

Unit 4: Our Beliefs

Lesson 20:

The Bible—Not Just a History Book

Welcome to Confirmation Class

Confirm Series: Lessons 20-21

As we wait to begin, take a moment to review our goals and expectations for class:

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| Lesson Goals  As a result of this lesson, I will be able to... <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understand the historical origins and development of the Bible and how Scripture is viewed within the United Methodist tradition.• Develop skills to responsibly interpret Scripture and applying its teachings to daily life.• Recognize the importance of regular Bible reading as a Christian practice. | Class Expectations  <ul style="list-style-type: none">• WORK HARD• BE KIND | For Fun!  <i>Be ready to share one of the following responses:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What was the best part of your winter break?• What was your favorite gift that you either received or gave?• What is one of your New Year's Resolutions? |
|---|--|---|

All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work.

2 Timothy 3:16-17

Tentative Agenda

5:00-5:05= Welcome/Opening Prayer

5:05-5:35= Lesson 20: Not Just a History Book

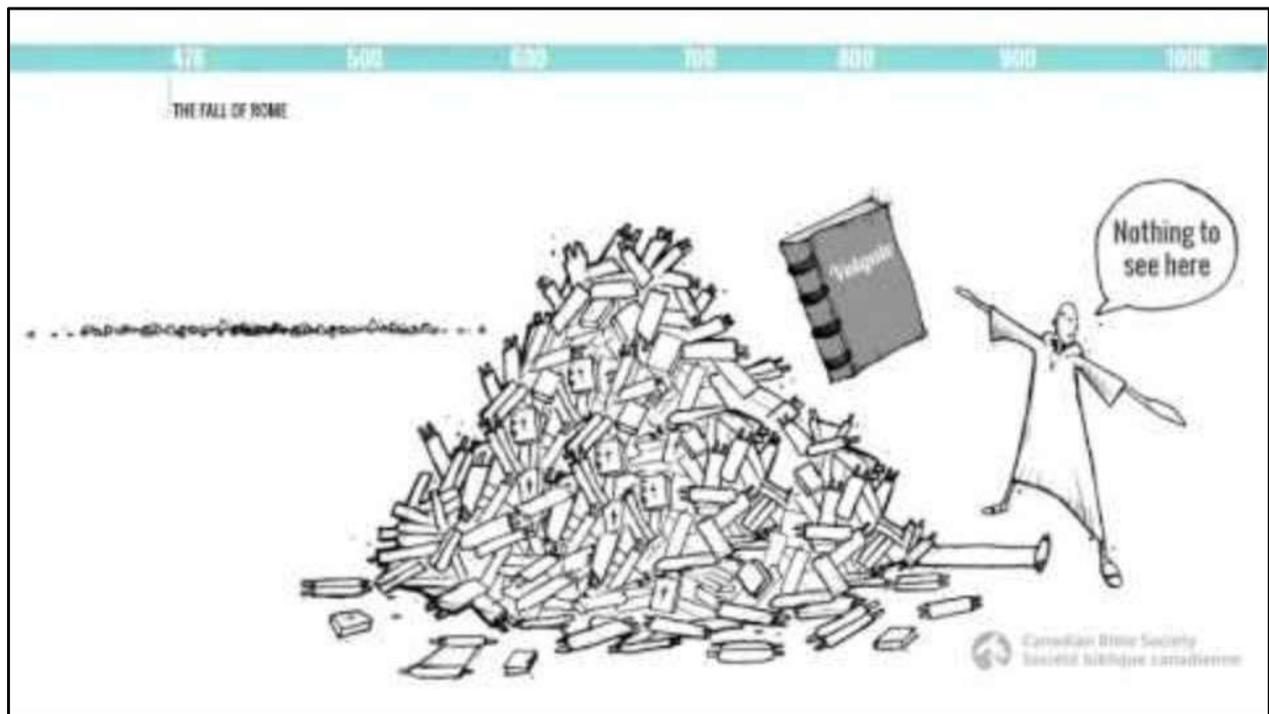
5:35-5:45= Break/Snack

5:45-6:25= Lesson 21: The UMC View

6:25-6:30= Wrap Up/Closing

Opening Prayer

Dear God, thank You for the gift of Scripture, a source of wisdom, guidance, and inspiration throughout history. As we explore where the Bible came from and how it shapes our faith, open our hearts and minds to understand its intent and meaning. Help us to ask the right questions and learn how to apply Your Word to our lives with humility and grace. Guide us to cherish the practice of reading Scripture as a way to grow closer to You. In Jesus's name, we pray. Amen.



