

The Bible, part 1

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[0 : 0 0] All righty. Open your Bibles to 2 Timothy chapter 3.

2 Timothy chapter 3. I'm going to take a look at verse 16 and 17, and mostly just 16.

Next week we'll take up 17. And then next week we'll look at chapter 4 verses 1 through about 5 or 8. And just kind of a three-week series on the Word of God.

Because nothing else that we say or do, nothing else that we talk about will matter if we don't have a good foundation from which to talk and to speak and to think about.

And so I want to read the passage and then we'll pray and then we will get going. This is the New American Standard 2020.

[0 : 5 9] I'm not 100% sure that I like it. We'll see. The 95 has always been a nice, good, strong standard that I love. You may have a different translation, but that's okay.

We'll make it through together. All right. Here we go. 2 Timothy chapter 3, beginning of verse 16. All Scripture is inspired by God and beneficial for teaching, for rebuke, for correction, for training in righteousness, so that the man or woman of God may be fully capable, equipped for every good work.

Let's pray together. Father, we thank you for your Word and we do pray that you would help us to know, to understand what this means. Lord, do not let us succumb to the idea of what it means to us.

But Lord, we want to know your mind on these things so that we might think your thoughts after you. So help us, we pray, in the name of Christ.

Amen. So there's a lot of questions that we could ask in life. There's a lot of questions we probably should ask in life. I thought I would just kind of hit at a few of these questions.

[2 : 1 5] Some of these you're going to find yourself identifying with, and some of these questions you're going to find, wow, that's a very controversial question. Good. Let's go for it. Number one, what is a woman?

What is a man? How long should a person work before they retire? What is the best method for parenting?

Should you attend a so-called same-sex marriage? How should we feel about abortion? What does it mean for a Christian to be coming closer to death?

Is it right for me as a Christian to get angry? What is the purpose and place of the church in my life?

How did life begin on this planet? What do I do when I lose a loved one? How should we grieve?

[3 : 2 7] How do we prepare ourselves for death? I'm struggling with depression or anxiety. What does the Bible have to say about these things?

There are so many questions. There's so many questions that we ought to ask, so many things that we should ask, and these are great questions, and some of them may make you really uncomfortable, but the point is this.

I'm not going to answer those questions. I'm really concerned with not so much what the answer is as much as how we answer them.

I don't know if you understand the difference in what I'm talking about, but on one hand, we could sit here and we could go through a list of questions and give what we think is the right answer, but I'm more concerned with us getting to the place of saying, anytime there's a question, this is how we should answer that question.

This is the direction we should go. Let me see if I can give you some examples so you can understand what I'm talking about. Some people would look at such questions and they would use their tradition to answer these questions.

[4 : 37] This is what my mama taught me. This is what my daddy taught me, and this is the way it's always been, and so this is the way I think about these questions. The only problem that I ever see with tradition is that when we encounter a relationship close to us, that emotional attachment has a tendency to make us waffle on our tradition and adopt new ideas.

Some people will use the idea of popular opinion. Well, most people believe this way. Most Christians think this way. Why not go with just the majority opinion?

The problem is the majority can be wrong. And some people would even use what they would call the feel test. In other words, this doesn't really feel right.

I mean, I hear the question, I hear the answer, and I look at the answer, and that just doesn't hit me right. That doesn't feel right. That doesn't seem like the right thing. And the problem with all of these is these are man's way, these are human ways for us to try to figure out answers to really big questions.

And I want to argue this morning that there's only one eternal rock-solid standard by which we can answer such questions, and it is the Word of God.

[6 : 08] And I want us to be committed to the Word of God. I want you to have such a trust in the Word of God, and I can't do that, but I can present information and pray that the Lord would use this to convict you in your own belief to be solely committed to the Word of God.

And the way that I think we do that is we come to understand what it means that the Bible is inspired. So under two headings this morning, I want to talk about what does it mean to be inspired, and then what does inspired mean?

I know that sounds like I'm saying the same thing, but it's not, and you'll see what I'm saying in just a second. So let's just talk about this Word. It's right there in verse 16 that all Scripture is inspired. Now, I don't know what you know, so I'm just going to cover lots of ground here.

