



OKOTOKS EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH

THE TRUSTWORTHINESS OF GOD'S WORD

(2 TIMOTHY 3:16-17; 2 PETER 1:16-21)

MAY 20, 2018

SERMON OUTLINE

What do I need to do with what I have heard today?

MAIN POINT

The Scriptures were given by God and are trustworthy to guide every aspect of our lives.

THINKING THINGS THROUGH

Connect the sermon to the study.

1. In what ways do you view God's Word as useful? How confident are you in the Bible's ability to speak into any part of your life?

2. Has there been a particular season of life when the Bible was the most meaningful to you? Describe that time.

Leader: There is no part of our lives for which Scripture is not useful. God gives us His Word so that we are equipped for every circumstance that we will encounter. God causes Scripture to connect with our lives in a way that shows that His Word is living and active.

DIGGING DEEPER

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

> HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ 2 TIMOTHY 3:16-17.

Leader: In his encouragement to Timothy, Paul instructed him to hold firmly to what he had learned in Scripture, the words he had studied since he was young. The task God

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had for Paul and Timothy was rooted in the authority of the Scriptures. Because the Bible is our primary tool for growing as Jesus' disciples, it is crucial that we believe the truth that the Word of God is totally accurate, free of error, and inspired by God Himself.

3. Verse 16 teaches that all Scripture is God-breathed. What does this imply about the Bible's truthfulness and its reliability?

4. How does the idea that Scripture is God breathed help you understand what it means that the Bible is inspired? What would change if you didn't believe Scripture was divinely inspired? How does knowing that God inspired the Bible impact the way you use it to guide your life?

Leader: Paul reminded Timothy that the Scriptures guide believers on how to believe, grow, and serve the Christian community. Paul appealed to Timothy concerning the inspiration and usefulness of Scripture in daily life. This begins with the truth that Scripture is inspired by God. The content bears God's stamp of approval.

5. How has the Bible proven to be profitable for you in the areas Paul listed here?

6. Do you notice a change in those areas when you don't actively study or meditate on God's Word? How can you use this realization to spur yourself on toward reading Scripture more faithfully?

Leader: The Bible is a guide that teaches us how to grow in our faith and how to live as disciples. David called it "a lamp to my feet and a light for my path" (Psalm 119:105). It's profitable to teach, so it's also profitable to learn from. Scripture rebukes and corrects us, making it useful for preventing error. "Training in righteousness" (2 Timothy 3:16) points us to Christ—we can't be righteous apart from Him. The Bible, when actively consumed, provides us with all we need to mature in the faith, a process that God designed to take place in the community of His church.

> HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ 2 PETER 1:16-21.

7. Peter is adamant that the writings of Scripture came from God. Why does it matter whether the Scriptures came from God or man?

8. What picture was Peter painting when he referred to the “morning star” in verse 19 and what or who does this refer to? What did Peter challenge us to do while we wait for the morning star to dawn?

9. What role did the Holy Spirit play in the development of Scripture? How does His role speak to its validity today?

Leader: “The morning star” refers to Jesus Christ and His return. When He returns, we will gain a full understanding of God’s work in our world. Until that time, we have Scripture as our guide. We are to remain diligent in our study of and confidence in Scripture, relying on the Holy Spirit to help us understand it.

10. Verse 19 instructs those who read the Scriptures to “pay close attention” to them. Do you consider yourself to be one who pays close attention to the Word of God? If not, what needs to change?

Leader: These verses were penned by Peter, one of Jesus’ disciples and an eyewitness to the life of Christ. Peter testified that he and other writers of the Bible were told what to write by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:21). God’s Word is completely reliable. Written by about 40 different men across a span of hundreds of years, all of Scripture tells the same story—the story of Jesus. We can trust that God’s Word is true and unchanging for all of time.

DOING LIFE TOGETHER

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

11. What is one thing that distracts you from daily studying the Word of God? Is that thing more valuable than the rewards that come from spending time in Scripture? What habits or routines need to change for you to make Bible study a priority?

12. What can our group do to help one another maintain a life-changing respect for what the Bible says?

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PRAYER

Close in prayer, thanking God for the complete truthfulness and sufficiency of Scripture. Ask Him to use His Word powerfully in your life. Ask Him to open your eyes and ears to how He wants to speak to you through Scripture.

MEMORIZE

¹⁶ All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, ¹⁷ so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. - 2 Timothy 3:16-17

SPOTLIGHT ON THE PASSAGE

2 TIMOTHY 3:16-17

3:16. The power of the Bible to affect change and demand obedience resides in the fact that all Scripture is God-breathed. The Bible originates with God. Claims of origins carry great significance because authority lives in the Creator. This is why people invest such Herculean efforts in trying to disprove God as the earth's Creator and in questioning the authenticity of the Bible. Admitting to God's authorship is an acceptance of his authority over every aspect of life. By stating that Scriptures are God breathed, Paul established the Bible's claim as God's authoritative Word over all people.

The Scriptures were written by men "as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit" (2 Pet. 1:21). The picture is that of a sailboat being moved along by the wind. Indeed, men wrote the Bible, but the words and substance of what they wrote came from God. This makes the Bible useful. Paul listed four main uses of Scripture, all of which intertwine with one another.

Teaching involves instruction. Since Timothy was feeling the attacks of false teachers, Paul encouraged the young pastor to continue in teaching correct doctrine and correct living. The Scriptures must be known so people will grasp their need of salvation and so the confessing community will adhere to its instructions on proper Christian conduct.

