

Sidney Greidanus. *Preaching Christ from Psalms: Foundations for Expository Sermons in the Christian Year*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016. 595 pages. \$40.

Sidney Greidanus, Professor Emeritus of Preaching at Calvin Theological Seminary, offers a study on Christian preaching from the Psalms in this volume. He follows the methodology he used in his work *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament* (1999). It also echoes ideas from his *The Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text* (1988). He has also written on the theme of Preaching Christ in three other volumes on Genesis, Ecclesiastes and Daniel.

He bases his study on 22 psalms from the Psalm reading from *The Revised Common Lectionary* Year A. However, preaching from the Psalms does not need to be limited to this and he offers a variety of helpful suggestions in an appendix, “Series of Sermons on the Psalms.”

Chapter one discusses issues found in preaching Christ from the Psalms. He addresses such objections as the Psalms were meant to be prayed or sung in the church. He emphasizes that preaching Christ from the Psalms should not be a forced ideology. His approach to preaching Christ from the Psalms is to “preaching sermons which authentically integrate the message of the text with the climax of God’s revelation in the person, work, and/or teaching of Jesus Christ as revealed in the New Testament” (5). Greidanus views a predictive nature of many of the Psalms in which Jesus fulfilled the hope that went unfulfilled during the earthly Israelite reigns. He also notes the extensive use of the Psalms in the New Testament, by both Jesus and the writers, to emphasize the importance of the Psalms for the Church today.

One of the strengths of the book is its emphasis of understanding the literary structure of the Psalms in the preparation and preaching from the Psalms. Poetic devices can often be lost in translation. Parallelism is common in Hebrew poetry and provides an insight to the flow of a given Psalm as well as other rhetorical structures such as repetition, inclusio, and chiasmic patterns. It is also important to understand the literary structure of the Psalms including its division into five books and the use of different types of psalms throughout the book. Knowing these types and their functions aids in the interpretation of the Psalms.

Each of the 22 Psalms is dealt with in separate chapters that follow a shared outline. The text and the context are dealt with first followed by a discussion of the literary and rhetorical qualities of the text. Greidanus then deals with the theocentric aspect of the text. After addressing the theme and goals of the text, he offers various ways in which Christ can be addressed through the text. Finally, the author offers an expository sermon based on the text.

Helpful appendices at the end include additional sermons and meditation. It has already noted, “Series of Sermons on the Psalms,” which offers alternatives to *The Revised Common Lectionary* for preaching from the Psalms. Two appendices, “Ten Steps from Text to Sermon” and “An Expository Sermon Model,” offer primers for sermon preparation.

Sidney Greidanus’ *Preaching Christ from the Psalms: Foundations for Expository Sermons in the Christian Year* provides a rationale for preaching from the Psalms in the church today. As an Old Testament professor, I do question the need to always to preach Christ from the Psalms. The Psalms can be a personal and rich resource for the reader to voice his or her own self to God. Nevertheless, Greidanus provides an introduction to understanding the literary and rhetorical nature of the poetic literature of the Psalms. Each chapter offers a good example of the depth of research and thought that should be included in the sermon preparation process. This is

accentuated by his inclusion of developing the sermon and the expository sermon and also additional suggestions for developing Psalms sermon series in the appendices.

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