



Teaching the Bible Classically with Dr. Fred Putnam

Lecture 2: Pedagogy

Outline:

Learning & Teaching

- What does it mean to learn something?
 - Aquinas: “The person who knows something has become one with it because they have come to love it.”
 - Because we want to do it, we learn to do it well. That is really when we’ve learned.
 - Students only learn what interests them.
 - We are trying to find a way to engage students with the Bible. We foster an atmosphere in which it is easier for students to become interested in what they are reading.

Three Trusts

- We trust the **text** that we are studying. We trust it because its author is our primary teacher. It stands above us (student and teacher).
- We trust our **students**. People want to learn and understand. The best teachers for students are often other students.
 - The curse of knowledge: as we get better at doing something we don’t remember what it is like to learn something for the first time.
- We trust the **process** of reading, reflecting on, and responding to the text. We are not looking for the grass that springs up quickly. The process goes on beyond us.

Learning & Teaching

- **Goal:** Learning to **read carefully and well** something that we **assume** we already **know** well. The text is actually foreign to them.
- Teaching
 - Opening Question: This question will prompt a conversation among students.
 - Bad questions:
 - Closed ended questions
 - Good questions:
 - Open ended questions
 - Give students the opportunity to think together.



- Example: Why did Joseph tell his brothers his dreams? Was he being boastful?
- Example: Why do we find the Levite's wife leaving him in the end of Judges? Why does she run away? Why does her father keep them from leaving?
- These questions lead to conversations.
- We need to learn to shut our mouths.
 - Relax and let the students puzzle it out.
 - They must genuinely believe that our reticence is not laziness, but interest. People are different and offer insights that vary.
- Keep a notebook for reading the Bible.
 - Write one thing for each chapter, a question, comment, a name, an event.
 - Use this for a quick review.
- Use breakout rooms or small groups. Have each small group agree on a question that you want the class to discuss, after they have discussed it in their small group.
- Assessments
 - Cooperative testing can be used.
 - Write everything you can think of from a Book of the Bible.
 - Then turn to your neighbor and combine your lists.
 - Then do an open book part in a group of four to put things in the order in which they occurred or were said.
- It is tempting to assign research papers in high schools.
 - This is unhelpful because students don't know how to judge sources.
 - Do an inductive version first. This proved to students how much they can do by thinking on their own.
 - Do research second.

Which version of the Bible?

- Use the same version for teacher and student.
- Use more literal than interpretive versions. Leave the debate up to the reader.
 - Example: John 5:42
- It is tempting to look up a Greek word online. The Greek/Hebrew word never simply mean a single English word.

Order?

- Read canonically (Genesis to Revelation).
- A lot of students are amazed by all of the material before you get to the gospels.
- Some chose to study the Bible based on genre.