

Patio Pulpit, March 31, 2021

“Context, context, context.”

What are the three rules of Biblical interpretation, boys and girls? Context, context, context. I borrowed that from a pastor by the name of Chris Rosebrough, whom I follow on his website, Fighting for the Faith. But long before I ever heard of Pastor Rosebrough, I learned the lesson of context at Columbia Bible College from 1988 to 1991.

If we are watching the evening news or reading a local newspaper or the Wall Street Journal, context is just as important as it is for reading the word of God. Nowadays with all the fake news circulating around the media, the only way we can find the truth is by vetting the stories and checking the context of what is being reported as truth. The same can be said with all the fake prophets and teachers and pastors circulating around the church. Context will often expose them for what they really are, wolves in sheep’s clothing.

I have told you before that our Hermeneutics prof said, “Context is king.” And I have also told you before that I modified that little saying this way, “When it comes to interpreting the Bible, the Holy Spirit is King, context His queen.” One cannot rightly divide the word of truth without both.

The apostle Peter said this, ²⁰ *But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation,* ²¹ *for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God. (2 Pet. 1:20-2:1 NAU)* And it is explicitly implied in those two verses that one must submit to the Spirit if one sincerely desires to know what the word of God is saying in any and every book, chapter and verse of the Bible. And it can be done.

The Lord Jesus told His apostles this, ¹² *"I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.*

¹³ *"But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.*

¹⁴ *"He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose it to you.*

¹⁵ "All things that the Father has are Mine; therefore I said that He takes of Mine and will disclose it to you.

(Jn. 16:12-15 NAU)

That is the role model for every God-called preacher, we must not speak on our own initiative.

²⁶ "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, **He** will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you. (Jn. 14:26 NAU) And context demands we understand Jesus to be addressing the apostles specifically at that time.

And the apostle Paul prayed this for the church in all ages and generations, but specifically at the time to the Ephesians, ¹⁵ For this reason I too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which exists among you and your love for all the saints,

¹⁶ do not cease giving thanks for you, while making mention of you in my prayers; And here is his first prayer for the saints in Ephesus. The second one is found in chapter 3:

¹⁷ **that, the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him.**

¹⁸ **I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,**

¹⁹ **and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe.** These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might

²⁰ which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, (Eph. 1:15-20 NAU)

It is the responsibility of every God-called pastor to pray this for his congregation. "...that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him. I do pray that for my people at Eastway Baptist Church. Even so, amen.

And furthermore,

¹⁸ *I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will **know**, and I can explain that word “know” as meaning “know without a doubt,” what is the hope of His calling,
what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,
and
what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe.*

Beloved of God, we can receive this, we can know these things.

If you are a fan of the US Constitution, and I hope you are, you may remember that it now has 27 Amendments, the first ten of which are called “The Bill of Rights.”

The Constitution is to the United States what the Bible is to the church. It is not inspired or infallible, but it is the document our country relies on in order to maintain our independent Republic. The Bible, in its original documents, is infallible and without error of any kind. It is the singular document we rely on for doctrine and practice. The versions we have now that use a word-for-word type of interpretation and translation relying on the thousands of existing ancient manuscripts are utterly reliable, not every translation out there, but more than a handful.

There are some so-called Bibles that are not translations but man-made paraphrases such as The Living Bible, The Message and one very new abomination called “The Passion Bible.” And the always popular NIV falls into the category of a man-made version that I would never use for anything. When studying or casually reading from one of these so-called translations it is impossible to discern the true context of the word of God because it has been twisted and perverted by the producers of such tripe long before it reaches your desk or table.

The NIV translators used a method of translation (and I use the world loosely) called the “**dynamic equivalence method**,” which to put it concisely, means they rely on ancient manuscripts but rather than a word-for-word method they have produced a Bible that they believe delves into the minds of the original authors to see what they might have been thinking. That is heresy looking for a place to happen.

These per-versions of the word of God ignore Biblical context in favor of man-contrived, non-existent context. In other words, it's all in their heads. "What do we want the Bible to say. What do we wish the Bible had said? What do we want our readers to believe?" It was the deceived and demonic thinking of the great heretic Joseph Smith and then his disciples and false prophets who have come after him. Joseph Smith claimed to have been visited by the Trinity no less who told him that everyone had messed the word of God up and they were commissioning him to make it right. He ended up with silly non-sense material that came from his mind and with a different gospel and a different Jesus, making him anathema (Gal. 1:6-9). The same holds true for the false prophet Muhammad and the Watch Tower Society.

It is the twisted perverted thinking behind The Passion Bible, written by a man named Brian Simmons who claimed a visit by none other than Jesus Himself who came into Brian's bedroom and told him that he was being commissioned by He Himself, Jesus, to write the correct version of the Bible. And Brian Simmons now claims to be a Biblical linguist, with a working, scholarly knowledge of Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek. And that has been proven to be false. Here is a link to one site that deals with Simmons' version and claims. [\(2296\) Before You Use The Passion Translation Watch THIS - YouTube](#)

Personally, I use the New American Standard version of 1995 and I have found it to be as reviews bear out, one of several translations that use the "Formal Equivalence" method of translation and interpretation. It relies solely on the extant ancient manuscripts and a word-for-word translation and interpretation. I rely heavily on the original manuscripts in my studies in preparation for my sermons and lessons. It is a labor of love. The Greek New Testament is my area of concentration and some expertise. I am no Hebrew scholar I say to my shame, but I use several outstanding Hebrew resources to help me in that discipline.

I would also recommend the New King James Version, the English Standard Version and the New English Version. There are several others that escape my mind at the moment.

Now, having said all that. This morning I happened to catch one of the sites I visit daily that focuses on my favorite Biblical topic, apologetics, and the gentleman who hosts it was making observations of a recent series of talks given by Joel Osteen. And he agrees with me that if one has heard Joel Osteen speak one time, you have heard Osteen speak every time. Osteen just regurgitates the same message week after week. Osteen's messages are man-centered and not Christ-centered. They are Osteen centered and not Biblically centered. They are self-promoting messages and not, most definitely not the gospel. Osteen preaches a different Jesus and a different gospel. Let him be anathema.

According to Osteen everything is coming up roses, just wait and you will see. You can experience "Your Best Life Now." Believe and it will come to pass as your destiny. Say it, confess it and it must come to pass as you have confessed it. Nothing bad can come into your life unless you have confessed bad words and thoughts. I guess the twelve apostles must have not known this or they would have survived life without all the suffering they experienced.

Osteen has said, and I quote, "Your words prophesy your future."

So, that begs the question, "What does the Bible say about the lives of those who are genuinely in Christ?" Let's start with this, ¹⁵ *For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!"*

¹⁶ *The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God,*

¹⁷ *and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.*

¹⁸ *For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.*

¹⁹ *For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God.*

²⁰ For *the creation was subjected to futility*, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope

²¹ that the creation itself also will be set free from *its slavery to corruption* into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

²² For we know that *the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now.*

²³ And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, *even we ourselves groan* within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body. (Rom. 8:15-23 NAU)

That passage alone proves without doubt that the Christian life is a life that is characterized as much by our suffering for Christ as it is our being joyful and happy in Christ. And this, ⁸ *For we do not want you to be unaware, brethren, of our affliction* which came to us in Asia, that we were *burdened excessively*, beyond our strength, so that *we despaired even of life;*

⁹ *indeed, we had the sentence of death* within ourselves so that we would not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead;

¹⁰ *who delivered us from so great a peril of death*, and will deliver us, He on whom we have set our hope. And He will yet deliver us,

(2 Cor. 1:8-10 NAU)

Osteen and the Word Faith teachers, or the Bible?

⁴ *For out of much affliction and anguish of heart* I wrote to you with many tears; not so that you would be made sorrowful, but that you might know the love which I have especially for you. (2 Cor. 2:4 NAU)

²³ *Are they servants of Christ?-- I speak as if insane-- I more so; in far more labors, in far more imprisonments, beaten times without number, often in danger of death.*

²⁴ *Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine lashes.*

²⁵ *Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep.*

²⁶ *I have been on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from my countrymen, dangers from the*

Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren;

²⁷ *I have been in labor and hardship, through many sleepless nights, in hunger and thirst, often without food, in cold and exposure.*

²⁸ *Apart from such external things, there is the daily pressure on me of concern for all the churches.* (2 Cor. 11:23-28 NAU)

The visible church, that which consists of the true church and the assemblies that merely bear His name, must decide now, “will we follow the clear word of God, or will we embrace the myriad of heresies and heretics the world offers?”

I close with this,

2 Timothy 4:1 *I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom:*

² *preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction.*

³ *For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires,*

⁴ *and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths.*

⁵ *But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.* (2 Tim. 4:1-5 NAU)

Osteen? Or Christ? Osteen? Or the written word of God?

“Even so, come quickly, Lord Jesus.”