

# The Perfection of Scripture (2LCF 1.6-1.7)

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[0:00] Sometimes in church history, something will begin to be taught that wasn't taught before, or it's what has been taught before, but with a new twist on it or a novelty, as we considered this morning, and the church has to respond to it by examining this new teaching, weighing it against scripture and having a response of the accuracy or the errancy of the error of this new teaching. And when councils or when synods gather together, typically the response comes in a written form, and a lot of the articulation throughout church history is in a polemic fashion in response to error that is being taught. And as we've been looking at what the Bible says about scripture, so when we look at the confession, we believe it accurately summarizes what is taught in scripture, and we've seen the necessity of scripture, and because of the necessity, then well, what is scripture? So we looked at the definition of scripture, that which is inspired by God, and being inspired by God, then we see the authority of scripture, and scripture has authority over the church. And because of the authority of scripture, next we have the perfection of scripture. And if you remember last week, I told you about the perspicuity of scripture, and if you didn't know what that term meant, that we would find out this evening. So in church history, there was some new teachings that was coming out of Rome. And if you remember the little jingle, it was when a coin in the coffer rings, a soul from purgatory springs. And there was a monk, Martin Luther, who was troubled by these ideas coming out of Rome, and the idea of purgatory and indulgences, which sparked the Reformation, and a part of the Reformation was the doctrine of scripture. Not everything had to be reformed. There was not a division at that point of Roman Catholicism and Protestants. But some things had to be examined, and a response had to be determined or given. So if you recall, Martin Luther was disturbed by some of the teaching coming out of Rome, and so he posted his 95 theses. And Rome responded by declaring his views to be heretical, and that he was not authorized to teach those views, and people weren't authorized to hear him teach those views. And then they added on top of that, that only the Pope has the ability to interpret what scripture says, and nobody's allowed to interpret scripture outside of Rome. And by the way, the Pope is infallible. So that's the counter-argument that Martin Luther had to deal with or to respond with. So the question then, when we think about this, and what had to be worked through at that time, and what still applies today, is the question, is scripture perfect? Is scripture perfect for saving faith and obedience? Is there more to scripture that we need to know in order to know how to be saved, or for faith, or for obedience, how to live to Christ, or operate as the church? Either scripture is perfect, or it's not perfect. So is it sufficient? And is it clear enough that a small town church, for example, could function according to scripture without Rome? That they could function according to scripture as the pillar and ground of truth without the heresies of Rome? So I've kind of implicitly given away the answer to that question, but let's find out what scripture has to say about it. So if you have your Bibles, open to Psalm 19, starting in verse 7. The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul. The testimony of the Lord is sure,

making wise the simple. The statutes 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 judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold, sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover, by them your servant is warned, and in keeping them there is great reward. Who can understand his errors? Cleanse me from secret faults. Keep back your servant also from presumptuous sins. Let them not have dominion over me. Then I shall be blameless, and I shall be innocent of great transgression. Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer. Our great God, we thank you for your word that we have supernatural revelation, that we have divine testimony, and that in your word contains what we need to know for salvation,

for faith, and for obedience. And I pray, Lord, that as we seek to hear from you, from your word this evening, that by your spirit you would illuminate your word to us and grow us in our knowledge and understanding. We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen. As we consider the doctrine of scripture, or of holy scripture, as it's summarized in our confession, we come to the topic of the perfection of scripture. And what the perfection of scripture is, or what we will unpack this evening, is that scripture being both sufficient and clear, is a full and perfect body of the essential doctrines for faith and obedience. So I'll say that one more time. Scripture being both sufficient and clear, is a full and perfect body of the essential doctrines for faith and obedience. So our confession summarizes what the Bible says about scripture, and we are in paragraphs, well, really four to seven.

If you remember, I mentioned that paragraphs four to seven are about the properties of scripture. So last week we looked at the authority of scripture in paragraphs four to five, and then from six, paragraphs six and seven are on the perfection of scripture. We'll divide that into two parts, according to each paragraph. First of all, the sufficiency of scripture, and then the perspicuity of scripture. So the sufficiency of scripture in paragraph six. So I'll read the first part first there, but the whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man's salvation, faith and life is either expressly set down or necessarily contained in the holy scripture, unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelation of the spirit or traditions of men.

