

BYOBible

*How to read your Bible, Part II –
Interpreting and reading the Bible
October 17, 2021*

Overarching Theme: In 2021, FUMC will be SENT with the peace of Christ!

Instructions:

When using this material as teacher, feel free to pick and choose the point you want to emphasize in the lesson. *The format of the curriculum is designed to have an abundance of information in which to refer as desired.*

Core Point:

On Easter evening, the Risen Christ appears to his gathered disciples for the first time since Good Friday and speaks these words: "*Peace be with you. As the Father sent me, so I send you*" (John 20:21). Just as Jesus sent his disciples into a divided, conflicted 1st Century with his peace, so he sends us into a divided, conflicted 2021 with his peace.

Reflect on this Scripture:

2 Peter 3:13-18 NRSV ¹³ *But, in accordance with his promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home.* ¹⁴ *Therefore, beloved, while you are waiting for these things, strive to be found by him at peace, without spot or blemish; ¹⁵ and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation. So also our beloved brother Paul wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, ¹⁶ speaking of this as he does in all his letters. There are some things in them hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other scriptures. ¹⁷ You therefore, beloved, since you are forewarned, beware that you are not carried away with the error of the lawless and lose your own stability. ¹⁸ But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.*

This Week: 2 Peter 3:13-18

Peter is an apostle; the use of "our" in "our beloved brother Paul" probably refers to the apostles as a whole, with whom Peter is identified. The author points out that both Peter and Paul have the same inspired message for the church, Paul's being written "according to the wisdom given him" – that is, by inspiration similar to Old Testament prophets (1:20-21). 2 Peter admits that

Paul's letters contain some things hard to understand (as the history of scholarship attests!), but it is implied that Peter can interpret them and that so can those with knowledge and stability, like the churches addressed. It is the "ignorant and unstable", like the false teachers, who twist Paul's revelation to their own destruction, as they do with the Old Testament (the "other scriptures."). In short, all readers will interpret Scripture in some way. The question is, will the interpretation be helpful for Christian discipleship or harmful?

-- Adapted from New Interpreters Commentary, Vol XII, p. 359-60

Questions to Ponder for Accountability in the Group:

1. 2 Peter 3:13ff implies that the writings of those in close proximity with Jesus (like Paul, John and others) were beginning to be accepted as Scripture on par with the Old Testament, leading to the development of our New Testament. Writings like 1 Thessalonians (written about 49 A.D.) are from 16 years or so after the death/resurrection of Jesus. Is it significant that many of these writings were written by persons who were close to Jesus fairly soon after they happened? How does this impact your confidence in the New Testament?
2. The Bible can be read with knowledge and stability, or can be misread ('twisted') through ignorance and instability (verse 16). Can you think of an example in history where the Bible has been misused? How about in your own experience?
3. 2 Peter speaks of false teachers that seemingly approach the Scripture with 'an axe to grind.' What would be a more helpful approach to reading Scripture?
4. In the sermon, the importance of learning what the Scripture meant to the original listeners/readers was emphasized. Why is it important to understand the original 1st Century meaning before trying to apply it to the 21st Century?
5. Is there a Biblical book or passage that is currently compelling for you? What about it has been helpful in *knowing and doing God's will* (John Wesley's consistent focus when reading Scripture)?

Activity for the Life of a Disciple:

1. Remember to find encouragement for the day by reading the daily devotional from FUMCC and/or to journal in the "*Morning by Morning*" gratitude resource.
2. Take the "Chapter Challenge" to read or listen to a chapter a day from one of the Gospels each day this week.

3. Check out a study Bible or two from the resource table near the Ministry Center coffee area. Consider some of these resources for your continued study.
4. Ponder and pray on this scripture this week: 2 Peter 3:18 NRSV
***18** But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.*