

Crossing the Principlizing Bridge

The Interpretive Journey

Goal: Grasp the meaning of the text God has intended. We do not create meaning out of a text; rather we seek to find the meaning that is already there.

Obstacles or Separating River:

- 1.) culture
- 2.) time
- 3.) situation
- 4.) covenant, etc.

Theological Principle

This is the broader universal reality or truth that is found within the text. These principles that are revealed in the text are applicable to the ancient biblical audience and to Christians today. This principle is the bridge that helps us cross over the boundaries of culture, language, time, situation, covenant, etc. The principles in the Bible are applicable to all of God's people at all times.

This Journey involves 4 steps:

- 1.) Grasping the Text in Their Town
- 2.) Measuring the Width of the River to Cross
- 3.) Crossing the Principlizing Bridge
- 4.) Grasping the Text in our Town

Step 1- Grasping Text in Their Town

What did the text mean to the biblical audience?

Process: Read text carefully, repeatedly, and observe it. Scrutinize grammar and analyze all significant words. Study the historical and literary contexts. Get the specifics. Do not try to develop theological principles yet.

Step 2- Measuring the Width of the River to Cross

What are the differences between the biblical audience and us?

Process: Look for significant differences between our situation today and the situation for the biblical audience. If you are studying Old Testament, make sure you identify the

theological differences that came as a result of the life and work of Jesus. Try to identify any unique aspects of the situation of your passage.

Step 3- Crossing the Principizing Bridge

What is the theological principle in the text?

Process: Recall differences identified in step 2. Identify any similarities between situation of biblical audience and our situation. Return to the meaning for the biblical audience and try to identify a broader theological principle reflected in the text, but also one that relates to the similarities between us and the biblical audience.

Parts-Whole Spiral

Reflecting back and forth between the text and the teachings of the rest of scripture. The principle you derive should not only be present in the passage but also be in line with the rest of scripture.

Criteria: The principle should:

- A.)be reflected in the text
- B.)be timeless and not tied to a specific situation
- C.)not be culturally bound
- D.)correspond to the teaching of the rest of scripture
- E.)relevant to both the biblical and contemporary audience

Last step in completing our bridge is to write out the theological principle in one or two sentences

Step 4- Grasping the text in our Town

How do we as Christians apply this principle to our lives?

While for each passage there will usually only be a few(and often only one) theological principles relevant for all Christians today, there will be numerous application possibilities. This is because we find ourselves in different specific situations. Each of us will grasp and apply the same theological principle in slightly different ways, depending on our life situation and where we are in our relationship with God.

Joshua 1:1-9

THE GRAMMATICAL-HISTORICAL (CONTEXTUAL) METHOD OF EXEGESIS

EPHESIANS 5:16 ACTS 17:11 ROMANS 12:2

PRESUPPOSITIONS:

1. The Bible is the Word of God. Although God worked through people to produce the Bible, it is nonetheless inspired by the Holy Spirit and is God's Word to us (2Tim 3:16).
2. The Bible is trustworthy and true (John 17:17).
3. God created the heavens and the earth and also mankind, as such, God affects man's history; thus the supernatural does occur (Genesis 1:1, 27).
4. The Bible is not contradictory, it is unified, yet diverse. Nevertheless, God is greater than we are, and He is not always easy to comprehend by our own reasoning (1Corinthians 2:16).

PRINCIPLES:

1. Progressive Revelation
2. Divine Illumination
3. Authorial Intent
4. Single Meaning

EXEGESIS:

To lead out/of (from unknowing to knowing, to lead into understanding); to "unpack" knowledge from the text. The meaning is found within the text, the meaning is not forced from the text. EXEGESIS is the application of the principles of HERMENEUTICS and will seek to identify the singular point, as intended by the author, within the intention of phrases, clauses, sentences, and words from within the text.

Grammatical-Historical/Contextual (GHC)

A. Contextual

1. The FACTS of History
 - A) Archaeology, Customs, Geography, Topography
 - 1) Luke 10:30-37 The Good Samaritan
 - (A) Topography encountered when traveling from Jerusalem to Jericho
 - (1) A long distance
 - (2) Rough and cumbersome road
 - (B) Conditions encountered with Customs of regions in Biblical Times
 - (1) Racial tension between Jew and Samaritan
 - 2) Luke 15:11-32 The Prodigal Son
 - (A) Conditions encountered with Customs of Biblical Times
 - (1) Elderly man running
 - a. Considered to be ignoble
 - B). Of the Bible, Book, Chapter, Passage, Verse, Word
 - C). The Christmas Story hand-out
 - 1) Missler, Chuck, The Christmas Story, CD with notes, Koinonia

