Why Christians Differ Doctrinally - Part VIII, The Origin of Doctrinal Differences - Rightly Dividing the Word of God - The Plain Meaning of the Bible.

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Preacher: Marvin Wiseman

[0:00] We are not actually teaching on this parable this morning, but we are going to be using it as an illustration in connection with what we have been talking about for the past several sessions.

You will recall we have engaged the subject matter having to do with why is it or how is it that Christians differ so much doctrinally.
Why are there all the different denominations and splits and splinters and sects and cults and isms and so on? And they all seem to have but one thing in common.
They all believe that Jesus Christ is their head. They all claim to worship him and so on. Then how is it that we have all of these divisive things going on within the realm of Christendom?
I have a number of propositions that I would like to present and we often do this at the outset to just give you an idea of where we are going and what we hope to accomplish within the body of this message.
[1:02] So consider before we get into some illustrations why we believe what we do believe can be justified only on one ground.

And that is we believe it to be objectively true and that our belief of whatever it is we believe is in compliance with what God has revealed.
If this is the only valid justification for anyone believing anything, that is because it is true, how then have Christians managed to reach so many different conclusions?
It is all vitally linked to how one interprets various passages of Scripture. The Scriptures do not convey multiple meanings.
And that is really important. The Scriptures do not convey multiple meanings. But men take multiple meanings from them.
[2:13] That does not mean that God put multiple meanings in the book. It just means that men who read and interpret the book make multiple meanings from them.

This, of course, results in the original intent of God's giving the Scriptures to be compromised, at least to the degree that uncertain meanings are derived from the Scriptures, where clarity and openness were the goal.
Why do we have a Bible? Why has God given us a record? What's the purpose for the existence of this book that we call the Old and New Testaments?
It is but for one reason and one reason only. And that is so that the divine creator, redeemer, can make himself known to intelligent creatures whom he has created in his likeness and in his image.
This is not a book of riddles or of obfuscation. It is a book of revealment, not concealment.
[3:29] It is designed to show forth, to unfold, to explain, so as to gain an understanding and an appreciation. In all too many minds and hearts, the Bible is a book that just has a big question mark looming above it.

They respect it. They admire it. They may even revere it. But insofar as really getting a handle on it so that they can have an appreciation and an understanding that affords them a measure not only of enlightenment, but of peace and contentment, it completely escapes them.
Well, it should not be the case. Because this book was given in order that we might know the things we need to know so that we can live the lives we need to live, do the things we need to do, and enjoy what we have in Christ, rather than endure it, as so many do.

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So to the extent that men derive wrong meanings from scriptures is to the extent that the very purpose of God's giving us the Bible is negated, short-circuited.
And I am the first to tell you that this is true in all too many cases. However, we can delight in the fact that the scriptures do labor to reveal the requirements of salvation and make them abundantly clear in an abundance of places, in lives like Abraham and Noah, in the Old Testament, Christ and the Apostles, justification by faith, in the New Testament, so that the things that God regards as being the most important are the things that are the most clearly revealed and the most frequently found in the scriptures.
[5:29] Justification by faith is throughout the book, from Genesis to Revelation, and it is one of the clearest of all doctrines in scripture. Nonetheless, some are still able to corrupt it by adding things like water baptism or the fullness of the Holy Spirit or some other mystical experience to salvation so that you cannot be sure that you're saved unless you have spoken in tongues or unless you have been water baptized or unless you have done this or done that.

So even though justification by faith is taught with such crystal clarity as it is in the Old and New Testament, some still manage to corrupt it. However, we can thank God that he has made that abundantly clear and for that we are grateful.
Many believers arrive at their interpretation of scripture by studying the scriptures themselves. That is commendable, but it does not guarantee the accuracy of their interpretation.
It would be wonderful if we could just say the longer you study the scriptures, the more clear they become to you and that's a given and in most cases that's true, but it would be wonderful if we could say that someone who has been studying the Bible for five years knows twice as much about it as somebody who has been studying it for two and a half years, but it doesn't always work out that way.
Sometimes someone who has been studying the scriptures for one year knows more than somebody does who's been studying it for five years. So it isn't necessarily how much time you log in the scriptures. It has to do with having the keys that are so critical in place when you come to the scriptures so that you can implement them and be reasonably confident that this is what God is saying.
[7:22] Not just that this is what you want God to say, so you read that into it and get out of it what you want, which we all have a tendency to do, but we must guard against that. And I think it needs to be said that most do not arrive at the interpretation of the scriptures that they have because of independent or private study and conclusions that they have reached.

