

The Authority of Scripture (2LCF 1.4-1.5)

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[0:00] So our morning series is expositional preaching and that's working through right now the book of 1st Timothy. And our evening services we're going to be working topically based on the confession.

So Scripture is the Word of God and Scripture contains many words, many chapters, many books, 66 books as we saw of the definition of Scripture last week.

And it contains a lot of doctrine. So what our confession does is that it takes that doctrine and it summarizes it according to each theological head.

So if we want to know what does the Bible say about Scripture, then chapter 1 we can see systematically what Scripture says about Scripture. And then so on, chapter 2 on God and the Holy Trinity.

And this, our confession, it was written by Puritans who were scholastic theologians and pastors.

[1:02] And it's not inspired, it's not Scripture, but it's a very well articulation of what we believe Scripture says.

So what we understand Scripture says we can see according to the head. So that's why this topical series will be using the confession to guide each topic. So chapter 1 is on Holy Scripture. So the first topic we will be working through is Holy Scripture.

Now last week when we looked at the definition of Scripture, we considered how in the turn of the 16th century in the early 1500s, there was a monk who was troubled by things that Rome was doing and that Rome with their ideas of purgatory and indulgences.

There was the jingle that Rome was saying that when a coin in the coffer rings, a soul from purgatory springs. And so Rome, the Pope, was asserting that they had the ability to free souls of people who have died from purgatory.

But where do they even get this idea from purgatory, let alone indulgence in the authority that they have to do so? So in examination of Scripture and a definition of Scripture to see that the Apocrypha is not inspired, because inspiration is that it is breathed out by God.

[2:25] But anyways, when Martin Luther posted his 95 Theses against Rome, he of course posted it on Twitter, but it was a long time ago, so it was Twitter, not X.

No, it was posted on the doors of the Wittenberg Castle, and Rome didn't like it very much. So what was Rome's response to Martin Luther saying that what their views were were wrong according to Scripture?

Well, first of all, Rome declared his views to be heretical. And having declared his views to be heretical, they forbid him from teaching his views, and they forbid anyone from listening or hearing his teaching on these views.

And Rome also reserved the exclusive right to interpretation of the Bible to the Pope. Only the Pope has infallible interpretation of the Scripture, and anybody who wanted to interpret the Bible outside of the interpretation of the Pope of Rome was forbidden.

And they also, of course, asserted that the Pope was infallible. He was the only infallible interpreter of Scripture.

[3:41] So the question comes down then, what is the authority? Because Rome was asserting that what was divine testimony with Scripture, but also tradition, because the Pope is infallible, and that that was to be put at the same level.

So the question comes down to, what is the authority? What is the authority for the church? What is the authority for knowledge of faith and obedience? We'll start by looking in 2 Timothy chapter 3, and we'll read verses 13 to 17.

But evil men and imposters will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.

But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith, which is in Christ Jesus.

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

[5:03] Our great God, we thank you for your word, that we have divine testimony written, and that we have access to read your word, that we may know how to be made right before a holy and just God, and that we as the church may know how we ought to conduct ourselves in the house of the living God.

So we pray that by your spirit you would illuminate your word and give us a spiritually discerned understanding of the truth contained in your word, and help us to better grasp the authority of your word.

I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. So if you have those binders handy, flip open to them, and in the confession, you'll find the tab on the confession, and we'll refer to the wording that's used in the confession, because we believe this accurately summarizes what the Bible says about these things. And we are in chapter 1 of Scripture, and we're going to cover paragraphs 4 and 5 this evening on the authority of Scripture.

So to summarize what these two paragraphs say about what Scripture says about Scripture, it is that holy Scripture alone is divine testimony and the only final and supreme authority in matters of faith and doctrine.

[6:24] So again, holy Scripture alone is divine testimony and the only final and supreme authority in matters of faith and obedience. Now, chapter 1, paragraphs 4 to 7 cover the properties of Scripture.

So if you remember, we looked at the necessity of Scripture, and then we looked at the definition of Scripture, and then we have the properties of Scripture, which are the authority, the perfection, and the perspicuity of Scripture.

