

Discuss the following when approaching the Gospels for teaching, preaching, and discipleship. Be sure to support your answer with evidence and analysis:

1) Why is it important to understand historical-critical issues, such as authorship, recipients, and dating (even if we cannot determine these details definitively)? **1 to 2 paragraphs**

It is critical to understand and to be knowledgeable of the authorship, recipients and dating of the Gospels. Whether we are teaching, preaching or discipling it is necessary to correctly share the Truth. Being aware of the authorship allows one to appreciate the perspective from which the Gospel accounts or any book of the bible. As Powell points out all the books were written by Christians so there is “a need to understand what they believed, valued, and feared.” It would also be important to understand the influence Roman culture had on them as well as their Jewish heritage.

It is essential to understand the recipients and the diversity of their backgrounds and the influence culture played. The Roman government and culture, various sects /factions, for example the Pharisees Sadducees, and Samaritans and Gentiles to name a few and lastly, Hellenism, or Greek influence, would have affected the way the recipients of the Gospel received the message and how the message was written and delivered. All of these influences had an effect on what was penned. When we have knowledge of this the way we share the Gospels will be more effective because we can share more fully. It gives one a better ability to share Truth with more accuracy.

2) Present a well-reasoned argument for your ministry context as to what is significant for people’s faith and interpretation of a Gospel for spiritual growth about the phenomenon that the Church has 4 canonical gospels? **1 paragraph**

I am currently the Soul Care coordinator at my church . We regularly minister to people who have false beliefs about God the Father, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. As Powell states these four Canonical Gospels are a “selection not a collection of writings.” There is unanimity in the writings. A unity coupled with a diversity, as we minister, these Gospels act as an anchor of truth and hope. We disciple people with the life giving words of Christ and they begin to experience Him in new ways as the veil is lifted. Each Gospel offers a unique perspective based on the author, so depending on the needs of the individual, we will search for the appropriate truth for the circumstance. At times I compare what each Gospel states with regards to healing/deliverance. The Gospel or Good News offers individuals the opportunity to repent and be restored as they come out of agreement with the lies/sin patterns that hold them in bondage

3) When reading the letters of Paul, one must consider the relationship between the Church’s context (the recipients) and the argument Paul makes in a specific letter.

A) Explain the reason why this is an essential step in reading Paul’s different letters with competence. **1 paragraph.**

It is essential to understand the culture and the belief of the particular churches, and the relationship Paul had with each . Different churches had different false beliefs, philosophies, and influences. Therefore Paul addresses these specifically in each of the letters. Each location had its own culture, strengths and weaknesses. False beliefs, and sin patterns enlisted in these communities Paul wrote to. He addresses the specific issues with each. Not only correcting but exhorting that which was fruitful. Paul often brings clarity to the Gospel message, ensuring that individuals did not add to or subtract from the message of salvation by Grace. He also encouraged the recipients of his epistles to live in a Christ like manner towards one another and those who have not yet received salvation.

B) Focusing on Galatians, discuss the relationship between the context and the theological points emphasized. Be sure to be specific about the context and explain why these theological issues best addressed them. **1 to 2 paragraphs.**

The Galatians irked Paul. According to Powell this epistle is referred to as the “angry letter.” From the opening of the epistle, we see Paul express frustration where he would usually express gratitude. At the crux of his frustration are the false teachers who were insisting on circumcision as an assurance of salvation and those Galatians which abandoned the Truth and sufficiency of the Cross. These false teachers who lived in the region taught that Salvation was for Jews only and that Gentiles should become Jews first to be truly saved. Paul tells the Galatians they are fools for being persuaded by this false teaching.

Paul reminds and exhorts the Galatian church that God's favor is universal and declares in Galatians 5:1, Paul declares “They have been set free and are no longer under a yoke of bondage.” Later in Galatians 5:13 he reminds them that true freedom will come by serving one another in love.

4. By the end of this course you should be more aware of the diversity of the New Testament, as well as how the message of each book complements God’s overarching purpose of reconciliation with humanity. Diversity is a hot-button issue today and education is often construed as the domain of elitists, and that includes Seminary educated pastors and teachers. It is important you are clear about the extent and limitations of diversity.

A) Is diversity a problem for interpretation, or do you see a value to these different voices for the proclamation and ministry of the contemporary Church? Explain. *Remember the unique presentations of the Catholic or General epistles. 1 paragraph.*

Diversity can become problematic if it detracts from the truth of the Gospel message. However the diversity that we find in the New Testament is helpful in getting a full picture of Christ and the Trinity. When we look at the diversity of the writers in their form/literary style, we find they leave us with a different idea or understanding of Jesus. We glean a different perspective on Christ in each Gospel, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Certain Gospels do not contain certain information and seem to purposely leave it out. While we do not base the presentation of our proclamations on just particular verses or books of the Bible. We need to look

carefully and compare the entirety of scripture. Denominations may express certain aspects differently, however there needs to be caution on denying portions of truth.

B) Describe what steps you would take if an interpretation on a passage of Scripture was not the same as yours, and what you would do if a commentary or denomination challenged what you have always understood.

If I were challenged by an interpretation or passage, I would hope to be able to keep an open mind and search the scripture. I would then ask the Holy Spirit to guide me. Lastly I would speak truth in love after my research was completed. I would hear their heart and consider the information presented to me. I would do a personal deep dive and research to hear the various sides of the passage that was not seen the same way. I believe after taking this course, I have a better appreciation of others' perspectives, and the skills to study the New Testament more inductively. I am also quite comfortable in agreeing to disagree and maintaining a harmonious relationship as much as it is in my ability to do so.

OPTIONAL: “One thing I would like the professor and/or ATS to know about my experience in this course is:

This course has spurred me on to steward the Word of God with excellence, and “To study to show thyself approved.” Thank You!!