

Ryan P. Tinetti. *Preaching by Heart: How a Classical Practice Helps Contemporary Pastors to Preach Without Notes*. Eugene: Cascade Books, 2021. 114 pages. \$19.

Preaching by Heart makes the clear declaration that preaching requires the speaker and the hearer to have a relational connection for the best possible engagement. This connection is something they both need from each other. The “villain” often disrupting that connection is the sermon notes or manuscript the preacher takes into the pulpit (2). In this book, Tinetti makes clear connections between the need for more engaging preaching and the capacity to move away from the written page. Instead of “practice, practice, practice” to memorize the sermon, *Preaching by Heart*, looks at the ancient and classical practices of crafting a “Memory Palace” using images and places to craft a sermon that the preacher can utilize both in creating and delivering the sermon (14-17).

In the first part of the book, Tinetti lays out the key elements of ancient rhetorical practices. There are five elemental canons of rhetoric. These include *inventio* (discovery), *dispositio* (arrangement), *elocutio* (style), *memoria* (memory), and *pronuntiatio* (delivery) (30-36). Many of these rhetorical elements are already part of the modern preacher’s toolbox. Preparing, exegeting, writing/crafting, and delivering – with or without notes – are what most preachers are taught. According to Tinetti, it’s the memorizing and delivery process that needs more focused attention. *Memoria* is the foundation of the Memory Palace process and allows preachers to internalize their sermon and thus ensure a more engaging delivery as well as reception by those listening (42). The main thrust of *Preaching by Heart* is in this fourth canon and is described with thorough details in the subsequent chapters.

The second part of the book is where preachers will find the application portion, the step-by-step process that leads to the creation of the images and places in the preacher’s Memory Palace (73-94). Determining the number of images (87-89) and the exact places of the preacher’s experience or imagination is vital in this process (75-77). One of the helpful pieces for the Memory Palace is determining the locations that take the lead in crafting sermons. There are three kinds of places to focus on. The first is a real place. Preaching with this type of concrete location can be quite helpful, especially if the preacher has been there themselves (74-75). The second is an imaginary place made up by the preacher, which can be just as impactful to the preacher’s Memory Palace (75-76). The third uses hybrid places, both real and imagined, wherein a real place can have imagined pieces thrown in for more effective preaching (76-77). Chapter four summarizes and clearly shows the entire process in detail (97).

As a preaching professor, I teach my students to minimize the use of notes as much as possible. However, they often share their anxieties about the expectations of the course during the first session. Often, someone says, “I’m terrified of not using a manuscript.” To help them, I have long used Joseph Webb’s book, *Preaching without Notes*. However, Tinetti goes a bold step beyond Webb’s approach. Whereas the “practice, practice, practice” method is Webb’s memorization technique, the process of memorizing the document, manuscript, outline, or key words of the sermon can be daunting for some. In contrast, Tinetti’s Memory Palace offers a different method of memorization that goes beyond words and activates the brain’s use of images and places instead.

Tinetti’s book is convincing and effective. His clarity of purpose is undergirded by a thorough synopsis at the conclusion of each chapter. I think the reader will find the construction of his argument and the very practical steps in the book helpful. For Tinetti, the goal is to craft a sermon that first touches their own heart and then the hearts of their listeners as it is proclaimed

with little to no notes. That's the purpose and the promise of *Preaching by Heart*. If the preacher desires to be more effective and connected to their audience – the people in the pews – an internalization needs to occur (26-28). That desire of the preacher is addressed well in *Preaching by Heart*.

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