

The Bible, God's Word

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Bible Text: 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21

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Our Scripture reading today is from 2 Timothy chapter three beginning with verse 10.

Now you followed my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, patience, love, perseverance, persecutions, and sufferings, such as happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium and at Lystra; what persecutions I endured, and out of them all the Lord rescued me! Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. But evil men and impostors will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them, 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. All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.¹

Today we are going to look at what I consider to be a crucial question for Christians. Where do we find out authority? You know, the world deals with this constantly. What is the authoritative source of knowledge? How can we know that we know the truth?

Well, I believe—and I trust that you also believe—that the Bible is the Word of God and because the Bible is the Word of God it is the place where we find ultimate truth. But there are so many people in our world today who deny that the Bible is God's Word. And, in fact, there are skeptics who will constantly find reasons for denying the Scriptures as God's Word.

Well, how do we determine whether it is God's Word and how do we determine what, in fact, is true in this book that we call the Bible?

Well, you know, if I wanted to know something about you there are various ways that I could find out about you. Well, I could go ask your neighbors, right? Go ask the neighbors, "Well, what do you think about him? What do you think about her?" Maybe I could learn a little bit.

¹ 2 Timothy 3:10-17

I could get on the internet and look things up and see whether there are things there about you. There are many things that I could do to possibly get some information about you. But I think that if I am a reasonably intelligent person which I trust that I am, the way that I would learn about you would be to ask you about you. Isn't that logical? I would go over to you and I would say, "Now, tell me about yourself."

And you would tell me what a wonderful person you are and, you know, where you were born and all the great accomplishments that you have had in your life and whatever else you wanted to share with me. And I would learn things about you.

Why should we not approach the Bible in the very same way? Why should I not go to the Bible and say, "All right, Bible, tell me about yourself. Tell me who you are, what you are and how I am to understand you." And that is the approach that I take.

I go to the Bible and I try to discover what the Bible has to say about itself.

Now when I do that, first of all, I find that the Bible declares itself to be God's Word. We read and I am just going to quote a few passages from the Scriptures that you may want to look at later.

In Psalm 119 it says, "Forever, O LORD, Your word is settled in heaven."²

In Isaiah chapter 40, "The grass withers, the flower fades, But the word of our God stands forever."³

In Matthew chapter five we read, "For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished."⁴ And we are going to look at this verse a little bit later.

In Acts chapter one we read, "Brethren, the Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit foretold by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus."⁵

In Romans chapter three, "Great in every respect. First of all, that they were entrusted with the oracles of God,"⁶ speaking about the people of Israel.

And then in Galatians chapter three, "The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, 'All the nations will be blessed in you.'"⁷

² Psalm 119:89

³ Isaiah 40:8

⁴ Matthew 5:18

⁵ Acts 1:16

⁶ Romans 3:2

⁷ Galatians 3:8

Over and over again as we go into the Scriptures we find statements that indicate the fact that the Bible itself is faithful and it is the Word of God. Frequently the prophets will say things like, “And the Word of the Lord came unto me saying...” indicating the fact that what they were writing down as Scripture was, in fact, the very Word of God. It was not the Word of man. It was the Word of God.

Two passages in the Scriptures, I think, help us best to really understand the nature of the Bible. And we are going to look at those now in some detail. In 2 Timothy chapter three and verse 16, the passage that we read as our Scripture reading today, we read this.

All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.⁸

First of all we need to understand what it means when it says, “All Scripture.” What he is talking about here is the entire Word of God. He is talking about everything that comprises the 66 books of the Bible.

Now, you may say, “Well, the whole of the Bible had not been written at the time that Paul wrote these words.”

You are absolutely correct. But when he says this he is talking about the totality of Scripture, all that would come together as the Word of God. And so it means the whole Bible.

But it is important for us to understand exactly what he is saying about the Bible. He says, “All Scripture is inspired by God.” That word “inspired” is a very interesting word. You know, sometimes when we use the word “inspired” or “inspiration” we can have different meanings.

Well, for instance, I could say, “That was a very inspiring message that I heard.”

Or, “Wow, what an inspired writer that was who wrote that book that I just read.”

And that is the way we use “inspired” frequently in our language. That is not the word that is used here in 2 Timothy chapter three. The word is a combined word in Greek. It uses...it puts two words together, the word “God” and the word “breathed.” And those words are put together.

The idea behind this word is that all Scripture is God breathed. It is as if when the writer of Scripture sat down to write he was writing what was actually coming out of the mouth of God, that this was the breath of God speaking. That is the idea behind this word.

So what is the inspired author saying to us here? He is saying that all Scripture, everything from the book of Genesis to the book of Revelation and everything in between

⁸ 2 Timothy 3:16-17

is as if it were the breath of God coming out of the mouth of God. It is all God's Word. And we can trust it.

But what else does he say about it? It says that the Word of God is profitable. In other words it is useful. It can help us in many, many ways. It says it is profitable for teaching.

One of the things you will notice. Now, you know, in some churches you will find that the Word of God is not really the emphasis. That is not what is taught. You can go into some churches and find that the teaching of the day will be something that came out of the newspaper or something that came from a book. You will find that in our church the only thing that is going to be taught is what is found in the Bible, the Word of God.

Why? Because it is profitable for teaching. When we teach from the Word of God those who hear profit and gain and are blessed by it. And it can improve their lives and make their lives functional for the glory of God. It is profitable for teaching. It is profitable for reproof and correction.

Did you ever read the Bible and have the experience that you read something and you say, "Yeah, that's talking about me and I need to change something in my life."

That is what is being spoken of here because the Bible will point out the errors that exist in the way we live. The Bible will point out the problems that exist in our lifestyle and teach us so that we can read it and say, "Lord, whatever you say, that is the way I am going to live." It is for reproof and correction. And it is for training in righteousness. Why? "So that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work."⁹

Do you want to be ready to serve the Lord? Do you want to be ready to honor him? The way to do it is to be a student of the Word of God, to know that book, to love it, to make it a vital part of your life.

Well, that's the first passage that I think helps us to understand what the Bible really is. Now there is a second passage we need to look at. It is in 2 Peter chapter one and verse 20. Let me read that to you.

But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.¹⁰

This is a fascinating statement in God's Word. It is telling us that we cannot on our own interpret the Word of God or it could easily mean that no Scripture can be interpreted by itself, that we compare Scripture with Scripture.

But the main point that is given to us here is that no prophecy of Scripture, nothing in the Word of God was made by the act of human will.

⁹ 2 Timothy 3:17

¹⁰ 2 Peter 1:20-21

Now, you may say, “That doesn’t make sense. Wasn’t it human beings that sat down and wrote the Bible? When Paul wrote his letters, didn’t he actually write them or dictate them? Weren’t they his words? When Isaiah wrote his prophecy weren’t they the words of Isaiah? And when we look at the Bible we find that the different writers had different writing styles, different vocabulary. Obviously, this came from them. This was their writing.”

But God says it was not really done by the human will, but instead men were moved by the Holy Spirit. The Word “moved” here in the original language has the idea of being carried along. It is what I am doing with this book. You see, I lift it up and I move it from one place to another. The book has no power. Am I right? The book isn’t doing anything. I am doing it to the book. I am taking it from this place over on this side to this place over here. The book does not control me. I control the book. And so when it says this was by holy men of God who were moved by the Holy Spirit it means that when Paul sat down to write the Word of God the Holy Spirit of God moved him along step by step by step. He was writing a book using his own vocabulary, using the language that he knew and understood. But every single word that he wrote was exactly the word that God wanted him to write. For the Spirit of God was moving him along as he wrote the passage that we might read in the Word of God.

And so every single word of Scripture, whether it is written by Paul or Luke or Mark or Matthew or Isaiah or Jeremiah or Moses, it doesn’t make any difference. Every single word is the exact Word that God wants us to read. Every single Word is the authoritative Word of God written by men, yes. But men who were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

Now if we want to get some evidence and some authority, I think our highest authority, the one that we could look to would be the Lord Jesus Christ himself. And there was a passage that I read earlier that I want to look at with you in a little more detail to get an idea of what Jesus had to say about the Bible.

Mathew chapter five and verse 18, a very important passage. It says, “For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished.”¹¹ Or, as you may have it in your translation, “not a jot or a tittle.”

Let me explain what they are, what the Lord is talking about here. He is saying that until earth and heaven pass away, not the smallest letter... Now if you look at the Hebrew text most of the letters are a certain height. But there is one letter that is very, very tiny. It looks like a tiny apostrophe above. It is the letter *yodh* and Jesus points to that letter. He says, “Not even the tiniest letter, not even the smallest letter can pass from the law.”

¹¹ Matthew 5:18

But do you know he goes beyond that? He says, “Or a stroke.”¹² Now the word here “stroke” or “tittle” as you may have it in your translation refers to a tiny little extension on certain letters that distinguish one letter from another.

If I could draw it for you there is a letter that is shaped like a curve. It looks a little bit like a backwards “C.” And that letter is pronounced “k” similar to K. If you add a tiny little extension to the bottom right part of it, I mean, the tiniest little line, it changes the letter entirely. Instead of being a “k” K it becomes a “b” B or a C. Do you see what I am saying? Jesus is saying that not only the smallest letter cannot pass from the law, but even the tiniest part of a letter.

We talk about what we call verbal inspiration. And that means that every single word in the Bible is the Word of God and inspired by God. Jesus goes beyond that. He not only says that every letter is inspired by God, but even the little tiny part of a letter is inspired by God, that which would distinguish one letter from another.

In other words, what he is saying is, “I trust the Bible 100% I trust the Bible.”

We, as followers of the Lord Jesus Christ need to have the same attitude. We need to be people who trust the Word of God. It is important for us to understand that all Scripture is God breathed, that all Scripture is written by men who are born along or carried along by the Holy Spirit and not one letter or even a part of a letter can pass from the law until everything is fulfilled.

Well, if that is true then we need to ask the question: What, in fact, does the Bible do in our lives? And why is it important for us?

Well, first of all, we are told that the Bible is not something that is passive, that just sits there. But when we read it it has an active effect on our lives.

Now, remember, this is the inspired Word of God. This is God’s holy message sent down from heaven.

But listen to what it say in Hebrews chapter four and verse 12. “For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.”¹³

The Word of God is living and active. In other words, it can do things. It can make changes in one’s life. It tells us here that it is sharper than a two edged sword. Imagine the sharpest sword that you could have, one that you could take and swing it and slice something to shreds. God says, “That is what the Bible is like.” It has the power to make an impact and make a difference in a person’s life. It is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Hebrews 4:12

In other words, as we read the Scripture it can affect us. We read the Word of God and it tells us how we are supposed to live. It also gives us good information about how we are not supposed to live. And we read it carefully. And we begin to see things in our lives that need to be changed and that two edged sword begins to come.

No, it doesn't cut us up physically, but maybe it chops away some things that should not be there.

The way the Lord Jesus Christ said that if your right arm offend you, cut it off.¹⁴ He doesn't mean literally take a knife and cut off your arm. What he is saying here is that if there are things in your lives that are offensive to God, if there are things in your lives that are not according to the teaching of the Word of God, cut them off. If your right eye offend you, pluck it out.¹⁵ He is not telling you to actually grab your eyeball and pull it out.

What is he saying? He is saying, "If there are things that are offensive to God, things that don't honor him, get rid of them. Throw them away."

And how do we know what things are honorable, what things are important to make changes in our lives? The Word of God tells us like a two edged sword. It slices away the things that need not to be there.

The Word of God also in a very effective way actually changes us. Listen to what James says in James chapter one beginning in verse 21.

Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls. But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does.¹⁶

This is an interesting picture here. You gentlemen, remember this morning you woke up. You went in to your bathroom and you looked at the mirror, right? And you said, "I need a shave." Many of you said that, right? And so you got out your razor and you shaved yourself.

¹⁴ See Matthew 18:8

¹⁵ See Matthew 18:9

¹⁶ James 1:21-25

You ladies, you walked into the bathroom and you looked in the mirror and you said, “Boy, my hair needs combing.” And you walked out and you got whatever it was you needed and you combed your hair.

Now, the picture here is one of a person who looks in the mirror, notices all the imperfections whether it is a need to comb the hair or a need to shave or whatever it is and says, “forget it,” and walks out and says, “I’m good enough the way I am,” and just doesn’t bother.

That doesn’t make much sense, does it?

Now how many of you ladies would do that? Imagine walking in, looking in the mirror, I mean, your hair is all over the place. You just woke up.

None of you ladies are like that. I guess your hair is already combed when you wake up in the morning. But anyway, you know, your hair is just all over the place and so on and so forth and you say, “Oh, forget it. I’ll just go out and do the things that I need to do.”

You look in the mirror and you say, “Well, you know, I have some spots on this blouse...And, well, it’s good enough. Don’t worry about.” And you just go on and live your day out.

That is ridiculous. None of you would do that.

How many of you men having looked in the mirror and said, “Well, I need a shave, it looks that way. Forget it. I’ll just out and, you know, I’ll live my day as I am.”

The Word of God uses this as an example. He says, “Nobody does that.” You examine yourself and you make changes.

And he says, “The Word of God is like that.” It is like that mirror. You read the Word of God and it points out to you where those imperfections are. It points out to you where the needs for change are in your life.

And then you make those changes. You do what God wants you to do no matter what it might be. Let’s say you look into the Word of God and it convicts you. Oh, you have a certain habit that is not honoring to God. And you say, “Ok, I am getting rid of this. That is going to end in my life.”

And so you take action. And that habit disappears and you no longer are involved in that and you feel so good because you are serving God. Or you look into the Word of God and you say, “Here is something God wants me to do. I haven’t been doing it.” And so you make a change in your life in that you begin doing that which will bring honor and glory to the Lord. You feel good about it. You are honoring him.

That is the picture that we have here. That is what the Word of God does. It makes changes.

But do you know? In order for the Word of God to make changes in your life, there is one step that is necessary. You must read and study the Word of God. If you don't read it and you don't study it, you are not going to know what changes God wants you to make in your life.

You know, the Bible is not a book that simply belongs on a shelf in your house. I mean, you know, I can remember visiting a family who had come to visit a church that I was pasturing many years ago. I went into their home and we were talking about something and I said, "Why don't you get your Bible out and we will look at something."

Now, I had a Bible of my own, but I wanted to see theirs. And the lady went over to a shelf and she pulled a Bible out and I am not joking, she had to dust it off before we could read it.

I don't think that Bible had been opened for a year or longer. The Word of God, if it is not read, can't make a change in your life. It is absolutely necessary that you read the Word of God so that you know it and so that you can understand what God wants you to do.

In 2 Timothy chapter two and verse 15, we read these words. "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth."¹⁷ In other words, we must be diligent. And you folks know what diligence is. Most of us go to work or we have in the past gone to work and maybe you put in an eight hour day, a nine hour day whatever it is. You are diligent in your work. You do your job. You accomplish the goals. That's diligence.

Folks who work in the home. There may be some ladies who work in the home and you have cleaning to do. You have laundry to do. You have the job of making a meal. And all of those things have to be accomplished. You have to be diligent to accomplish the goal. You don't do it, it won't be done.

We are told that we need to be diligent in our study of the Word of God. We need to be students of God's Word or the Word of God will not take effect in our lives and will not change us. We need to study the Bible every day of our lives, taking a passage of the Bible and reading it and getting to know it and making it a part of us and allowing it to change the way we live.

One other aspect of this. Not only do we have to know the Word of God ourselves, but the Word of God tells us that we also have to share it with other people, that it is not something that we keep to ourselves. You know, some things we keep to ourselves, right? I mean we have secrets that we don't want anybody else to know. We keep that to ourselves. Maybe we have some special possessions that are ours alone. We don't pass

¹⁷ 2 Timothy 2:15

them out. But there are other things that we want to give out to people and let people share with us.

The Bible tells us that the Word of God is something that we need to share with those around us. Listen to what we read in the last chapter of the book of Matthew. It says this.

And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”¹⁸

What is Jesus saying to us here? He is saying our job is to share the Word of God, that we are to make disciples. How do you do that? By teaching God’s Word. And it says that we are to teach them to observe all that I commanded you. We teach them with what the Word of God has to say.

In Mark chapter 16 we read, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.”¹⁹ He is not just talking about the apostles. He is talking about us. That is our job, to share the Word with the people around us.

By the way, that is not just the preacher’s job. Some people have the idea, well, the preacher is the one who shares the Word. No. According to the Word of God the preacher’s job is to train the members of the congregation so that they can effectively teach the Word of God to those who are around him. It is everyone’s job to share this message with neighbors, friends and family members.

In Acts chapter one we read, “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.”²⁰ And that includes Savannah, Georgia. We are to be his witnesses, sharing the Word of God.

What a wonderful message we have from God’s Word. God gave us the Bible. It is the inspired Word, God breathed Word of God. It was written by men of God who were carried along by the Spirit so that every single Word is the Word that God wants us to read. Even Jesus indicated that he trusted the Scriptures to the extent that even the portion of a letter would not disappear from God’s Word until all is fulfilled. The Word of God is active. It is like a two edged sword cutting and piercing and teaching and training. It changes us.

But in order for it to change us we must know it, love it, study it and make it a part of our lives and share it with those around us.

¹⁸ Matthew 28:18-20

¹⁹ Mark 16:15

²⁰ Acts 1:8

I ask two questions today. Do you know Jesus as your Savior and Lord? Have you come to know him? If you do, praise God for that and I trust that each one of us here today has had that wonderful experience. If there are those who do not know him, I challenge you to come to know the Savior even now.

For those of us who are his, how diligent are we in the study of the Word of God? Is it a vital part of our lives? Is it the daily experience that we study God's Word? If it is, praise God. If not, let's make that the habit of our lives.

Let's pray together.

Our heavenly Father, we thank you for the Word of God. We thank you that you have given it to us that we might enjoy the blessings that come only from you. We pray, our Father, that we might be among those people who know your Word, love your Word, obey your Word and, Father, teach your Word. Help us, dear Lord, to honor you in all the things that we say and do and bless our continued worship today we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.