

Tim MacBride. *Preaching the New Testament as Rhetoric: The Promise of Rhetorical Criticism for Expository Preaching*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2014. 265 pages. \$31.

This text, which could easily double as an introduction to rhetoric, provides a thorough investigation of the utility of rhetorical criticism for expository preaching. Combining homiletical theory and a deep knowledge of the history of rhetoric, MacBride provides a methodology aimed at ensuring that expository sermons perform the same rhetorical function as their scriptural sources. One of the most impressive aspects of this book is the way that MacBride makes rhetorical theory accessible to practitioner and academic alike. While I have an introductory familiarity with rhetoric, the descriptions of terminology are clear enough that someone without any previous exposure to rhetorical theory would be able to apply this methodology to their preaching. Centering his analysis on undisputed Pauline epistles, MacBride demonstrates how rhetorical criticism helps the preacher understand Paul's original rhetorical purpose in order to model that purpose in their sermons.

The move to write sermons that not only interpret a text but that also perform the same way that the biblical text performs in context predates MacBride. He acknowledges how the work of David Kelsey, David Buttrick, Tom Long and others provide a preliminary investigation into this technique. MacBride however offers a study that uses rhetorical theory to provide a methodology for crafting sermons. He argues that rhetorical criticism allows one to understand the original intent of the authors and how it would have been received in its original setting and that with this knowledge, current expository preachers would be able to craft sermons that modeled those intentions. In many ways this book also works as a guide to biblical interpretation, helping preachers account for the differences between the context of the original hearers and our current congregations.

Chapter 1 begins by arguing for the legitimacy of using rhetorical criticism, specifically as it relates to Paul's writing. Anticipating arguments that Paul's work should be examined with epistolary theory instead, MacBride provides a strong foundation for the application of rhetorical criticism to Paul's writing. In fact, he limits this particular study to Paul's undisputed writings because he believes them to be the closest things to actual speeches found in the Bible. Chapter 2 continues with a survey of the field of rhetorical criticism that is purposely limited to works that support its utility for expository preaching. This directed survey demonstrates that that rhetorical criticism is quite useful for expository preaching precisely because this methodology emphasizes the function of a text, the same way that expository preaching intends. Chapter 3 begins the actual movement into rhetorical criticism by discussing the different rhetorical species (genres), namely deliberative, forensic, and epideictic. MacBride shows how the species of a biblical passage informs how a sermon might be preached from the text. For MacBride, figuring out the species of a text is not mere categorization but instead "an epistemological tool for unlocking meaning in individual texts" (53).

Chapter 4 shifts the focus to rhetorical arrangement and demonstrates how a familiarity with this aspect of rhetorical theory informs preaching. This chapter contains an illustrative example of the kind of depth found in this work and how it aids preachers. In this chapter MacBride describes how Paul's exordiums (introductions) had the purpose of informing the audience of the intent of the speech. He then names how these elaborate introductions are often used as "launching pads" for topical messages by today's preachers. He cautions against this use because it is so different than Paul's original intent. This kind of detail exemplifies the work that MacBride does in this text. Chapter 5 serves as an introduction to the Means of Persuasion that

are more closely detailed in chapters 6–8. In these chapters he gives a history of the uses of *ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos* and how identifying these proofs within the New Testament authors informs preaching. Chapter 6 uses the first four chapters of 1 Corinthians as a source for a potential preaching series based on the methodology offered in this book.

This book serves as an effective, logical, and detailed extension of the move within homiletic theory to match the function of the Biblical text with the function of the sermon. Using the reemerging field of rhetorical criticism, MacBride's profound analysis provides a clear understanding of how to craft expository sermons that are faithful to the original intent of Paul, a learned rhetorician.

Timothy Jones, Boston University School of Theology, Boston, MA