So the sufficiency of scripture, there's the objective completeness. It is sufficient, so it is complete. And there's also the inward illumination. And then there's also a note about the light of nature. But the objective completeness without corruption, the complete, the perfection of something is its completeness. So if there, if it's not complete, or if it's corrupted in some way, then it's not perfect. So the perfection, its perfection necessitates that it is complete.

So the objective completeness, keep your, actually flip over to 2 Timothy 3, 15 to 17. She probably remember from last week.

[8:09] 2 Timothy 3, 15 to 17 says, 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.

So scripture is sufficient, but sufficient for what? Is it sufficient for everything we need to know in life as humans? So to understand the sufficiency of scripture, we want to understand the purpose that scripture is sufficient for its purpose. And that purpose is that scripture is sufficient for, or it contains all things necessary for, what did we read? God's own glory, man's salvation, faith, and life. Which means that if we desire to live a life to glorify God, we don't need some sort of secret knowledge that's outside of scripture. Or if someone wants to know how to be saved, they'll find the answer in scripture. Or if we need to know as Christians how we can live obediently to our Lord, we find it in scripture. There's nothing in addition, whether that be traditions of man, or current so-called prophecies or tongues. So scripture is sufficient materially, in that what is contained in it, the contents of scripture, is sufficient, and it's also sufficient formally, in that it contains what's necessary to make it intelligible. In other words, which this is reaching into another paragraph, but scripture interprets scripture. So if scripture was sufficient for everything we know, we need to know for saving faith and obedience, but yet who knows how to understand what it means, then it's not sufficient. But scripture contains within it the keys to understanding what scripture says. Scripture interprets scripture. And this sets us up really for the next paragraph of the perspicuity of scripture. But both materially, its contents, as well as its own intelligibility, scripture is sufficient. And it starts off by talking about the whole counsel of God. It contains the whole counsel of God. Now, the Leiden synopsis of pure theology, which was a response to error that was being taught in the early 1600s. And it's a,

I would actually recommend it to everybody. I think everybody should read the Leiden synopsis of pure theology. But it concisely summarizes scripture in a response way, dealing with a variety of heads of theology. But anyways, on the sufficiency of scripture, it defines it in this way. All the doctrines about the faith and moral conduct necessary required for a comprehensive and saving knowledge of God and for the pursuit of supreme blessedness are contained sufficiently in the written word of God.

So the whole counsel of God, and notice the wording, that might be a little bit confusing, but it says it's expressed, set down, expressly set down or necessarily contained. So in other words, it's either

stated explicitly in clear didactic teaching or in a way that's by implicit reference.

Now, God, when God created man, he created man after his own image and knowledge, righteousness, and holiness. We are creating the image of God in a way that other creatures are not. We have the ability to reason. So we can learn something. We can think about what we've learned.

[12:14] We can weigh it in our minds. We can come to conclusions. And then we can have a response to those conclusions that we have. So because we have a reasonable soul, we can read scripture, two parts of scripture, see what they say, come to conclusions about it, and from those conclusions generate a response of praise to God. So when something is by implicit inference, it's not expressly stated in a sense of you read that verse and just the meaning pops right out to you, like clear didactic teaching, but by drawing conclusions, by implicit inference, which is by the use of reason.

So by good and necessary consequences may be deduced. So in other words, not a single proof text for everything. For example, the doctrine of the Trinity. It's an easy one to discuss because we know that if you deny the doctrine of the Trinity, you're a heretic. You've strayed from the faith. But the word Trinity isn't found in scripture. It's what's deduced from all of what scripture says about God, and drawing that together and summarizing it in the doctrine of the Trinity.