House, 2007

- 2. Genre
 - A) Old Testament
 - 1) Narrative, Law, Prophecy, Poetry, and Wisdom Literature
 - B) New Testament
 - 1) Gospel, History, Parable, Letter, and Apocalyptic Literature
 - 3. Context and Grammar
 - A) We start with Context
 - 1) Context defines Grammar
 - 4. Context has two points of view
 - A) The Writer
 - 1) Authorial point of view
 - (A) Inspired by the Holy Spirit (2Tim 3:16)
 - (1) Consistencies throughout the Bible
 - a. Prophecy
 - 2) The Four Gospels hand-out
 - (A) Missler, Chuck, The Book of John, CD with notes, Koinonia House,
- 2001
 - C) The Reader
 - 1) Subjectivity of rendering
- B. The Reader
 - 1. Personal Context
 - A) Experiences and perspective
 - B) Post-Modern attitude
 - 1) "You don't know me"
 - 2) "My reality"
 - 2. Preunderstanding
 - A) What we bring to the Text with us culturally/ contextually
 - B) "Personal Baggage"
- C. Preunderstanding
 - 1. The Issue with Preunderstanding
 - A) The preconceived notions one brings to the Text
 - 2. The Identification
 - A) Unteachable Pride
 - 1) Believing to be knowing, unwilling to learn
 - 2) Prov. 10:14, Prov. 14:3, Prov. 14:7, Prov. 15:7
 - B) Comfortability
 - 1) Comfort Zone
 - 2) Surveying the Text
 - (A) Topical Study
 - (B) Not Systematically Studying
 - (1) The Whole Council of God
 - C) Cultural Baggage
 - 1) Cultural barriers
 - (A) Anti-Semitism
 - 2) Theological hurdles
 - (A) Under a New Covenant

- 3) Traditions
 - (A) Behavior and Beliefs
 - (1) Passed down from generations
- D) Theological Agenda
 - 1) Mark 7:6
 - 2) Luke 12:1
 - 3) 2Peter 2:1
- D. Guarding against Apostasy
 - 1. Perspective on Apostasy
 - A) Deut. 13:1-4
 - 2. Having sound doctrine
 - A) 2Tim 4:1-4
 - 3. Scripture applied in the Bible
 - A) Scripture hand-out
 - 1) Blueletterbible.org
 - 4. Matthew 4 hand-out
 - 5. The Bread hand-out
 - A) Chabad.org
- E. The Importance
 - 1. Having a willingness to learn
 - A) Remaining humbly teachable
 - B) Prov. 2
 - 2. Objectivity
 - A) Understand that subjectivity applied to the rendering of the Text can skew and hinder our EXEGESIS or the "Unpacking of Truth"
 - 3. Authorial meaning of the text
 - A) The Singular Point as intended by the Author
 - 1) John 20:31

Grammatical Considerations

When you dig into the grammar of any given passage, you begin to mine the depths of God's Word. It is within the walls of grammar that you ascertain the communication of God to His people. – BSM

Goal: Understand the meaning of the words in scripture (lexical study) and their arrangement (syntactical study) within the given contexts.

The textbook gives an example of a love struck boy reading over a love letter. It says he reads over and over trying to understand the meaning behind each word. He analyzes each word to get to the details. It is important that we are in Love with God when we go to His word. If you don't have that desire to know more and more about Him- then your Bible study time will be boring and tedious. We get to know Him better by dissecting the words and their placement. It is important to ask questions and pursue the answers.

What is the meaning of this word in this particular verse?

Lexical Study

Hebrew & Greek

We get our Bible from both Hebrew(Old Testament) and Greek(New Testament) origins. When we start looking at the original words in the Hebrew and Greek we find that the one word we have in English may have multiple words in the Hebrew or Greek that have more specific meanings and will give us a better understanding of the single meaning the author is trying to convey. Unfortunately, certain things are lost in translation. A Hebrew/Greek dictionary can be helpful when trying to understand what the single meaning of a passage is.

Example: The word Love in John 21:15-17

“The context itself indicates that *agapao* in the first two questions suggests the love that values and esteems. It is an unselfish love, ready to serve. The use of *phileo* in Peter's answers and the Lord's third question, conveys the thought of cherishing the Object above all else, of manifesting an affection characterised by constancy, from the motive of the highest veneration(to be up uttermost importance or Holy).”

We see the progression from Peter esteeming Jesus to putting Jesus as the highest priority in his life.

Tool: Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words

Where else is this word spoken of in the Bible?

Tool: Strong's exhaustive concordance of the Bible

A concordance will allow you to look up any word and find every scripture in the Bible that contains that word from Genesis to Revelation. This gives us a greater perspective of what God wants us to understand regarding that word or person, place, etc.

Syntactical Study(Arrangement)

1.) Word Repetition

Why is this word repeated several times in a series of verses?

- 1.) Repetition of the same word within one sentence or verse.
- 2.) Repetition in the larger passage or elsewhere in the Bible

1 John 2:15-17 (Handout # 1)

Matthew 27:46- And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, “Eli, Eli, lama Sabachthani?” that is, “My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?”

