

CrossTrek

Restart Your Bible Journey

Presentation by
Marmy A. Clason, Ph.D.
John A. (Jack) Beck, Ph.D.

For
Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church

Introduction

- Vision for the Class

- 1) To answer questions about the Bible's origins and qualities.
- 2) To offer suggestions on how to read and interpret the Bible.
- 3) To leave you better enabled and more excited about reading your Bible.

Introduction

- Overview of the Class Sessions
 - 1) What is the Bible?
 - 2) How is the Bible Organized?
 - 3) How is God Speaking?
 - 4) What am I Missing Here?
 - 5) How can I Interpret the Bible?**
 - 6) What Resources Are Most Helpful?

Bible Reading Plans

- High Volume Examples
 - Reading through the Bible in a year
 - Reading along the historical arch
 - Reading a book or collection of books
- Goals:
 - Learn the overall content and structure
 - Less focus on application
 - Tolerate unanswered questions

Bible Reading Plans

- Low Volume Examples
 - Chapter a day reading plan
 - Five chapters a week reading plan
- Goals:
 - Reflect and mediate on the thoughts of those chapters
 - More focus on application
 - Work to answer all questions

How Can I Interpret the Bible?



A rectangular warning sign with a dark blue background and a white border. At the top, the word "WARNING" is written in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters inside a red oval. Below the oval, the words "ASSUMPTIONS" and "AHEAD" are written in black, bold, sans-serif capital letters on a white background. The sign has a slightly worn, aged appearance.

WARNING

**ASSUMPTIONS
AHEAD**

Assumptions

- Because the Bible provides access to the mind of God, it contains mysteries that I will never fully understand. This is a barrier imposed by my mortal limitations and sin-ruined state.

Assumptions

- Because the Bible provides access to the mind of God, it contains mysteries that I will never fully understand. This is a barrier imposed by my mortal limitations and sin-ruined state.
- **In response to my prayer and despite my limitations, Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit to guide my study and interpretation of the Bible, so that I can penetrate deeply into the thoughts of God encoded in his Word.**

