

Can I Trust the Bible?

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Preacher: Cedric Moss

[0 : 00] The scripture readings for this morning are taken from Psalms chapter 19 and 2 Timothy 3, verses 16 and 17.

Psalms 19. The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge.

There is no speech, nor are there words whose voice is not heard. Their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.

In them he has set a tent for the sun, which comes out like a bridegroom, leaving his chamber, and like a strong man, runs its course with joy.

Its rising is from the ends of the heavens, and its circuit to the end of them, and there is nothing hidden from its heat.

[1 : 25] The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul. The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.

The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart. The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.

The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever. The rules of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.

More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold, sweeter also than honey, and the drippings of the honeycomb.

Moreover, by them is your servant warned, and in keeping them, there is great reward. Who can discern his errors?

[2 : 30] Declare me innocent from hidden faults. Keep back your servant also from presumptuous sins. Let them not have dominion over me.

Then I shall be blameless and innocent of great transgression. Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight.

O Lord, my rock and my redeemer. 2 Timothy 3.16.17 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. Thank you very much, Faye. Well, this morning we are continuing our four-part vital questions sermon series. We have come to the third sermon in this series.

[3 : 52] And the vital question this morning is, can I trust the Bible? It's a question that many people ask. And this morning, by God's grace, I will seek to answer this question.

From the outside, let me say that my intention this morning is not to seek to convince anyone that the Bible can be trusted.

I can't do that. Only the Holy Spirit can do that. Instead, my purpose this morning is to simply answer the question by asserting the Bible's own answer, which is, the Bible can be trusted.

And I will offer a few reasons why the Bible can be trusted. But largely, I will rely on the Holy Spirit, who alone is able to convince the hearts and minds of men and women that this is God's word and that it can be trusted.

But the most important thing I hope to do this morning is to simply, from Scripture, show why the Bible should be trusted.

[5 : 15] For those who want to delve into this a bit more deeply and look at apologetics and see broader reasons that many would give as to why the Bible objectively can be trusted, I want to recommend a book.

This has been helpful to me. It's a book, Did God Write the Bible? by Dan Hayden. We have a few copies in the bookstore if you're interested in that. Let me go ahead and pray for us.

Lord, thank you for gathering us to this place this morning. Lord, even though we are aware of the conscious decision that we made to come, we recognize that ultimately you're the one who's at work in all of our lives, causing us to be here this morning.

Lord, you know what we need to hear from you. Would you superintend the preaching of your word this morning? And would you care for us? Lord, as I have already indicated, we need your Spirit's help.

Lord, we need the Spirit's help to cause all of us to grow in our conviction that the Bible can be trusted. And Lord, for some who have not yet come to that conviction, to come to it for the first time, whether they're present or whether they are watching or listening online.

[6 : 53] Lord, I pray that you would make real for us this morning the reality of your word as it is proclaimed and the transformative effect that it has on those who come under its sway, under its influence.

Lord, so would you do that for us this morning? May our hearts burn within us as we hear your word preached. Lord, we ask all these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

Can I trust the Bible? Or more broadly, can we trust the Bible? In our remaining time, I want to answer this question by making two statements.

And then I'll allow some time for questions and answers at the end. But first, we can trust the Bible because the Bible can be trusted.

And what I mean by that is that the Bible is worthy of our trust. And because the Bible is trustworthy and worthy about trust, it can be trusted.

[8 : 17] The last letter that the Apostle Paul wrote, he wrote to his spiritual son, Timothy. 2 Timothy is that last letter. And as Paul wrote to Timothy in 2 Timothy, he had a chief concern for Timothy.

His chief concern was that Timothy would hold fast to the word of God. He would hold true to the word of God. We read verses 16 and 17 earlier, but I want to read starting at verse 10.

In verses 1 to 9, Paul describes how increasingly sinful people would become in the last days. And he calls Timothy to be different. He calls Timothy to live differently.

This is what he says to Timothy starting in verse 10. 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 and 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 impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived, but as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it.

[10 : 04] and how from childhood you've been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

Paul's 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.

Paul's argument to Timothy as to why he should continue to hold true to the scripture, the Bible, and to live in accordance with it is that all scripture is breathed out by God.