So there's, we don't want to think of the Bible in the sense that it's just a collection of proof texts and that each verse explains something. And if you, if you want to believe in a doctrine, you have to go to the, the verse that states it explicitly. And we're going to see why shortly, the problem with doing that. But before we do, it starts off by saying the whole counsel of God, not the partial counsel of God, not just some of what you need to know, but there will be further revelation, not partial revelation and also the tradition of man, but the whole counsel of God is complete, final, sufficient, and perfect. So by implication of the sufficiency of scripture, if scripture is sufficient for what we need to know, uh, for faith and obedience, then it must be final.

It has to continue, if it contains all that we need to know to be saved, then it must, and obedience, and it must be final. Nothing is to be added. Um, and there is to be no new revelation, um, which is why we hold to cessationism. If you haven't heard the word cessationism, it, it's the belief that the, uh, the, the apostolic gifts have ceased. They were there for a purpose. There's, there's a number, we're not going to dive into it today. We will later, but just in a, in a brief summary, it's that, um, we, we believe that scripture says that the prophecy and the, through the, the revelation, um, written by the apostles will come to an end after the apostolic era, and there were apostolic gifts to validate their authority for the establishment of the church, and even the doctrine of it behind it. We'll look at that later, but that, that has come to an end, so that there are no current day apostles. There is no current day prophecies. There's no current day divine revelation, which would be authoritative, uh, which would indicate that what was already once for all delivered, um, was not sufficient. It was not complete. It was not final.

Uh, so to disregard God's word in any way, to disregard it, to edit it, to add to it, to take away from it, to reject a part of it, or to rule anything out of it is sinful disbelief. It's disbelief of what God has said, which is sin, which also means that nothing is to be added.

[16:05] And if you notice the wording, um, at the end of that paragraph, I'll reread it, unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelation of the spirit, or traditions of men. That statement, traditions of men, you know, what's going on there is that shots have been fired. And remember I said that parts of this was polemic, and this is stemming a lot of what's coming out of the reformation, and a lot of how Rome was justifying what was coming out of Rome was that it was divine inspiration through tradition instead of the written word. So by tradition of men, making tradition of men equal to scripture. So that statement is deliberately against Roman Catholicism that claimed that their tradition was of equal authority with scripture.

Now, at this point, uh, reformed theology is diametrically opposed to Roman Catholicism at this point on scripture, on the, on the, on the perfection of scripture, and that nothing is to be added by the traditions of men, but not on everything. Um, there, something that's, we need to remember about the reformation is that there wasn't from the apostolic era, there wasn't Roman Catholicism and Protestantism. There's the church, there's, there's orthodoxy, there's, um, the faith once for all delivered to the saints, as I mentioned this morning. And then based on that foundation, it's upright, or it's, it's, it's corrected straight. And then throughout history, something would stray from sound doctrine. And as it strayed, it was no longer over top of the foundation. And then the church would

respond, and they would have to then word things in a way that's not in scripture, because heretics would use scripture to say, this is why they believe what they do. So it had to be reworded in another way to demonstrate that what they were stating was not true for scripture. So there would be branches that come off and then polemic, they would, they would address it. They would determine it to be wrong and come up with the response. So there's always, there's always these little bubbles or branches or whatever it is that comes off of what is straight once for all delivered to the saints and to be held to by the church to be, to, to, to guard the good deposit. And then we get to the Reformation and

Rome has these ideas that are new, they're different, and it strays from what is upright and correct, such as purgatory indulgences, which this monk, Martin Luther was troubled by. So the Reformation wasn't, wasn't a clean cut from the church and starting something new. What the Reformation was, was saying that this has departed, leaving what's departed and coming back to what is straight and historical. And there are parts of things that Roman Catholicism didn't stray on, such as their, their doctrine of God or the doctrine of the Trinity. So it is in particular areas, and it's this area, this is one area, the doctrine of scripture, and the perfection of scripture is where, one place where Protestants and Roman Catholics are diametrically opposed. Another one is justification by faith alone, which we'll, we'll come back to you. But, um, Galatians 1.9, it says, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed. It is a serious thing to stray from the gospel according to scripture, uh, the faith once for all delivered to the saints.