So if I'm saying something you already know, that's fine. It's just going to confirm it for you. But hopefully you understand and know that the Bible was not written in English. The Bible was written in the Old Testament in Hebrew and Aramaic, and then the New Testament was written in Greek.

So what we're reading right here was once in Greek, and sometimes we have to get behind the English to sort of figure out what's going on here. And this word inspired is a Greek word that has two parts.

[7 : 30] The first part is God. As a matter of fact, it's the Greek word theos, where we get God from, where we get the word theology from.

You ever heard the word theology? Theology is the word that means study of God, because theos is God. So the first part of this word is God. The second part of this word is the word that is used for spirit or breath.

Spirit or breath, pneuma. And so what you have in this word is you have God breathed. That's what it means, this word inspired, that the scriptures are breathed out by God.

God breathed the scriptures. An illustration of this is there in Genesis chapter 2, verse 7. It's where God is creating man, and we get this close-up image of it in Genesis chapter 2.

And it says there, God made man, so he starts with something that he's made, and as he's made this, he breathes into it, and it is now alive.

[8 : 51] Adam is a living being. So too, the word of God is a whole creation by God himself. There's not a single part of it that is not touched by God.

Every word of scripture is breathed out by God. All of it is his. How did he do this? According to 2 Peter chapter 1, verse 20 and 21, as it speaks about the prophecy that no prophecy is ever made by the act of human will, right at the end of verse 21, it says this, men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

Every word is breathed out by God, and men moved by the Holy Spirit wrote what those words were.

Now, this is where in my preaching, and I just like to let you know sort of the inner workings of how I preach, I usually have points, and after I've kind of made my emphasis and point in this one, which is what does it mean inspired, now I switch in the middle of this point to trying to apply that, trying to help us understand what do we need to think or do or live in such a way because of the truth that this is inspired.

Well, here's the application. If you and I are Christians, we need to believe this truth. Yeah, you can go ahead and say, hey, man, you're not going to hurt my feelings, I promise.

[10 : 19] You're all probably sitting there going like, oh my goodness, what is this weird guy doing? Yeah, I'm weird, that's okay. But here we go. So here's the thing. The point is, is that all Scripture is breathed out by God, and as a Christian, you must believe this.

Without believing this, you're not Christian. I'll let that hang in the air for just a second. There are some people who do refuse to believe this.

They call themselves Christians, but they don't want to believe that the Scriptures are breathed out by God. Instead, they want to say that maybe some of the Scriptures are breathed out by God or parts of it, but they want to cut off the rest of it.

But here's the thing. If the Bible is what tells us about who Jesus is and salvation, and you don't believe the Bible is breathed out by God, there's no way that you can be a Christian because you don't believe the very thing that it teaches.

Now, that doesn't mean that as a Christian, you're not going to struggle with the Bible. You might say to yourself, I believe that the Bible's from God.

[11 : 32] I believe it's breathed out by God, but it's weird. I don't understand Leviticus. Why in the world does it have this in there? Why did they say it this way?

You might struggle with it because you don't understand it, and that is a different thing than saying, I refuse to believe it. Do you understand what I'm saying? I'm trying to give you some space here so you can understand that it's okay to look at the Bible and say, I just don't get it.

It's okay. You might not ever get that part of it, but let's launch into the places that you do. You might struggle, though, also, because as you look at the Bible and you read it and you match your life up to the Bible, you might say, my life doesn't match up.

Well, that should be the case for all of us. We should all have a place where we struggle because as we read God's Word, we know that we don't match up. We don't live up to what is there.

What I'm just saying to you is this, is that if you're a Christian, we need to believe that the Scriptures are breathed out by God. But if you're not a Christian, then I want you to understand something because every time I preach, I talk to Christians and non-Christians both, whether there's any non-Christians here or not.

[12 : 49] All of you can be Christians, but I'm going to still preach to non-Christians. And the reason I'm going to do that is because I want you to know what you can say to non-Christians. But I would guarantee you, I'm not a betting man, but I would bet that there's perhaps maybe somebody here who doesn't know the Lord.

