

God's Sacred Word

2 Timothy 3:16-17

Introduction

Last week we started a series on Revelation, that is, on how God reveals Himself to us in various ways through time. We took a look at wise counsel last week, and spoke about how God uses us to speak His wisdom into one another's lives. This week, we'll be talking about God's special revelation to us, otherwise known as the Bible. Sometimes, it may be easy to take for granted what a gift we hold in our hands when we pick up our bibles. The Bible not only tells us about our history and who we are as men and women, but it also serves as a roadmap to godly living, helping us to live the best and most prosperous lives we could hope to live.

We're going to look today at some of the hallmark truths about the Bible, and what makes it so special of a gift and a resource in our hands. We're also going to look at a handful of ways in which the Bible affects us in our daily lives. Through the course of this sermon, we'll come to respect just what a privilege it is that God has revealed Himself to us through the sacred Word of God.

To begin, let's look at scripture from 2 Timothy, beginning in chapter 3, verse 16. It says this.

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

Here, we'll see that the Word of God...

Guides Us

This verse has a number of points that I want to dive into, but first and foremost, we see that all scripture is God-breathed, or **INSPIRED**. This means that

each of the 66 books that comprise our Bibles have been guided by God in their creation through their various authors. Though human authors, from Moses to Jeremiah to John and everyone in between wrote the books of the Bible, it is fair to say that God guided their every pen-stroke; and because God is perfect, this means also that the Bible, in its original translations, is also perfect. This is known as the **INERRENCY** of the Bible. This term means that the Bible is accurate and without error. We don't have to worry about if what we're reading is biased, embellished, or slanted in any way. Put simply, the Bible is right. Though much of modern culture would seek to dispute this fact in some way, shape, or form, we can nonetheless be assured that the Bible was co-authored at every point but the perfect Maker of the universe. In these facts, we should find comfort and assurance in the faith that we have in God's sacred Word.

Psalm 12 helps to hammer this point of inerrancy home. Look at what Psalm 12:6 says.

Psalm 12:6 – And the words of the LORD are flawless, like silver purified in a crucible, like gold refined seven times.

The words of the LORD are flawless. One thing you may not know about refining silver and gold is that as the metals are repeatedly refined, the Refiner can more visibly see his own reflection in the pieces. There is also significance to the notion of the words of God being like gold refined seven times. Seven is known as the perfect number in the Bible, associated with divine completion. So again, we see a standard of perfection at work in the Word of God.

Returning to our verse from 2 Timothy, we see that Paul advises us that the Scriptures are useful for a number of purposes.

1. They are useful for teaching – The Bible can teach us so much about our own history, what is right and what is wrong, and practical Christian living. We must take to heart the lessons that the Bible teaches us through its various forms of contained literature.
2. They are useful for rebuking – Rebuking is not a fun matter, but it is sometimes a necessary one. A rebuke is a sharp criticism, and sometimes, if we're that far out of line, a rebuke from a fellow believer may be just what we need. The Bible stands as the standard for proper behavior. And thus, it can be used to snap us back into line when we fall out of it, so to speak.

3. They are useful for correcting – Again, the Bible stands as the authoritative standard on what is right, and what is wrong. The continuation of the sharp rebuke is gentle and guided correction, pointing us away from wrong thoughts or behaviors to what is right and correct. The Bible helps us to learn from our mistakes. In that, the Bible helps us to grow.
4. They are useful for training in righteousness – The value of this one cannot be overstated. Training in righteousness is our sanctification. Sanctification is our cleansing, our refining process as if we were pieces of silver and gold, by which we are molded and shaped, growing as Christians in our attitudes and behaviors to more resemble Christ. Put simply, the Bible is our guide to living a more godly lifestyle.

Paul tells us that ALL scripture is useful for these purposes. Some scriptures may be more applicable to our daily lives than others, but there are both truth and value to be found in everything that we read, throughout the various books of the Bible. If you struggle to see how a certain piece of scripture or a certain book of the Bible applies to you here today, pray to the Holy Spirit to illuminate that truth to you. Talk it out with other Christians, friends, family, or members of your biblical small group. Something will be made known to you. Have faith in that fact.

One other important aspect of the Bible is that it is **IMMUTABLE**, that is, it never changes. Again, the value of this fact should not be overstated. Since its compilation, nothing has or can be added or removed from the Bible. Though it has been retranslated numerous times, into numerous different languages and versions, the core messages of the Bible remain the same and unaltered throughout time. The Word of God is the solid foundation on which we can stand. This is especially important in our world where values and cultural norms seem to change almost yearly. What is unacceptable today may be acceptable tomorrow, and one constantly finds himself either re-evaluating their own value system, or periodically at odds with the culture surrounding them. The Bible, however, remains unchanged. It is often the one thing we can be sure of no matter how the rest of the world is trending in any given moment.

Next, we see that the Word of God...

Convicts Us

Listen to this verse from the book of Hebrews.

Hebrews 4:12 – For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

The Word of God searches our hearts and tries us. It divides the soul and the spirit not from one another, but open and laid bare to be seen, judging the thoughts and attitudes of our hearts. When we stack ourselves up beside the Word of God, our innermost flaws are plain to be seen, and this is of immense value for our own growth and purification. As we read and understand our bibles, the stories within, they life examples lived out by the characters portrayed in the stories, we see glimpses of what was done right and what was done wrong.

The verse further reminds us that the Word of God is alive and active. When we store the readings of the Bible away in our hearts, it then lives within us. And it is active, within us... As such, it is immensely important that we read our sacred Word of God and store it in our minds and our hearts. Listen to Psalm 119:11.

Psalm 119:11 – I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.

My friends, there's power to be found in reading and knowing our bibles. It is by knowing the laws, decrees, and life lessons within the Bible that we are able to know how not to sin against God. And because the laws of God never change, our moral compass when influenced by the Bible is a solid rock to stand on. As a compass, it is always our true-north.

Conviction is never to be confused with guilt. Guilt points backward, and tries to hang one up on something that they've done in the past. Conviction points at one's current state, and helps to guide them towards correction for the future. The former is a tool of the evil one. The latter is a gift from God as He shapes and grows us more into his own likeness. The Bible's role in your conviction is that of a blueprint or a guidebook, to help you to understand how correctly to process your life going forward. Conviction often comes with grief, but it is a healthy grief. Paul's second letter to the Corinthians says this regarding the grief produced by conviction.

2 Corinthians 7:9-10 – yet now I am happy, not because you were made sorry, but because your sorrow led you to repentance. For you became sorrowful as God intended and so were not harmed in any way by us. Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.

Grief from conviction is a good grief why? Because it leads to repentance... Repentance from our sins leads to sanctification and personal growth. The Word of God has the ability to initiate this within us. We should love it for this reason, and so many others.

Joshua 1:8 advises this...

Joshua 1:8 – Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.

We must remember how prosperity and success are defined for our purposes. This verse is not a promise that if we follow the Word of God, that we will be healthy and wealthy, though we will be wise. To be prosperous and successful is to be obedient in the eyes of our Lord, and that's one of our most important goals as Christians. We must not get caught up in our circumstances, possessions, or monetary status as part of our definition of being successful.

Next, we will see that the Word of God...

Enhances Us

Now, I'd like to look at 5 ways in which the Bible enhances our lives. Here they are:

1. The Word gives us direction – Above many other things the Bible does, it serves as an authoritative moral compass in our lives. The stories and examples within, including perhaps most importantly, the example of Christ, serve to guide us to better Christian living, and to being the people that God would desire for us to be. What characters can you relate to in the Bible and why? What stories of their lives speak to you the most? What proverbs resonate the most with your soul? What psalms speak to you the most when

your heart is crying out for relief? The Bible is a nearly bottomless resource for providing both purpose and guidance for our daily lives. It tells us our history, our identity, and reminds us that our value is found in God's love for us, not in the definitions by which society might define us. I like to consider it a user's manual for the human race, of sorts.

2. The Word of God shields us from lies – Additionally, the Bible serves as the authoritative book of truth in our lives. The devil would seek to lie to us in many ways, convincing us that we are not worth God's love or that we can find no value in striving to live a godly life. The Apostle John reminds us of Satan's character and agenda in John 8:44, where he says.

John 8:44 - He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

The Bible helps to guard our hearts from the devil's falsehoods, as well as any other falsehoods that might rob of us our identity, the gifts that God gives to us, or our ability to continue walking a righteous path.

3. The Word of God cleanses us – The Bible additionally helps to cleanse our souls. Holding fast to the laws and good moral examples in the Bible can help us to continue to grow into a sense and state of purity more resembling of Christ with each passing moment of sanctification. Storing up the principles of the Bible in our hearts helps to mold and shape us into proper Christians. The apostle James reminds us...

James 1:21 – Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.

The Word of God... planted in our minds... planted in our hearts, can truly save us, even from the wickedness within ourselves.

4. The Word of God provides constant hope – Amidst a world full of trouble and tragedy, we can cling to the Bible as a constant source of hope. God's sacred Word makes many promises to us. Not the least of which is the promise of an eternal future in communion with God for those who accept Jesus as the Christ. No matter what life's circumstances may bring to into our paths, the truths and promises in the Bible remain constant. In the end,

nothing can rob us of our eternal salvation through Christ, and all of life's circumstances, are only temporary. Paul reminds us in Romans 8:18.

Romans 8:18 – I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.

Remembering this truth in spite of whatever sufferings you may be embroiled in at any moment will help to keep you anchored in hope. Though life's circumstances may be difficult, they are only temporary, and as Paul says, they pale in comparison to what awaits us in the future. The Bible is home to many such assurances. Seeking them out and finding them is like engaging in a treasure hunt amidst God's field.

5. God's word provides us with courage – God's word also provides us a source by which to be courageous. We're going to look at two verses from Joshua to illustrate this point, one after another. The first verse is from Joshua 1:8, which we've already visited but will now revisit and reads as follows:

Joshua 1:8 – Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.

What is interesting about this verse is the verses that immediately precede and follow it. Joshua 1:7-9 says this:

Joshua 1:7-9 – Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.”

Prosperity and success come when we obey the Lord, and the prosperity and success of being obedient leads into assurance that God is with us, which is cause for great courage. Anchoring yourself in the truth of God's sacred word will help to embolden you to take on life's challenges.

Conclusion

The Bible is God's special revelation to us. It is inspired, inerrant and immutable, never changing over time though culture and the world around us are changing constantly. Do we realize what a precious gift we hold in our hands? The Bible tells us who we are as people, providing an early history of mankind, and it also guides us in our day to day lives with its morals, laws, and life lessons from which we can learn and apply to our own lives. The Bible helps to convict our hearts and keep us on a righteous path, and it enhances our lives in so many ways.

In his book entitled, "Eternity", Dr. Merrill F. Unger said this of the Bible.

"A contagious enthusiasm among Christians for the Word of God and a return in faith and obedience to its precepts would do more to point the way out of the present world distress and despair than all the plans and strivings of men!" – **Dr. Merrill F. Unger**

Let us always remember the power that is in our hands when we hold, read, and apply God's sacred Word to our lives. Please stand with me as we prepare for the invitation.

Invitation