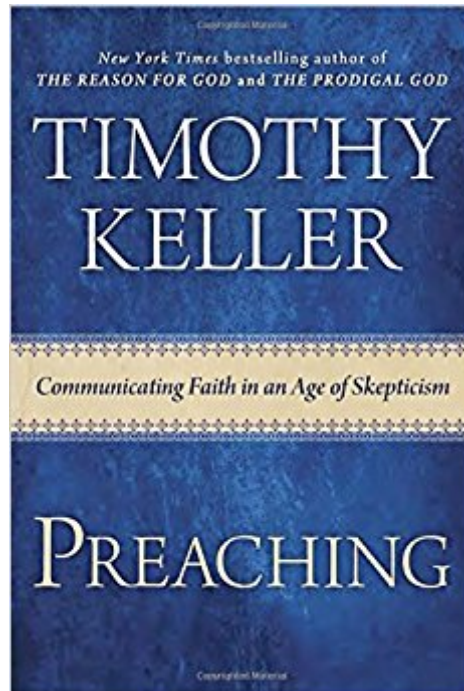




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# Preaching: Communicating Faith In An Age Of Skepticism



## Synopsis

Pastor, preacher, and New York Times bestselling author of *The Songs of Jesus* Timothy Keller shares his wisdom on communicating the Christian faith from the pulpit as well as from the coffee shop. Most Christians—including pastors—struggle to talk about their faith in a way that applies the power of the Christian gospel to change people's lives. Timothy Keller is known for his insightful, down-to-earth sermons and talks that help people understand themselves, encounter Jesus, and apply the Bible to their lives. In this accessible guide for pastors and laypeople alike, Keller helps readers learn to present the Christian message of grace in a more engaging, passionate, and compassionate way.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Praise for *Preaching* "Superb . . . we should be grateful to Keller for his wisdom, scholarship, and humility." -The Gospel Coalition "If you want to see between the lines and just below the surface of our cultural moment and societal ethos . . . Which is to say, if you are any kind of Christian leader, teacher, writer, blogger, public thinker, politician, artist, media person, campus minister, youth leader, parent, Christian educator, spiritual director, or anyone with influence . . . then this is going to be exceptionally helpful for you." -Byron Borger Praise for *Prayer* "Keller provides a contextually rich guide and companion to prayer." -Kirkus "if you follow Keller into the arsenal, you will be powerfully equipped to overcome the world/flesh/Devil and see your prayers for kingdom

advance answered by almighty God. And if you follow Keller to the banqueting table, you will increasingly feast on new and old treasures of awe and intimacy with your heavenly Father."-The Gospel Coalition

Praise for *Encounters with Jesus* "Keller's work belongs on the bookshelf of every serious Bible student. It is not a quick read, but, instead should be savored like fine wine, one sip at a time to glean the full impact of his life-changing message."-Examiner.com

Praise for Timothy Keller and his books: "Tim Keller's ministry in New York City is leading a generation of seekers and skeptics toward belief in God. I thank God for him." -Billy Graham

"Unlike most suburban megachurches, much of Redeemer is remarkably traditional. What is not traditional is Dr. Keller's skill in speaking the language of his urbane audience|Observing Dr. Keller's professorial pose on stage, it is easy to understand his appeal."

-The New York Times

"Fifty years from now, if evangelical Christians are widely known for their love of cities, their commitment to mercy and justice, and their love of their neighbors, Tim Keller will be remembered as a pioneer of the new urban Christians."

-Christianity Today Magazine

"With intellectual, brimstone-free sermons that manage to cite Woody Allen alongside Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, Keller draws some 5,000 young followers every Sunday. Church leaders see him as a model of how to evangelize urban centers across the country, and Keller has helped transplant 50 gospel-based Christian churches around New York plus another 50 from San Francisco to London."

