

Beyond Mere Words

Wk5: Learning to Read and Listen

Scott McKnight notes “The word ‘listen’ or ‘hear’ is found more than 1,500 times in the Bible.” The conclusion his college made from this after a study of each of references was “The biggest complaint in Scripture is that people do not listen to God.”

1. Enter Reading Your Bible With The Expectation That You Will Encounter God And Hear His Words.

- a. God gave the Bible not so we can know it but so we can know and love God through it. (Reading the Bible Relationally)
 - i. God ≠ Bible
 - ii. The Bible is God’s communication—in the form of words—with us.
 1. We listen to God speak in the Bible and we engage God as we listen.
 2. We may argue with God, ask questions of God, but that all comes after we listen.
- b. “Indeed it may be no exaggeration to say that the ultimate purpose of biblical interpretation is to achieve right relationships: with God, with others and with oneself.” Vanhoozer, *First Theology*, 40
- c. Postmodernism increased the gap between author and reader...and an autonomous text/reader are expressions of atheism.

2. How To Read The Bible For All Its Worth

- a. Read the Bible
- b. Schedule time to read the Bible
- c. Read as if it was the first time
 - i. It is said that familiarity breeds contempt
 - ii. Try different translations (ESV, NIV, NRSV, NLT, NET, CEB)
 - iii. Try a Readers Bible
- d. Read entire books in one sitting (or at least in larger sections)
 - i. We are story people
 - ii. Yet we read the Bible like a textbook
- e. Read and reread the same book (focusing on that book) for a month
- f. Read out loud
- g. Listen to an audio Bible (listen & read together)
- h. Read Imaginatively (close you eyes and picture it)
- i. Read patiently
 - i. Read for relationship and wisdom, not entertainment or information
 - ii. Don’t dash to commentaries the moment you think your over your head
 - iii. Be patient with yourself. Be patient with the text.

**Observational Exercise(s)*

3. Seeing And Hearing Are Not The Same As Listening And Observing

- a. Ask questions of the text
 - i. Who (s)
 - ii. What (s)
 - iii. Why (s)
 - iv. When (s)
 - v. Where (s)
 - vi. How (s)
 - vii. So what?

- b. Write down your observations of the text
 - i. Terms (unknown, unique, or key words)
 - ii. Subject and Object
 - iii. Verbs
 - iv. Prepositional Phrases (where action is taking place)
 - v. Connectives
 - vi. Modifiers
 - vii. People / Places / Times
 - viii. Cause and Effect Relationships
 - ix. Comparison and Contrasts
 - x. Purpose Statements, Introductions, and Summaries
 - xi. Lists and Repeated words
 - xii. Quotes
 - xiii. Metaphors or illustrations
 - xiv. Questions and Answers
 - xv. Genre of Literature (e.g. Narrative, Poetry, Wisdom, Epistle, Prophecy, Apocalyptic)
 - xvi. Narrative Structure (tension and resolution)

**Attached PDF of 1 John 1*

4. Listening And Obeying Are Indivisibly Linked

- a. Anabaptist Hermeneutic: To obey the Scriptures we must know them, yet to truly know them we must obey them.
- b. "Good reading is an act of love and therefore an act of listening. But good listening...is more than gathering information. It is more than just sitting around the back porch with God as we sip tea while God tells us a story. God speaks to us for a reason—I call this 'missional' listening. In brief, God tells his story so we can enter into relationship with him, listen to him, and live out his Word in our day and in our way." Scott Mcknight, *The Blue Parakeet*, 103
- c. Matthew 7:24-27 "Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock..."
- d. Explain how these questions differ:
 - i. How does what is being communicated apply to me?
 - ii. What does this text mean to me?

1 John 1

We declare to you what was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life— this life was revealed, and we have seen it and testify to it, and declare to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was revealed to us— we declare to you what we have seen and heard so that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. We are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.

This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light and in him there is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him while we are walking in darkness, we lie and do not do what is true; but if we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

QUESTIONS: