

Men and Women in Christ: A Divine Harmony

Hermeneutics and Exegesis - how to do better Bible Study.

Introduction

- Sundays: examples of men and women working together
- Midweeks: key texts, some of which are controversial
- Hear the Scripture, hear God, hear one another
- The way we approach the Bible is more important than how much Bible we know.

A. Examples

1. Genre

"Lift up your heads, you gates; be lifted up, you ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in." (Psalm 24:7 NIV11)

Bible genres include.....

2. Context

"So Judas threw the money into the temple and left. Then he went away and hanged himself." (Matthew 27:5 NIV11)

Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise." (Luke 10:37 NIV11)

"What you are about to do, do quickly." (John 13:27 NIV11)

A text without a context is a pretext

3. Whole Bible

"Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down. For it is written: " 'He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'" Jesus answered him, "It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'" (Matthew 4:5-7 NIV11)

Psalm 91:11-12

What else does the Bible have to say on this topic?

B. Exegesis & Hermeneutics

Exegesis focuses on understanding the meaning of a particular text in its original context. Hermeneutics is broader. It encompasses the principles and methods of interpretation across various disciplines. Here are two examples of a hermeneutical method:

Allegory

Augustine on the parable of the Samaritan, Luke 10:25-37

- A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho = Adam
- Jerusalem = the heavenly city of peace, from which Adam fell
- Jericho = the moon, and thereby signifies Adam's mortality
- thieves = the devil and his angels
- stripped him = namely, of his immortality
- beat him = by persuading him to sin
- left him half-dead = as a man he lives, but he died spiritually therefore he is half-dead
- The priest and Levite = the priesthood and ministry of the Old Testament

- The Samaritan = Christ himself
- bound his wounds = binding the restraint of sin
- oil = comfort of good hope
- wine = exhortation to work with a fervent spirit
- beast = the flesh of Christ's Incarnation
- inn = the church
- the morrow = after the Resurrection
- two-pence = promise of this life and the life to come
- innkeeper = Paul (anachronistic!)

Literal

"Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day." (John 6:54)

"Therefore I want the men everywhere to pray, lifting up holy hands without anger or disputing." (1 Timothy 2:8 NIV11)

Exegesis / eisegesis

- We all have unconscious biases
- "Misreading Scripture with western eyes: removing cultural blinders to better understand the Bible". Richards and O'Brien
- Tend to read "you" as individual, whereas almost always plural.
- Shame and honour is collective in Eastern thought

C. The Stone-Campbell Movement Heritage

- Patternism / Blueprinting. Command, example, necessary inference
- This is the basis for exclusive acapella music in the worship of the church. The command to "sing" in Ephesians 5:19 excludes its coordinate "play an instrument" because the specific command, example, or necessary inference for playing an instrument is absent from Acts and the Epistles. Some also inferred that rhythmic hand-clapping was a form of instrumentation and therefore implicitly forbidden as well." Hicks, John Mark. Searching for the Pattern: My Journey in Interpreting the Bible (p. 58). Kindle Edition.

D. Practical Advice

Each text:

- In it's local context (co-text)
- In it's Biblical context (whole Bible perspective)
- What it meant to the original hearers
- If not so clear to us, what it *could* have meant
- What it *cannot* have meant
- What works in our context today
- Read books that give different views on the same topic or text - from experts
- Talk about what finding; listen to others
- Pray for open heart and mind

Conclusion

Rather than looking for a position we will explore, learn and then see what the Spirit reveals to us as a congregation. If we decide to change anything about the way that we practice what we do, that may come, but it is not the goal. This is about God in the end, not us. The big question is never 'what does this mean we should do?', but, 'what does this teach us about God?'