

Weekly Study of Sunday's Message.

September 18, 2022 "What is scripture, and how can I be better at understanding it?"

I Intro.

Welcome to the weekly devotional that gives you some specific things to work through from the message Sunday. Whether you were able to participate in this service or not, this devotion is free-standing, and you can use it to help you dig deeper into your own spiritual walk. Fall is almost here and we have several things planned to the end of the year. Our children's program is growing and we're still tweaking ways to love on them well. We also have many ways you can plug into life at NCC. You can see all that through our newly upgraded app, and social media sites. We're so encouraged by your love and presence when you gather with us. A great group of familiar and new faces join us each Sunday. If you're joining us online, we appreciate your presence also. We are 100% committed to our virtual attenders. We are your church family, and if there is anything you need, prayer, ideas or suggestions, please pass them our way. We know the future is still uncertain, but we are committed to making our virtual congregation as central to NCC as our in person group.

II Recap.

We talked about the process of spiritual growth, renovation. We plowed through John 9 to address how we all have to be aware of our own spiritual blindness. Last week we 'tried' to emphasize how limiting words can be when we talk about God. We recognized we do need words to talk about God. But we fully embraced what seems like an apparent truth that our words about God are born out of our experiences, beliefs, and that they are not God. God is too vast, infinite, Paul said God is the 'everything'. And that helps us understand a bigger God. That's all we need to do for the recap.

III Sunday.

We talked about scripture. What it is. A little of the history of it. But most importantly there is this grand narrative arc in scripture of God's continual revelation of himself to humans, so that we can know who God is. Scripture culminates in God revealing himself in the person of Jesus. The incarnation, God with us. And it's with that understanding we approach scripture.

We wanted to set an understanding of how to better read scripture, so we gave some tools as we approach it. We'll include all of those at the end of the devotional. But first...you know the drill.

What role has scripture played in your life?

How does it help you grow? How have you found comfort in it?

How have you struggled with it?

We split the passage into two parts reading the second half first for the specific teaching, and then the previous verses for context. So, read **2 Timothy 3:16-17 first**, and then **2 Timothy 3:10-15**. The questions will apply to both passages.

What jumped out to you about these passages?

How did you interpret, understand the purpose of scripture?

What did you read about the context of putting scripture to use?

1. Scripture is for discipling people who choose to be a disciple. There is a double truth in this warning from Paul. The world does not embrace the truths in scripture. The key idea here is Paul, a disciple for Jesus, is speaking to young Timothy who has also chosen to be a disciple and is now

putting practices in place to help him grow. Paul says we are not to use scripture to make the world, non-believers, do what we think they should be. Paul is telling the church at Corinth to deal with sexual immorality, greedy people, grifters, cheaters, drunks, people who tell lies within the church. The church should be a place where we help people grow out of these behaviors.

1 Corinthians 5:12-13a (NLT)

It isn't my responsibility to judge outsiders, but it certainly is your responsibility to judge those inside the church who are sinning. God will judge those on the outside.

So we learn from scripture how to live, and not to use scripture to judge people who haven't chosen a relationship with God...to be a disciple. That is the foundation for this teaching.

2. The scriptures are to grow us to live in a world that doesn't embrace Jesus. Because we don't try to make the world what we want it to be, we accept these truths to help, guide, and grow us to live in a world antagonistic to what we hold true. Here are truths Paul wants Timothy to know. You will be different. You will most likely not experience success that those who don't follow Jesus will. Scripture is an owner's manual to be put to use. It's NOT for people outside of the community of faith. People must experience our faith, patience, love, and endurance when they experience us.

IV Challenge.

The scriptures are our plumb line, our straight edge, to create a life that reflects Jesus. We HAVE to live what we read putting scripture in practice. Scriptures are proven true not by us proving them true. But by living them out. We learn how to do this in community. To be read and interpreted in a community of faith. Individual study is good and important, but be careful of isolationist type reading. We use scripture to help us find God, and then continually grow a relationship with God.

Here are some tools for more effective reading of scripture. (From The Meeting House)

1. How to see layers of both the surface and deeper principles in text.

SURFACE.

The Law

The Precept

The Rule

The Story

The People

The Culturally Embedded Teaching

DEEPER.

The Love

The Principle

The Reason for the Rule

The Meaning

The Example, (or anti-example)

The Transcendent Truth

2. How to interpret scripture. S.P.E.C.K.

Sins I need to avoid or repent of. Things specifically mentioned or opposite of traits mentioned in the passage. Where do I feel that resistance we talked about earlier?

Promises I can be encouraged by. Who is God and what is my relationship with him? How does God say he will be there for me? When can I live in a world that is unfriendly to what I believe with confidence and assurance?

Examples to follow or avoid. There are great stories of both. Stories and parables always call us to decide who we are in the story. Rule of thumb, we rarely are the good character.

Commands I need to obey. Stated or implied. These are for my personal growth. And can be used to measure the choices I am making.

Knowledge of God, the world, or myself. Something new to learn that helps in my walk. Every approach to scripture should reveal something new to us to help us in our spiritual growth. Fight the urge to only learn more info, but to grow a body of truths we hold close.