Exegesis has to do both with what the author said (the content itself) and why the author said it at any given point (the literary context). Furthermore, exegesis is primarily concerned with intentionality: What did the author intend his original readers to understand? Exegesis is also relevant. It speaks to our circumstances today (e.g. observation, interpretation, application).

The following material is based on the book New Testament Exegesis located at: 225.601F295n 2002. Follow the steps below to do a proper exegesis of your chosen passage and write the results of that study and reflection.

**Step 1: Study the general historical context.**
Look at the entire book in which the text appears. Who is the author? Are there things about that person that contribute to an understanding of the passage? Who are the recipients? What were their circumstances when they first received this writing? Was there a specific historical event or situation which caused the book (and not just the specific text) to be written? What is the book's overall theme or concern?

**Step 2: Determine the boundaries of the text's larger natural setting.**
What passage or unit or section contains the text being studied? That is, if there were no chapter and verse divisions, how much of the surrounding text would belong to your passage?

**Step 3: Reflect on issues of wording in the text on which you are going to write.**
Do any of the old manuscripts differ in wording? What specific words did the author use (as opposed to others the author might have chosen with almost the same meaning) and in what order? Are there words in the passage that do not occur frequently elsewhere in the author's writings?

**Step 4: Try writing the text in your own words.**
As you do so, do you sense that your own theological positions are shaping how you understand the passage? If so, in what ways?

**Step 5: Analyze sentence structures and syntactical relationships.**
Is there meaning that grows out of the specific way the thoughts are constructed?

**Step 6: Reflect on the grammar of the original language.**
Do Greek scholars indicate that some phrases could be read differently if the grammar were constructed a bit differently? Are there any ambiguities in the Greek that make different interpretations possible?

**Step 7: Examine key words as they appear in the original Greek.**
What are the nuances of particular words used?
Step 8: Research the historical-cultural background.
What might not be obvious to today’s readers? How might what was communicated to the original hearers be different than the associations made by today's readers? Do any of these differences significantly alter the meaning?

Step 9: Determine the formal character or genre of the passage.
What kind of saying is the text? Is it an apocalyptic saying? Is it a prophetic utterance? Does it have poetic elements? Does it employ overstatement?

Step 10: Take a look at how the text appears in parallel passages.
How does the passage appear as it is related to the other parallel passages? Is similar wording found? Is the wording in the same context in the other passages?

Step 11: Consider the life setting of the person as subject.
To whom were these words spoken to originally? At what point in their ministry does the writer place this passage? Should any significance be attached to the point of time in which the writer places it?

Step 12: Consider the broader biblical and theological contexts.
What other passages of Scripture helps us understand this text? Does this passage affect the meaning or value of other Scripture passages? If so, which ones? What would be lost or how would the message of the Bible be less complete if this passage did not exist? To what Christian doctrine or doctrines does the passage relate? How major or minor is the passage's contribution?

Step 13: Consult secondary literature (commentaries, book studies, etc).
Investigate what others have said about the passage. Compare, incorporate and adjust.

Step 14: Polish your own re-statement of the text.

Step 15: Write the paper. Be sure to document all quotes (verbatim and paraphrased) and to include a bibliography page of all the sources you consulted.
Take the point (or the several points) of the passage and turn them into a living word for your contemporaries. What does this passage mean or what should it mean to those with whom you rub shoulders day in and day out?