Most arrive at their interpretation of scripture because that was the conclusion that someone else arrived at, someone for whom they have respect or admiration and their idea is that was good enough for them, it's good enough for me.
This is typical. This is very ordinary. This is what happens in most cases. You tend to pick up on the things that your parents believe.
When you are reared in their household, you tend to adopt their interpretation of life and their interpretation of spiritual things and their understanding.
So, it's very, very natural, very ordinary, if you are reared in a Jewish family, for you to adopt the tenets of Judaism. And if you are reared in a Roman Catholic family, the likelihood is that you're going to grow up, going to confirmation, going to mass, taking catechism, and you will, in all likelihood, become a Roman Catholic.
[8:59] One varying degree or another. Same thing is true if you grew up in a Lutheran household or a Mormon household or whatever. We tend to adopt positions and teachings taught by people whom we respect before us.

But, that is no guarantee for truth. Not at all. My mother and father reared me in what I would call a typical American, hardworking, honest, moral, patriotic family, but with very weak or non-existent spiritual values.
And, I tended to adopt for my own personal life that same value system. And, this is why, of course, the scriptures place so much emphasis upon parents knowing what they need to know so that they can communicate to their children what their children will need to know.
None of these things is a guarantee for truth. It is a lot easier to tag along on what somebody else believes because you respect them and their insight to the scriptures and you just kind of automatically, I have done this.

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I know what I'm talking about. The man who led me to Christ on the day that Barbara and I were married, December 8, 1956, dear man of God, I shall forever be indebted to him.
[10:37] And, he is one of the first people I want to find when I get to heaven. Next to his majesty and her majesty, I want to look up Harold Sweetland.

He is the man that God used to lead me to Christ. He was a Baptist church-establishing and I was a preacher in this little church in Ellensburg, Washington.
He gave me the gospel and it made sense to me and I understood it and I received Christ as my Savior and I'll be forever indebted to him. And I had frequent contact with him over the years and you know his doctrinal position, his Baptist denomination, etc., became mine out of respect, out of admiration.
I had an emotional attachment to the man. I mean, how could this one whom God used to lead me to Christ, how could he possibly be wrong in anything that he thought about the Bible?
So, I just kind of piggybacked onto his, that's perfectly natural. It is perfectly wrong, but it's perfectly natural.
[11:54] We do that. We establish an emotional connection and maybe it's with child to parent or a favorite uncle or someone we identify with.

One of my great heroes of the faith was and still is Charles Haddon Spurgeon. I would give my left arm up to about here to hear Charles Spurgeon preach.
It must have been something. and I've got I have got 2,000 of his sermons in print and I can still read them and that man and his command of the English language sometimes I find myself being picked up spiritually and just lifted right up and it's just a major wow this is great.
He's done that to me a number of times even though he being dead yet speaketh. So if Spurgeon believes something isn't that good enough for you?
No. Spurgeon is not our authority. Charles Sweetland Harold Sweetland is not our authority. Marv Wiseman is not your authority.
[13:23] Only thus saith the Lord has to be your authority. But if you're going to get it on your own it's going to require more effort more intensity more work we would rather let somebody else spoon feed us get it from them.

So you just pick yourself out a guru whom you admire and respect and then you can just lean back and say well whatever so and so believes that's good enough for me. That is crass laziness.
We all need to be Bereans and search the scriptures for ourselves to see whether those things are so. That's getting it from the source.
You don't need God's truth second hand. or third hand. You need to get it from the book yourself.
We have denominations formed based primarily upon the interpretation of certain men and their estimation of scripture.
Methodism came from the interpretations and the disciplines in the Methodist discipline handbook set down by John Wesley. John Wesley was an incredible individual.
[14:45] Mightily used of God. Powerful in the scriptures. But he wasn't Jesus Christ. He was John Wesley. And Charles Spurgeon was Charles Spurgeon.

