on all points, but they will be challenged to deepen their own understanding of theology and preaching through engagement with this volume.

Preaching Hope in Darkness: Help for Pastors in Addressing Suicide from the Pulpit. By Scott M. Gibson and Karen E. Mason. Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2020. 978-1-6835-9411-6, 259 pp., $23.99.

Reviewer: *Kyle Lincoln, North Point Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Danvers, MA.*

When I first started working in the field of suicide prevention and intervention, I was surprised that churches and church leaders were not recognized as players in the crisis system of care. I was surprised because, having grown up in church, no physician was as relevant to my life as the Great Physician; and my childhood pastor was, at least in my eyes, highly involved and respected in our community. The church provided a lot of support, and I imagine, even though the subject of suicide was homiletically taboo, this support protected against suicide. Times may not have changed so much as my view from within the church has been complemented by a view from outside of the church. Mason's earlier research has shown that pastors and preachers feel ill-equipped to become players in the work of crisis care (whether in suicide prevention, intervention, or recovery) and so may sit on the sidelines. This work is too important to leave on the backburner, which is why this book matters.

In *Preaching Hope in Darkness*, Gibson and Mason address a gap in homiletical literature. Perhaps even more than this, they invite preachers to join this holy work in the ways the church is best positioned to do. Preaching that addresses suicide is a difficult task, but it is among the first tasks for pastors hoping to

protect against suicide and to provide care for the victims of suicide loss. A notable inclusion in the book is the seven fences of suicide prevention (for example, fence #2 is to "Preach and teach on the worth and dignity of every person"), matched with practical pastoral intervention strategies. These seven fences carry over into the Bible studies appended to the book.

Gibson and Mason frame their collaboration as a "conversation" between practitioners in "two fields that don't typically interact—homiletics and psychology" (back cover), though in fact it is more like a playbook handed down from seasoned coaches. This is a multifaceted resource compiled with theological and clinical sensitivity, which includes digestible guidance for preachers, example sermons, Bible studies, worship outlines, sample prayers, and more. The authors' main conviction is that the hope of the gospel protects against suicide and is the surest comfort for victims of suicide loss within the church. This hope should infuse pastoral care before and long after the sermon event. Gibson and Mason model the relevance of "conversations" like this, and I hope there are more to come.

Those most affected by suicide are blessed by words marked by sensitivity and directness, incarnational empathy and transcending hope. Gibson and Mason are well suited to this task. I found their tone and message to be balanced, the content to be carefully researched (25 pages of references, plus over a thousand interviews and surveys!), and the hope of the gospel to be central. I believe it will be accessible for pastors of multiple sized churches and different denominations. If you are a preacher, this book is likely to open up new avenues of thought—it did for me—though perhaps not directly answering every question that suicide surfaces.

More critically, some example sermons run the risk of implying the sufficiency of private spirituality in the face of suicidal ideation, others commending the sufficiency of the body of Christ. Sadly, each sermon neglects mentioning the existence of mental health professionals. One way that the included sermons could be strengthened is by leaning into Fence #7 "Encourage congregants to reach out for help." Beyond pastoral

care, preachers can directly recommend help from mental health professionals. Such homiletical directness beneficially addresses the stigma of help seeking (which can be prevalent for laity and pastors alike) *and* promotes cross-sector collaboration to work against the silo-ing of protective efforts mentioned above.

Living in God's True Story: 2 Peter. By Donald L. Morcom. Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2021. 978-1-6835-9483-3, 113 pp., 14.99.

Reviewer: *Nicholas B. Marnejon, Community Christian Fellowship, Edmonds, WA.*

In *Living in God's True Story*, Donald L. Morcom reminds readers that books like 2 Peter help reorient Christians to the true story of the world, God's story. As Morcom puts it, 2 Peter "recombobulates" us, amid competing stories, so that it becomes "a valuable primer on the sort of people we ought to be as Christ-followers" (5).

