

What Is The Bible: 2 Peter 1:16-21

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[0 : 00] Please take out your copy of God's Word and join me in 2 Peter chapter 1. I believe that we can get the answers with all of their complexities and all of their applications worked out in our minds to these three questions.

We will have a firm foundation on which to build a life that is pleasing to God. I settled in on these three questions after being asked a question many years ago.

A man that was a missionary, many of you know, Jay Whetstone, asked me over tea at his house one afternoon, what do you hope to accomplish with college students in their three to four years in Dahlonaga?

And I didn't really have an answer. I could have begun to talk through some things. I mean, there was stuff on my mind, oh, well, we want students to do the following. But what he was asking was, what's your plan?

Is there a system in place for young people when they come and give you some of their time while they're at school in Dahlonaga? So I didn't have a confident answer, but I knew that I should.

[1 : 37] There should be some things, some anchors that I would say, yes, we want to make sure that college students know certain things. And so in rolling that around and considering most important things, I kind of settled in on these three questions, which we answer all the time around here.

This is not the first time we've taken up these questions. But I thought it would be helpful for us to do so systematically over the next three weeks. And those questions are, what is the Bible? What is the Bible?

What is the Bible? And what is the church? And there's so much confusion about the answer to these three questions.

You may think already, oh, I know the answer to those three questions. You may find that you don't. I knew that if we could get answers to these three questions concreted in the minds of college students or anyone for that matter, we would be doing quite well together as a church.

And so we've been about that. We weave the answers to these questions in and out of all sorts of things that we do. But specifically, I want to stop and think about these things before we get back to our normal verse-by-verse exposition of a book of the Bible.

[3 : 00] So the question that I want to ask and answer, at least in part, right, with the best of my ability, my frailty this morning, what is the Bible?

And I want to look largely at 2 Peter 1, verses 16 through 21. And we'll look at some other texts as well this morning. So before I read this, beloved, I want to remind you that this is God's Word to us. It was written for His glory and our good. And so we would all do well to listen to it in order to believe its promises and obey its commands. Peter writes, verse 16, For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty.

For when He received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was born to Him by the majestic glory, this is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.

We ourselves heard this very voice born from heaven, for we were with Him on the holy mountain. And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.

[4 : 29] Knowing this, first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

What an astounding text. Let's look at its context a bit before we proceed. Following Peter's greeting, Peter tells his readers in chapter 1, verses 3 and 4, that God's divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness through the knowledge of Him who has called us to His own glory and excellence, by which He has granted to us His precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desires.

So Peter says to his hearers, those who are in the faith, we have been granted power for life and godliness through, what? Through knowledge. We have been granted precious and very great promises.

His promises made already, given to us, wherever those promises once made in the Scripture. We have been granted to become partakers of the divine nature, and we have escaped from our sin. By the Scripture, this knowledge that comes to us, given to us for all things concerning life, pertaining to life and to godliness.

[6 : 20] And he goes on then to instruct his readers to make their calling and election sure by pursuing holiness and seeing that holiness, the holiness that's being birthed in them as they pursue it, as evidence of their standing in Jesus Christ.

to make sure they're in the faith, to be confident of it by pursuing Holy Scripture. He says in verse 10 and 11, Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities, you will never fall.

For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. And so it's in this context that Peter says in the beginning of verse 16, For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And he goes on to say, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty. It's a good try, Cheyenne. It was good.

I thought you had her settled too. Verse 17, For when He, being Jesus Christ, received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was born to Him by the majestic glory, This is My beloved Son with whom I am well pleased.

[7 : 52] We ourselves heard this very voice born from heaven, for we were with Him on the holy mountain. And what is Peter referring to? The transfiguration of Jesus Christ.

When they went up with Him, James and Peter and John on the mountain, and Jesus' image was changed, made more glorious, they got to see this happen.

And God spoke over Him, This is My beloved Son with whom I am well pleased. What an astounding thing to be able to witness.

What an incredible thing that these three men, the only three in history, were able to see. And you can read about that in Mark 9, 2-7, Matthew 17, Luke 9, they're all accounts of what happened. It's amazing. It's an incredible thing that they were witnesses of. But then Peter does, in verse 19, the most astounding thing.

