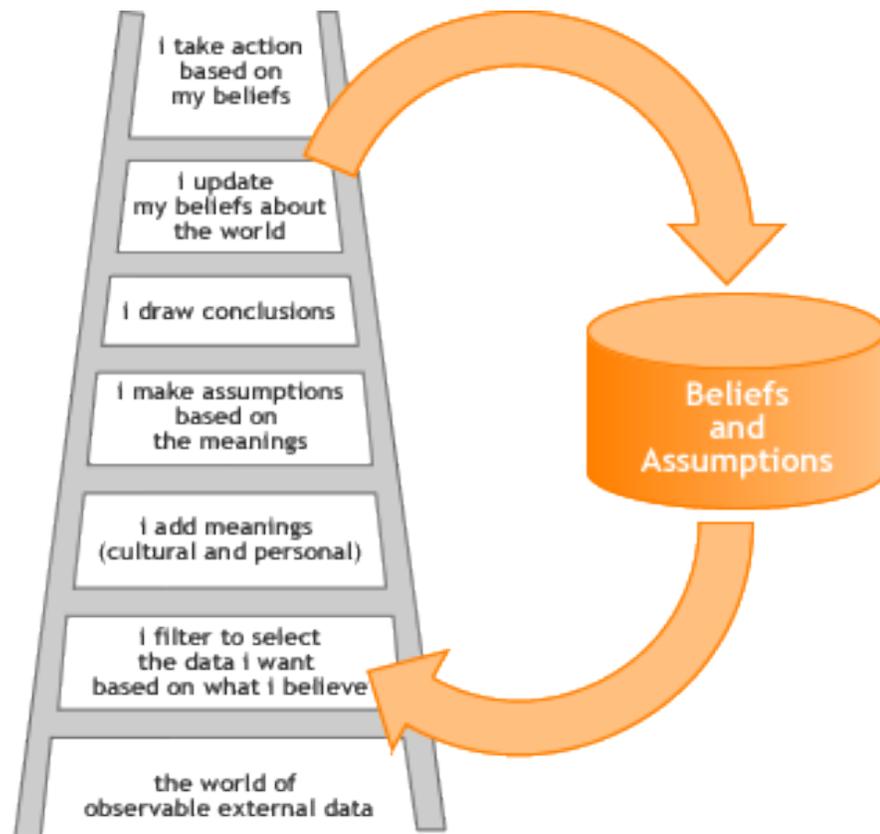


Jesus and Women  
Glenwood Church of Christ  
January 22, 2017

It's Not What We Read, It's How We Read

The Ladder of Inference



Understanding Brain Function

Limbic (emotional brain) - automatic guidance system organized by the emotional or instinctual processes that are necessary to maintain life.

Neocortex (thinking brain) – mostly organized in the cerebral cortex or frontal lobe that functions by processes of thought, reasoning, logic.

## Brain Process

Instinctive Reaction – Fight or Flight  
Emotional Response  
Reasoned Response

Reason and Emotion function together to produce complex decision-making. Only simplest of decisions are made by the reasoning function alone.

Our Heritage in Churches of Christ: “Come, Let Us *Reason* Together”

Our cultural assumption until recently: Emotion is inferior to reason; women are more emotional!

## Factors That Affect Our Reading of Scripture

Physical Location  
Social Location  
Personal Story  
Individual versus Collective Identity

## Models for Reading Scripture that are often Assumed

The Bible is Literal History – any doubts about that are attacks on Inspiration and a threat to the existence of God.

The Bible is “God’s Instruction Manual” – God’s rule book for life.

The Bible is a collection of Timeless Moral Principles.

A corollary – a collection of proof-texts that function proverbially.

## Added Assumptions that create “blindness.”

1. The Bible cannot contradict itself – on any subject: Science, Marriage, Parenting, etc.
2. Answers to all of life’s questions.
3. The “culture card” – when to play it?

4. The Regulative Principle: Regarding worship specifically (but by implication other beliefs as well), believers are required to do what the Bible commands but equally required to not do those things about which the Bible is silent.
5. Mechanistic Worldview
6. Human Beings as “Brains on a stick”

#### Scripture as the Unfolding Drama of God

Creation (Genesis 1-2)

Chaos (Genesis 3-11)

Conversation (Genesis 12-Malachi)

Christ (Gospels)

Church: The Embodied Christ Empowered by the Spirit (Acts-Revelation 20:10 –  
> Present Day)

Consummation (Revelation 20:11-22:21 -> Renewed Heaven and Earth)

# Jesus and Women

## The Gospels and Specific Circumstances

- Each gospel account is written to specific audiences who have specific needs/interests – and they are all Christian!
- The First Century World has many things in common with the 21<sup>st</sup> Century World – and MANY THINGS NOT in common.
- The Roman Empire and American Democracy – The Same/NOT the same.
- Culture then and Culture now – The Same/NOT the Same

## The Texts

Mary, the mother of Jesus (Matthew 1-2, 12:46-50, 13:55-56; Mark 3:21, 31-35, 6:3; Luke 1-2, John 2:1-12, 19:25-27)

Mother of the Sons of Zebedee (Matthew 20:20-23, 27:56)

Woman with bleeding (Matthew 9:18-26, Mark 5:21-43, Luke 8:4—56)

Syrophoenician Woman (Matthew 15:22-28, Mark 7:25-30)

Widow of Nain (Luke 7:11-17)

Woman of the City (Luke 7:36-50)

Other Anointing-of-Jesus stories (Matthew 26:6-13, Mark 14:3-9; John 12:1-8)

Women Disciples (Luke 8:1-3)

Mary and Martha (Luke 10:38-42; John 11:1-44)

The woman caught in adultery (John 8:1-11)

Women at the Cross (Luke 23:27-31, 55; Matthew 27:56, Mark 15:40, John 19:25)

Women on Resurrection Morning (Matthew 28:1-10, Mark 16:1-8, Luke 24:1-13, John 20:1-2, 11-18)

## Observations

These stories all took place in a particular culture and historical setting.

Jesus treated every woman he encountered with the same respect and without condescension.

Jesus is aware of the prejudices and barriers against women and goes out of his way to break them down.

Jesus welcomed female disciples.

Apart from the testimony of John the Baptist (John 1), women are the first to testify to the identity of Jesus (John 4), first witnesses of resurrection, and first witnesses of resurrected Christ – and thus also first to testify to the resurrection.

## Discussion Questions

In your current context, how does the life of Jesus, not just his specific teaching, shape your understanding of what it means to be a Christian? What it means to be human in the image of God? How one should see/interact with other people?

Which of these stories/women seem most significant in terms of the current study?

Prior to this study, how have these stories – and the women in them – shaped your understanding?

What do these stories suggest about Jesus' view of women in the first century world in which they all lived? What trajectories might that suggest for how we live now?