



# What does it mean to be 'biblical'?

with Clive Marsh

# What we're going to do:

- ensure everyone speaks!
- do some serious exploring together
- find out /re-assess what **we** each mean by 'biblical'
- take stock of what this all means for church & world
- offer our understandings/musings/explorations to God
- [...and invite everyone to buy *So What's the Story...?* (!!)]

# By way of introduction...(I)

‘Biblical’ *can* mean:

- tragic/disastrous [or at least ‘on a big scale’]
- the one true, only way, ‘sound’, orthodox [on the assumption the Bible has one single message]

# By way of introduction...(II)

‘Biblical’ *must* mean:

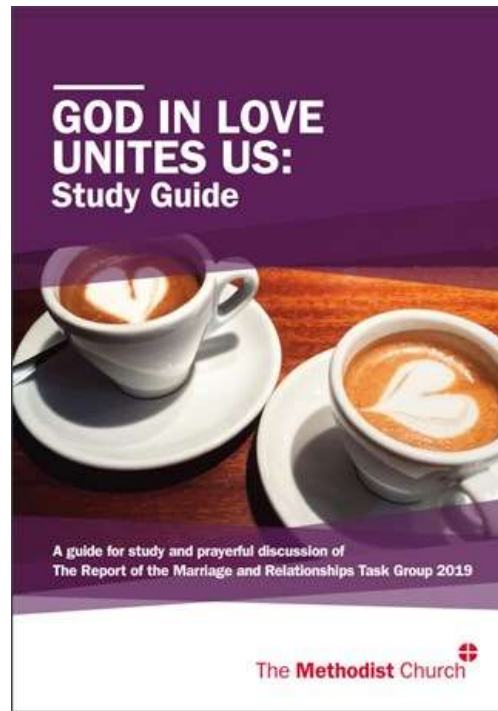
- contained in a particular Bible (e.g. Hebrew, Christian)
- related to the Bible (or Bibles) in some way

# By way of introduction...(III)

‘Biblical’ *might also* mean:

- continuous with some part/parts of a Bible
- trying to act on the basis of a Bible’s ‘basic gist’

# Our (Methodist) context for reading



# A broader context for reading



# An exercise



- Read through the questions
- THEN Read through the passage
- Address the questions together
- Come up with some answers!



# An exercise: the detail



- What is this passage basically about?
- What view/understanding of God is presented here (if any)?
- How do you respond to the view of God presented?
- Is this passage valuable today (here in the UK)?
- If so, how? If not, why not?

# An exercise: the response



**How/why is your passage valuable today?**

Passages used:

Genesis 8.1-22

Leviticus 19.1-18

Judges 11.29-40

Song of Solomon 3.1-11

Matthew 4.1-11

Mark 2.23-28

Romans 1.18-32

Galatians 3.19-29

# An exercise....phase 2



- What thoughts came into your minds when you did the exercise? (e.g. 'It's the Bible, so it has to be valuable...!')
- What things influenced you? ('I've always been taught that...')
- How did your life-experience come into play?
- How did your personal background play a role?
- How did other members of the group affect your responses?

**Make a note, as a group, of all the kinds of things you mention**

# An exercise (phase 2): the response



What kind of stuff came up in your reflections?

# 7 Points to ponder

- Different parts of the Bible (may) have different value
- Different sections ‘speak’ to different people
- We need life-experience to enable us to interpret texts at all
- It’s good to read the Bible with others (‘church’ matters)
- There really are some tough bits in the Bible!
- God and the Bible are not the same thing (don’t worship it!)
- We relate to God *through* the Bible (and in other ways too)

# What *does* it mean to be ‘biblical’?

- tragic/disastrous/on a grand scale
- the one true, only way, ‘sound’, orthodox
- contained in the Bible
- related to the Bible
- continuous with some part/parts of the Bible
- trying to act on the basis of the Bible’s ‘basic gist’
- ...some other definition?

**Make a note (for yourself only) of where you’ve ended up**

# Our offering...

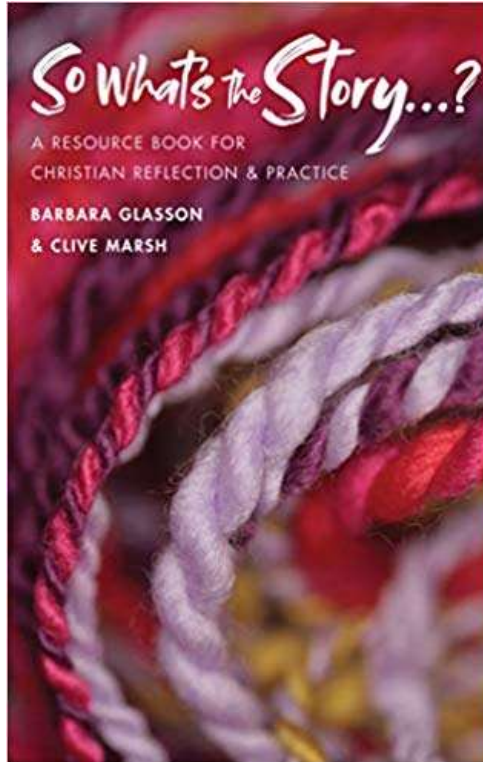
Creative God,  
through whose Word the Bible exists  
take our efforts to use the texts before us  
and our resolve to live for you  
and enable us, with patience, to hear what you say to us  
as we seek to be 'biblical' in our many different ways  
as a Church  
and as your disciples in the world.

In the name of Christ, we pray. AMEN

# And now for the book plug...!

Of making many books  
there is no end,  
and much study  
is a weariness  
of the flesh.

Ecclesiastes 12.12

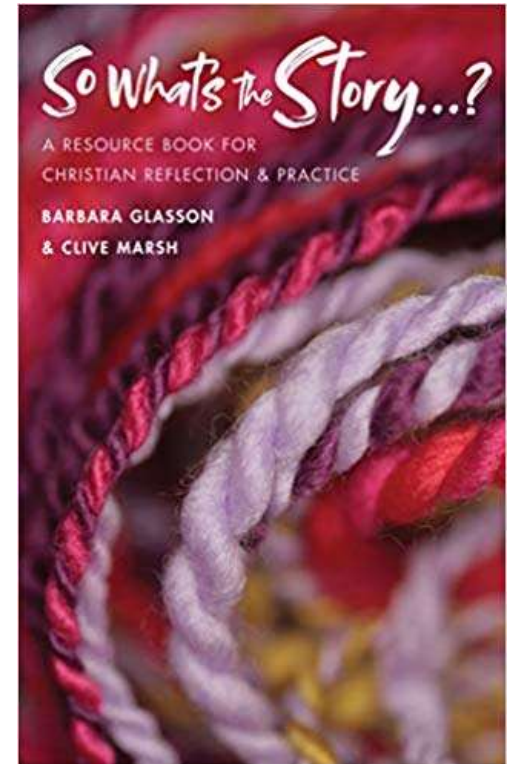


...but it's perhaps worth  
buying just one more!

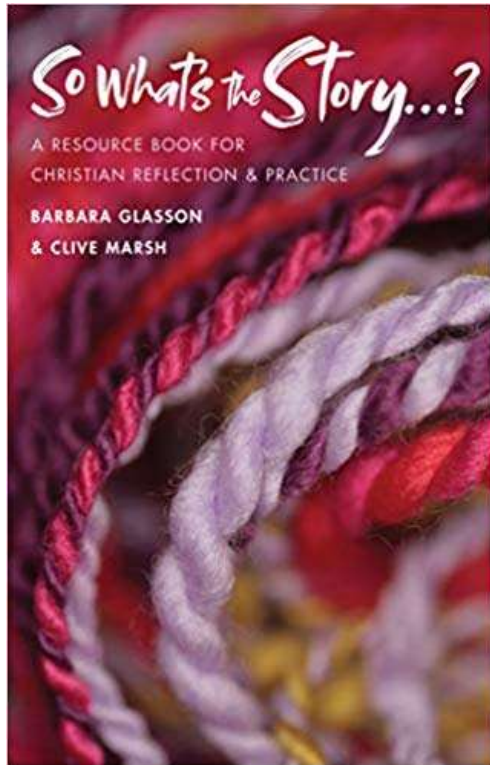


# The first six chapters...

1. Telling Stories: why do it?
2. Shaping Stories: narrating life experience
3. Connecting Stories: making Christianity our own
4. Living Stories: story as testimony
5. Hearing Stories: listening for the untold
6. Jesus Stories: engaging with the Gospels



# ...the final six chapters



7. Sharing Stories: living between faiths
8. Creating Stories: being creative
9. Growing Stories: responding to context
10. Shocking Stories: handling bad stuff
11. Inhabiting Stories: living it out
12. Living the Story: on being committed