[9 : 02] He says, And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed. We use, typically, I think almost all of us are using the ESV translation of the Bible.

If you have the ESV 2001, which I do, and my brain went, what, as I copied and pasted out of Lagos, this text, ESV 2001 says, And we have something more sure, the prophetic word.

We have something more sure, or we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed. Peter is saying, We have a greater confidence confidence in the Scripture.

We were with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration. We heard God speak from heaven, but we have a greater confidence in the Bible. It's incredible.

What an astounding thing that he is saying. And it has much bearing for us today. Oh, wouldn't it have been glorious to be on the Mount of Transfiguration?

[10 : 10] It wouldn't have been grand to behold such a thing. Peter says, We have a more sure thing. We have a greater confidence in this text.

My prayer for us this morning is that we would have the same kind of confidence that Peter had in his Bible. So here's the summary answer to the question, What is the Bible for our consideration this morning?

The Bible is God's inspired, inerrant, authoritative, clear, necessary, and sufficient word to mankind.

I'm going to break that into six statements to make it easier to digest. And I've included those on the back of your bulletin to aid you this morning. Before I say anything else, I just want to point out that I misspelled the word inerrant, which I realized too late.

It is spelled I-N-E-R-R-A-N-T. And maybe God, in his providence, permitted such a thing so that I can make the point that he's inerrant and I am not.

[11:32] Such creative ways to keep me very humble. So, anyway, now you know how to spell inerrant properly and not the way I spelled it.

First, the Bible is God's inspired word to mankind. The Bible is unlike any book ever written.

At the most fundamental level, it is both authored by human beings and by God. The word Christians have commonly used to describe this process is this word inspired.

This means that the Bible is the product of God inspiring and using human authors to write his perfect holy words without error or defect.

speaking through men's personalities, through their circumstance, and through their pens. Two passages that explicitly tell us the Bible is God's inspired word.

[12:39] First, 2 Timothy, chapter 3, and verse 16. Which is, all scripture is breathed out by God. You may be familiar with this.

The Greek word used there for breathed out is actually the word expired. Much the way we say that a person dies when they expire, they breathe their last breath.

The emphasis here is that it comes literally from God. It is God breathed. And where we pull the word inspired is breathed into.

God breathed out but into men who pin down his very words. The second text text is from our text this morning.

2 Peter, chapter 1, verse 20 and 21. Peter says, knowing this, first of all, that no prophecy of scripture comes from someone's own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever produced by the will of men, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit, as they were inspired to write.

[13:46] the Bible originated not with the will of its human writers, but with the will of God the Holy Spirit. Over 3,000 times, biblical writers claim to have received their messages from God.

God the Holy Spirit inspired, breathed out, or originated the scriptures through human writers. So to be clear, this does not mean that God dictated the Bible to its human authors, right?

That he spoke in all cases audibly, and they just pinned down exactly what he said. In some cases, this is the way we receive the text. But rather, they wrote with their own creativity, and in their own styles, and their own vocabulary, accomplishing all along exactly what God wanted them to accomplish.

The word carried along in 2 Peter is the same word used to describe Paul's ship in Acts that's carried along by the storm, and then he's shipwrecked, and there's a wind that drove them outside of their course.

A ship has sails to catch the wind, a keel to prevent it from tipping over, a rudder to steer it to some degree, but ultimately, a ship goes where the wind carries it.

[15:11] So, this is our understanding of the Scripture being inspired, given to us by God Himself. And there's a lot of doubt in our day about this.

How do we know? How do we know that the very copy you have before you is God's inspired word to mankind? I want to make briefly, I hope, for you, an argument for the Old Testament and an argument for the New.

As I'm doing this, if your brain is panicking because of the length of the definition I gave you, we're going to move much more quickly through some of those other doctrines of Scripture.

But this one I think we need to spend some time on to make sure that we can get God's inspiration of His word. So, an argument for the Old Testament.

The Lord Jesus Christ, the one who we say to be followers of, validated the Old Testament's inspiration by quoting from all three sections.

[16:15] The law, the prophets, and the writings. Commonly understood Hebrew categories for the Old Testament.

