

Vertical Focus Series

5-05-24

Finding God in the Word

I. Announce:

A. **Welcome:** those online.

B. **Prayer:**

II. Slide1 Intro:

A. This Series we entitled the *Vertical Focus Series*.

1. **Goal:** to Focus by looking **upward, inward, and outward**. (May, June, July)
2. **Vertical Focus:** (looking upward to **God and His Word**)
3. **Slide2** This evening, *Finding God in the Word*. 5/8 *Gospel Centered Application*. 5/15 *Dealing with Difficult Passages*. 5/22 *Discerning God's Will from the Bible*. 5/29 **Wednesday Refresh:** (Guy) (my guide from Israel)

B. The Bible is comprised of 66 books, written by various authors, over 1500 yrs.

1. **Yet** God's Word it is **a unified revelation** unveiling a single message.
2. It is crucial to understand what the Bible's overall message is, to **interpret** it properly, **and** rightly **apply** it to our lives.
3. So we need to make sure **every story of the Bible is seen through the one main story of the Bible**. [recommend AL Unfolding Gospel class]

C. The Bible's plots the movements of: *creation, fall, redemption, and new creation*.

1. This helps us answer the questions that every person asks and must answer: *Where did we come from?* (creation) *What went wrong?* (Fall) *What is the solution to our problem?* (redemption) *Where is history going?* (new creation)

D. From Genesis to Rev, the Bible's message is 1st and foremost about *the Triune God*.

1. It's centered in **His Name and His Glory**, **and** how **He** has graciously chosen *to share Himself* with us. (wow sit in that)

E. **Ask 2 questions:** What does it say about **God**, **and then** what is He saying to me?

1. My granddaughter **Joey** (1), my favorite is how she says, *Mmmeeee!*
2. To flip this by only looking for *what is He saying to me?* Makes the Bible simply a *self-help book* :(**Ask:** What does this say about the *character, the nature, the goodness* of God.
3. **Ask yourself**, do you want to get things *from* God, **or** get **God**?
4. Andrew L says, *all the Bible is significant for you, but don't see it all about you?* (Brian's paraphrase)

F. There are 2 ways to read the Bible.

1. It's either about **me**, **or** it's about **Jesus**.
2. Is it about **what I must do**, **or** what **He has done**.
3. Is it about **trying harder**, **or** *living by faith* with what **Christ has done**.

III. Slide3 **FINDING CHRIST IN EVERY SECTION OF THE BIBLE** (even OT)

- A. Luke 24:27 *And beginning with **Moses** and all the **Prophets**, he interpreted to them in all the **Scriptures** the things concerning himself.*
- B. Let's look at how **each part** of the Bible points towards Christ in a particular way.
 1. (in Gen) He is **the Hope** of the patriarchs. He is **the angel of the Lord**.
 2. (In Exodus - Deut) He's **the rock** of Moses. He's the **fulfiller** of the Law. **He's the final temple**.
 3. (in the history of Israel, *after Moses*) He is the **commander** of the Lord's host (Joshua). He's the **true King** of Israel. He is **the true Israel** (everything Israel was supposed to do and be).
 4. (in the Psalms) Jesus is the **sweet psalmist/singer** of Israel in the songs of David.
 5. (in the prophets) He is the **promised King**. He is the **suffering servant**. **He is the world healer** (Isaiah end).
 6. (in Proverbs) He is the **true wisdom** of God.

C. **So each part of the Bible points towards Christ.**

IV. Slide4 FINDING CHRIST IN EVERY MAJOR FIGURE OF THE BIBLE

- A. **All anointed leaders in the Bible** - every prophet, priest, king, and judge who brings about *salvation or deliverance, or redemption* of any kind or level, **are pointers to Christ**, their strengths, and even in their flaws. (in their flaws, *Jesus is better than*)
- B. (from Timothy Keller, *Preaching*)
- C. **Jesus is the true and better Adam**, who passed the test in the garden, and his obedience is imputed to us (1 Cor.15).
- D. **Jesus is the true and better Abel**, who, the innocently slain, has blood that cries out for our acquittal, not our condemnation (Heb.12:24).
- E. **Jesus is the true and better Abraham**, who answered the call of God to leave the comfortable and familiar and go out into the void, *not knowing where he went, to create a new people of God.*
- F. **Jesus is the true and better Issac**, who who was not just offered up by his father on the mount, but was truly sacrificed for us all. **God said to Abraham, now I know you love me, because you did not withhold your son, you're only son whom you love, from me.** Now we can say to God, *now we know that You love us, because You did not withhold Your son, Your only son whom You love, from us.*
- G. **Jesus is the true and better Jacob**, who wrestled with God and took the blow of justice we deserved **so that we, like Jacob**, received only *the wounds of grace* to wake us up and discipline us.
- H. **Jesus is the true and better Joseph**, who at the right hand of the king forgives those who betrayed and sold him and uses his new power to save them.
- I. **Jesus is the true and better Moses**, who who stand in the gap between the people and the Lord, who mediates a new covenant (Heb.3).
- J. **Jesus is the true and better rock of Moses**, who, struck with the rod of God's justice, now gives us *water in the desert.*