Sorry, the perspicuity of Scripture. So if you don't know what that word means, you're going to have to come back next week, because today we're just dealing with paragraphs 4 and 5 on the authority of Scripture.

So paragraphs 4, we see the source of the authority. Why does Scripture have authority? Well, first of all, we need to understand the source of authority.

And if you recall from last week in paragraph 3, and that the Apocrypha is not considered inspired, the Apocrypha is not the Word of God, it said that the Apocrypha is of no authority to the church.

[7:32] And the Apocrypha is where Rome was getting their ideas for purgatory and indulgences, but the Apocrypha is not inspired. So it is of no authority to the church. So what then is of authority to the church for doctrine and for practice?

So first of all, what is authority? And what is the significance of testimony to the authority?

And then what is the origin of authority? So what is authority? The authority, when we say the authority of Scripture, authority is the power. The power of Scripture that rests in its inspiration.

So the reason why Scripture has authority and why we would say that Rome does not have authority, that the Pope does not have the final and supreme authority, is because of inspiration. Now Rome itself would say that tradition of the Church of Rome is divine inspiration.

So what it comes down to is that authority is that which is inspired, and inspired being breathed out by God. When holy men were moved or carried along by the Spirit of God, now the apostles were taught by Jesus, and he said, I will send the Spirit who will bring these things to mind, and it will lead you into all truth.

[8:54] And then we have the written, and scripturation means the writing of the Scriptures. So the authority is the power of Scripture that rests in its inspiration.

Now Richard Muller has a very helpful dictionary on Greek and Latin theological terms, and he has some helpful contributions that Scripture is authoritative, first of all, as the foundation of knowing, the basis by which we cognitively understand and comprehend things, but also secondly, as the canon or norm resting in inspiration, for all discernment of truth and falsehood in matters of faith and morals.

So the authority of Scripture, what role does the Church play in it? When we considered the 66 books of the Bible, and that the Roman Catholic Bible has more than the 66 books of the Bible, did the early Church play a role in having the authority to determine what was Scripture, or did they merely affirm it?

If you remember, it was that their testimony was the reception of what was already considered to be the Word of God. But anyways, testimony. We see in the Confession that it speaks about the testimony.

In paragraph 4, right at the bottom, I'm just going to flip there, and read it out that it says, Well, the authority of the Holy Scripture, for which it ought to be believed, does not depend on the testimony of any man or church, but wholly upon God, who is truth itself, the author thereof.

[10 : 38] Therefore, it is to be received, because it is the Word of God. So the Church doesn't make it the Word of God. The Church receives it, because it is the Word of God.

So the Church testifies and affirms to the fact that Scripture is the Word of God, but the Church is not itself the authority.

If the Church was the authority, and determining that Scripture is the Word of God and is authoritative, then that would put the Church as a higher authority than the Bible itself. So the Church merely bears testimony in the affirming and receiving of it as the Word of God.

Because remember, it's kind of like the chicken and the egg when you ask, Well, what came first? Was there first a chicken or was there first an egg? Well, what came first, the Word or the Church? The Church did not bring the Word into existence.

The Word brought the Church into existence. So the authority belongs to whom is truth itself. That's why it's worded this way. It's not of any man or church, but holy upon God, who is truth itself.

[11 : 45] Richard Muller in his dictionary, he goes on further and explains that the power, dignity, or influence of a work that derives from its author. So the power, dignity, or influence of Scripture is derived from its author.

And with tradition, well, tradition can be helpful. For example, the creeds. And the creeds were very influential in the formation of parts of the Confession.

They are very helpful, but they're not inspired. But we believe they're helpful because they accurately explain what Scripture says. Now, the origin.

And considering the source of the authority of Scripture, we consider the origin of Scripture because the authority comes from the source. Scripture's authority is derived from its authorship.

And it was the Word of God. So, where we can say Scripture says this, it's the same thing as saying God says this.