Living in God's True Story is a short, one-hundred-page book that's part of the Transformative Word Series by Lexham Press. In each book of the series, authors trace a key theme of a biblical book that provides a helpful orientation to it. For instance, Morcom unites 2 Peter around the question, posed from 2 Peter 3:11, "What kind of people ought you to be?" (9). Morcom walks through 2 Peter, section by section, thematically exploring this forgotten epistle. At the end of each section, the Transformative Word Series has authors give suggested Bible reading and reflection questions that help facilitate interaction and retention. The book concludes with some recommended reading, another series distinctive, that points readers to resources for further study. This suggests that the Transformative Word Series knows its books are thematic primers, not full-bodied exegetical commentaries. The size of Morcom's book alone indicates that, but anyone who comes

looking for a thorough and deeply exegetical book will be left wanting.

Sticking to his theme, Morcom ably weaves together personal stories, illustrations, and even solid reflection questions that go beyond the restate-what-the-author-said variety, producing a very readable book. Morcom does enough to make the argument of 2 Peter alive to its readers without bogging them down with the details of date, authorship, and textual criticism. However, Morcom did his homework. An appendix shows that he is conversant with the critical issues surrounding 2 Peter, like authentic Petrine authorship, and comes to his own conclusion that, "[T]here is no definitive reason to reject the authenticity of 2 Peter and that the claims the letter makes for itself may be taken at face value" (94).

Preachers will find several uses for Morcom's book, and really the entirety of the Transformative Word Series. They could easily take this book and read it in an hour or two to help prime or refresh themselves for preaching a series in 2 Peter. They could also hand this book to small group Bible study leaders and trust that this will give them no more or no less than what they need. Even teens would benefit from reading this approachable book and engaging with its thematic approach to 2 Peter.

Living in God's True Story: 2 Peter can find a place on the preacher's full shelf, or in the hands of their parishioners, reminding them of the value of this oft-neglected epistle's transformative power for the lives of all God's people.

1–2 Timothy & Titus. By Andreas J. Köstenberger. Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2020. 978-1-6835-9431-4, 544 pp., $49.99 (hardback).

Reviewer: *Steele B. Wright, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY.*

The renewed interest in biblical theology in recent years, particularly among evangelicals, has led to a wealth of publications seeking to equip pastors and church leaders with the necessary skills to teach the overarching story of the Bible to their congregations. Following in this stream, the Evangelical Biblical Theology Commentary series aims to analyze carefully each biblical book and situate it within the context of the entire canon. As a well-established New Testament scholar and editor of the EBTC, Andreas Köstenberger is uniquely positioned to write the present volume on *1–2 Timothy & Titus*. Additionally, Köstenberger's desire to see Christians cherish the Scriptures and pastors proclaim them faithfully means the present work is no mere academic exercise, but a labor of love for those serving the Lord at the ground level.

Paul's letters to Timothy and Titus (LTT) represent the culmination of the apostle's ministry. As Paul's apostolic delegates, Timothy and Titus were sent to ensure that churches order themselves according to his instructions and prepare themselves to combat false teaching (1). Rather than see the LTT as separate epistles detached from the rest of Pauline literature, Köstenberger situates these two books within the context of Paul's larger ministry (6). When analyzing the text of the LTT, Köstenberger adopts "a balanced interpretive approach that investigates in depth the matrix of the historical setting, literary character, and theological message of each letter" (2). Köstenberger's exposition largely follows this pattern as he discusses relevant background material for each letter before examining the text in more detail. His expertise with the Greek language enables him to highlight significant words or phrases without descending into a dense technical discussion. In addition to Köstenberger's intimacy with the original language, his awareness of the wider scholarship provides readers with an excellent working knowledge of the key issues in the LTT.

Given the biblical-theological focus of the commentary, Köstenberger carefully and consistently connects the text of Paul's letters to relevant Old Testament passages that illuminate the apostle's message. One example of this is found in

Köstenberger's discussion of 2 Timothy 3:1–9 where Paul assures Timothy that the false teachers will not succeed in his day any more than they did in the days of Moses. Relying on both the Old Testament and extrabiblical material, Köstenberger draws a typological connection between Moses and Aaron and Paul and Timothy (260). Following his analysis of these verses, Köstenberger models the kind of theological application he expects pastors to emulate; "In vv. 1–9, then, the storm clouds grow even darker. Eschatology takes center stage and casts its shadow on ecclesiology, with the effect of throwing the need for the life of faith, the pursuit of virtue, and faithful gospel ministry into even sharper focus" (260).

