The Triune God Has Spoken

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Preacher: Rev. George Sinclair

[0:00] Father, we confess that sometimes when you give us good gifts, they don't feel like they're good gifts to us. They feel like they're uncomfortable burdens.

And Father, we also confess before you that we think, we don't even realize that we're doing this, that we take a good gift that comes from you and think of it as a burden.
We ask, Father, that the Holy Spirit would move with might and power and deep conviction, deep within each of us and as a whole this morning, both those who are present and those online.
And we ask, Father, that your word would do a powerful work in our hearts, that your Holy Spirit would do a powerful work in our hearts, that we might grow in confidence in Jesus, in his word, in his ways, in his plans for us.
And this we ask in the name of Jesus, your Son, and our Savior. Amen. Please be seated. G.K. Chesterton was sort of a famous man of letters back in the day, which was the first sort of three or four decades of the 1900s.
[1:14] And for his day and age, he was a very large man, very, very tall and very, very substantial. And he was very substantial, so to speak, a big body from a very early age.

And he was a young man during the First World War. And there's a story reported by others watching this, that one day an older woman came up and tapped him on the chest and said, young man, how come you are not out at the front?
Because, of course, the First World War was going on at that time, and there was the young man. And she said, young man, why are you not out at the front? And it's reported that he, without missing a beat, he smiled, and he patted his substantial stomach.
And he said, madam, you are mistaken. And if you turn and look at me from the side, you will see I am considerably out at the front. There's a variety of ways that you could tell that joke.
And some of you who are far more funny than I am could probably take that, cut out a couple of bits, add a little bit, and make it vastly more funny. And so one of the features of something like a joke is that there's some things in the joke that you really can't change.
[2:25] You need to keep them there, and other bits you can move around and change and add or shorten. And this is maybe not as obvious for a short little funny story like the one about G.K. Chesterton, but my favorite joke about churches that some of you have heard, and those of you online have not heard it.

Now you're going to hear it for the first time. If you are trying to figure out what the difference is, you know, you've not been part of the Christian church. You're, you know, from a part of the country maybe, a part of the world that don't have many churches, from one of the other great religions, and you can't figure out all these denominations and churches.
Well, here's a very, very simple way to understand the difference between the churches. The Salvation Army, those are the Christians that find you in the gutter or on the street and get you out of the gutter and get you giving you faith, helping you come to faith in Jesus.
And what are Baptists? Baptists are those Christians that get you plugged into a local church and starting to trust the Bible and get you baptized.
Well, what about Presbyterians? Well, Presbyterians are those Christians that are very good at educating you and teaching you, especially in terms of a worldview and really understanding the Christian faith.
[3:37] What about Methodists? Well, they're the Christians who are very, very good at getting you concerned for holiness, a great zeal for personal holiness. Well, what about Pentecostals? Well, Pentecostals are those Christians that really help you to get on fire for the Lord, but really, more importantly, they really get you into pouring your heart out and singing God's praises and into the

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importance of prayer.

What about Anglicans? Well, Anglicans are very good at introducing you to society and culture, and then the Salvation Army picks you up out of the gutter. So in that particular joke, I could have added a couple of other denominations.
I could have added brethren. I could have added Christian Missionary Alliance. I could have added a few other little groups, charismatics maybe. I could have rearranged some of those types of things. But as you can see, there's a part of that joke that if you're going to tell it well, there's certain things that have to just be there.
They have, in a sense, a greater power. All the words matter in the joke, and a good comic knows that every single word matters on one level, but on another level, certain words matter more than others. They have a greater type of power to make the whole thing come together.
It's the same thing not only with jokes, but basically in novels and in any type of thing that involves words. Those of you who have seen the movie The Sixth Sense, and I'm not going to give away the end of it, but you know that there's a couple of key things in that movie that you could redo the whole movie, and you could do it with different actors and different scenes, etc., etc., but there's a couple of key things in that movie, especially something that happens right close to the end, that you can't change that without making the movie a completely and utterly different movie.
[5:14] Certain words, certain parts have a greater, in a sense, power, explanatory power to the whole. Now, the Bible, of course, is also a literary thing.

