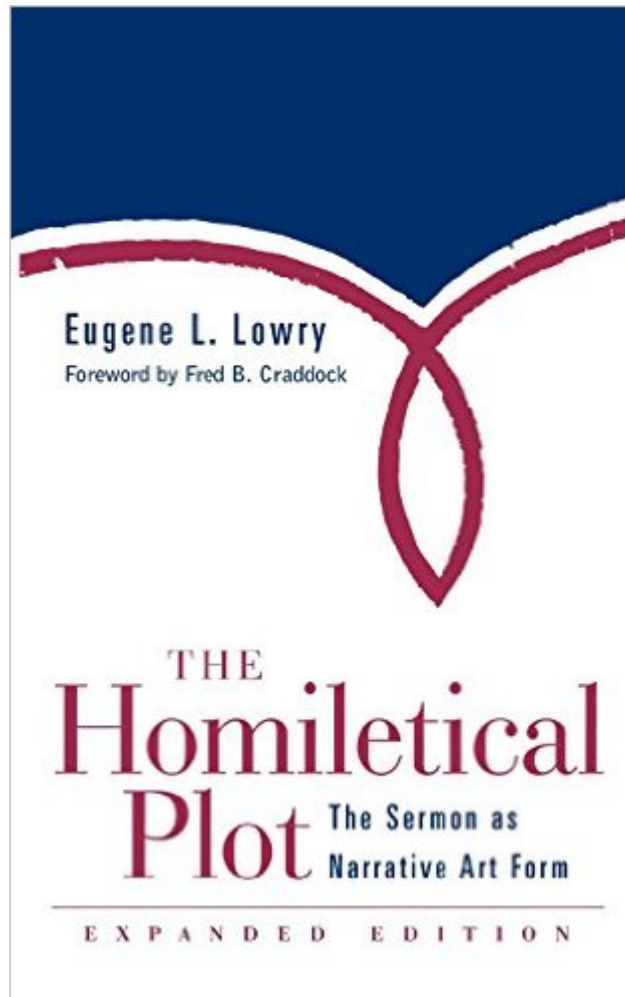


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# The Homiletical Plot, Expanded Edition: The Sermon As Narrative Art Form



## Synopsis

Now in reissue with a new foreword by Fred B. Craddock and afterword by the author, Eugene L. Lowry, *The Homiletical Plot*, Expanded Edition follows in the same solid tradition of its predecessor. Upon its release, *The Homiletical Plot* quickly became a pivotal work on the art of preaching. Instead of comments on a biblical passage, Lowry suggested that the sermon follow a narrative form that moves from beginning to end, as with the plot of a story. This expanded edition continues to be an excellent teaching resource and learning tool for all preachers from introductory students to seasoned clergy.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Lowry challenges the usual preaching style (tell them what you're going to say, say it, then tell them what you've said). He says no good storyteller gives away the climax of a story like that. Rather, sermons should be stories with: plot, tension, climax, etc. The book was easy to read, and his advice for sermon preparation has been very instructive. Experientially, the times I have used this approach, I have gotten many favorable comments on the sermons.

This book is for anyone who is serious about preaching; even if you have been preaching for a while! For the new preacher, Lowry explains how to make your sermons interesting, Biblical, relevant, specific and memorable! For the seasoned preacher he illuminates several ideas that you may already be aware of subconsciously by using in depth analysis of the five parts of "the sermon

as preached" and by giving excellent examples and analogies. Even if you do not adopt his specific format this book enables you to make your style more effective and crisper. This book should be in every preacher's library!

Lowry's book is the best I have read on narrative preaching. He is easy to read and his suggested homiletical plot is remarkably simple and yet easy to apply to all kinds of texts, regardless of their genre. A narrative sermon - as Lowry has made clear - does not have to be preached from a narrative passage of Scripture. Another excellent point he makes (which needs to be heard by today's preachers) is that the sermon ought NOT be constructed like an essay, which is pieced together one point upon another. No, a sermon is an event which HAPPENS. Therefore the congregation needs to hear and experience the sermon in such a way that it transforms their thinking because they have had an experience which leads them to greater faith in Christ. In teaching homiletics courses in the future, I will certainly make use of this book as a required text!

Eugene Lowry says that each sermon ought to begin with the human predicament, then it should be diagnosed, then the sermon idea should come as it intersects with the gospel answer. Lowry believes that the sermon will best hold the attention of the hearer if you proceed inductively and do not resolve the tension until the Weee!!! and the Yeah!!!! stages. He compares the sermon to a Columbo episode where you know who dunnit, but you are wondering how in the world Columbo is going to figure it out. In the same way, we know that the gospel is the answer to man's problems, but we don't know exactly how and in what way it is the answer to a particular problem. He also discusses how the movie High Noon holds the viewer in tension until the end, and he wants preachers to follow suit. Giving away your proposition at the start of a sermon is like giving away the punchline of a joke before you tell the joke! Lowry takes us through the five stages of the Homiletical plot and makes a compelling case why we ought to make our sermons compelling. He is realistic, he knows that preachers cannot weave a thriller every Sunday, but he does give us the way in which we can plot out the sermon in a way which will intersect with the lives of our listeners. I agree that this is a valuable way to preach, and looking back on my old sermons, I have been inductive and have begun with the issues in people's lives about 95% of the time. Yet it should also be stated that there are times and places and passages where the deductive method can be effective. Perhaps you can begin with the sermon idea and then make it your goal to explain how this idea can be applied to our lives. I can certainly see parts of James and 1 John being preached deductively. But this is a very helpful primer on preaching as a narrative art form. Recommended.

The propositional, three point sermon. That's what I learned in seminary. I was good at it, but I soon got bored. I started checking into other forms. Thus I read the Robinsons' "It's All In How You Tell It", which explains first person preaching. My Biblical characters visiting our church were great successes. Then I found this little gem and I was able to develop into narrative preaching. I have no plans to go back to the three point sermon. As soon as the narrative starts, people hear and pay attention. My last endeavor was so successful, people approached me afterwards thanking me for the form and the content that touched and moved them (they even applaud, don't ask me why though). If I have one complaint, it's this. As a total neophyte, with no idea what narrative preaching looked like, I would have liked to see a few samples in the book. The Robinsons included about seven sample sermons in theirs, so I was expecting the same. But then again, this book is much older. Still a great book that I credit for putting me on a completely new path. I thoroughly enjoy preparing and preaching these sermons (much more than the traditional ones) and people respond more eagerly to them too.

Very good presentation on Homiletic presentation. It can be challenging at points, and yet so distinctly simple in its intent. I recommend this book for the serious theology student and veteran minister wanting to broaden their horizons.

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