-New York Magazine

"Keller's work belongs on the bookshelf of every serious Bible student. It is not a quick read, but, instead should be savored like fine wine, one sip at a time to glean the full impact of his life-changing message." -Examiner.com

on *Encounters with Jesus*

"It has something for everyone • something for the agnostic (Keller makes a strong argument that there are no true atheists); something for the philosopher (although he invites the wounded reader to skip that section); and something for the believer being beckoned into the inner sanctum of sharing in the fellowship of Christ's sufferings (a place no one naturally wants to go)."

-The Gospel Coalition on *Walking with God through Pain and Suffering*

"It is a resource that takes a multidimensional approach to suffering - tackling the internal and external realities - and takes us deep theologically and practically." -Vertical Living Ministries on *Walking with God through Pain and Suffering*

"A luminous and ultimately hopeful examination of the many aspects of suffering." -Booklist on *Walking with God through Pain and Suffering*

"Theologically rich and philosophically informed, yet accessible and filled with practical wisdom."

-Cardus on *Every Good Endeavor*

"This book is for us all and through its reading it can change and reshape your entire outlook on your life."

-SarahMac on *Every*

Good Endeavor

It's a great resource to equip you to speak with your secular friends; to show them why the Christian understanding of marriage is not only a tremendous blessing, it's the only one that works.

ChristianPost.com on The Meaning of Marriage

"The Meaning of Marriage is incredibly rich with wisdom and insight that will leave the reader, whether single or married, feeling uplifted. While the book is filled with expertly selected biblical verses, nonreligious readers willing to explore these observations may find answers not only to the meaning of marriage but to that even bigger question—the meaning of life itself.

The Washington Times on The Meaning of Marriage

"This is the book I give to all my friends who are serious spiritual seekers or skeptics.

Rick Warren, author of The Purpose Driven Life, on The Reason for God

"Keller mines material from literary classics, philosophy, anthropology and a multitude of other disciplines to make an intellectually compelling case for God. Written for skeptics and the believers who love them, the book draws on the author's encounters as founding pastor of New York's booming Redeemer Presbyterian Church

[The Reason for God] should serve both as testimony to the author's encyclopedic learning and as a compelling overview of the current debate on faith for those who doubt and for those who want to reevaluate what they believe, and why.

Publishers Weekly on The Reason for God

"World has briefly reviewed about 200 books over the past year. Many stand out, but one in particular is likely to change many lives and ways of thinking. World's Book of the Year is Tim Keller's The Reason for God.

Marvin Olasky on The Reason for God

TIMOTHY KELLER was born and raised in Pennsylvania and educated at Bucknell University, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, and Westminster Theological Seminary. He was first a pastor in Hopewell, Virginia. In 1989 he started Redeemer Presbyterian Church in New York City with his wife, Kathy, and their three sons. Today, Redeemer has more than six thousand regular Sunday attendees and has helped to start more than two hundred and fifty new churches around the world. Also the author of Prayer, Encounters with Jesus, Walking with God through Pain and Suffering, Every Good Endeavor, The Meaning of Marriage, Generous Justice, Counterfeit Gods, The Prodigal God, Jesus the King, and The Reason for God, Timothy Keller lives in New York City with his family.

The two words that immediately come to mind when considering Timothy Keller's new book is: rocket fuel. Keller's book is a supercharged approach to expository

preaching. *Preaching: Communicating Faith in an Age of Skepticism* stands alone in book market that includes several approaches to preaching. Some books provide preachers with the nuts and bolts or the mechanics of preaching. Others focus on the rationale for expository preaching. Keller's work includes both and so much more. Readers will be drawn to a few important items that stand out in this work:

**The Centrality of the Gospel** First, Keller is relentless about the necessity of gospel preaching. He stands with C.H. Spurgeon who famously admonished preachers to "preach a text and make a beeline to the cross of Christ." Keller repeatedly challenges preachers to preach "Christ crucified, to preach Christ through every theme of the Bible." Wherever the preacher finds himself in the biblical text, he must alert the listener to the person of Christ and the completed work of Christ. It is this feature that makes Keller's work unique and should propel his work to the required reading list of every Bible College and Seminary course that pertains to preaching.