It's made up of 66 different books, and not only as a whole, but each of the books, there's the same type of thing. All of the words are important, but there's certain words that, in a sense, are more important.
They help you to understand the bigger character of what's going on. Those of you who have been following along, we're going through the book of 2 Timothy, And today, in 2 Timothy, we have one of those bits of the Bible, which is very, very important to understand, not just the book of 2 Timothy, but all of the Bible.
And it's interesting, because this very important little bit, that helps to explain lots of stuff in Christianity, is something which many Christians find very, very troubling and uncomfortable. Rather than seeing it as a gift, they see it as a burden. And part of the reason is, is because non-Christians, most Canadians who are outside of the Christian faith, see this as something completely and utterly ridiculous.
[6:28] Something that would make your co-worker, if they found out that you believed it, you would go down in their estimation. They would say something like, I used to think that George was a smart guy, or Victor was a smart guy, or Lisa was a smart woman, but now that I hear this about her, I, boy, gosh, it's, I guess they're not.

But it really is something that is a gift from God. It's a doorway to profound hope and meaning in life. So let's look at it. We're 2 Timothy chapter 3.
The text we're going to look at today is verses 10 to 17. But this bit, which you need to see, I'm going to look at it first, is verses 16 and 17. 2 Timothy chapter 3, verses 16 and 17.
And some of you have this Bible text memorized. You already know what it is. And just before I start reading it, just a little bit of another timeout. You know I like to do this, a little bit of timeout.
But for those of you who are grammar geeks, there's an interesting grammar geek aspect about verses 16 and 17. And that is, as one academic commentator put it, it's as if Paul is writing 2 Timothy, and he's writing the letter, you know, da-da, da-da, da-da, da-da, da-da.
[7:44] And then at this point in the text, it's as if he drops an anvil into the text. A huge, big, hunking piece of metal. And he just drops it there, and then he continues writing.

And at the level of the original language, that's what Paul does. I guess if they were to try to translate this text in a way that would maybe bring this out to us right now, it would be as if you came to verses 16 and 17, and all of a sudden the font is doubled and bolded.
And it would just be, whoa! Everything else is the same size font, then it comes here, double the size and bolded, and it would sort of shout at you and scream at you. So that's what Paul is actually doing here in this particular text.
And let's look at what it says. It says this, And I'll read it again.
So one of the things which is interesting about that is the first little bit, all scripture.

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[9:06] And some of you, if you're using different Bible translations, it might say every scripture. And so one of the things which is different about English than the language which this was originally written in is that in the original language, Paul uses some words which have two meanings at the same time.

So the original hearers would have heard, in a sense, a double meaning here. We, in English, either have to translate it all or every, because English doesn't have the same feature.
But in the original language, it's also, in a sense, I would say part of God's wisdom that he chose a language where two things could be said at the same time. And the first thing this is making a claim of is to understand that, in a sense, the Bible, whole Bible, ultimately comes from God.
The whole Bible. And some of you who are familiar with Christian circles, Christian circles, you're probably familiar with the idea that's very common in lots of churches.
In fact, I would say that probably most people in the Anglican Church of Canada, from which we were huge, at one time we were a part of it, and we're no longer a part of it, they would say, ah, yes, that might be true. You know, the whole Bible is, in a sense, God's word written.
[10:18] But it doesn't mean that every bit in the Bible is from God. That, in fact, you have to discern the word of God within the word of God. And that's part of the attack of the job of scholars.

