

Book Review: *What is Biblical Preaching*, by Eric J. Alexander

In the introduction to his booklet in the “Basics of the Reformed Faith” series, entitled *What is Biblical Preaching?*, Eric J. Alexander confesses that he has “the deepest possible conviction about, and a God-given burden for, the centrality of biblical preaching in the church today”. This conviction of the importance of biblical preaching is directly tied to his understanding of the nature of biblical preaching; and his understanding of the nature of biblical preaching is based on the foundational doctrine of the utter pre-eminence of God, and the unique position that His very word has in the life of his people. If more Christians recognized, with Alexander, just what is true biblical preaching, perhaps more Christians would agree with him on its utter centrality in the church.

In his booklet, Eric J. Alexander very clearly works his way through eight propositions on the nature of biblical preaching; and in each of these propositions, the one great underlying theme is the supremacy of God. This truth, more than anything else, colors the nature and importance of preaching. Because preaching has to do with the word of God himself, it must necessarily be *fundamental in importance*; because it has to do with God's word as that which was given to restore fallen man to a favorable relationship with himself, it is certainly *spiritual in its essence*; because only the truth of God can set us free, it must be *didactic in its nature*, and *expository in its form*; biblical preaching must likewise be *systematic in its pattern*, *pastoral in its concern*, *clear in its structure*, and *relevant in its application*. In a word, biblical preaching, recognizing as it does the supreme importance of God, and the utter dependence that God's creation has upon his word, must cast aside all the wisdom of the preacher, and for the good of the people of God, trust in the sufficiency of what he has said to meet every need of those who are his.

The supremacy of God and his word must certainly lead the minister to careful reflection and study; but it likewise demands of him that he be eminently concerned about those for whose advantage God sent his word, recording in it everything necessary for their eternal life and happiness. In other words, it demands that he be a rigorous scholar in his study and exposition, and a compassionate pastor in his care and application. But further than this, it must also lead him to the realization of his own insufficiency for the task: the goal of preaching is to affect the people of God with the truth of God, and that goal can be accomplished by the Holy Spirit alone; thus, at the same time that the nature of biblical preaching demands a careful use of all possible means, it also demands a full-orbed reliance on the all-powerful Spirit. Prayer and humble dependence on God is as requisite to true preaching as scholarly acumen. Without God's anointing, preaching will accomplish absolutely nothing, no matter how well-crafted the sermons may be.

Although this booklet is only 32 pages, they are rich, thought-provoking pages, answering poignantly and succinctly that question, *What is Biblical Preaching?* I would highly recommend it to all current or aspiring ministers of God's word.