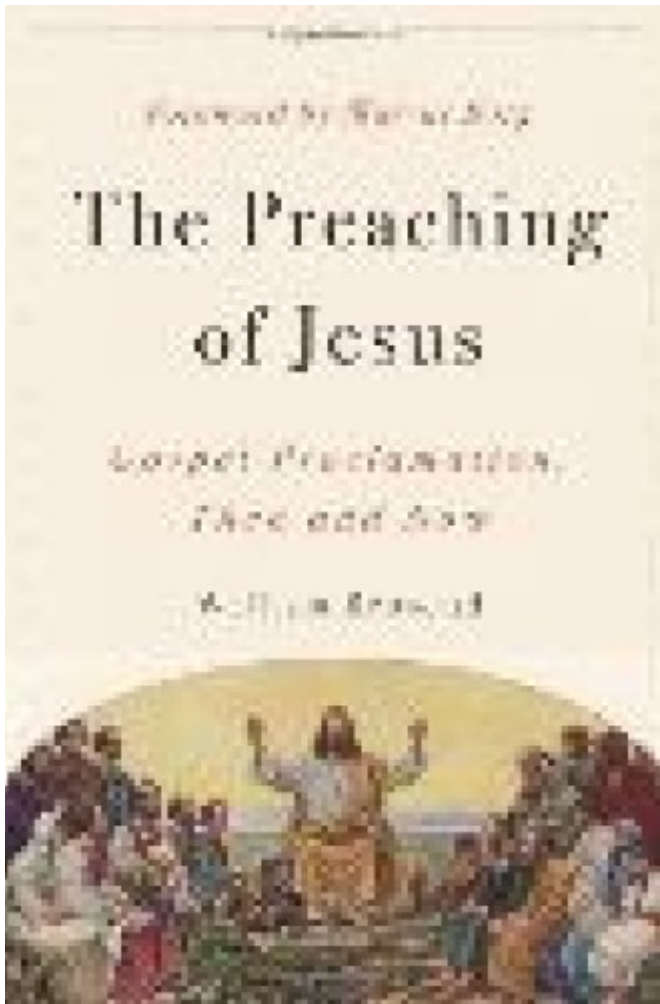


BookMarks

Books in the [May 18, 2010](#) issue

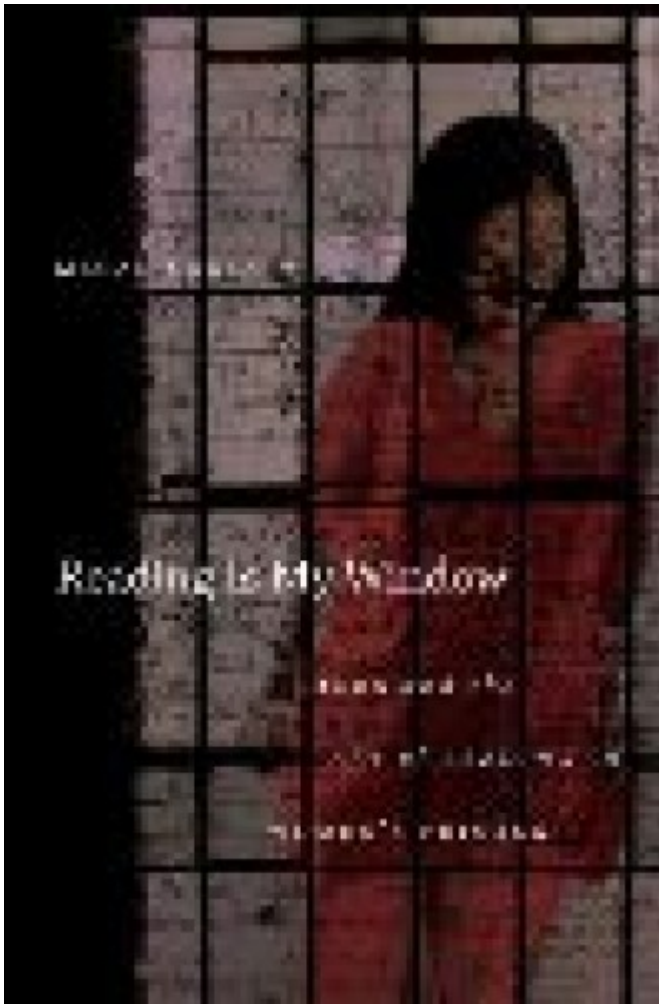
In Review



The Preaching of Jesus: Gospel Proclamation, Then and Now

William Brosend

Westminster John Knox



Reading Is My Window: Books and the Art of Reading in Women's Prisons

Megan Sweeney
University of North Carolina Press

Then and Now -->

Brosend makes four claims about how a focus on Jesus' rhetoric can improve modern preaching: One, Jesus formed his messages in dialogue with tradition, culture, the lives of his listeners and especially scripture. Two, Jesus' preaching focused on proclaiming God's reign in such a way that lives might be changed. His messages prophetically resisted the powers, whether religious, statist or cultural. Three, there's too much self-revelation in contemporary preaching, in marked contrast to Jesus' own practice. Four, Jesus' stories were mostly fictional. He fabricated them—and we should do the same. Although the world that modern preachers address is different from Jesus' world, we can learn by giving our attention

to the master teacher's example.

Sweeney's *Reading Is My Window* is an ethnographic study of reading in women's prisons. She is interested in how inmates understand their reading, not in what she thinks they should be reading. This allows an almost cataloglike account of what women learn through reading. John Grisham teaches them about law; V. C. Andrews helps women grapple with incest. Putting bias aside, Sweeney listens carefully while women explain what the books of Joyce Meyer mean to them, even while she examines critically both the "self" and the "help" of Christian self-help books.