So if you are a Methodist, you might have grown up in a Methodist household and attended a Methodist church and you believe Methodist doctrine. Because why? Well, that's what I was born into and that's what we've always believed.
Mormons could say the same thing. Muslims can say the same thing. Hindus can say pretty much the same thing. But none of those positions, so ordinarily and normally contracted by those whom we admire, respect, etc., none of that is a guarantee for truth.
Doesn't make any difference. And I might say the same thing about people in the grace movement who are locked in to the writings of C.R. Stamm, whom I personally admire, greatly appreciate.
I'm indebted to C.R. Stamm for a lot of his insights of scripture, but he's not the authority. You know, Paul Pannus, when he's with the Lord now, he knows more about what I'm talking about than all of us here put together.
[15:58] But when he was residing in this retirement village down in South Carolina, it was a Presbyterian facility, owned and operated by the Presbyterian Church.

And it was a beautiful facility, very nicely appointed, very well run, just immaculate, a real top drawer operation. And he was interested in teaching a Bible class there, and he had a talk with a local pastor, who of course was Presbyterian, and they were discussing the differences that they

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had in their doctrinal positions, which were considerable.
You remember Paul Pannus and his teaching. And he said this pastor kept coming back and saying, well, the reformers say, well, the reformers, or the reform fathers, well, the reform position is the reform, and after a while Paul said, I heard that just about enough, and finally I stopped him and asked him one time, and I said, wait just a minute, what makes the reformers the authority?
Oh, well, well, well, they're the reformers. well, what were they reforming?
They were reforming the Roman Catholic Church, in which they were all born and reared, and with which they were taking exception, and standing against, trying to reform the Church, trying to get the Roman Catholic Church, to stop this terrible practice of the selling of indulgences, and saying things like, if you will give X number of dollars to the church for this building program, we will say special prayers for your dear departed mother, and we'll get her out of purgatory a couple of years earlier than what she would.
[17:55] And they took exception to that, and they started making noise, and they reformed a number of practices. In fact, they reformed enough that they were persona non grata, and they were eventually kicked out.

And the Roman Catholic Church dignitaries from the Pope on down said, we don't want your reformation, we like things just the way they are, so long, we'll see you, goodbye. You're kicked out. And they excommunicated John Calvin, they excommunicated Martin Luther, they excommunicated John Wycliffe, they excommunicated William Tyndale, these were all staunch Roman Catholic priests in the system.
But they saw it as a flawed system, and it drastically needed changing. And the point that I'm simply making is that the reformers made a lot of right moves, but there were a number of things that they didn't reform enough.
They brought baggage with them from the Roman Catholic Church, part of which, infant baptism. baptism. You will search high and low throughout the scriptures to find one incident of infant baptism, or any indication that infants should be baptized in water, regardless of what your position is on water baptism.
[19:16] But it's still practiced because the reformers. So, where do you find that in scripture? Well, you don't find it in scripture, but the reformers, now wait a minute, the reformers are not the authority.

And Marv Wiseman, God forbid, is not the authority. I've had to change my position on a number of things. We were talking about this this morning in the adult Sunday school class about election and what I have taught regarding the doctrine of election in the past.
And you know one of the reasons I taught it? Because Charles Haddon Spurgeon believed it and preached it. And boy, if Charlie Spurgeon believed it, that's good enough for me.
Well, it shouldn't have been, but it was. And I'm embarrassed to tell you that now, but as a young preacher, he had profound influence on it. He still does. But I no longer regard him as infallible. His positions are not the positions of scripture necessarily. So, I've had to reverse some of my teachings regarding that, and I don't mind telling you that's somewhat painful.
[20:34] We talked a little bit about origin. And Adamantius' origin lived from 185 to 254 A.D.

Now, I know this doesn't mean diddly to you, but it is really important. And this man, who he was and what he taught, he was obviously a very brilliant man, very influential, soon gained a following. And as I told you before, what is it that causes people to take doctrinal positions? It starts with somebody getting an idea or an interpretation of scripture.
And they become convinced about it. they become evangelistic about it. They want to recruit. And they proclaim this finding that they've got in scripture, this doctrine or whatever it is, often with great charisma, great personality, great persuasiveness, and people pick up on it.
And they are moved by it. And they buy into it. And the next thing you know, what began as an idea or an interpretation in the mind of one person spreads to a following. And the following spreads and you have a movement.
[21:57] And pretty soon you've got, voila, another denomination. All based on what started in the mind of one man.

That's where Islam came from. Muhammad. Muhammad. And his writings. And his teachings. And his supposed revelation from God, which we do not believe, but which Muslims do.

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It's the very core of their doctrine and practice. You could say the same thing about Mormons and Joseph Smith and the tablets supposedly provided by the angel Moroni and so on.
You could say the same thing about a whole host of other things. All I'm telling you is that none of this stuff, none of this stuff is any guarantee for its truthfulness. Even the numbers that adhere to it is not proof at all that God is in that.
Well, some say, well, God must be blessing the Mormon church because it's one of the fastest growing churches in the whole world. Obviously, it's enjoying God's blessing. Look at the numbers.
[23:08] That's no criteria. Numbers have never been a criteria for what is true. Some people look at financial or material blessings as proof that God is really blessing this individual.

So and so, seems like everything they touch turns to gold. They've got these investments, they've got this property and everything, and they must be a really godly individual because look at how God has blessed them and prospered them financially.
You can say the same thing about the mafia. That's no proof. That's no evidence. Some of the wealthiest men in the Bible were also some of the godliest men.
And some of the orneriest cusses that ever came down the pike were poverty stricken people. So that's no criteria. That's no proof. You cannot evaluate anything as being true or untrue based on the source of it.
Unless you're looking at the scriptures, then you can take that as being true. But, true according to someone's interpretation.
[24:21] Whose interpretation? That is the question. So, Origen really started this idea of allegorical interpretation, and I want to explain to you quickly as I can what that means because it gets us away from a literal interpretation, of the scriptures.

And I think, first of all, let us go to what is really regarded as a legitimate allegory, and we'll find the first one in 1 Corinthians chapter 10.
And this is very, very important. I have been beating this drum for a long time, and I will continue to beat it, and that is the scripture must be interpreted from a literal point of view, and I have made this clear, I trust, in the past, that this does not mean, quote, this does not mean that you interpret everything in the Bible literally.
It means you begin with the literal approach. You approach it literally. And more often than not, when it is not intended to be taken literally at face value, that usually becomes abundantly clear even within the body of the context.
And here in 1 Corinthians chapter 10, we've got the use of an allegory. The apostle says, For I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that our fathers, and he's talking about the Jewish fathers, the patriarchs, who lived long before this, our fathers were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea.
[25:54] And he's talking about the Exodus from Egypt. And he says, And all were baptized into, well, how do you get baptized into a person? What does that mean? Baptized into Moses?

Sure, all it means is this. It means identified with Moses. It means as Moses was, so were they. There was a connection between these people and Moses.
And the word baptized is used because it means an intricate or a complete kind of identification. They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea.
And all ate the same spiritual food and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them, and the rock was Christ.
What? What does that mean? The rock was Christ? Now, one would think that the rock was a rock.
[26:56] Well, how is it that the rock is Christ? Is that to be taken literally? No. It's to be taken allegorically.

That means it is symbolic of Christ. It reminds you of Christ. It is a spiritual connection that can be interpreted regarding Christ.
He doesn't mean that Jesus Christ was a rock. When we talk about him being our rock, we don't mean he's a literal rock. We think in terms of a rock as being solid, stable, strong.
So, we talk of Christ as being our rock in that sense. And nobody thinks he's a real rock like you would see out on the hillside someplace. He's a person.
But the metaphor is he's a rock. He's also a shepherd. He's a door. He's a light. He's manna. He's all of these things. But not literally.

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[28:03] Spiritually. Or allegorically. And this is an allegory. There's even one that's more famous and it's over a couple of books in Galatians. Galatians chapter four. And it is a very legitimate use of an allegory.

