

READING THE BIBLE LIKE JESUS

SESSION FIVE: ALL FOR ONE AND ONE FOR ALL

RECAP – THE BIBLE IS:

1. **Human and Divine Literature** – The Bible’s creation, formation, and preservation is a result of God’s people working in partnership with God’s Spirit, which reflects the way God desires to walk and work with us now, in partnership.
2. **Unified Literature** – The Bible is a unified work communicating one main message across its whole, reflecting God’s desire that we too may have lives that lead to that same message.
3. **Messianic Literature** – The Bible is all about one figure, an anointed one, the Messiah, whose portrait grows throughout the story of the Old Testament and of which the New Testament responds saying that Jesus is that figure! In the same way the whole Bible points to Jesus, we too as Messiah people are to point to Him. The whole of our lives, our actions, words, thoughts, and more ought to reflect the intentionality of Scripture by pointing to Jesus.

Remember, our goal is to learn this paradigm that may help us to better read the Bible like Jesus.

WHATS THE DEAL WITH BREAKING BREAD?

Luke 24:28-32

²⁸ And they approached the village where they were going, and He acted as though He were going farther. ²⁹ But they urged Him, saying, “Stay with us, for it is *getting* toward evening, and the day is now nearly over.” So He went in to stay with them. ³⁰ When He had reclined at the table with them, He took the bread and blessed *it*, and breaking *it*, He began giving it to them. ³¹ Then their eyes were opened and they recognized Him; and He vanished from their sight. ³² They said to one another, “Were not our hearts burning within us while He was speaking to us on the road, while He was explaining the Scriptures to us?”

Luke 24:41-44

⁴¹ While they still could not believe *it* because of their joy and amazement, He said to them, “Have you anything here to eat?” ⁴² They gave Him a piece of a broiled fish; ⁴³ and He took it and ate it before them. ⁴⁴ Now He said to them, “These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.”

John 6:2-5

² A large crowd followed Him, because they saw the signs which He was performing on those who were sick. ³ Then Jesus went up on the mountain, and there He sat down with His disciples. ⁴ Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was near. ⁵ Therefore Jesus, lifting up His eyes and seeing that a large crowd was coming to Him, *said to Philip, “Where are we to buy bread, so that these may eat?”

Matthew 26:26

²⁶ While they were eating, Jesus took some bread, and after a blessing, He broke *it* and gave *it* to the disciples, and said, “Take, eat; this is My body.”

When reading through Jesus’ story, we often find him participating in meals with people: his disciples, sinners, crowds, etc. In fact, many portions of Jewish life revolved around meals. The Sabbath being one of the main ones. Yet, it was in these moments of fellowship some of the greatest miracles, lessons, or acts of love were displayed. What is it about the breaking of bread that brings such transformation?

John 21:9-13

⁹ So when they got out on the land, they *saw a charcoal fire *already* laid and fish placed on it, and bread. ¹⁰ Jesus *said to them, “Bring some of the fish which you have now caught.” ... ¹² Jesus *said to them, “Come *and* have breakfast.” None of the disciples ventured to question Him, “Who are You?” knowing that it was the Lord. ¹³ Jesus *came and *took the bread and *gave *it* to them, and the fish likewise.

Acts 2:42

⁴² They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

THE BIBLE IS COMMUNAL LITERATURE

The Bible is and should be read as Communal Literature. This communicates three main ideas:

1. The Bible is the result of a community of people across time writing, arranging, and preserving its words and stories.
2. When the Bible was written, it was intended to be read in community, aloud and together.
3. The intention behind the Bible being read this way was that its wisdom and truth would then shape that community to live in right relationship with God and one another.

So, when we say the Bible is communal literature, it means that the Bible was formed in community, meant to be engaged in community, and designed to shape the community! **This is the key context, the native setting for the way people engaged with the Bible.**

Exodus 17:8-16

¹³ So Joshua overwhelmed Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword. ¹⁴ Then the Lord said to Moses, “Write this in a book as a memorial and recite it to Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven.”

