

Matthew D. Kim. *A Little Book for New Preachers: How and Why to Study Homiletics*. Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2020. 126 pages. \$12.

In *A Little Book for New Preachers*, Matthew D. Kim gives a broad overview of the study of preaching and its practice. The book is divided into three sections: "Why Study Preaching?" "Characteristics of Faithful Preaching," and "Characteristics of Faithful Preachers."

In the first section, "Why Study Preaching?" Kim laments the common experience that many homileticians and preachers relate to: namely, engaging in this discipline that is often maligned by culture at large and underappreciated in theological education. He makes a case that preaching is still central to the life of the church because people still "hunger for faithful exposition of Scripture" (26). Furthermore, he argues that preaching should not be a peripheral discipline in theological education because it is "the very capstone and consummation of all other theological disciplines" (29). Kim goes on to name some of the burdens and joys of preaching and then briefly explores the legacy of preaching handed on to preachers of every generation: the legacy of God's word, the legacy of heralds, and the legacy of tradition. New and experienced preachers alike will recognize this legacy as both a burden and a joy. Section one ends with a discussion around the goal of preaching, which is to make disciples who are obedient to God, Christlike, and whose love is transformed and directed to God.

Section 2, "The Characteristics of Faithful Preaching," expounds on the following characteristics that work together to form a sermon: faithful interpretation, faithful cultural exegesis, and faithful application. Regarding faithful biblical interpretation, Kim argues in favor of a five-step, authorial-cultural model of hermeneutics, which begins by seeking an understanding of the biblical author's culture and intent in writing. This section also offers practical advice on how to choose a text, and tips like "spend as much time in exegesis as you do in preparing the outline and manuscript" (65). Faithful interpretation is described as the "first key element for faithful preaching" (72), but the second is not far behind: faithful cultural exegesis. The goal of faithful cultural exegesis is to understand the culture so that one can more effectively proclaim God's word in that culture. Kim readily recognizes that "culture" is not a monolith, so preachers must exegete multiple layers of culture including generational cultures, ethnic and racial cultures, socioeconomic and educational cultures, etc. This is framed as a deeply pastoral concern; learning to faithfully exegete the cultures in one's congregation is a way for the pastor to honor the *imago Dei* in each person and love them well. The third characteristic of faithful preaching is faithful application. Kim encourages specificity and variety in application; he directs preachers to the possibility that application does not always mean giving listeners a list of three new things to do in the coming week. For example, sometimes, application may be more about being rather than doing.

In the third and final section, Kim describes the ethos of a faithful preacher. He makes the case that a faithful preacher will be characterized as a loving pastor who is warm, direct, available to the congregation, and appropriately intimate in the sense of sharing one's life with the congregation. The point is clear: preaching and pastoring belong together. Within this section, there is ample practical advice for new and seasoned preachers alike when Kim addresses the importance of self-care and Sabbath for maintaining one's character.

This book is directed toward new preachers and students of homiletics. However, it will also help the seasoned preacher who is growing tired or who feels the burden of the weekly task before them. In the latter case, it is a helpful refresher and an encouragement to see the preaching task as the sacred and formative thing. The book does not attempt to delve into the mechanics of

sermon writing, though Kim does offer suggestions for books on expository methods for preaching. Kim's high regard for scripture as God's word comes through clearly, as does the preference for an exposition-application approach to sermon writing. This book is a valuable primer on the task of preaching and the life of the Christian preacher.

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