

"The Gospel According to Jesus" Matthew 4:23

Jesus' words are life and truth, yet many of them are incredibly hard to understand! Why does He call a Gentile woman a "dog" in Matthew 15? Why does He tell the rich young ruler that eternal life is gained by obeying the Law and selling all of one's possessions? Why does Jesus' gospel emphasize works rather than faith? We will never understand the teachings of Jesus unless we are willing to become diligent students of the Word of God; students who are capable of skillfully studying the words and context of Scripture.

Examples of Jesus' teachings that are difficult to understand:

- Mt. 19:16-22; Rich young ruler – "go sell all you have and give to the poor"
- Mt 5:48; E.g. "You must be perfect"
- Is the Great Commission clear? Mt 28:18-20 (make disciples of all the nations); Mt 10:5-6 (Do not go in the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter any city of the Samaritans ...)
- Mt 15:22-26 : "do not throw the children's bread to the dogs"

1. Study Key Words.

One of the most important words in the gospels? **Gospel**.

The word "gospel" is never used in John? Most evangelistic gospel.

- "Good news"; good news about what?
- Secular uses: news coming back from the battle front
- OT – 1 Sam. 31:8-9; Nah 1:15; Is. 52:7-8

1 Samuel 31:8-9

The next day, when the Philistines came to strip the dead, they found Saul and his three sons fallen on Mount Gilboa. They cut off his head, stripped off his armor, and sent messengers throughout the land of the Philistines to carry the **good news** to the houses of their idols and to the people.

Isaiah 52:7-8

How lovely on the mountains are the feet of him who brings **good news**, who announces peace and brings **good news** of happiness, who announces salvation, and says to Zion, "Your God reigns!"... for they will

see with their own eyes when the Lord restores Zion.

- Luke 1:19; 2:10-11; 3:15-18; 4:43

Within the books we call "gospels" the gospel is focused on the good news that God is fulfilling His covenant promises

- Gospel according to Paul...1 Cor. 15 – death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. Payment for our sins. Believe and you receive eternal life.

1 Corinthians 15:1,3-4

Now I make known to you, brethren, the **gospel** which I preached to you... that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures...

- Gospel according to Jesus...

Context! Context for Jesus' teachings...

2. Study the context.

- Flow of God's redemptive plan. Entire Bible
- Entire book
- World of author and audience
- Words, ideas have meaning in context of history
- God progressively revealing His program.

A. Jesus came at a unique time to a particular people

- Jesus was not speaking directly to us. Not in English, to Americans, living in the 21st century. Applicable but we are not the first audience.
- 1st century Jews, God's covenant people
 - Abrahamic
 - Mosaic
 - Davidic
 - New
- Expectations/Hope based on covenant promises
- Covenant background
 - Gen. 12:1-3. Abrahamic covenant everlasting but unfulfilled
 - Mosaic covenant "added alongside"
 - Obey and enjoy promises; disobey and be disciplined

- Dt –expectation of failure-discipline/exile-repentance-restoration
- Davidic covenant pending – 2 Sam 7
 - Herod not a Jew; Idumean, Edomite, from Esau
 - Rome
 - Still in exile
 - Waiting for David’s heir to take the throne
- Waiting for restoration through New Covenant. NC not yet in affect.
 - Jer 31:10-12, 31-34
 - No foreign domination; Destruction of God’s enemies
 - Physical blessing
 - Spiritual healing of God’s people
- A people to whom promises had been made but not yet fulfilled
- How could people get prepared? Malachi 4:4-6

“Remember the law of Moses My servant, even the statutes and ordinances which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel. Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord. He will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, so that I will not come and smite the land with a curse.”
Malachi 4:4-6

 - John the Baptist preached the Law

B. Jesus came with a specific mission

1. To fulfill God’s covenant promises
 - Mt 1:1 – son of Abraham, son of David – Jesus connected to the OT covenants from the very first verse of the gospels. The OT covenants are the context of Jesus’ ministry
 - Jesus is the perfect Israelite who will succeed where Israel has failed
2. To offer Himself as Davidic King to Israel – Mt. 11:28-30

Some recognized the offer. “son of David”; most did not

Characteristics of kingdom – Ezek 37:24-28

 - Physical, national, political
 - Spiritual

Luke 4:16-21/Is. 61 (and the day of vengeance of our God)
3. To be rejected – John 12:27-28
 - What did they most want? Physical peace and prosperity. Leaders were jealous of Him. Taken prisoner - Jesus was not measuring up.
 - Predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God – Acts 2:22-23

- Death necessary to extend blessing to all nations. To set all things right.
- 4. To fulfill the righteous requirements of the Law.
Proved Himself a worthy sacrifice
- 5. To inaugurate a New Covenant – Luke 22:19-20

- We wait for fulfillment of God's promises. Whether you are Jewish, African, Haitian, Texan, all our hope is in Jesus Christ.

- Amazing day yesterday. Funeral and wedding in one day. Looking back on a life of a man whose hope was in Christ. Looking ahead with a couple whose hope is in Christ.

- This semester we will fix our hope on Christ and learn from Him.

Application

Do you know Him?

Do you live for Him?