**The Importance of the Heart** Second, Keller focuses on the heart in biblical preaching: Preaching cannot simply be accurate and sound. It must capture the listener's interest and imagination; it must be compelling and penetrate to their hearts. It is possible to merely assert and confront and feel we have been very "evaliant for truth," but if you are dry or tedious, people will not repent and believe the right doctrine you present. We must preach so that, as in the first sermon on Pentecost, hearers are "cut to the heart." Dr. Keller walks readers through a critical discussion of the heart which is "the seat of the mind, will, and emotions, all together." Critical to this discussion is the idea that expository preaching must move the heart to action. Keller notes, "It is all-important, then, that preaching move the heart to stop trusting and loving other things more than God." So the goal of the sermon cannot be merely to make the truth clear and understandable to the mind, but must also be to make it gripping and real to the heart. Thus, Keller highlights the primacy of both the heart and the mind. To exclude the mind in the preaching endeavor will lead to contentless preaching. But to exclude the heart will necessarily lead to preaching which is void of application. The standout feature of this section is Keller's treatment of Jonathan Edwards and his approach to the heart in preaching. Edwards refuses to pit the heart against the mind and argues for a view of preaching that integrates both. Keller does a terrific job of expounding Edwards's work, *Religious Affections* and the impact such of view has on preaching. There is much to commend in Keller's work on preaching. Readers are encouraged to dive in and benefit from this godly man who has mastered the preaching task. May

the rocket fuel in Keller's work launch many sermons into the stratosphere for the glory of God! Other titles that will serve preachers well include *The Supremacy of God in Preaching* by John Piper, *He is Not Silent: Preaching in a Postmodern World* by Al Mohler, *The Kind of Preaching God Blesses* by Steven Lawson, and *Preaching and Preachers* by Martyn Lloyd-Jones. I received this book free from the publisher. I was not required to write a positive review. 4.5 stars

This book is being given a 5 star review because of 3 outstanding chapters. But if there was a 4 1/2 star review, I would have to give it because with just a few adjustments, this book would be a classic on preaching. The 3 outstanding chapters are: Chapter 2, "Preaching the Gospel every time," Chapter 3, "Preaching Christ from all of Scripture," and Chapter 6, "Preaching Christ to the Heart". Those 3 chapters alone (all 3 are probably the best I've read on their subject matter) make the book a valuable resource and practical sermon preparation guide for every preacher. Those 3 chapters should be read, highlighted, notated, re-read, and absorbed into the mind, emotions, will, and passion of anyone calling themselves preachers. The rest of the chapters contain good and practical information, but those 3 soar above the others. The appendices and end notes of this book are also great reads. Here's a recommendation: Read the end notes for the chapter immediately after reading the chapter. The end notes often expand on and interact with what's in the chapter, so reading them is fun and informative. Having sung the praises of this book, still, three minor changes would have pushed this book into the realm of being a classic. First, the book should have been printed in the larger book format of 6" X 9". That sounds picky, but this book, physically, just seemed a bit cramped. There's something to be said about the importance of the size of a book! Second, the book should have had subject, people, and Scripture indices. That would have helped tremendously, and would have given the book more of a reference-textbook 'vibe'. Third, the chapters and the book itself should have not ended so abruptly. It's almost like it was a hurriedly-written work by Keller. As good as Keller is with analogies and examples, summarizing each chapter with an illustrative element would have each chapter packing a real punch in the gut and slap on the side of the head! The chapters and book just . . . ended. It's like a preacher preaching a sermon and saying, "Well, that's about it," and closing the sermon. Keller needed to apply his own principles of "Preaching to the Heart" to his writing of the end of the chapters and the ending of the book! As it is, it just feels a bit . . . incomplete . . . Having said all that (if you're still reading), I do not hesitate for one second recommending this book. If I was teaching preaching, this would be a required supplemental text. Every preacher and person who gives Christian messages should read, mark, and inwardly digest this book. A lot. At least once a year. This book will be, in a

word, GREATANDINSPIRINGLYTRANSFORMATIVE to you and to your preaching!

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