The Journey
HOUSTON

How to Read the Bible

Session 11: New Testament Narrative

DISCUSSION

- What are some famous stories about Jesus that come immediately to your mind and/or that you think a lot of people, even non-Christians with little church background, are familiar with?

- How about famous teachings of Jesus?

TEACHING NOTES

The New Testament picks up, continues, and completes a Story that begins in Genesis 1.
When we get to the NT, the Story isn't finished because the problem isn't solved.

The Gospels

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John

"Something similar to a biography of Jesus."

Differences b/n Gospels b/c distinct theological emphases and purposes.

#1 mistake in reading and interpreting the Gospels is reading the stories/teaching passages ("pericopes") in isolation and not asking how they fit into the main message of that particular Gospel writer or how the Gospels fit into the larger Story or even just the surrounding passages.

Main Purpose: show who Jesus is, the fulfillment of OT hope

River is not as wide, but we're not Jesus or the apostles

We must always ask ourselves, "Why did Matthew/Mark/Luke/John feel the need to include this? What is the point that he is trying to make with this individual passage that contributes to the larger point of his Gospel?"

I. ***John***: "so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name" (John 20:31).
II. ***Mark 8:22–10:52***: Begins/ends with healing of a blind man. Why do we need two examples of Jesus healing the blind?
III. ***Matthew 10:5–6***: "Don't go to the Gentiles"; ***Matthew 28:19***: "Go to the Gentiles!"

Acts

Continuation of the Story (Part 2 of the Gospel of Luke)
early church (Spirit's work to spread the gospel through the church)

Key Verse: Acts 1:8

Challenge: What's descriptive/what's prescriptive? (e.g., speaking in tongues)
This is still a unique time period in redemptive history.
How do the stories relate to make up the story and fit into the Story?

PRACTICE

Read Mark 4:35–41. (*Hint: the point of this story is* not *that Jesus promises to calm the "storms" of your life.*) If time, skim Mark 5 and note any common themes in Mark 4:35–5:43.

- ***Step 1: Grasping the Text in Their Town.*** Discover the message of the Biblical author to the Biblical audience. (*Who is Jesus? How do the parts fit together?*)
- ***Step 2: Measure the Width of the River to Cross.*** Consult the Biblical Story to determine differences between Biblical audience and the reader. (*What is different between us and Jesus and/or the apostles?*)
- ***Step 3: Crossing the Principlizing Bridge.*** Ask what the significance of the text is in order to develop a theological principle. (How does this passage contribute to my theology?)
- ***Step 4: Consulting the Biblical Map.*** Consult the Biblical Story to learn everything the Bible teaches about that theological principle. (Consult systematic theology.)
- ***Step 5: Grasping the Text in Our Town.*** Consider how the theological principle changes the way you live your life.

Homework: Read chapter 9, "New Testament—Letters" of *Journey into God's Word*