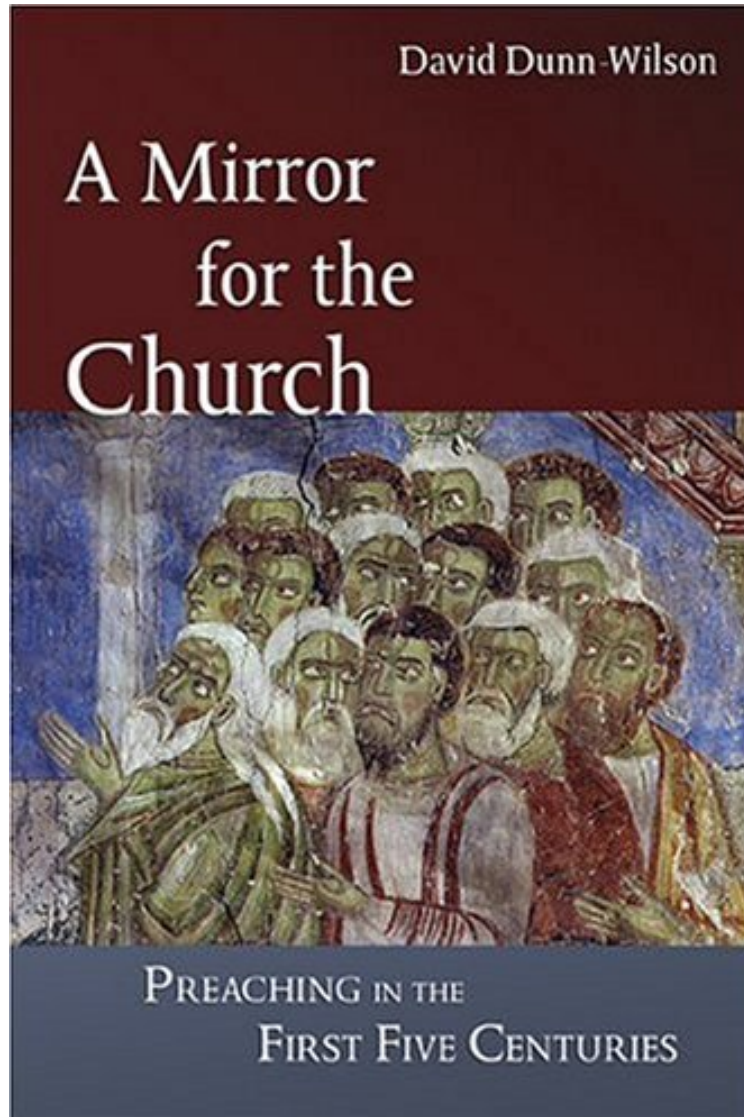


(Read free ebook) A Mirror for the Church: Preaching in the First Five Centuries

A Mirror for the Church: Preaching in the First Five Centuries

Von David Dunn-Wilson

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Von David Dunn-Wilson : A Mirror for the Church: Preaching in the First Five Centuries before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Mirror for the Church: Preaching in the First Five Centuries:

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Mirror, mirror, on the wall...Von FrKurt MessickThere have been many studies done over how preaching changes and shifts; even recently, my seminary faculty with others have engaged in an interesting process of discovering how people

listen to sermons and hear the messages presented. Preaching is a much-studied thing, but the further one goes back into the history of the church, the less material there is, and the less analysis, it seems. Part of the reason for this might be our lack of context - particularly in the modern, Protestant-dominated, post-Christendom West, the early church after the first century (pretty much up to the time of the Reformation) is less studied, so to look for the preacher-congregation relationship in the church at that time presents various difficulties. Author David Dunn-Wilson begins with the fact that this preacher-congregation relationship has always been a crucial one in the Christian community. But who were the early preachers, and to whom were they speaking? What were the key issues in their minds, and how did they convey their messages to the people, both in and out of the congregational context? Preaching assumes a very important role in the Luke-Acts chronicle. Indeed, a significant portion of the text of the Acts of the Apostles consists of sermon texts. The two principal preachers in this book are Peter and Paul, and often the comparison and contrast is made between Peter's sermon on the Pentecost and Paul's sermon in Athens. Both sermons show an early adaptability in Christian preaching, both in content and in style. Sermons and preaching at this stage are well-studied; less well studied is the immediate post-apostolic age. Dunn-Wilson describes this period in Henry Chadwick's terms as being covered in 'a shroud of darkness'. Even the deaths of Peter and Paul come from extra-canonical writings, and the other apostles' fates are largely the stuff of legend and hagiographic lore. Dunn-Wilson identifies several types of preaching, and devotes a chapter to each form. First there are the Apologists, who try to explain Christianity (often in a world adverse to them). Then there arise the Ascetics and Mystics, perhaps in part because of the rejection of the world (if the world won't accept Christianity, then Christians should reject the world). There are the Theologians (actually, all preachers are theologians of a sort, but here Dunn-Wilson uses the term more properly to refer to systematisers such as the Cappadocian fathers and other such figures). Finally, Dunn-Wilson identifies 'Delightful Persuaders', those who combined the various methods and content with rhetorical flourish and skill - figures such as Ambrose and Augustine appear here. Dunn-Wilson includes a brief liturgical interlude among the chapters to discuss how liturgy is done in the congregations and its relationship to preaching (topics that are still of interest to seminary students today). In his epilogue, Dunn-Wilson compares the fifth-century church, just before the collapse of the Roman Empire in the West, with today's situation, and how the church dealt with issues there relate to current problems. Pluralism is a big issue then and now. The sense of 'supermarket spirituality' is also a recurring theme from then to now - people are 'offered beliefs like rival brands of detergent' in the great mix of religions of the past, and the great mass of postmodern confusion today. Dunn-Wilson asks many challenging questions for theological and homiletic development in the future, ones firmly rooted in the history of Christian experience and practice. The lessons from early preachers and congregations can help renew communities today, and this book is a good resource for such. The past does mirror the present, and in examining this, we can see perhaps a distant if fuzzy image of the future.

Kurzbeschreibung It might be assumed that Christian preachers have always proclaimed the same message in the same way to similarly comprised and receptive congregations. But this assumption is far from accurate. As "A Mirror for the Church" reveals, the style and subject matter of sermons have repeatedly changed throughout history to meet the shifting needs of congregations molded by contemporary events. David Dunn-Wilson examines the dynamic relationship between preachers and congregations as it developed in the early church. In turning to sermons preached during the first five centuries of church history, he answers some important questions: Who were the first preachers? What did they preach about, and what methods did they use? What kinds of people made up the first congregations, and how did they relate to the world around them? In the process, Dunn-Wilson uncovers both the constant themes of early church preaching and the ways that the church adapted to waves of social change. He also suggests ways in which the priorities of the early church might inform preaching and Christian practice today.

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