So the objective completeness of scripture. So to add something to the gospel that's not in scripture is according to Galatians 1.19, let him be accursed. So the objective completeness of scripture, and then we see inward illumination. Notice it says, nevertheless, we acknowledge the inward illumination of the spirit of God to be necessary for the saving understanding of such things as are revealed in the word. And there are, um, some circumstances, okay, we'll come back to that, but the inward illumination, this is making a difference between internal light and external light, or we could say the light of nature and the light of faith. So by the light of nature, by our, our eyesight, by, by the way that we're born, we're able to perceive things. We're able to have discussions. We're able to hear things. We're able to look at nature and by the light of nature, we can look at a mountain and we know that there's a God and a God who created all of this and a God who has almighty power. But by that light of nature, that's not, we're not saved by that. That's not saving light, but to understand the gospel. So somebody who is not regenerated, who is not saved, can read the gospel or hear the gospel, but by the light of nature, not be saved by it. What's required is the light of faith, which is by the spirit of God, the internal illumination. And that's what it's referring to here, making a distinction between the light of nature or that which we see and perceive by nature and the light of faith, the internal light. In other words, say a saving understanding of such things that are revealed in the word. So I'm going to read 1 Corinthians 2, 9 to 12.

1 Corinthians 2, 9 to 12 says, But as it is written, Now, So you might even wonder at times, if two people come in and they've never heard the word of God before, and they come into a church and they sit down and they hear a sermon preached and the gospel is proclaimed in the sermon, they hear the same gospel at the same time, the same day, God saves one of them and God doesn't save the other one. Well, it's the same message, it's the same word.

[22:59] So what's the difference? The difference is the light of faith by the spirit of God. So the inward illumination is what it's getting at there. And then we notice that it makes a note about the light of nature.

So scripture is sufficient for all we need to know for faith and obedience. A part of obedience is gathering as a church. As the church is to be ordered, is according to scripture.

So scripture is sufficient for all we need to know for faith and obedience. A part of obedience is gathering as a church. As the church is to be ordered, is according to scripture.

That you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of truth. So if scripture is sufficient for what we need to know to assemble as a church, does that mean scripture tells us what time we must meet?

Well, the time of which we meet isn't what is necessary for obedience. That's what it refers to when it says the light of nature. So there's a difference between the elements and the circumstances.

[24:12] So maybe you recognize that when it mentioned the word circumstances. The elements are what's in scripture, which is what is prescribed for scripture, such as the preaching of the word,

the praying of the word, the administration of the sacraments, the seeing of the word.

But some things we need to decide that aren't in scripture, such as the time in which we meet. And that doesn't mean that scripture is not sufficient because it doesn't state a necessary time, but that is by the light of nature.

For example, what if we decided to meet between three in the morning and between three and four thirty in the morning? Well, by the light of nature, I could tell you not many people would probably come because that's a very inconvenient time.

People don't want to get up at three in the morning to come to church. It's better for us to meet at ten thirty. So by the light of nature, we meet at ten thirty. So why doesn't it just say everybody must meet at ten thirty?

Because by the light of nature, situations might be different. For example, maybe there's a church that lives in a country where it's illegal to be a Christian, and there's a patrol that goes out from nine in the morning till noon, and if that patrol comes across any church gathering, then they're going to be killed.

[25 : 29] Then, by the light of nature, they might want to meet at a different time. So, some circumstances are not in scripture.

The elements are in scripture, but circumstances are to be determined with Christian prudence and the right use of reason according to the light of nature. So that's the sufficiency of scripture. And the perfection of scripture also includes the perpetuity of scripture.

What does that word mean? It means clarity. The clarity of scripture, or the lucid quality or transparency of scripture.

So, scripture, I'll just start saying clear instead of perspicuity, but they mean the same thing. But scripture is clear absolutely and by itself as well as in relation to the person.

So, let me explain what that means. Scripture in itself is absolutely clear by itself. But, each particular person who reads it is going to have a different understanding, a different way of thinking perhaps when they come to read it.

[26 : 43] So, scripture is clear, but yet everybody that reads it doesn't come to the same conclusion. But scripture is clear in relation to the person that is by the intellect endowed by reason.

