



Sermons with Insight

Roland Zimany

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Sermons with Insight is an instructive collection that muses on how Christians should approach contemporary issues in a way that reflects their faith.

The earnest entries of Roland Zimany's collection *Sermons with Insight* encourage adherence to God's will.

Following Christian seasons and holidays, these sermons reflect upon biblical meanings and encourage personal faith affirmations. Their ethos is one of charitable works and everyday surrender; they suggest that both are central to fruitful, faithful living. They go beyond common understandings of faith, too, plying scriptures for deeper meanings: here, "life" means living according to Jesus's core values and God's standards, and not just mere existence. The Greek meanings of terms in the New Testament are also addressed, with Zimany noting that the Greek concept of "love" has multiple interpretations.

Many of the sermons seek to explain how Jesus's teachings can be applied to everyday personal situations. Some concern forgiveness and moving on from past mistakes; others emphasize trusting God and depending on the Holy Spirit's daily guidance. Expressing love in ordinary situations and understanding that self-worth is not based on external, superficial beauty are also topics.

But most of the entries are too brief to do much that's new or surprising with their complex topics. Subjects like pollution, immigration, gun control, and racial inequality are addressed in passing, and in terms that are too general to be uniquely compelling. For example, Zimany urges awareness of the gaps between rich and poor people, but without nuance or specific solutions to the problem. As a result, many of the entries feel more like monologues than they do like involved conversations with their topics. Opposing viewpoints are neither acknowledged nor addressed, and the book does not go far beyond naming biblical solutions to its contemporary concerns.

More compelling is the book's integration of the teachings of outside theologians. In addressing freedom and the continual need to deal with social and economic inequalities, the book uses the words of others to interpret its biblical concepts, helping to translate them into straightforward messages. And historical references to errant ideologies, as with those of Vladimir Lenin and Josef Stalin, are used to emphasize the importance and worth of every individual. Further, rhetorical questions are used to prompt personal reflection, as about one's willingness to adopt God's values, or readiness to change and live according to God's will.

Direct and didactic, the book covers baptism, salvation, and justification in an approachable manner. It's a short but diverse gathering that reflects the breadth of Christian faith—sometimes within single entries, as with a sermon that covers the church communities as well as marriage and baptism, and whose discussion becomes tangled as a result. Still, *Sermons with Insight* is an instructive collection that muses on how Christians should approach contemporary issues in a way that reflects their faith.

EDITH WAIRIMU (December 9, 2021)

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