

# Rooted: The Bible

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] Welcome here for this Sunday, September 10th. Thank you to my friend Paul for preaching last Sunday. You had a heavy theological topic, but it was a good one, and I hear that it was very good.

So blessings on you as you continue to process that, because there will be more in the days ahead from he and I at different times. So welcome to everyone this morning, whether you're here in person, it's so good to see all of you here this morning.

Or if people are connecting in some way on the phone line or on the website, on various channels in the days ahead. As you can see, we tried to create a moat around the church, and we were unsuccessful because it will not hold water.

No. Park Paving is in the neighborhood doing a bunch of construction work. So they have, as you can see, they are currently replacing sidewalk. We're quite grateful that the access road is still open.

Our parking lot is still open on the east side. And so concrete will be poured this week. Angela is frustrated because I sent her a picture and said, you know all the stack of stuff that's out in front of the church?

[ 1 : 1 0 ] That was a bridge, right? And she said, rats! She said, they promised! And I said, that's okay. I said, I was walking a loop around the church this morning saying, just looking for people who are lost, going to the back door, thinking, okay, go to the other, I can't get to the other door.

So you're all here, and it's good to see you. So as you're hopefully aware from the newsletter and conversations and things that I've been talking about, we're starting a viewing and discussion series on The Chosen Season 1.

And that's this Tuesday night, two days from tonight, right here in the sanctuary starting at 6.45. So we'll get together and we'll grab a coffee and just quickly visit, and then we will start at 7.

So that'll be the goal. So what is The Chosen, you might be asking? Some of you know, and some of you probably have no idea. Well, it's the first multi-season series about the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, Jesus of Nazareth.

And it's primarily set in Judea and Galilee in the first century. So this is not a documentary. They didn't find this footage. This is created. And the series centers on Jesus and the different people who met and followed him or otherwise interacted with him during his ministry on earth.

[ 2 : 3 0 ] And so each week we'll be watching an episode of the show together, and then I'll be leading us in an informal discussion. So there will be no homework. There will be some deep thinking and I hope some engagement as well.

We've invited lots of people, so God only knows quite literally who will come. So I invite you to come on Tuesday night at 6.45, and it should be a good time. So this is a great opportunity to bring friends and family with you, to bring people to experience the story of Jesus and the story of the Gospels in this way.

I have yet to meet anyone who has seen the chosen, who is a follower of Jesus or not, who has not been encouraged and impacted by it, and I invite you to experience that too.

Transition time. So I don't know about you, but it seems like the fall has come. Right? Is that fair? It seems like fall almost literally came overnight one night this week.

I don't recall which night, but I do recall being shocked when I woke up. But fortunately, we're having a bit of a return to summer. It's a beautiful day today. It was a beautiful day yesterday.

[ 3 : 4 6 ] There's beautiful warmth ahead still, so no flakes yet, except for pastors. So fall is a time of change, right? It's, for some of us, our schedules change, and we return from a summer pace, maybe a more relaxed pace, back to a fall focus and routine.

But also we recognize that the natural world begins to change around us as well. The leaves have begun to change color, as you can see in this picture, which is so beautiful.

The trees get another opportunity to show off their beauty. And we're treated to yet another glimpse, yet another side of how God made them, made the trees and plants and nature all around us to function in different ways within the seasons.

So you may have read this in the newsletter this week, or heard me tease it a little bit two weeks ago. But I wanted to set the stage for you a bit for our new fall sermon series.

It's called Rooted. So we can likely all recognize it's important for trees, I've been talking about trees, to remain anchored in the earth, to receive vital nourishment, a strong foundation from which to grow and flourish.

[ 5 : 01 ] And in much the same way, it's essential for followers of Jesus to remain anchored in the truth and foundation of our faith. And we're going to be exploring that through many key ideas through our fall sermon series, Rooted.

And over the coming weeks, we'll be considering some important concepts, some important truths that are essential for us as followers of Jesus. Things that we need to remember and understand clearly to remain rooted in our faith.

