

6th Lecture

Biblical Hermeneutics (Ilm-ul-Tafseer)

Teacher: Rev. Khurram Younus

Topic: 8 Common Mistakes in Interpretation and Preaching

1. Lack of Self-Application (Not Applying the Word to Oneself)

- **The Mistake:** The preacher prepares the message for others but does not apply it to their own life.
- **The Correct Way:** To be an effective minister, the Word must impact your own life first.
- **Reference:** James 1:22-25 (Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says).

2. Ignoring the Original Author's Intent

- **The Mistake:** Not asking "Why" the author (e.g., Paul, David) wrote this and "To whom" it was written.
- **The Correct Way:** Try to understand the historical context and circumstances of that time.
 - *Example:* If Paul wrote "I no longer live" to the Galatians, why didn't he write the same phrasing to the Corinthians? Every letter has a specific reason.

3. Ignoring the Context of the Whole Bible

- **The Mistake:** Isolating a single verse and ignoring the teaching of the rest of the Bible.
- **The Correct Way:** Practice **Christocentric Preaching**.
 - *Example:* When teaching about the sacrificial system in the Old Testament (OT), connect it to the ultimate sacrifice of Christ; do not limit the teaching only to goats and bulls.

4. Copying Others (Plagiarism)

- **The Mistake:** Mimicking the style, voice, and interpretation of famous pastors exactly.
- **The Correct Way:** Learn from others but do not copy them. God has made you unique. Do your own **Personal Study** so that you do not repeat the errors of others.

5. Interpreting Based on Feelings

- **The Mistake:** Saying, "I feel like this verse means this."
- **The Correct Way:** Interpretation is based on **Principles**, not emotions/feelings.

- *Example (Luke 5:1-11):* The story of Peter and the miraculous catch of fish.
 - **Common Mistake:** Using this only for "Business Blessings" or "Hard Work."
 - **True Meaning:** This event is about **Discipleship**, as Peter left the fish behind to follow Jesus.

6. Forcing Culture into the Text

- **The Mistake:** Forcing a verse to fit into your own culture or current agenda.
- **The Correct Way:** Faithfully extract the meaning that the text is actually stating.
 - *Example (2 Corinthians 6:14 - "Do not be unequally yoked"):*
 - **Common Mistake:** Using this primarily for "Marriage with non-believers."
 - **True Meaning:** Contextually, this was written to warn against joining with **False Apostles/Teachers** and sharing in their ministry.

7. Distinguishing Between Descriptive and Prescriptive

- **Descriptive:** What is described in the Bible as having happened in history. It is not necessarily binding on us to repeat.
 - *Example:* David killing Goliath, or the command "Do not cook a young goat in its mother's milk" (Cultural/Ceremonial background).
- **Prescriptive:** Commands that are given for us to follow.
 - *Example:* Do not steal; Love one another.
- **Lesson:** Do not treat every historical event as a command for today.

8. Ignoring the Immediate Context

- **The Mistake:** Not reading the verses or chapters immediately preceding or following the text.
- **The Correct Way:** Always check the theme of the surrounding chapters.
 - *Example (1 Corinthians 13 - The Love Chapter):*
 - **Context:** This chapter is sandwiched between chapters regarding Spiritual Gifts (Ch 12 & 14).
 - **True Meaning:** The Corinthians were "puffed up" (proud) about their **Spiritual Gifts**. Paul showed them that while gifts are good, **Love** is superior and is the true mark of spiritual maturity.

Summary for Students: "A good Bible student understands the **Author**, the **Context**, and the **Type of Literature** (Descriptive vs. Prescriptive), and interprets based on **Principles** rather than **Feelings**."