

Safford Church of Christ

3888 S Hwy 191, Safford, AZ 85546

21 September 2014

I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go to the house of the LORD!" Psalm 122:2

Topics

A.M. Bible Class:

God has arranged (1 Corinthians 12:18f)

A.M. Lesson:

The whole will of God (Acts 20:17-38)

P.M. Lesson:

The day of the Lord (2 Peter 3)

Wednesday:

The death of Josiah (2 Chronicles 35:20f)

Pulpit Evangelist

Ken Knowlton: 428-3494

Elders

Greg Briggs: 428-8756

John Cunningham: 428-0895

Sunday Bible Class	10:00 A.M.
Sunday Morning Worship	11:00 A.M.
Sunday Evening Worship	6:30 P.M.
Wednesday Evening Class	6:30 P.M.
Thursday Ladies Bible Class	10:00 A.M.

Five most misused Bible verses

Martin Saunders

The Bible is brilliant. Full of incredible wisdom, and more than that, a book that is somehow alive; the clearest way in which humanity can hear from God. Taken as a whole, it communicates the heart, character and nature of God, and gives us an understanding of his relationship with humanity. However, thanks to a helpful 13th century Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bible is divided into the chapters and verses by which we quote and reference it today – and that's where the trouble can start...

While chapters and verses are helpful in navigating the Bible, they can also lead us to pull out short phrases out of context – at which point it's a lot easier for us to make the words mean what we want them to. Sometimes the original meaning translates; at other times it subverts slightly (one of the main reasons that atheists claim the Bible contradicts itself) – and sometimes it completely changes our understanding of biblical wisdom – and even of the character of God. Here are just a few examples of some of the most popular – and some might say most misused – Bible verses, along with a suggestion of what they might actually mean in context.

Do not judge, or you too will be judged (Matthew 7:1)

Out of context: In a pluralistic culture where the greatest 'sin' is intolerance, this looks very much like Jesus telling us not to criticize or find fault with one another's lifestyles.

In context: In v3-5, Jesus tells us first to address the issues in our own lives (the plank in our own eye) before turning our attentions to the issues with others. BUT, v5 does indicate that once we've put our own houses in order, we are then enabled to help other people deal with their issues. So while we should be careful not to behave judgmentally, we are supposed to be involved – in humility and through community – in helping others to work through their issues.

Forgetting what is behind and straining towards what is ahead (Philippians 3:11)

Out of context: If this seems petty, this verse is included because it has become a recent favorite of rapidly-restored Christian leaders who've had a major moral fall. Paul's words also appear to suggest that we shouldn't ever look back on our mistakes – that all we need to worry about is 'pressing on'.

In context: Paul isn't reflecting in this passage on

his mistakes, or on the terrible things he used to do when he was a Christian-hunter – but on his many achievements and claims to righteousness. This verse is about Paul dismantling his own pride, not glossing over his mistakes.

Where two or three gather in my name, there I am with them (Matthew 18:20)

Out of context: This verse seems to suggest that in order to amplify our prayers or our experience of God, we have to form a small gathering. This verse is often used as a rallying call to bring people together for prayer or worship.

In context: This is the final part of a section about dealing with disagreements, and navigating a path of unity within the church. Jesus IS saying that there's something beautiful and holy about resolving disputes together well – but he's not suggesting there's some special amplified prayer power that negates the point of individual devotion.

For I know the plans I have for you... (Jeremiah 29:11)

Out of context: Many people list this verse as a personal favorite, perhaps because it appears to offer a guarantee that in the end, life will be OK, and that the general direction we're all heading in is one of prosperity. The problem with that is when our faith is based on such an idea, and something really bad happens to us, we end up asking – 'How could God do this? How could he break his promise like that?'

In context: This word is given not to an individual, but to a people – the exiles in Babylon. God is promising that he has not given up on his people Israel, and that even though things look hopeless, they still have a future. The context of v1-3, which explain that this is a letter to those exiles, makes this abundantly clear – but when we pull the verse out on its own, it becomes a promise of personal earthly prosperity that God simply doesn't make. The principle of God being for us and giving us a bright future absolutely IS true – but this verse isn't our best source for that news, and it also seems to suggest we'll walk through life unscathed, which sadly isn't the experience of many faithful Christians.

The Truth will set you free (John 8:32)

Out of context: One of the many popular cultural idioms that started as Bible verses, this appears to be an affirmation that telling the truth – as opposed to living a life built on lies – is a route to personal 'freedom'. On one level of course, this is absolutely correct; the only problem is that this reading strips the verse of its true, extraordinary meaning...

In context: Jesus is speaking to Jews who had believed his message, but to whom his message of

liberation is complicated – with their 'old covenant' in place, they're not sure why they need a new one. So Jesus explains that they are 'slaves to sin', and that he has come to set them free from that slavery. As part of this, he refers to himself as 'The Truth' (as in John 14:6). The key is in the previous verse – following the truth means holding to Jesus' teaching. So this verse is actually about how Jesus has the power to open up the way between man and God, and how the route to that is in following him.

The lesson in all these cases is simple – if you're struck by a verse, make sure you read it in the context of the chapter, or even better, the whole book. God has so much to say to us today through his word, but if we pick and choose single phrases to make them mean what we want, we reduce his holy, living word to a self-help manual.

Christianitytoday.com, with a few spelling adjustments from British to American.

I wish to add to the above list a few passages (without comment) that are frequently misused and quoted out of context. -ns

But we are all as an unclean *thing*, and all our righteousnesses *are* as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away (Isaiah 64:6, KJV).

Let all things be done decently and in order (1 Corinthians 14:40).

As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all *men*, especially unto them who are of the household of faith (Galatians 6:10).

News

Joy Gibson is having surgery on September 30. Barbara Eisenberg is in home hospice care.

Please remember in prayer Barbara, her husband Bill and family Robin, Tamara and Carri Richards.

Bill and Barbara Eisenberg have a son, Andrew, who is being treated for glaucoma.

Brian and Billie Martin are traveling.

John and Sharon Cunningham are traveling.

Prayer List:

Bill and Barbara Eisenberg, H.L. Boling, Mike and Sandy Cavasos, Nic and Ani Self.

