

Wednesday, February 23, 2022

EPISODE 19: MAKE IT MAKE SENSE

INTERPRETING THE TEXT

CONTEXT

In this episode, we will discuss how the reader should approach any biblical text. There are three main components to biblical reading and interpretation. Observation. Interpretation. And application. The second part of the process is interpretation.

Interpretation asks the question: What does it mean? (William Hendricks)

Interpretation is about inviting others into conversation with you to help you answer the questions you raised during your observation period. It's very important that you sit with the text long enough before looking to outside sources.

IMPORTANCE OF GENRES IN INTERPRETATION

- i. Literary Form or Genre
 - a) The Bible involves writings from various genres. Genres have rules for their interpretation. Just as it is important to understand genre for music or movies, it's important to understand biblical genre.
 - b) Biblical genres
 - 1) Narratives-Over half of scripture contains narratives/stories of events, people, places, and times.
 - (1) How to interpret narratives: place meaning of story in light of meaning of the whole book or surrounding stories. Ask what kind of values the characters' lives uphold (Example: Abraham's faith in Genesis 15:1-6).
 - 2) Law-The law is primarily found in the Pentateuch/Torah and includes moral teachings given directly to Moses for God's people.
 - (1) How to interpret the law:
 - (a) Distinguish ceremonial law from moral law
 - (b) Discover the timeless truth contained in the law (Example: Easy-Do not murder (Exodus 20:13) Harder: Unclean due to menstrual cycle (Leviticus 15:19-30)-Large families, so monthly was less common. Impacted younger women more. Bloomberg argues that the timeless truth is to regulate teenage passions and discourage relations between young, unmarried folks.
 - 3) Wisdom-wise sayings and teachings about God, life and virtue (Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Song of Solomon, Ecclesiastes)
 - (1) How to interpret wisdom literature: Proverbs ain't promises. Wisdom literature often isn't not prescriptive, but descriptive. (Proverbs 26:4-5)

- 4) Poetry-songs and writings with structure often meant to be recited or sung.
Mostly found in Psalms.
 - (1) How to interpret poetry:
 - (a) Interpret corporate psalms accordingly, and not in individualistic way
 - (b) Look out for hyperbole and don't interpret literally (Song of Solomon 4:7-"there is no flaw in you").
- 5) Prophecy-forthtelling-messages about the prophet's own audience about their day or a day in the near future. May have multiple fulfillments (Isaiah 7:10-16 and Ahaz)
- 6) Gospels-good news (gospels were present in Jesus' day. Announced kings). Mark 1 doesn't use plural, uses singular. Significant.
 - (1) How to interpret gospels: Read with the theological emphasis of each writer in mind to understand how text is laid out. Talk about distinctions in each of the gospels. What is emphasis in each? Why?
 - (a) *Matthew*-very Jewish, Kingdom language
 - (b) *Mark*-short, succinct
 - (c) *Luke*-detailed and Gentile; women, children, and marginalized
 - (d) *John*-theologically ordered around 7 signs
- 7) Parables-short, fictional stories that contain real life circumstances. Illustrations to drive home larger points
 - (1) Literally means to "throw alongside"
 - (2) How to interpret parables: find the truth the parable is trying to get. Sometimes Jesus gives the meaning himself (Mark 4:1-20)
- 8) Apocalyptic-dramatic, very symbolic, with vivid imagery
 - (1) How to interpret apocalyptic literature: May God be with you (☺). Understand what kind of messaging in there for original audience.
 - (2) Don't get too lost in the symbols (Daniel 7:1-8)
- 9) Exposition/Letters-reasoned arguments with logical flow (Paul's letters move from doctrine to instruction. From indicatives to imperatives.)
 - (1) Example (Philippians 1-2 doctrine; Philippians 3-4 instruction)
 - (2) How to interpret exposition/letters: Keep in mind there may have been letters sent that prompted the communication (see Paul and 1 Cor. 5:9-13)