When time gets hard, it can start to become easy, I think, for Christians to abandon their faith, to lose their grip on their faith. I've experienced this myself with friends, with people whose faith in Christ was so deeply anchored, and even rock-solid, unshakable, deeply rooted, the most important thing in their lives, anyone would have said.

These were people who once spoke with passion and conviction about their belief in everything, everything their faith in God represented to them. And yet, as we've all likely experienced, to some of my friends, to all of us, life sometimes happens, doesn't it?

I have friends whose faith faded over time. It withered. Ultimately, they chose to walk away from what had once anchored their lives, what had been the central focus and the driving force of their life, their relationship with God and their love for Him.

[ 6 : 43 ] There's still a fresh experience of that for me, and it's hard. I've said to Michelle many times, I still can't wrap my head around this, and how it played out like that.

And she agrees. But I think this is a real danger for all of us. Because if our foundation isn't solid, we talk in Sunday school about building upon the rock rather than the sand, right?

If we don't question and learn, it's okay to question. But if we don't question and learn, or perhaps even struggle at times, the Bible is filled with struggle and anger at God and frustration, and that's all okay.

But if we don't remain connected, if we don't continue to ask and stay engaged, stay with other Christians who will support and encourage us, if we don't care for our roots, we can falter and even ultimately fall.

But if our roots are deep, even in tough times, we can continue to not only survive, but thrive. So this sermon, Rooted, is all about helping us to remain deeply rooted in our faith, and the important aspects of it that we'll discuss in the weeks ahead.

[ 8 : 05 ] We're going to examine some of the basic beliefs of Christianity, and there may be weeks where you go, oh, I know all this stuff. But it's important to be reminded.

We're going to be reminded of the essential things that compose our faith, that we need to recognize as part of our faith. And my goal through this series is going to be that by the time we're done, we're going to have an even more clear idea of why you believe what you believe.

Does that sound okay? Because it's never too late, in my mind, to be reminded, okay, I believe this, but what is that, what's the application of that? What does the fact that I say I believe this translate into in my life?

So we're going to begin this series by exploring what the Bible means for our faith. Good place to start, I think. So what we believe about God, comes from the Bible.

What we believe about Jesus comes from the Bible. What we believe about ourselves, who we are, where we come from, why we exist, our place in creation and God's plan comes from the Bible.

[ 9 : 22 ] Without the Bible, we really don't know anything about God other than what someone once told us, maybe, or that we've personally experienced.

Can you recognize that? You take the Bible out of the equation and it's very thin. And those things are good, what someone has taught you about the Bible, what you have heard about the Bible,

what you've experienced about God or the Bible yourself.

Those are good, but they're not enough on their own. If we don't trust the Bible, we don't ultimately have a true source to which we can return.

So we're starting with the Bible today because it is the anchor. It is the root. It is the foundation upon everything else we build as Christians.

So this morning, we're going to consider four things. Everybody likes their lists. We're going to consider four things we want to understand about the Bible. And are there more?

[10:23] You bet. But I don't want to overload anyone. The first thing we want to understand about the Bible is its authority. Is that clear?

And so what do we mean when we say the Bible is our authority? You've probably used those words. Maybe you've been questioned by someone in an argument and said, well, where'd you get that from?

And you said, well, I get it from the Bible because the Bible is my source. It's my authority. Well, I think theologian Wayne Grudem says this well.

He says that authority means, quote, the power to determine or otherwise settle issues or disputes, the right to control, command, or determine.

Now, you read that without the Bible context, right? And you see, yikes, that's political control.

That's social control. That's all those things. But when we say the Bible has authority, we're saying that it's the Bible that has those qualities.

[11:28] And that's what Grudem is ultimately getting at. The Bible has the power to determine, to settle issues or disputes. The Bible has the right to control or command or determine things.

