

Selected Passages "Can I Trust the Bible?"

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[0:00] You are listening to a message from Southwood Presbyterian Church in Huntsville, Alabama. Our passion is to experience and express grace. Join us.

This morning before we turn into the scriptures, because we will be turning through a couple of passages this morning, I do want to give a slight disclaimer. And that is that some of the preparation when you think about the questions that we are asking this summer, it requires us to go to the scriptures.

And when your question is, can I trust the Bible, it can put us in what may feel like a circular argument or a circular conversation about the trustworthiness of the Bible.

And so I am not a professor or a lecturer. I'm a pastor. And so this morning, if you have questions related to things like canon or how we got to the scriptures or the kind of things that may interest you or trouble you, this morning we are not going to be able to answer that in a short, about 30-ish minute, I could say 30-ish hour sermon, but I mean truly 30-minute sermon.

Because there is so much to cover and I am not an expert in all of the minutia. But what is true, even though it may seem difficult at times, is that God's word is true.

[1:29] And we are going to discuss that today. And so we are going to use scripture to teach us what scripture says about itself. Because that's something we believe in. We believe that scripture tells us what is true and it tells us what to believe.

So when we turn to scripture for the answers of scripture, that's not necessarily an argument. That's a belief that we have about the power and the reality of what scripture does. And so if you have further questions, we have a connect hour time that we'll be going to.

And we can have further discussions. And again, a reminder, not a professor, not a lecturer, not a PhD. I can point you to a lot of those people that will help you with some of your conversations or questions.

But I'm not necessarily an expert in this. But I do know that God's word is true. And that's what I'm here to point you to. So before we get started, I'd love for you to join us in the connect hour to help us continue this conversation after we're done.

Because I think it's really helpful and encouraging to us. So let me pray for us as we get started. Father, we come to you trusting you and trusting you to have struggles over this idea.

[2:36] But Lord, would you help us to be clear, help me to be clear. So that we can turn our eyes to the God of the universe who gave us these scriptures. So that we might know him more closely and walk with him all the days of our lives.

And so Lord, help us in this moment as we study your word. Lord, help us as we look to you for your truth. Lord, we love you and we thank you and we pray out in Jesus' name.

Amen. So as we look to God's word, before we get there, I want to tell you about misplaced trust. I want to talk to you just briefly about misplaced trust.

In an earlier time in my life, we had this time where I was able to use my finances for essentially strictly myself.

It was the days of being single, right? And I used to go camping with my friends and I used to do things. And that's not meant, that's not anything other than to say I had a different life before I stepped into marriage and kids.

[3:44] And I had this obsession in my 20s with buying the best rain jacket on the market. And I don't know what it was, but my buddies and I, we talked about this all the time.

It was, you know, I feel like a very strange thing. But I was obsessed and we were like, you know, North Face, Patagonia, Mountain Hardware. Oh, and what about this obscure brand from Norway? And we're like, maybe, that might be it.

But it was something that I was willing to spend hundreds and hundreds of dollars on. And, I mean, we looked at everything, we talked everything. And even in those mid-2000s, early-ish internet days, we read everything possible on it.

And I remember picking this one out. And because it was not the \$10,000 go hike, you know, Mount Everest type jacket, but it was more like a normal human jacket.

And so all the specs keeps water out like this percentage. The glues on the seams can never break. The stitching, the waterproof technology, the plastic used, the inner lining, everything seemed to be incredibly trustworthy.

[4:56] And so I wear it to the first football game one Saturday because I know it's going to rain during the game. And I put it on and it's not a downpour, not a torrential rain, not a flood, a light rain.

And when I tell you it would have been the same as if I had not worn a rain jacket, that would have been the exact same. Had I worn a rain jacket or not worn a rain jacket, I would have been equally wet that day.

The rain jacket failed me. It did not do as it was promised. It was quite stylish, but it was not a trustworthy rain jacket to do the job that it says it would do.

And it literally could not weather the storm. God's word has weathered historical, critical, religious storms and continues to do so even now.

It does not fail the way that my rain jacket did. The 27 books of the New Testament, the 39 books of the Old Testament, the 66 books contained into the scriptures that we Christians hold to the highest regard has been scrutinized and studied over and over and over and over again.

[6:27] And it has held up over and over and over again. And there are, of course, those who do not believe. I do not wish to just mindlessly go over that.

I know there are people who struggle with what, even as Christians, who struggle with what's contained in the word of God. And even as the most tested book in the world, I believe it is something that we can trust.

And I think there are some key things that we need to think through why we should trust it. Why it is a trustworthy book for us. And I think the first one, as I'd like to tell us, is that it was given to us by God himself.