Origen was the expert allegorist. Well, I wouldn't call him an expert in that sense. Not in a positive sense, but rather in a negative sense. And look, if you would please, at Galatians chapter four.
And Paul is laying out the distinctions between law and grace. And he says in verse 21 of Galatians four, tell me, you who want to be under law, do you not listen to the law?
For it is written that Abraham had two sons. One by the bondwoman, that was Hagar, that was Ishmael, and one by the free woman, that was Sarah, and the son, of course, was Isaac.
But the son of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh. That means that Ishmael was a product of man's will and of woman's will.
[29:25] That's born of the flesh. Abraham sexually went in unto his wife's servant, Hagar, and impregnated her at Sarah's insistence.

And God had nothing to do with this. This is another example of man helping out God. God doesn't need that kind of help, doesn't want it.
God could have prevented this. God could have prevented Abraham from going into Hagar. But he didn't. The son of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, the son by the free woman through the promise.
That is, God's promise to Abraham and Sarah. This, look at verse 24, this is allegorically speaking. An allegory is a comparison.
It is kind of like a parable. It is drawing parallels. It is giving you examples or for instances. And that is the only way to think in terms of an allegory.
[30:37] Allegorically speaking, these two women are two covenants. What? I thought there were two women. Well, they are two women. But they remind me I am using these two women as an illustration.

Okay? I am using these two women to give you an understanding or a picture of two covenants. one proceeding from Mount Sinai, which is where Moses got the law, of course, bearing children who are to be slaves.
She is Hagar. Mount Sinai is Hagar. Now, if you're thinking that you thought Mount Sinai was Mount Sinai, you're right.
And Hagar is Hagar. But again, he is trying to use this as an object lesson. He's trying to illustrate. He's saying, you know what? Hagar reminds me of Mount Sinai, the law.
And she corresponds to the present Jerusalem. For she is in slavery with her children.
[31:53] Now, he doesn't say she is present. She says, she corresponds to present Jerusalem. For she is in slavery with her children.

But the Jerusalem above is free. She is our mother. For it is written, rejoice, barren woman who does not bear, break forth and shout, you who are not in labor, for more are the children of the desolate than of the one who has a husband.
And you, brethren, he's writing to these Galatian believers, he says, and you, brethren, like Isaac, are children of promise. But as at that time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the spirit, so it is now also, what does the scripture say, cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be an heir with the son of the free woman.
So then, brethren, we are not children of a bondwoman but of the free woman. What in the world does all this mean? What it means is this, law and grace cannot peacefully coexist.
You are under grace, not under the law. What do you do then with the law? You kick it out. You are not under law anymore. You kick out Hagar. She doesn't belong.
[33:08] She's not part of the family. She's not part of your birthright. You are not under law. You are under grace. You understand that? That's what Paul is saying. He isn't saying that, you know, all along you thought Hagar was Hagar.

She's not Hagar. She's a mountain. She's Sinai. Do you see the illustrative point? The point that he is making, the comparison, the illustration?
He isn't saying that one thing is another. He's saying this corresponds to, this reminds me of, this looks like. It's just an illustration.

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Now, here's the problem. Origen, Adamantius Origen, and Philo, the Alexandrian Jew before him would say, that's the way all of scripture is supposed to be interpreted, allegorically.
well, what about the literal meaning of scripture? Well, the literal meaning of scripture, the meaning that it appears to give at face value, is okay, but you need to understand that's just the surface meaning.
[34:31] If you want to get at the real spiritual meaning, the real meat of the word, word, you have got to go below the surface and get to the deeper meaning.

One of the most classic examples of this is found in the treatment of the allegorists of the four rivers that flowed out of the Garden of Eden.
One was the Euphrates, one was the Tigris, one was the Pishon, and the other was the Gihon River that flowed from the Garden of Eden.
Now, on the surface, superficially, these four rivers are four rivers, rivers.
But, if you want the spiritual, deeper, hidden meaning, you have got to delve below the surface.
[35:42] In other words, the surface interpretation is okay if that's all you're able to come up with. It'll just have to suffice for you. But if you really want to get into the depth of the word of God, you've got to go below the surface.

And what these four rivers really mean is that they are four virtues. Love, joy, peace, and long suffering.
That's what those four rivers really mean. Wow! Wow! that's deep.
It's deep, okay. Deep in what? And why those four virtues? Why not four other virtues?
Why not honesty, and compassion, and love, and why those four virtues? You see, here's the problem. Anytime, anytime you divert from a literal interpretation of Scripture, you are subjecting the passage to the creativity of your imagination.
[37:09] And for some of us, that can be considerable. there is no check, there is no rain on man's imaginations, he can just let them go crazy, come up with all kinds of wild interpretations.

