

All Scripture is breathed by God

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[0 : 01] Now, as the Lord enables us, let us turn to consider words we have in this chapter we've read. The second letter of Paul to Timothy, chapter 3.

And reading again at verse 16. 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 competent, equipped for every good work. Few thoughts on these words.

Very early this morning I came across this verse and I felt that I had to bring it before you. The Apostle Paul, the writer here, is now an old man.

And he's writing this particular letter, as well as others, from his prison cell in Rome. And if you glance down at chapter 4 at verse 6, he tells us there the way he feels about his present circumstances.

[1 : 27] Chapter 4, verse 6 says, He says, So he's in the prison cell, as far as he himself can see, awaiting execution.

But he's got the burden of the church upon his heart. And his heart, as it were, goes beyond the prison walls.

Focusing in this particular instance upon a young minister by the name of Timothy. Now he had met Timothy quite some time before this, probably 13 years before this.

When you see the reference in Acts chapter 16. And he says that he met Timothy there in Derbe and Lystra. Disciple was there named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer, but his father was a Greek.

On the second missionary journey that Paul took, he met up with Timothy. And he laid hands on him, and Timothy was chosen by the Lord and ordained by the apostle to go out and preach the gospel.

[3 : 19] And we see in the two letters that he writes to Timothy, the counsel he's giving to him, regarding the way he has to live his life as an individual, and as one entrusted with the preaching of the gospel.

In chapter 1, for example, 1 Timothy 6, 11, he says that he has to fight the good fight of faith. Now that's the way Paul sees his own life as a Christian. He says, I have fought the good fight. It's as if he anticipates that Timothy is going to follow in the same footsteps as he himself walked, fighting the good fight of faith.

And then, of course, he goes through various chapters in 1 Timothy, counseling and directing him as to how to live and be a preacher of the gospel.

But now in chapter 3 of 2 Timothy, it's as if the apostle Paul is bringing before young Timothy the reality of the situation that he must confront as a preacher of the gospel and as a Christian in a fallen world.

[4 : 45] And it's amazing. The first number of verses here are devoted to telling how bad things are going to be. People will be lovers of self, it says in verse 2, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure, rather than lovers of God, having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power.

It's as if he is saying, all of these things you will come across among people who profess godliness. It wouldn't be surprising to come across this list of things among people who were anti-religion and anti-God and reckless as unbelievers.

But he says, this is a possibility even with those who have appearance of godliness but deny its power. And he says, avoid such people.

And he goes on to describe some of the ways that these people live. But, in verse 14, he says, but as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed.

knowing from whom you learned it 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.

[6 : 56] Paul knows that Timothy had a godly mother and a godly grandmother. Although his father was a Greek, these two women's godly influence upon him gave him to know the sacred scriptures and he had embraced the Lord Jesus Christ having heard the scriptures from these two godly women.

and Paul is now saying, this really is what the church still needs and this is what the world still needs and this is what every individual needs, the word of God.

And he describes then in verse 16 and 17 in these marvelous words what the word of God is like. he 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 competent, equipped for every good work.

Just three points in relation to what we have here. There's a tremendous amount of material in these verses before us. First of all, regarding the scripture, the origin of the scripture.

It says here it is God breathed. That's the first thing. That's the origin of the Bible that we have. It is God breathed.

[8 : 32] Secondly, it is profitable. It's a profitable book and he gives a list of the ways in which it profits people.

It's good for teaching, reproof, correction and for training in righteousness. And then finally, the outcome of having such exposure to the word of God and having faith in the God of the word, we see that the man of God will be competent, equipped for every good work.

So he focuses on God's word as the tool and the means that are absolutely essential to Timothy's ministry and to his own personal spiritual development, the word of God.

first of all then, it says here that all scripture is breathed out by God.

A lot of people have various views on what the Bible is. Some people say, well, that it's made up of various people's thoughts like David's thoughts in the Psalms or Solomon's Proverbs or the thoughts and the prophecies of the Old Testament prophets like Jeremiah and Ezekiel and it's as if it's their own personal perspective on life and the things that happened to them and the things they anticipated happening in the future.

[10 : 28] Well, that's not what Paul says at all. he says the origin of the scriptures, the originator of the scriptures is God himself.

He says all scripture is breathed out by God. And you ask, well, why then do we associate David with the Psalms or Paul himself with his letters or various writers of the gospels and so on?

Well, the fact of the matter is that God uses or has used these men to bring his thoughts and bring his mind and purposes before us.

Isn't it wonderful what Peter says, 2 Peter chapter 1 verse 21, for the prophecy, he's talking about the scriptures, the prophecy came not in old time by the will of men, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, the Holy Spirit.

They weren't their own thoughts, they were giving. But the Lord, by his spirit, filled them with his thoughts. And the way the original language puts that verse, they were moved by the Holy Spirit as if a mother were carrying her little baby and she moved the baby or brought him wherever she wanted to lay it down.

[12 : 19] So the Lord used his men in the Old Testament and in the New to bring his thoughts and his purposes before us and they are written down for us as inspired or God breathed, inerrant and without any mistake whatsoever.

The word of God is the truth of God. It's the benchmark mark of truth. There is no lie in the word of God.

It is an expression of what God is saying. All scripture is God breathed. From the first word in Genesis right through to the last word in Revelation, not one jot, not one tittle will fall to the ground. Heaven and earth will pass away, Jesus says, but my word shall never pass away. Isn't it marvelous that we have such a canon of scripture from every individual word in the Old and the New Testament, we have the flavor of divinity.

We have the words of God, the infinite creator and sustainer of all things, the planner of eternal salvation.

[14 : 01] He brings before us in the written scriptures the thoughts he had from all eternity regarding his people, that he elect them from all eternity, that he set a mediator aside who was willing to come in the fullness of times and take the sins of his people upon him and suffer in their room and in their place.

That's the only way we can have any reliance upon who Jesus is and what Jesus has done. It's the fact that it's written in the infallible record of the scriptures because all the scripture is God breathed. And you notice if you go through even the gospels themselves, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, how the styles are somewhat different.

Different men, different personalities, when the Holy Spirit filled them in order to write God's thoughts down as the scripture, it's as if their individuality wasn't cancelled out.

You find in the gospel of John the cord of love, as it were, running through it. You find in the gospel of Mark the abruptness of Peter, seemingly running through it.

[15 : 38] You find the logical mind of the apostle Paul in the epistles and so on. It's as if the Lord is using the people as individuals.

Nevertheless, when the Spirit comes upon them, they are filled with the Spirit so that what they write down is infallible and inerrant and the very truth of God.

are we not privileged people to be in possession of such a treasure? Should not we be thankful to God for the kind providence that has brought such a treasure to us in our island in a language and in languages that we know?

Shouldn't we be praising God for the men whom he raised up at the Reformation to highlight the centrality and the importance of the scriptures of the Old and the New Testaments?

We mustn't have anything on a par with the scripture by way of authority. Everything must be underneath the authority of the scripture. Every outlook, every plan, every aspect of our life must be lived under the authority of the scripture because the scripture is the be all and end all of truth, a revelation of God's mind for us.

[17 : 12] The origin of God's word. Love it. Live by it. Examine it. Search it. Pray over it.

When you hear it, expound it. Cherish what's according to the word of God and ask the Lord to fill your mind and heart and affections with the power of this word that we may grow in the knowledge of God.

That's the first thing then. The origin of God's word. It's not the word of man. It's the word of God. Secondly, it reminds us here how the word is profitable.

Profitable. And there are four things he mentions by way of the word being very profitable. The first thing he says is it's profitable he says for teaching or for doctrine as it might be translated also. How would we know any real divinity truth apart from God's word? Well certainly the heavens declare the glory of the Lord.

[18 : 35] That's his general revelation. But the word of God is his special revelation. And the word of God shows us who God is.

What he is like. That he is the eternal one. He is the infinite and eternal God unbegun and unending the alpha and the omega.

But he is a spirit infinite eternal unchangeable in his being wisdom power holiness justice goodness and truth.

And the men who compiled that description of God for the catechism the Westminster divines they were merely gathering what the scripture says about God.

It's profitable to tell us not only who God is and what he's like but it tells us what we're like ourselves. What does the Bible say about us and demonstrate to us what we are like?

[19 : 42] Well it says to us that there is none of us righteous no not one. That we have all sinned and come short of the glory of God. That all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags and they were not able to save ourselves by our own efforts.

That we are under the curse of God because we have broken his law and without him we cannot be saved.

But it also teaches us that God sent a saviour. God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life.

It's profitable for us to know who we are, what needs we have, what limitations we have and that without him we can do nothing. And if he sends his spirit into our hearts in a day of regeneration that we are brought alive and exercise faith and hope and love upon the God who is the author of life and the author of life everlasting as well as the author of the scriptures.

Profitable for teaching. But secondly it says here it's profitable for reproof.

[21 : 20] It's profitable for highlighting what are heretical thoughts and heretical actions, what are sinful inclinations in our outward lives and in our innermost thoughts.

We read and sang from Psalm 19 a few moments ago and the psalmist there says who can his errors understand? It is as if he realises because the Holy Spirit is showing him that sin has managed to invade every faculty of his being and every corner of every faculty of his being. And he says I can't understand it all. He's echoing what the prophet is saying elsewhere that the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked.

Who can know it? It reproves our sinful thoughts, our sinful practices, our worldliness.

It shows us the catastrophe that awaits us if we continue on a rebellious route. my brother-in-law lives in Canada.

[22 : 57] And we were over there last year. And he's got a nice jetty at the bottom of his property. And I used to go down there early every morning. A river, the Grand River, which is, I would say, almost a mile wide at that point.

I used to sit there and do my readings. And a boat would come and go all the way up nearer the other bank of the river, almost a mile away.

It would all the way up the river and then disappear. And maybe five minutes or more than that, after that, I would feel the ripple of the water caused by that boat.

A while ago, the boat was now out of sight. I often thought, well, there's a message there for me. The way I live always makes ripples either for good or for bad.

The ripple of my life will be felt whether it's a bad or a good life I'm living. and it might not be a ripple that's known this year or next year, but maybe down the road.

[24 : 18] You see, the word of God reproves us and it shows us how calamitous a disobedient life can be. Maybe not at the very moment of your disobedience, but later on.

be sure your sin will find you out. So the word of God brings these things to light. Thirdly, it says here, it is profitable for correction.

The word correction has the idea of restoration. Restoration.