

Yung Suk Kim. *Preaching the New Testament Again: Faith, Freedom, and Transformation*. Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2019. 110 pages. \$16.

In *Preaching The New Testament Again*, Yung Suk Kim invites readers to rethink traditional interpretations of three themes integral to the New Testament—faith, freedom, and transformation. Kim urges contemporary proclaimers to interpret these themes anew and to engage broader meanings for preaching in contemporary contexts. The book is organized into three discussion chapters, titled faith, freedom, and transformation, respectively. In each chapter, Kim examines historical views of the concepts, and offers incisive interpretive options with which to view faith, freedom, and transformation. Each chapter includes suggestions on how readers may move from exegetical inquiry to concrete sermons that address faith, freedom, and transformation in light of current social conditions.

New Testament readers are led to understand faith as that which “involves the whole being of who we are as we contemplate how to live in this hostile world” (10). In addition to faith as it relates to one’s soul salvation, readers are invited to survey more closely God’s faithfulness, Jesus’s faithfulness, and Christian faithfulness. Kim shows how faith stories from the Gospels portray God as faithful. For instance, Mark’s faithful God is a God of justice, while Luke’s faithful God is one of unconditional love. Rather than faith in Jesus, the writing turns attention to the faith of Jesus, as evidenced, for example, in his baptism, his social action, and his prayer of distress at Gethsemane (19). Kim argues that Jesus’ willingness to proceed to death is a faith decision. The third discussion of faith centers on varying aspects of faith in the lives of Christian believers, that is, faith as trust, faith as participation, faith as knowledge, faith as assurance, and faith as works. Kim concludes that “faith is an active or dynamic word that propels Christian participation” (30). Faith, writes Kim, seeks freedom (38).

Freedom is explored as freedom from (enslaving conditions), freedom for (building community), and freedom in (God or Christ) (39). Again, an analysis of the Gospels yields the ways in which the very concept of freedom connotes a need to be released or set free from something or someone. Mark’s writings urge freedom from fear, the fear that permeated Markan communities who chose to follow Jesus. Matthean freedom is from hypocrisy, namely, the hypocrisy of excluding Gentiles from the house of God. As a case in point, Kim argues that even Jesus changed his mind about the Gentiles after his encounter with a persistent woman in Matthew 15 (42). The Pauline letters promote freedom from the law and/of sin, and submission to the law of God. The purpose of this freedom is to build loving communities, communities of solidarity that are rooted how Jesus lived. Paradoxically, Christian freedom is found in God and bound by the character of God and activity of God in the world. Good preaching on freedom explores the range of ways freedom may be interpreted in the scriptures.

Concerning transformation, Kim refutes simplistic views, suggesting rather that transformation is a holistic concept that involves a constant change of human life (75). Jesus, Kim asserts, was transformed in his baptism, in his prayer life, and in his understanding of his own ministry. After baptism, writes Kim, “he had a stronger motivation to serve the oppressed and marginalized” (77). Similarly, the author shows how New Testament individuals and communities changed in response to personal and social issues. Matthew’s Gospel “transforms the view of the law into the spirit of integrity, seeking God’s impartial love for all” (80). Kim gives considerable attention to Paul’s dramatic transformation and life thereafter. He portrays Paul as one who shifts his belief in a Davidic Messiah to a Crucified Messiah. Kim’s insistence

of Paul's universalism and egalitarianism is prevalent throughout the text. The Deutero-Pauline writings suggest transformation as a change of knowledge, particularly about God or Jesus.

Readers may most appreciate Kim's exegetical dexterity that yields New Testament insights on faith, freedom, and transformation—a gift to preachers wrestling to excavate new meanings for this age! Each chapter offers a wealth of interpretive possibilities for the given concepts, options that inspire still more alternatives to energize the preaching imagination. Kim's turn to New Testament preaching that addresses social ills—such as immigration, racism, and marginalization of particular people groups—is refreshing, if the homiletical bridge is not consistently evident. Preachers may refer to this book as an accessible compact resource for re-reading the New Testament, particularly the Gospels, in preparation for preaching that is faithful, offers freedom, and invites transformation.

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