And then, if that were not bad enough, we have a new group of people who come along and say yes, and you know what? That's just wonderful, because to you, it says this, to you, it says that, to you, it says something.
We all have our own truth. Ew. Ew. That's all wrong.
That's all wrong. We don't all have our own truth. Truth is one. You may have it, or you may not. But if you have truth A, and I have truth B, and they are clearly contradictory one to the other, we may both be wrong, but we can't both be right.
That is a logical impossibility. It's a logical fallacy. Some think that when you're dealing with religious things, that's the beauty of it. Everybody can be right, and nobody has to be wrong.
[38:27] You've got your truth, I've got my truth, the truths completely disagree, and are completely different, but that's okay. That's just one of the wonderful things about spiritual truth. Everybody's right.

Such hogwash, such sloppy thinking, but it goes on all the time, particularly in this postmodern day. This passage in the parable of the Good Samaritan that Gary read earlier is an example.
When you interpret that literally, I think that it means exactly what it says, and Christ is answering. If you look at the context, all Jesus is doing with this parable of the Good Samaritan is answering the question.
He said, you shall love the Lord your God, with all your heart, mind, and soul, and your neighbor as yourself. And this wise guy came back and said, okay, and just exactly who is my neighbor?
And the Lord answered the question, I'll tell you who your neighbor is. And he told this story about this man who went from Jerusalem to Jericho, fell among thieves, highway robbers.
[39:42] They beat the poor man up, robbed him, took everything away from him, and left him lying there half dead, and by chance a certain priest.

Well, who's a priest? A priest is near the top of the religious totem pole. A very religious man. priest going down from that road, saw him, he passed by on the other side.
You know why, don't you? Because he had to hurry to the temple for worship. He couldn't be late for worship. You know, he didn't have time to deal with his riffraff. He's off to serve God. So he hastens on.
And likewise, a Levite also, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.
He didn't want to give him the time of day either. I'm sure he too was a Samaritan.

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And why do you think Jesus used this in the parable? A Samaritan. Because if anyone in the whole universe that the Jew would have selected to be an unfit individual, it would be the hated Samaritans.
[40:57] I mean, who is in the top echelon of the Jewish mind when it comes to religion? Priests, Levites, the most revered.

Who is the most despised? Samaritans. Walk a mile out of your way to not set foot on Samaritan soil.
And Jesus said, a certain Samaritan who was on a journey came upon him, and when he saw him, he felt compassion. Came to him, bandaged up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine.
Now all of this is a story. Jesus just made it up to illustrate a point. What true neighborliness really is?
It's those who have compassion on a neighbor, who will spend and be spent to help out someone who is in need. Last one in the world you would suspect to be a neighbor.
[41:59] Samaritan. And that's who Christ made him out to be. I think that the items in this story speak for themselves when you take it literally, and even if it isn't a real event, and Christ just made it up for the purpose of illustration, what we are saying, and what a literal interpretation is, is that this man was beaten physically, and left for half dead, physically, and the Samaritan came along, and he felt compassion, and he bandaged up his wounds.

The bandages were real, and the wounds were real, and he poured real oil and real wine on them, and he put them on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And it was real money that he gave to the innkeeper for the man's care.
And that is a literal interpretation of that particular parable. And when you read the allegories, and I've got a book here that can reduce this, I think, pretty quickly, by Dr. Roy Zuck, on the subject of the, I lost my place here, let's see if I can find it.
Good Samaritan. Here's an allegorical approach. Now, this is what the allegorists comes up with when they say you should not be satisfied with the surface interpretation or the literal interpretation to get the real spiritual meaning.
This is what the parable is really getting at. And this is, this is not Origen, this is the revered St.
[43:54] Augustine, one of the premier church fathers of Roman Catholicism, and a man who obviously was intensely brilliant, probably one of the greatest intellects who ever lived.

