

Scripture Rocks

When I was a kid...I loved math. It came so naturally...I could do math flip cards at a young age. Math was just easy.....English on the other hand...not so easy. I really struggled with pronouns, conjunctions, verb usage, similes, metaphors and others. They made no sense to me

But then one day the light went on..... Saturday Morning....in my pj's watching cartoons.....eating Captain Crunch and drinking Tang My English troubles were over.... School House Rock...rocked! Everything I needed to know about English I learned at **School House Rock** With a bit of help from Sesame Street

I thought all my English woes were over until Seminary. God has a funny sense of humor Turns out all those conjunctions, verb tenses and pronouns....God uses in His word to point toward the gold

When I got to my Hermeneutics Class in Seminary The first thing I had to learn was how to spell hermeneutics Second thing was to find out what it was Biblical Hermeneutics is the science of interpreting Scripture To Interpret Scripture is also know as to exegete Then I soon discovered that I needed to know English to correctly exegete during hermeneutics.

So learn those two words today and impress friends tomorrow. So Monday when people ask you what you did this weekend. Just a bit of hermeneutics you know.....exegeting.....

As much as I resisted it, what I learned in English really began to unlock the Bible for me It really shouldn't have surprised me. The writers of Biblical Text were using words to communicate.

All writers use those tools. It is the intricate use of language that makes great writers. My Dad was a huge Jane Austin fan. I asked him once what made Jane Austin such a great writer. He told me that she is a great writer because of her realism and biting social commentary. It set her apart from others A woman writing in a man's world and doing so anonymously

He said that she could craft amazing sentences that said so much more than the words. She painted a mental picture with words. He words always took you deeper into the story and the meaning that she was trying to convey.

The Bible is like that as well. But it was written by God. It is the use of words, phrases, connectors, pronouns, verb tenses that encourage us to dive deeper. So we can see what God has for those who are willing to explore the depths of His Word. So for those who like me..struggle with the native tongue I want to encourage you to persevere today.

I will try to make this as interesting as possible. You may need to watch School House Rock on YouTube along the way But, if we want to understand the deeper truths of Scripture.... there are some basic things that we just have to know

I just want to expose you to some basic principles that will point you to gold. So that you can begin the process of panning the depths of the river for the Gold God has for you.

We have been discussing the **4 C's Content**- "What do I see?" Context- "What does it mean?" Connection- "How does it relate?" Conduct- "What Am I to do?"

We are still on the first C Just looking **PHOTO 1** to see what we can see Not yet trying to understand what it means Not yet trying to bring it forward 20 centuries to our context And certainly not yet trying to apply it. Once we get the first C down...everything else is downhill But we can't interpret what we don't see. So if we put some effort in there...it will pay off quickly. We are just looking, observing, noticing, exploring. We started looking last week.

Things That We are Looking For Last week we covered the first 3 Repeats Compares Contrasts

Today we will learn about 3 other things to look for Connects Communicates Emphasizes

There is a thread that runs through God's word. Each thought connected to the next....Themes that run deep in the word....Some are repeated....Some are connected....When we look at how ideas, thoughts and concepts are connected...We begin to understand the deeper meanings in the text.

Remember why we are doing this. This can seem like an English class, particularly today. But after today we will use what we have learned and dive in to the text. The reason we are doing this is really to just force us to slow down. By looking for these flecks of gold....we force ourselves to slow down.

I am going to apologize in advance....this sermon will seem more like an English class...but we are laying a foundation...we are learning to examine the text for ourselves....we are looking for clues that draw us in deeper.

Last week we noted ways to look....what do we see? We saw things that repeat, things that compare and things that contrast...Today we look for things that connect, things that communicate, and things that emphasize. Let's jump in to **words that connect.**

I came up with 9 of them

Look for **conjunctions**

And, For, But, Therefore, Since, Because, Conjunctions connect The most obvious is "therefore" Everytime you see it...ask what is it there for? It is always connecting what is about to be said to what was just said. Therefore.....you have to go back.

But also look at "Since" and "Because"

Romans 12:1 (NIV84) 1 Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship.

1st 11 Chapters talk about the Beauty of the Gospel

Then with one word he connects all the thoughts in those chapters to what he is about to say.....Present your bodies as a living sacrifice which is your spiritual worship. Paul spends eleven chapters talking about the beauty of the Gospel, the value of the Gospel, the Truth of the Gospel, The Gift of the Gospel and the Gospel is Jesus Christ and him crucified and resurrected. Once he makes that crystal clear....then in one word....he connects all of that to our response.....

Therefore, since Jesus did all that He did....we are to present our bodies as a living sacrifice which is your spiritual worship. We are to worship Jesus by surrendering our bodies to Him....To become what He became...a sacrifice....We connect with Him by surrendering all. And it all connects with one word....therefore.

The key to understanding Romans 12:1 and connect it to what preceded it is to notice the conjunction. So the first connector is a conjunction.

Look for prepositions

by with from in upon, on, through to

Galatians 2:20 (NIV84) 20 I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

The preposition with...Crucified WITH Christ....Slow down and think about what that means....We have been crucified...We share in that experience...You and I are identified with His death. In order to follow Jesus, we must die....our flesh nature must die so that we can be born again and live in the Spirit. Just like Jesus we give up our lives to live for others.

Paul says....I no longer live....BUT...there is a connector...Because we have been crucified with Christ....I no longer live....BUT....here comes the next preposition....Christ lives IN me....When you hit another preposition...you are invited to slow down and think....Christ Lives IN ME. You died to yourself....and Jesus took up residence in you. You have died....He lives...and He now lives in and through you.

We then move to the next preposition.....And the life I live IN the body....I live BY faith IN the Son of God.

So in our bodies...while on earth....Christ lives in us...He lives through us...He does His Work....His Spiritual Work...telling the Gospel...to the lost through us. So I live BY faith...It is not just my faith...but where I have placed my faith....IN CHRIST.

Who loved me and gave Himself FOR me. This one passage....full of prepositions....inviting you and me...to slow down and digest what God is saying through Paul. You could have an incredible quiet time with God...on this one passage....focusing on the prepositions.

Look for Question and Answer

Question Marks are HUGE! When you see a question mark, I can almost guarantee you that deeper meaning is awaiting your exploration.

In Romans, several chapters start with Paul asking a question....and then he spends the chapter answering it.

Chapter 3 "What advantage is there in being a Jew?" Chapter 4 "What then shall we say was gained by Abraham?" Chapter 6 " Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase?" Chapter 7: "Do you not know that the law is binding only as long as you live?"

In these chapters, Paul is having a dialogue with his readers. He is asking the question that they are wondering and then answering it. Questions almost always draw you in deeper. Let me read to you common gold revealing questions in Scripture.

Where are you?" (Genesis 3:9) — God seeking Adam after the Man had sinned. "Am I my brother's keeper?" (Genesis 4:9) — Cain to God after murdering his brother. "Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?" (Gen. 18:25) — Abraham pleading with God to spare Sodom. "Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation?" (Job 38:4) — God questions Job about the extent of his knowledge.

"Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" (Isaiah 6:8) — The godhead asks if anyone will represent Him. "Who do you say that I am?" — (Mark 8:29) — Jesus pressing His disciples as to their opinions about His nature and identity. "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (Mark. 8:36) — Jesus on what's really valuable. And what's not. "Who is my neighbor?" (Luke 10:29) — The infamous question posed by a self-righteous religious lawyer that led Jesus into the parable of the Good Samaritan. "Why do you look for the living among the dead?" (Luke 24:5) — The angels to the women searching for Christ's crucified body. "If God is for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31) — The apostle Paul on God's absolute power.

Job 14:14 (NIV84) 14 If a man dies, will he live again?

Mark 8:36–38 (NIV84) 36 What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul? 37 Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?

Psalms 8:4 (NIV84) 4 what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?

Genesis 18:14 (NIV84) 14 Is anything too hard for the Lord?

Luke 6:46 (NIV84) 46 "Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?"

Hebrews 13:6 (NIV84) 6 So we say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?"

Matthew 27:22 (NIV84) 22 "What shall I do, then, with Jesus who is called Christ?" Pilate asked. They all answered, "Crucify him!"

Questions are God's way of dialoging with us. Never blow through questions.

Look for Cause and Effect

Cause and effect often reveal the promises of God.

For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son....and then the effect....whomever believes in Him shall have eternal life.

Romans 6:23 (NIV84) 23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Cause Sin. Effect Death. Cause Free Gift of God. Effect Eternal Life

Romans 12:2 (NIV84) 2 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.

Cause: Be Transformed by the Renewing of your Mind Effect: you will discern the will of God.