He endorsed the inspiration and authority of the Old Testament in detail. We've studied through the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5, verse 17, 18. He elevates it.

He doesn't do away with it, but He helps us to properly understand it. And the Old Testament promises are made, and the New Testament promises are fulfilled.

We get the proper lens by which to view the Old Testament through. We don't discard it, but we continue to pick it up and understand it through the lens of Jesus Christ.

The Bible of Jesus' day is what we call our Old Testament. 39 first books that we have in our Scripture. It was not structured the same way we have it structured today, but it was the same nonetheless.

[17:20] Luke 11, you might want to turn here with me. Luke 11 and verse 49. In this text, Jesus is indicting the Pharisees.

So this is what He's accomplishing as the indictment of the Pharisees, but He does something really unique, something that should draw our attention and help us to see what was Jesus' Bible? What's He referring to as He references the Scriptures in His ministry? So here's the text.

Therefore, verse 49 of chapter 11, therefore also the wisdom of God said, I will send them prophets and apostles, some of whom they will kill and persecute, so that the blood of all the prophets shed from the foundation of the world may be charged against this generation.

From the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who perished between the altar and the sanctuary, yes, I tell you, it will be required of this generation.

So He's saying, He's indicting them for all of the prophets that had been killed. And He uses two names. Abel, who here Jesus is saying is the very first prophet.

[18:46] Genesis chapter 4, verse 10, And the Lord said, What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground. Right?

Here Jesus calls Abel the very first prophet who was killed by his brother Cain. The second is a man named Zechariah.

So from Abel to Zechariah, Zechariah, and remember this was not written in English, so it's not A to Z. It's not what Jesus is accomplishing here for us, although it's cool that that happens.

From Abel to Zechariah, why is he the bookend? Why is he the other end? Why from Abel to Zechariah? Here's where we read about the death of Zechariah.

Second Chronicles chapter 24, verse 20 and 21, Then the Spirit of God clothed Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada, the priest, and he stood above the people and said to them, Thus says God, Why do you break the commandments of the Lord so that you cannot prosper?

[19:48] Because you have forsaken the Lord, he has forsaken you. Very prophetic. They didn't like it. They conspired against him and by command of the king they stoned him with stones in the court of the house of the Lord.

So this is the Zechariah. So Abel, Genesis chapter 4, Zechariah, 2 Chronicles chapter 24, but chronologically, walking through history, the timeline, chronologically, the last martyr of the Old Testament was Uriah, whose death is described in Jeremiah chapter 26.

Chronologically, so Jesus isn't following chronology then. He's not saying from the very first one to the very last one martyred. So why?

Abel to Zechariah. This is cool. The Jewish Bible of Jesus' day was ordered differently than ours.

Our Old Testament is grouped by literary type. Jesus' Bible was ordered in a different way. 1 and 2 Chronicles were one book, just called Chronicles, and was written as an overview of Israel's history with a particular emphasis on David and the temple.

[21:12] It was placed at the end of Jesus' canon, this Old Testament Bible that they had, to help God's people look forward to a better David and a better worship.

It was placed at the end there. It was meant to make them expectant of the coming Messiah. So in Luke 11, when Jesus says, from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, he's indicting the generation for the death of the prophets of his Bible.

They would have gotten, they knew in the reading of their scripture, Abel was the first, Zechariah was the last, as they would have read it in order as it was printed, read to them in that day.

Are you catching this? This was the Bible of Jesus' day. The Old Testament is the scripture that he's referring to. This is the scripture that Peter is referring to.

He's saying you would do well to pay attention to it, to these New Testament Christians. Catching that's important. There are many people in our day that are trying to undo that, that are trying to say to us that the Old Testament ought to be used merely for history and inspiration.

[22 : 27] I quote. It's so much more. It's still God's inspired word. This was the text that New Testament Christians had, this Old Testament.

Jesus' Bible is what they had in their day. It is a precious book that should be read and rightly understood, and that is not an easy thing to do.

It is an ancient, ancient text. Trying to sort through promises already fulfilled and promises yet to be fulfilled is a challenge of the Old Testament.

