



Teaching Augustine with Dr. Junius Johnson

Lecture 5: Augustine's *De Doctrina*, Part II

Augustine's *On Christian Teaching*: Book IV
Focusing on the presentation of biblical truths through eloquent preaching.

Introduction

- **Overview:**
 - Books I-III focus on discovering the truths in Scripture, while Book IV focuses on how to present these truths effectively.
 - Augustine explores the role of rhetoric in preaching and defending the Scriptures (homiletics and apologetics).
- **Purpose of Book IV:**
 - Teaching Christians how to present Scripture clearly and persuasively.
 - Not a formal course in rhetoric but a guide for effective preaching.

The Role of Rhetoric

- **Rhetoric as a Tool:**
 - Rhetoric is a neutral tool that can be used for both truth and falsehood.
 - Augustine's argument: Truth should not go unarmed while falsehood is well-defended.
 - Rhetoric can enhance the delivery of truth but is not absolutely necessary (e.g., the *Gospel of Mark* lacks rhetorical flourish but is still powerful).
- **Ethos of Rhetoric:**
 - Augustine's guidance on ethical rhetoric:



- Eloquence should clarify hidden truths, not manipulate emotions or opinions.
- Effective preaching makes people realize and act on what they already know but haven't fully grasped.
- **Key Quote (p. 117):** "The function of eloquence in teaching is not to make people like what was once offensive or to make them do what they were loath to do but to make clear what was hidden from them."

Christian Eloquence and Secular Learning

- **Secular and Classical Education:**
 - Augustine promotes engaging with Classical learning (philosophy, rhetoric) to strengthen Christian preaching.
 - Example: Paul's use of secular rhetoric to spread the Gospel aligns with apostolic practice.
- **Balance of Sacred and Secular:**
 - Augustine acknowledges that secular rhetoric can complement but should not overshadow the sacred nature of Scripture.
 - He stresses that eloquence serves to move people to action, not merely to intellectual assent.

Preaching and the Heart

- **Beyond Intellectual Knowledge:**
 - The goal of Christian preaching is not only to teach what people ought to do but to inspire them to do it.
 - Augustine critiques the classical idea (from Plato, Socrates, and Aristotle) that knowing the good is enough to do the good.
 - **Preaching as Transformation:**
 - Augustine emphasizes that preachers must speak to the heart first, with intellectual understanding being secondary but important.