The origins of the Bible are first and foremost concerned with telling the story of how God delivers his people. **This story was to be publicly retold to the whole community. This was the primary way of passing God’s word down: oral presentation.**

Exodus 24:3-4

³ Then Moses came and recounted to the people all the words of the LORD and all the ordinances; and all the people answered with one voice and said, “All the words which the LORD has spoken we will do!” ⁴ Moses wrote down all the words of the LORD....

The Bible continues to be written to invite those rescued people into a covenant partnership so that they can represent him to the rest of the world. Yet, it isn’t passed out in pamphlets. No, **it is read a public setting, in community Bible Study with the community hearing and responding to God’s words.**

Deuteronomy 31:19, 22, 24-26

¹⁹ “Now therefore, write this song for yourselves, and teach it to the sons of Israel; put it on their lips, so that this song may be a witness for Me against the sons of Israel.... ²² So Moses wrote this song the same day, and taught it to the sons of Israel.... ²⁴ It came about, when Moses finished writing the words of this law in a book until they were complete, ²⁵ that Moses commanded the Levites who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD, saying, ²⁶ “Take this book of the law and place it beside the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, that it may remain there as a witness against you.”

This same story is recorded and retold, taught, and sung to accuse the covenant partners of their failure and rebellion, and to offer hope for the future of God’s people and his world. **Note, once again, it isn’t read individually but becomes a community chorus of accountability and hope. Moses kept writing but the community kept reciting, this was Bible study.**

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So, should we engage the Bible in a community setting?

THE SEVEN BIBLICAL FEASTS

Name	Date	Activities	Theme	Fulfillment
*Passover (Pesach)	14 th day of Nisan (Spring)	Sacrificing the Passover lamb	Remembering the protection from the angel of death and the deliverance from slavery in Egypt	Jesus dies on Passover as the lamb whose blood protects believers from God's judgement. Jesus delivers us from slavery to sin and death.
Unleavened Bread (Matzot)	15 th day of Nisan (Spring)	Remove leave. Live without leaven for 7 days.	Get rid of sin (leaven)	Jesus's body is without sin, a perfect sacrifice. Believers live "unleavened" lives in response.
Feast of Firstfruits (Bikkurim)	1 st Sunday after Passover (Spring)	Bring firstfruit offering of barely to temple.	Celebrating the first fruit of barely harvest.	Jesus' resurrection was on Firstfruits. He is the firstfruits of those risen from the dead.
*Pentecost (Shavuot)	50 days after Passover (Spring)	Celebration in temple. Bringing sacrifices of wheat. Read Ezek 1-2.	First of wheat harvest. Celebration of covenant of law on Mount Sinai.	The Spirit is given and first harvest of souls takes place. Holy Spirit writes law on believer's hearts.
Feast of Trumpets (Rosh Hashanah)	1 st day of Tishri (early fall)	Blowing of shofar. Confess sin for ten days.	Celebration of New Year. Anointing God as King.	Dead shall rise at final trumpet. Christ returns to reign as King.
Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur)	10 th day of Tishri (early fall)	High priest atones for sin.	Atonement for sin. Scapegoat.	Jesus becomes our atoning sacrifice at the final judgement.
*Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot)	15 th day of Tishri (early fall)	Living in booths. Dwelling with God in wilderness.	Celebration of harvest. Water pouring ceremony (last day)	All God's people are gathered into new heaven and new earth to dwell with him forever. Jesus promises living water of the Spirit.

***Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles are all pilgrim feasts. All people of Israel were encouraged to journey to Jerusalem to celebrate as a community on these days/weeks.**

****The Bible mentions two holidays that are still celebrated but are not commanded in the Torah: Hanukkah and Purim. **Hanukkah** (called the "Feast of Dedication" in John 10:22) is celebrated in December and commemorates the victory of Judas Maccabeus and purification of the temple in 168 BC. **Purim** takes place in late winter and remembers the deliverance of the people of Israel during the time of Queen Esther. The **Sabbath** is also considered a holy day, as important as the yearly feasts days, and comes with its own meal and scripture reciting.**

To help paint a fuller picture of why these feasts were so important, look at one of the commands of Moses and why he gave it. And recognize, Israel did not fulfill this well. No wonder that by the days of the Judges, a generation rose up that did not know the Lord!