But this is where what Paul says here, what the Bible says, is very interesting. Because, in a sense, what he's saying is that this, as a whole, comes ultimately from God.
But when it says every, it then also says, well, if you'd open it up, and every word, every common, every comma, every semicolon, every colon, every phrase, every sentence, every paragraph, every chapter, every book, every testament, is inspired, it comes ultimately from God.
Everything in it is exactly what God wanted to be written. Everything. You see, that's why, traditionally, Christians say that the Bible is inerrant, that it's infallible, that it's authoritative, that it's trustworthy.
Now, right away, some of you can see why I'm saying this is viewed as a little bit of a burden by many Christians, rather than what it should really be taken of, is that this is a profound gift.
[11:39] A profound gift that opens up the door to meaning and to hope. It should be something that excites us and delights us.

But we all know that if this was to be shared with our co-workers, they'd go, no, what are the differences between Canadians and Americans? I don't know if any Americans are watching this. Canadians, we Canadians tend to be passive-aggressive. So in other words, what would happen is if you let your co-workers know about this, they might not say anything at all, but they'd go away rolling their eyes and going, gosh, I thought George was a smart person, but it turns out he's sort of a lunatic religious fanatic.
Like, what goofball would believe something like that? Whereas Americans might just tell you, I don't know. It's really funny. In America, when parents don't like what the school board teaches, they all storm the school board and complain, in Canada, we don't do anything about it at all.
We just complain about it. But anyway, that's a whole other topic and maybe I've just lost you and I shouldn't have talked about something like that. But the point is, is that we all know in our bones that if we were to reveal this to our co-workers, if we were to reveal this to our neighbors, that they would look down their noses at us.
[12:53] They would think that this is a ridiculous type of idea. That this book, written, the early bits may be written 2000 B.C., the last bits written before 70 A.D., that it's all ultimately something that comes from God.

And actually, just before I deal with it, just to make it clear in case you're wondering whether that's in fact what the Bible's claiming, I sort of got out of order. Look at the verse again, all scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.
So not only is it all scripture or every scripture, but breathed out by God makes this very clear as well. And in the original language, what happens is Paul invents a word.
Paul actually invents a word to communicate this. He takes two Greek words and puts them together, and it's the first place in Greek literature, that's my understanding, that this word has actually appeared.
And what he's saying is he's using the analogy of God breathing, and by him breathing, which of course in the rest of the scripture is resonant with the idea of the Holy Spirit and the winds of God

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blowing over creation and all of that, but God breathes, and as he breathes, something comes into existence.
[14:16] So what that text is saying is that the source of this, of the Bible, is very clearly from God. Those of you who are familiar with the Narnia Chronicles, you'll get, C.S. Lewis has captured this idea very, very well in different parts of the Narnia Chronicles.

So for instance, in the book, The Silver Chair, when the two children, Eunice, not Eunice, Eustace and Jill, thank you, when they meet Aslan, Aslan is going to send them on a big task, and he breathes on them, and his breath carries them over to exactly where they are to launch their text. And there's other places where Aslan breathes, and when he breathes, his breath accomplishes something. And that's the idea which is going on here, is that God breathes, and what he breathes accomplishes something.
And if you think about it, it's also a very intimate image. It's in this very image you get the very massive worldview difference between Christianity and Islam. Not all people know this, but in Islam, Muhammad is God, is the prophet of Allah, but it isn't that Allah actually gives the words to Muhammad directly, because you see, at the heart of Islam is that Allah is very separate.
Allah reveals it to an angel, and the angel reveals it to Muhammad. But here we have this image of God breathing something into existence, and this breath is very intimate.
[15:47] It would be as if God is so close to you that you can feel his breath, that God comes, in a sense, so close into the work of what he wants to accomplish that you can feel his breath, you can smell his breath, so to speak.

And it shows the great intimacy. But the original language is making this very, very stark claim. God wanted this book to come into existence. The triune God wanted this book to come into existence. And most Canadians outside the Christian faith think it's ridiculous, and because most non-people outside the Christian faith thinks it's ridiculous, many people within the Christian faith are uncomfortable with the doctrine.
But we should delight in it. Now, several things. Just the other day, I was, I started to have conversations in coffee shops, again, not as often because it's sort of harder and not as many people are in them sitting down.
But I got into a conversation. It was a Saturday. The person saw me working on my sermon. He asked a little bit about it and even why the sermon would be based on the Bible. I started to tell him a little bit about this idea of the inspiration of the Bible, that it comes from God, and Christians want to gather and be taught by God and understand from God.
[16:59] And I could tell that I was losing him. So I said, you know, Joe Rogan, and he said, you've heard of Joe Rogan? He was surprised that I knew of Joe Rogan. And I said, Joe Rogan has put it very well how a lot of people think outside the church.

