

**- Order of Service -**

**Call to Worship**

**Welcoming Prayer**

**Reading John 1:1-18**

- 430, Standing on the Promises
- Your Words are Wonderful
- Every Promise of Your Word
- Speak O Lord

**Announcements and Prayer requests  
Greeting**

**Message in the Word -**

**God's Word is meant to be understood**

**The clarity of God's Word**

**Nehemiah 8:1-8**

**Sending prayer**

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**July 21 (Friday) Fellowship Game Night**  
**July 29, Walk for Life**

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**You may notice we don't pass an offering plate**

We invite you to participate in the ministry, and the offering box in the foyer is for your gifts and offerings for the Lord's work.

**- 2 Corinthians 9:7-8, Galatians 6:6 -**

**Grace Bible Fellowship**

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love. truth. grace.

*“We are identified with Jesus Christ in his  
crucifixion, death, burial, resurrection,  
ascension, and heavenly seating”*



**- Teaching -**

**Eric Peterman**

**God's Word is meant to be understood**

**The clarity of God's Word**

**Nehemiah 8:1-8**

**- July 16<sup>h</sup>, 2023 -**

## God's Word is meant to be understood

### **The clarity of God's Word**

#### **Nehemiah 8:1-8**

*Is the Bible understandable and its meaning plain and clear? Or is it obscure, requiring mother church and a priestly caste to safely unravel its mysteries? This was the line in the sand drawn by men like John Wycliffe, William Tyndale, Martin Luther, and Miles Coverdale. They went to great lengths, some even to prison and death, to translate the Scriptures into the common vernacular. The Protestant Reformation which followed, radically reshaped the Christian world and history, was grounded in an amazingly simple truth: That common people could and should read, understand, and heed God's Word. That God communicates to His people in understandable, readable human language. **The Reformers believed that the Bible proclaimed itself to be inherently clear and that God is able to communicate His message to all men, even the unlettered. A main tenet of the Reformation is that Scripture is clear enough for the simplest person to live by. Out of this ideal we get the term, *Sola Scriptura*.***

You'll notice that, like most Protestant Evangelical churches, GBF has Bibles in every pew. We expect everyone to read along, or listen along, and understand the Bible as we read and study it's words. When you think about it, this fact underlies a basic assumption among us: **We assume that the Bible is readable and understandable, or clear, don't we?**

**The word *perspicuity* means "clarity."** To say that something is perspicacious is to say that it is clear. **The doctrine of the perspicuity (clarity) of Scripture is one of the basic tenets of Protestant evangelicalism** regarding the Bible, along with the doctrines of the inspiration, inerrancy, and sufficiency of Scripture. **In short, the doctrine of clarity, or perspicuity, means that the central message of the Bible is clear and understandable and that the Bible itself can be properly interpreted in a normal, literal sense.**

Here's how I understand the doctrine of the clarity of the Bible (*with a nod of thanks to Wayne Grudem*):

**Scripture affirms that it is able to be understood**

- but (1) not all at once**
- and (2) not without effort**
- and (3) not without ordinary means**
- and (4) not without the reader's willingness to obey it**
- and (5) not without the help of the Holy Spirit**
- and (6) not without human misunderstanding**
- and (7) never completely.**

**Scripture affirms that it is able to be understood**

**OT:** Deuteronomy 6:6-7, Deuteronomy 30:11-14, Psalm 19:7, Psalm 119:30 & 105, and of the OT, 2 Peter 1:19

**NT:** Jesus treated the Bible as if it were readable and its meaning plain and obvious. Do we ever hear Jesus saying anything like this: *"I sympathize with your frustration — the Scriptures relevant to this topic contain unusually complex hermeneutical difficulties."*

No, Jesus instead says this:

"Have you not read what David did ..." (Matt. 12:3), or

"have you not read in the Law" (Matt. 12:5), or

"have you not read" (Matt. 19:4), or

"Have you never read in the scriptures . . ." (Matt. 21:42),

"have you not read what was said to you by God" (Matt. 22:31),

or, "Go and learn what this means, 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice'" (Matt. 9:13), or,

"Are you the teacher of Israel and yet you do not understand these things?" (John 3:10),

or even, "You are wrong, because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God" (Matt. 22:29)

Similarly, most of the NT epistles are not written to leaders/pastors, but to the entire congregation:

"To the church of God which is at Corinth" (1 Cor. 1:2),

"To the churches of Galatia" (Gal. 1:2),

"To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, with the bishops [elders] and deacons" (Phil. 1:1).

The exhortations to *read Scripture publicly* also affirm an expectation that ordinary believers in ordinary congregations could understand the Scriptures: "Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching" - 1 Timothy 4:13

#### **(1) But not all at once**

This first qualifying statement reminds us that coming to understand the Bible, like any rich and diverse topic, does not happen all at once. It is a process: It takes *time*, and it takes *thinking/conscious meditation*.