

Preaching Christ in a Post-Modern World

Notes on Lecture 4

Applying Christ: Introduction to Christ-centred Application

Keller defines 4 ways of getting to Christ organically.

1) Theme Resolution

Inter-canonical themes are themes that cut across the Biblical canon. For instance, the theme of kingdom or law or grace. The theme develops and thickens as scripture progresses.

Broad themes:

The King and the Kingdom

The freedom and glory of God's kingdom is lost when Adam and Eve sin.

The people throughout the OT needed a good King.

Only the creator himself is a satisfactory King because the problems of his people are too deep for any human King to deal with.

Grace and Law

This theme asks the question: How can God remain holy and gracious with a rebellious people?

Approaches to this theme:

Conservative: God commands obedience so that we can receive his blessing.

Liberal: God loves everyone no matter what they do

The conservative approach is exclusively set on the holiness of God while the liberal approach focuses only on the love of God.

Isaiah highlights the tension in his writing when describing a strong King and a suffering servant. Christ fulfils the covenant so we can be saved by grace through faith. Perfection is needed to satisfy God's holiness.

Narrow themes:

Worship: How can we be in the presence of God?

The presence of God is experienced and removed in the garden and then restored by Christ through the cross and administered to the church.

Righteousness and Nakedness: How can we look good in God's eyes?

We are spiritually naked as a result of the fall. Christ clothes us with his righteousness.

Marriage and Faithfulness: How can we know love and intimacy?

The love of God is obscured by sin.

Christ's wins the love of his spouse by his death.

Image and Likeness: How can we become fully human?

Humanity has been degraded through sin. Christ is the ultimate image of God restoring the image of God back to the people by sanctification.

Rest and Sabbath: How can we find harmony with those around us?

Enmity with God and others is brought on by sin. Christ reconciles us back to God by his death and back to people within the context of church.

Judgement and Justice: Will justice ever be administered?

Bad things happen to good people because of sin. Christ was a judge who was judged to secure ultimate justice for eternity.

When preaching about the psalmist's desire to go to the sanctuary you shouldn't say "that's the reason you should want to come to church on Sunday". Instead say "we have more access to the presence of God than the psalmist as we are the temple of God." We should allure people to obedience rather than just enforcing it. We need to make obedience look attractive.

2) Law Completion

This is preaching Christ from one ethical principle. Gal 3:24 tells us that the law leads us to Christ. Preach Christ from ethical principles by showing that he completely does all of what we should do. Jesus is the only way to take the law seriously. The law is saying "you can never fulfil me, you need a saviour."

Say to the people: unless Christ has saved you, you're stuck. Then take people to the generosity of Christ. Melt their hearts by Christ's love to move people to faith. Christ exemplifies and fulfils every law.

3) Story Insertion

Take the story you're looking at and put it into the bigger story. Look for pictures of Christ in the text.

All individual stories point to Jesus. Jesus is the true Adam, Abel, Abraham....

Every story is about Jesus.

This principle is also true of corporate story lines:

Jesus Christ is the true creator- we were created through him.

Temptation in the wilderness: The fall points forward to the active obedience of Christ.

Moses took the people out of political bondage; Jesus redeemed the people from spiritual bondage.

Jesus is the true Israel. Jesus earns the blessings of the covenant to all who believe.

Another sort of typology sees Christ from the narrative pattern of the text: God working through the weak, God bringing life through death, God working through defeat.

Esther sacrificed to save Israel as Christ sacrificed himself. The acts of Esther and Ruth mirror the way in which Christ brought salvation to us.

The order of the Exodus and the law giving teaches us about Christ. The law is given after redemption. Obedience is demanded after grace is received.

4) Symbol Fulfilment

Every major figure points us to Christ. The non-personal symbols point us to Christ. The entire sacrificial and temple system points us to Christ etc