

Jeffrey D. Arthurs. *Preaching as Reminding: Stirring Memory in an Age of Forgetfulness*. Downers-Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2017. 167 pages. \$16.07.

God's calling and a sense of commitment drive preachers to proclaim God's word. However, this regular proclamation of the word of God brings preachers the burden and pressure of avoiding monotonous content. In the digital age, preachers are expected to use more digital/technological tools to help hearers engage in the sermon content or to help sermons be more accessible. However, Jeffrey Arthurs, professor of preaching and communication at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, proves to preachers that they should be "God's remembrancers" (4). In other words, Arthurs wants preachers to be reminders.

Jeffrey Arthurs traces biblical and theological worlds to explore the meaning of remembering and forgetting, and in chapters 1 and 2 proves their prominence. He then asserts that preachers are also the Lord's remembrancers, providing more examples from the biblical texts in chapter 3. Chapter 1 describes the essence and action of God and what God has done for the human being (25). Chapter 2 continues the topic of remembering and forgetting and discusses it from the perspectives of neuroscience, media, and psychology. Arthurs shows readers how brains work and how media shapes our perception and attention; however, the human being is cursed with the problem of forgetting God. Therefore, Arthurs points out that the primary task of the preacher is to remind hearers what God has done and what God's people have experienced in order to evoke in hearers their original passion and love of God, and then lead hearers to action (58).

In chapters 4 to 7, Arthurs provides four rhetorical elements to aid the preacher's task of reminding: style, story, delivery, and ceremony and symbol. Style means the use of language, and is important because it helps preachers capture the hearers' attention by processing information through people's concrete experience. Story aids preachers in illustrating reality with biblical and theological accuracy within the pastoral mind. Delivery pertains to issues of verbal and nonverbal communication, like a person's voice and gesture. Finally, ceremony and symbol are contained in Christian worship and help contemporary hearers reconnect to God's action with God's people, and to evoke hearers' emotion and imagination in the present.

Arthurs states that a task of preachers is to remind hearers and bring hearers from the old story of the past to our story in the present. Although the ideas that Arthurs provides in this book are not new concepts, it is valuable to reconsider the importance of oral communication and the necessity of proclaiming God's story and historical events day by day or week by week using better rhetorical strategies. Arthurs makes a powerful case about human beings forgetting, and thoughtfully asserts that preaching is an act of helping people to remember.

As helpful as I found *Preaching as Reminding*, I have three concerns. First, *Preaching as Reminding* applies different disciplines to interpret the requirement of reminding. However, disciplines should not only help us find problems, but help us solve them. For instance, Arthurs mentions the problem that technology has caused for hearing. Yet at the same time, technological tools could create more sacred elements in different forms that help hearers access and remember theological and historical events through different senses. Technology is not such a negative subject in our faith. Second, is "not remembering" forgetting? Arthurs thinks "the opposite of remembering is forgetting" and explains that "forgetting is parallel to forsaking and rejecting" (18). Then Arthurs uses examples from scripture that describe how the people of Israel forget the Lord, and adds his conclusion that "God does not forget his children, but he does forget their sins

(24).” However, there are several passages in the Bible that indicate that God forgives our sins, like Isaiah 43:25 and Hebrews 10:14-18. Theologically, God’s “not remembering” is not what we usually think of as forgetfulness. If we know that God is omniscient and knows all things, God cannot forget in the sense that a human does. Third, in the context of some Asian countries, do the ideas of remembrance of God’s works and the preacher’s work of reminding limit the mission of preaching or the mission of the church? In a country where the Christian community is only 5 percent of the whole population, it is not easy for a preacher to share the memory of Christianity with non-Christians in that context.

Notwithstanding the potentially problematic arguments mentioned above, the book proves itself useful both for field preachers and seminary students who learn current communicative-strategic approaches to preaching. Jeffrey Arthurs’s claims are grounded and thought-provoking, and his book gives the preacher practical approaches for worship and pastoral care. I highly recommend seminarians and preachers to read this helpful reference for their future work on preaching.

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