Following the Introduction (1–54) and Exposition of the LTT (55–355), Köstenberger concludes with a section on the letters' Biblical and Theological Themes (357–544). Here, Köstenberger makes his unique contribution to the scholarship on the LTT as he unfolds in considerable detail relevant theological themes such as mission, teaching, God, Christ, salvation, God's household, the Christian life, the last days, and the LTT's contribution to the canon. What makes this section immensely helpful for teachers and preachers is Köstenberger's ability to show how each theme is distinct and yet related to one another. If the Bible is ultimately the work of a single divine author who has designed each individual text with a purpose, then it is incumbent upon pastors to alert their listeners to the unity of the biblical message and apply it accordingly.

1–2 Timothy & Titus is a worthy resource for pastors striving to equip their congregations with a connected view of the Scriptures. Köstenberger's work will ensure that pastors do not miss the forest for the trees when preaching on a particular passage. Those concerned that the emphasis on biblical theology may detract from the passage at hand will be encouraged by Köstenberger's incisive exegetical work. One never gets the sense that Köstenberger imposes his biblical theology on the text. Rather, his biblical theology flows from his exegesis to produce profound theological and practical fruit for his readers to digest.

Preaching with an Accent: Biblical Genres for Australian Congregations. Edited by Ian Hussey. Macquarie Park: Morling, 2019. 978-0-9945-7266-0, 310 pp., $35.00.

Reviewer: *Rodney A. Palmer, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI.*

Several books have been produced on preaching to different cultural and ethnic groups in recent years, and *Preaching with an Accent* is another such volume targeting Australians. The book is edited by Ian Hussey, a lecturer and director of Post-Graduate Studies at Malyon Theological College, an affiliate institution of the Australian College of Theology. It is a compilation of thirteen contributors from different denominations who all possess depths of knowledge about the Australian culture.

The book focuses on aiding Australian preachers with the important tasks of hermeneutics and contextualization, which will result in biblically sound sermons that are appropriately applied to twenty-first century Australia. The first chapter provides a cultural exegesis of Australians. The typical Australian is characterized as individualistic, egalitarian, rule-based, monochronic, secular, postmodern, pluralistic, anti-institutional, multicultural, wealthy, consumeristic, anxious, depressed, and time-poor. This chapter also lays the foundation for the proceeding chapters, as the highlighted cultural characteristics form the basis for the contextualization process conducted by each contributor.

Each of the remaining twelve chapters focuses on a specific biblical genre and follows a similar structure as outlined by Hussey:

1. Introduction: discussion of the general issues related to preaching this collection of books
2. The hermeneutical task: insights into the interpretation of these books

3. The contextualization task: insights into the particular message of these books for Australian culture
4. A sample sermon: an example of the type of sermon that can be preached to an Australian congregation, provided with some comments on the hermeneutical and contextualization tasks that have influenced the shaping of this particular message (7).

One of the apparent weaknesses of the volume, which the editor was quick to admit, was the gender imbalance among the contributors. In acknowledging this weakness, Hussey explained that there were very few "women preaching academics in Australia to draw on" (7). This revelation underscores the need for greater intentionality in the recruiting and mentoring of Australian female scholars in the field of homiletics.

Although *Preaching with an Accent* was primarily written for Australian preachers, it should not deter non-Australians. In addition to obtaining a concise overview of the Australian culture, readers will also better understand how to preach sermons that will connect with Australians scattered across the globe. This volume serves as an excellent template for homileticians who are desirous of producing a guide for preaching from their respective cultural or ethnic backgrounds. Overall, the book will aid preachers in avoiding the pitfall of preaching biblically sound sermons with "accents" their listeners cannot comprehend because the messages are misapplied contextually. This tome is well-suited as a supplemental text in a contextualized preaching class.

Preaching in/and the Borderlands. Edited by J. Dwayne Howell and Charles L. Aaron, Jr. Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2020. 978-1-5326-6465-6, 167 pp., $24.00.

Reviewer: *Jesse Welliver, Luther Rice College and Seminary, Stonecrest, GA.*

J. Dwayne Howell is Professor Emeritus of Old Testament and Hebrew at Campbellsville University. Charles L. Aaron, Jr. is co-director of the Intern Program at Perkins School of Theology at Southern Methodist University. Together, the editors organize their book into four sections.