[12 : 49] Some who realize that Scripture points out that their views are erroneous, they might try to say something like only the letters in red are the words of Christ.

And so that takes more priority than the black words, which are the words of the apostles. But all of Scripture is inspired. So if the Bible says it, it's because God says it.

And it's divine testimony written. So the origin is that it is the Word of God. Some texts that help us with this.

1 Thessalonians 2.13 says, And then also, as we started off reading in 2 Timothy 3.16, All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, which means God breathed.

All Scripture is God breathed. Therefore, it is to be received because it is the Word of God. And when God speaks, God speaks with authority.

[13 : 59] So paragraph 4 summarizes for us the source of the authority that Scripture has. And paragraph 5 summarizes for us the evidence of the authority of Scripture.

And it's broken up into three parts. The first part is the external evidence. That's what is outside of Scripture. The second part is internal evidence. That's what's inside of Scripture.

And the third part is divine evidence. It's obviously God's divine testimony as evidence. So external evidence. What is outside of Scripture that speaks about Scripture.

The internal evidence. Some might say, well, that's circular reasoning. For to say that the Word of God is the Word of God. Because the Word of God says it's the Word of God. Well, what if I don't believe in God? Or what if I don't believe it's the Word of God?

Then it's not true that it says it's the Word of God. So some might say it's just circular reasoning. But it's not. Because to put anything as a higher authority, such as the Church, is the Word of God. Because the Church says it's the Word of God.

[14:57] Well, now the Church is the higher authority. So it's like light. Actually, it is light. But it's also like light. And that you don't... If you have light, you don't need to take another form of light to shine it on the light to prove that that's light.

You just reveal the light and it proves itself that it's light. Scripture is light. But just to demonstrate the division of external evidence, the first statement of paragraph 5, And then there's a statement on the internal evidence.

And the heaviness of the matter, the efficacy of the doctrine, and the majesty of the style, the consent of all the parts, the scope of the whole, which is to give all glory to God, the full discovery it makes of the only way of man's salvation, and many other incomparable excellencies, and entire perfections thereof are arguments whereby it does abundantly evidence itself to be the Word of God.

The Word of God itself is internal evidence that it is the Word of God. And then the last statement is on the divine evidence that it is the Word of God, and therefore the authority of it based on its source.

Yet, notwithstanding, our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth and divine authority thereof is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts.

[16:34] So I just want to point out a couple of things that are stated in that and help to understand it a little bit further. But the scope, it talks about the scope of the whole. The scope of the whole is to give glory to God, which pairs well with this morning.

And if you know the catechism question, what is the chief end of man? To glorify God and to enjoy Him forever. And the chief end of everything that's created is to glorify God. So the scope of the whole is to give glory to God.

So keep that in your gaze when you think of all of Scripture, what any of it says, that the purpose, the chief end of it, that the scope of the whole is to give glory to God.

Not to give glory to man, but to give glory to God. Romans 11, 36. For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things... From Him and through Him and to Him...

I just left my mind. But to Him be glory. All things are from God, all things are through God, and all things are to God for His glory. And William Ames, he wrote...

[17:38] So remember the scope. The scope of the Old and New Testament, from Genesis to Revelation, what is the common theme in all of Scripture? What is the scope of the whole of all that we read?

Well, the scope of the whole is to give glory to God. Now let's separate that into the two Testaments. William Ames wrote that the Old and New Testaments are reducible to these two primary heads.

The Old promises Christ to come, and the New testifies that He has come. So all of Scripture, both Testaments, point to either the coming of... that Christ will come, or that Christ has come, and it is all for the glory of God.

The scope of the whole is to give glory to God. And then, the unity of all Scripture. There are different perspectives. Dispensationalism, for example, is one of them that will try to make distinctions, sharp distinctions, in parts of the Bible, which neglects to see the unity of all of Scripture.

There's the scope of the whole, all of the Scripture. There's a united theme throughout it all, and that theme is for the glory of God, but it's through the work of Christ, the Old Testament promise of His coming, and the New Testament that He has come.

