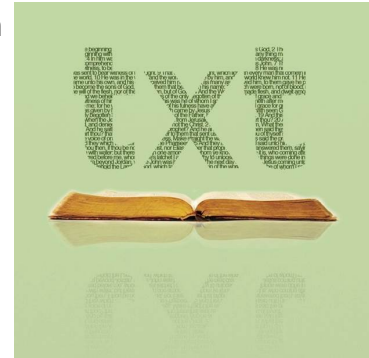


Graphics, Audio and Video - Media Notes are highlighted with this background color

- There is no video for the word of witness.
- There is a sermon starter video.
- There are several slides during the sermon to show ways to study the Bible



Key Questions, Metadata and Outline

What is this sermon about?

This sermon is about ways to understand and study the Bible.

Why is this sermon important?

It is important because studying the Bible is an important way to grow in our faith and tools to study are essential.

What is the context of this sermon?

It is homecoming weekend for El Dorado and Circle High School as well as Butler Community College.

Some of the key resources for this sermon and series include: Wrestling with the Bible sermon series at The United Methodist Church of the Resurrection (<http://j.mp/1kl57lS>); txt sermon series at LifeChurch.tv (<http://j.mp/1t5aqv7>) and the book Making Sense of the Bible by Adam Hamilton.

What are the next action steps?

- Let your life be defined by the story of Jesus and the Bible
- Open the Bible and read it.

What is the good news (bottom line)?

The good news is that we are part of God's story. We are connected with the stories of the Bible. Its words can light our path.

Metadata

- Topic(s)
 - Bible
- Sermon Books of the Bible
 - 1 Kings, Psalm
- Series
 - txt: Rediscovering the Power of Scripture

- The Bible is much more than a book of stories and rules from the past. It's rich with a relevant message God has for us today. Join us as we discover how to engage with the Bible like never before and how to apply it to our lives each and every day.
- Speaker
 - Andrew Conard
- Tags
 - Bible, study, SOAPY, questions, conservative, liberal, understanding, scripture, story, life,

Outline

[Graphics, Audio and Video - Media Notes are highlighted with this background color](#)
[Key Questions, Metadata and Outline](#)
[What is this sermon about?](#)
[Why is this sermon important?](#)
[What is the context of this sermon?](#)
[What are the next action steps?](#)
[What is the good news \(bottom line\)?](#)
[Metadata](#)
[Outline](#)
[Psalm 119:9-16, 105, CEB](#)
[Response to Scripture](#)
[Sermon Starter Video](#)
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[Opening Prayer](#)
[Darkness of the Contention Mine](#)
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[Making Sense of the Bible](#)
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[Liberal Approach](#)
[Middle Approach](#)
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- [General Outline](#)
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- [Transition](#)
- [See Yourself in the Story](#)
- [Transition](#)
- [SOAPY](#)
- [Review](#)
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- [Conclusion](#)
- [Good News](#)
- [Call to Action](#)
- [Invitation](#)
- [Closing Prayer](#)

Psalm 119:9-16, 105, CEB

9 How can young people keep their paths pure? By guarding them according to what you've said.

10 I have sought you with all my heart. Don't let me stray from any of your commandments!

11 I keep your word close, in my heart, so that I won't sin against you.

12 You, Lord, are to be blessed! Teach me your statutes.

13 I will declare out loud all the rules you have spoken.

14 I rejoice in the content of your laws as if I were rejoicing over great wealth.

15 I will think about your precepts and examine all your paths.

16 I will delight in your statutes; I will not forget what you have said.

105 Your word is a lamp before my feet and a light for my journey.

Response to Scripture

One: The Word of God for the people of God.

All: Thanks be to God!

Sermon Starter Video

- Play sermon starter video.

Introduction

Sermon Notes and Scripture Study

I invite you to open your bulletin to a place where you can take notes during the message today. Today, I hope that you will hear:

- Something new or find new questions
- Perspective on your life or something in your life that gives additional meaning to the message today.
- Guidance about how to live as a disciple of Jesus.

I invite you to write down some of the things that you hear in the sermon today and take your bulletin home as a tool to grow in your faith outside of worship. You can reflect on what you heard today, pray for people of our congregation and read scripture to prepare for worship next week.

Opening Prayer

Will you pray with me? O God, use these words to speak good news so that as individuals and as a congregation we will fear nothing but sin, desire nothing but you and live as part of your kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.