Action and then reaction. Cause and Effect. Obedience and Promise. They all come together.

Means

When something happens. By what means did it happen? Was it God? Was it man? Was it a move of the Holy Spirit? Look for the word "by" or "through"

Matthew 4:1 (ESV) 1 Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

Acts 20:22–23 (ESV) 22 And now, behold, I am going to Jerusalem, constrained by the Spirit, not knowing what will happen to me there, 23 except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and afflictions await me.

Just like Jesus was led to the wilderness by the Spirit.....Paul is led to Jerusalem bound by the Spirit. Noting the means....ties these two passage together for reflection. The themes that connect verses from other passages are often found in noticing the means. The Holy Spirit take us to places we don't want to go and does so to fulfill the purposes of God. He led Jesus to the Wilderness and Paul to Jerusalem.

Conditions and Consequences

Causes that have a condition that brings about a specific response Look for "IF" which is the condition and "Then" which is the consequence

2 Corinthians 5:17 (NIV84) 17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!

John 15 Jesus talking about abiding in Him...has many if then statements.

IF you remain in ME, THEN I will remain in you.

IF a man remains in Me AND I in him, THEN he will bear much fruit. IF you are cut off from Me, THEN you can do nothing.

IF you stop dwelling in Me, THEN you will be cut off, hauled off and burned in the fire.

IF you abide in Me AND My words in you AND they continue to live in your heart (active and operating, not passive), THEN ask whatever you like and I'll do it for you.

IF you keep My commandments, THEN you will abide in My love and live on.

Sometimes the IF and THEN are implied....there is still a cause and effect....

Jeremiah 29:13 (ESV) 13 You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart.

If you seek me with all of your heart Then you will find me

Lists

Look for things that are itemized and then ask this question...How is this listed? Why are they ordered in a certain way? We covered lists in a different message earlier. They are always important and always point to Gold.

Galatians 5:21–23 (ESV) 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

Write out the list. Is there an order? Love is first Greatest commandment is love Are they linked? How are they different? How many are in the list?

Pronouns

Help us see connections in the text I, You, We, us, your, me, they

Ephesians 1:3–14 (ESV) 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, 4 even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love 5 he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, 6 to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. 7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, 8 which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight 9 making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ 10 as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. 11 In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, 12 so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. 13 In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

verse 13 pronoun change. We to you. Paul was writing to two audiences. Jews (we) and Gentiles (you)

He starts out addressing the Jews and telling them what they have been promised. Then he turns to the Gentiles and says "You also" Then he joins everyone together in the last pronoun "our"

The pronouns teach that there are no second class citizens in the Kingdom of Heaven. Jews and Gentiles alike. Us together OUR inheritance When you look at the pronouns The picture of community comes alive in this passage

2 Peter 2:19–21 (ESV) 19 They promise them freedom, but they themselves are slaves of corruption. For whatever overcomes a person, to that he is enslaved. 20 For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first. 21 For it would have been better for them never to have known the way of righteousness than after knowing it to turn back from the holy commandment delivered to them.

People use this verse to say you can lose your salvation. The key to this passage is the pronoun They Who are "they"? They escaped the corruption of the world through knowledge of God. They are again entangled. They would have been better off to never have known. So can I lose my salvation based on this verse? Who are "They"?

If you go back to the first verse in this chapter. Peter tells us who "they" are

2 Peter 2:1 (ESV) 1 But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction.

These are the false prophets. They were with us but not of us. They are not us. They are false prophets among us. The key to this passage is in the pronoun. You have to know the pronouns.

Look for How the Word Communicates- You must feel the text

Are their words, images, phrases that communicate emotion, moods or tones? This is where we experience the text....we feel what is happening....we ask ourselves what is moving our heart?

This is the part of reading the Bible imaginatively Look for words that convey feelings or emotions. Don't study the Bible like it is an academic lesson Listen to the emotion of Jeremiah 3 as God reaches out to His people.

Jeremiah 3:19–20 (ESV) 19 “ ‘I said, How I would set you among my sons, and give you a pleasant land, a heritage most beautiful of all nations. And I thought you would call me, My Father, and would not turn from following me. 20 Surely, as a treacherous wife leaves her husband, so have you been treacherous to me, O house of Israel, declares the Lord.’ ”

Can you read that and not feel God's emotion for His people They have been unfaithful to Him like a wife unfaithful to her husband. By paying attention to the emotions you connect with the Heart of God.