- K. **Jesus** is the true and better **Job** - the *truly innocent sufferer* - with intercedes for and saves his foolish friends (Job 42).
- L. **Jesus** is the true and better **David**, whose victory becomes *his peoples* victory, though they never lifted a stone to accomplish it themselves. (David & Goliath).
1. **Rather than** being **the main actor** in God's story, live in the **outcome** of *what God has done and is still doing*. Andrew L [we are not David, but the Israelites who benefited from David]
- M. **Jesus** is the true and better **Esther**, who didn't just risk losing *an earthly palace*, but lost **the ultimate heavenly one** (incarnation), who didn't just risk his life but **gave his life** - to save His people.
- N. **Jesus** is the true and better **Jonah**, who was cast out into the storm so we could be brought in. [let's dig deep into this one]
- O. **Slide5** Let's talk about **Jesus as the true Jonah**. At the end of Mark 4, Jesus stills the storm, then his rebuke, *Have you still no faith?* (Mrk.4:40).
1. *37 And a great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking into the boat, so that the boat was already filling. 38 But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion. And they woke him and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" 39 And he awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. 40 He said to them, "Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?" 41 And they were filled with great fear and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"*
 2. It is easy to preach the book of Jonah in a moralistic way. You can draw the lesson that we need to **work on your faith** and **trust God** when things **get bad**. It could merely be a *how-to-sermon* - *how to have faith and hold on in storms*. But it wouldn't show us the gospel very clearly.
 3. **Mark is intentionally recapping the Jonah episode** in Mark 4. He uses **nearly identical words and phrases**:

- a) **Both** Jesus and Jonah are in a boat. **Both** are in storms described in similar terms. **Both** boats are filled with others who are terrified of death. **Both** groups wake the sleeping prophets angrily, rebuking them. **Both** storms are miraculously calmed and the companions saved. And **both** stories conclude with the men in the boats, more terrified after the storm is stilled than they were before.
- b) **Every feature is the same** - *with one rather large apparent exception*. **Jonah** is sacrificed into the storm, thrown into the deep, satisfying the wrath of God so the others will be saved from it. - **but Jesus is not**. (in this storm there)
- c) **Or, are the accounts really different at that point?** **No**, they are not. As Jesus says in Matthew 12:41, **He is the ultimate Jonah**, who **is** thrown into **the ultimate deep** - *eternal Justice - for us*.
- (1) See Jonah was thrown overboard **for his own sin**, **but** Jesus is thrown into the ultimate storm **for our sin**.
- (2) Jesus was able to save the disciples from the storm, **because He** was thrown into the ultimate storm.
- d) So, let's not **default** to a mere exhortation **to trust God more**, **but go deeper to see the saving work of Jesus**. **Then** not only do we have a great picture of the gospel of salvation, but in the end, we also have a more powerful, heart-changing motivation to trust God.
- (1) We now have a practical application for listeners, that is surrounded in **His saving work**, **not** in **our efforts**.
- e) **So**, instead of settling with a message of *Have faith in the midst of your storms! Have faith in Jesus! He won't let you down!* **Instead**, **let the gospel stir inside your heart ... faith in Christ's work, to show people what He did for us**.
- f) **Are you in something like a storm in your life?** Have you prayed and felt like God must be asleep? He is not. How do you know? Because **He** faced that ultimate storm and endure it **for you**, so you could know **He** will not abandon you in *your infinitely smaller storms*. Why not trust **the One** who did that for you? (Hear the difference?)

P. Jesus is the true Prophet of God sent from Heaven with a message of repentance, but instead of the belly of a fish, He emerged from **the grave**. He sat outside the city of Jerusalem weeping over their rejection of Him and their coming judgement, which is a stark contrast to Jonah weeping over Nineveh in anger that they would be spared and would receive God's mercy instead of judgment.

Q. *****

R. There are other categories: *Preaching Christ from every Major Image in the Bible* (bronze serpent; water from the rock). *Preaching Christ from every deliverance story in the Bible* (David & Goliath). *Preaching Christ from every Theme of the Bible* (kingdom, covenants, justice, judgment).

S. Ask, What is the road to Christ? Did you know that in Southern California from every city, every town, from the mountains to the beach, there is a road that leads to LA?

1. And so from Scripture, there is a road to *the metropolis of Scriptures* ... that is **Christ**.

T. Keywords: