

From God to Us Part 2

Before we return to our studies in the Gospel of Mark, I would like to spend one more week focusing our attention on the subject of God's Word.

Last week Ron communicated the source and character of God's Word by using the 3 "I's" of Biblical Authority.

1. Inspiration - (God himself is the Source of Holy Scripture) 2 Timothy 3:16, "**All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction and for training in righteousness.**"
2. Inerrancy and Infallibility - (these two words describe the character of God's Word) When we say that the Bible is "Inerrant" we mean that it contains NO mistakes or errors. Since it comes from God who is holy and perfect it stands to reason that everything he communicates is holy and perfect as well.
 - An even stronger way to describe the "Inerrancy" of God's Word is to say that it is "Infallible." NOT only does the Bible contain no errors it is incapable of error.

This week I would like to focus on another attribute, a different characteristic of God's Word and that would be "Sufficiency."

- Most of us are familiar with the word, Sufficient or Sufficiency.

Webster 1828: SUFFICIENCY, n. The state of being adequate to the end proposed.

- Sufficiency speaks of Competence; adequate substance or adequate means

There are times when we pray for "Sufficiency" as we work out our monthly budget.

- Is our income sufficient or adequate to pay all of this month's bills? (water / Taxes)
- When we speak of the sufficiency of Scripture we say that God's revealed Word, the 66 books of the Bible contain ALL of the revelation that is necessary for salvation, all of the wisdom and understanding that we need for LIFE.

Here are a few questions that may help you evaluate your understanding of the sufficiency of the Scriptures:

1. Do you look for ways to blend the Bible's teaching on the origin of human life with the teachings of modern science?
 - Laboring to inter-mingle the theory of evolution with the Genesis narrative?
2. Do you think the Bible's teachings on marriage, divorce, sexuality are outdated and need to be reformed in order to relate to today's culture?
3. Is the Bible sufficient to address your own emotional needs and concerns?
 - Do the Scriptures help to quiet your fears? Lift you out of depression? Comfort your anxious mind? Soothe your angry soul?
4. Does the Bible help you to make wise decisions in your life? Does reading it help you become a better Husband, better Wife, more honest and faithful employee? Does it provide the wisdom you desperately need to raise godly children?

Peter expresses the sufficiency of God AND his Word in his Second Epistle:

2 Peter 1:3 **His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence,**

- ALL THINGS (all sufficiency, without exception) has been given to us, in order that we may live a godly life.
- And this gracious endowment comes “**through the knowledge of Him who called us.**” This is the knowledge of Jesus Christ that God has provided in his sufficient Word.

Our attitudes and habits can keep us from receiving all that God has provided in his Word. More than a few people have told me how they struggle with consistent Bible reading, they know they should be reading more but they find it boring.

- Some spend all their leisure time reading blogs, tweets and Facebook posts on the Internet but they rarely pick up their Bible.
- Others are intrigued by new, novel spiritual ideas and experiences but they lack the discernment that comes from a steady diet of solid Biblical food.
- Multitudes of Christians were infatuated with the book “Heaven is for Real,” *the story of a little boy who supposedly went to heaven.* (8 Million Copies Sold)
- As it turns out there were some significant flaws in that story. Frankly the Bible’s description of Heaven is sufficient to provide us with a living hope.
- The Apostle John went there and God told him to write down what he heard and saw. All of this was for our benefit and his words are contained in the Bible.

There are many scriptures that could help us understand the sufficiency of God’s Word I believe that one of the best is Psalm 19.

Psalm 19 was written by King David and like many of you He is one of my favorite Bible personalities. The strength, tenacity and endurance of his faith in the face of extreme difficulties has been a great example to the people of God for generations.

- David knew what it was to have marital troubles, Rebellious children,
- He was a valiant warrior battling against both external and internal enemies.
- He lived the extremes of great sorrow and ecstatic jubilation.
- HE HAD A LOVE FOR GOD’S WORD that is vividly expressed in the longest chapter in the Bible. (Psalm 119)

Here is how we are going to break up our study this morning: In verses 7 - 9 there are SIX lines of thought describing the sufficiency of scripture. Each line contains three elements:

- A unique TITLE for the scripture,
- A different CHARACTERISTIC describing the scripture.
- A distinctive BENEFIT that the scripture provides.
- Take note, in every line the SOURCE of the Scripture is “the Lord.” David uses the covenant name of God, “YHWH” for the source.

Psalm 19: 7A **The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul;**

- Title - “The Law of the Lord” The word Law is TORAH. (you may be familiar with the word) It means divine teaching (archery) teaching that hits the mark. David is picturing God as man’s instructor and the Scripture as His perfect syllabus.

Characteristic of divine instruction is expressed in the word: "Perfect" David says the Bible is whole, comprehensive and SUFFICIENT.

- God's perfect Word clearly communicates everything that is necessary for salvation, it tells us where we came from, where we are going and clearly lays out God's plan for us to get us there.
- James speaks of God's Word as the "perfect Law."

James 1:25 **But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.**

3rd Element: Benefit: David says the benefit of this "Perfect law" is: it revives the soul.

- This speaks of Refreshing, Converting or Transforming the soul.

The Scripture is sufficient, fully capable of transforming the human soul. HOW?

1. By providing salvation: The Word of God is the agency of new birth.

1 Peter 1: 23 **you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God;** (Romans 1: the Gospel is the power of God for salvation)

- But the word doesn't stop transforming at our new birth it continues its work:

2. Transforming, equipping and correcting those who are saved.

2 Timothy 3:16 **All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.**

- The Word of God then has the power of total transformation. It is so comprehensive that it can mold a soul, from a sinner into a trophy of God's GRACE.
- From the moment of our new birth all the way to our ultimate glorification the Word of God is sufficient for our transformation.

NEXT: Psalm 19:7B, **the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple;**

- Title: "*The testimony of the Lord*" The body of scripture is God giving testimony to who He is and what He requires. The Bible is God's divine witness.

Characteristic: *The testimony of the Lord is sure.* This is in contrast to the unsure, insecure, wavering, changing, unreliable, untrustworthy notions of men.

- The Word of the living God is sure = unwavering, immovable, unmistakable, worthy to be trusted and reliable.
- The Apostle Peter tells us that the Word of God is MORE SURE than any spiritual experience we may have. Remember the Mt of Transfiguration?
- (expound)

2 Peter 1:19 **And we have something more sure, the prophetic word, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts,**

- Peter said that the Word of God, the prophetic scriptures provide a more sure, trustworthy and reliable witness of the glory of God than his experience.

- When you are asked to give an account for the hope that you have in Christ do you point people to your experience or do you point them to God's Word as a more sure testimony of God's unchanging truth.

Benefit: **"Making wise the simple"** The Word of God endues a believer with wisdom.

John Mac: "The root of the Hebrew word for "simple" is the idea of an open door. A simple person is a person who's undiscerning. They don't know when to shut the door. They don't know what to close out. Everything comes in. They're not discerning. They're unlearned, inexperienced, ignorant, and naïve"

- BUT the Word of God is SUFFICIENT to provide simple, undiscerning people with divine wisdom.

This is a marvelous promise. The Word of God can take a naive, inexperienced, ignorant person and bring them to the place where they can live a wise and godly life.

- HOW IMPORTANT then, is the Word of God in the training of our children??? If we want them to discern truth from a lie, if we want them to have wisdom and make right choices we need to teach them the Word of God.
- AS my mind is continually renewed by the Word of God I am enabled by God to make right choices about right things at the right moments in my life.

Psalm 119: 98 **Your commandment makes me wiser than my enemies, for it is ever with me.**
 99 **I have more understanding than all my teachers, for your testimonies are my meditation.**
 100 **I understand more than the aged, for I keep your precepts.**

Psalm 19: 8a **the precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart;**

Title - "Precepts of the Lord" His commandments, statutes, that which He mandates.

- Many people think of God's commands, his precepts in a restrictive way. God is the cosmic kill-joy who takes all of the fun out of living. That is NOT the testimony of scripture: David rejoices in them.

Psalm 119:12 **Blessed are you, O LORD; teach me your statutes!** 13 **With my lips I declare all the rules of your mouth.** 14 **In the way of your testimonies I delight as much as in all riches.**

- In the statutes, the Rules, the commands of the Lord, David takes great delight, as much as in ALL riches. (Think about that)
- Consider the joy of someone who hits the lottery. (Mega millions) Even a large sum of money will pass away BUT the Word of God. the joy of our salvation are eternal.
- Christians should be some of the most joyful people on the earth!
- How valuable are the Words of life to you? How precious is your salvation?