Augustine had an incredible mind, but he didn't have as yet the laws of Miles Coverdale for interpreting the Bible. It would be better if he did.
So listen to this. Augustine's allegorizing of the parable of the good Samaritan. The man who fell into the hands of robbers is Adam.
Jerusalem is heaven. Jericho signifies man's mortality. The robbers are the devil. and his angels who stripped man of his immortality.
In beating him they persuaded him to sin, and in leaving him half dead, the devil and his angels have left man in a condition in which he has some knowledge of God, but is yet oppressed by sin.
[44:59] The priest represents the law, the Levite represents the prophets, the good Samaritan is Christ, who in bandaging the man's wounds, seeks to restrain sin. Oil is hope, and wine is a fervent spirit.

The man's donkey is Jesus' incarnation, and the man being placed on a donkey pictures his belief in the incarnation of Christ. The inn is the church.
The next day pictures the Lord's resurrection. The two coins represent either the two precepts of love or this life and the life to come. The innkeeper is of course the apostle Paul.
Wow! Give me a break! And do you realize that there were people who lived back at that time who looked at that and said, Isn't that amazing?
How is he able to see all of that in that? Well, the answer is, he's got an active imagination. Now, is there anything wrong with taking these elements in the parable and saying, you know what?
[46:07] This reminds me of, or this could be compared to, or I see a similarity here between this and that. Nothing wrong with that.

But that's not the interpretation. That's an application. Interpretation is one. Applications are many. There are all kinds of applications that can be made. You and I could come up with some individually that would be different from these. And they would be a reminder of, or something that makes us think of, or a comparison to.

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And that's fine. But don't call that the interpretation. Don't call that the meaning of Scripture. Meaning is one. Applications are many.
How do we know what it means? How do you know what the meaning is? What is the meaning? The meaning. The meaning of the passage is that which the writer intended to convey.
[47:12] That's the meaning. That's the interpretation. What did the writer mean by what he said? And what did those recipients who were on the receiving end of that, what did they understand that to mean?

That's the meaning. interpretation. And how do these arrive at this, at these really weird things? Well, if all you're able to get is the literal interpretation, that's okay. But for those of us who want something more, who want real depth in the Scriptures, and this, by the way, is the basis for a lot of devotional teaching, most of which is not worth a hill of beans because it isn't rooted and grounded in a literal interpretation and meaning of the Scripture.
a lot of devotions are just fluff. Doesn't stick to your spiritual ribs at all. Just nice, warm, fuzzies, little pleasant thoughts.
Isn't that interesting? And it's in one ear and out the other. How did they arrive at this? Whatever tempted them to look for these deeper hidden meanings? I do not find any rationale for this.
[48:33] I have searched and searched, and I have not come up with any answer as to why they felt the necessity to do this. So I'm going to give you a wise man answer with this caveat.

Beware. I may be missing the mark a million miles. This may not have been what was in their heart and mind at all that led them to seek the deeper meaning, the deeper interpretation.
But I tried to put myself in their position. What could possibly motivate me? to be dissatisfied with the plain literal sense and insist that there is something more, something deeper, something beyond.
And if you really want to get into the deep things of God, you've got to get beyond the literal and see the hidden meaning that God put there.
First of all, I don't believe God put hidden meanings there. I believe the meaning is the meaning that he intended to communicate.
[49:41] But insofar as how they saw the necessity for doing that, here's what I reasoned. And like I said, I could be completely wrong.

I think of God as utterly, totally, awesome, indescribable, immortal, infinite, above, beyond anything that we can imagine or think.
that being the case, I suspect that the word he has communicated is likewise and that the scriptures have a meaning that is so deep and so great that that's what would be required to come from a great intellect, a great infinite God, all kinds of hidden meanings in scripture that would be more true to his character and nature rather than just the plain sense, the superficial obvious.
That can't be God. God is so much deeper and greater and more wonderful than that. Is that terribly far-fetched? Can you not see possibly how some might think that a plain literal meaning is not worthy of this infinite God?
That there's got to be more secretive, hidden, undivulged. You've got to get in under the meaning and then when you get down to the really deep stuff, that's where you find the real meat of the word.
[51:32] I can understand somebody doing that and being well-motivated and being sincere about it. But again, sincerity is never a guarantee for truth.

