

# Gospels Exegetical Workshop

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# Course Description

- ▶ In this workshop participants develop competency in exegeting materials found in the New Testament Gospels. The goal is to provide an exegetical method and frame of reference to assist participants in communicating through sermon and means the essential meaning of the Gospel narratives and their potential application.

# Schedule

Session	Topic	Focus	Objective
1	Introduction	Basic hermeneutical issues and methods related to Gospel literature	Developing an exegetical framework.
2	Applying methods	General narrative (Mark 8:27 – 9:1) A Miracle Story (Matthew 8:5-13)	Discerning the bigger narrative context and discerning the Galilean, first-century context.
3	Applying methods	Reading in Stereo (Luke 11:1-3 and Matthew 6:9-15; 7:7-12) Jesus' Last Words (John 19:28-30; Matthew 27:45-54; Mark 15:33-39; Luke 23:44-49)	Unity and diversity in the witness of the Evangelists. Concluding comments.

# Introduction: basic issues in hermeneutical methods related to Gospel literature.

- ▶ What does the average Christian need to understand about the Gospels and their interpretation?
- ▶ How can you teach believers to interpret the Gospels through the way you preach or teach?

# Introduction: basic issues in hermeneutical methods related to Gospel literature.

- ▶ What does the average pastor need to understand about the Gospels and their interpretation?
- ▶ What are these documents we call “Gospels”?
  - ▶ Genre
  - ▶ Purpose
  - ▶ Connection with the events narrated
  - ▶ Canonical Place

# Genre -- diverse

- ▶ Written by individuals between 60 – 90 AD.
- ▶ Who are these people and what kind of literature were they composing and for whom?
- ▶ Traditional understanding and understanding based upon evidence in the texts themselves.
- ▶ Luke-Acts – the introduction/prologue (1:1-4) marks it essentially as intended to be read as an historical account – an accurate and trustworthy narrative.
- ▶ Mark – a narrative that explains how a crucified Jew must be acclaimed as Messiah – an apology?
- ▶ Matthew – a narrative that explains how Jesus fulfills God's plans for Israel, re-visioning the people of God to accomplish the mission God has established for it.
- ▶ John – an evangelistic presentation – John 20:31 – these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God – an apology like Mark.

# Genre -- diverse

- ▶ Internally – many different literary materials in each Gospel
  - ▶ Genealogy
  - ▶ Proverbial sayings
  - ▶ Prophetic oracle
  - ▶ Miracle story
  - ▶ Didactic discourse
  - ▶ Commentary on Israel's experience
  - ▶ Historical narrative with theological interpretation
  - ▶ Parable
- ▶ Even as we focus upon a particular pericope (segment of a Gospel), we must also strive to locate it appropriately within the entire Gospel narrative and appreciate its contribution to the whole.

# Purpose

- ▶ *Understanding each individual Gospel's purpose is key to discerning why the author presents the account of Jesus the way he does.*
- ▶ *Purpose can help us understand:*
  - ▶ *Differences in the order of events*
  - ▶ *Differences in the materials included*
  - ▶ *Differences in characterization and plot*
  - ▶ *Differences in the use of OT materials*
  - ▶ *Differences in chronological and geographical setting*

# Connection with Events Narrated

- ▶ If we have interest in the authenticity and accuracy of the information provided by these narratives, then we must explain the relationship between the narratives and the events they recount.
- ▶ At one level this means discerning the relationship of the author to the events – was he an eyewitness of some or all of them? What access did he have to eyewitnesses?
- ▶ If the author incorporates material from another written source, what is it and how trustworthy would it have been?
- ▶ How concerned were the first generation of Christians with preserving this information? And if they were, how did they do this?

# Connection with Events Narrated

10

- ▶ Relationship between:
  - ▶ 1. Jesus and his teaching and actions
  - ▶ 2. The transmission of these materials orally – by whom? When did people start writing down Jesus' teachings and stories of his actions? Aramaic or Greek – does it matter?
  - ▶ 3. The access of the individual evangelists to these materials and witnesses.
  - ▶ 4. The composition of each Gospel and their inter-relationships.
  - ▶ 5. The reception of the Gospels by the early church.

# Canonical Place

- ▶ Place of the Gospels in the NT Canon
- ▶ Place of the Gospels in the Biblical Canon
- ▶ Questions of selection, order, and text.
  - ▶ Why is Luke separated from Acts?
- ▶ Earliest evidence of a four gospel collection
- ▶ The significance of context for interpretation

# The Cross-Cultural Transfer

- ▶ Between Jesus, a Gospel and us today – over 2,000 years, across significant cultural boundaries and time.
- ▶ The illusion of contemporaneity produced by the fact of English translations.
- ▶ The “mystery” of Jesus – trying to communicate his identity and significance in first century terms – and then transferring these compositions into a 21<sup>st</sup> century reality.
- ▶ Getting in touch with the Greek text – the best way to discern and realize this cross-cultural reality.

# How can you teach believers to interpret the Gospels through the way you preach or teach?

- ▶ How can you help people experience Jesus by reading his teaching and the stories of his actions and interactions with people?
  - ▶ First century Jewish people
  - ▶ First century non-Jewish people
- ▶ Connecting with the experience of people today with the experience of people in the Gospel narratives

# How can you teach believers to interpret the Gospels through the way you preach or teach?

- ▶ Enabling people to grasp the dynamics and significance of the situations presented in the Gospel accounts
  - ▶ Religious
  - ▶ Political
  - ▶ Economic
  - ▶ Social
  - ▶ Theological

# How can you teach believers to interpret the Gospels through the way you preach or teach?

- ▶ Appreciating the narratives as the writers tell the story of Jesus.
  - ▶ The significance of God's new revelation in Jesus within the Jewish and Greco-Roman cultural realities requires a new literary genre to communicate appropriately Jesus' importance.
  - ▶ Building from the construct of the oral gospel – a missionary motive.
  - ▶ Learning to ask questions of the narrative.

Questions?