The contributions in the first section address legal and ethical issues surrounding immigration. The second section addresses the concept of immigration in the Old and New Testaments. The third speaks to the intersection of immigration and homiletics, which includes three sample sermons on the topic of immigration. In the last section, two contributors offer reflections on their experiences of integrating ministry to immigrants in their local church.

Several of the book's contributors confront cultural issues they see as prevalent in American society, issues that the majority culture might not notice. In Robert Hoch's chapter "Being White These Days," pastors, especially white pastors, are encouraged to name and confront whiteness in the pulpit. Though the preacher's dialogue on the subject will be imperfect and will make white-dominant churches uncomfortable, Hoch argues it is necessary if one is "to return whiteness to the rainbow; or as a pastoral theologian might say, return whiteness to the rainbow, part and parcel of the diversity of God's creation" (35).

Gerald C. Liu's chapter, "Making U.S. Protestant Disciples of ALL Nations," highlights the way in which Protestant ideals, religious liberty primarily, have been co-opted to fuel imperialistic and violent tendencies in America's foreign relationships and immigration policies. Preachers, according to Liu, must learn from America's tendency toward violent imperialism in the name of Protestant ideals and learn to be "effective proclaimers who nurture people of faith while not excluding followers of other faiths" (50).

Sarah Adkins' "An Overview of the Current Landscape of Immigration Law" provides helpful insight into immigration law in the United States. Adkins argues that understanding immigration law is essentially to the prospect of preaching or

speaking on immigration (52). Knowing the challenges of immigrants will produce a more informed homiletic. Adkins attempts to demonstrate the difficulty of pursuing citizenship or legal status in the United States and argues that pastors must remember the humanity of those who are pursuing immigration in America (65).

Many people who cross political borders often experience abuse in the process. Lis Valle's "Toward a Border-Crossing Homiletic: Building Blocks for Trauma-Informed Preaching Practices" aims to help preachers build a homiletic that is informed by the research of Judith L. Herman in trauma recovery. Valle excels by highlighting the level of sensitivity a preacher/pastor should have toward those in the congregation and some aspects of trauma theory that can help the preacher craft and deliver sermons. However, given the complexity of trauma recovery, many preachers may feel inept or unqualified at integrating the concept in their preaching.

Throughout the book there are some hermeneutical and homiletical moves that warrant questioning. Owen Ross's "Moving from Caution to Faithful Proclamation: One Pastor's Story," for example, aims to equip preachers to preach biblical texts on immigration by offering a one-to-one comparison between the nation of Israel in the Old Testament and nations today (94). While Ross's concerns are understandable, assuming or positing this kind of comparison between the theocratic nation of Israel and the Unites States is overly simplistic (99). Further, as other chapters in the book have made clear, *immigration* itself is a pregnant term that involves many factors, including ways of immigrating. Preachers should avoid over-generalizing the issue; more nuance is required in applying Old Testament laws regarding immigration to nations in our contemporary society.

Preaching in/and the Borderlands is a valuable contribution to the conversation between homiletics and immigration. Not all readers will agree with some of the interpretations, suggestions, and applications of theology and Scripture found in the essays in this book. However, the authors are correct; immigration is both a personal and policy issue that occupies much space in

contemporary political discussion. As the book recommends, preachers and pastors should give more thought to how their congregations and denominations will be involved in caring for the immigrant, refugee, and others at risk.

Expository Preparation: *Preparing Your Soul to Preach*. By Benjamin G. Campbell. Eugene, OR: Resource Publications, 2021. 978-1-6667-3023-4, 140 pp., $17.00.

Reviewer: *Tony A. Rogers*, *Southside Baptist Church*, *Bowie*, *TX*.

Benjamin G. Campbell will invigorate every preacher in this new work. This pre-homiletic primer, exploring spiritual disciplines and how they relate to preaching and pastoral ministry will inform, encourage, and convict. Campbell is pastor of Arbor Grove Free Will Baptist Church in Hoxie, AR. "If pastors are called to preach, they will (or should) strive to prepare their souls *and* their sermons well" (xii-xiii). Herein lay Campbell's dilemma, the gulf between soul and sermon which he sees as the cause of much fruitless preaching (xii). His answer—spiritual disciplines both as preparatory *to* and mandatory *for* the preaching endeavor. He states his aim as "the preparation of the pastor's soul is of *utmost* importance. If the pastor's soul is not in union with the Lord Jesus, he will have a difficult time shepherding the flock of God" (xi), further if there is no expository preparation, there will be no expository preaching (85).

Chapter one (Biblical Authority: A Review) sets the authority of Scripture as foundational to true sermon preparation (xiv), viewing propositional revelation as necessary because the Bible is about fact, not theories (10). In the second chapter (The Pastor and the Spiritual Disciplines) Campbell sees spiritual health preceding sermon prep (xiv). The disciplines of Bible intake, prayer, and meditation (21) aid the pastor in soul preparation (12). Chapter three (Preparation and the Pastor's

Personal Life) addresses areas such as rest and family (xv). In all disciplines, Christ and His likeness are essential to preparation (25). Chapters four and five (The Disciplines of Expository Preparation) view specific disciplines in lieu of sermon preparation (xv). Chapter four focuses on the personal nature of soul care, while chapter five has an outward focus (54).

Chapter 6 (Preparation as Worship) addresses the preacher's sanctification, proper hermeneutics, recognizing theological themes within the passage, applying the selected text to his congregation, and being able to observe life with his congregation (xv). Chapter seven (Basis for Worship) presents pastoral soul care as worship (xv), a lifestyle of manifesting God's work of grace (75). Chapter eight (Why Expository Preparation?) is a systematic approach to viewing preaching as worship, which pastors oft see as work instead of glorious proclamation on behalf of Christ (xv).

Do not let the book's diminutive appearance fool you—there is much to quarry. Campbell shines the light on several areas, one of those being plagiarism. He asserts, "This problem of preaching someone else's sermon entails more than the sin of stealing someone else's material, but it deals with the pastor's heart condition. A pastor who is consistently neglecting to preach and prepare his own sermons is one who consistently neglects his holiness" (38).

Further compounding this is the fact that sermon preparation is preeminently a personal act of worship and failure here will bring uncertainty of calling within one's life (69).

Another positive is Campbell's stress on Bible intake, an area where some preachers may be self-deceived. You cannot preach what you do not know, and Campbell warns against going to the Scriptures solely for sermon material. "This trickery will, then, eventually come through how one preaches … [creeping] into how a pastor prepares himself to preach. When preparation is fraudulent, so is the pastor's spirituality … [ministers then] will eventually become a poison to their congregations" (28).

A final area to underscore—Campbell raises prayer as the *sine qua non* of expository preparation (48). This is true of the pastor's prayer life—personally, familially, and, pastorally for: (1) the health of his soul depends upon his prayer habits, (2) his sermon preparation is dependent on his vibrant prayer life, and (3) what is in the well is what comes up in the bucket (32-33).

It is a small work, and one might have wished for some beefier chapters especially considering much of the appendices (30 pages) are already chapter material. Though picayunish he uses the phrase "in other words" thirty-six times which can be distracting. However, these do not detract from the book's rich content. Other works speak to these issues but not in the way that Campbell addresses them. It is a quick read for all preachers and would be a nice companion text in a homiletics or pastoral ministries class. It would fit nicely in the pastor's bookcase next to Rick Reed's *The Heart of the Preacher: Preparing Your Soul to Proclaim the Word* (Lexham, 2019). God both requires and desires spiritual growth from His ministers, it is essential because the pastor's: (1) personal life depends upon it, (2) impact in the church depends upon his spiritual growth, and (3) sermon preparation depends upon it (14-15, 97-98). Campbell has done a needed service for a noble task and all of God's preachers should declare, "I will do this thing because I love God and want to please Him" (19).

Always a Guest: Speaking of Faith Far from Home. By Barbara Brown Taylor. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2020. 978-0-6642-6170-2, 242 pp., $25.00 (hardback).

Reviewer: *Arica Heald Demme, St. Veronica's Anglican Mission, Bear, DE.*

Barbara Brown Taylor, an Episcopal priest and academic, is one of four individuals to be named among the twelve most effective preachers in the English speaking world by both the 1996 and

2016 surveys of the Kyle Lake Center for Effective Preaching at Baylor University's George W. Truett Theological Seminary. She is also the only woman to have been named to that prestigious list either time. It is with these distinctions in view that her recent collection of sermons is worthy of examination by EHS members despite any discomfort with her hermeneutic or exegetical conclusions.

The thirty-one sermons contained in *Always a Guest* were all preached by invitation after Taylor left the full-time pastorate for academia, and they span from 2006 up through 2020. The date and location of delivery as well as any useful context for the occasion are provided for each sermon. The settings vary widely and include college chapels, Sunday morning services of various denominations, seminary graduations, the Chautauqua Institution, radio programming, and a certain English Cathedral.

The biblical text specified for each sermon is more than decoration for the page or springboard to a topic of choice. Taylor engages with Scripture, walking through the passage in a loosely expository manner and addressing textual and theological issues as appropriate to the audience. She utilizes a conversational style unburdened by theological jargon. She repeatedly draws the listener into encountering the people in the text and experiencing their emotions. One effective example is her brief, first-person voicing of James or John's thoughts throughout the transfiguration account.

Taylor writes in the preface, "The most surprising gift [of always being a guest] was the freedom to preach without fear of being fired–or if not fired, at least roundly criticized with apparent relish" (x). She expresses this freedom homiletically by tending to dive into the deep end of discomfort. She describes the human condition with all its doubts and fears. She questions common assumptions and rejects pat answers. She draws pointed attention to how her listeners may be internally squirming, and she presses in to challenge them spiritually. These are not necessarily "safe" sermons, and that may feel like a breath of fresh air to readers.

Nonetheless, this collection feels consistent with her earlier work for which she has been amply recognized and awarded. In particular, Taylor's facility with language and imagination is exceptional. One of my favorite moments in the book is when she describes creation from the point of view of birds, if birds had the same intellectual and spiritual capacities as humans. The description paints a delightfully fun and thought-provoking picture. Even an illustration that would seem like a last-minute addition – an experience on the plane ride to the venue – is seamlessly woven into the tapestry of her words.

These sermons are on the shorter side, so one or more could easily be read and evaluated in a homiletics class activity or included in a course packet as an exemplar of an esteemed preacher. Given that Taylor is now retired to some extent, this book is a valuable contribution toward formal analysis of her preaching corpus. For example, I found it interesting to compare her treatment of the parable of the Good Samaritan in *Always a Guest* ("The Good Heretic") with that of "Do Love" in *The Preaching Life*, published in 1993.

Lies My Preacher Told Me: An Honest Look at the Old Testament. By Brent A. Strawn. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2021. 978-0-664-26571-7, 116 pp., $15.69.

Reviewer: *Soloman R. Patrick, Jr., Luther Rice Bible College and Seminary, Lithonia, GA.*

Brent Strawn, Professor of Old Testament and Law at Duke University, seeks to set forward the true beauty of the Old Testament by exposing ten mistruths presented about it in the church by both Sunday school teachers and preachers, whether intentionally or not. He gives ample space to the examination of each mistruth as it is often presented in a familiar cliché before challenging it with simple logic.

After a brief introduction, Strawn explains in chapter one that the Old Testament is not someone else's mail; it stands as the holy word of God for all. In chapter two, he challenges the idea that the Old Testament is a boring history book by pointing to some examples of the action and intriguing accounts recorded in the Old Testament. Chapter three challenges the claim of the first Testament's obsolescence, showing that it has a place in the life of Christians today. In chapter four, Strawn defends God against the charge of meanness as depicted in the Old Testament by explaining how God is not pleased with injustice and sin throughout all of Scripture. Chapter five, similarly, speaks to the alleged violent nature of God by showing that there are violent passages throughout both testaments. In chapter six, he dispels the notion that David wrote all of the Psalms by pointing to the clear indications of other psalmists. Strawn challenges the idea that the Old Testament is not spiritually enriching in chapter seven. The relevance of the Old Testament is the focus of chapter eight, while chapter nine challenges the view that the Old Testament is both burdensome and impossible to keep. Finally, chapter ten addresses the claim that everything in Scripture is about Jesus.

Lies My Preacher Told Me is a unique work. Among its strengths is that it grabs the reader's attention by discussing statements that most Christians have previously heard, if not made themselves. The biggest weakness of the work is that it is not long enough. The author does not explore the impact of the mistruths on the body of Christ.