But why, how can we give what is a book that kind of power over us, that kind of authority? It's a good question.

We give the Bible that authority because the Bible isn't just any book. Everybody's not, everybody should be nodding, right? The Bible is not just any book.

The Bible is, what is the Bible? God's Word, the Word of God. And sure, it's recorded in different editions, different translations, but ultimately, that source is God himself.

2 Timothy 3, verse 16 says, you know this well, All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness.

[12:35] That the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. God breathed, profitable for all these different things.

It's complete and it equips us for every good work. And all of the Bible is God's words.

I hope we can recognize that as well. Everything that is clearly spoken by God himself, where God is quoted, essentially, in Scripture, is obviously his words, right?

But that's not all. Even the words that are not spoken directly by God are his words as well. And remember what we just read there, that all Scripture is God breathed.

All Scripture is God's words. And the Old Testament is God's words. The New Testament is God's words. The whole thing is God's word.

[13:39] And as God's literal words to us, these words hold ultimate authority. As God's words, the Bible itself reflects God's authority.

So since the Bible is God's words, these are not just true words. This is a little bit hard to wrap our heads around a bit. They're not just true, what the Bible says, but it is truth itself.

It is the source of truth. John 17, verse 17, easy to remember, says, sanctify them in the truth. Your word, meaning the Bible, is truth.

Not like truth, it's a form of truth. The Bible, your word, is truth. So to suggest in any way that the Bible is false is the same as suggesting that God himself is false.

Now we're not saying the Bible is God, don't hear that, but as God's word, as God's truth, if you say the Bible's not true, you've got a fundamental problem there.

[14:51] So when we choose not to believe in God, that means that we're placing ourselves or some other source of information or knowledge in a place of higher authority over God and his words to us.

See the danger there? There's no anchor. I can look a diagnosis up on WebMD today and I bet you six months from now it will be, have been adapted, it will change.

God's word is the same. So as we seek to understand and trust and obey the Bible, we're also seeking to understand, trust, and obey by association God himself.

Because as I said, the Bible is our source to know God better. So the second thing we want to understand about the Bible is its clarity. So what do we mean by the clarity of the Bible? You may say, well, I can't read Greek so that's not that clear to me. I prefer the King James, I don't prefer the King James, I like the New Living Translation, I prefer my translation of the Bible because it's more clear.

[16:05] I'm talking deeper than that. So Wayne Grudem helps here again he says that the Bible is written in such a way that all things necessary to become a Christian and to grow as a Christian are clear.

Does that make sense? Does that give you some confidence? I hope. So because we have the Bible, we can understand how to become a Christian and follow Jesus.

We have those steps, we have that clarity, we have those examples given to us. And we can also understand how to live as a Christian because the model of a Christian life is there.

The model of an un-Christian life is also there in case we get confused. There's opportunities for comparison. That doesn't fit, this fits, right?

And we can also understand how to grow as a Christian. Growth comes for, comes to us, with us, when we engage in truth, when we engage in life-giving information, life-giving connection.

[17:18] Psalm 19, verse 7 says, the law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul. I love those words. The testimony of the Lord is sure, making the wise simpler.

So it's not a suggestion there that somehow smart people come to the Bible and become dumb. That's not what it's saying. It's saying that it levels the playing field.

It's saying that scholarly knowledge doesn't necessarily equate with God's knowledge. Does that make sense? So anyone can understand, through the Bible, what God wants us to know.

The Bible is a perfect source for that. Because God gave us the instructions and the blueprints in the Bible. We hesitate to read our Bible sometimes as followers of Jesus, or we think, oh, it's boring, I can't really, you know, I just have to try and make it happen, I have to get five minutes a day. It's a privilege. It's not an obligation, right? It's the opportunity to engage with life-giving content, rather than what we find from other sources.

[18:37] God shows us over and over through the words of the Bible who He is and who we are. And He definitely shows us how we can know Him and how we can continue to grow in that knowledge and relationship.