- Reflect on your favorite part of winter break. Think about all of the details and the emotions.
- The stories of our lives are not just a random collection of past experiences.
 - In many ways, our stories define who we are.
 - The story we thought of reveals what kind of person we are and what is important to us.
 - Our beliefs—about ourselves, the world, and God—flow out of the stories we take on as our own and share with one another.
- The stories in the Bible are the same.
 - They aren't just a random collection of past experiences.
 - The Bible is carefully told, curated epic about two special communities' encounters with God.
 - The stories in the Bible reveal deep truths about these two communities—the Israelites and the first Christians—and give us a glimpse of what it means to see God up close.
 - The Bible is a story meant to shape who we are and what we believe.
- Take a few minutes to learn more about the Bible and its history: https://youtu.be/r0Zm8_B_4wA?si=P1stoer0BWsv3cHB (8 min)

Where did the Bible come from?

WHAT IS THE TORAH?

What is the New Testament?

What is canon?

WHAT TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE DOES KINGSWOOD USE?

- How do we answer these important questions that we heard in the video and in our church life?

| Where did the Bible come from? | What is the Torah? | What is the New Testament? | What is canon? |
|---|--|---|---|
| <p>What we call the Bible began as an oral tradition handed down from generation to generation. These stories were memorized and held as sacred. As communication advanced, the stories were written down and combined into books. These stories detail the experiences of God's people, the Israelites and the early church, and the struggles they had trying to follow God.</p> <p>The Old Testament is filled with celebrations, exile, and even songs that share humanity's ups and downs with God. During Jesus's time, God's people had the Old Testament or the Hebrew Bible. Priests were expected to have the whole of the Scriptures memorized! It was common to quote Scripture, as Jesus does many times in the Gospel.</p> | <p>The Torah or the Pentateuch (five scrolls or books) are the first five books in the Old Testament. These books are the foundational narrative of the Jewish faith. The stories in the Torah begin with the Creation story and the early beginnings of the Jewish people. It details how they ended up in Egypt and how they were set free.</p> <p>The Torah ends with the death of Moses right before the people of Israel reach the Promised Land. The word Torah means "teaching" or "guides." Most of what is found in the Books of Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy are early laws that created the identity of what would be the Jewish nation.</p> | <p>The New Testament begins with the four Gospels telling four distinct stories of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It also includes the accounts of the early church and the apostles' ministry in the Book of Acts.</p> <p>The New Testament includes letters written by the apostle Paul and many others and sent to some of the earliest churches. It concludes with the Book of Revelation, a book of apocalyptic literature with the intent of being prophetic.</p> | <p>The canon is the collection of books our church fathers and scholars agreed were divinely inspired by God. The canon began about 200 years before Jesus's life, when the Torah was translated into Greek, a common language in the Western world.</p> <p>The New Testament canon was added about 400 years after Jesus's resurrection, at the third Synod or Council of Carthage (a.d. 397). There, 27 books were included to make up the New Testament as we know it today. It wasn't until more than 1,200 years later that the Roman Catholic Church declared this canonization as doctrine at the Council of Trent (a.d. 1545-1563).</p> |
| <h3>What translation of the Bible does Kingswood use?</h3> | | | |
| <p>Most Methodists, like many Protestant denominations, use a variety of Bible translations, but the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) is commonly preferred for study and worship within the United Methodist Church. The NRSV is widely respected for its accuracy and scholarly approach, as well as its inclusive language. In addition to the NRSV, some Methodist churches may also use the Revised Standard Version (RSV), the New International Version (NIV), or the King James Version (KJV), depending on the congregation's preference and tradition. However, the NRSV is often recommended by the United Methodist Church for its balance of readability and faithfulness to the original languages.</p> <p>Kingswood uses the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV). NRSV is a modern English translation of the Bible that was first published in 1989. It is an update of the Revised Standard Version (RSV), which itself was based on earlier translations, including the King James Version (KJV) and the American Standard Version (ASV).</p> <p>The NRSV was created by a team of over 30 scholars from various Christian denominations and Jewish traditions. These scholars used the most reliable ancient manuscripts available, such as the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Masoretic Text (Hebrew Bible), and the earliest Greek New Testament manuscripts. Their goal was to provide a translation that is accurate, readable, and inclusive, reflecting advances in biblical scholarship and sensitivity to modern language.</p> <p>The NRSV is widely used in academic, liturgical, and personal study settings due to its balance of fidelity to the original texts and its inclusive language approach, making it one of the most respected translations today.</p> | | | |