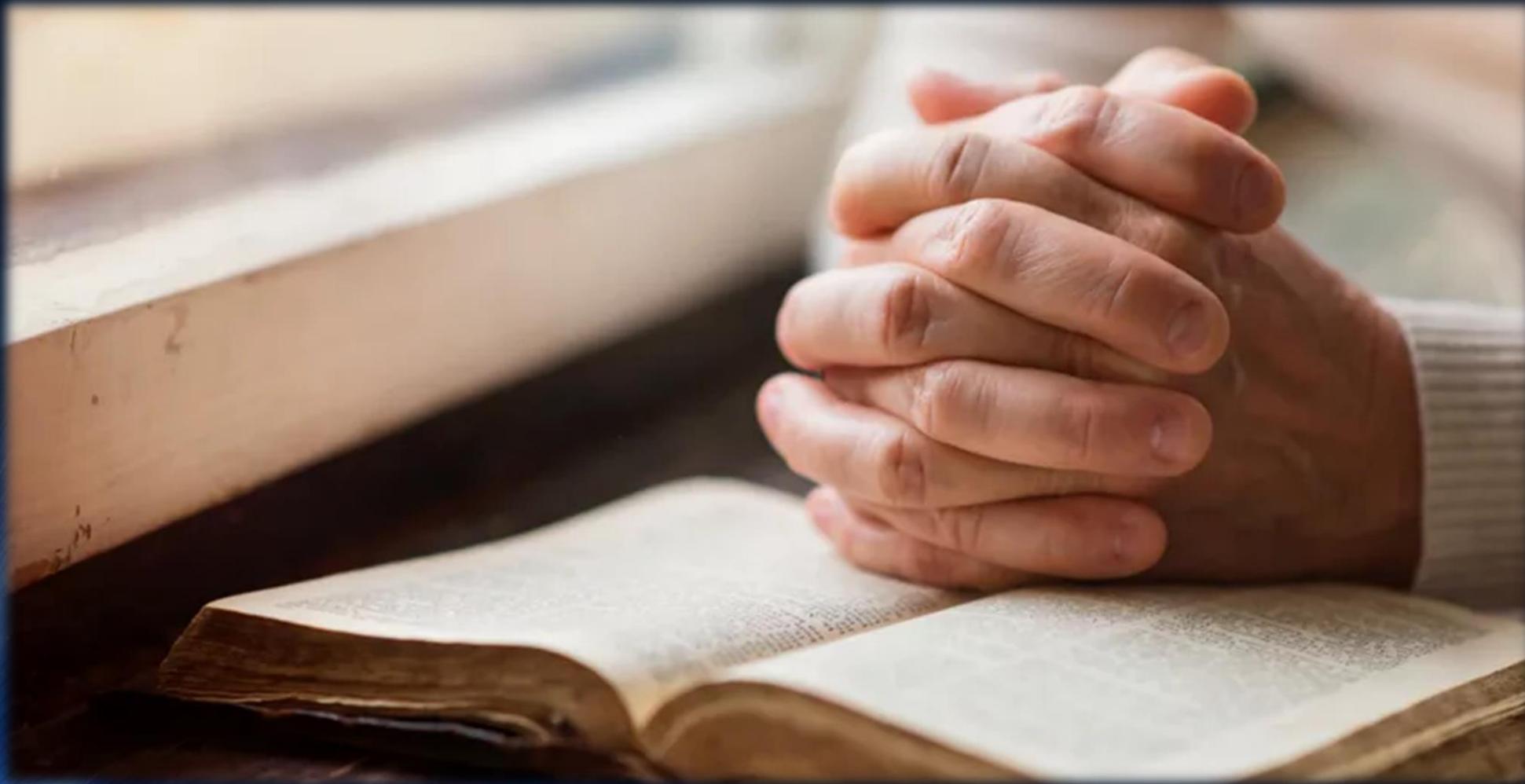
Assumptions

- Because the Bible provides access to the mind of God, it contains mysteries that I will never fully understand. This is a barrier imposed by my mortal limitations and sin-ruined state.
- In response to my prayer and despite my limitations, Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit to guide my study and interpretation of the Bible, so that I can penetrate deeply into the thoughts of God encoded in his Word.
- **The goal of my Spirit-led search and method of inquiry is not merely to discover a *possible* interpretation of the text but to discover the most *compelling* interpretation of the text.**

Five-Step Method

- Pray
- Read
- Understand What It Meant
- Interpret What It Means
- Search for the Significance

Step One: Pray your way into the Word.



Psalm 23

A psalm of David.

1 The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing.

2 He makes me lie down in green pastures,
he leads me beside quiet waters,

3 he refreshes my soul.

He guides me along the right paths
for his name's sake.

4 Even though I walk
through the darkest valley,

I will fear no evil,

for you are with me;
your rod and your staff,
they comfort me.

5 You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies.

You anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.

6 Surely your goodness and love will follow me
all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord
forever.

Step Two: Read

- The goal of this step is familiarity.

Step Two: Read

- 1) Read the text several times to become *familiar* with the content. (Consider using a variety of English translations.)
- 2) Record your initial reactions.



Psalm 23

A psalm of David.

1 The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing.

2 He makes me lie down in green pastures,
he leads me beside quiet waters,

3 he refreshes my soul.

He guides me along the right paths
for his name's sake.

4 Even though I walk
through the darkest valley,

I will fear no evil,

for you are with me;
your rod and your staff,
they comfort me.

5 You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies.

You anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.