They said, how on earth can you trust the Bible? Because isn't the Bible just a translation of a translation of a translation of a translation of a translation? And by the time the Bible has been translated, translated, translated, translated, there's just no way you have the original meaning.
It's a very, very common type of idea. And he said, yeah, that's sort of what I think. I said, well, with all due respect to Joe Rogan, he's got it completely and utterly wrong.
I said, that's not how the Bible actually came to be. I said, the Bible came to be. When you look at this text right here, it's not that there's a translation of a translation of a translation of a translation. I said, there's literally thousands and thousands of copies of the, you know, we don't have the very, very first text like of 2 Timothy. But within a very short order, we have people who'd copied 2 Timothy down in the original language.
[17:58] And we have lots of examples of those texts. And I said, there's a whole scientific process by which you can tell when those different things were written. They can look at the writing style.

They can look at the paper or the medium that it's found on. And there's a very, very standard way of being able to go back from that and actually get back to the original text. And I said, you know, for instance, I said, if you read, because you'd seen me reading academic commentaries, I said, if you go to a standard academic commentary, one of the things they talk about is that.
They talk about the different translation things. And I said, if you went and got a good modern version of the Bible, often they'll have little notes about something like that. He was completely, and I was surprised, completely shocked.

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because it's a bit of almost like an urban myth that the Bible is a translation of a translation of a translation of a translation of a translation. And I said to him, in fact, you can be rock solid sure that when you read this, they don't translate this from some other language in some other language. The people who wrote this learned Greek, and we know what the Greek text is, and so they've translated just once into English. This particular friend is a Chinese speaker, and I said, you know, obviously there can be some nuances and stuff, but that's, it's a very accurate type of thing.
[19:14] But I even told him, I said, did you know this? Most non-Christians don't know this. Many Christians don't even know this. There's a standard rule when they're looking at like, you know, one Greek copy of the New Testament, another Greek copy of the New Testament, and there's a bit of a difference in the words.

I said to him, there's a standard rule that is used that the more difficult copy, the more difficult wording is the wording that they'll accept as original because it's part of human nature.
If Paul says something that seems to contradict something else in the Bible, it's human nature for the copyist to want to fix it. It's not usually part of human nature to make it more difficult. So I said, when people coming to it, they see two different wordings, and one's a bit more difficult and one's easy, they always choose the difficult one.
He just, he didn't know, he just didn't, he didn't know that that happened, that that's how much we can trust it. But that's just one aspect of it. So for many people, okay, they'd say, well, okay, even if you get over this idea, okay, so let's trust that, okay, the Bible is in the translation of a translation of a translation of a translation, and I'll accept that when you're reading this, there's a 99.9999% chance that this, every single word you see has been translated from what Paul actually wrote, but George, the whole idea, there's two other types of ideas that are in the back of people's minds that make the whole Bible thing completely and utterly ridiculous, this idea that God has actually spoken.
So one of them would be, it goes back to the whole thing of the elephant. George, you know, you have all these different religions, and it's like blind men coming up to an elephant, and you know, some blind man sees, touches the tail, and another one touches a leg, and another one touches the trunk, and another one touches the side, and they all have these limited perspectives, and from these limited perspectives, they try to, you know, think they know everything that's going on, but George, it's the whole endeavor is completely proud and arrogant, and it just doesn't work.
[21:18] Like, you're trying to think that your limited perspective and your limited words can actually capture God. You're just like those blind men touching different parts of the elephant. And that's a very, very popular and very powerful image for many people outside of the Christian faith, and actually for many Christians, it troubles them.