Rebuking and correcting are the disciplinary authority of Scripture. Because the Bible is God's Word and because it reveals truth, it exercises authority over those who deviate from its standard. "Rebuking" points out sin and confronts disobedience. "Correcting" recognizes that a person has strayed from the truth. Graciously, lovingly, yet firmly, we should try to guide the errant individual back into obedience.

Many times the Old Testament relates Israel's disobedience to God, how the people suffered God's chastisement for their rebellion, and how God corrected their sinful habits. The New Testament continues with stories and instructions, warnings regarding disobedience, disciplinary actions for those who fail to heed God's revelation, and teachings on proper conduct. Training in righteousness is the counterpoint to correction. The Scriptures give us positive guidance for maturing in faith and acceptable conduct.

3:17. The goal of all this instruction, discipline, and training is not to keep us busy. God intends that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. We study the Bible, we rely upon God's Spirit, his revelation, and the community of the faithful to keep us on

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track—obedient and maturing in faith. Continuing in this commitment will enable us to do whatever God calls us to do. Timothy could withstand the attacks of false teachers, the abandonment of professing believers, and the persecution that surrounded him because God had equipped him for the task. God never calls us to do something without first enabling us through his Spirit and the power of his truth to accomplish the task.

We neglect the Scriptures at our own peril. Through them we gain the ability to serve God and others. The Scriptures not only point the way; through the mysterious union of God's Word and faith, they give us the ability to serve.

2 PETER 1:16-21

1:16a. Later (vv. 19-21), Peter will give an extended defense of the written Scriptures in terms of their authority and accuracy. First, he went out of his way to display the glory of the Lord. The order of his presentation suggests that we will never appreciate or value the reminders of Scripture, the Word of the Lord, until we value and worship the Lord of the Word. False teachers labeled the truths that Christians believe as make-believe, fiction, or simply stories. They claimed the incarnation of Jesus Christ, the resurrection, and his coming kingdom were only invented stories. Peter responded that he was speaking and writing about spiritual truths and certainly was not embellishing the facts or inventing a story.

1:16b. In this verse, Peter revisited the transfiguration of Jesus he had witnessed some thirty years earlier: but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty (v. 16b). This event was the most supernatural event in the ministry of Christ. It provided a preview or picture of the Second Coming when Christ will return in glory. If Peter is wrong here, then everything is wrong—a myth just as the false teachers claimed. The transfiguration of Jesus Christ declares who he is, speaking of the glory and the majesty of the character of Christ. If his character is flawed, then his word is flawed. "Majesty" refers to the splendor and grandeur of Christ. It points to the very nature of Jesus.

1:17. On the mountain of transfiguration Peter had the unique experience of being present when Jesus received honor and glory from God the Father. *Honor* describes the exalted status of Jesus Christ. *Glory* refers to the brilliance of the light that radiated from Christ at that moment—the same brilliance and honor that belong to God alone. This light or glory radiated from within the person of Christ and put into a visual aid the perfect character of Christ. In the Old Testament, the word *glory* originally expressed the idea of weight. From there it came to be applied to any characteristic of a person that makes that individual "weighty" in other peoples' eyes and prompts them to honor that person. The glory of Christ is the perfection of God in Christ. God the Father affirmed this essential nature of Jesus Christ. The Majestic Glory is another way of describing the very presence of God—a presence that Matthew's Gospel indicates demonstrated itself in "a bright cloud" (Matt. 17:5) descending upon the mountain. In that moment, God the Father solemnly affirmed the divinity of Jesus his Son. The scene was forever burned into Peter's memory: God the Father, meeting with God the Son, in the presence of eyewitnesses and declaring to them all the majesty, glory, and perfection of Jesus Christ.

1:18. Peter's reiteration of his participation in this moment as an eyewitness underlines his authority in teaching about the person and work of Christ. If readers doubt the character of the messenger, they will certainly doubt the character of the message. Peter's testimony leaves no doubt about the character of the messenger and his message.

1:19. The section from here to the end of chapter deals with the false teachers. Despite such teachers, we can know the truth about God. The word of the prophets refers to the writings of the entire Old Testament, not simply the prophets. In making reference to this, Peter expressed his complete confidence in the Old Testament Scriptures. Peter has just described his incredible experience of seeing Jesus Christ in all of his glory on the mountain of transfiguration. That

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experience was a preview of what it will be like to see Christ at his second coming. Yet here, when Peter notes that we have the word of the prophets made more certain, he essentially says to his readers: "You do not have to rely only on my experience. We have another source of assurance about Christ that is even more reliable— the Scriptures."

So confident was Peter of the reliability and authority of the Scriptures that he counseled us to use the Scriptures as our guide until the Second Coming of Christ. Until the day dawns refers to the day of the Second Coming (see Mal. 4:2). The morning star is a picture of Jesus Christ at his Second Coming (see Luke 1:78, Eph. 5:14; Rev. 22:16). We are to walk by the torchlight of Scripture until the second coming of Jesus.

Until we see Christ face-to-face, we have an authoritative source of spiritual truth. Scripture introduces us to God and a way of life that honors him. Why do we neglect to "pay attention" to it? Some in Peter's day were so influenced by the false teachers that they were beginning to fail to give serious attention to the Scripture.

1:20-21. The Old Testament writers did not invent or make up their material. The Old Testament prophets were the communicators, in written form, of God's message. Carried along was used of a sailing ship carried along by the wind. The metaphor pictures the cooperation of the Holy Spirit with the individual writer. The prophets raised their sails, and the Holy Spirit filled them and carried their craft along in the direction he wished. Through their own unique personalities, styles of writing, and vocabularies, God moved each of them by his Spirit to communicate his truth.