Darkness of the Contention Mine

I am an Eagle Scout and one of the great experiences that I had in my time with scouting was a trek to Philmont Scout Ranch in the mountains of New Mexico. One of the camps where we stayed was Cypher's Mine and we took a tour of an old gold mine, the Contention mine.

When we were at the deepest part of the mine, our guide invited us to turn off all of our flashlights and then finally turned off the lantern which he was carrying. I remember the utter blackness of the mine and my eyes straining to try to see anything at all.

When our guide finished the story he lit a single match and I remember how relieving it was to be able to see again. One by one we all turned our flashlights back on and made our way out of the mine.

Light makes a difference.

Impact of Light

Driving through the Flint Hills at night, headlights make all the difference. When you are the only one on the road it seems that the darkness can almost swallow you up. Turning on your brights helps, but it only pushes the darkness back so far. There are still things that can't be seen until you come to them.

Light is essential to finding our way.

Scriptures as Light

This is one of the ways to understand scripture as presented by the psalmist in the

scriptures today.

“Your word is a lamp before my feet and a light for my journey.”

The Bible can help light the way on our path through life.

The words of the Bible tell the stories of God’s people over time, give us the clearest picture of Jesus Christ and contain everything necessary for us to live in relationship with God.

Series Review

Over the past several weeks we have considered a variety of ways to make sense of the Bible. I hope that over the past weeks you have remembered that the Bible is much more than a book of stories and rules from the past. It is rich with a relevant message which God has for us today.

Transition

Today, I want to review some of the ways that you might understand the Bible and offer several ways for you to study the Bible on your own.

Making Sense of the Bible

Conservative Approach

One approach to make sense of the Bible is to see it as a book that is without error and never fails. That each and every word was dictated by God. This approach places such a strong emphasis on God’s role in creating the Bible that there is little room left to wrestle with the Bible or to question it’s troubling passages. With this understanding of the Bible, the only way to justify these passages of scripture is to insist that they are still a part of God’s plan for the world.

I believe approach is inadequate because there are inconsistencies in the Bible and there are many passages in which the Bible teaches or accepts behavior we would find immoral today—slavery, subordination of women, genocide and the death penalty for crimes we would never deem worthy of the death penalty today.

Liberal Approach

Another approach is to go too far in the opposite direction. For some, the Bible is primarily a human book with little space for God’s involvement. The Bible is certainly old and has a tradition around it, but does not contain words from God in any way

Middle Approach

I believe instead that the scriptures were written by human beings who were inspired by God yet wrote in light of their own experiences, the scientific knowledge to which they had access and the historical circumstances in which they lived. They were trying to address the needs of the communities to whom they wrote. They were shaped by the Holy Spirit and also by their own understanding of God and assumptions about what is right and wrong in the world.

Inspiration of the Bible

The Bible is inspired by God, in some ways similar to the way that people of faith are inspired by the Spirit today and in every age. You may have felt moved by the Spirit in some way at some time in your life. There may be times when you feel that you have heard from God while hearing a sermon, singing a song or reading the Bible or devotional literature.

The Biblical authors were close to the events they were described in these words. The church experienced and continues to experience God speaking through these words. They contain the essentials of the faith and were helpful and useful during the early centuries of Christianity and are the same for us today.

Transition to Study the Bible - Bookmark

A couple weeks ago I preached through the Old Testament and New Testament, giving you some idea of the themes or characteristics of each of the books of the Bible. The bookmark that you have in your bulletin today is a gift for you with a summary of each of the books of the Bible. I hope that it is a helpful tool for you as you study the Bible on your own. The truth is that an overview is helpful, but just reading the words on this bookmark is simply inadequate when trying to listen for God's word for us in the Bible.

So today, I want to teach you several ways to study the Bible on your own. I hope that you will try them out and use them to help you explore the scriptures on your own. The first one we find on the bookmark itself.

Ways to Study the Bible

General Outline

- Pray for God to speak to you
- Read a chapter or passage of scripture
- Engage the text
- Keep a journal of your insights

Begin with praying for God to speak to you. God in a variety of ways and when we ask God in prayer to speak to us through the Bible it is more likely that we will hear God's word for us today.

Read a chapter or passage of scripture—You might read the scripture for the week ahead, a particular chapter or you might use a reading plan.

Engage the text—Study the Bible using one of the ways that I will talk about today or one of many other ways that you might connect with the text.