But you see, the particular image has two really huge problems with it. The first problem is actually insurmountable. The person telling me that is actually presuming that they have knowledge like God, and they can see the whole elephant.
They think they can, so in other words, if my friend was to say that to me, I'd say, one moment, you think, I'm blind, but you're claiming you see, and you can see the whole elephant.
Like, why on earth do you think you can see? Like, who died and made you God? I wouldn't say that to him. That's too abusive. But that's what's going on there.
And the second thing is it's making a complete and utter mistake about what the Bible has just claimed. You see, if you just remember, it says all Scripture is breathed out by God. That's what the text is claiming.
[22:31] It's not saying that Paul had some brilliant mystical visions or that he had this profound aesthetic sense or that he was the best analytic philosopher that had ever existed.

And somehow or another, by the power of his mind, by the power of his mystical experiences, by the power of his, of just whatever was going on, he is able to ascend to God.
No, Christians say that's not what happened at all. Literally, that's the opposite of what the Bible says. Paul is saying that God breaks into our human world and he speaks words that we can understand.
He gives the words. In a sense, to go back to my friend in the story with the elephant, the only person who could actually claim to see the whole elephant is God. And while my friend is thinking he's God and can see the elephant, we Christians are saying, no, no, no, no, no.
All of us are blind men. We're completely and utterly dependent upon God to reveal the elephant to us, to temper our mind and the arrogance that we can easily fall into.

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[23:40] But even if we say something like that, there still is this profound sense that there's just something wrong with this idea that God would break into our human world and that he would communicate by words.

Because at a very, very fundamental level of many, many people outside the Christian faith, they sort of have this idea that words are unworthy of God.
That it's as if surely, if God exists, God is more like the force described in Star Wars. That, you know, surely it's something more like that, some type of power.
It's as if somehow or another we have, it's sort of in the, just in the, underneath people's conscious thought, this idea that words are somehow or other unworthy of God.
But if you walk towards that for a second, you realize that there's a very, very, there's a very deep incoherence there. Now, just a timeout, like a bit of a pause.
[24:49] I don't, I don't say this to offend, especially for those of you who might be watching online, not to offend, because I'm going to use an example from abortion. And, and anytime I talk about abortion, like including now, I, I know very well that abortion's not, sometimes in the world it's made it look as if it's an us versus them thing.

There's absolutely no question that there's some of us here and some of you who are watching who would consider yourselves Christians who've had an abortion or have, in fact, helped people have abortions or encouraged abortions.
So it's not an us versus them thing at all. And I, I don't say this to condemn. I never say this to condemn. And in fact, actually, I mean, we Christians believe that abortion is to take a human life. and so it's wrong. But at the same time, we also realize that the only hope for anybody who's done something wrong is to come to Jesus. And often, those of us who've been involved in an abortion, there's other types of feelings of guilt and other types of things which can reverberate in your life for a long time.
And the only hope you ever really, truly have of dealing with that is actually coming to Jesus and to experience his forgiveness and his love as an acceptance. That he can make all things new.
[26:10] So just, I'm not saying this to condemn for anybody. But here's the problem. What's one of the arguments for abortion? Well, one of the arguments for abortion, I just saw a sign the other day that said, abortion saves lives.

I thought to myself, how would you have a conversation with somebody who says abortion saves lives? Actually, this is what I say all the time. I mean, sometimes I'm a human being and I want to mock them and insult them and all that type of stuff.
But regularly, when I see things like that, I think, how would I have a conversation with them? How would I have a conversation with them? And so, and usually, if you look at it, you'd say, what they'd say is that whenever the human, what's inside the womb doesn't become a human being, they don't listen to medical evidence because all of the medical science shows that the normal life of a human being is it begins as a fertilized egg implanted on the wall of the womb and it ends whenever you die and that's just what human life, that's all human beings are, every human being is like that.
But they'd say, well, you're only a human being but often at the heart of it, they'll use different type of examples and if you don't have, if you're not conscious, you don't have volition, if you don't have these other types of things that make you human, then you're not human.
But one of the things that make you human is being able to speak. It's words. So here's the incoherence.
[27:33] How is it that for the smartest and wisest people in our culture that when you can no longer use words, you're not really fully human and if it's in the womb, it's valid to stop it and if it's at the end of your life and you've come to a point in dementia or of some other type of medical condition that you can no longer speak, that the same very bright lights in our culture would say that that is not really a human life anymore and so therefore another the loss of speech means that you're not even human.

