

Small Group Notes – 9th July 2017

Ice Breaker (optional)

If you read non-fiction, do you prefer a book that gives answers or provokes questions?

Theme: How do we read and live out the Bible?

Readings: 2 Timothy 3:10-17

Sermon Outline

Two more “Big Questions”:

- How do we uphold our Christian faith & values in a secular world – where law & authorities act in ways against what the Bible says?
- How can we explain and/or come to terms with the fact that people who pray to God and read the Bible can come to completely different conclusions about high-profile and divisive issues?

Scripture is like an onion with many layers (Shrek video!) or a multi-faceted diamond. There are many ways of reading the Bible:

- Meditatively, e.g. Lectio Divina, allowing God to speak.
- Critically, e.g. Biblical Studies, asking questions.

What does the Bible give us?

- Knowledge;
- It shows us how to live;
- It reveals the way of salvation;
- It reveals God.

Two key questions we must consider:

- What did the text mean to the original audience?
- What does the text mean to us today?

There are barriers:

- Time – what is the historical context of the events described?
- Culture – what was the significance of the belief, custom, practice, action or place at that time?
- Geographical – where is the action taking place? How far did they walk? etc.

- Literary – what type of literature am I reading?
- Significance – what does it actually mean? What does it say to me/us in my/our situation?

Other questions to ask

- Who are the people involved? Where are they? When does the action happen? How does the writer seek to communicate? Why do the events happen? So what are the results that follow?

Be aware! When reading books about the Bible, know **who you are reading!** What theological strand (evangelical, catholic, liberal) do they come from? Read a variety of opinions. Know **who you are** and what is important to you – these colour how you read the Bible.

So (part of) the answer to the second question is: we are all different, with different viewpoints, different influences.

Now **read the passage from Timothy**, and note:

- Context: Paul (we assume) was writing to Timothy from prison. Christians were persecuted.
- v. 14 Disciples learned by imitation, not instruction.
- v. 14 Not abstract concepts, but lived reality.
- 4. 15 Life-long learning, learnt and owned. Timothy was taught by mother and grandmother before meeting Paul. (2 Tim 1:5.)
- v. 16 Purpose – teaching, rebuke, improvement, training in righteousness.
- v. 17 Why? Completeness; making us whole, flourishing.

Questions of Application

- 1) How does the passage help us to address the first question?
- 2) How do we respond to those who hold different views?
- 3) What does unconditional acceptance look like?
- 4) How do we challenge?

Ali suggested that these issues can lead to uncertainty and doubt. We must go back to examine our own understanding. They are easier to deal with when we have confidence in God, and can learn to let go of our own understanding, values and even identity.