Keep a journal of your insights—You might find it helpful to keep a record of your insights. Some people will write in their Bible, others keep a separate notebook or you might find some other way to record your response. Over time you may come back to the same passage and

find something different or find a theme as you read a variety of passages

You can use this general outline with each of the ways to study the Bible which we will talk about today as well as many other ways of engaging the text.

Transition

With that in mind we begin with the way to study which I call four questions. You can find this way of studying the Bible at the bottom of the New Testament side of the bookmark.

Four Questions

1. What did this mean to the original recipients?
2. What does this passage say about God?
3. What does it say about people?
4. What is its message to me?

The first of these four questions may involve a good study Bible which will include an introduction to each book that gives scholars' best thinking about the situation of the author and the people to whom the author was writing.

For example, it can be helpful to know that Philippians is written while Paul is in prison waiting on news about whether or not he will be executed. This makes the focus on joy and rejoicing much more meaningful. Those who received his letter would likely have been aware of his circumstances and may have even faced persecution of their own.

As you read this particular passage, what impression do you get of God? of people? It may be something that is explicit in the text or it may be a feeling that you get as you read. Finally, consider what message might these words have for me today.

Transition

When you are reading the stories of the Bible that are narratives, it can be helpful to step into the story.

See Yourself in the Story

Try to imagine what the characters were feeling, thinking or doing. You might ask yourself,

- "Which of these characters would I be?"
- "In what ways is their story similar to my story?"

So let's practice with the story of Elijah from the Old Testament. In 1 Kings 19, Queen Jezebel plans to kill the prophet Elijah. He was afraid, felt all alone and fled into the wilderness. Then hear these words from 1 Kings 19:4:

He himself went farther on into the desert a day's journey. He finally sat down under a solitary broom bush. He longed for his own death: "It's more than enough, Lord! Take my life because I'm no better than my ancestors."

Now, I want you to imagine a moment in your life when you were afraid, under attack or just overwhelmed by how difficult you found your life.

Have you ever felt praying the prayer, "It is more than enough, Lord! Take my life."?

When you read the stories of the Bible make the connection between the experience of the biblical character and your own life experience. As you read the Bible in this way, Elijah's story becomes our story.

Transition

The final way to study the Bible I want to teach you today is an acronym - SOAPY

SOAPY

- S - Scripture
- O - Observation
- A - Application
- P - Prayer
- Y - Yield

Scripture - The S stands for scripture or perhaps slowly. It reminds us to read the passage slowly and carefully.

Observation - What do you observe about the passage? What was different or new? What seemed strange or unusual? Was anything surprising?

Application - How do these words apply to you in your life? What might the lesson be for you in these words?

Prayer - Write or pray a prayer to God about this passage, your life and the ways that that they are connected

Yield - Consider what you might need to yield or surrender to God for the lesson to become alive. What might you need to change in your life so that you might live more fully as a disciple of Jesus Christ?

Review

- Pray for God to speak to you
- Read a chapter or passage of scripture
- Engage the text
 - Four Questions
 - See Yourself in the Story
 - SOAPY
- Keep a journal of your insights

Transition

These are just a few of the ways that you can study the Bible and I hope and pray that

you might grow deeper in your engagement with the Bible.

Conclusion

“The Bible contains the theological, spiritual and ethical reflections of God’s people. It offers the earliest and most reliable testimony to the life, teachings, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It contains the earliest Christian reflections on the meaning of his life for the ordering of our lives. Through the Bible God has spoken and continues to speak to the human race. It contains every truth we need to know God and God’s will for our lives.”¹

Good News

The good news is that we are part of God’s story. We are connected with the stories of the Bible. Its words can light our path.

We can walk with God every day of our lives and one day live with God forever. We can be part of the stories of God’s people and live as part of God’s kingdom right here in El Dorado and Butler County.

Call to Action

My invitation for you is to live a life defined by the story of the Bible, especially the story of Jesus. Let the Bible capture your deepest hopes and greatest aspirations. Allow the person you hope to be and who you are today to be shaped by what is in this book.

Invitation

Let your life be defined by the story of Jesus and the Bible

Open the Bible and read it.

It is useful for teaching, reproof, correction and training in righteousness.

It contains God’s word.

Inside this book are the words of life.

Closing Prayer

Let’s pray.

¹ Excerpt From: Adam Hamilton. “Making Sense of the Bible.” iBooks. <https://itun.es/us/M9PxN.I>