Although Strawn's work is interesting, it does not provide any new ideas for preachers. It does, however, challenge readers to reflect on the statements that they make to their parishioners about the Old Testament to ensure that they are grounded in truth.

Let the Legends Preach: Sermons by Living Legends at the E. K. Bailey Preaching Conference. Edited by Jared E. Alcántara. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2021. 978-1-7252-6689-6, 254 pp., $29.00.

Reviewer: *Matthew D. Kim, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, South Hamilton, MA.*

Books of collected sermons, some would argue, are becoming increasingly passé. "Who wants to read a bunch of printed messages? Isn't that so nineteenth century?" The answer to that question, for this reviewer, is this: not so in every case. *Let the Legends Preach* is a salient volume that any preacher who values biblical preaching should pick up and read.

Jared E. Alcántara, holder of the Paul W. Powell endowed chair in preaching at George W. Truett Theological Seminary, Baylor University, serves as the editor of this important contribution to the field of homiletics. Highlighting the life, ministry, and sermons of homiletical "legends," or to use the metaphor of baseball "hall of fame" preachers, this collection of biographies and sermons brings to our focus the fruit of decades of sermonic brilliance from the annual E. K. Bailey Conference on preaching.

In the excellent foreword, written by one of these preaching legends, Joel C. Gregory emphasizes the impact that Bailey had on expository preaching, generally, and African-American expository preaching, more specifically, during his time in the pastorate which prematurely ended with a battle with cancer. Bailey's preaching ministry exemplified the best in the African-American preaching tradition.

The twenty-four legendary preachers, some known to this reviewer more than others, highlighted in this book include: Ervin Kinsley (E. K.) Bailey, Gardner C. Taylor, Henry H. Mitchell, James Earl Massey, Haddon W. Robinson, Robert Smith Jr., Joel C. Gregory, and many others. To begin each chapter, Alcántara does a fine job of providing succinct biographies on the

preachers, their lives, pastorates, and sermonic influence. The legend's sermon preached at the E. K. Bailey Conference immediately follows his biography. To be fair, some sermons are more expositional than others, as some readers of this journal would undoubtedly agree. However, there is no doubt that we can learn from each of these preachers to grow in some facet of our common desire to faithfully preach God's word.

I am grateful for the vision of Bryan Carter and the execution of Jared E. Alcántara in furnishing our guild and pastors with this significant resource. My only wish is that there could have been an audio/video companion to this printed book so that preachers could hear and/or watch the sermons in their original setting. Perhaps the organizers of the E. K. Bailey Conference would be able and willing to share sermon links for such aspiring minds. I would highly recommend this work and encourage you to pick it up for yourself and for the sake of your congregations and students not just as an introduction to the world of African-American homiletical excellence, but also as a place to linger and learn from some of the most effective preachers in our day.

The Journal of the Evangelical Homiletics Society

History:

The Evangelical Homiletics Society (EHS) convened its inaugural meeting in October of 1997, at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, South Hamilton, MA, at the initiative of Drs. Scott M. Gibson of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary and Keith Willhite of Dallas Theological Seminary. Professors Gibson and Willhite desired an academic society for the exchange of ideas related to instruction of biblical preaching.

Specifically, the EHS was formed to advance the cause of Biblical Preaching through:

> promotion of a biblical-theological approach to preaching increased competence for teachers of preaching integration of the fields of communication, biblical studies, and theology scholarly contributions to the field of homiletics

The EHS membership consists primarily of homiletics professors from North American seminaries and Bible Colleges who hold to evangelical theology, and thus treat preaching as the preaching of God's inspired Word. The EHS doctrinal statement is that of the National Association of Evangelicals.

Purpose:

The Journal of the Evangelical Homiletics Society is designed to engage readers with articles dealing with the best research and expertise in preaching. Readers will be introduced to literature in the field of homiletics or related fields with book reviews. Since the target audience of the journal is scholars/practitioners, a sermon will appear in each edition which underscores the commitment of the journal to the practice of preaching.

Vision:

The vision of the Journal of the Evangelical Homiletics Society is to provide academics and practitioners with a journal that informs and equips readers to become competent teachers of preaching and excellent preachers.

General Editor:

The General Editor has oversight of the journal. The General Editor selects suitable articles for publication and may solicit article suggestions from the Editorial Board for consideration for publication. The General Editor works cooperatively with the Book Review Editor and the Managing Editor to ensure the timely publication of the journal.