[18:54] So the unity of all of Scripture, the Old Testament and the New Testament, both of them, is that a holy God is reconciling sinful people to Himself, through Christ, to the praise of His glory.

Don't lose sight of that. The scope of the whole is to the glory of God. And to expand on it even just a little bit further, Herman Bovink wrote that the essence of the Christian religion consists in the reality that, and here we're kind of getting from Genesis, creation, to Revelation, consummation, but the essence consists in the reality that the creation of the Father, ruined by sin, is restored in the death of the Son of God, and recreated by the grace of the Holy Spirit into a kingdom of God.

Theology is about God, and should reflect a doxological tone that glorifies Him. So in other words, all of Scripture about Christ, salvation of lost sinful human mankind, all of the theology, all the conclusions that we derive from Scripture, so we can read passages of Scripture, theology is when

we draw conclusions of it.

So drawing conclusions and summarizing it systematically is theology. So theology, that must then be, and should reflect, it says a doxological tone.

And doxological means glory, to give glory. To praise God is to give glory to God. So theology itself, all of the scope of all of Scripture, as we read it, and think about it, and draw conclusions, that it is to have a tone that causes us to glorify God.

[20 : 41] And as mentioned about the Old Testament and the New Testament, the unity of Scripture being of the coming of Christ, that is the central theme of all of Scripture, and the view from the beginning.

The end is the view from the beginning. So we need, we should understand that even when we read Genesis, of God's purpose in all of creation is to reconcile sinful mankind to a holy God, that we, because before, before the fall, there would be an understanding of God as wise, as right, as all-powerful.

And even in nature, we see this about God, the God who created all things, that God is, that he is powerful, that he is wise. But through Christ, through having sinned and being at enmity with God and deserving wrath and condemnation, and that being our lot, our wages, what we deserve, but then because of the redemptive work of Christ, that the Son of God came and assumed our nature and in our nature, perfected obedience, what we could not do, what we failed to do, and suffered and died as a substitute to pay for the wages, which is our due, and died, was buried, and was raised from the dead with power, and that all of those who are united to Christ, all those who receive Christ and rest on Christ and embrace Christ as offered in the gospel, receive all that is Christ, receive his righteousness, receive a full forgiveness of sins, and by receiving his righteousness, we're clothed in his righteousness.

And this is all to the glory of God because we see, we now understand God not only as just powerful and wise and holy and just, but we now personally and experientially understand the perfections of God, of mercy and of grace and of love, and it's to the glory of God.

It's the doxological tone. In all of Scripture, that's what all of Scripture is about. So if we, we don't want to ever read Scripture in a way that is not about the coming of the Messiah into the world to save sinners, to the glory of God.

[22 : 56] So next we see a discovery that speaks about the full discovery it makes of the only way of man's salvation. In paragraph one, we saw the necessity of Scripture because nature tells us that God is, but nature itself, when we look, when we look at the heavens, when we look at the stars, when we look at a mountain, there's something inside of us, innately inscribed inside of us that tells us that God exists, that we were created, that this is created, and that God is powerful, and God's moral law is written on us that we know that we are guilty.

Our consciences tell us that we have broken the law of God. But, when we look at the mountains, when we look at the stars, or when we look at our conscience, it doesn't tell us the gospel. So, Scripture is, necessary, and so that's why it says, the full discovery it makes of the only way of man's salvation and many other incomparable excellencies.

There's so many other things we learn from Scripture, even about the excellencies, the perfections, and essence of God, and of course, for, not only for faith, but also for obedience, how the church ought to conduct itself in the house of the living God.

So, this discovery may be fully known in Scripture, which, it's hard to concisely summarize all this because this, this then leads into the sufficiency of Scripture, how Scripture is sufficient and we don't need common day, current day revelation.

but it makes full discovery of the only way of man's salvation and further excellencies, perfections, and internal evidence of divine testimony.

[24 : 39] And then also, persuasion, the last statement about the divine evidence of the authority of Scripture because of the source, yet notwithstanding our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth and divine authority thereof is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts.