The repetition of My God calls our attention to the seriousness of Jesus’s suffering and raises the question of why? There is a Scripture that gives a clue:

“For he hath made him [to be] sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” (2Corinthians 5:21)

God the Father cannot look at sin. For a moment Jesus became sin and **God had to look away**. For the full effect of that event, God kept Jesus from knowing it. Jesus felt a strange vacuum of the Spirit and uttered the famous words, meaning, **My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?** Quite understandably He felt momentarily forsaken. Quickly God the Father made an end of His spiritual and physical agony, and He died

We see this exact wording being used in Psalm 22:1. A Psalm of David. This Psalm is known as the Psalm of Crucifixion because it describes things that only Christ experienced. Old Testament prophecy being completed through Jesus. **Cross referencing** is important for connecting scriptures like this.

2.) Contrasts v. Comparisons

Contrasts focus on differences. Comparisons focus on similarities.

Examples:

“He who oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker, but whoever is kind to the needy honors God.”- Proverbs 14:31

Two types of people are **contrasted** and it reflects their attitude toward God.

“Like a muddied spring or a polluted well is a righteous man who gives way to the wicked”- Prov. 25:26 – **comparison**

How is a righteous man who gives way to the wicked like a muddied spring? Because the spring, like the man, was once clean, pure, and useful, but now is contaminated and useless for service.

3.) Lists

Anytime you encounter more than 2 itemized things, you can identify them as a list. Write the list down and explore the significance. What order are they grouped in? Why?

Example: "For everything in the world- the craving of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does- comes not from the Father but from the world."- 1Jhn 2:16

List:

- A.) craving of sinful man
- B.) lust of eyes
- C.) boasting

4.) Cause and Effect

Biblical writers will state causes followed by the effect of that cause. These are often times simple truths but many times we don't recognize the power behind them.

Example: "A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger"- Proverbs 15:1

- A.) Cause – gentle answer/ Effect- turns away wrath
- B.) Cause- harsh word/Effect- stirs up anger

5.) Figures of Speech

Powerful literary forms because they paint images to which we can relate emotionally.

What image is the author trying to convey?

Examples: Your word is a lamp unto my feet and a light for my path. Psalm 119:105

We see figures of speech throughout scripture but many are found in the poetic books of the Bible

6.) Conjunctions

And, For, But, Therefore, Since, Because, Etc.

Our tendency in reading is to skip over these words but they have a purpose and function that is important. We have to approach the Bible differently.

- A.) But is an indication of a contrast. Romans 6:23 contrasting wages of sin(death) and the gift of God(eternal life).
- B.) Therefore or So present a conclusion based on earlier arguments or reasoning. Romans 12:1

2 Timothy 1:7-8- "**For** God did not give us a spirit of timidity, **but** a spirit of power, of love **and** of self-discipline. **So** do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord, **or** ashamed of me his prisoner. **But** join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God.

Contrast is made between spirit of timidity and the Spirit of God(power, love, self-discipline)\

Contrast is made between suffering for the gospel and being ashamed to testify of Him.

7. Verbs

Communicate the action of the sentence

Types:

- A.) past, present, or future tense(I went, I go, I will go?)
- B.) Does it present progressive idea- does it have a continued action(I was going, I am going, I will be going).
- C.) Is it an imperative verb(Go!)? **These are often God's commands to us.**

Ephesians 4:2-3

“**Be** completely humble and gentle; **be** patient, **bearing** with one another in love. **Make** every effort to **keep** the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.

D.) Passive v. Active

“Since, then, you *have been raised* (passive) with Christ, *set*(active) your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.”- Colossians 3:1

Passive- We are being raised with Christ

Active- We are setting our hearts on things above

8.) Pronouns

A word that is used instead of a noun (he, it, hers, me, them, us, our, etc.)

The importance in looking at the pronouns is to identify who or what they are referring to.

Example: “Praise be to the God and Father of **our** Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed **us** with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ”- Ephesians 1:3

The our and us are referring to two things we find in Ephesians 1:1

- a. The saints in Ephesus
- b. The faithful in Christ Jesus

HANDOUTS

1.) 1 John 2:15-17

Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world- the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does- comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.

2.) Romans 12: 1-2

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God-which is your spiritual worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is- his good, pleasing, and perfect will.

Textbook answers

Step 1: What did the text mean to the biblical audience?

The Lord commanded Joshua, the new leader of Israel, to draw strength and courage from God's empowering presence, to be obedient to the law of Moses, and to meditate on the law so that he would be successful in the conquest of the Promised land

Step 2: What are the differences between the biblical audience and us?

We are not leaders of the nation Israel(although some of us may be leaders in the church). We are not embarking on the conquest of Canaan, the Promised Land. We are not under the old covenant of law.

Step 3: What is the theological principle in the text?

To be effective in serving God and successful in the task to which he has called us, we must draw strength and courage from his presence. We must also be obedient to God's word, meditating on it constantly.

Step 4: How should we apply this principle?

Several suggested applications:

- Spend more time meditating on God's word by listening to Christian music as you ride in your car.
- If God calls you to a new, scary ministry, such as teaching fourth-grade Sunday school, then be strengthened and encouraged by his empowering presence. Be obedient, keeping a focus on the scriptures.
- If you are in a church leadership position, realize that successful Christian leadership requires strength and courage that flows from the presence of God.