And that, to me, is really important because the author doesn't just lie on those who wrote the books. Because God used those who wrote the books.

But God himself gave us these scriptures. And we see this example in 2 Timothy. And we see it in 2 Peter 1. But we're going to focus on 2 Timothy here.

[7:34] Verse 16, chapter 3. 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. And this word, theonoustos, breathed out by God. Right? Means that the scriptures were given to us by God's breath carrying along those who are writing it.

And I think when God is the one who has given us his word, it gives us this sense of weight and gravitas to God's word.

And importance to God's word. A weight that is one we must hold fast to. Because it is not something that we picked or just chose. Though that's a conversation for another time.

It gives it authority. The scriptures are not considered as just mere writing by men. Or just another holy book or religious book.

[8:34] But it is the very book that God himself has given us. And so now we can trust the Bible. Not just because it is something helpful.

Or it gives us good advice. Or it gives us a good way to live our lives. Not because of its goodness. Or its application. Or its usefulness to us.

Or its culture building. Or all those things can be great. They are not just that. The scriptures have authority. Now. Because they were given to us by God.

And so we look to them to tell us about. What does it mean to live in this world? When something has authority. When something is. Has power. It is something that we would turn to.

To help us understand. How we as Christians are called to live in this world. These scriptures are for us. Because they are given to us by the most high God.

[9:32] The creator of the universe. The holy God over all the earth. They have authority. Because of who. Because of who God is. And in his character. Second Peter.

Additionally says. In chapter 1 verse 19. Through 21. It says. We also have the prophetic message. Is Peter talking of something. Completely reliable. And you will do well to pay attention to it. As to a light shining in a dark place. Until the day dawns. And the morning star rises in your hearts. Above all you must understand. That no prophecy of scripture. Came about by the prophet's own interpretation of things.

For prophecy never had its origin in the human will. But prophets though human. Spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. Again. The Holy Spirit carrying along God's people. The writers of the scriptures. And so this is not just God's authority. But there is a beauty to this. Right. Because in the Presbyterian church.

[10 : 35] Right. When we read God's word. When we look at God's word. We're not just doing it for our own incentive. To be better people.

And so I'm leveling up as a Christian. If I just read God's word. And I read it every day. I'm leveling up. And I'm becoming this level 72 Christian. Right.

But what does happen in the midst of that. Is that God through the means of grace. Which the scriptures are. The study of the scriptures are. He is bringing spiritual blessing. Growth. Sanctification. Which kids is a big word for saying. Growth in holiness. Or becoming more and more like Jesus. Is how we usually say it. Across the street with the youth. Is that this idea of becoming more and more like Jesus.

The perfect. Perfect son of God. We're becoming more and more like him. When we read his word. And on believers. There's this beautiful blessing.

[11 : 34] That comes to us. From God's word. And this is incredible. Because the highest authority in existence. That has ever existed. The only thing pre-existent.

Right. Is that he has gifted to you and me. His very word. And so when we say yes.

It's given to us by God. And that means it has authority in our lives. But it also reveals something else. In the character of God. That I think is really important. He.

How loving. And how kind he is. How incredible. That he would share his word with us. That we can know something about him.

And his. And his nature. The one who has the highest authority. Over all things. Over all the earth. And all of creation. And he has decided.

[12 : 31] And desired. To give us a way to know him. And so. When God gives us his word. He's given. He's revealing. That he has authority. Over all these things.

But he's also reminding us. That we can know him. And start to have this relationship. With him through Christ. And so it's deeply important. For us. To remember this.

As the realities. Of what happens. Because when we understand God's word. As his word. When we understand the scriptures. The Bible. As his word. We start to see a way. That we can actually know him.

And so when we study God's word. We're not studying God's word. Just again. To level up. Or become better Christians. It's actually to know.

The very God of the universe. And so God. With his great authority. And with his great love. For his people. Gives us his word. So that we might know him. And so we can trust it.

[13 : 29] Because it draws us closer to him. In our study of it. I was thinking about this. This morning. And so if I riff.

And it falls flat. I totally understand. But I was thinking about. Just for myself. How important. Something small is. In my life sometimes. And I can remember. Being somewhere. With one of my grandparents. When I was younger. And I can remember thinking.

I was looking at a toy. I remember. I can remember looking at a toy. And I told my grandmother. That I really wanted this toy. I can remember. I was like. This is the thing. That I want.

And. I didn't tell my parents. And on Christmas morning. I opened up my presents. And from my grandmother. Is this toy. That I've so desired. And so wanted.