So, this is why, let's say if you have two people, they are, they've never heard the gospel, they're unregenerate, they're not believers, they come into church together, they sit under the exact same sermon, they hear the gospel preached, one of them is saved, God saves one of them and the other one isn't.

Well, why? What's the difference between the two? The difference is what this speaks of is the inward work of the Holy Spirit or the effectual call which is the work of God's Spirit convincing us so somebody can hear the gospel and not be convinced of their sin.

They might think, I do a lot of good. I thank God because of the good that I do, God will give me a pass. But the effectual call, the work of the Spirit is convincing us of our sin and misery.

Not only that we are sinners, but that we are in misery because of our sin. And enlightening our minds, a person who's not a believer can read Scripture and not understand it by the light of faith.

[25 : 58] By the light of nature, we know what the words are saying, but to understand and to believe is by the light of faith. So, this illuminating work of the Spirit is convincing us of our sin and misery, enlightening our minds and the knowledge of Christ that's contained in Scripture, renewing our wills, persuading and enabling us to embrace the Lord Jesus Christ as freely offered in the gospel.

The persuasion of what is spiritually discerned. discerned. So, I'm getting ahead of myself here, but somebody who is not a believer and is doing a biblical exegesis, it's not a biblical exegesis.

They're not an expert in Scripture because they don't have the illumination of the Holy Spirit who inspired the words to be written. But anyways, the inward work of the Holy Spirit bearing witness by and with the word in our hearts.

This is the internal and the external means of illumination. The external means is the gospel, the word itself, which is why we have such a high view of the preaching of the gospel or in missions and that those who are not saved have to hear the gospel because the external means is the gospel proclamation.

These be heard. And then the internal means is the illumination of the Holy Spirit. So the word and the spirit. And it's not that there's a missing piece. It's not that there's a piece missing from Scripture that the Holy Spirit then provides that then, oh, now I understand what it says.

[27 : 34] It is all contained within Scripture, but it's the removing of our blindness that the Holy Spirit does. So, having looked at the content of paragraphs four and five, what are some concluding uses that we can take from this?

I'm going to say the same thing I've said with each other. The paragraph that we've looked at is what is at stake? And I think I'm going to say that until we're done paragraph one. But what is at stake with our understanding of Scripture?

Because some might say, well, I'm not going to die on this hill because it's not the gospel. And it's that only, the gospel is the only hill to die on. But if the doctrine of Scripture isn't important to us, if the inspiration, the source, the origin of Scripture and therefore the authority that Scripture has and all of the arguments that might try to subvert it, what's at stake?

If we give up ground on the doctrine of Scripture, especially for today, on the authority of Scripture, what is at stake? Same thing. The glory of God, the salvation of man, right living to God, and living blessedly forever.

So everything is at stake. So in light of that, if you cause doubt in one verse of Scripture that either it's not inspired or that it's not of authority, if you cause doubt in one part of Scripture, then you can't trust it completely as being inspired.

[28 : 59] If somebody presents a plausible argument that a part of Scripture isn't actually inspired because there's an error, then you can't trust any of Scripture.

So all of these subtle or plausible arguments to try to tear down the authority of Scripture or the inspiration of Scripture, it is a primary doctrine.

Because if you cannot trust it completely as being inspired and fallible and authoritative, then you can't trust it at all. And progressive Christianity does attempt to pull down the doctrine of the authority of Scripture.

And even if it doesn't seem like a foundational issue that it starts with, so that it might not even start with Scripture, but a doctrine. A doctrine about something about practice.

If they start to, something that's clear and didactic teaching in Scripture of how the Church ought to conduct itself, but when progressive Christianity tries to cut that out, then that's a problem because how then do you trust any of what Scripture says?

[30 : 07] you lose ground on the authority of Scripture. The authority of Scripture is a foundational issue. An example, for example, is the clear didactic teaching of 1 Timothy 2.12, which in the mornings in our series through 1 Timothy we've gone through, which clearly states that God does not call women to the role of elder, to pastors.

