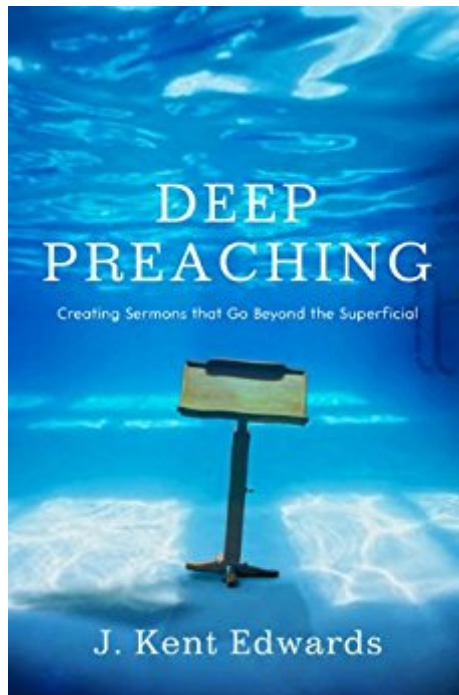




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Deep Preaching: Creating Sermons That Go Beyond The Superficial



Synopsis

J. Kent Edwards recalls a story that late pastor J. Vernon McGee told about seeing children in South Africa playing a game of marbles in the dust with real diamonds. The precious stones were being handled with no regard for their true worth. Edwards fears the same thing happens today when preachers offer Scriptural truth to listeners without being completely overwhelmed by its greatness themselves in the process. Deep Preaching is his call to "rethink" preaching. Edwards helps preachers learn to preach the word in ways that will powerfully change the lives of hearers. He contends that sermons "need not settle comfortably on the lives of the listeners like dust on a coffee table." He encourages preachers to join him in casting off the lines that moor their ministries to the status-quo and make every effort to steer their preaching out of the "comfortable shallows." He urges them to preach deep sermons rather than superficial ones, moving "beyond the yawn-inspiring to the awe-inspiring, from the trite to the transforming."

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Customer Reviews

Kent Edwards' Deep Preaching mostly delivers as promised. I'll focus on three negatives before

offering some positives. Three drawbacks to the book are poor editing, a confusing presentation of fasting and a disdain for systematic theology. I noted misspelled words in more than twenty places, many of which were so obvious that they took away from the experience of reading for comprehension. In a word, it was distracting. For example, in Appendix 2, Improving Perfection (Extended Metaphor) on p. 193, Edwards introduces us to Michele Oka Doner. However, several lines later she is called "Ms. Donner." Here's another found on p. 65: "God often presents. These may be nitpicky, but this happened throughout the book. I also finished reading the section on fasting without getting a clear vision for his reasons for fasting. On p. 115 he states that Jesus fasted and "[h]is comments on fasting are frequently prefaced with 'when you fast' rather than 'if you fast.'" My issue was with the word "frequently" especially since the footnote refers to one passage: Matthew 6:16-17. Again, I mostly agreed with his argument, but I was also concerned with his wobbly stance on the implications for pastors who are NOT regularly making fasting a part of their sermon prep. To say that not fasting implies "that you are not experiencing real intimacy with God" is a bold statement that he does not back up very well. He then backs off a little in the next sentence to say that not fasting "may indicate our remoteness from God," which is a careful, nuanced way of saying it. I love systematic theology. I love the synthesis of themes found throughout the Bible presented topically. I think it brings balance to one's understanding of Scripture by seeing how God has addressed various topics throughout history. People who love the book of James need to read Galatians to have a full-orbed picture of justification. Edwards paints a brief and negative view of systematic theology and seems to present the whole discipline as men's "theories" who have apparently wasted the "gallons of ink [they] spilled." To dismiss systematic theology with merely a wave, and to put it at odds with the storyline and stories of the Bible is unhelpful and unfair. If the preacher does not have some kind of "system" that helps him organize his thoughts about biblical topics, he is much more open to contradicting himself as he preaches through the various genres and authors of Scripture. The part of the book I loved was his overarching emphasis on the need for the pastor to meet with God and plead with the Holy Spirit to work in not only the delivery, and not only the prep, but to work in the heart of the pastor. His description of the process leading from exegesis to homiletics is one that harried and hurried 21st century pastors need desperately to heed. His quote of D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones that "the preacher's first, and most important task is to prepare himself, not his sermon" is right on. Deep preaching ought to affect us before we even think about how it might affect our congregations. Another thing that must be noted is Edwards' insistence on mastering metaphors. He uses them incessantly throughout the book, the vast majority of them to good effect. Edwards makes the case for the necessity of finding metaphors in real life that will