So, a person who is endowed with reason is able to understand from scripture that it is clear enough for them to understand. So, it's not just that it's clear, but nobody can really understand what it means.

But those who are endowed with reason can understand. So, there are a few errors to address, first of all, in the clarity of scripture. So, the first error is to think that every single person, every single time they open the Bible, every verse that they read is going to be clear to them.

That is not what the clarity of scripture means. And that argument is used against the clarity of scripture to presume that that's what it means.

And perhaps you've unfortunately maybe been in a small group where it's a small group of people and they read a text of scripture and then they say, well, what does that mean to you?

[27 : 57] And then, well, what does that mean to you? As though the meaning or the sense or the interpretation is according to that person's intellect.

But the clarity of scripture is not that every single person, every single time they pick up scripture, every verse they read, it's going to be clear.

There is one sense of scripture. So, if every single person who picked up the Bible, it was clear to them, that would make truth relative because everybody, people have different interpretations.

And that there would be different senses. And so, if it's, well, what's your interpretation? What's your interpretation? What's your interpretation? And then, each person's interpretation, that's what the scripture says.

Well, that's contrary to the clarity of scripture because there is one sense of scripture. And it's that one sense of scripture is clear from scripture.

[28 : 58] And when we say one sense, some questions that might come up is, well, what about typology? Because perhaps David is writing in the Psalms about his circumstances, but yet that is referenced to Christ, or the New Testament references that as speaking to Christ.

So, there's that meaning, but then there's also the meaning of pointing to Christ. So, the one sense is the full meaning. And the full meaning includes both the historical grammatical context with the human authors, as well as the divine meaning, the sense of the divine author of it pointing towards

Christ.

So, there's one sense of scripture. And there is a diversity of the clarity of scripture. So, it's not that all of scripture is going to be extremely clear to every person every time they read it.

There is a diversity of clarity, which not alike plain or not alike clear. So, let me read paragraph 7 here. It says, In other words, Even though some verses or some passages or some chapters or some books, we might not initially understand what it means, what's necessary for salvation and for obedience is clear in scripture.

And also, if all of scripture is given by God for us, it's given to us for a reason. So, while some parts may be not as clear as other parts, ask yourself, ask yourself, what's the reason for that?

[31 : 05] Why has God revealed that to us in a way that it doesn't immediately jump out the meaning of it to me? So, not alike clear.

And when we ask that question, sometimes, it's like, it's probably, the reason why it doesn't immediately jump out is because it's not what we need to know for salvation, in the sense of, it's obscure for us to know how we can be saved, so scripture's not helpful.

But when there are passages that are not as clear, it's for a reason. And probably that reason is that it contains something that's so valuable for our comprehension that it's intended to cause us to slow down and really meditate on it, really chew on it, maybe even reach back into the Old Testament to find out what those words mean, get a visual of what those words mean, in order to have a fuller understanding of scripture as it pertains to saving faith and obedience.

So the first error is to think that all of scripture is going to be always clear to every person every time they pick up the Bible. The second error is obscurity.

So it's really on opposite ends. One end is extreme clarity, the other end is obscurity. So Rome, Rome declared exclusive interpretation that scripture is too obscure for the average person in order to be able to interpret.

[32 : 50] So it needs to be interpreted through Rome and that only the Pope has the true interpretation of it. And so they're claiming scripture to be obscure. And Rome declaring exclusive interpretation, they actually prohibited what they called unauthorized translation of scripture because it wasn't in the the vulgar tongue or the common language.

So they prohibited the unauthorized translation, which was any translation, the unauthorized translation into somebody's common language so that people could read scripture and see what scripture has to say.

And so in so prohibiting it, it has to be done through through Rome. So what is clarity? What is clarity of scripture? Scripture scripture clearly reveals all necessary truth for saving faith and obedience.

So a person endowed with reason, if they want to know what's required for saving faith and obedience, it is clear in scripture. I once met a couple who nobody here knows them.