But why at the same time that we think that is so important to make a person human, we think that words are unworthy of God. How does that make any sense?
That's deeply incoherent. Like that's fundamentally incoherent. If we were to find some way of using wormholes and all of that to go to some other distant galaxy and we saw things that maybe were life forms, we might think that they were life and they were very, very interesting, but we would treat it very differently if that life form was able to go beep, beep, beep, beep, beep, beep, beep, beep,

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beep, beep, beep, beep, beep, and we would go, it's not just a plant and it's not just an animal, it's communicating.
Well, why is it that we use words as a sign of a higher thing but when it comes to God we think that somehow or another words are unworthy of Him?
The problem isn't that we're so wise is that we don't realize there's a profound incoherence. And so this news that the triune God has broken into our world to reveal Himself should be something that excites us.
[29:40] And here again science fiction movies help to show the double aspect of our culture. If you see any type of a science fiction movie that's going to involve first contact with aliens, well, first of all if it involves Bruce Willis or Arnold Schwarzenegger you know they're going to have to fight them and kill them because they're bad.

And if it involves some type of thoughtful actress you know it's probably going to be something good where you're going to learn something from them but that's part of the nightmare of our culture. If we were to actually meet life, aliens, would they be someone that's a higher civilization that could just add huge value to us maybe teach us how to stop being at war bring an end to pollution bring great prosperity or would they be somebody who wants to come and invade us and eat us?
Well you'd know early on in how they treat us. and so we have this fundamental divide within us as human beings in terms of science fiction movies and what it reveals and this is why what happens here that all scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching for reproof for correction and for training in righteousness that the man of God may be completely equipped for every good work we see this profound message that it's done within the context of how do we know that this how do we ultimately believe anything in the Bible it's because for God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son to the end that anyone who believes in him will not perish but have everlasting life that ultimately God has revealed himself has made contact with us first contact has already happened and it's been made with us in his word and in acts of deliverance and we can even see it in a very small way within this text look again what it says all scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching for reproof for correction and for training in righteousness that the man of God may be completely equipped for every good work and some of your
English versions will take away the word man of God and translate it in a different way I'm going to have to have another drink in a moment but that's a mistake here's what's going on there why is it that the Christian faith exploded most amongst slaves and women in the first several centuries of the Christian faith well one of the reasons is for this word man of God you see man of God is an Old Testament title and not just an Old Testament title but a great term of respect and importance and significance and what this text is saying is that a man of God they're talking about Moses they're talking about Daniel they're talking about Elijah they're talking about King David a man of God a mighty man of God someone that God mightily uses and why is the Bible so important to Christians why did it grow so quickly amongst women and slaves this text is saying that Ashley when she becomes a Christian is a mighty man of God that Sue that Amanda that Karen that Diane that Kristen when they become a Christian
God is making them through his word a mighty man of God a Daniel a Moses an Elijah a David you see in the book of Romans when it uses the word heir and uses masculine language in terms of a person becoming a Christian and modern translations take away the masculine they're missing what's happened because why was this exciting to women in the Roman world a woman was either somebody who's just going to clean for a man and cook for a man where a man can have sexual relations with her just to fulfill his desires a woman is basically a wife was just basically a person who was there to make sure that the man is able to get an heir to continue the estate and that's really their function and the Bible is saying that if you come to Christ and you accept him as your savior and lord a woman has the status of the oldest son who will inherit everything that a woman is not just a baby producer she has this status of a David a Daniel a Moses a mighty man of God that can make profound difference in the world and this is first contact this is why the Bible is such good news and why we should rejoice in the fact that this text is saying that God has broken into the world to speak and his message is for God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son to the end that all that believe in him will not perish but have everlasting life come to me all who weary and are heavy laden and I will give you rest take my yoke upon you and learn from me for I am gentle and lowly of heart and you will find rest for your souls that's the message daughter of Eve come to me and I will make you inherit as the firstborn son and I will make you a Moses and a

