

“The Sufficiency of the Word of God”

The following message presented by John Martinez at Eastside Southern Baptist Church January 6th 2013 and portions were adapted from a message by John MacArthur, Our Sufficiency in Christ taught at Grace Community Church in 2002.

The 1925 Baptist Faith and Message (SBC) / (aka 1925 New Hampshire Confession) was presented on the floor to the Southern Baptist Convention, in session at Memphis, Tennessee May 14th, 1925. Prior to its reading, a portion of the preamble to the 1925 Baptist Faith and Message contains five “**statements of understanding**” shared by the reporting committee by E.Y. Mullins to the floor at the convention:

In acceptance of the Statement of Faith or Confession these statements were points of clarification; not for the benefit of the statement of faith itself as much as what the Convention should consider in receiving the statement of faith.

1. That they constitute a consensus of opinion of some Baptist body, large or small, for the general instruction and guidance of our own people and others concerning those articles of the Christian faith which are most surely conditions of salvation revealed in the New Testament, viz., repentance towards God and faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.
2. That we do not regard them as complete statements of our faith, having any quality of finality or infallibility. As in the past so in the future Baptist should hold themselves free to revise their statements of faith as may seem to them wise and expedient at any time.
3. That any group of Baptists large or small has the inherent right to draw up for themselves, and publish to the world a confession of their faith whenever they may think it advisable to do so.
4. That the sole authority for faith and practice among Baptists is the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. Confessions are only guides in interpretation, having no authority over the conscience.

5. That they are statements of religious convictions, drawn from the Scriptures, and are not to be used to hamper freedom of thought or investigation in other realms of life.

The Scriptures (1925 Baptist Faith and Message)

“We believe that the Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired, and is a perfect treasure of heavenly instruction; that it has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter; that it reveals the principles by which God will judge us; and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds and religious opinion should be tried.”

Luke 16:29-31 ²⁹ But Abraham *said, ‘They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.’ ³⁰ But he said, ‘No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent!’ ³¹ But he said to him, ‘If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead.’”

2 Tim. 3:15-17 ¹⁵ and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶ All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; ¹⁷ so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

Eph. 2:20; ²⁰ having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner *stone*...

Heb. 1:1; ¹ God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways.

2 Peter 1:19-21 ¹⁹ So we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts. ²⁰ But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation, ²¹ for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

John 16:13-15; ¹³ But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. ¹⁴ He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose *it* to you. ¹⁵ All things that the Father has are Mine; therefore I said that He takes of Mine and will disclose *it* to you.

Matt. 22:29-31; ²⁹ But Jesus answered and said to them, “You are mistaken, not understanding the Scriptures nor the power of God. ³⁰ For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. ³¹ But regarding the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God:

Psalm 19:7-10 (NASB) ⁷ The law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul; The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. ⁸ The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. ⁹ The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; the judgments of the Lord are true; they are righteous altogether. ¹⁰ They are more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb. (NASB)

The passage in Psalm 19: 7-10 is seen by many Biblical scholars the most concise statement on the *Sufficiency of Scripture*. As you know the Psalm was written by inspiration of the Holy Spirit by David, these few verses speak testimony from God Himself about His Word being enough for every situation we could ever encounter.

David makes several declarations that underscore irrefutable nature of Scripture and relate the effects of a life that holds to it. So let's take a look at each of these statements as we explore the passage.

- I.** ⁷ “*The law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul...*” This word “*perfect*” here is translated from the Hebrew –**tamiym**, as being *sound, complete, whole*’ or in our case today, *sufficient*; in other words, nothing further is needed or required. The English may even be rendered as, *comprehensive*. This same picture was verbalized for us by Jesus upon the cross when He uttered the phrase “*...It is finished...*”

Have you noticed that our modern approach to issues of concern such as would require counseling, is to lean more on man's philosophies or verdicts, when all along, scripture is enough.

By definition, the word *sufficient* or even the word *enough*, implies Scripture is comprehensive; being all that is necessary to one's spiritual life. In other words what David is saying all other approaches are insufficient.

Think about this: If I told you I would give you a Diamond or a Cubic Zirconium, which one would you take? A cubic zirconium is a cheap imitation of the real thing.

The phrase, “*...restoring the soul...*” is from the Hebrew **shuw** (shiv) to turn back or ‘repent’. In other words, the Word of God has the power to restore something that has clearly been lost.

- II.** (7b) “*...The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.*”

David's use of the word “*sure*” means that the Lord's testimony is unwavering, immovable, unmistakable, reliable, and worthy to be trusted.

It is a foundation upon which we can build our lives and clearly lean our eternal destiny.

“On Christ the Solid Rock I stand, all other ground is sinking sand.”

God’s **sure** Word makes the **simple** wise (v. 7). The Hebrew word **pethiy** translated “simple” comes from an expression meaning “an open door.” It evokes the image of a naive person who doesn’t know to shut his mind to false or impure teaching. Have you ever heard someone tell you to be “open-minded”? The purpose clearly is so that information or philosophy can easily be poured in.

Guard your minds and your hearts brothers. Undiscerning, ignorant, and gullible are other words that come to mind here. God’s Word makes us wise. Be skilled in the art of godly living: Submit to Scripture and know how to apply it to your circumstances.

The phrase is saying that the Word of God therefore takes a *simple mind* with no discernment and makes it skilled in the issues of life.

III. ⁸ “The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.”

In verse 8, David adds another statement about Scripture’s sufficiency: **“The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart.”** Rather than simply clarifying right vs. wrong, the word translated “**right**” **yashar** indicates ‘upright’ or a path that is pleasing and correct. Listen, the truth of Scripture arrange the proper path through our tough lives. You talk about giving you confidence; The first time I placed a set of NVG’s or Night Vision Goggles on everything was clear and discernible. We get stressed out because we lack direction and purpose, and most of us are looking for answers from the wrong sources. God’s Word not only provides the light to our pathway (psalm 119: 105) but also sets the course before us. Because of this, God’s Word **rejoices the heart**.

the real and only solution for concerns like depression, anxiety, fear, or doubt: isn’t found in self-esteem and self-fulfillment. The key is in learning to obey God’s counsel and warnings found in His Word. This **‘rejoices the heart’** like no other thing.

IV. ⁹ “The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever;

In verse 9 David uses the word “**fear**” as a synonym for God’s Word: **“The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever.”** This “fear” speaks of the respect that compels believers to worship Him.

Scripture, in this sense, is the divine manual on how to worship the Lord. The Hebrew word “clean” **tahowr**, speaks of the lack of impurity, filthiness, defilement, or imperfection. Do you

recognize that phrase? **It is without error for its matter.** The truth it conveys is therefore absolutely uncorrupted.

Because of this, The Word of God endures forever. That also means that any changes or modifications would introduce imperfection and ultimately error.

I like this quote from John MacArthur: ***“Scripture is eternally and unalterably perfect. It needs no updating, editing, or refining, for it is God’s revelation for every generation. The Bible was written by the omniscient Spirit of God, who is infinitely more sophisticated than anyone who dares stand in judgment on Scripture’s relevancy for our society, and infinitely wiser than all the best philosophers, analysts, and psychologists who pass like a childhood parade into irrelevancy. Scripture has always been and will always be sufficient.”***

V. *9b the judgments of the Lord are true; they are righteous altogether.”*

Check out the last half of verse 9. I think it shows a trait of God’s Word that makes a straight forward statement: ***“...the judgments of the Lord are true; they are righteous altogether.”*** The word “judgments” **mishpat**, refers to *ordinances* or something like a *divine verdicts* coming down from God acting as the Supreme Judge of the Universe, much like the act of deciding a case, or executing a sentence.

Listen now, the Bible is God’s standard for judging you and me and our destiny. It is where we get what we need to know about Heaven and Hell. Check this out, *because* Scripture is **true**, it is ***“righteous altogether”*** That simple phrase is really telling us that the truth of scripture produces a comprehensive righteousness in those who accept it.

Hear me now: there is no need for more revelations, visions, and new prophetic discoveries. God’s Word is Sufficient and it is enough. Christians don’t need to augment their study of God’s Word with outside sources, we need only to study and obey it as is through the enabling of the Spirit of God who helps us to interpret it as He intended. Scripture is sufficient.

The capstone on this Psalm is verse 10. It speaks for itself, so I will just read it and then we’ll pray.

¹⁰ They are more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb.