



Hear and Be Wise: Becoming a Preacher and Teacher of Wisdom

Alyce M. McKenzie

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Empowers the preacher to understand the role of wise leader to which he or she has been called, and to claim that role with conviction and joy.

Pastors are called to an exciting ministry of proclamation and leadership. That excitement, however, often turns to demoralization and burnout as pastors become increasingly uncertain of what their role is supposed to be. Competing claims by the congregation, the denomination, and society about who and what the pastor is supposed to be breed confusion and disappointment. Are they primarily managers? Therapists? Fundraisers?

A way out of this confusion lies in reclaiming the biblical understanding of who the pastor is. One of the biblical roles within the pastoral vocation that often goes neglected is that of wise teacher or sage. Scripture presents as a model of pastoral leadership those who interpret the word and will of God for daily living. Especially in their preaching, pastors are called to help the congregation understand their place in God's world.

In this book, Alyce McKenzie lays out the four qualities of the wise teacher—the bended knee, the listening heart, the cool head, and the courageous voice—and encourages pastors to make each of these integral to their ministry and vocation. She goes on to demonstrate that the sermon is the prime opportunity to function in the role of wise teacher. She offers strategies for applying biblical wisdom to all areas of everyday life. The strategies include: (1) Preaching that is as sensory as life is; using imagery, metaphor, simile, and story to connect with people's emotions as well as their intellect. (2) Preaching that uses first-person experiences without being narcissistic. (3) Preaching that teaches without boring. (4) Preaching on public, often controversial issues that minimizes defensiveness and maximizes dialogue.

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