6 Surely your goodness and love will follow me
all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord
forever.

Step Two: Read

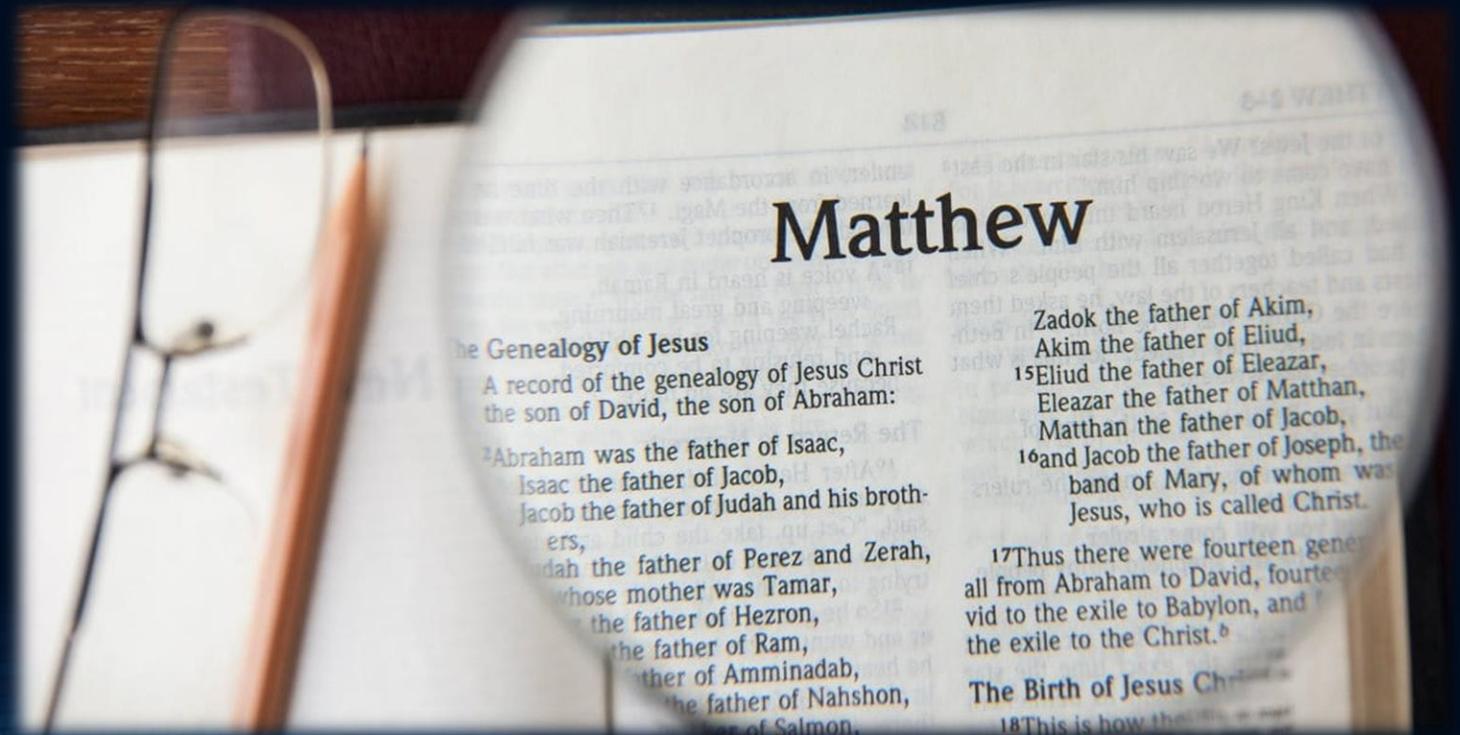
- *You will have completed this step when you are no longer surprised by new content and when you have recorded your initial reaction to the verses you have read.*

Step Three: Understand What it Meant

- The goal of this step is to move from familiarity to understanding.

Understand What It Meant

- 1) Determine how the verses fit the purpose and flow of thoughts within the book.



Understand What It Meant

2) Investigate the meaning of words, phrases, and grammatical signals.



Understand What It Meant

3) Consider the literary genre.



Understand What It Meant

5) Explore the geography.



Understand What It Meant

6) Deepen your understanding of cultural artifacts, social relationships, and cultural practices.



Psalm 23

A psalm of David.

1 The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing.

2 He makes me lie down in green pastures,
he leads me beside quiet waters,

3 he refreshes my soul.

He guides me along the right paths
for his name's sake.

4 Even though I walk
through the darkest valley,

I will fear no evil,

for you are with me;
your rod and your staff,
they comfort me.

5 You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies.

You anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.

6 Surely your goodness and love will follow me
all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord
forever.

Step Three: Understand What it Meant

- *You will have completed this step when you bring your understanding as close as you can to the understanding of those who first read/heard these verses.*

Step Four: Interpret What It Means

- The goal of this step is to move from understanding to theological insight.

Step Four: Interpret What It Means

- 1) Isolate the topic and point-of-view.
 - What is the writer talking about?
(This is the topic.)
 - What is the writer saying about what they are talking about?
(This is the point-of-view or perspective on topic.)

Step Four: Interpret What It Means

2) Dig more deeply into the point-of-view.