The Bible has all of that contained within it. So to return to this, the Bible is clear, even when it comes to the things that we don't immediately understand.

What am I saying there? Well, we can ask for God to help us understand something. We have people around us who have perhaps walked with the Lord longer, know their Bible better, more deeply.

We are in this together. We're not in this alone to try and figure it out on our own. We have resources and we have support. The third thing we want to understand about the Bible is its necessity.

So let's hear Romans 10, verse 14. So if you want to turn to Romans 10, just park there because I'm going to go 14 and 17. Romans 10, starting with verse 14.

[19:49] 17. So that says, how then will they call on him whom they have not believed? And how then, or how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard?

And how are they to hear without someone preaching? Paul says. And then jumping down to Romans 17, Paul says, so faith comes from hearing and hearing through the word of Christ. So Paul's pointing out the process through which we learn of God and what he has done for us. And the source is, again, the Bible.

We need the Bible to be shared with and communicated to us. So the necessity of the Bible means that it's necessary, it's essential for us to either read the Bible ourselves, ourselves, and you can see this, yes.

The necessity of the Bible means that it's necessary for us to either read the Bible ourselves, or have someone help us to understand what is written in the Bible.

[21:01] That's why we have commentaries and things like that. If we're going to know God personally, receive forgiveness for our sins, and know for sure what God wants us to do, that's what we're looking for, right?

We're looking for an assurance of our eternity, we're looking for forgiveness for what we've done, and to be restored in right relationship with God, and we want to know what God wants us to do. You saved me, but what's next? What do you want me to do, Lord? So if we don't read the Bible for ourselves, or have someone help us understand it, do you see how that's a problem?

If we remain disconnected from that essential source, it's a problem. So how can we know God without the Bible to tell us that he exists, and that he loves us?

How can we recognize that we're sinners? We don't even begin to recognize the state in which we find ourselves without him if we don't learn it from the Bible.

[ 22 : 08 ] We don't even begin to understand what sin and selfish choices are and the damage that they can do without the Bible. And there's lots of people who say, that's why I don't read the Bible.

That's not, I'm a Christian. I'm not, that's why I'm not a Christian. I don't want to feel guilty. I want to be able to do whatever I want, and that's fine. That's a choice.

But the Bible, again, makes it clear where that choice leads. So how can we even know that God has a plan? Have you ever thought about that?

Okay, I believe in God, but so? There's a God out there, he created things, that's all I've got. But through the Bible, we can learn that he has a very specific plan of redemption and restoration, and that our lives, our own lives, each of our lives, have a role to play in that plan.

But you don't know that if you don't read the Bible. Do you understand that? We don't understand what God has done in the past and how that relates to his character and his plan, nor do we understand what he's doing in the future.

[ 23 : 25 ] We would have no knowledge of that without the Bible. So I want to get a little theological language again for a sec. Paul will appreciate this. So we can know some things about God without the Bible.

And I'm going to talk briefly about general revelation and special revelation. This fascinated me in seminary. So Psalm 19 verse 1 says, and you probably know it off by heart, the heavens declare the glory of God and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.

Have you ever looked at a harvest moon in the sky and gone, eh, there's no God. Not me. Have you ever seen a baby animal of any kind and God, eh, just by chance.

Not me. You ever held a newborn baby, Kathy, and gone, eh, yeah, it's just a human biology thing, it just kind of happens by chance. Not me.

Romans 1, 19 and 20, if you still have one finger in Romans, but don't worry, I'll read it for us.

Romans 1, 19 and 20 says, for what can be known about God is plain to them because God has shown it to them.

[ 24 : 41 ] For his invisible attributes, namely his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived ever since the creation of the world in the things that have been made, so they are without excuse.

So what we're hearing from both of these things is an idea of general revelation. So we can look around and see God's creative handiwork all around us, the evidence of God's work and his creation, and that's known as general revelation.