Galatians 4:12–16 (ESV) 12 Brothers, I entreat you, become as I am, for I also have become as you are. You did me no wrong. 13 You know it was because of a bodily ailment that I preached the gospel to you at first, 14 and though my condition was a trial to you, you did not scorn or despise me, but received me as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus. 15 What then has become of your blessedness? For I testify to you that, if possible, you would have gouged out your eyes and given them to me. 16 Have I then become your enemy by telling you the truth?

Paul expressing the emotion of one who feels the pain of rejection by those he has diligently served. At one time they would of done anything for him...now they have made him their enemy. You can feel the emotion in his words.

When you read Genesis 22 with Abraham on the mountain with Isaac Connect to the emotion of a father putting his son on an altar to kill him Because God commanded it

A son submitting to the will of his father Are you scared? Bewildered? The relief of having been given a substitute to take his place.

Luke 13:33–34 (ESV) 34 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!

Can you imagine coming to save someone, knowing that you are going to die in the process, and those you came for...those you love....don't care?

Look at what the Word Emphasizes

Look at Verbs

Look at verbs. How is the action taking place?Is the verb past, present or future?

Ephesians 1:11–12 (ESV) 11 In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will,

Galatians 2:20 (ESV)

20 I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Note the verb tense. Have been Crucified.....Christ lives in me present tense...He loved and gave past tense. The verbs remind us that the salvation work of Christ is past tense but the effect is present tense.

Is this something we have to do in the future? No the verb is past tense. It is done. But notice the verb works Present tense. Jesus is still doing. Verb tenses are critical to notice.

Is the verb imperative?

Matthew 28:18–20 (ESV) 18 And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Where is the command in this verse? It is not Go as many misuse this verse The command is to make disciples.

Colossians 3:1 (ESV) 1 If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.

You have been raised (passive) Seek the things that are above (active)

Look at Space

What did the author spend time on? Genesis has 50 Chapters 11 Creation/Fall of Man/Scattered People 1 1/2 Chapters on Creation Genesis 12-50 Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph 38 Chapters of the Story of God and His people What does that tell us?

God likely thinks that His pouring out of His blessing and promises on His people is very important People are important in God's economy

A purpose statement

Does the author say why He says something or why something happens? In order that.... So that....

John 20:31 (ESV) 31 but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

Why did John write the Book of John? He tells you. So that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ A clear purpose statement That helps us unpack all of the Book of John

John 15:16 (ESV) 16 You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you.

The reason He chose you...the purpose That you should go and bear fruit. Not just to save you.

By studying this purpose statement We see the deeper truth that our faith is not just for us

It is not just about avoiding hell and going to heaven It is so we can bear fruit for others to see in us. That the fruit of the Spirit will be manifested in you Think about that purpose statement

The next time you want to keep your faith private- just between you and God A purpose statement points you to dive deeper

Order

The Disciples are listed 4 times in the Scriptures....The lists are almost identical in order.

In Mark 3 and Matthew 10 they are identical. In Luke 6 and Acts 1 they are identical and they only differ from the other two by the order of one name. In all lists, the first 10 are identical in order and the bottom 2 change because of Judas.

Jesus' inner circle...Peter James and John are always listed first and in that order. Lists and order always signifies something in scripture. Could be importance, significance, age, etc. Almost always highest to lowest.

Exaggeration. Also known as a Hyperbole. Exaggerating to make a point...not to lie.

John 4:39 (NKJV) 39 And many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, "He told me all that I ever did."

Mark 1:4–5 (ESV) 4 John appeared, baptizing in the wilderness and proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. 5 And all the country of Judea and all Jerusalem were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.

2 Corinthians 11:7–8 (ESV) 8 I robbed other churches by accepting support from them in order to serve you.

Matthew 23:24 (NKJV) 24 Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!

You now have some idea of what you can begin to look for. We must sharpen our skills of Listening and Looking as we open God's Word So we now move from the classroom to the laboratory. From Theory to Practice Fancy ways of saying homework. We want you to begin to explore Colossians 1:15-23. It is a beautiful passage that we will explore next week.

Colossians 1:15–29 (ESV) 15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. 16 For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. 17 And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. 18 And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. 19 For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, 20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross. 21 And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, 22 he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him, 23 if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, became a minister. 24 Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church, 25 of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known, 26 the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to his saints. 27 To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. 28 Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. 29 For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.

Let's Pray