Unit 4: Our Beliefs

Lesson 21:

The Bible—The United Methodist View

~~**“Luke, I am your father.”**~~

“No, I am your father.”



- Now, let’s examine how we, as United Methodists, look at Scripture.
 - We will learn what questions to ask ourselves when reading the Bible in order to better understand its intent and how it applicable to us today.
 - We will look at the importance of reading the Bible as a regular Christian practice and how to effectively interpret Scripture responsibly.
- What is the famous quote that gets repeated by Darth Vader in Star Wars?
 - You may know it as, “Luke, I am your father.”
 - But the actual quote is, “No, I am your father.”
 - Seems like a small change, but the actual words imply that Vader is arguing about who Luke claims to be his father rather than just telling him.
 - It’s a small change, but sometimes that can make all the difference.
 - The misquote often suggests a dramatic, villainous line, but the real line is more about denying Luke's belief that Obi-Wan told him the truth—that Vader killed his father.
 - The true quote is about Vader's attempt to manipulate Luke into joining him, not just a simple reveal.
- When we look at quotations at the surface, sometimes we get completely different meanings than the writers’ original intentions.
 - We need to look at the Bible this way, too.
 - Sometimes finding the meaning in a piece of Scripture means looking at the whole story and researching its history.

~~God helps those who help themselves.~~



- When we look at quotations at the surface, sometimes we get completely different meanings than the writers' original intentions.
 - We need to look at the Bible this way, too.
 - Sometimes finding the meaning in a piece of Scripture means looking at the whole story and researching its history.
- "God helps those who help themselves."
 - Original Meaning: This quote does not appear in the Bible at all.
 - It originates from Benjamin Franklin's "Poor Richard's Almanack".
 - The idea is that self-reliance and personal responsibility are important virtues.
 - Misused Meaning: Many use it to imply that God only helps those who try hard on their own, which can be misleading.
 - The Bible teaches that God's help is available to everyone, especially when we are helpless, and that grace is not earned by our efforts (e.g., Romans 5:8, Ephesians 2:8-9).
- Think: Have you ever had something you've said taken out of context before?

Jeremiah 29:11 (NRSV)

For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the LORD, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.

- The Bible helps us understand what faith is.
 - When our faith is challenged or even celebrated, the stories we find about our ancestors help us know that we are not alone.
 - And the last part says, “to interpret the Bible responsibly.” Why do you think that this is important? Let’s read Jeremiah 29:11 together.
- When we read the Bible, often our first question is “What does this mean for me?”
 - This is an important question, but it shouldn’t be our first question we ask.
 - When interpreting Scripture, we should first ask, “What does it mean to the people it was originally written to?”
 - This is called seeking context.
 - We need to dig deeper to find out what was going on in the time and place in which that Scripture was written.
 - Reading Scripture is kind of like starting to watch a movie in the middle.
 - It takes us some time and effort to find out what is going on in the story to accurately interpret it.
- When we understand the bigger story surrounding Jeremiah 29:11
 - We discover that God is speaking through a prophet—a human messenger named Jeremiah—encouraging an ancient group of people—the people of Israel—who were in slavery and exiled to Babylon.
 - This wasn’t the first time that Israel had been enslaved; this kept happening to them.
 - They were looking for a message of hope from God in the midst of their suffering.
 - One of the simplest ways to learn about context is to help understand Scripture is to read the book that surrounds that verse.
 - More than 70% of Scripture is narrative, meaning that it is part of a story.

