



Marking Time: Preaching Biblical Stories in Present Tense

Barbara K. Lundblad

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Read the Preface

The preacher is too often caught between biblical and contemporary time. Residing first in one, then in the other, the preacher must somehow find a way to bring the two times -- separate as they might seem -- together. The temptation of course is to capitulate to one side or the other of this tension. The preacher can reside solely in the biblical time, offering the congregation what amounts to weekly lectures on history and archeology, spiced up with the occasional moralistic conclusion. Or, setting up shop permanently in contemporary time, she or he can offer commentaries on society and culture that occasionally tip their hats in the direction of Scripture. A third way, contends Barbara Lundblad, lies in marking time, a way of allowing biblical time to speak to the contemporary world and vice versa. When the preacher marks time, he or she admits that there can be no one-to-one correspondence between the world of the text and the world of the congregation. Nevertheless, the preacher demonstrates that when the biblical text is let loose upon our day to day existence, it challenges and judges, redeems and sanctifies it, infusing it with new meaning. Likewise, contemporary situations, needs, and experiences open up new possibilities within Scripture, allowing the congregation to see truth in the text they had never before discovered there, allowing them to discern the leading of the Spirit through the text and into the present moment. In this volume, which grows out of Lundblad's 2000 Beecher Lectures delivered at Yale Divinity School, the author presents both an argument for the ongoing intersection of the biblical and contemporary worlds, and examples of how that intersection might take place.

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