

Trauma–Informed and Healing–Centered Preaching

By Lis Valle

valleruizlis@gmail.com



Content

- Gathering
- Applications
- Trauma-Informed Preaching
 - Definition
 - Judith Herman, Trauma and Recovery
 - Correlation: Recovery >< Preaching
- Practice



Gathering

- ▶ Introductions and Greetings



Gathering

- ▶ Introductions and Greetings
- ▶ Why learn about this topic?

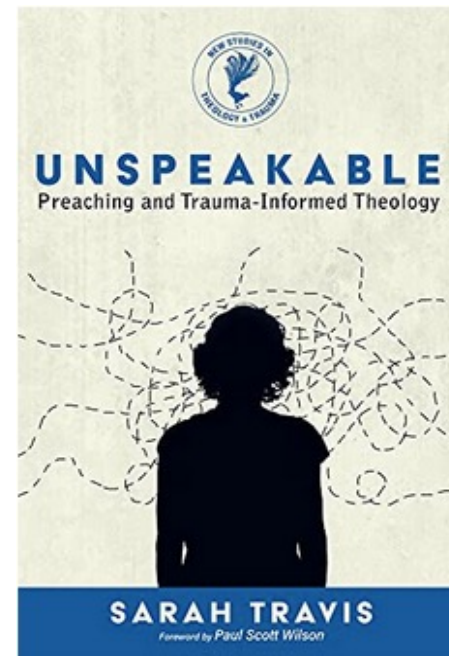


Gathering

- ▶ Introductions and Greetings
- ▶ Why learn about this topic?
- ▶ Thermometer of previous knowledge

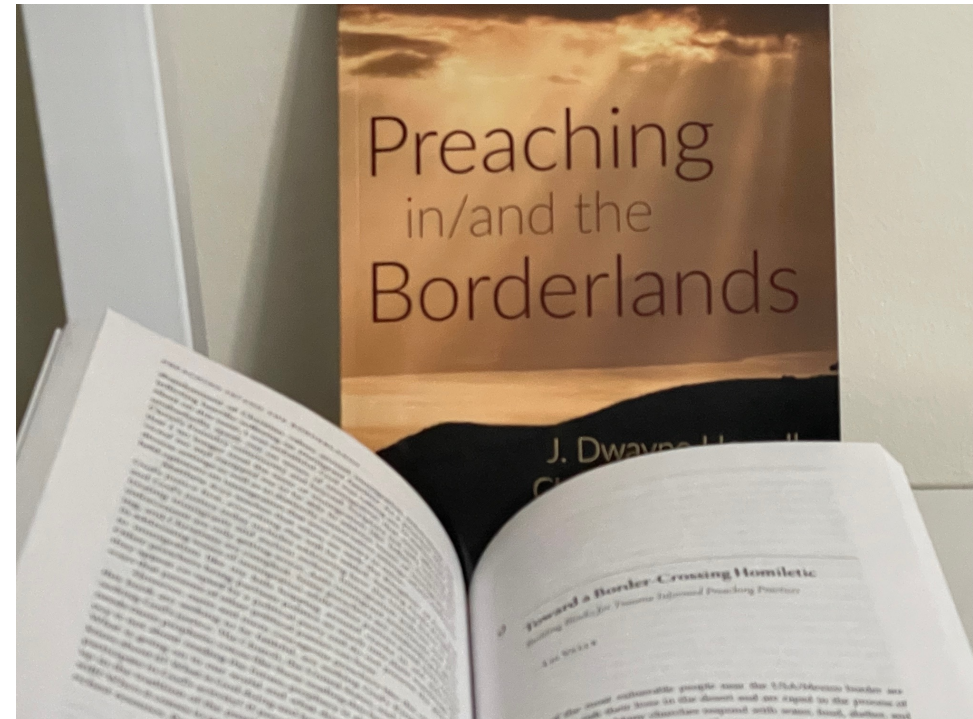
To apply trauma theory to the art and science of preaching

- ▶ Assuming that preaching is always through oratory



To apply trauma theory to the art and science of preaching

- ▶ Centering trauma theory and the purpose of preaching
- ▶ Revising the very ritual of preaching



