

“How do I Interpret the Bible?”

Sermon Reflection Questions – January 22, 2012

Sermon Series “God Questions: Real Questions – Authentic Faith”

We are building a foundation these first three weeks of the *God Questions* series by looking at three fundamental questions. First, is there truth? Second, if there is truth how do we know the Bible is what defines truth? Third, how do I interpret and understand the Bible so that I can arrive at the truth? There are many people who will say yes to number 1, there is truth; and yes, to number 2, the Bible is what depicts truth; and then they disagree on what the truth is by using different interpretations of that scripture.

1. Run through quickly if you can, why you would assert that the Bible is what defines truth. If you wouldn't assert that the Bible defines truth, then why not?
2. Our primary passage today is 2 Timothy 3:16-17, the same passage as last week. What does this passage say about?
 - a. How scripture came into being (verse 16)
 - b. The purpose of scripture (verse 16)
 - c. The result for those who use scripture appropriately (verse 17)
3. The second point on the outline describes four different approaches that are necessary to rightly gather truth from scripture. The first is that we must submit ourselves to God and His Word. What does that statement mean? Where are areas in our lives that we allow our own desires to out weight scripture?
4. Reflect on the statement by Tim Keller which says, “To stay away from Christianity because part of the Bible’s teaching is offensive to you assumes that if there is a God He wouldn’t have any views that upset you.” What part of God’s views could potentially upset you or our culture that we must submit to?
5. The second point of the message was that we need to understand the purpose and the context of a passage. I used as an example the parable of the Kingdom of God being like a treasure, and not allowing that passage to teach us that it is ok to use unfair business practices. What are other misappropriations of scripture?
6. The third point is to ask whether a text is “descriptive of an event at that particular time” or “prescriptive for all time”. How do you know the difference between the two? What are some examples of descriptive vs. prescriptive?
7. The fourth thing we need to do is allow scripture to interpret scripture. What are examples of passages that may appear to be less clear then are clarified when examined through passages that are clearer?
8. How do we make the connection between interpreting scripture and applying it?