The King James says it is given by inspiration. And in verse 16, when Paul says that scripture is breathed out, he gives us a very helpful way of understanding how scripture was actually given. He is saying it's a very part of God, that God actually breathed it out, it's the very words of God. And by that he doesn't mean that God dictated it and the hearers, the authors, sat down and wrote it out.

[11 : 29] That's not what he means. What he means is that these authors, some 40 of them, they were moved upon by the Holy Spirit, they were inspired by the Holy Spirit, and God, through his Holy Spirit, caused them to write with their distinct personalities exactly what he wanted them to write.

And so, what we have is, we have a single divine author of scripture.

Many human authors, but one divine author. This is a very important point about the trustworthiness of God's word. The Bible is one book that contains 66 individual books, 39 in the Old Testament, 27 in the New Testament, the Old Testament written in Hebrew, the New Testament written in Greek, and written by some 40 authors over a period of some 1,500 years.

And these 66 books, written over some 1,500 years, they are about one central story and one central person.

Not random books with random ideas, but a central story, that story is redemption, and a central person, and that person is Jesus Christ.

[13:12] And this is one of the compelling features of God's word, that it has this unity. And that should not surprise us because it has one divine author who supernaturally, through his spirit, caused these 40 human authors over some 1,500 years to write as he would have them to write.

That's something worth reflecting on. One book, 66 individual books, a divine book. One divine ultimate author, although many human authors.

One divine message. And one divine person. The story of the Bible is the story of redemption. And the person of the Bible is the Lord Jesus Christ. So God's own witness in the Bible, he's the highest authority that we can appeal to, appealing to some other source outside, and relying on that makes that source authoritative to confirm the Bible.

But we look to God himself to attest to his word, to be a witness to his word, that it is his holy and inspired word, that it is the very word of God.

[14:38] And that means that it is consistent with God's character. God is trustworthy, so his word cannot be anything other than trustworthy.

And brothers and sisters, there's no other book like it. There's no other book like the Bible. Take, for example, the Koran, which is the religious book of the second largest religion, Islam.

The Koran, the history that is given of it, the Koran was written about Muhammad says that the angel Gabriel appeared to him and over some 20 years he got these revelations and he then orally communicated these revelations to his followers, those who were adherents to him, and they scribbled them down on fragments and pieces of writing material.

And then, a man by the name of Usman, over a period of some 23 years, he compiled these writings.

And so, when you really think of the book of Islam or the Koran, it has a lifespan of some 43 years between his transmission and between its actual compilation.

[16:15] And this happened between 610 and 653. And so, one of the big differences about the Bible and the Koran, very, very obvious, is that the Koran itself does not claim to be the Word of God.

It claims to be the revelations that Muhammad received from the angel Gabriel. So, at best, it is the Word of an angel, if it is that.

But the claim of Scripture itself is that it is the very Word of God that he breathed out over some 1,500 years to some 40 different authors who wrote with their own personalities, but they wrote a unified message because God himself superintended what they should write, that it would be a message of redemption and that message would be the message of his Son.

But notice what Paul further says to Timothy in 2 Timothy chapter 3 verses 16 and 17.

he doesn't only say to Timothy that Scripture is God's Word, but he also speaks to Timothy about the usefulness of Scripture, about the effect that Scripture can have on our lives.

[17:49] He says to Timothy that it is profitable, it is useful for teaching, for reproof, which means to test things, to expose things for what they really are.

Scripture has this revealing, exposing, illuminating effect. He says it's good for correction when we're going astray, when we're going the wrong way, when we're living or thinking wrongly.

And he says it is able to train us in righteousness. And in verse 7, he gives the reason so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

Many theologians summarize what Paul says in these verses to say that what Paul is saying is that Scripture is sufficient. God has given us his sufficient word to carry us and keep us through all of life.

that's what we just sang moments ago about these ancient words handed down to us over the ages and that they will keep us and they will guide us and that they are sufficient for every single thing that we need in this life.

[19:12] God has not left us in a void or vacuum in any aspect of life. Scripture is sufficient for every part of life that we live.

God can be trusted because it is God's word. God himself can be trusted.