We can say, yeah, there's evidence of a God. If you believe in one, there is evidence that one exists. But only the Bible tells us things about God that we could only learn, or that we couldn't only learn by looking at the natural world.

So you can't learn about the character of God by looking at plants, for example. Kinda. He is sustaining, he is loving, he cares for even these things.

But the depth and breadth of God's character we can't learn from anywhere other than the Bible. Bible is the only place where we can learn that the creator God, this general revelation God who makes things that we can see, is also a redeemer God.

[ 26 : 03 ] The God of covenants and relationship and restoration and healing and sustenance and provision and all of those good things. That we only learn about God's character from scripture.

So that is called specific revelation, special revelation. And that only comes through the Bible. It really, that's the only way to find it.

And so only the Bible gives us the full picture. So general revelation, looking at the natural world, is a bit of it, but only the Bible gives us the full story.

So the fourth thing we want to understand about the Bible is its sufficiency. And I'll soften that a bit. 2 Timothy 3 verse 16 and 17.

If you want to jump there, you can, or I will read it as well. 2 Timothy 3, 16 and 17. And we read it already. That was a test.

[ 27 : 06 ] All scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness. That means that the, sorry, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

Sufficiency is not a word I use in my daily vocabulary to you. I need to know the sufficiency of my fridge to ensure that it will keep my items cool.

Sufficient. Look for that root. So what we're saying here is that the Bible contains all of the words of God that a person needs to become a Christian, to live as a Christian, and to grow as a Christian. The Bible contains all of that. so the Bible is sufficient. It's sufficient for telling us how to be saved from sin, how to be restored in relationship with God.

And there's no other source like that that we can go to to find those kinds of answers. Another thing that's important to note is we don't need to add to it.

[ 28 : 20 ] there should never be a sense that the Bible is part of what you need. There should never be a sense of well yeah the Bible is really awesome but just add this other document, this other book, this other thing, the words of some other person, some other source, and then you'll have the full picture.

Because for me that is always a red flag. Always. well you say well what about a commentary? Well what about a different translation of scripture? It's different.

Because you're still looking at the Bible as the ultimate source. So you're not adding something else. Does that make sense? Or I might be confusing it more. So what we ultimately mean by all of that is that the Bible is enough.

It is enough. So are you at the point now where you're saying well this is all very nice Pastor Kent. Thank you for the Bible chat. But what does this how does this matter for us in our daily lives? What is the authority the clarity the necessity the sufficiency of the Bible mean for us in our daily lives? It's an excellent question.

[ 29 : 40 ] So recognizing these four things that we've considered about the Bible this morning it means we don't have to wonder. Are you a worrier?

Do you get anxious? Do you need answers? Do you get worried when you don't have answers? The Bible keeps us from having to wonder who God is or what he thinks.

The Bible keeps us from having to wonder whether he loves us or not. It keeps us from having to wonder if we can be restored into a correct, into a right relationship with him or if we're just lost.

The Bible also makes it clear what's going to happen to us when we die. The entire scope of that concept. We also don't have to wonder how to find God, how to come to God.

John 3 16 says, for God so loved the world. The first verse I memorized and it still gets me every time. For God so loved the world that he gave his only son that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

[ 30 : 59 ] Friends, the Bible says that we are sinners. The Bible says that we can be forgiven through Jesus. The Bible says that we can have eternal life.

As you've heard me say it in the past many times, John 3 16 is recognized by many people as the gospel in a nutshell. One verse full of depth and breadth right there.

My friends, the Bible has authority over our lives. Surrender that authority to the Bible and to God. God. It brings clarity to our lives.

We're so desperate in society to find truth, to find things that we can trust and believe. There's only one source for truth. And it's the most necessary and sufficient book we could ever have, we have ever had, to find the life that God wants for us.

So let's remember to anchor ourselves in God's word. let's read it for guidance, for direction, and for comfort.

[ 32 : 14 ] The Bible, God's word, is all we need. Amen.