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Daniel and an Elijah in your context in your situation there's profound good news if you could put up the points just very briefly
[35:28] I have to wrap it up the triune God is the ultimate author of the Bible the words in it are the words he wanted in it the triune God is the ultimate author of the Bible the words in it are the words he wanted in it and the second is that from each particular word in the Bible to the Bible as a whole and for every literary unit in between the Bible is God's word written from each particular word in the Bible to the Bible as a whole and for every literary unit in between in between the Bible is God's word written now a couple of things just to wrap this up and I apologize I don't have the time to go into it like I wanted to go up to verse 10 there's a couple of other things here which are very surprising and very humbling but very important to know and I just want to quickly point them out to you look at verse 10 and following you however have followed my teaching my conduct my aim in life my faith my patience my love my steadfastness my persecutions and sufferings that happened to me at Antioch at Iconium and at Lystra which persecutions

I endured yet from them all the Lord rescued me indeed all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted while evil people and imposters will go from bad to worse deceiving and being deceived but as for you continue in what you have learned and firmly believe knowing from whom you learned it just a couple of things here what the Bible is saying here is that there's these little micro decisions that we need to make all the time and sometimes there's macro decisions and one of the micro decisions is will you choose godliness if you don't choose godliness what you're actually choosing is to be deceived or to be evil and to go from bad to worse that's part of what's going on you see we can choose godliness or if we don't choose godly and with it persecution or we can avoid the godliness and persecution but what we're doing is actually choosing deception self-deception and evil so for instance to actually have it come out in conversation you believe the Bible is God's word and have your co-workers think less of you and so you'd be quiet about that to avoid the persecution but what you're actually entering into is these micro decisions of deception of self-deception and that's one of the things which is going on here but the other thing is this that maybe if you could put up the third point that would be very handy the Lord's plan is surprising and humbling the main way to understand his word written is by the teaching and example of ordinary Christians in the church see the word whom you know whom you've learned the Bible from is plural and when Paul is talking about it's not just that we can somehow or another just read the Bible by our fallen human minds and put it together any particular way that we want that we need to look at the book of Acts and we need to look at this and we need to get a sense of what Paul's heart is and the fact that he's willing to endure persecutions and that he won't deny on the truth of God's word he won't compromise on the fact that the grave was empty the tomb was empty that Jesus rose from the dead that he appeared and you need to see these things which are uncompromising you need to see gentleness you need to see love you need to see respect you need to see these patterns of life and interpretation that help you to understand the Bible and put it together and make it real for your own life and it's not a it's not a in a sense a bug a flaw in the system but it's actually a characteristic of the design system that God wanted local congregations and local Christians to teach the Bible and he wanted it to have this situation that kids not only do they learn the Bible from me preaching but they learn the Bible from their mom and their dad reading them Bible stories and praying for them and we learn about the Christian faith by going to Bible studies and having mentors and we try to live examples of what the Christian life is like so that we can not only model we not only teach it but we model it and this isn't sort of a weakness in the system that's how God intended it he intended to use let's be frank really imperfect people to do this some of us have had very imperfect weeks but he uses imperfect people in the power of the Holy Spirit it's part of his design function and one final thing let's read verses 15 to 17 and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus all scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching for reproof for correction and for training in righteousness that the man of God may be complete equipped for every good work if you could put up the point
Claire that would be wonderful or Andrew I think it's Claire reading the Bible as the triune God intended is a means of grace preaching and teaching the Bible as the triune God intended is a means of grace what do I mean for that?
so the best way to understand means of grace as I say time and time again is to think of the story of Jesus turning the water into wine and here's how a means of grace works we all know that if we had