Now, if a Church compromises on that because maybe, well, she's a godly woman or it's a relative of an influential person in the Church or whatever it might be, or maybe she says, I'm called by God to do this.

It's like, well, who am I to say God was wrong in calling you? For whatever reason, they compromise on what is clear and authoritative in Scripture.

So if it's clear in Scripture and you compromise on the authority of Scripture on that, then Scripture has no authority on that, which is of needing of further clarity to understand what it means by looking at other texts.

And third, concluding use, that Scripture is the only final and supreme authority. There's, there's a movement that tries to, it's, they try to remove any help other than the Scriptures.

[31 : 30] That really, Scripture is the only thing, this movement of Biblicism. But Scripture, what is that? Scripture is the only final authority, the only supreme authority. So, while the Athanasian Creed or the Nicene Creed is of unauthority because we know that the Nicene Creed, if I deny what it says about Christ, I'm a heretic.

So people know that because it's been around for a while. So if somebody comes into a church, they're not going to say, I deny the Trinity. But the word Trinity, because they know that if they deny the Trinity, they're a heretic.

But the word Trinity is in the Bible. So if we say, you have to have a verse that says that for it to be true, well, what do we do with the doctrine of Trinity? Because the Trinity is taking multiple verses of what Scripture says about the essence of God and, and bringing it together.

so we understand that that is an authority, but it's, it's subservient to Scripture. It's only authority because it's indisputable that that's what Scripture says.

And the implications, if I deny it, is that I deny what Scripture says. So there is authority there, but only insofar as it agrees with Scripture. So what if it doesn't agree with Scripture?

[32 : 48] What if there's a creed or a council that comes up with something and it disagrees with Scripture? Well, Scripture is the only final and supreme authority. No, no, no man, no church, no pope, no country, no council, no synod has an authority that is majesty or that is over top of Scripture.

Scripture is the only final and supreme authority. Now, out of the Reformation, there, there were the five solas, the first one being sola scripture. And that is something that Biblicism will try to stand on as their grounds.

Scripture alone. Scripture alone. And kind of leave it at that. But sola scriptura isn't nuda scriptura or bare scriptura or solo scriptura.

This Biblicist view, they'll cry out, no creed but the Bible. Which is contradictory because a creed is a statement of what I believe.

So to have that statement, no creed but the Bible, is a statement of what their belief is. So it's a creed. So their creed is no creed but the Bible.

[33 : 54] So it doesn't even make sense because it's in itself a creed, a creed in itself contradictory. But what it actually means is that they don't know enough, what they know, they don't know it enough that they're willing to write it down or they're not honest enough to disclose it.

Because like I said, if somebody comes into a church, they're not going to say, I deny the Trinity because they know that you're a heretic if you deny the Trinity. So they're going to say, yeah, I agree with the Athanasian Creed or I agree with the Nicene Creed.

But there, with this, no creed but the Bible, if somebody, if somebody believes something other than what the Nicene Creed says about the Trinity, they're probably not going to want to write it down because then when you compare it with what Scripture says or with what the Nicene Creed says, it's going to show that their beliefs are a problem.

It's an error. So people are willing to agree with things that are outside of Scripture such as the term Trinity or the Nicene Creed or the Athanasian Creed, but as soon as what is written contradicts what they believe, they're no longer willing to agree with having a confession or a creed because it shows their error.

So what about this Biblicism? The reality of Biblicism, this no creed but the Bible, no, you know, no commentaries, no confessions, no catechisms, no creeds, what it is doing is it's with theology there's a culture.

[35 : 43] A culture, theology is the conclusions that we derive from the Bible and we have the promise of the presence of Christ in the church and these confessions, these creeds, these

catechisms, it's the fruit of the presence of Christ in the church with the victory gifts of pastors and teachers throughout the ages.

So there's this culture, what theology is, it's a culture but culture transcends language, whether it's someone who's Dutch or someone who's German or someone who's French, it's a culture that transcends language, it transcends nations, it transcends even age in history past a hundred years ago, a thousand years ago.