General Content

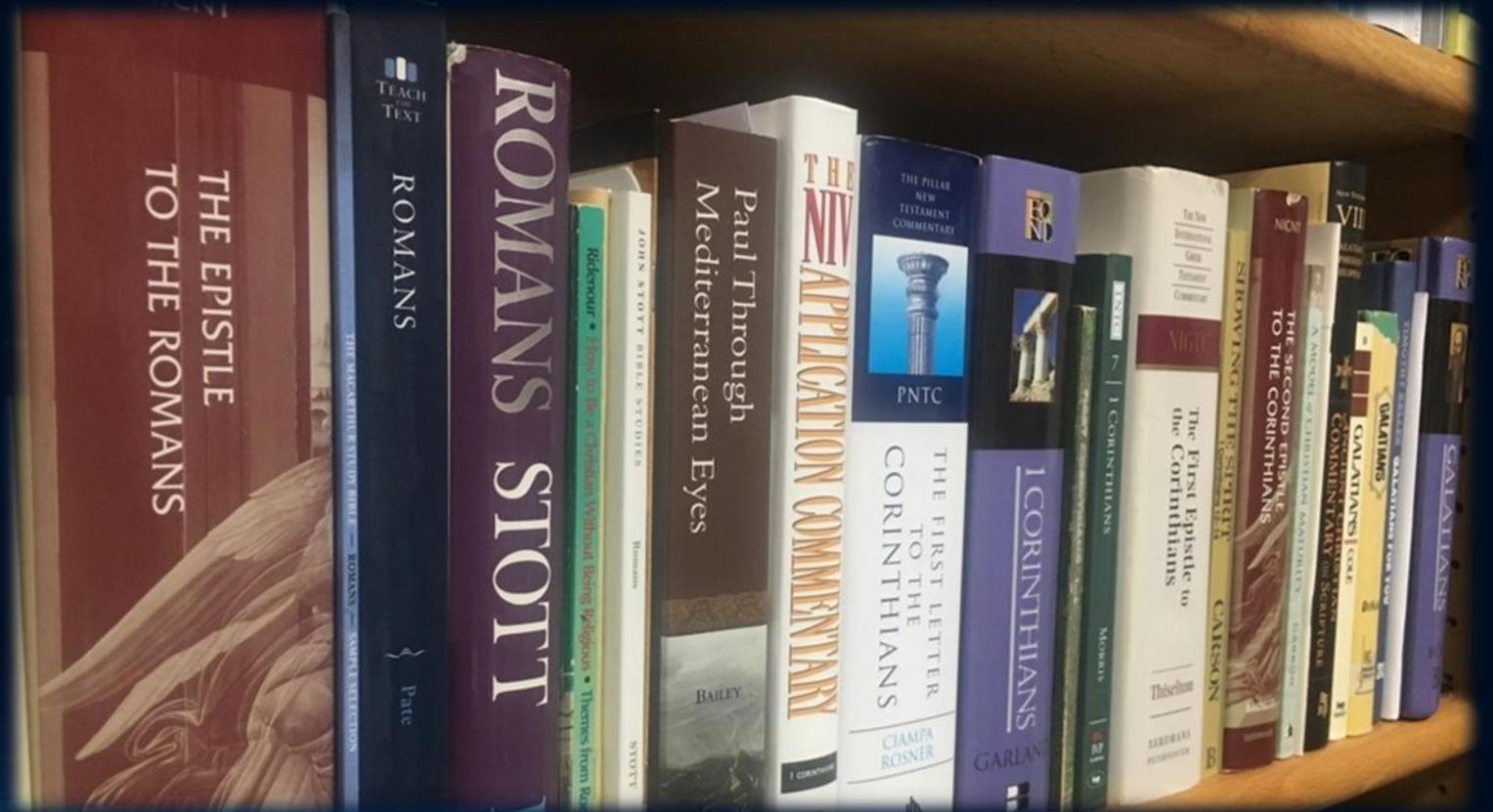
- The Bible tells us who God is.
- The Bible tells us how God thinks about us.
- The Bible tells us how God wants us to think about the natural world, ourselves, and others.

Descriptive Vs. Prescriptive

- Prescriptive content is affirmed as true for all time, all places, and all people. It is anchored in the unchanging nature of God and his desires.
- Descriptive content includes details that are required to tell a story or divine directives designed to meet a temporary need in the story of salvation. They describe but do not prescribe.

Step Four: Interpret What It Means

3) Consult the interpretation of others.



Psalm 23

A psalm of David.

1 The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing.

2 He makes me lie down in green pastures,
he leads me beside quiet waters,

3 he refreshes my soul.

He guides me along the right paths
for his name's sake.

4 Even though I walk
through the darkest valley,

I will fear no evil,

for you are with me;
your rod and your staff,
they comfort me.

5 You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies.

You anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.

6 Surely your goodness and love will follow me
all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord
forever.

Step Four: Interpret What It Means

- *You will have completed this step when you have isolated the key theology in the verses.*

Step Five: Search for the Significance

- The goal of this step is to move from theological insight to personal application (significance).

Step Five: Search for the Significance

- 1) Distinguish between meaning and significance.
- 2) Ask the personal application questions.



Psalm 23

A psalm of David.

1 The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing.

2 He makes me lie down in green pastures,
he leads me beside quiet waters,

3 he refreshes my soul.

He guides me along the right paths
for his name's sake.

4 Even though I walk
through the darkest valley,

I will fear no evil,

for you are with me;
your rod and your staff,
they comfort me.

5 You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies.

You anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.

6 Surely your goodness and love will follow me
all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord
forever.

Step Five: Search for the Significance

- *You will have completed this step when you have allowed the message of the verses impact how you think, believe, speak, and act.*

Method

- Pray
- Read
- Understand What It Meant
- Interpret What It Means
- Search for the Significance

How Can I Interpret the Bible?

