

Week 7: Hearing God's Voice (Part 2) – Making the most of the bible

Introduction

- Irina Ratvshinskya, "which is worse: to steal it or not to read it?"
- The truth will set us free - John 8:32
- And give us a firm foundation – Matt 7:24-27

1. Scripture is God-breathed

- 2 Tim 3:16-17 – so what scripture says, God says.
 - God so worked through the human authors that what they wrote was also God's word
 - A library with an amazing unity
- **Scripture has a dual authorship**
 - Both the word of God and the word of man
 - A faith position of Jesus both human and divine
- **So it requires a dual approach**
 - Study it like any other book – principles of interpretation (see 2)
 - Study it like no other book – sit under it humbly, seeking illumination of Holy Spirit (see 3)

2. Three principles of interpretation

- **God has spoken in order to be understood**
 - So look for the natural sense
 - Beware reading in our own assumptions
 - Read poetry as poetry and history as history
 - Mark Twain "It's not the parts of the bible I don't understand that bother me – it's the parts I do understand"
- **God speaks without contradicting himself**
 - So look for the general sense
 - article XX: don't "expound one place of scripture that it be repugnant to another"
 - An apparent contradiction is not necessarily a real one
 - Don't take bits out of context
- **God spoke in precise cultural contexts**
 - So look for the original sense
 - Distinguish between the point made and its cultural clothes
 - Is this rooted in culture or creation?

3. Key attitudes for approaching scripture

- Read the bible:

Humbly

- Sit under it not over it
- On our own and with others
- 1 Samuel 3:9-10 "speak Lord for your servant is listening"

Expectantly

- JB Phillipps "like rewiring a house with the mains still on"
- Luke 24:32 "did not our hearts burn within us?"

Honestly

- There will be things you find difficult/don't understand
- Keep a "pending" tray – remember Mark Twain

Attentively

- Slowly – meditatively - Psalm 1
- Eat this book – food, milk, honey, meat

Imaginatively

- Put yourselves in shoes of a character
- Variety: book, verse, character, theme

Prayerfully

- Read until you find prayer rising
- Remember why it was given ; "Lectio divina"

Obediently

- Be doers of the word, not just hearers (James 1:22)
- John 14:23-24
- Matt 28:16-20

Regularly

- Daily (like manna – Exodus 16)
- John 15:1-8 – abiding & fruitfulness

2 Tim 3:17 "thoroughly equipped..."