He is perfectly trustworthy in all of his ways and all that he does. There's one other feature that I'd like to highlight just to underscore the trustworthiness of the Bible.

and that is the Bible's prophecies. Dr. Grant Jeffrey is a man who has spent decades researching various topics and themes with the aim of showing the truthfulness of Scripture.

And Bible prophecy is one of those areas that he has spent time studying. Here's what he says.

There are 1,817 individual predictions concerning 737 separate subjects found in 8,352 verses.

[20 : 37] These numerous predictions comprise 27% of 31,124 verses in the whole Bible.

So in other words, more than 25%, more than a quarter of the Bible is about predictions and prophecies.

hundreds of these have already taken place with 100% accuracy. And the most important of these predictions, these prophecies, center around the coming of the Messiah.

Writing about the Messianic prophecies, this is what Dan Hayden writes in his book, Did God Write the Bible? He writes the following.

In the Old Testament, more than 300 passages refer to no less than 61 specific details of the Messiah's coming as a man in humility and sacrifice.

[21 : 50] They speak of his birth, life, sacrificial death, and resurrection as the Savior of the world.

Although these Messianic prophecies were written more than five centuries prior to the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem, he fulfilled all of them exactly as predicted.

And this is Jesus' own testimony. At the end of his earthly ministry, as he was preparing to ascend back to heaven, Jesus says this very thing about himself.

we read this in Luke 24 verses 44 to 48. Luke records Jesus speaking to his disciples. This is what Luke wrote.

Then he said to them, these are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the law of Moses and the prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled. then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures and said to them, thus it is written that Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations beginning from Jerusalem.

[23 : 16] You are witnesses of these things. So according to Jesus, he fulfilled everything written about himself in the Old Testament, which he refers to as the law of Moses and the prophets and the Psalms, which is another way of referring to the Old Testament.

And brothers and sisters and friends, we have every reason to believe that just as the prophecies of Christ's first coming were fulfilled with 100% accuracy, we have every reason to believe that the prophecies of his second coming will be fulfilled with 100% accuracy.

It is the same word of the same God who is perfectly trustworthy. And his word is an extension of himself.

And so we can trust it. Now there's a lot more that can be said about the Bible's trustworthiness. But I want to move on to my second and final point, which flows from this first point, and it is this.

Since the Bible can be trusted because it is God's word, then the Bible should be trusted. Since the Bible can be trusted because it is God's word, then the Bible should be trusted.

[24 : 50] And the main point I want to make here is that we should trust the Bible because it is where God has revealed himself in a special way.

God has revealed himself in no other place in the special way that he has revealed himself in the Bible. Not in the Koran, not in the holy books of Hinduism or Buddhism.

he has only revealed himself in this special way in his word. And this is what we see in Psalm 19.

In Psalm 19, the psalmist tells us that God has revealed himself in two ways. First in verses 1 to 6, the psalmist tells us that God has revealed himself in creation.

the point that he makes is that God's creation proves God's existence. In verse 1, the psalmist, and if you've not turned there, please go ahead and turn to Psalm 19.

[25 : 59] We'll spend the rest of our time here. In verse 1, the psalmist says that the heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.

The psalmist is telling us that when we look up to the sky, it speaks to us in a loud voice that God is its glorious creator.

That all the handiwork of the heavens, all the glory of the heavens, that God is the one who created it. It is his handiwork. Now, it's interesting that of all the creation of God that the psalmist could have referenced, he referenced the heavens.

He references the sky and the sun and the moon and the stars that speak about God's glory and reveal God's existence. Why does he point to the sky?

Why doesn't he point to beaches and seas and rivers and trees? Well, the reality is that depending on where we live, some of these things we see on earth, we don't see in other places.

[27 : 23] So in the Bahamas, we have wonderful beaches, but we don't have rivers. And there are some places that don't have beaches, but they have rivers. there are some places that are flat like we are here at the Bahamas, but there are other places that have mountains and valleys.

And we experience rain and other places experience snow. And so God's creation, the way it is expressed on the earth, is so vast.

We think of the vast deserts and there's no vegetation at all. people. But the one part of God's creation that all people see and have in common is the sky above, with the stars and the moon and the sun.

And I believe this is why the psalmist points us to this aspect of God's creation, because all people everywhere see it. But notice what he says in verse 2.