Deuteronomy 31:9-13

⁹ So Moses wrote this Law and gave it to the priests, the sons of Levi who carried the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and to all the elders of Israel. ¹⁰ Then Moses commanded them, saying, “At the end of every seven years, at the time of the year of the release of debts, at the Feast of Booths, ¹¹ when all Israel comes to appear before the Lord your God at the place which He will choose, you shall read this Law before all Israel so that they hear it. ¹² Assemble the people, the men, the women, the children, and the stranger who is in your town, so that they may hear and learn and fear the Lord your God, and be careful to follow all the words of this Law. ¹³ And their children, who have not known, will hear and learn to fear the Lord your God, as long as you live on the land which you are about to cross the Jordan to possess.”

The whole point of all of these feasts was for people to be in community and for this community to engage in the Bible and be shaped by Scripture together!

CULTURE SHOCK

We live in a very individualist culture, where everything is about me. My identity, my worth, my health, my growth, my future, etc. Even in church: my faith, my salvation, my walk with Jesus, my growth, my quiet time, my small group, my worship experience, etc.

“In church we sit together and sing together and greet one another cheerily as we leave at the end of a service. We do all of these things, sometimes for years, without forming any real personal Christian relationships. Our words often seem superficial.

The church, therefore, becomes a place where Christians live alone together.”

– Larry Richards - the Friendless American Male

In Jesus’ day, life was about “us”. Honor, success, and respect were formed around family and community. Everything a person did was wrapped up in community. A person’s identity was wrapped up in the community. A person’s faithfulness or faithlessness was directly connected to the community.

Just look at how Daniel, a devout and faithful God-fearing man, prayed in light of the sins of his past ancestors and his community.

Daniel 9:1-19

⁴ I prayed to the Lord my God and confessed, and said, “Oh, Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and faithfulness for those who love Him and keep His commandments, ⁵ we have sinned, we have done wrong, and acted wickedly

and rebelled, even turning aside from Your commandments and ordinances. ⁶ Moreover, we have not listened to Your servants the prophets, who spoke in Your name to our kings, our leaders, our fathers, and all the people of the land.

Daniel was just thrown in the Lion's Den for praying too much! If anyone was blameless, it was him. But this shows us the depth of community in the Jewish culture.

(Also look at Nehemiah's prayer in Nehemiah 1:1-11)

"On Lois' first trip to Israel, she visited a class of Orthodox Jewish boys between the ages of 13 and 16. As the boys took her group on an informal tour of their synagogue, they brought out a pair of antique Torah scrolls, proudly placing them on the lectern. As they opened them, someone asked what they had been studying this week. Since there were no verse numbers or chapters, it took them a moment to find it, but they did. Then they described this week's Scripture: here is what they said, 'We're reading the story of how God brought us out of Egypt and saved us from the Egyptians.'"

- Ann Spangler, Sitting at the Feet of Rabbi Jesus

We have a vital need to connect with our spiritual ancestors like this.

"What does it have to do with me? This story is my story, each chapter is for me. This unattractive man of humble beginning and ignominious end is the Hope of the Universe.

Mercy is what it has to do with me; it is what the sin struggle of my heart, like the heart of David, requires."

– Paul David Tripp in White as Snow, Meditations on Sin and Mercy

"A Christian who has David in his bones, Jeremiah in his blood, Paul in his fingertips, and Christ in his heart will know how much and how little value to put on his own momentary feelings and experiences of the week. To remain willfully ignorant of Abraham wandering in the desert, the Hebrews enslaved in Egypt, David battling the Philistines, Jesus arguing with the Pharisees and Paul writing to the Corinthians is like saying, 'I refuse to remember that when I kicked that black dog last week he bit my leg.' If I don't remember it, in the next fit of anger I will kick him again and get bitten again."

- Eugene Peterson

THE IDEAL BIBLE STUDY

HOW TO READ THE BIBLE AS COMMUNAL LITERATURE

Deuteronomy 6:4-8

⁴ "Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one! ⁵ You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. ⁶ These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. ⁷ You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. ⁸ You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. ⁹ You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

The *Shema* (above) was a daily prayer said in Israel of which maybe we should return. Even Jesus would've grown up praying this prayer every day. Full of meaning, dedication, and community this prayer has the capacity to reshape the course of our entire life.

