

Should I Take that Literally? – Sermon 20 September

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

1. Think of some expressions in English that are not literally true but we still understand, such as describing an activity as ‘a piece of cake’ or ‘It is raining cats and dogs’.
2. In John 16:25, Jesus said that He used both “figurative” and “plain” language.
 - a. Write down four examples of each type.
 - b. In what ways are the figurative examples, although not literal, still true?
 - c. In what ways are the figurative examples perhaps more powerful than simple literal statements might have been?
3. How comfortable do you feel with the idea that the Bible use language that is not literally true? What are your reasons?
4. Write down what you think each of the following scriptures is saying and how you should understand, or obey, it. Knowing the technical terms is not important, but, if you can, identify the figure of speech (if any) being used.
 - a. John 13:34: A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.
 - b. 1 Peter 5:14: Greet one another with a kiss of love.
 - c. Psalm 91:4: He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart.
 - d. Matthew 5:29-30: If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away... If your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away.
 - e. Matthew 6:11: Give us this day our daily bread.
5. Are there passages of the Bible that you struggle to understand, and suspect might mean something other than the obvious meaning? Write them down and do some research, or talk about them with someone who might be able to add some insight.

If you want to think more about figures of speech in the Bible there are some resources [here](#)