You don't have to try to figure out who it was, but they're from the United States and I had an interesting discussion with them. I lived in Dryden. They asked why they were visiting. They're from the States. They're up visiting.

[34 : 08] And they asked why I moved to Dryden, I think. And I told them about the church plant, which is now a church. And they were paedo-baptists. They believed that.

So they baptized their babies. And so, you know, we kind of, oh yeah, there's some differences we have and some similarities. And anyways, the husband was convicted of paedo-baptism because he believed that's what scripture says.

And the wife said, I don't think scripture's clear enough on it, so I just think it doesn't matter what you do. And while the husband and I would disagree more on the conclusion, I respect the husband more because he acknowledges that scripture is clear enough to come to conclusions on what is required of us for obedience to God.

To just say, well, scripture's not clear enough. Something like baptism, it's what we are to do. So if God has told us this is what we are to do, but yet we don't know whether or not we're supposed to do it or if it's clear, is to put the error on God.

Scripture is clear enough. If something is of our duty for faith and obedience, then scripture is clear enough, even if it doesn't jump out right away, it is clear enough for saving faith and obedience.

[35 : 30] Scripture is not in darkening. Reading what scripture says about faith and obedience doesn't darken our understanding of what God requires of us, but it is a lamp onto my feet and a light onto my path.

So it mentions the ordinary means. That not only the learned but the unlearned and a due use of ordinary means may attain to a sufficient understanding of them.

In other words, through the ordinary means, through the preaching of the word, where there is faithful preaching of the word of the whole counsel of God. If somebody comes to church, let's say they don't know how to read, but they come and they sit under the preaching of the word and it's faithful preaching, they will, through the ordinary means of grace, know what is required of them for faith and obedience.

It probably won't be all in one sermon, but under the faithful preaching, which is why we hold to the primacy of preaching and how important the preaching of the word is.

And that's why if you've ever been to a Roman Catholic church and you've been to a Protestant church, you probably notice a difference of how they arrange things, but in a Protestant church, the pulpit is front and center and sometimes it's even elevated in some way because what that's indicating is it's upholding God's word.

[36:55] It's holding up the word of God for people to see and to hear and to hear from God through it because of the primacy of preaching, the preaching of the word of God.

And the knowledge for saving faith and obedience is made fully known through the ordinary means. Church is faithful where there is a true church, the pure preaching of the word, the due administration of the sacraments and the exercise of church discipline and through the ordinary means, knowledge of saving faith and obedience is made fully known.

So what about that whole argument or concept? You probably heard it. It's common today. Just me and my Bible. Just me, just one man, me and my Bible, that's all that's needed and I will understand what Scripture says.

Well, that argument is actually not in agreement with the clarity of Scripture. It's twisting. If somebody says because of the clarity of Scripture, then just me and my Bible, that's all that's necessary.

They're twisting what the clarity of Scripture means. This thinking, if somebody was to say, just me and my Bible, that's all that I need.

[38:04] These creeds, these confessions, pastors, commentaries, that's, it's just me and my Bible. What this thinking does is it transfers the properties of Scripture to the reader.

It transfers the authority of Scripture to the reader. The reader's, how the reader wants to interpret Scripture is the reader's authority of how they interpret it.

Or the sufficiency of Scripture is transferred to the reader. Scripture is sufficient for them or the clarity of Scripture is saying the clarity of their own intellect in reading Scripture.

And that is not what the clarity of Scripture is. So this thinking of just me and my Bible, it also treats Christ's victory gifts with scorn.

Because if you remember when you read in Ephesians 4, Christ's victory gifts of, in the apostolic era, the apostles and prophets and the ordinary gifts of prophets, sorry, of pastors and teachers, this is Christ's victory gifts to the church.

[39:12] So when someone says, just me and my Bible, it's treating Christ's victory gifts with scorn and it's also undervaluing the presence of Christ with the church throughout the centuries.

When you read in Revelation, you read about Christ's spiritual presence walking amongst the lampstands. And then when you read what the lampstands are, it's the churches. So we have here the promise of the spiritual presence of Christ walking amongst the churches, which covers all ages.

