

Lutherans Talk About...Scripture, Marriage, Ordination and LGBTQIA+: A Bible Study
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Session 1: How Lutherans interpret Scripture and The Essential Stories of the OT

Welcome! Meet and Greet. What are you hoping for from this study?

Prayer

How Lutherans read and interpret Scripture: 4 lenses (there are more!)

1. What is the Word of God? #1: Jesus

#2: The Bible

Principle: When faced with a hard or confusing text, interpret it in the light of Jesus.

2. Let Scripture interpret Scripture: the Whole of Scripture interprets individual verses and stories.

Principle: When faced with a hard or confusing text, interpret it in light of the essential faith-shaping stories of the Bible.

3. Lutherans are not and have never been fundamentalists who assert that every word of the Bible is literally, historically true.

Principle A: When faced with a hard or confusing text, bring in all the tools that are necessary for understanding—history, culture, language, science, experience, tradition.

Principle B: Our study is never complete; it is always open to new guidance from the Holy Spirit. The Word of God is a living word.

4. Law-based texts function differently from gospel-based texts. Law shows us our sin; gospel saves us from it. (There are gospel—grace-based—texts in the OT and law in the NT.)

Principle: When faced with a hard or confusing text, figure out if it is law or gospel and apply it accordingly.

The Essential Old Testament Stories and their Challenges

‘Red threads’ are the big picture themes we can follow through the whole Bible.

What happens to the community of faith and its boundaries? Its identity?

>Red Thread #1: God establishes and nurtures a particular community

Story #1: Slaves are freed -- Exodus 6:2-9

And more: a brief review of OT history!

(Commandments are given -- Exodus 20: 1-17)

(Strangers are welcome -- Deuteronomy 10: 12-22 (*17-19)

(Faithlessness, collapse, and exile – Isaiah 58, 2 Kings 25)

Challenges to identity: The Holiness Code Leviticus 18:22; 20:13

Challenges to community: Sodom: Genesis 19: 1-29

(Gibeah: Judges 19:22-30)

Story #2: Restoring the community-- Outsiders become insiders -- Isaiah 56: 1-8

Take home: God’s welcome expands beyond old boundaries

>The challenge: What defines the community? Are there any boundaries?