Don't ever think that because you mean well, you're doing the right thing. You could mean well and do the wrong thing. There's a lot of that that goes on.
So we come to the scriptures and we try to keep our good friend Miles Coverdale in mind and his sound advice for the interpretation of scripture and we gave you a copy of this last week.
It shall greatly help ye to understand scripture if thou mark not only what is spoken or written but of whom and to whom with what words at what time where to what intent with what circumstances considering what goes before and what follows after.
In the year 1535 Miles Coverdale gave us the first complete printed copy of the English Bible along with these principles for interpreting it and I do not think they have ever been improved upon.
[52:45] I have tried to use this as my guideline for interpreting the scripture and as I've said before I am confident that no mere man is competent to interpret the scriptures including myself.

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So that's why we have to insist on allowing the Bible to interpret itself and you know what it does. The Bible is its own best commentary but you have to allow the scriptures to speak for themselves and you have to compare scripture with scripture.
This will ordinarily require that you have a good concordance that you have a good Bible dictionary that you be able to look up references that you be able to compare what's in Genesis with what's in Revelation this is essential for the study of the scriptures if you are going to become a capable interpreter of scripture by letting the scriptures interpret the scriptures this is what you have to do and there are no shortcuts there's no pill you can take there's no crash course you can take you just have to get in and gut it out but let me tell you something it is more than worth it it is more than worth it and in our next session we're going to see how and why different denominations exist including the grace movement which we consider ourselves a part how they originate how these things are spawned why one interpretation is arrived at as opposed to another and I think you'll be able to get some real insight we've got about a minute and a half left any questions or comments harleen okay you were talking about the catholic religion and the lutheran religion what they believe but if they believe that jesus christ died for their souls aren't they right well yes they are right in that one respect someone has said even a broken clock is right two times a day so you can be right in certain respects and wrong in certain others and I'm sure that's true of me too
I know there are some areas in which I'm absolutely convinced I'm right I know there are some areas in which I'm pretty shaky too I think that's true with everybody but in so far as salvation is concerned there is only two kinds of catholics lost catholics and saved catholics there's only two kinds of protestants lost protestants and saved protestants only two kinds of lutherans lost lutherans and saved lutherans if you have put your faith and trust in jesus christ as your personal savior that is your salvation whether you're roman catholic protestant or whatever you are makes no difference in so far as your eternal destiny is concerned but it can sure make a heap of difference in how you see life how you see your security in christ how you see your future how well there's a whole lot more than that someone has said salvation is the end of the gospel but it's the front end someone else yes jay jock john when i was young my father was interested in different religions so he drugged me along and you know we visited all kinds of different churches and you know i discovered it everybody thought they were right this group was wrong and i'm right i'm going to heaven you're going to hell yeah of course of course and i came to that conclusion as a young man that as long as you believe in jesus and what he did for us that's what's important you know and i also want to say that the time i've spent coming to this church that i have learned more here and i haven't anything before that as far as getting closer to the truth well i appreciate that jock thank you thank you and i assure you the privilege has been all mine to be able to communicate and i i just want to teach the word plainly and clearly but i want to warn you that when it is filtered through the wiseman grid or the wiseman lens you are at risk and it may not be the pure truth that i intended to be and that i want it to be because frail humanity does not have we see through a glass darkly and we need to understand that and admit that so just be advised that nothing is true because i say it is and i want to warn you about that how many times have i told you every preacher has two great fears one is that people will not believe what he says and the other is that people will believe what he says and those are both legitimate fears so be forewarned the only real authority you can bank on is thus saith the lord that's why it is so critical to be a
Berean and not be a parrot where you just go repeating whatever your guru says and if he says that that's good enough for me well it shouldn't be good enough for you there should be only one person of whom you can say if he says that that's good enough for me and that's God and nobody else comes close may we stand please for a word of prayer father we are so blessed and grateful that the greater issues of scripture are the most clearly revealed and the most frequently found in this wonderful book and thank you for emphasizing what you have because you know that to be the most important and most important of all is your great love for us and the great sacrifice that Jesus Christ paid for us to demonstrate your love how that you commend your love toward us and that while we were yet sinners Christ died for rejoice in it we bless you for all these other things though they are important they are peripheral to that we thank you for it all in
[59:34] Christ's wonderful name Amen

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