So how can we practice the Shema? How can we read the Bible as communal literature? How can we further read the Bible like Jesus?

#1 - "HEAR" / Listen / Shema – Read Out Loud

This word alone means more than just hearing with your ears. **Instead, the word conveys three main meanings. First, to "listen" or "hear" means to allow the words to sink in, provide understanding, and generate a response.** It is a call to attention for your ears, mind, and heart. The idea behind is that we are meant to *hear* Scripture in our hearts as well as our ears. Therefore, Jewish people never read (or recited) the Bible silently to themselves, but always aloud, in a meditation/mutter/whisper.

Adopt this way of engaging the Bible. Read out loud when you are reading the Bible to yourself. You could even listen to the Bible on audio. See how this might impact your Bible reading.

This word "*shema*" not only means to get your attention, but **also conveys a call to obedience and to gather**. The rest of this passage helps understand this more.

#2 – "LOVE" – Live it, Obey it, Move to Action

These words were never meant to be read and forgotten but **lived out in the heart and mind, followed in direct obedience of the Spirit, and moved into action with your hands and feet**. So, when James writes (1:22-25), "But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves..." this is part of what he is communicating. When we engage scripture, we need to respond immediately.

Are you moving into action after you read, or are you walking away to go about your day without any intent to live it out in love?

#3 – "ON YOUR HEART" – Read it Again, and Again... and Again!

The idea of heart encompassed the whole of a person. The idea is that we should let scripture encompass the whole of ourselves. What this means is that **the Bible was designed to be read, reread, reflected on, and the read again. And as we breathe Scripture in and out, it will continue to interpret itself to us**. Some ways we can begin practicing this are to: - Read the Bible in multiple translations, - Make your own copy of Scripture, - Consider reading lessons, - Establish a consistent quiet time, or - Memorize larger passages of Scripture.

#4 - "TEACH, TALK, BIND, & WRITE" – Get Yourself Haverim & Talmidim

'*Haverim*' is the Hebrew word for friends. Specifically, **friends that are fellow disciples, earnestly desiring to grapple with others over issues of faith, who wants to**

delve into God's Word, and to be challenged and refined. But the idea of reading the Bible with *haverim* goes beyond just our friends. This means **READING THE BIBLE IN COMMUNITY THROUGH MULTIPLE MEANS AND METHODS.** Notice how the Shema worded each phrase and the implications of these phrases:

"You shall teach them diligently to your [children]"

- READ THE BIBLE WITH YOUR KIDS
- READ THE BIBLE WITH YOUR SPOUSE
- TALK ABOUT THE BIBLE WITH YOUR FAMILY

"You shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up."

- READ THE BIBLE WITH FRIENDS
- DISCUSS THE BIBLE AROUND MEALS
- PARTICIPATE IN BIBLE FELLOWSHIP

"You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and... frontals on your forehead.... You shall write them on the doorposts... and your gates."

- READ THE BIBLE WITH TALMIDIM (Disciples)
- DEBATE THE BIBLE LIKE JESUS DID (Luke 2:46, Matt 19:3)
- BE SHAPED BY THE BIBLE WITH OTHERS

PRACTICE – Reading Ruth as part of Communal Literature

RETURNING TO BREAKING BREAD – COMMUNION

Remember, we aren't completely missing this idea of Reading the Bible as communal literature. There is a LOT of community, *bible fellowship*, and *haverim* in our church today. But there are always ways to grow and connect Scripture and the Spirit-filled community. When we do this, we will begin reading the Bible more like Jesus.

One easy way, to participate in the community of Christ, the body of Christ, is through the Lord's Supper / Communion.

1 Corinthians 11:23-32 - ²³ For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread; ²⁴ and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me." ²⁵ In the same way He took the cup also after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." ²⁶ For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.

²⁷ Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. ²⁸ But a man must examine himself, and in so doing he is to eat of the bread and drink of the cup. ²⁹ For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself if he does not judge the body rightly. ³⁰ For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep. ³¹ But if we judged ourselves rightly, we would not be judged. ³² But when we are judged, we are disciplined by the Lord so that we will not be condemned along with the world.