Or maybe there's somebody who might watch this at some point later who doesn't know the Lord. And so we need to address this, and this is what we need to address. If the Bible really is breathed out by God, then the person who is not a Christian needs to understand that it is not our responsibility to convince you that it is the Word of God.

I know that sounds contradictory, right? Because if I were to come up and tell you, listen, I got this new diet drink, it has helped me lose weight, it's helped me have lots of energy, and it also cures cancer.

And you look at me and say, prove it. Well, that's a right thing to say, right? Because this is a man-made product that I'm saying has great claims about it, and I'm making great claims about it, and I need to be able to prove it.

But the problem is, is the Word of God is not a man-made product. The Word of God is from God, breathed out by God, and we do not get to stand in judgment over God.

[14 : 03] We don't get to look at His Word and say, well, I'll think that that's God's Word. No, no, it is, whether you like it or not. God and His Word are not like Tinkerbell. They don't need you to believe in them in order for them to be true.

But I will tell you what our responsibility is, and our responsibility is to tell you what the Bible says. And what the Bible says is that we're all sinners, and we fall short of the glory of God, and we have never loved God the way we ought to, and because of that, we're guilty before God, and we deserve His wrath, His anger, and His punishment.

But in His great love, He sent His Son into this world to take the punishment for us, so that if we would turn and trust in Christ, we will escape the punishment and have the reward of heaven with God, with the Father, with the Son, the Holy Spirit for eternity.

And while I may not sit here and defend to you that this is the Word of God, I will tell you, by the Word of God, you can have eternal life. So when we say then, what is it that the Bible is inspired?

It means that it is breathed out by God. So if it is breathed out by God, I'm gonna move to my second point here. If it is breathed out by God, what does that mean? What are some things that that really hits on that should make us think about as we think about it being breathed out by God?

[15 : 30] And I have three things that I just wanna suggest to you. The first is this. All Scripture is breathed out by God means all Scripture.

The 66 books of the Old and New Testament. Not a book more, not a book less. Now, we could sit here and I could go through a very technical discussion with you of how we know what's in the Bible.

We could go through and talk about a very technical discussion when Paul says Scripture, what does Paul have in his mind? I have a whole list. I was gonna bring that this morning and I thought to myself, it's a pretty lengthy list and I might have a tendency to just ramble so much that you guys would be like, what, that's just so many verses coming at me.

Yeah. So if you want to know the inner workings of that, I'd be glad to sit down with you, hand you my notes so you can see that. But here's the bottom line. The bottom line is that from Genesis to Revelation, all Scripture is breathed out by God.

Even those places that you're looking at and you're going like, this is weird. Leviticus? I know, every year you go start to read your Bible through and you get to Leviticus and you just kind of slow down and kind of go like, I just don't, what is all this?

[16 : 44] This is weird, right? It's breathed out by God. You might not understand it. You might not even like it. But the point is, is it's breathed out.

There's not a single part of it that is not breathed out by God. That means you can trust every part of the Bible. Secondly, if the Word of God is breathed out by God, it means that the Bible is sufficient.

And I want you to say that word with me. Everybody say this word, sufficient. That is a, we know that word, but we don't really know that word. So let's dive into this for a second. If you'll notice in verse 17, it says, so that the man of God may be fully capable and equipped.

The point is this. The idea is that this person is now fully equipped, or some translations use the word adequate. And they're adequate for good works.

They're fully capable for good works. So this sufficient, this sufficient that we sort of understand, means this idea of this, that the Bible is enough for a Christian to be able to do good works.

[18 : 00] You say, what are you talking about? What sort of good works? Well, let's remember that a good work is anything God has commanded us to do. A good work is not just something I create out of my own mind, but it's something God has commanded us to do.

And anything he's commanded us to do, the Bible is enough to equip us so we can do it. So let me give you some examples. A pastor preaching, counseling, training, and caring for the congregation as he's commanded to do, the word of God is enough to equip him to do it.

A husband who is to disciple his wife, disciple his children, disciple his friends, exercise dominion over the world that God has commanded him to do so.

