

God-Breathed

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[0 : 0 0] Well, it's been about two and a half months since I preached a sermon, and while I enjoyed having a break from weekly sermon prep over the summer, I'm also excited to be back at it this Sunday and to open the Word of God together with you.

This thing that we do right here every Sunday morning is arguably the most important thing that we do together as a church. And I'll say more about why this is later, because our passage this morning is actually going to speak to this.

We're once again picking up the words of the Apostle Paul to Timothy, Paul's second letter to Timothy, and quite likely one of Paul's last letters written.

If you remember from earlier this year, Paul at the time of this writing is in prison, and he is very near the end. History has it that not long after this, he was executed in Rome.

And so these are like Paul's last words. And you can hear it. You can feel it, even as you read through this letter. These are the words of a man who knows his days are numbered.

[1 : 1 6] And he's writing to encourage and instruct the younger man, Timothy, who is right now serving as a leader in and around the church of Ephesus.

Now I'm not going to recap the whole letter for us this morning, but I would encourage you to have a read through it again this week. My last message back in June was on chapter 3, verses 10 to 15, and so I'm going to read verses 10 to 17 for us this morning.

And then we'll continue on from verse 15 to the end of the chapter. So 2 Timothy chapter 3, we're picking it up in verse 10.

You, however, know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, persecutions, sufferings.

What kinds of things happened to me in Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra, the persecutions I endured, yet the Lord rescued me from all of them.

[2 : 3 7] In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evildoers and imposters will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the holy scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

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.

So the first thing we hear Paul do is to encourage Timothy with the example of his own life.

You know my teaching. You know my life. You know my purpose, and so on. His main point here is something like, Timothy, you can trust me. Unlike the evildoers and imposters of our day, you know me.

[4 : 0 6] You know I am the real deal. You know that my life and my teaching match. And then here he points out another trustworthy source for Timothy.

In contrast to the religious imposters and pretenders of Timothy's day who cannot be trusted, there is a source of truth that can be relied on, which can be trusted, and it is the holy scriptures.

This is what Paul is referring to when he says, Continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of. What you have known from childhood.

The holy scriptures. And it's worth mentioning here, Paul mentions it. How did Timothy learn the truth that is in the holy scriptures?

He says, Because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the holy scriptures. Who did Timothy learn the holy scriptures from, from the time that he was a little child?

[5 : 20] The answer is in chapter 1, verse 5, right at the beginning of the letter. It says there, I am reminded of your sincere faith, Timothy, which first lived in your grandmother, Lois, and in your mother, Eunice, and I am persuaded now lives in you also.

So Timothy learned and became convinced of the truth in the holy scriptures because his grandmother and his mother taught them to him.

They had sincere faith in God, and so they did what God commanded, and they taught the holy scriptures to Timothy. This is to be further confirmation to Timothy.

Because you know those from whom you learned it. Again, it's not just Paul, who has been a godly example worth following, but look at your own mother, and your grandmother, Timothy.

They too are the real deal. And you can trust what they taught you since you were a child, because look at how their lives match their message.

[6 : 33] Unlike with these imposters we are seeing around us. Do you hear this? The life of Timothy's mom and his grandma have become like anchors for Timothy in the storm that he now finds himself in.

Many are turning away from Paul. Imposters and false teachers are arising. But Paul tells Timothy to look at the example of faith in his mother and grandmother and be reminded that the holy scriptures that they taught him are true.

Now, I know this is a tangent that I'm about to go on, but it is worth mentioning here. Are parents responsible to teach their children the holy scriptures?

Are parents responsible to teach their children the truth about God? Are they responsible to exhort them to have faith in God and to follow God?

Two passages have been on my mind in the past several weeks. First, there is what God said to the Israelites long ago in the Old Testament law.

[7 : 59] Deuteronomy 6, verse 4. Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.

These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts, impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.

So God commanded the Israelites long ago to teach their children his commands. And not just once a week, but all throughout the course of the day and throughout the various activities of the day.

Back in the Old Testament, that's what God commanded. And then as we look to the New Testament, this is what Paul himself wrote about this to the church at Ephesus.

I'm reading from Ephesians chapter 6. He writes there, The first commandment is, honor your father and mother, which is the first commandment with a promise, so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.

[9 : 24] Fathers, do not exasperate your children. Instead, bring them up in the training and the instruction of the Lord.

Now, it's easy for us who are fathers to get focused in on that word, exasperate, and we get thinking about our interactions with our children. And have I been patient with them?

Have I been given to anger with them? Have I been putting on them a load of expectation that even I couldn't carry when I was his age? And these are great questions to ask.

For us who are fathers. But let's not miss the rest of the verse here. That's what we should not do. We should not exasperate our children. But what should we do?

Do not exasperate your children. Instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord. Are parents responsible to teach their children the Holy Scriptures?

[10 : 36] Yes. Are parents responsible to teach their children the truth about God and exhort their children to have faith in him and to follow him?

Yes. And not just parents, but us who are fathers. This has been charged to us by Christ.

This task is ours. And we notice what it does not say here. It does not say, Fathers, bring your children to church so that Pastor Josh and the alive teachers can bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

It says, Fathers, you do this for your own children. And yes, part of that will include bringing your children to church and to alive and to youth group.

But the bulk of that responsibility is on your shoulders, Dad. And of course, there are situations when this doesn't happen.

[11 : 41] Maybe Dad isn't a believer, but maybe Mom is. Or maybe neither of the parents are. And this is why it's important for us to do things like alive in our church for the children.

In fact, we notice that Paul does not even mention Timothy's father as an example to follow. It's the sincere faith of his mother and grandmother.

But where was Timothy's dad? Timothy's dad was a Greek, but it would seem that he was not a believing Greek. And so his mother and grandmother taught him the scriptures and taught him to know and love the Lord.

What are you doing in your household not just to encourage, but to bring up your children in the training and instruction of the Lord?

this is going to require more than just telling them, son, read your Bible every day and believe it. If you have children at home with you, I strongly encourage you to consider incorporating some kind of family devotional time into your family routine.

[13 : 02] Donald Whitney, a professor at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, has written this wonderfully brief and helpful little book called Family Worship.

And it's a fantastic starting place if you've never done anything like this before. He says it can be as simple as read, pray, and sing. each day to read a passage of Scripture together from the Scriptures, pray together for a few minutes, and sing a song of praise together.

Even ten minutes a day after supper is a great place to start. And as you get into this with your kids, it may not seem natural or rich at first, but stick with it.

You're creating the time and the space and the place for conversations about the Lord Jesus to happen. And questions may arise as you read the Scriptures together and you may not be a gifted teacher, but you can explain to your kids what you think God is saying in a passage and how we should live in obedience to it.

Fathers, this is your responsibility to lead in this. And if you want to get started with something and have no idea what to do, come and talk to me and we'll get you a copy of this wonderfully brief little book to help you get started.

[14 : 37] But back to the main point here and Paul's letter to Timothy. Here in 2 Timothy 3 verse 15 he says, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of because you know those from whom you learned it and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

There's two things we want to see here. First, what are the Holy Scriptures? What are the Scriptures that Paul is talking about?

And second, what does trusting these Scriptures do for a person? So let's tackle that first one. What are the Holy Scriptures?

Which Scriptures is Paul talking about? Notice, Paul says that Timothy has known these Holy Scriptures from infancy.

From infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures. And if we think through the chronology given us in the book of Acts and how Timothy was old enough to understand and witness the sufferings of Paul when Paul first came through Lystra with the Gospel, these Holy Scriptures Paul is referring to are undoubtedly the Old Testament Scriptures which Timothy's Jewish mother would have taught him.

[16 : 22] I mean, the New Testament Scriptures hadn't even been written yet when Timothy was a child. And by this time, the time of this second letter to Timothy, only some of the New Testament Scriptures had been written.

