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Review

Ajibade, Ezekiel A., *Preaching Well: Avoiding Common Pulpit Errors*. Kingdom Impact Publishing and Media Limited, Ogbomoso, 2024. ISBN: 9789787858967, 139pp.

Review by Joshua A. Adesina¹

Preaching is not merely an act but also a profound art form and an essential practice in the Christian faith. With the advent of modern technology, the preaching of sermons has expanded exponentially. Today believers have the luxury of accessing a plethora of sermons across various media platforms. However, amidst this proliferation lies a growing concern: the quality of preaching. Ezekiel Ajibade's *Preaching Well: Avoiding Common Pulpit Errors* emerges as a timely and essential guide in this field of scholarship and practice, offering seasoned and novice preachers strategies to craft contextualised sermons while steering clear of common pitfalls.

Ajibade, a distinguished scholar of Christian preaching at the Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, brings his wealth of experience and deep passion for preaching and for teaching the same to this work. His first-hand insights make this book a valuable resource for pastors, teachers, preaching students, and anyone involved in communicating God's word. Through this book, Ajibade demystifies the preaching process, making it accessible and understandable to a broad audience, including the current and future generations of preachers in Africa and beyond.

Preaching Well is an expanded edition of Ajibade's earlier work, *Common Pulpit Errors and Solutions*, published in 2016. This updated version retains the

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exact content of the previous book and incorporates additional new materials. The book is divided into two parts: the first focuses on the principles of effective preaching; the second addresses common errors in preaching and solutions for those errors.

The first part of the book, spread across seven chapters, provides a comprehensive framework for crafting and delivering effective sermons. Ajibade begins by defining biblical preaching, emphasising its incarnational nature and the need to respect the text's historical, grammatical, and literary contexts. He describes preaching as

the incarnational communication of the text of God's word considering its historical, grammatical, and literary intention, in a form that is faithful to the genre of the text and that is meaningful to the hearer in their socio-cultural context, with the ultimate aim of enhancing total transformation that results in Christ-likeness. (p. 16)

Chapter two outlines the essential components of a good sermon, including text selection, title framing, outlining, and effective delivery techniques such as voice modulation, audience analysis, and appropriate mannerisms. Ajibade argues that the effectiveness of a sermon largely depends on the preacher's effort and skill in these areas. Chapters three to seven are dedicated to discussing the above-mentioned components of a good sermon, providing detailed guidance and practical tips.

The second part of the book focuses on common errors that Ajibade has observed in contemporary preaching, particularly in Africa. From chapters eight to twelve, he categorises these errors into issues related to the preacher's personality and character, sermon preparation, delivery, and the invitation to preach. Drawing from his observations and those of his students, colleagues, and church members, Ajibade offers a nuanced analysis of these errors and proposes solutions grounded in both biblical and African contexts.

A standout feature of *Preaching Well* is its practical approach. Ajibade enriches his theoretical discussions with real-world examples, case studies, and engaging activities at the end of each chapter. These elements provide readers

with tangible guidance, making the book not just an academic text but also a practical manual for improving preaching skills.

Ajibade's work is particularly notable for its African perspective. While much has been written on preaching, few scholars have addressed it from this standpoint. Ajibade's unique position as an African homiletician allows him to address the specific challenges and nuances of preaching within African contexts, making his contributions especially valuable.

Preaching Well is primarily intended for faculty members at theological colleges and universities, experienced preachers seeking to refine their skills, and novices looking for foundational advice. One notable shortcoming of this expanded edition is that, despite the evolving landscape of homiletics since 2016, Ajibade does not identify or address any new errors in preaching beyond those identified in the 2016 publication.

In conclusion, Ezekiel Ajibade's *Preaching Well: Avoiding Common Pulpit Errors* is a must-read for anyone involved in the ministry of preaching. It offers a thorough, practical, and contextually rich guide to effective sermon preparation and delivery, making it an indispensable resource for enhancing the quality of preaching in today's diverse and dynamic Christian community.