And there is fruit from the presence of Christ in the church, such as confessions and creeds. So it's undervaluing the very presence of Christ.

It's not that the church is just human reason trying to figure things out as they go. But there's the promise of the spiritual presence of Christ with the church throughout the ages. Also, the Bible presents itself under the assumption that the Bible is being read and understood in a corporate context.

And that's the ordinary means of grace through which a person will hear the word of God. There's also the analogy of faith, if you've heard of it, to compare the analogy of faith with proof text.

[40:26] So the person that says just me and my Bible, they're the person that has a proof text. And when they go to a proof text, it's that verse proves it. And if you don't have a verse that you can go to prove it, then it's not to be believed.

But this proof text, so when we, in the confession, when there's the proof text, if we'll call it that, the intention of those texts is not, when you go to that text, it will explain everything you need to know. That text is intended to send you to the commentaries. And the commentaries explain more fully how this is what scripture means as it is summarized in the confessions.

So the analogy of faith isn't that, the analogy of faith is that there's not a proof text for everything, but that we need to understand things in the scope of the whole of scripture and that proof texting doesn't harmonize with all of scripture.

So the analogy of faith is understanding scripture in harmony with what all of scripture says. So how do you do that? If you read a verse, in the verse, let's say you read 2 Timothy 3, 15 to 17 about scripture, okay, so how do I really understand what it's telling me about scripture?

[41 : 49] You would have to read all of the Bible and highlight everything it says about scripture and summarize it and then weigh it and then do that with every single verse you read. So the analogy of faith is taking that which has faithfully summarized what scripture says and understanding the scope of scripture and harmonizing each verse with it.

And to use a proof text, let's say you're debating against a Roman Catholic and you throw out a proof text and that's it, just as though the proof text is the answer. Are you assuming that that person has never read that verse and when they read the verse they're like, oh, why didn't I read that before?

Because they interpret scripture differently or they come to different conclusions. That's why it's necessary to see the bigger picture of scripture and harmonize each passage with that analogy of faith.

So it's intended to connect you when there's these verses, these proof texts, it's intended to connect you with the way that the church has broadly understood the Bible throughout the centuries.

Not some new and novel idea but how throughout the centuries what has been orthodox and upright and straight and correct that connects you with the church throughout the centuries of how the church has rightly understood the Bible and how it has corrected what has strayed to keep us from straying as well.

[43 : 17] So what are some concluding uses from the perfection of scripture? First of all, the denial of the perfection of scripture. is asserting that God failed to adequately speak to his creatures.

Scripture is supernatural revelation, is divine testimony. If it's not perfect, if it's not sufficient, and if it's not clear, then God has failed to communicate to his creatures how we are to be saved and obey him as followers of Christ.

Second of all, ask yourself the question, does the people, or does the, does the Bible teach justification by faith alone? There are some who will point to the Bible and say that what the Bible says is something other than justification by faith alone, that our deeds will give us a final justification.

So, ask the question, does the Bible teach justification by faith alone? That is a very important thing of the Reformation, which was in response to Rome, and that our justification, which is, our justification is a forensic declaration of being right before God, and what that requires is a full pardon of our sins, and the righteousness of Christ imputed to us and received by faith alone. That's important. That's what we need to know for salvation. But does the Bible clearly teach it? If it doesn't clearly teach it, then that's a problem.

[44 : 54] So, if it does clearly teach it, then I ask, are you sure? Are you sure? If that's what is required for salvation, then are you sure that that's what Scripture says?

Because we have to have confidence. We have to have a confident assurance and truth that that's what Scripture says. So, is the Bible clear enough?

that we may know that we are justified by faith alone. In other words, has God indeed said these things?

And the answer is yes. And we need to be able to say yes with confidence. We need to be able to say that we are justified by faith alone and Christ alone with confidence. And we need to be able to trust what God says in His Word.

faith. If it's not clear, how do we trust it? And if we can't trust it, how do we live confidently knowing what our condition will be after we die? Faith, if you remember, is knowledge, assent, and trust.