- So if we take the time to read around a verse or a chapter, we can learn a lot.
- We can also discover context and meaning by studying the language.
 - The Bible was originally written in the ancient languages between Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek.
 - So, in Jeremiah 29:11, the word for “plans” is machasabah (MAK-ush-ah-bah) in Hebrew better meaning “thoughts”.
 - Or “peace” is actually shalom in Hebrew, better translated as “completeness” or “wholeness.”
 - By exploring the original languages, we see more dimensions to the Scripture.
 - In a verse like Jeremiah 29:11, new meanings open up to us as we uncover God’s thoughts and wishes for a future filled with hope and wholeness for the people of Israel.
- Now you may be wondering, “If Scripture was written to someone else (an ancient community) in another language, what does this have to do with me?”
 - That is a great question. The simplest way to explain it is that even though Scripture was not written directly to us, it was written for us.
 - That means that God reveals meaning in our lives out of the ancient stories in the Bible. This is called “application.”
- Read: Jeremiah 29:11 again
 - When reading the Bible, we need to look at it through the lens of humility.
 - When reading, we need to know who is writing the Scripture, to whom the Scripture is being written, and what is going on during the time the Scripture is written.
 - When we can make these connections, then we no longer take the Scripture at face value, but rather learn to read beyond the words.
 - Having one foot in the Scripture and one foot in the present allows us to begin to understand what was the intent of the written word and how it could apply to us thousands of years later.

Psalm 23

The Divine Shepherd

A Psalm of David.

¹ The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.
² He makes me lie down in green pastures;
he leads me beside still waters;
³ he restores my soul.
He leads me in right paths
for his name's sake.
⁴ Even though I walk through the darkest valley,
I 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 goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD
my whole life long.

Psalm 23

The Divine Shepherd

A Psalm of David.

The LORD [redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted] leads me
[redacted] restores
[redacted] me
[redacted]
[redacted] are with me;
[redacted]
[redacted] comfort me.
[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted] all the days of my life,
[redacted] my whole life long.

- The Bible is a collection of ancient stories, poems, and letters that still give meaning to life and world today.
- We are going to create a blackout-style poem about what it means to be a person of faith in our world today.
 - Cross out words, lines, and sections of the text to reveal the words and phrases that make up your poem.
- Hint—start by underlining the words you want to include, this way you can black out the rest when you are done and more easily change your mind during your drafting portion.
- Take a look at this example using Psalm 23.
- Now, you try using Matthew 6:7-15.

Wrap-Up

Confirm Series: Lessons 20-21

As we wrap up class, lets go over a few things together:

Objective

The objective of class today was...

- Understand the historical origins and development of the Bible and how Scripture is viewed within the United Methodist tradition.
- Develop skills to responsibly interpret Scripture and applying its teachings to daily life.
- Recognize the importance of regular Bible reading as a Christian practice.

Application

Today's lesson is important to me because...

Upcoming Dates

- Sunday, January 18
 - SUNDAY NIGHT LIVE (5-7pm)
- Monday, January 19
 - Martin Luther King Jr Service Day
- Sunday, January 25
 - Confirmation Class (5-6:30pm)
 - Chili Cook-off (5-6:30pm)
- Sunday, February 1
 - SUNDAY NIGHT LIVE (5-7pm)
- Friday, February 6
 - Parents' Night Out (5-9pm)
 - Youth Lock-in (9pm-Saturday at 8am)
- Sunday, February 8:
 - Confirmation Mentor Meet Up (10am)
 - NO Confirmation Class (Super Bowl)
- Sunday, February 15
 - SUNDAY NIGHT LIVE (5-7pm)

Closing Prayer

One confirmand will lead us in a closing prayer.