GO DEEPER

Reading Gospel Stories

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Telling stories involves choices

- which story?
  - which events?
  - which characters?
  - which bits of the story to focus on?
- point of view
  - look for God's point of view—usually the same as the narrator's point of view in Scripture
  - look for other points of view—often expressed through characters' words and actions
- plot: the storyline
  - situation → complication → resolution

Aim and process

- To enable today's readers to hear the passage as it was heard by its first readers
  - this means today's readers can then reflect on what it says for them in different circumstances today
- Process
  - observe

Observe

- Look: read the passage and its setting repeatedly looking for…
  - context: what precedes and follows the passage?
    - what is the relationship of the passage to these preceding and following sections?
      - contrast
      - comparison
      - consequence
      - repetition/reinforcement
      - illustration

Observe

- Look: read the passage and its setting repeatedly looking for…
  - context: what precedes and follows the passage?
  - structure: how does the story develop?
    - cause and effect
    - means to an end
    - progression to climax/challenge
    - general statements made more specific
    - same idea presented in different ways

Observe

- Look: read the passage and its setting repeatedly looking for…
  - context: what precedes and follows the passage?
  - structure: how does the story develop?
    - who performs and who receives the actions of the verbs?
    - watch for 'shift' words (conjunctions)
      - but, therefore, then, so, for, because, yet, if, since, when, while, so that, in the same way (etc.)
    - are there cultural features I need to learn about?

Observe

- Ask the seven key fact-finding questions
  - who are the people involved?
    - writer/speaker
    - readers/hearers
    - what is their relationship?
    - in Mark, especially notice relationship with Jesus

Observe

- Ask the seven key fact-finding questions
  - who are the people involved?
  - where are they?
    - why there?
    - what's the atmosphere?

Observe

- Ask the seven key fact-finding questions
  - who are the people involved?
  - where are they?
  - when is the story happening?
    - notice its place in Mark's overall development—remember the Markan 'hill'
    - notice what Mark uses his words to tell us (i.e. the speed of 'narrative time')

Observe

- Ask the seven key fact-finding questions
  - who are the people involved?
  - where are they?
  - when is the story happening?
  - what is the central event/key theme?
    - a problem?
    - an event influencing others?
    - a conflict?
    - a crisis?

Observe

- Ask the seven key fact-finding questions
  - who are the people involved?
  - where are they?
  - when is the story happening?
  - what is the central event/key theme?
  - how does the writer/speaker communicate?
    - how they describe the event
    - relationship of event to what precedes and follows
    - do words used reveal motives, feelings, etc.?

Observe

- Ask the seven key fact-finding questions
  - who are the people involved?
  - where are they?
  - when is the story happening?
  - what is the central event/key theme?
  - how does the writer/speaker communicate?
  - why does this event happen?
    - are the reasons explicit or implicit?

Observe

- Ask the seven key fact-finding questions
  - who are the people involved?
  - where are they?
  - when is the story happening?
  - what is the central event/key theme?
  - how does the writer/speaker communicate?
  - why does this event happen?
  - so what results follow?
    - are they expected or surprising?
    - …for the readers who accepts or rejects the story?

Synthesise

- pull your thinking together into a coherent whole
- check any uncertain or difficult points (commentary, Bible dictionary, etc.)
- evaluate your findings—what's the 'big idea' of the passage?
- correlate ideas—how do they relate to each other?
- summarise the main point in a sentence
  - Who is doing/saying what, to whom, in what circumstances, for what reason(s), and with what result(s)?
- outline how the passage presents that point

Mark 2:1–3:6

- Five stories of Jesus in controversy
  - 2:1-12 The healing of the man who was paralysed and let down through the roof
  - 2:13-17 Criticism of Jesus for the company he keeps
  - 2:18-22 The question over fasting
  - 2:23-27 'Working' on the sabbath
  - 3:1-6 Jesus heals a man on the sabbath

Mark 2:1-2

- Where? Jesus is 'at home' v 1
- Who?
  - the crowd who want to hear Jesus vv 1b-2
  - the four friends of the paralysed man vv 3-4
  - Jesus vv 1, 5, 8-11
  - the teachers of the law vv 6-7
  - the man who is paralysed and healed vv 3-5 (passive) vv 10-12 (active)

Mark 2:1-2

- Where? Jesus is 'at home' v 1
- Who?
- What is the central event?
  - the healing or the forgiving? vv 5, 9-11
- How does Mark communicate?
  - he sets the scene vv 1-4
  - he gives us crucial words from Jesus v 5
  - he sets up a 'conversation'
  - he lets us into the teachers' and Jesus' thoughts vv 6-8
  - he tells us what Jesus did vv 10-11

Mark 2:1-2

- Where? Jesus is ‘at home’ v 1
- Who?
- What is the central event?
- How does Mark communicate?
- So what?
  - Jesus has authority to forgive as well as heal vv 10-11
  - people are amazed and praise God v 12
  - readers are invited to consider who Jesus is

Now study…

- 2:13-17
- 2:18-22
- 2:23-27
- 3:1-6