

Reader's reactions

Wilson P. S. (1999)

‘The Four Pages of the Sermon: A Guide to Biblical Preaching’

Abington Press, Nashville

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The book that has most influenced my preaching is Paul Scott Wilson’s ‘The Four Pages of the Sermon’. With an accessible and practical approach Wilson provides a simple and effective system for sermon preparation; combining thorough exegesis, an honest appraisal of brokenness in the Biblical world and our world today and an emphasis on the grace of God present, reaching out, healing and making new, both then and now.

He recommends this approach as the basis for preparing a balanced sermon written metaphorically on four pages. Page one ‘problem in the text’; page two ‘problem today’; page three ‘God’s grace in the text’; page four ‘God’s grace today.’ These pages can of course be shuffled.



The book also encourages the reader to prepare the sermon like a filmmaker would produce a film. This ‘filming’ is a narrative form of preaching that attempts to create multi-sensory word pictures. He encourages us to explore the history of the scene and conjure up a vivid picture of the situation, of characters, of smells and of sounds or to employ dynamic equivalence to bringing the story forward to a time period the listeners can better relate to.

Using actual film in sermons is becoming more popular but I consider that an over emphasis on using film and projected images in sermons can limit the work of the Holy Spirit. Images placed on a screen make me and other people lazy, we don’t have to think and interact with the living text. A good contextual sermon engages with images that are already stored in the consciences of the listeners; it reshapes and gives new significance and possibilities to these images and thereby communicates much more effectively.

I have found that the outcome is a sermon that is easily understandable, biblical, theological, engaging, pastorally relevant and missional. I do not consciously use Wilson’s approach all the time, but his tune is always there, playing away in the background. I would highly recommend the book to anyone who seeks to authentically preach God’s Word in our contemporary culture.

Please note that the views expressed in these materials are those of the individual writer and not necessarily the official view of the Church of Scotland, which can be laid down only by the General Assembly.



Additional Resources

Resourcing Mission



<http://www.resourcingmission.org.uk/> is host to Starters for Sunday as well as key mission resources from the Church of Scotland, for download and purchase, and has an online booking facility for Mission & Discipleship events (eg National Youth Assembly). Please check back regularly, as new items are being added all the time. We welcome all feedback so if there is something you'd like to see on this new site that isn't already there, please use the 'Website Feedback' option on the 'Contact Us' page.

Prayer Resources

These materials are designed to be a starting point for what you might look for in Prayers. You may also be interested in looking at our publication **Pray Now 2013**. Please click [here](#).



Music Resources

The hymns mentioned in this material are ideas of specific hymns you might choose for this week's themes. However, for some excellent articles on church music and ideas for new music resources, please check out our online music magazine **Different Voices** which can be found [here](#).

Preaching Resources



These materials are designed to be a starting point for **what** you might preach this Sunday. If you would be interested in looking at our free materials on **how** you might preach, please click [here](#) to see our [Preachers Perspectives](#) web page where we have asked twelve preachers to share the insights they have gathered through their experiences of writing and delivering sermons regularly.

