

Context is critical because God's Word is inherently contextual. The importance of contexts in preaching is premised on the incarnation, God becoming human, God becoming flesh, God choosing to enter into a particular context, in time, in place, in person. The thing is, God has always been about contexts, inserting God's self into the lives of people so as to establish and maintain a relationship that God so desperately wants. Contexts are multi-faceted—how the text lands in its ancient context, in the ways in which it has been contextualized over the centuries of interpretation, and how it helps us make sense of how we negotiate our multiple contexts today. At the same time, contexts are extraordinarily unique. A preacher's task is to realize the contextual history of the text while at the same time reading the particularity of the context into which it will be preached with all of its specificity. The recognition of a text's numerous contexts in the end means little if it does not help to locate the text in the real lives of particular congregations, and then become reincarnated. Contextualization is an act of reincarnating the Word.

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