



Of Seeds and the People of God: Preaching as Parable, Crucifixion, and Testimony

Michael P. Knowles


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Preachers mount the pulpit steps terribly burdened by the conviction that they are somehow responsible for the growth and spiritual well-being of their congregants. How, they ask themselves, can mere words communicate the reality of God, bring life to a congregation, or foster spiritual growth? This study argues that effective sermons function much like Jesus' parables-by bearing witness to divine power. Parables and preaching both testify to something beyond themselves: to a life-giving dynamic that far outstrips the force of words alone. Preachers are not go-betweens or gatekeepers for the kingdom of heaven: rather, they imitate Jesus by dying to themselves in the very act of proclamation, relying directly on God for their sermons to bear fruit. As well as offering a novel interpretation of Jesus' agricultural parables, *Of Seeds and the People of God* presents a Christ-shaped theology of preaching. Beyond exegesis or rhetoric alone, faithful proclamation is a question of spirituality, of preachers and listeners together yielding to God's gift of new life.

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