The Bible is enough to equip him to do this. A wife living in submission to her husband, raising her children in the instruction of the Lord, living as God commands her to live in Scripture, the word of God is enough to equip her to do that.

A Christian who seeks to evangelize and disciple or care or minister to other people, the Bible is enough to equip them to do this. Any Christian who seeks to fight against their own sin, struggle against their emotions, deal with their own fears, the Bible is enough to equip them to do this.

[19 : 27] They don't need anything more than just the Bible. The Bible is adequate, sufficient, and enough. Even Peter agrees with Paul's statement here in 2 Peter 1 where he's talking to these Christians and he says to them, grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

Verse 3, seeing that his divine power has granted to us everything, now, how much is everything?

everything. It's all of it. Okay? Everything pertaining to life and to godliness. You want to know how to live life?

You want to know how to be godly? You want to be able to do life the way God intended you to do life? You want to live the way God intended you to live? You want to be able to be obedient to him?

His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness. How? Through the true knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and excellence. In other words, by the knowledge of God, by the knowledge of Christ, that's how we are equipped to live life the way he's called us to live.

[20 : 51] So we can trust the Bible because it is enough for our daily life, enough for us to deal with the troubles of life, enough for us to deal with the sufferings and the difficult times that come.

And the third thing, if you take and look that all the scripture is God breathed and it is therefore enough, it is then thirdly our authority.

The Bible is our authority. Every word breathed out by God and since God is our ultimate authority, then the Bible is our ultimate authority.

Think about how many times the Old Testament says, thus says the Lord, thus says the Lord, thus says the Lord. It says that in order to bring the weight of his authority saying this is God's word, you need to live this out, you need to believe this, every word from God and as the authority he tells us what we should believe and how we should act.

I don't get to decide on my own what I'm going to believe. I don't get to decide on my own how I'm going to live out this Christian life.

[22 : 08] This, this word of God, this is what tells me what I ought to do. This is why there's a conflict between the world out there and Christians in here because we live by the word of God and they hate God.

There will always be conflict. So the big idea, we'll just get right back to it and just make a couple applications, but the big idea of this whole thing is that everyone needs to believe, to trust, to love the Bible.

It doesn't matter who you are, it doesn't matter what you claim as a truth, it doesn't matter how you feel about it. you should love, believe, and trust the Bible.

You should order your life by the word of God. And those who are not Christians, who don't trust his word, who don't read his word, they don't order their life by his word, I know there's a lot of people who claim to be Christians, but they don't order their life by his word.

They barely even pick it up. It collects dust on the shelf, or maybe it's a big Bible sitting on the middle of the table, but it doesn't order how they live their life. As gently as I know how, it doesn't matter if you think you're a Christian or not.

[23 : 27] If the Bible is not central in your life, how can you be a Christian? I would say it this way, that if you never pick up the Bible, you never read it, you don't want to order your life by it, you just sort of placate everybody around you with some sort of semblance of respect towards the Bible, then you ought to doubt that you're ever going to see God.

I know that you were raised to be polite towards God's word, you were raised to respect God as word and your family and everything else and that's good, that's a healthy thing, but it's not enough.

If I told you that I was a die-hard sports fan, and you asked me what football game I watched yesterday, what if all of a sudden you find out you don't ever watch any sports, can you really be a die-hard sports fan if you never watch it?

What if I said that I was a football player? What if I never touch a football? What if I told you that I'm a hunter, but I've never killed an animal in my life?

You see, that's a disconnect, it's a contradiction, it's not true. You can talk all the talk you want to about how much you love God and how much you know that the Bible is true, but unless you're going to read it, unless you're going to take it into your life, because you need to understand, a true Christian is someone who loves the Word of God, craves the Word of God, wants their life ordered by the Word of God, wants his thoughts, affections, and actions to be ordered by the Word of God.

[25 : 28] So if that's not you, you don't want that, then you need to understand that you are in a place of great danger under the wrath of God.

Christians, I just want to talk to you for just a second, because some of you, you're sitting there and you're thinking to yourself, well, yeah, I'm a Christian, I'm feeling a little guilty right now because you're talking about ordering the life by, like I haven't read it in a couple weeks, but I do believe it's God's Word, I really do want to read it, and I do, let me just say, maybe you've been distracted with life, maybe you've been distracted with work or home or sports or whatever it is you do, maybe you've let life squeeze out your time with God, you know, maybe you could ask yourself this, do you have more Spotify playlist than you have lists of Bible verses to look at?

Do you talk more about the aches and pains of your body in the good old days than you do talk about what the Bible says? Do you have more sports stats memorized than you do verses of Scripture memorized?

Let me say this, Christians, are you starting to feel just a little bit awkward and guilty at the moment? Good. Don't run from that.

Don't think to yourself that coming to church ought to be a place where you never are made to feel guilty because if you're not made to feel guilty, then the big solution that we have to everything is of no use to you.

[27 : 18] Here's what you need to hear. The guilt that perhaps you feel because you're not putting a priority on the word of God, the guilt you feel because of the sin of neglect of the word of God in your life is exactly why Jesus came to die.

He died on the cross because we get distracted and enamored with life and we leave his word on the side. We do all kinds of evil as Christians as we neglect and forget and don't get into his word, but that's exactly why Jesus died.

I mean, when he died, he looked ahead and he could see this moment right here, right now, knowing that you've had a moment in your life where you've sort of fallen off the wagon and left the word of God to the side, but he has cleansed you of that.

He has washed you of that. He took it to the cross and he died for that. And this is the open gate to come home. This is the moment.

He's not asking you to try to do some grandiose thing in order to sort of get back in his good graces because you've neglected his word. No, see, the son already bled for your neglect of the word.

[28 : 36] He's saying here today, I have this gift for you. It's your forgiveness that's already been there. I just want you to reckon with it.

You see, Romans chapter 8, verse 1 says this, that therefore there is now no condemnation at all. for those who are in Christ Jesus.

So that guilt you feel, it's okay to feel it, but now you need to let it go at the foot of the cross because he's paid the price for you. But it's not just that he's forgiven you.

His death doesn't just forgive you, although it forgives you in a great way. His death also empowers you by his spirit to live the way he's called you to live.

And so you can overcome the neglect of the word of God that's been there and pick it up. And so I'm going to give you two final things to do. As you look at the word and you're looking at this next week, two things, because the Holy Spirit can empower you to live out a life of being in the word, then I want you to do two things.

[29 : 53] Number one, look at the Bible the right way. Look at the Bible the right way. And the right way is this, the Bible is the very mind of God.

It's the very words of God. And when you read the Bible, you are hearing God's thoughts. When you hear preaching, preaching should always be an explanation of what the Bible says.

And then making application of that explanation to our lives. That's all preaching is. That ought to be so central in your life because if I'm properly interpreting this, then it's as though you're hearing the Lord speak right now.

Not because of me. Get anybody up here who's properly interpreting this and it's as though the Lord himself is speaking. Now look at the Bible the right way.

It is the very mind of God. And second, read the Bible the right way. You say, read the Bible the right way? Yeah, let me just tell you. Don't do this.

[31 : 09] Like a flower, he comes out and withers. He also flees like a shadow and does not remain. Hmm. I guess I shouldn't go outside today, maybe. I don't know. What else is there?

However, please hear my speech. Job, I don't know. I don't want to read about Job. Then this shall be the sign for you.

You will eat this year. What grows? I don't even, what is this even talking about? This is what I call scripture roulette. Don't do it. These are books.

books. They have a beginning. They have a middle. They have an end. You don't grab the newspaper and have an article and start backwards on the article and go back to the front.

You'll never understand it. You don't grab that new book that just came out on the bestseller list and start at the back and go to the front. You might read the ending and then go to the beginning and read through the whole thing, but to understand it, you've got to go to the beginning, the middle, and the end.

[32 : 16] The gospel of John has a beginning. It has a middle. It has an end. Read it in order from beginning to end the way it was written.

And as you read, ask yourself, what does this say about God? What does this say about humans? And what do I need to think, believe, and do because of this?

Christians, we need to read the Bible because every word is from the mouth of God. Let's pray together.

Let's pray together.