Book Review Editor:

The Book Review Editor is responsible for the Book Review section of the journal. The Book Review Editor contacts publishers for books to review and receives the books from publishers. The Book Review Editor sends books to members of the Society who serve as book reviewers. The reviewers then forward their written reviews to the Book Review Editor in a timely manner. The Book Review Editor works in coordination with the General Editor for the prompt publication of the journal.

Managing Editor:

The Managing Editor has oversight of the business matters of the journal. The Managing Editor solicits advertising, coordinates the subscription list and mailing of the journal, and works with the General Editor and Book Review Editor to ensure a timely publication of the journal.

Editorial Board:

The Editorial Board serves in advising the General Editor in the publication of articles for the journal. The Editorial Board serves as a jury for articles considered for publication. The Editorial Board consists of no more than five members. Board members are approved at the annual meeting of the Evangelical Homiletics Society and hold a two-year appointment.

Frequency of Publication:

The Journal of the Evangelical Homiletics Society is published twice a year: March and September.

Jury Policy:

Articles submitted to the Journal of the Evangelical Homiletics Society are blind juried by members of the Editorial Board. In addition, the General Editor may ask a scholar who is a specialist to jury particular articles.

The General Editor may seek articles for publication from qualified scholars. The General Editor makes the final publication decisions. It is always the General Editor's prerogative to edit and shorten said material, if necessary.

Submission Guidelines

1. Manuscripts should be submitted in electronic form. All four margins should be at least one inch, and each should be consistent throughout. Please indicate the program in which the article is formatted, preferably, Microsoft Word (IBM or MAC).

2. Manuscripts should be double-spaced. This includes the text, indented (block) quotations, notes, and bibliography. This form makes for easier editing.

3. Neither the text, nor selected sentences, nor subheads should be typed all-caps.

4. Notes should be placed at the end of the manuscript, not at the foot of the page. Notes should be reasonably close to the style advocated in the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* 3rd edition (New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 1988) by Joseph Gibaldi and Walter S. Achtert. That style is basically as follows for research papers:

   a. From a book:

   note: 23. John Dewey, *The Study of Ethics: A Syllabus* (Ann Arbor, 1894), 104.

   b. From a periodical:

   note: 5. Frederick Barthelme, "Architecture," *Kansas Quarterly* 13:3 (September 1981): 77-78.

   c. Avoid the use of op. cit.
   Dewey 111.

5. Those who have material of whatever kind accepted for publication must recognize it is always the editor's prerogative to edit and shorten said material, if necessary.

6. Manuscripts will be between 2,000 and 6,000 words, unless otherwise determined by the editor.

Abbreviations

Please do not use abbreviations in the text. Only use them for parenthetical references. This includes the names of books of the Bible and common abbreviations such as "e.g." (the full reference, "for example" is preferred in the text). Citations of books, articles, websites are expected. Please do not use "p./pp." for "page(s)," or "f./ff." for "following." Precise page numbers or verse numbers are expected, not "f./ff."

Capitalization

Capitalize personal, possessive, objective, and reflexive pronouns (but not relative pronouns) when referring to God: "My, Me, Mine, You, He, His, Him, Himself," but "who, whose, whom."

Direct Quotes

Quotations three or more lines long should be in an indented block. Shorter quotes will be part of the paragraph and placed in quotation marks.

Scripture quotations should be taken from the NIV. If the quotation is from a different version, abbreviate the name in capital letters following the reference. Place the abbreviation in parentheses: (Luke 1:1-5, NASB).

Headings

First-level Heading
These indicate large sections. They are to be flush left in upper case, and separate from the paragraph that follows.

Second-level Heading
These headings are within the First-level section and are to be flush left, in italic in upper and lower case, and also separate from the paragraph that follows.

Notes

All notes should be endnotes, the same size as the main text with a hard return between each one.

Submission and Correspondence

Manuscripts should be sent to the attention of the General Editor. Send an email with attached Word document to: scott_gibson@baylor.edu

Address correspondence to Scott M. Gibson, General Editor, Journal of the Evangelical Homiletics Society, Baylor University's Truett Seminary, One Bear Place #97126, Waco, TX 76798-7126

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