[14 : 32] And. It is. The gift that made me. More so than anything else. I received that day. It's something that. It's a toy. I'm a boy in the 90s.

Action figure. Late 80s. I couldn't tell you what it was. But it just made me elated. And how trustworthy. My grandmother was. To remember me.

And know me. And to take care of me. And God has given us. His word. As this gift. So that when we open it up. We can know him. And it's a greater gift.

Than even some little. 1980s sci-fi toy. Could ever be. Because it allows us to know. The God of the universe. Who actually gives us life. And not just life on this earth.

But life eternal. And so when we look to God's word. And we trust in it. We can trust in it. Because it is from him. So that we might know him.

[15 : 30] Second. I want us to turn our eyes to. The whole story of the Bible. And that's why it says. Assorted verses. At the top of the. Sermon.

Is because. There's a lot of things. We're going to. Walk through. Here. Hopefully. But I also want to make sure. That I don't. I don't.

Make everyone crazy. And not show up to church. When you see the bulletin online. So. You can trust the Bible. Because God has given it to us. But you can also. Trust it.

Because it is the true. Story of God. And his people. The true story. Of God. And his people. God. God. Tells. The truth. The scriptures. Attest to this. God. And his character. Is a truth teller.

[16 : 25] The book of Hebrews. Numbers. And Titus. All tell us of God. That he cannot lie. Psalm 19. Verses. 7 through 11.

Says. 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 drippings of the honeycomb. Moreover. By them is your servant warned. And keeping them there is great reward.

His commands. His rules are true. And God is a truth teller. And so we can trust the truthfulness of God's word. And so as we think about this whole story.

[17 : 25] Like we could start in Genesis. And we could start to tell you the story about God. Telling this true story. Beginning with the creation. And the goodness. And people made in the image of God. And we often talk about the fourfold story of scripture.

Telling us about how God made things perfect. Good. Right. And true. And our sin. Causes us to fall into this state of disrepair. Of brokenness. Of sin. Of fallen nature of human beings.

Where we are sinners. And Jesus comes into the picture. And redeems us. And is the redeemer that God has sent. So that we might have life and life eternal. And that one day.

That fallenness. And that good creation. Is going to be redeemed totally into this new creation. And so that's one way of kind of summarizing. The great story of all of scripture.

There are a million ways to do it. But when we think about what Jesus presents to us. In the gospels.

[18 : 24] He presents to us a complete understanding. That the whole of the Old Testament. Is pointing to him. Like we center as Christians.

Our entire story. Our entire story. Not on a nice guy. Not on a good teacher. Not on a humble carpenter. Not on a revolutionary.

But the fact that Jesus Christ. The son of God. Came to save sinners. And he is the centerpiece. Of the story. And so what does he think about the true.

Trustworthiness of the Bible. What does he think of the whole story. Right. He wants his people. In John 17. And particularly verse 17. Jesus is praying for his disciples.

To be sanctified by the truth. And then he says. Your word is truth. He wants for his people. To know this whole truth.

[19 : 29] His story. And so let's just. We're going to. I'm going to go through a couple things. That I found online. Just through some lists. And stuff that Kevin DeYoung. Kind of helps us with.

If you're not familiar with Kevin DeYoung. He's a great PCA pastor as well. He helps us with. He's a professor at RTS in Charlotte. Occasionally. And he speaks a lot in our denomination. But he has this great little list.

Where he starts to rattle off. For these things that Jesus does. He says things like. Here in the Sermon on the Mount. In Matthew chapter 5. Verses 17 through 19. He didn't come to abolish the law. One iota or dot.

From the law or the prophets. And he says. That he's not just thinking. By saying that. He's not just thinking of the idea of scripture. He's talking about the written scripture. Jesus in Matthew chapter 12.

He says. He's arguing with the scribes and the Pharisees. And he references the story of Jonah. And throughout the gospels. Jesus treats biblical characters. And biblical history.

[20 : 25] From Abel. Noah. Abraham. Elisha. Elisha. The wife of Zarephath. And as real people. Engaged with real historical events. Jesus quotes. From Genesis 2.

And as to what. He created them. Male and female. Right. Jesus. Continually. Points us to the whole of the scriptures.

As being true. And personally. Having had to preach a sermon. On Melchizedek.

From a few months ago. If you're familiar. If you're members of Southwood. Or you've been here for a long time. You know we went through the book of Hebrews. And we went to this very shortly mentioned.

Character of Melchizedek. And then how Jesus is like Melchizedek. In the book of Hebrews. A small story. Small narrative. From the Old Testament.