Notice what the psalmist says in verse 2. He tells us that day and night, that every day, speech is poured out about God's existence through his creation in the heavens.

[28 : 51] The psalmist is saying that everything that the heavens declare, is spoken day by day.

When he refers to by day and by night, he's not saying two different things. He's saying the same thing different. He's just saying all the time, every single day, the heavens are declaring that God is their creator, that God is the one who made them.

Look at what he says in verse 3. He says, all that the heavens declare is heard everywhere by people on the earth. there's nothing that the heavens declare that is not heard on the earth.

Every bit of witness and proclamation that the heavens declare that God is its creator, the psalmist says, it's heard by people throughout the entirety of the earth.

there is no place where this strong voice witnessing to God and his creation from the heavens is not heard.

[30 : 09] And in verse 4, the psalmist is telling us it resounds, it resounds to all people everywhere. here. At the end of verse 4 and through to verse 6, the psalmist zeroes in on the sun, which is the most dominant and visible part of God's creation in the heavens to the naked eyes.

And he talks about the sun and the sun's tent. He describes the sky as a kind of a tent for the sun, where the sun goes in and sets and where it comes out when it rises.

And then in verse 5, he likens the rising of the sun to a happy bridegroom on his wedding day who comes out of his house all dressed up and beaming with joy and it affects all those who are around. And so he likens the process of the rising of the sun to a strong man who is running a race with joy because he is strong, he's able to finish it.

In verse 6, the psalmist tells us that the sun in its rising circuits from one end of the heaven to the next and he tells us how nothing is hidden from its heat, meaning that everyone and everything is affected by its power, by its majesty.

[31 : 39] And so human beings who are rational creatures can't escape observing the sun and its effect upon them, its power, its majesty, its consistency, its beauty, its benefit.

Without the sun, we'd all die. And that's the most visible part of God's creation.

But what the psalmist is addressing in these first six verses is what theologians call general revelation. It is God's general revelation to all people everywhere from the beginning of creation and so it will be until the end of time that God is the God who exists.

He's the God of creation. God of God. So it begs the question, if the heavens are declaring every single day the existence of God, the glory of God, the creation of God, why is it that we human beings are naturally disobedient to Him and we disregard Him?

If the heavens are doing that every single day, every single way, screaming out speech about the creator God, why is it and how is it that men and women like you and me can live in God's word, in God's world, disregard Him, and disobey Him?

[33 : 26] Well, the short answer is because of the fall, because of sin, because of Adam's sin that swept the mass of humanity into rebellion against God and would cause us to live in God's world without disregard for Him.

But the Apostle Paul says it in a more thorough manner as to why people are able to live in God's world and ignore the speech of the heavens that scream out to the existence of God.

He says this in Romans chapter 1 verses 18 to 20. This is what he writes, For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who by their

unrighteousness suppress the truth.

For what can be known about God is plain to them because God has shown it to them. For His invisible attributes, namely His eternal power and divine nature have been clearly perceived ever since the creation of the world in the things that have been made.

So they are without excuse. That's how and why God's general revelation of His existence and His power is not perceived by fallen men and women because they suppress the truth.

[35 : 13] They cover their eyes. They stub their ears because they do not want to acknowledge God, the supreme creator of heaven and earth and the creator of all people.

And the truth is that left to ourselves, all of us would live in God's world ignoring Him and rebelling against Him. But starting in verse 7, the psalmist transitions.

The psalmist transitions from how God has revealed Himself generally in creation to how God has revealed Himself specifically or specially in Scripture.

This is what we see in verses 7 to 11. In these five verses, the psalmist is extolling and praising God's law and testimony and precepts and commandments and rules.

And these together are referring to the five books of the Bible, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, which the Jews call the Torah. In Greek, these five books are called the Pentateuch.

[36 : 37] These five books constituted the Mosaic Covenant. And what we see the psalmist expounding is the unique ability of God's word to have a transforming effect on the lives of people.

And see, this is one of the reasons why we're not persuaded about the truthfulness of God's word and the trustworthiness of God's word by apologetic arguments, by a person who is able to bring convincing arguments to us about the objective truthfulness of God's word.

At the end of the day, it is in the experiencing of God's word that our confidence and our trust begins to grow and begins to deepen.

