

# The Complexity of the Bible: A Colorful Journey of Preaching

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The 18th-century British author, art historian, and politician Horace Walpole stated, "To the rational thinker, life is a comedy; to the sensitive soul, it is a tragedy." The Bible honestly reveals this duality of life, offering us profound insights and meanings that go beyond the surface.

The Bible unfolds as a grand comedy, where everything ultimately works out in the end. However, it is also a comedy intertwined with tragedy, as many despairing events unfold before reaching the conclusion. Throughout this journey, various ambiguities arise, continuously sparking curiosity in the reader.

A preacher who emphasizes only the comedic aspects of the Bible tends to overlook the real suffering experienced by the audience. While people often perceive pain as a shared experience, it is, in fact, felt differently depending on each individual's circumstances and emotions. The pain one person endures is rooted in their unique context, and even in similar situations, others may experience entirely different feelings. Thus, suffering remains a deeply personal and distinctive experience.

However, many overlook this diversity and adopt an approach that states, "The real problem can only be solved by Jesus." When someone is grappling with deep questions about the meaning of life or existence, rather than truly listening and empathizing with their story, they may simply brush it aside with the assertion that "believing in Jesus will solve everything." While this claim may be theoretically sound, it often reveals a lack of understanding of the emotional aspects and the feelings of the other person. Ultimately, when arguments are presented without consideration for emotions, achieving genuine empathy becomes challenging.

A preacher with profound insights into the suffering depicted in the Bible is likely to adopt either a therapeutic or prophetic approach, depending on their personality and spiritual gifts. Those who have a deep understanding of the tragic elements can tailor their sermons to help others or deliver warnings about the future based on their unique talents. Such preachers genuinely grasp the pain of their audience and offer practical solutions to address their issues, or they may strongly critique the sins that cause suffering. In other

words, they deeply empathize with people's struggles and strive to propose concrete solutions or correct misguided behaviors.

Preachers who are particularly sensitive to the ambiguities within the Bible often conduct sermons that encourage the audience to seek meaning and purpose, sparking their curiosity. They resonate deeply with the complex aspects of scripture and guide listeners to pose new questions as they engage with the sermon. These sermons are structured to prompt reflections like, "What does this mean?", "Why is it so confusing?", or "What should I do next?" In essence, the sermons do more than just convey information; they provide thought-provoking material and evoke feelings of confusion that stimulate deeper exploration.

Just as the Bible encompasses a comedy that includes suffering, filled with ambiguity, intertwining sad stories with hopeful messages and complex situations, sermons too should reflect this diversity. They can convey hope, discuss recovery, or tackle sorrowful and intricate issues based on their content. So, how can we effectively embody this variety in our preaching?