

Brian Chesemore

SESSION 4: FINDING CHRIST IN EVERY PASSAGE

Class Overview

“Now these Jews [in Berea] were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so. Many of them therefore believed, with not a few Greek women of high standing as well as men.” (Acts 17:11–12).

"Raking is easy, but you get only leaves; digging is hard, but you might find diamonds." John Piper, *Future Grace*, 387.

Theologian Grant Osborne (*The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 21-22) says that bible interpretation is:

- Science:
- Art:
- Spiritual act:

Class Schedule

- January 17: What is the Bible?
 - January 24: Genre Matters
 - January 31: Context is Key
 - February 7: Find Christ
 - February 14: Interpretation Lab 1: Old Testament
 - February 21: Interpretation Lab 2: Old Testament
 - February 28: Interpretation Lab 3: New Testament
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“Don’t you know, young man, that from every town and every village and every hamlet in England, wherever it may be, there is a road to London?...So from every text in Scripture there is a road towards the great metropolis, Christ. And my dear brother, your business is, when you get to a text, to say, now what is the road to Christ?...I have never found a text that had not got a road to Christ in it, and if ever I do find one...I will go over hedge and ditch but I would get to my Master, for the sermon cannot do any good unless there is a savor of Christ in it.”¹ - *Charles Spurgeon*

I. Two Pit-Falls

A. A Premature Sighting of Christ

B. Neglecting to See Christ

II. A Middle-Way: A Gospel-Centered Reading of our Bibles

A. What is the Bible?

B. The Unfolding of God’s Redemptive Plan in Christ

C. Placing Every Text in Context

“Using the tools of exegesis, we look for the point in the context of the larger passage or biblical book. Using the tools of biblical theology, we then consider the point of the text in light of where the text falls in redemptive-history...It’s precisely at this point that biblical-theological themes become apparent, as we ask how the specific event or teaching relates to the ultimate revelation of Jesus Christ, his saving work, and his promised kingdom.”²

D. Asking The Right Questions

- Does this passage point to Christ explicitly?
- How does this passage foreshadow or reflect upon Christ?
- How does this passage reveal man’s need for a savior?
- How does this passage reveal God’s provision of a savior?

¹ Spurgeon, C.H., “Christ Precious to Believers,” in the *New Park Street Pulpit*, vol. 5 as quoted by Bryan Chapell in *Christ-Centered Preaching: Redeeming the Expository Sermon* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1994). 280.

² Lawrence, Michael. *Biblical Theology in the Life of the Church*. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010) 181.

III. Jesus's Method of Interpretation

A. Reflections on Luke 24.13-35

1. What was their hope? (v. 21)
2. What was their hope contingent upon? Their reliance was on sight, rather than faith. (v. 22-24)
3. What was their problem? Their problem was their slowness *of heart* to believe the Scriptures. (v. 25)
4. What was missing from their theology? It lacked a redeemer's death and resurrection. Their interpretation of history and salvation lacked the gospel. (v. 26)
5. How did they miss what was central? They needed a Christ-centered lens through which to read Scripture. This is exactly what Jesus gave to them. Jesus showed them a Gospel-Centered Hermeneutic, that is, the method of seeing how all the Scriptures point to him. (v.27)
6. So all we need is the right method of interpretation? They needed the (ongoing) help of the Holy Spirit. (v. 31-32 in contrast to v. 16)

B. Reflections on Luke 24. 44-49

1. Jesus's understanding of Scripture was always Christ-centered (v.44)
 2. Jesus is the fulfillment of the Old Testament.
 3. Every genre points to Jesus and finds fulfillment in him.
 4. We need the illumination Christ alone can give. (v.45)
 5. Illumination produces a gospel-centric reading of Scripture. (v.46-47)
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C. Conclusion: All the Scriptures point to Jesus

“In its context, every passage possesses one or more of four redemptive foci. Every text is predictive of the work of Christ, preparatory for the work of Christ, reflective of the work of Christ, and/or resultant of the work of Christ.”³

1. **Predictive:** “Some passages predict God’s redemptive work in Christ by making specific mention of his coming person or work... Other texts reveal what Christ will do or be without making specific reference to him.” The NT provides needed interpretation.
 - Messianic Psalms or Isaiah 53.
 - Rest of the Land points to a lasting rest of faith in Christ (Heb. 4)
 - The Priests and their sacrifices (Heb.9-10)
 - Psalm 23’s Shepherd (fulfilled in John 10.11-16)

2. **Preparatory:** “The inspired intention of other texts is to prepare the people of God to understand aspects of the person and/or work of Christ.”
 - The Law pointed God’s people to their need for a Savior. (Gal. 3.24)
 - Abraham pointed God’s people to a redemption/justification apart from their works. (Ro. 4.1-8; Gen.15.6)

3. **Reflective:** Even where there is no direct mention of the messianic person or his work, every text reflects, “God’s nature that provides the ministry of Christ and/or human nature that requires the ministry of Christ.”
 - “As soon as Gideon died, the people of Israel turned again and whored after the Baals and made Baal-berith their god. And the people of Israel did not remember the LORD their God, who had delivered them from the hand of all their enemies on every side.” (Judges 8.33-34)

4. **Resultant:** All that we are called to do as God’s people, is made possible because of what God has done for us.
 - “To preach matters of faith or practice without rooting their foundation or fruit in what God would do, has done, or will do through the ministry of Christ creates a human-centered faith without Christian distinctions...Every aspect, action, and hope of the Christian life finds its motive, strength, and source in Christ or it is not of Christ.”

³ This quote and the subsequent quotes under C. are taken from: Chapell, Bryan. Christ-Centered Preaching: *Redeeming the Expository Sermon* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1994). Pg. 275-279.

- The Beatitudes (Matt. 5.1-12) and the commands of the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5.13-8.27) were fulfilled perfectly by our Savior, and our obedience to them is made possible by his resurrection power at work in us. (Ro. 6: we who have been baptized into the death of Christ might now “walk in newness of life.”)
- Roman’s 12 calls those formerly under judgment and wrath (Ro. 1-3) to a life of worship made possible by the propitiatory sacrifice and imputation of righteousness explained in Ro. 3 and 4, and the union with Christ explained in Ro. 5 and 6 and forgiveness and Spirit-empowering of Ro. 8. In other words

IV. Applying Jesus’s Method of Interpretation