God's word has the unique ability to do what the psalmist describes in verses 7 to 11. And this is what theologians call special revelation.

Unlike general revelation that is to all people, special revelation is to specific people. In the case of the Torah, it was God's special revelation to the nation of Israel.

[38 : 03] in God's special revelation in the Torah, he revealed far more to the nation of Israel than was revealed to everyone in general revelation in the creation.

But today, we have more than just the five books of the Torah. We have more than just the five books that the psalmist would have been celebrated. We have all the books of the Bible, the 66 books of the Bible.

And what the psalmist says about the Torah in verses 7 to 11 is also true of all of God's word because it is God's word. And because God is unified, and because God is consistent, the same that is true about those first five books is indeed true about all of Scripture.

Scripture. All of it is God's special revelation. Not just to Jews, but to all people of every kindred, town, tribe, and nation.

So I want to submit to you this morning that we can trust the Bible, and we should trust the Bible, because in it God has specially revealed himself in the Bible's overarching story, which is the story of redemption, and through its overarching subject, who is Jesus Christ, the divine Son of God, who became God in the flesh in his birth.

[39 : 49] Psalm 19 extols the word of God and therefore encourages us to embrace the word of God, where God has revealed himself in a saving way, in the message and the person of his Son.

Now I want us to just walk through these verses to conclude this morning. And what we see is in verses 7 to 11, the psalmist uses a poetic pattern to praise the virtue of God's word.

He does it by praising the word and then stating a benefit that he is praising. So in verse 7, he says God's word is perfect. Reflection of God himself, the author, it revives or refreshes the soul.

And then again in verse 7, he says God's word is sure or trustworthy and certain. wisdom. It makes the simple wise.

Brothers and sisters, true wisdom comes from God through his word and it makes a simple person, makes the person who is immature and easily led astray, it makes them wise.

[41 : 10] And the psalmist is extolling the ability of God's word to do this. In verse 8, not only is the word of God perfect and sure, but the psalmist tells us what is contained in God's word is right and that it rejoices the heart.

Following God's word will always cause our hearts to rejoice. But when we disobey it, it will cause our hearts to lament. And notice as well in verse 8, the psalmist tells us that God's word is pure. Speaking of the perfection of God's word from another angle and it means there's no evil in it, there's nothing to taint it, it is unmixed.

And he tells us that God's word enlightens our eyes. In God's word's purity, we see as we should. God's word provides light to our eyes. And in verse 9, the psalmist does not directly reference the word of God, instead he indirectly references it by referring to the fear of the Lord which is taught by the word of God.

[42 : 32] It is only by and through God's word that we learn to fear the Lord. And the psalmist says this fear is clean and it endures forever.

And then also in verse 9, he tells us that the rules of the Lord are true and righteous all together. All of us this morning who have been revived, our hearts have been revived, we have been made wise through the word of God, our hearts have rejoiced over the rightness of the word of God, our eyes have been enlightened by the word of God, we recognize the fear of the Lord through his word, and the righteousness of God's word, the desirability of God's word.

If we've had that experience, we would agree this morning with the psalmist assessment in verses 10 and 11, he says God's word is to be desired more, as more valuable than the best gold and the sweetest honey.

This is the testimony of someone who has been affected by and transformed by the word of God.

The psalmist is talking about his own life, but this brothers and sisters, it's true of all those who have come to know the transforming effect of the word of God.

It becomes a precious thing. It becomes a sweet thing to those whose lives are transformed by it.

The psalmist is expressing delight and celebrating God's word.

[44 : 32] I notice that it naturally leads him to a particular point. It naturally leads him to the point of asking a question in verse 12.

Notice the question that the psalmist asks. He says, who can discern his errors? Who can discern his errors? Do you think the psalmist is just writing and all of a sudden this is a random thought that came to him and he just wrote it down?

No. Meditating upon the word of God, reflecting upon the word of God, will have this effect on our lives.

Because God is revealing himself in the pages of scripture and this is the effect that it has on the lives of those who come under its influence.

He asks the question in verse 12, who can discern his errors? It is a rhetorical question. It is a question that the answer is so obvious.