Trauma–Informed Preaching

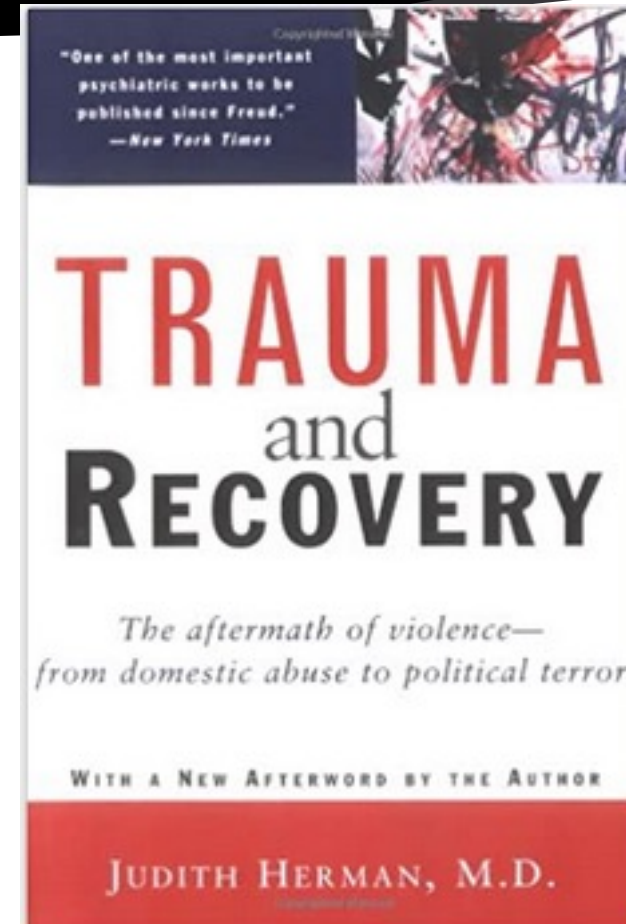
“Preachers are not necessarily experts in diagnosing, or treating people with trauma, nor is the pulpit the place for such services. Nonetheless, border–crossing preachers can indeed develop trauma-informed sermons by getting acquainted with trauma theory and its goals, and by developing preaching practices informed by such theory.”

Valle, Lis. “Toward a Border-Crossing Homiletic: Building Blocks for Trauma-Informed Preaching Practices” in *Preaching in/and the Borderlands*, J. Dwayne Howell and Charles L. Aaron Jr., editors. Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2020.107–118.



Judith Herman's Theory

- ▶ Two goals of recovery
 - ▶ Empowerment
 - ▶ Social connections
- ▶ Three stages of recovery
 - ▶ safety
 - ▶ Reconstruction of story
 - ▶ reconnection



The following correlations lead to a trauma–informed preaching practice with a distinctive approach to the role of the preacher, hermeneutics for preaching, and the presentation of preaching.

■ recovery

- safety
- Reconstruction of story
- Reconnection with community

■ preaching

- Role of preacher
- Communal biblical interpretation
- Conversational preaching (performed)

safety | role of the preacher

- ▶ from main speaker to conversation facilitator
- ▶ host and guest
- ▶ offers hospitality and sanctuary
- ▶ includes the congregation in the sermon preparation process and in its presentation



reconstruction of story | communal biblical interpretation

- ▶ Worshipers as co-preachers
- ▶ Situated hermeneutics
- ▶ Testimony preaching + liturgical lament

The co-preachers tell their personal stories and testify what they perceive in scripture from their lived experience

Congregation as community of honest sadness
Brueggemann, 4

Evidence from its own life and construct an alternative account
Brueggemann, 49

Testimonial preaching in the form of lament told by the survivor includes the personal story, but most importantly it constitutes a reconstruction that allows for the **transformation of memory** that is necessary for recovery while also generating fresh theological insights. Valle, 115

reconnection with community | conversational preaching (performed)



- ▶ "Herman's third stage of recovery, restoring the connection between survivors and their community, may be accomplished during a sermon in which the co-preachers connect with each other and with the community through communal biblical interpretation performed through conversational preaching." Valle, 116

Select Bibliography

- ▶ Brueggemann, Walter. *Cadences of Home: Preaching among Exiles*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1997.
- ▶ Herman, Judith Lewis. *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence – From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror*. New York: Basic, 1997.
- ▶ Isasi-Díaz, Ada María. *Mujerista Theology: A Theology for the Twenty-First Century*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1996.
- ▶ Jiménez, Pablo A. and Justo L. González. *Púlpito: An Introduction to Hispanic Preaching*. Nashville: Abingdon, 2005.
- ▶ McClure, John S. "Preacher as Host and Guest." In *Slow of Speech and Unclean Lips: Contemporary Images of Preaching Identity*. Robert Stephen Reid, ed. Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2010.
- ▶ _____. *The Roundtable Pulpit: Where Leadership and Preaching Meet*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1995.
- ▶ Rose, Lucy Atkinson. *Sharing the Word: Preaching in the Roundtable Church*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1997.
- ▶ Shoop, Marcia Mount. *Let the Bones Dance: Embodiment and the Body of Christ*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2010.



Practice

a collective sermon based on 2 Samuel 13:14-19

