



fortress press

discussion guide

Fortress Press Video

n. t. wright on paul and the faithfulness of god

A conversation about preaching with Ronald J. Allen



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Use the following questions for personal reflection, essay composition, and classroom discussion.

1. In sharing his thoughts about sermon preparation, N. T. Wright mentions an “aha moment” in which it becomes clear what needs to be said at this time to these people. Wright says that preaching is as much an art as it is a science. What has been your experience of this “aha moment”? What do you think are the elements of preaching as an art? Why is preaching an “odd” form of speech, unlike any other?
2. In answer to the question “what does Paul have that we as preachers need?” N. T. Wright answers that Paul is the originator of Christian theology and his theology’s primary purpose was to build up, unite, and sustain the growing Christian community. How is contemporary Christian theology in alignment with Paul’s purposes? How is it out of alignment with those purposes? How does the theme of the “faithfulness of God” further Paul’s purpose? What are the primary theological themes you are developing for your preaching?
3. When asked how Paul can help preachers think about imperial systems today Dr. Wright answers that preachers must also be historians who dig deeply into the text to discern what was going on then and there. He also says preachers need to be wary of inserting twenty-first-century interpretations into first-century contexts. What do Dr. Wright’s words mean for you as you “wrestle the text” toward relevance?
4. Dr. Wright points out that Paul never says to his Jewish listeners “we have a new religion that is better than yours.” How do Paul’s letters shape how you might go about engaging in contemporary conversations and commitments with your Jewish neighbors?
5. Dr. Wright names Galatians 4:21-31 as being a challenging text from Paul. Keeping in mind Dr. Wright’s exhortation to dig deeply into the context, to listen closely to the register in which Paul is talking, and to note Paul’s capacity to “twist the tail” of his listener, how do you understand these passages?
6. In listening to this interview with N. T. Wright, what struck you as being the most interesting? The most helpful? The most personally moving or relevant? And why?