

Christ-Centered Preaching

by Bryan Chapell
Baker Academic: Grand Rapids, Michigan

Bryan Chapell writes with a single burden on his mind. As he scans the Evangelical world, he sees too many hearers of sermons being stung by the “the deadly B’s” (“Be like” “Be good” “Be disciplined” – 289) rather than being strengthened by the crucified and risen Christ. From the book’s beginning to its end, the author seeks to remind preachers that their goal is to help their listeners “understand a text’s full meaning in the context of its God-glorifying, gospel intent” (273).

Lutheran preachers will certainly notice some elements missing that we would like to see such as

- the close relationship of Christ-centered preaching to baptism and the Lord’s Supper,
- the beautiful symmetry between the progression of the seasons (and Sundays) of the church year and Christocentric preaching, and
- the assistance that preaching within the context of the liturgy gives as proper and ordinary combine to proclaim Christ.

Those trained in homiletics at WLS will also notice some differences in terminology that at times requires a bit of translation.

Yet despite those challenges, there is much the Lutheran preacher will appreciate in Chapell’s book. Keeping Christ central to our preaching is not a challenge only for Evangelicals in the pulpit. One particularly helpful section offers detailed assistance in preaching Christ legitimately from the Old Testament, neither engaging in fanciful allegory nor leapfrogging un-textually to Christ.

Because this is also a textbook covering all the basic steps in the process from exegesis to sermon delivery, much practical help in the nuts and bolts of the homiletical process can also be found. Often where our own textbook (*Preach the Gospel*) is a bit brief, Chapell goes into considerable detail.

A study guide that can be used to work through the entire volume can also be found on this web site.