This letter is a part of them. Another way to say all this, Timothy's Bible growing up was only the Old Testament. That's the specific Scriptures in view as Paul tells Timothy here to remember the truth that he has learned and become convinced of from the Holy Scriptures.

And this becomes especially important as we get to verse 16 where Paul says, all Scripture is God breathed and is useful for teaching and rebuking and correcting and training in righteousness.

All Scripture includes the Old Testament. In context here for Timothy, it was primarily the Old Testament Scriptures.

So let's consider now the second thing that we want to see here. What does trusting these Scriptures do for a person? how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

[17 : 53] We notice the care that Paul takes in his wording here. He does not say that the Old Testament Scriptures are what saves you by believing in them. He does say that they are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

So it's faith in Christ Jesus that brings salvation. Believing in Jesus Christ is what we must do to be saved.

And the Old Testament did not reveal Jesus because he hadn't come yet. But the Old Testament laid the foundation salvation for Timothy.

It prepared him to understand and receive Christ Jesus by faith when he came. So the Old Testament Scriptures can make us wise about how to be saved because they point forward to the Savior, the Christ.

Christ. So in ten years when Paul is dead and Timothy perhaps is in jail and false teachers and impostors and wicked men are surrounding him like a pack of dogs hungry for his blood and when the judge gives Timothy the option to renounce his faith in Jesus, what does Paul want Timothy to do in those moments when doubts may arise?

[19 : 28] Remember the Holy Scriptures which you learned from your mom and your grandma. Remember the holy words of our God.

It was he who made all these wonderful promises concerning the Christ through Moses and the prophets. It was he who foreshadowed it how things would go with Jesus Christ hundreds and thousands of years prior in the lives of men like Joseph, David, Solomon, Daniel, and in the ordinances of Israel with the Passover and the sacrifices, it was God who foretold the rising of his chosen king from the dead.

If doubt gets a hold of you, Timothy, shake it off by going back to that which we can be confident in, the holy words of God which announced and declared and foretold and foreshadowed this good news of Jesus coming for salvation long before we were even born.

The Old Testament is able to make us wise for salvation, specifically the salvation that comes through faith in Christ Jesus.

And this actually makes a lot of sense when we stop to think about it. Where do we first come to learn about sin? The Old Testament. Where do we first learn that our sin warrants punishment because God is just?

[21 : 18] The Old Testament Scriptures. Where do we also hear that God is merciful and that he forgives sin? The Old Testament. Where do we first learn that forgiveness of sins can only come through a blood sacrifice?

The Old Testament Scriptures. Where do we first learn that there's going to be a forever kingdom for the people of God? The Old Testament Scriptures.

And I could go on for a long time here, but I think you get the point. And so we must not neglect the Old Testament Scriptures. This is why we are crazy enough here in our church to take two out of every three years with our kids in alive to work through the Old Testament.

It is the foundation for the Gospel. The Old Testament Scriptures are able to make our kids wise for salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.

They are able to prepare the heart and mind to understand what's going on so that by the time we come to the New Testament, we understand, we appreciate why we need Jesus in the first place.

[22 : 41] In fact, I will be so bold as to say that even for the adult who has grown up never going to church, half of what's in the Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, half of it doesn't even make sense.

unless you know what's in the Old Testament. Let us not neglect the Old Testament. Oh, but I'm already saved, Pastor Josh.

I believe in Jesus. I've learned what I need to from the Old Testament and now I just mostly read the New Testament. But wait, Paul has more to say here.

All Scripture is God breathed, he says. All includes the Old Testament. And all of it is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

God So the Old Testament doesn't only make us wise for salvation, it too is part of the All Scripture that is useful.

[24 : 08] It's not irrelevant to our lives today. All Scripture, even the Old Testament is useful to us today. It's useful for teaching us, teaching us about who God is and who we are and what's

happening in the grand story of our world.