[21 : 23] Meant to point us to Jesus's. Unique priesthood. And then Jesus on the road to Emmaus. After he's resurrected.

He's speaking to a couple of the disciples. And they're. It's a conversation they're having. And they were discussing Jesus himself.

He drew near to them. And they didn't recognize him. Right. And they start talking about what happened. To Jesus. And talks about his death.

Talk about. His resurrection. They couldn't find his body. And then. Jesus says to them. Oh foolish ones. And slow of heart. To believe all the prophets have spoken.

Was it not necessary. That the Christ. Should suffer these things. And enter into his glory. And beginning with Moses. Which would be the Pentateuch. The first five books of.

[22 : 21] The Old Testament. And the. All the prophets. He interpreted to them. All the scriptures. The things that were concerning him. Jesus.

Jesus. Points. To the truthfulness. Of scripture. Jesus. Shows us. How all of scripture. Points to him. And how God is working out salvation.

For his people. And so we can trust in this. What. While we would. We could sit here for. For a long time. Talking through these. I prefer for us to look to what Jesus has done.

By in a short way. Summarizing the realities of the Old Testament. And saying. All these things point to me. All these things are true about me. And so we can trust the scriptures.

We can trust the Bible. Because it is God's word. And it is true. And is the story of how God is at work. With his people. Bringing salvation to them.

[23 : 24] Thirdly. You can trust the Bible. Because it is living. And real. For you and me today. And this is as close to.

A vision for what we do. On Sunday nights. Or Wednesday nights. Over the past five years. As I have been here. About how often we talk about. These kind of verses. And I am going to talk first. Before we turn to Hebrews 4. I am going to talk really briefly. About Psalm 1. 1 through 3. And in Psalm 1. If you have seen some.

If you have ever been to our youth building. The lodge. There are trees everywhere. And Luke. And Kate. And our staff. Have been working on. Different logos.

And different things. At different times. To try and come up with a way. To update it. But if you go over there. There are trees everywhere. And the reason why. That that was chosen. As a sort of logo.

[24 : 24] Or symbol. Of our youth ministry. Is because this is the desire. Of our hearts. For all of our children. Is that they would be the one. Who is blessed.

By God's word. Blessed is the one. Who does not walk in step. With the wicked. Or stand in the way. That sinners take. Or sit in the company of mockers. But whose delight. Is in the law of the Lord.

And who meditates on his law. Day and night. That person. Is like a tree. Planted of streams. Of living water. Which yields its fruit.

In season. Whose leaf. Does not wither. Whatever they do. Prosper. Prospers. That person. Is like a tree.

Planted by streams of water. Which yields its fruit. In season. Whose leaf. Does not wither.

Whatever they do. They prosper. That God's word. gives life. The way water.

[25 : 18] Gives life. To a tree. Planted by that water. This is not just. An ancient text. That we should.

Brush aside. And forget. And we tell our students. And I'm similarly telling. The rest of Southwood. That this is not something. That we should. Turn away from. This is not just about.

Doing things that. And whenever they talk about. In Psalm 1. Chapter 3. About prospering. It's not about health. Or wealth. Right. It's about. A prosperous life.

In God. Knowing the very God. Of the universe. But whose delight. Is in the law. Of the Lord. Who meditates. On his law. Day and night. It's another way. For us to understand. His word. And it gives life.

And produces fruit. And yields its fruit. And season. It does not wither. It doesn't fade. And that truth.

[26 : 15] That we try and tell. Our students. Is the same truth. That I'm telling to you. That you can trust the Bible. Because it is living. And real. For you. And me. Today. And if you would turn.

Your hearts to it. You would turn. Your life. To it. You would see. How important. And valuable. It is. To you. And to me. In the book of Hebrews.

It tells us. That the word of God. Is living. And active. And sharper. Than any two-edged sword.

Piercing. To division of soul. And spirit. Of joints. And marrow. And discerning. The thoughts.

And intentions. Of the heart. It goes deep. It isn't just living. And active. It goes deep. To our very hearts. And I think. That's really important.

Because it's not just. About surface behavior. One of the things. That we try. And talk about. Really regularly. With your students.

[27 : 13] Is this idea. Of real faith. And real life. With Christ. Versus behaviorism. Don't just. Be. Be a good kid.

That's. That's something. We say. In our. Parents meeting. Often. We say. I'm going to say it here.

So. If we get a collective gas. I'm sorry. I don't care.

If your kid's a good kid. Huh. Yep. I don't. I want your child. To walk. With Jesus. We want.

At Southwood. Your children. To walk. With Jesus. And the way. They can know him. Is through studying. God's word. And that's. Because we believe.

God's word. Is still alive. Today. And it's still. At work. In the hearts. And minds. Of people. All throughout. The world. It is not. Just something. That we look at.

[28 : 07] And check a box. It is something. So that we can know. The living God. Jesus. Who rose from the dead. Who ascended. At the right hand of God. So that we can know him.

And walk with him. Now and forever. We don't care. If they're nice. We want that. We're praying for that. We want to. We want kids. That honor their parents.

But we want children. To love Jesus. And the way they can know. And love Jesus. Is by studying the word. And getting to know him. Because they know. They need him.

Every day. They need him. So living an active word. Does not mean. It stops. And when you get to a certain age.

It becomes. Well I've done all the study I need. It means that. Tomorrow. I'm 45. I need to get up.

And I need to seek God. And I can most. Actively seek him.

[29 : 02] Through his living word. And again. This is another reminder. To that. To us. As Presbyterians. That the study of scripture. Is a means of grace. Whereby we are sanctified.

And blessed. And transformed. By God's word. In a beautiful way. It works itself. Out. In our lives. It is how.

You actively. Know. God. And one of the things. That I think is so. Beautiful. And still. And in fact. We're. We just talked about it today.

Is the fact that we have sent people. To Thailand. To. Care for. A church. That's growing. And changing. And sanctifying. And people are being sanctified.

Over there. And Kelly. And the team. Of Southwood members. Who are over there serving. They are still. Actively participating. In the work. That God is doing. In the world.

[30 : 00] And we can. Trust God's word. Because. That's what God is doing. Beyond just his word. But in the world. People are still. Being. More and more. Made into the likeness of Christ.

People are still. Coming to faith. Churches are still. Being planted. Missionaries are still. Being sent.

People still. People still. Need to know. The God of the universe. Through his son. Jesus Christ.

The Bible.

Is a book. For us. For you. And for me. And for all of God's people. And it still draws. People. To him.

And so it is good. For us to trust it. Because it is alive. And draws us. To himself. As we finish this morning.

I want you to. To take a moment. And think on. Your own. Struggles against the Bible. I can remember. Growing up.

[31:03] And not reading the Bible. Really. Regularly. Until I was. In college. When I had come to faith. And I can remember. The kind of things.

That were so new to me. And. Life-changing. And. Even last night. I'll. I'll finish with this. Last night. I was. Rereading through. Through. I was rereading through the Gospels.

And I was thinking about. How Jesus heals people. And. I. I. My kids know this. We joke around about this.

But. They've. They've made jokes. They're like. I don't know if I've ever seen you cry. And I was like. Wow. If they just came around the corner right now. We could end this conversation.

Um. Because I just was. Uh. So moved last night. By what. I realized. In God's tenderness. And his kindness. As I was rereading.

[32:00] Jesus. Healing a man who could not walk. And then it made me turn to healing the blind. It made me hurt. Turn to healing the sick. The. Made me turn to. Um.

Healing demon possessed. And I just was overwhelmed. By what God. Is doing in his word. And what Jesus came to do. And how it changes us. And transforms us.

And cuts us deep. To our very souls. And I was reminded. About how much kindness. We see from God. In his giving. The word. His word to us.

Brothers and sisters. My. Um. The. The question in and of self. If we answer it correctly. The application. As you walk out the doors. As you go. Is not meant to tell you. To just go study your Bible more.

And. And do more for God. By reading your Bible more. The application of walking out these doors. Is. Go to God's word.

[32:56] So that you might know the God. Who loves you. Go to God's word. Because it's. And you can trust it. Because it's God's story for you. And for me. And how he brings salvation.

And one day. All this. Pain. Sin. Struggle. Will be gone. And all things. Will be made new. Go to God's word.

Because it is. His way of knowing him. Don't go to God's word. Because you need to check a box. Go to God's word. Because it is the beautiful story. About how God is at work.

In this world. Bringing his people to himself. Through his son. Jesus. And look. For how God. Is working. In your own heart.

Let's pray. Father. We are. Eternally grateful. For. How you work. And how you. Use your word.

[33:53] To change us. And make us. More and more. In the image of Jesus. And so Lord. We just pray. That you would use. The truth of your scriptures. That we would see ourselves. In this story.

See ourselves. As the center. In need. Of a savior. And Lord. Would we remember. Just the beauty. Of what God's word. Teach us. That you delighted. So much. That you would talk to us.

Through it. And teach us. About who you are. And who we are. Thank you. For drawing near to us.

We love you. And praise in Jesus name. Amen. For more information.

Visit us online. At [southwood.org](https://yetanother sermon.host). Thank you.