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Hudson and Matthew and Anne design some stone water containers just like they used in the time of Jesus and then they filled them with water and carried them 40 yards the water wouldn't turn into wine and then if you said okay well maybe we just need to be where Jesus actually was originally when he did it so you figure out archaeologically where it actually happened and you get your stone containers you fill them with water you carry them the 40 yards and you look and it didn't turn into wine so how do means of grace work?
means of grace work when you just humbly obey and do what Jesus asks you to do and when you humbly do what Jesus has asked you to do it's a means of grace God takes what's going on in your life which is just water and turns it into wine so is there something magical about reading the Bible? [42:03] no there's nothing magical about reading the Bible but what the Bible what we're hearing here is that to read the Bible is a means of grace if you want to be delivered from lies and know the truth if you want to be rebuked because you're going down a wrong path if you want to be corrected in terms of the right path if you want to live in a way which means that you're connected to God and you're living in a way that pleases God and if you live in a way that pleases God it's going to be good for you it's going to be good for your family it's going to be good for your neighborhood your church your community the city and the world and if you want to do that you need to be reading the scriptures you need to be understanding the scriptures and discussing the scriptures because that's what God does through his word but he doesn't do it as a magical act as a technique he does it he says just do this in obedience to me many of you have had the experience you read the Bible and it's while you're reading the Bible that all of a sudden you might realize it might not even be talking about forgiveness but you have this overwhelming sense that you need to forgive somebody you see it's not a direct one to one relationship it's not as if you just read a text about this and God does this in your life he just says trust me

I've given you this word read you the word read the word in a way to understand me and to understand yourself and spend time reading it with others and teaching others and when you do that God does something in your life it's a means of grace and so we should take the means of grace that come from him you see the means of grace is we find out from the Bible that God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son to the end that all that believe in him should not perish and have everlasting life we hear the words of Jesus come to me who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest take my yoke upon you and learn from me for I am gentle and lowly of heart and you will find rest for your souls for my burden is easy and my I got the rest of it I didn't remember it correctly but you get the idea my yoke is easy but my burden is light my yoke is easy and the burden is light and the Christian faith to become wise for salvation is that when we take Jesus at his word and trust him that he will take our heavy heart he will fit us for heaven he has swallowed your doom and mine in his death upon the cross and when we put our hands in his hands he will not turn us away but take our hands and as our hands touch his hands by faith our doom is taken away and the destiny that he deserved is bestowed upon us all out of grace and all out of love and just as that is the way the Christian life begins so the Christian life grows by reading the Bible you look at it and it looks weird it's hard to understand that's fine read the Bible don't understand that's fine read the Bible talk to others about it start to learn how to understand it and as you do it
God does something in your life because the Bible is his profound powerful means of grace please stand let's bow our heads in prayer Father we I began I began Father by praying and acknowledging how sometimes the things that you give us that are really very profound gifts that we actually sort of look at them askance thinking that maybe they're more of a burden than a gift because the world would see that gift as something ridiculous we ask Father that you would continue to do your wonderful work of healing in our hearts and minds and lives as we trust your means of grace as we trust your word and we give you thanks and praise Father that you have spoken to us and that your word is a means of grace it's the means by which we know Jesus and come to a saving faith in Christ it is the means by which you speak into our heart to rule and change our hearts and lives to teach us the truth to deliver us from this self-deception to deliver us from lies and idols and errors to point us in the right direction when we go astray and to keep us in the right direction and to actually receive life from you as we read your word and follow Jesus and we ask Father that you would help us to be students of your word and humbly come to your word trusting that you will do a work of grace in our lives for our good for the good of our city and for your great glory and we ask this in the name of Jesus your son and our savior amen

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