Grasping God’s Word

Learning how to rightly handle the Word of Truth

Access Pastor Bob’s blog by going to: www.PortageChurch.org/pastor
Hermeneutics is the art & science of rightly interpreting Scripture.

- We will be studying how to properly interpret the Bible.

- To explain the science of Bible interpretation.

- The art of discerning the intended meaning of Scripture.
2 Timothy 2.15

*rightly divide / handle =

Paul was a tent maker that had to correctly cut & put together pieces of fabric in order to create a proper tent.
This is what we will be learning…

**How to rightly handle the word of truth!**

1 Timothy 5.17

(it is hard work)

Ephesians 4.11-12 -

They are gifts to the church!

God has given teachers to the church.
Luke 24.27 -

Jesus explained *(word is what we get the word "hermeneutics" from)*... to them the Scriptures all things concerning himself!

“The Bible is not open to your interpretation.” *(1 Pet. 1.20)*

You’ve all heard me say this.

This is still true.
Hermeneutics

In fact, hermeneutics proves that, not disproves it.

Hermeneutics is not the antithesis of that statement… but rather the point of it.

The best commentary for the Bible is… The Bible!

You allow the text to communicate to you… not the other way around.

So hermeneutics is to teach you to properly interpret the Scriptures by allowing the text of the Bible to dictate the point of the text.
Bad hermeneutics is the Work of the Devil.

Bad hermeneutics... using verses out of the context of which they were intended...

Bad hermeneutics is the work of the Devil.
The Great Reformation -

- **Great for the church:** Bible in everyone’s hands

- **Great for the church:** Priesthood of every believer

- **One problem:** Misuse of Scriptures is monumental today.

Erasmus warned Luther about this!
Grasping God’s Word
Rightly handling the word of truth

So we need to know how to read it right!

With this great privilege… comes an amazing responsibility.

So we need to know how to... **Read it Right!**
Hermeneutics is the art & science of proper interpreting Scripture.

*Keep in mind if we are talking in terms of ...

- right & proper

That means there must be a...

- wrong” & “improper”

There is a right & proper way to interpret the Scriptures.

&

There is a wrong & improper way to interpret the Scriptures.
What was the Wizard of Oz about?

*Some think*...

Should America switch...

from the Gold Standard  ---> to the Silver Standard.

Yellow brick road (gold) led Dorothy to a fraud.

Dorothy’s true hope was found in her slippers.  
In the book, her slippers were not ruby… but silver!

Gold is measured by the oz.

Scarecrow - *farmers w/ no brains*  
Tin Man - *factory workers with no heart*  
Cowardly Lion - *political leadership of the time*  
Wicked Witch of East - *evil east coast establishment*

*Which interpretation is correct?  How can we know?*
You have to look into knowing what the author intended!!

*Peter, Paul & Mary: “Umm... its a song about a dragon!”
*Read Psalm 107.2*

*Funny Story -*

I posted this verse on Facebook and a Pastor friend of mine commented - “So” :)”

*PLAY - T.D. JAKES CLIP*

Let the redeemed of the Lord say “So”

He is wrongly preaching on that verse!

That isn’t what it means… obviously!

*Which interpretation is correct? How can we know?*
TRUE STORY - WOMAN CHEATING

A woman talking to a counselor, because she had been having an affair on her husband.

Lady told the counselor “I’ve made a decision… I’m going to leave my husband for my new BF. And I know God is OK with this, because it says so in the Bible.”

The counselor was confused and asked why she thought this.

She said “The Bible says so… Ephesians 4 says we are to put on the new man.”

TRUE STORY!

*Which interpretation is correct? How can we know?
TRUE STORY - MARRIAGE COUNSELING

Woman went to a pastor for counsel because she was having problems in her marriage.

The woman said that they were both Christians, her husband has never officially cheated but lately had been going back to his old ways - drinking more & struggling with lust.

The Pastor told the woman that because her husband was acting like a non-believer, therefore he would counsel her…

- not as a married woman struggling in her Christian marriage,
- nor as a woman considering divorce…
...but as a woman whose husband is dead.

Because Ephesians 2 calls him spiritually dead.

...and According to 1 Corinthians 7 -
She is a widow that is completely free from her marital vows. She’s not a married woman, but a widow who was free to date.

TRUE STORY!

*Which interpretation is correct? How can we know?
So we need to know how to handle it right!

There is a difference between making a point from the Bible...

and making the Biblical point!

You don’t want a preacher that preaches FROM the Bible...

You want a preacher that preaches THE BIBLE!!
1 Corinthians 2.14

The word “understand” is not mere head knowledge; it is the knowledge that comes from experience.

- The Holy Spirit helps the believer understand & know the significance of it.
- The Holy Spirit helps us apply the text.
- The Holy Spirit helps us be obedient to it.

But this does not excuse nor put away our responsibility to rightly study it!
*Evangelism* (title slide)

God will save them… but we must - *Pray & Proclaim!*

The idea sometimes people can over-spiritualize & under-value the idea of diligent hard work studying, pouring out and meditating, researching and working in Bible study.

I don't need to do all that studying & hard work…

- They say...

The Holy Spirit will reveal.
But if we rightly understand 2 Timothy 2.15…
then we are to be diligent & work hard into it,
and in doing so…
that is where the Holy Spirit will work and reveal.

That doesn't under-spiritualize it.

In fact, we say that only God saves and we don't save and yet God says I will save by myself with no help from you by grace alone.

And yet He tells us to pray for people to get saved and He tells us to preach for people to get saved and without praying and the proclaiming there is no salvation, there is no evangelism.

And yet all the work and glory for salvation and evangelism is in God's work in the heart of the person.

And yet it won't happen unless we do our part.

So the holy Spirit does work through diligence & hard work, for both evangelism & Bible study!
2 Timothy 2.15 - “study” = be diligent

“Cut it right!”

- tentmaker phrase. (Paul was a tent maker)

If you are 1 degree off, it seems right, but in the end you will end up worlds apart from orthodox Christianity.

You don’t want to visit a Doctor, & have him say:

“You’ve got kidney stones… Now let’s examine you.”
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Rightly handling the word of truth

**Today’s Average Reader** - Primarily concerned with what the text **means**. (eisegesis)

*click through*

**True Bible Student** - Primarily concerned with what the text **meant**. (exegesis)

**The Inductive Method** - **exegesis**

**The Deductive method** - **eisegesis**

**Reader Response:**
What does the text say to me?  *(typical today)*

**Authorial Intent:**
What did the author intend for it to say?
Our Goal -

We want to understand the Bible properly in order to apply it properly in order to love God properly.

The Grammatical, Historical Method of Bible Interpretation

Understanding the grammar of the book & the history of what was going on to the original audience so we learn the principle, so we can properly apply it to us today.

Typical Bible Study

Otherwise we will have a typical Bible study like this:

*Show Bible Study Clip @ 13:30 of Chapter 1
  - from (www.crossTV.com)
The Grammatical, Historical Method of Bible Interpretation

- author’s intent

- original audience’s understanding

To determine exactly what the author intended and how the original audience would have understood it…
We must understand the grammar and the historical setting …

then & only then…

can we rightly interpret & apply the text to us today.

If you want to know what the author intended…
you have to know this stuff!
Essential Rules

- A text cannot mean what it never meant.
- We desire to discover the authorial intent.
- We must ask the right questions of the text.
- Let Scripture interpret Scripture.
- Be careful trying to find something unique.
- The Bible has eternal relevance...
- It speaks to all mankind, in every age & culture.
- But the Bible also has historical particularity... written through human words in history conditioned by the language, time, & culture in which it was originally written & intended.
- God’s word to us was first of all God’s word to them.
- God’s word to us today was first intended for them yesterday.
- God chose to communicate His word through a variety of literary genres, so we must be competent in understanding them.
Dangers When Reading the Bible -

1.) Presuppositions:

Non-compromising beliefs.
Some are good & some can be harmful.

Examples:

- Bible is the infallible, inspired, inerrant Word of God.
- God gives us free will to choose.
- God is sovereign and always in complete control.
- God wants me to be happy.
- All roads lead to God.
- God is a democrat, republican, etc.
2.) Pre-Understandings:

- I have my doctrine & theology, now I need to find verses to support.
- This is what I want the Bible to say.
- I think the Bible teaches this… but I am open to learn.

3.) Attitudes & Experiences:

Our language, social conditioning, gender, intelligence, cultural values, physical environment, political allegiances, emotional state, religious experience, denominational background, nationality, etc.

*It's not bad to have these things... we just need to be aware that we do have them.
Typical Bible Study Method Used Today

Step 1 - Read the Text  

Step 2 - Directly Apply the Text to Me Today

Step 3 - Go Eat Lunch
However they lived in completely different times than us.

We read a text that was meant for in the Bible days. But we live today. We are separated by time, culture, language, situation, & sometimes covenant!

We need to understand the teaching of that day, take them… and cross over a principlizing bridge so that we can apply it correctly to our life today.
REMEMBER - Typical Bible Study Method Used Today

- Step 1 - Read the Text  (maybe)
- Step 2 - Directly Apply the Text to Me Today
- Step 3 - Go Eat Lunch

Hermeneutics *(The Bible Bridge Method)* uses 4 steps -

- **The Bible Bridge**
  - Step 1 - Observe the Text  *(what does it say?)*
  - Step 2 - Measure the River  *(how wide is it?)*
  - Step 3 - Cross the Bridge  *(what is the general principle?)*
  - Step 4 - Apply the Text  *(how does it impact me today?)*

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Next Session: June 15th