It's useful for rebuking and correcting. And because all of us are sinners and are still tempted by many things and even fall into sin or stray from God's ways, we need rebuking and correcting at times.

And the Old Testament in particular is a treasure trove of divine material perfectly suited to helping us see the error in our ways and the path back to God.

And there's more. All Scripture is useful, even the Old Testament, for training in righteousness. Do you want to know how to live a righteous life as a follower of Jesus today in 2024?

All Scripture, even the Old Testament, is useful for training us how. All Scripture, even the Old Testament, is useful so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped, for every good work, writes Paul.

[25 : 49] Do you want to be thoroughly equipped for every good work? Do you want to have just what you need from God to do the many good things that he would like you to do in life?

All of this is useful for God's God's God's God's God's God's life situations and circumstances.

Even the Old Testament. Let's just camp for a moment on the word all here. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for these good purposes in our lives.

All Scripture includes the history of Genesis and how our world began. All Scripture includes the commands God gave in the law through Moses.

It includes the details of the various covenants that God has made with man. All Scripture includes the prayers and the poetry of the Bible, the songs and the Psalms.

[26 : 58] Psalms. There once was a Christian man who said to me, I hate the Psalms. There's too much expression of feelings in them that I just can't relate to. But they too are God-breathed and are useful to teach us, correct us, train us, and equip us.

All Scripture includes the book of Ruth and the book of Esther. Sometimes we men would rather read about David and his mighty men fighting battles against the uncircumcised Philistines.

But God has something useful to us in Ruth and Esther as well. In Job and in some of those difficult books written by the prophets, all Scripture even includes the lists and numbers and genealogies of the Bible as our brother Nate reminded us of last Sunday.

We may have our preferences we may have our favorite passages and even genres in the Bible but we should choose to love all of the Scriptures.

Old Testament and new, poetry and prose. May we not neglect any of it for the reason that we think it's irrelevant or boring.

[28 : 18] Paul is telling us right here that it's not. We just haven't seen perhaps or appreciated what God has there in a particular passage for us yet.

How many of you have ever spent money on tools? Maybe a saw or a drill, a wrench, a pair of pliers, a hammer? Many of us have at least one toolbox full of tools.

Some of you I know have entire sheds and even shops full of them and tools are awesome because sometimes you need just the right device to fix something or to build something, to get the job done or that project finished.

Wouldn't it be awesome though if instead of going to home hardware to get another tool every time that you do something new, wouldn't it be awesome if you could just get a toolbox that has every tool you'd ever need in it for the rest of your life?

Wouldn't it be awesome if the toolbox was only this big? That's essentially what Jesus is saying to us here.

[29 : 41] all scripture is God breathed and is useful so that you might be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Every good thing that God wants you to do in your life, every one of them, what you need to do every one of those things, the equipment you need is right here in the holy breathed writings, the holy God breathed writings, the scriptures that he has given us.

We tend to underestimate the value, not just of the Old Testament writings, but of this entire book. I mean, it almost sounds too good to be true, doesn't it?

Can a single book, a single collection of writings be the perfect multi-tool for all of life's work? can it be the toolbox with no bottom, having just the thing we need for all of life's moments and situations? That's what Jesus is telling us here through Paul. Believe it so that the servant of God, man of God, may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

[31 : 10] How can this be true? It's true because of where this book comes from. Let's just look at our last word for today. All scripture is God breathed.

Now I want to dig into this word for a minute with you. In the original Greek that this was written in, this word is just one word. And it's basically the word God and the word breathed sandwiched together to make one word, as you can see on the screen there.

Here's a place where I think the translation of the Bible you use is significant. The New International Version, which is the translation on screen, renders this best.

Some of the other translations render this as inspired by God or something similar to that. Some of them have a footnote which says that this is literally God breathed or breathed out by God.

So this is not a disputed thing. But here's why this matters. Today, in our modern English, the word inspired often means just to have a great idea or to influence something.

