



The Imperative of Preaching

By John Carrick

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A Theology of Sacred Rhetoric

Believing that preaching remains of vital importance today, John Carrick argues that its effectiveness can be greatly enhanced if preachers make use of the patterns of communication laid down by God in Scripture for their instruction. He sees in the Bible a sacred rhetoric which the apostles and prophets, and Christ himself, used to awaken, move and persuade their hearers. While depending on the power of the Spirit, the preacher should not neglect any help which Scripture affords.

Sacred rhetoric is based essentially on statements and commands (called in grammar the indicative and the imperative), which, together with exclamations and questions, are of immense significance in the preaching of the Word.

Abundant examples from Scripture and from the preaching of such men as Jonathan Edwards, George Whitefield, Samuel Davies, Asahel Nettleton and Martyn Lloyd-Jones, demonstrate Carrick's case in *The Imperative of Preaching*.

Insisting on the critical importance of applying, as well as explaining, the truth of Scripture, Carrick provides an effective critique of redemptive-historical preaching, arguing that this approach seriously neglects the application of the Word of God.

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Editorial Review

Review

'What constitutes effective and powerful preaching? If we believe that prayer-soaked biblical preaching "in demonstration of the spirit and of power" (1 Cor.2:4) is the grand battering-ram for the demolishing of the bastions of ignorance and vice, and if we believe such preaching to be the unrivaled means ordained of God for the conversion and edification of men, then careful attention must be given to the biblical answer to the question, "what constitutes effective preaching and why is it so?"

Dr. Carrick has done great service to those of us who continually wrestle with this crucial question. In *The Imperative of Preaching* He approaches the Scriptures with the conviction that they are a self-interpreting body of special revelation, and that within that revelation there is clearly seen the indicative-imperative pattern of communication. He also observes the presence of the categories described as exclamative and interrogative.

It is my prayer that these pages will be read and assimilated, and the principles articulated then implemented by every preacher who has a passion to increase his effectiveness in that noblest of all callings, to "preach the Word".' --ALBERT N. MARTIN

About the Author

John Carrick is a graduate of Oxford University (BA, 1973; Certificate in Education, 1974; MA, 1978) and studied at London Theological Seminary, 1978-1980. He holds a D.Min. from Westminster Theological Seminary in California (2002). He was formerly Minister of Cheltenham Evangelical Church (1979-1992), briefly Lecturer in the History of Philosophy & Christian Thought at Reformed Theological Seminary, Charlotte, North Carolina (1993), and Minister of Matthews Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Matthews, NC (1992-1994).

He is the author of *The Imperative of Preaching: A Theology of Sacred Rhetoric* and *The Preaching of Jonathan Edwards*, published by the Trust.

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