



Sunday Teaching Guide

I LIKE JESUS: I'M NOT SURE ABOUT THE BIBLE, Week 1
April 7, 2024

Bible Texts

- Genesis 1:1
- John 1:1-5

Important Terms

- B'REISHEET: The first word of the Bible, usually translated as "in the beginning."

Sermon Notes

- Because the Bible was written in Hebrew over two thousand years ago, translating the text is difficult. One translation of the first verse of the first book of the Bible reads, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" and another "When God began to create[a] the heavens and the earth." The Hebrew words are difficult to translate because of the structure and order. The literal translation would be something like this: "In the beginning of God created..."
- One scholar says it this way: The rule is not that one can discover the meaning of Scripture. Rather, the rule is that the Bible is always delightfully ambiguous, and one's job as a reader is to determine the range of potentially reasonable interpretations. From the very first page, the very first word, and with the very first letter, we get an invitation. We get a passage that totally changes in meaning depending on how you interpret those words.
- God allowed this collection of stories, history, and letters to be written by people in the language of the people who were writing it: each generation, interpreting and applying the lessons of the scripture to their lives. From the very beginning (literally), the Bible challenges us to interpret without giving us easy, straightforward answers. The Bible isn't a book that we are supposed to place on a bookshelf or a coffee table. It's a book that we are supposed to wrestle with as we explore our faith.
- The Gospel of John begins similarly to Genesis, but instead emphasizes the importance of Jesus. The writer calls Jesus "The Word", which was a term used to describe an ultimate truth. Jesus is the one who through his teaching, recorded in the Gospels, shows us the way of grace, mercy, and love.

Reflection Questions

- Is there a Bible story that has struck you as strange, troubling, confusing, or contradictory, one that stirred up questions and doubts?
- Are there questions about the Bible you've been afraid to confront but would love to ask?
- Have you felt drawn to Jesus but unsure about the rest of the Bible?
- Have you ever experienced a time when your usage and understanding of words or vocabulary differed from someone enough to cause confusion, disagreement, or division?
- Why do you think the writer of the Gospel of John would want to say that Jesus was in the beginning?
- Why do you think a creation story matters? How can a creation story inform believers about their faith?

Prayer for the Week

- God, creator of the universe, open our hearts and minds in approaching the Scriptures in an effort to seek both truth in your Word and understanding. Amen.

Additional Readings

- Colossians 1:16
- Revelation 4:11
- Hebrews 11:3