[45 : 41] It really doesn't need to be stated. And the answer is no one. No one can, in and of himself, on his or her own, discern their errors or their faults the psalmist points to the errors that he is referring to in verse 12 and he refers to them as hidden faults.

The psalmist is not talking about sins that he was hiding. He's not talking about sins that we hide.

No, he's talking about sins that we commit and are hidden from us.

They are sins that we commit and we are unaware of. Who can discern those sins? The answer is no one.

No one can discern those sins. Yet the psalmist is aware of them. The psalmist is aware of them.

Why would anyone be aware of that which is hidden, that which one is unaware of, that which cannot be known or seen on his or her own.

And brothers and sisters, I want to submit to you this morning that the psalmist is pointing to one of the effects of God's word. It brings conviction.

[47 : 11] temptation. It causes us to recognize our sinfulness. It causes us to be aware that we are imperfect people and that even though we may not be aware of particular sins, that nonetheless, because we are imperfect, because we are sinful, those sins are there.

And if we read what the psalmist is saying in context, the point must be that God's word will help us to discern those sins that otherwise we would be unaware of.

And I would say this morning that all of us who have lived and served the Lord for any reasonable period of time can testify as to how the word of God has its effect in our lives.

How we can awaken awareness and bring conviction of things that we just didn't see in the moment, but the word of God acted in that way in our lives.

It sensitizes us to sin in this way. And think about it. If it does this, concerning those sins that are not readily in front of us, that we commit and are not so much aware of, how much more about the other sins, which the psalmist goes on to talk about in the next verse.

[48 : 48] It is only when God's word and God's spirit brings conviction that we would have this kind of sensitivity to sin. But notice what the psalmist says in verse 13.

He goes on and he begins to speak, not now about hidden sins, but he says in verse 13, keep your servant also from presumptuous sins.

The New International Version says willful sins. The psalmist has moved from sins that we're not aware of when we commit them. And now he's saying, oh Lord, would you keep me from willful sin? Brothers and sisters, this is the effect of God's word in our lives. This is why God's word should be trusted. It has the ability to do this.

Psalmist is crying, oh Lord, would you deliver me from willful sin, from consciously and willfully sinning.

[50 : 02] Hold me back from those sins and don't let them have dominion over me. Brothers and sisters, what the psalmist is articulating in verses 12 and 13 is how we need God's conviction of sin to help us, how we need God himself to help us to overcome our sin.

And this recognition is illuminated by the word of God when we reflect on it and when we delight in it. It's only through spending time in God's word, the Bible, the lighting in it that we have such sensitivity towards sin that God will keep us from sinning willfully, that they will not have dominion over us.

This is how God has revealed himself in the scripture. Before the psalmist concludes with a prayer in verse 14, he writes these words, then shall I be blameless and innocent of great transgression.

Writes those words to the end of verse 13. And this statement of the psalmist, that he will be blameless and innocent of great transgression, this statement begs the question, how can the psalmist, or anyone else for that matter, be blameless and innocent before a holy God?

How can anyone? how can anyone in and of himself, herself, be innocent and blameless before a holy God?

[51 : 58] That question, brothers and sisters, has one answer, and it is a one-word answer, and that word is grace.

grace. It is only by the grace of God and through the grace of God that sinners like David and you and me can be innocent and blameless before a holy God.

God. No amount of human effort, no amount of human merit will cause us to be innocent or blameless in the sight of a holy God.

And he convinces us of this truth in his word. We read these words in John's gospel, chapter 1, verses 14, 17, and the word became flesh and dwelt among us.

And we have seen his glory, glory of the only son from the father, full of grace and truth. John bore witness about him and cried out, this was he of whom I said, he who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.

[53 : 23] And from his fullness we have all received grace, upon grace, for the law was given through Moses, grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

Brothers and sisters, it is only through that grace, upon grace, that comes through Jesus that God is able to take his perfect life and credit it to sinners like you and me, and take his substitutionary death that he died and forgive us of our sins and thereby hold us blameless in his sight.

God is and we know him not just as creator, but we then would know him as father.

Psalms 19 ends with a prayer in verse 14, and the psalmist prays, let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.

And again, this prayer is only possible through Jesus Christ. It is only through Christ that the words of our mouths and the meditations of our hearts can be shaped by God's general revelation, by a special revelation, and it can be acceptable in God's sight.

