

# Workshop:

## Reading the Bible in Public

**EXPLORING**  
*your call*

1

### David Suchet on Reading the Bible in Public

**Preparation is everything.** Prepare it. Get different translations. Look at what you're reading. And don't just look at the section that you're reading, but look at the rest of the book and its overall message. Who was it written by? Who was it written for? When was it written? What was the purpose of the writing? Keep what you're reading in context of the whole of the book.

**Look at the text.** Look for alliteration (multiple words beginning with the same letter) and onomatopoeia (words which sound like what they mean, eg. murmur). What's the emotional content of the piece? Is it sad? Is it happy? Is it poetry? Is it history? Is it prophecy? Is it the end of days? Is it teaching? Is it Jesus' teaching? Each will have a tone, and it's that sort of thing that we're looking for.

**Beginnings and endings:** It's very important when you start to read that you are beginning very strongly, because you want to grab the listener's attention. Stand there with confidence. You have the gift of reading. You've prepared it all. You're doing it because you know it's God's word. It's not yours.

This is God speaking to whoever you're talking to. And it's very important. So you make contact, you pause, and you start. And the same with the ending, you end. You don't rush away and say, "oh, thank goodness." You end because they have just heard a chunk of God speaking. Not you. They have heard God's words. Leave it with them. Gently leave. Reverentially, and leave the word in their laps, and in their hearts.

**What does the Bible mean to you?** For me, between the leaves of that book is God's revelation of himself and God's revelation of himself through Jesus. And it's the revelation and the encounter through Jesus that you meet God. "If you have seen the Father, you have seen me. I am in the Father. The Father is in me." Jesus claims this all the time. We believe that Jesus is the son of God, that he is divine: it's a trinity. And God breathed breath, the Greek word *pneuma*. You cannot speak without breathing. You have to let breath out. So the Spirit and the Word is the same thing. God breathed into human beings and created them. Whether you believe that's allegory, it doesn't really matter.

The fact is that whoever wrote that believed that the Spirit and the Word are the same thing, and he breathed his spirit into us. When God speaks, it is Word and Spirit at the same time. When Jesus speaks, it is God, Word, and Spirit. It is the Trinity.

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