



Fall 2021 Town Hall Meetings

Session Three: The Authority and Relevance of Scripture

- ▶ Genesis 1:3 “And God said, ‘Let there be light...’”
- ▶ Psalm 32:8 “I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you and watch over you.”
- ▶ 33:4 “The word of the Lord is right and true; God is faithful in all God does. (vs. 5-11)

From God's Heart and Mouth to Our Lives

HOW DO WE

DISCERN

INTERPRET

INTERNALIZE

AND LIVE DAILY

BY GOD'S WORD...

CHARACTER, PURPOSES AND INSTRUCTION?

God Speaks and Instructs; Divine Purposes/Will

- ▶ Psalm 119:11 “I have hidden your word (law/instruction) in my heart that I might not sin against you.”
- ▶ Psalm 119:41; 42b “May your unfailing love (grace) come to me, O LORD, your salvation according to your promise... for I trust in your word (law/instruction).”
- ▶ Psalm 119:74b;89a; 92a; “I have put my hope in your word; Your word, O LORD, is eternal; your (law/instruction) is my delight.”

The Progression of God's Word

God's character/purposes prompt divine speech

God spoke creation into existence

God spoke to/instructed early spiritual leaders

Spiritual leaders had to discern God's voice/guidance

God gave the law (instruction) to Moses

Israel had to discern application/actions

The Prophets (in context) "Thus saith the LORD"

Rabbis- developed schools of interpretation

Students debated meaning/application of text

The Progression of God's Word

JESUS is the living Word in the Flesh (Grace/Truth)

Mark 1:22 “The people were amazed at Jesus’ teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law.

Jesus’ authority as living Word PRECEDED NT scripture.

Jesus stories/traditions circulated orally first; text later.

Jesus’ authority comes from embodying God’s character.

The Progression of God's Word

Matthew 11:29 “Take my yoke upon you...”
(interpretation of Jewish law; disciples as students)

Luke 10:25 “A lawyer stood up to put Jesus to the test, saying, ‘What shall I do to inherit eternal life?’ Jesus said to him, ‘What is written in the law? HOW DO YOU READ?’” (Interpret???)

The Progression of God's Word

John 14: 15-17; 26 “If you love me, you will obey my commandments/instruction. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor/Teacher/Guide/Tutor/Helper to be with you forever, the Spirit of truth... the Counselor (Paraclete) the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my NAME/character will teach/instruct you in all things and remind you of everything I have said to you.”
(Internalize and apply!)

The Progression of God's Word

God's character and purposes.

God's voice, revelation and instruction is perceived.

Discernment of oral tradition takes place in context.

Interpretation for application in context; transition to text!

People of God seek to live in alignment with God.

Jesus is God's LIVING Word in the flesh (grace/truth)

The Holy Spirit is promised to interpret.

Oral proclamation/transmission of Jesus/gospel. (33+)

Paul's letters to mostly Gentile (non-Jewish) believers. (50-64)

Gospels later: Mark, Matthew, Luke, John in order (66-90/100+)

The Progression of God's Word

Canonizing of Scripture: Defining the list!

(Nicene Creed: 325)

Constantine commissioned 50 copies of NT: 331

Athanasius: list of 27 NT books 362

Roman Catholic Church: 382

(Apostle's Creed: Orally 4th century; written 7th century.)

Orthodox Church: 692

Luther: 1517 Sola Scriptura (James, an epistle of straw;

James, Jude, Hebrews, Revelation last in order)

Church of England- 39 Articles/Doctrine: 1563

The Progression of God's Word: Discerning truth?

The Church of England--- John Wesley (Quadrilateral)

Scripture as primary authority

Tradition (Church of England: Bishop and Liturgy)

Reason (Via media- the middle, balanced view)

(Experience) 17th/18th century: in the context of living.

*What do you do when they conflict???

The Progression of God's Word

The Book of Discipline, paragraph 105

“United Methodists share with other Christians the conviction that Scripture is the primary source and criterion for Christian doctrine. Through scripture the living Christ meets us in the experience of redeeming grace. We are convinced that Jesus Christ is the living Word of God in our midst. (Biblical writers= “illuminated” by the HS)

Inspiration of Scripture and “Word”: 2 Timothy 3:16-17

“All *scripture is God-breathed (exhaled) and is useful for:

- 1.) teaching (instruction)
- 2.) rebuking,
- 3.) correcting
- 4.) and training in righteousness

so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

*(Only Hebrew (OT) scripture existed at this time)

The NT Gospels had not yet been written or cannonized.

I Tim. 4:13 “Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of scripture, to preaching and to teaching.

Word of God Language

“What advantage, then, is there in being a Jew, or what value is there in circumcision? Much in every way! First of all, (the Jews) have been entrusted with the very words of God.” -Romans 3:1-2

“And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, WHICH YOU HEARD FROM US, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God...” (Proclamation of the gospel)
-I Thessalonians 2:13

How words become Authoritative “Word”

Accurate PERCEPTION OF GOD requires discernment.

Scripture is accumulated perception of God.

There was a long, historic transition from oral traditions to “proclamation” of gospel to text as the “Word of God”

Transition from original languages to modern languages

Need for Authority: power to define or compel.

A Historical Progression: Sources of Authority

Papal Authority declaration of infallibility;

Protestant Response: infallibility/Inerrancy of scripture

19th/20th Century “Fundamentalist/Modernist” Battle

Introduction of “Infallible; Inerrant” language/concept

Need for certainty and non-episcopal authority

Changing cultural contexts...

competing/conflicting worldviews/narratives.

The Authority of Scripture in practice:

words of text + Spirit + discernment= Word of God
(Jesus/character of God + Spirit + discernment= Truth)

“Inerrancy”= scripture is accurate and sufficient
in all matters related to salvation

Interpretation and discernment in context is essential
yet, always culturally bound.

*Not every interpreter has the gift of discernment.

Scripture - Tradition - Reason - Experience

Exercise: Scriptural Interpretation and Discernment in context

Mt. 5:29-30 “If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away... if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away...”

Mt. 5:39 “Do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.”

Mt. 5:42 “Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.”

Mt. 5:43 “Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.”

Scriptural Interpretation and Discernment in context

Mt. 6:19 “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy...”

Luke 14:26 “If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters- and yes, even his own life- he cannot be my disciple.”

*Look at the handout sheet

Where do we stand?

Scripturally grounded as primary authority- scripture as focal point
(discerning and interpreting in context is required)

Christ centered: Jesus is God's character revealed

Grace-based: grace as continual loving action on
the front of everything, as God demonstrates.

Assignment: Romans 1:18-2:1;

Galatians 3:26-29; 4:6-7; 5:16-25

*DISCERNMENT AND INTERPRETATION required...IN CONTEXT!

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