connect biblical truth to the lives of those in the congregation. His reasoning is sound and he subordinates the need for metaphor to the need for the God to make the sermon come alive in the hearts of listeners. I would commend this book to all preachers, but especially those who were taught primarily to focus on sermon construction and communication techniques. Those are helpful but a technically good sermon that lacked depth is what provided the impetus for Edwards to write this book in the first place.

This book will compel the reader to approach the task of preaching in a whole new way. Edwards provides the answer for breathing new life into preaching. He holds a high view of preaching, and a high view of the Word of God, and yet he approaches preaching from a very current and culturally aware perspective. This book will help a preacher get excited about preaching. But more than that, it will make a preacher get excited about preparing to preach. And this book isn't just a professional's guide to preaching. Anyone who teaches the Bible, in any context, can be aided by this book. And anyone who is frustrated with the preaching they are hearing can read this book and instantly see why most preaching fails, while a few preachers enjoy great success. I heartily recommend this book.

Good effort, but hampered in two areas. First, the author believes in the direct illumination of the Holy Spirit. So several chapters are spent discussing how to get alone - "in your closet" for "closet time" - where the Holy Spirit will reveal to the preacher's mind directly the deeper meaning of the text. Though Edwards tries to separate this from those who claim direct inspiration it is, of course, exactly that. How would one resist a preacher who said "the Spirit has told me this text, on the deeper level, means _____"? What Edwards is arguing for is nothing short of being inspired of God. If you believe that sort of thing you'll like it. If not, you will struggle with it. As a side-note Edwards spends much time talking about "begging" the Spirit for this illumination. One would think the Spirit would WANT us to know His will. Why must we beg? The other point that needs to be made is this book needs an editor. There are sentence fragments everywhere. Several illustrations are difficult. Juvenile pictures of a closet (I think it looks like a Narnian wardrobe!) as well as other pictures that are just not professional are used. A good editor could help clean this up and it would be tighter, flow better and would be easier to read. There's some wheat here in amongst a lot of chaff. A lot of chaff. The reader who can read with discernment will get something from it. The reader who can't may well be led astray from what the Bible teaches and how to preach it at a deeper level.

I very much appreciated Professor Edwards' manner and love for the Lord when I attended a seminar on preaching at Talbot School of Theology. It was because of my impression of him that I purchased this book. Dr; Edwards gives excellent suggestions and tips as well as pointing out the need for prayer to be guided by the Spirit. I really appreciated his emphasis upon teaching by metaphor. I wish I were a lot better at it. I am looking forward to reading his book on narrative preaching.

Kent Edwards passionately and effectively persuades you of the dire need for good preaching, and then provides helpful instruction for how to get there. His explanation of the need for dynamic metaphors is worth the price of the book. This book will challenge you in a good way.

i absolutely love how the author of this challenges the readers to go beyond just following instruction on how to put a sermon together to total reliance on prayer and the leading of God's spirit.

I love this book because Edwards dissects an aspect that most preaching books just gloss over: Prayer. He gives key points to expository preaching and even presents a systematic plan for praying through your sermon prep. For analytical like me, I love this approach. I give this book to guest preachers at my church. Love it!

helpful

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