[55 : 05] And all of this, my brothers and sisters, is revealed in the pages of Holy Scripture. So can we trust the Bible?

Yes. We can trust the Bible because it is God's very word. It is trustworthy because God himself is trustworthy.

And because we can trust the Bible, we should trust the Bible, because in its pages, God reveals himself in a saving way through Jesus Christ. And this is the only way.

The Bible alone holds the words of eternal life. No other book has it. They're not alternative ways to God. Jesus Christ himself, revealed in the pages of Scripture, is the way, the only way, the truth, and the life.

God and if you've ever trusted in Jesus Christ as Lord and personal Savior, I pray this morning that we grow in this conviction that it is the word of God that has brought us to saving faith.

[56 : 19] It is the message of the gospel contained in the pages of Scripture that has brought us to saving faith. And if you have not trusted in Jesus Christ, I encourage you to open God's word.

And a good place to start is in the gospel of John. And I pray that as you read God's word, the one who moved upon its authors to write it would move upon your heart to believe it.

Only he can do that. Only he can do that. There's a saying that the proof of the pudding, the proof of the pudding, the proof of the pudding, is in the eating of the pudding.

I'm getting all mixed up this morning. The proof is in the eating. We're called to come and taste and see that the Lord is good. And that is what I invite all to do who have not trusted in Jesus.

Open the pages of this life-giving book and experience the life that is in it from one divine author in one divine story about one divine person.

[57 : 40] Let's pray. Father, we know that we need more than the heavens to proclaim the truthfulness of your existence and our need to serve you.

And Lord, in your kindness, you have given us your word. you have given us holy scripture in which you have revealed yourself in the person of your son.

Father, we pray that all of us who have come to trust in Jesus will delight in your word that we, like the psalmist, will say that your word is more precious than silver.

that your word is sweeter than the sweetest honey. Because in its pages, we find life eternal.

And Lord, we also pray that those who have not yet come to that conviction, that they will come to it, Lord. Would you move upon their hearts, Lord, to open the pages of your word.

[59 : 02] And we ask that you would transform their lives through its message. Father, would you work in all of our hearts in these ways.

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Any questions? I don't take that to mean that the message was clear.

or Troy does have a question. If God's word can be trusted, how do you, how would you address the, an inherent to the Catholic faith who has, I think their Bible has 73 books.

So that's an extra seven as opposed to ours. And they would make the argument that I guess those extra seven can be trusted as God's word also.

How would you address that? Yeah, the, how we got the canon, the Old Testament canon in particular, well, all of scripture, the way the canon was assembled, was based on how it was already, the books were already being used.

[60 : 20] And if my memory serves, I think it would be probably around the beginning of the fifth century B.C.

that the, the canon was considered closed. And those particular apocryphal books, those hidden books that the Catholics would have, just were not, were not considered scripture on the, the level of the other books of the Old Testament that were, that made it into the canon.

So, I mean, I would, I guess the first thing I would probably do is encourage someone in the Roman Catholic Church who is debating that and holding those apocryphal books on the same level of scripture.

And quite frankly, I'm not sure that the Roman Catholics hold all the books on that level. I mean, Shambi, you may be able to help me on this, but I think that they hold them as wisdom books, but I'm not sure they hold them on the same level of scripture.

Shambi, are you able to give any input on that? Do you know if they hold them on the exact same level? They do? They do?

[61 : 46] Yeah, okay. So, I would encourage them to certainly do some reading around how we got the Old Testament canon that we hold to. And I'm sorry, I'm not remembering a lot of the details of it, but there was some group called the prophets and the priests who took responsibility to safeguard the sacred writings.

And I mean, the long and short of it I'll say without continuing to ramble, is that those applicable books just were not a part of it. So, that's the best I can respond.

I don't know if you want to add anything to that, Shambi? Yeah, actually, I'm glad that you asked that, Troy, because I thought that question probably is bubbling up for others.

I think a few things when I think of those books. I think the first thing I would say is in Luke, I think it's Luke 24, when the Lord Jesus makes reference to the prophets, the books of Moses and the prophets, those two terms are expressions that have for the Jewish mind in the first century an indication that that is the 39 books of the Bible.