[45 : 59] So, Scripture has to be clear, and Scripture is clear on those things. So, what's at stake? You're probably already rhyming it off, hopefully, in your head when I ask this. What's at stake? If

Scripture's not clear, if we really can't know doctrine, if we really can't be sure of how we can be saved, if we really can't be sure of how we can obey God, what's at stake is the glory of God, the salvation of man, right living to God, and living blessedly forever.

I don't know about you, but none of that is something that I want to compromise on. So, what are some current day versions of has God indeed said?

If you recognize what I'm referring to, it's back in the garden when Adam failed to guard it from the serpent twisting what God had said and lies.

And he said, has God indeed said? Which causes doubt. And that continues even to today, but it's just wrapped in a little bit different wording.

Some examples of that, which are a subtle denial of the perfection of Scripture. Somebody probably won't come right out and say, well, I deny that whole perfection of Scripture stuff, but they'll have arguments that subtly deny it.

[47 : 15] For example, have you ever heard somebody say, well, that's just your interpretation? Especially within a church. It's within a church, they can't decide on doctrine and they say, well, that's just your interpretation.

And then they have their interpretation. And who's to say whose interpretation is right? So either your interpretation is right to you or else then who decides whose interpretation is right? what that's doing is it's subtly undermining the clarity of Scripture and it's subtly undermining the perfection of Scripture.

Similarly, you might have heard great men of God have differed. So you have someone like John MacArthur who's a great man of God. You have someone like R.C. Sproul who's a great man of God, but they differed on doctrine and they're friends.

So if they differ, then how are we to be able to rightly understand what Scripture says? And that is a subtle undermining of the clarity and sufficiency of Scripture, of the perfection of Scripture.

And that whole, you know, that's just your interpretation. I remember this was a long time ago.

There was a public debate at Heritage Bible College down south. One of the professors there, he was, I think he wrote the book, but he had this new teaching, that should be a red flag in itself, and it was being addressed.

[48 : 27] And I went and I sat in on it and what, I forget what it's called, but something about postmodern trajectory hermeneutics. And he said that Scripture was written with a specific culture at that time, but culture hasn't remained that way, but culture has changed, and so if we take that trajectory of how culture has changed and apply that trajectory to our hermeneutics, we have to change our hermeneutics with that trajectory.

So hermeneutics is the art and science of interpreting the Bible. So what he was saying is that we have to change the way we interpret the Bible according to the way that culture has changed.

And his ideas were shot down rightfully, which it should have, it was wrong. But that's that thinking, that postmodern thinking of differences of interpretation.

But the best response I've heard to the subtle denials is by Sam Waldron, and Sam Waldron is the president of Covenant Baptist Theological Seminary.

He said, how often the objection is raised, that's only your interpretation. Such objections presuppose and imply the insufficiency and obscurity of the scriptures.

[49 : 40] They are a denial of the perfection of scripture. They are an assertion that when God spoke, he muttered, stuttered, or stumbled. Such ideas are clearly rooted in rebellion against the God of scripture.

They are contradicted by the sufficiency and clarity the Bible ascribes to itself. Issues like the Christian Sabbath, believers' baptism, and others, perplexing as they can sometimes appear, must not be regarded as insoluble.

Since they are clearly matters of duty, we must regard the scriptures as sufficient and clear enough to resolve them. So just quickly, as we end here, if scripture is sufficient, if scripture is clear, then how do we sufficiently understand what scripture says?

because there's different churches that think it says different things. But if it is sufficient, and if it is clear, how do we sufficiently understand what it says?

Psalms 119, 130 says, the unfolding of your words give light. It imparts understanding to the simple. So that's what we want, the imparting of understanding of scripture.

[ 50 : 49 ] So how do we get there? How do we get to an understanding of it? It says, the unfolding of your words. The unfolding of the words of God requires proper interpretation.

And that is what paragraph 9 deals with, so you're going to have to come back next week in order to find what it has to say about proper interpretation or proper hermeneutics, how we properly understand what the Bible says.

Let's pray. Let's pray.