Characteristic: **are right, (the precepts of the LORD are right,)**

RIGHT = Straight, even, level, righteous

- Scripture reveals the true and level path of life. It guides us in the proper way to true understanding.
- A life of reading and meditating on the Word of God is a life that stays on track, a life that follows the narrow path that leads to glory.

- The “Rightness” of the Scripture reflects the righteousness of God.

Psalm 119: 137 **Righteous are you, O LORD, and right are your rules.** 138 **You have appointed your testimonies in righteousness and in all faithfulness.**

- Our Creator has not left us without a chart, without a compass for this life. We’re not left without principles for living. We’re not left to wander around in a fog of human opinion. We have a true word to follow. And the result of following that path is great JOY.
- That brings us to the Benefit:

Benefit: Psalm 19: 8 **the precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart;**

- People run from experience to experience in search of real joy. They hunt for it in relationship with other sinful people and are surprised when they don’t find it.
- But the Word of the Lord is SUFFICIENT to provide true and lasting joy.

Psalm 119:111 **Your testimonies are my heritage forever, for they are the joy of my heart.**

- We often blame our lack of joy on the difficult circumstances BUT I look at a man like David who freely expresses his hardships and yet keeps coming back to a place of JOY.
- Consider Jeremiah who is nicknamed, “The Weeping Prophet,” he was ostracized by his peers, exiled for the warnings that he communicated from God.
- Despite his circumstances he had a steady source of lasting JOY:

Jeremiah 15: 16 **Your words were found, and I ate them, and your words became to me a joy and the delight of my heart,**

LAST: Psalm 19:8B, **the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes.**

TITLE: Commandment - Decree or directive of the Lord

- When we speak of God’s Commandments the emphasis is on authority, on the non-optional character of Scripture.
- God didn’t give Moses 10 Suggestions, he gave him 10 Commandments. His words were binding and authoritative.
- In the same way: When the Gospel calls us to repent and believe on the Lord Jesus in order to receive eternal life it is clearly expressing God’s decree.
- This is what God requires, and for those who respond, there is blessing. For those who do not, there is judgment.

Characteristic: **The commandment of the Lord “Is Pure”**

- That is to say God’s command is lucid or clear. It’s not mystifying. It’s not confusing or puzzling. There may be some obscure elements in the Scripture, but God used common language, clear images that are easy to understand.
 - **You shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor** (This is not rocket science)
- Our problem is NOT that God is UNCLEAR, our problem is this: Because we are sinners we actively suppress or push away the clear commands of God.
- Rejecting the commands of God WE embrace the empty philosophies of man.

John Mac: “And so we would ask the question: is the Bible so insufficient that we have to depend on worldly wisdom? Do we have to go to men to ask them to explain what’s happening? Do we need further revelation? Do we need psychoanalysis for spiritual problems from sources that long have rejected Scripture as even a source of truth? Is the Bible so incomplete that we have to turn to science to explain origin, philosophy to explain life, and sociology to explain sin? No, all the light of life is in the Word of God.” (END QUOTE)

Benefit: **the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes.**

- The Word of God is all the revelation we need. It is clear. It is easy to understand. It leaves no doubt but serves to enlighten the path of life. **Proverbs 6:23** says “**The commandment is a lamp and teaching is light.**”

Some of the Authors of the Bible actually testify to its sufficiency warning us not ADD to it: You can find these warnings in: Deut 4:2, 12:32, Prov 30:5-6, (the most well known is) Revelation 22:18-19, 18 **I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, 19 and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.**

- Since the Bible is God’s all sufficient Word providing all we need for life and godliness:
- We shouldn’t seek after extra-Biblical revelation whether it comes from a book, a blog, or even a prophet.
 - Book of Mormon, The Watchtower, or the many false prophets that assign Divine authority to their personal visions and ramblings.

I believe that the word of God alone provides believers with spiritual life, understanding and blessing. Let’s close by contemplating the blessed life described in the first Psalm:

Psalm 1:1 **Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; 2 but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. 3 He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers.**

- The FRUIT of God’s Word is delightful and those who delight in it will eat its fruit.
- When it becomes your meditation it imparts LIFE to your soul. Like an oak tree planted by a constant supply of water your life will flourish and not wither.
- PRAY: Lord, develop in us a deep appreciation for your Word. Like new-born babies impart to us a sincere desire for the milk of your word that we may grow...