So, I think generally people have said that the books, what they call is the apocrypha, the reason why Protestants do not believe that those books belong in the canon of Scripture is, first of all, you have the Jews who certainly had the Old Testament.

[63 : 43] They themselves do not identify them as books of the Scripture. Say that again? The Jews themselves do not recognize the books of the Apocrypha as a part of the Old Testament.

The second thing is that in the New Testament, in Luke 24, when the Lord Jesus is referring to himself and, not himself, going back and saying that the books of Moses and the prophets, that is terminology to denote the 39 books of the Old Testament.

The third thing is the Lord Jesus never quoted from the books of the Apocrypha as an indication that it's Scripture. Fourth is that the apostles themselves never quoted from the books of the Apocrypha as an indication of the New Testament.

The Jews themselves who never have indicated that any of those books belong as a part of the Apocrypha. You have the Lord Jesus himself never using it. Third, you have the apostles themselves never now acknowledging it.

And I would say fourth is that not until what is called the Council of Trent in the 1500 is when the Roman Catholic Church officially acknowledged the books of the Apocrypha to be a part of the Scripture.

[65 : 02] So it's not until the Council of Trent, I think it's 1546, when in that indication, when they said that these books belong to the actual part of the Scripture.

So there's multiple reasons, but those would just be four reasons why. And I'll just close. The fifth reason is, and I think it's very important, is that there's actually teachings in those books that directly contradict the books of both the Old and New Testament.

There's language around salvation and other things that, like I said, directly are in contradiction. So now you have a problem if you're going to include those books. So those would just be a few things.

That's really good. Thanks, Shambi. And I would say that last point that Shambi made would probably be one of the strongest, that because Scripture's unified, if you have these other books that are contradicting it, then certainly that is one reason to reject those books.

Thanks, Shambi. You should have preached this sermon. But let me ask you a question. One more question. What about the Anglicans?

[66 : 19] Would the Anglicans hold? No. So I want to say something. I'm glad you mentioned that too. As far as the Anglican Church itself, so the Anglicans actually, they have a confession of faith known as the 39 Articles.

And let me just say, most Anglicans do not even know that this confession exists. I wish many Anglicans had actually go back and read it because they might be surprised or shocked at the teaching that's in that because the 39 Articles really is, for the most part, would call a Calvinistic teaching.

Now, in the first article I remember, it states that the books of the Apocrypha, these are to be read. These books are acknowledged as not a part of canon of Scripture.

They're not Scripture. They're only to be used as what are called didactic or useful teaching itself.

Now, many of you may be aware that in a funeral service, you will see that Anglicans will include those teaching, those books from the Apocrypha, the Book of Wisdom, for example, the Book of Sirach and so forth.

And they'll include those as a part of their readings in the funeral service. books. And I have certainly expressed to dear family members, even sometimes to priests, that when a person gets up and begins to say the Word of the Lord, right, or the Word of God, they go in error there.

[67 : 51] Because you are now expressing to those who are listening that these books are somehow a part of the Scripture, at least are a part of the Word of God.

And they are in great error there, I think. So it's useful, just like any other writing itself during that time, so to speak.

But it should never, ever be included and thought to be a part of Scripture. And, you know, that would be my comment. Yeah. Thanks. Yeah.

Any other questions? No? Maybe you should have preached. I would just say also, I think that, and I'm sure you thought about this probably in preaching, with the Scriptures itself, we must remember that the heritage we have now in the Scriptures have come, and we sang it also, it's come at the cost of blood of many persons.

You think of the English Bible and how we've received it now. It's a shame, and I may be the first to admit it, that it's a shame that how little do I read the Scripture, and how little do I treasure it, in light of how many people, even now around the world, would literally give everything they can to have a full copy of the Bible.

[69 : 17] And then, in light of that, those who have actually given their lives by being burned to the stake, in order that we now would have the copy of the Scriptures.

So, for all of us, let us not take for granted what it means that when we have a copy of the Scriptures in our possession. And so, that was my final word. Amen.

All right. Let's stand and let's close in prayer. Thanks, Shambi. Thank you, Shambi. Thank you, Shambi, for the! Thank you, Shambi, for the