It's a culture in which we partake in, which we're tapping into. So Biblicism, which pushes all that out of the way, all of the fruit of Christ's presence in the church, the scholastic theologians and Puritans and pastors, the minds whom God has gifted as pastors and teachers throughout the ages that they agree on all of these things to say, no, none of that, no creed but the Bible.

What it is, this Biblicism, is it's idolizing one's own personal, autonomous opinion about a text of Scripture. And it tends to be to the exclusion of the context and the whole of Scripture as a unified and inspired whole.

Biblicists will say, you have to show me the exact verse. Well, again, the Trinity is just an easy one. There's not an exact verse that has the word, the Trinity. It's taking what Scripture says as a whole and bringing it together and summarizing it concisely.

[37 : 26] And it's very easy to take a proof text and have heresy out of it. That's what heretics do. They take proof text but they exclude the context of all of Scripture.

So it's problematic. It sounds good at first. You know, Biblicism, you know, the word Bible is in it. It's Biblicism. But what the idea is behind it, it's more from the dictionary of the devil.

But anyway, so an illustration. If you get ten Biblicists who say, no creed but the Bible. No creeds, no confessions, no catechisms, just my interpretation, just me and my Bible.

You put them into a room and bring up one text of Scripture, you're going to have ten different interpretations of it. And so to ask them what their beliefs actually are is going to be like trying to take Jell-O and nail it to the wall because they're not actually willing to write it down.

So it's a problem because there's, they're just going to say, you know, to the nine people that had different interpretations, they're just going to say, well that's just your interpretation. Just me and my Bible and my interpretation is I'm the arbiter of what is truth.

[38 : 35] So again, it becomes a problem. And Matthew Barrett wrote that interpreting the Bible with humility as God intended means interpreting the Bible with the church.

Many today will respond with a shout of protest, no creed but the Bible. That shout, however, is a selfish individualism or what I call a crude, narrow Biblicism that masks itself in the name of biblical authority.

Sola Scriptura has been misunderstood, even radicalized to mean me and my Bible alone. But that is a mindset captive to our culture's God, autonomous individualism.

And the funny thing about it all is that this Biblicism, no creed but the Bible, me and my Bible, they'll say Sola Scriptura, they'll say it's from Sola Scriptura, but Sola Scriptura came from the Reformation because Rome was saying it's scriptures inspired but also the tradition of Rome is inspired.

So the Reformation was saying Rome is wrong, it's not tradition, it's just scripture. But Sola Scriptura as was defined by the Reformers and the Reformers who fought for the doctrine of Sola Scriptura, they used the creeds and they wrote confessions.

[39 : 51] So to use Sola Scriptura as the grounds of no creed but the Bible, it just does not make sense at all. Confessions and creeds are subservient to scripture but they are very helpful in summarizing what we believe accurately scripture says.

Not only that but it's disclosure. If you want to go to a church, something's going to be taught. It might be heresy, it might be helpful, it might be truth and a church that's not willing to disclose what's going to be taught is a problem because anything could come from the pulpit.

So these creeds and confessions are subservient to scripture but they are very helpful. They are of a ministerial authority not a magisterial authority.

And finally, the Holy Spirit's internal illumination, that last statement, yet notwithstanding our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth and divine authority thereof, is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit bearing witness by and with the word in our hearts.

What we read in scripture, the truths contained in scripture are understood and believed by the light of faith, by the work of the Holy Spirit in us. And that's why we pray at the beginning of the service

or before a sermon for the illumination of the word by the Spirit.

[41:07] The Holy Spirit's internal illumination in our hearts of the word. So, a scholar who is very good with words or with history or with writings, who is unregenerate, who is not a believer, who does not have the indwelling Holy Spirit, is not a biblical exegete because God's word is spiritually discerned and that, as I said, is why we pray for the illumination of the Holy Spirit, which is good both before a sermon as well as when we are at home reading our Bibles in the morning or whenever we read our Bibles for the Holy Spirit to illuminate the word of God to us by the light of faith.

Let's pray.