[32 : 37] You might watch a movie that tells the true story of something that happened in history. But then if you're like me, you might want to look it up online and see how accurate the movie was.

and you might be surprised to find out that the movie actually embellished a few things and changed a few things. Or in some cases, you might find out that it was inspired by a true story, but only very, very loosely.

Sometimes the movie barely resembles the true story that it was based on because it was inspired only in the sense of giving one great idea or one big motivation for the film.

But scripture is not inspired like that. God didn't loosely impress his ideas upon the biblical writers such that they wrote some things that have only some of his wisdom or ideas in them.

In fact, in my opinion, inspired has never been the best translation of this word because even 400 years ago when the King James was first translated, to inspire meant to breathe in, to inhale.

[33 : 59] And you can sort of see how the word came to mean what it does today. If someone was under the influence of something in the air, they might behave differently.

Some of the pagan worship over the centuries has involved smoking or breathing in of stuff that when burned causes hallucinations.

But this word that's used here in the original is not about breathing in. It's about breathing out. That the scriptures are God breathed means that God breathed out the words that are in the scriptures. As the biblical authors put pen to paper and wrote. God was breathing out the words they were writing such that those words were ultimately coming from God's mouth.

In, with, and under the words the biblical authors wrote was God's own spirit, God's breath, such that the words they wrote on the papyrus ultimately have their source in the mind and heart of God.

[35 : 24] God's love. And this is the key. If we're wondering how an old collection of writings like the Bible can be useful and relevant to us today, equipping us for every good work, this is how.

This is why. Because it's not just the thoughts and ideas of men from 2,000 plus years ago. These words ultimately come from God himself.

He breathed them out as men like the apostle Paul wrote them down. This is why the scriptures are so valuable.

This is why Paul tells Timothy to remember the scriptures and anchor yourself in the scriptures.

They are the words of God himself.

And so they have everything you need for life, for the situation you find yourself in, for every good work that God has given you to do.

[36 : 29] Once we wrap our minds around this truth, that these words in our Bibles come from God and are his words, it changes everything. And this is not just an old book anymore.

This is the single most important book on planet Earth. God is God to God to God. And this thing we do on Sunday mornings, having a sermon from the word of God, is arguably the most important thing we do.

And this is why. During this time on Sundays, we open up and read and unpack and reflect, not just on some thoughts of a dude who lived 2,000 years ago, but on the very words of God himself, our creator.

And if we have everything else wrong in how we do church, how we are living life, but we have this one thing right, that we are regularly and continuously going back to the words God has given us, the scriptures, then the rest will follow in time.

Day by day, week by week, year after year, God's word as we hear it and believe it and obey it will teach us. It will correct us as a church.

[37 : 58] It will give us the timely rebukes that we need. And it will train us in righteous living. It will equip us as a church for the good works that God has prepared in advance for us to do here in this community.

sometimes we think of God's word as being a part of what we do at church but it's so much more than that. God's word is what forms his church. It's what shapes us and molds us and nurtures us and grows us so that we are the church that God desires us to be.

Almost 20 years ago now our church went through a difficult time. And it was around that time that our church changed its name. I'm not going to go into all the details of it but after withdrawing from a particular conference of churches for the first time in decades we had no affiliation with other churches not with the associated gospel churches not with the Baptist churches and at that time those who remained sought the Lord together about what to change our church name to and the name chosen was the Davidson Community Bible Church who are we as a church in this community of Davidson what is it that most defines us what is it that determines how we operate and what we value and how we should live our answer as a church is not the

Pope not some archbishop or king or council not tradition but the Bible this is our highest authority because these words we believe are God breathed and useful to equip us and so I smile every time someone refers to our church by its nickname the Bible church church because while that may sound weird or pretentious that's what we want to be it doesn't mean we follow the Bible perfectly or know it better than everyone else it means we value it supremely above all other sources as the word of God it means that we are aiming to submit ourselves to his authoritative words in our lives and so may we continue as a church to treasure these words which God has given us may we continue to be changed by them let's pray