But because it's a challenge, we should not dismiss it. Because it's a little hard to understand. We shouldn't just do away with it, but we should get in there and do the work of understanding it because it's God's inspired word.

The Old Testament. Okay, the New Testament. Make an argument for the New Testament. A little more difficult. The Lord also prepared his disciples for the coming of the New Testament.

[23 : 33] John 16 verse 12 says he'd given the spirit that will lead them into all truth. And so he endorsed it in principle. I'm going to lead you into all truth in principle to the apostles.

Paul received revelation pertaining to redemption. Galatians 1 verses 11 through 17 and expected his writings to be received as from God.

2 Thessalonians chapter 2 verse 13 and verse 15. Peter classified Paul's writings with the inspired Old Testament. 2 Peter chapter 3 verse 16.

So we get these hints in our text that's equating it with the Old Testament as the scriptures. scriptures. But how do we end up with our New Testament?

How were the books that we have, the 27 books of the New Testament, considered and put into the canon of scripture, giving us a total of 66 books?

[24 : 37] Well, they were considered by this criteria. First, the book had to be written by a recognized apostle. Paul or Peter would be a fantastic example of that.

Secondly, it had to be written by or written by somebody associated with the recognized apostle like Luke or Mark.

Third, it went through the criteria of truthfulness. Deuteronomy chapter 18 verse 20 and 22. If a prophet claims to be speaking from me and what he has said is not true, then he has not spoken from me.

So they were carefully rolled around and waited and looked at, examined, is this consistent with the truth we already have? It went through that filter before it was considered to be part of the canon of scripture.

Faithfulness, much like truthfulness, right, to previously accepted canonical writings. Again, is it contradictory in any way to other writings that we've already affirmed as scripture.

[25 : 50] Fifth, confirmed by Christ, prophet, or an apostle. We have some examples of that. Luke chapter 24 verse 44, 2 Peter chapter 3 verse 16.

Peter talks about, in that case, 2 Peter, Paul's writings being scripture. And six, the church's usage and recognition.

The church used these writings, these New Testament writings, and was deeply edified by them. They were believed over time that they were from God.

And so the final acceptance of the recognition of the 66 books of the Bible as scripture took place at a gathering of church leaders called the Senate of Carthage in A.D.

397. So quite a bit of time after Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. Now, there could be much criticism of the Bible at this point.

[26 : 54] Oh, so many years later, I would counterpoint, but look at the time they gave to carefully weigh and measure and see these works out, see them edify in the church.

The claim is always that the church made the Bible, selected what it did and didn't want to be contained within it, but we like to rather think in these terms, the church did not make the Bible, but rather the Bible made the church.

And they were merely recognizing that, verifying its use and its veracity. Now, to be added to this, in much less measure, it's worth mentioning our own experience with the scriptures, what John Piper calls a peculiar glory.

The longer I spend studying the Bible, the more flawlessly I see it fit together. Even pieces written thousands of years apart, the more it feels like the work of God.

how would such a magnificent work come together in this way, written by so many people across so much time, if it were not inspired by God.

[28 : 15] The more I study it, the more astounded I am by its interconnectedness and all of its beauty. I know that's not something you can break your life on, me saying it feels like God's word.

You shouldn't bank your life on that. But for me, in addition to more objective arguments, I have to say it feels like what it claims to be. God illuminates the text to me.

He makes it come alive as I pick it up and read it. Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians chapter 2 verse 14, the natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he's not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.

So those of us who have the Spirit of God, and I know this is a difficult claim to make to someone who's not a follower of Christ, we have the Spirit of God, and the Spirit of God leads us to the truth, and where do we find the truth?

God's inspired word. So what we do is we put the truth in front of people as often as we can, that the Spirit might awaken them to the truth of the gospel.

[29 : 29] So we contend that the Bible is God's inspired word to mankind. If then the Bible is God's inspired word, then it follows that it is also his inerrant word, spelled properly I-N-E-R-R-A-N-T.

Inerrant. Just to prove I wouldn't get out in a Bible bee on that one. The Bible is God's inerrant word to mankind. To say that the Bible is inerrant is to say that the Bible in the original manuscripts does not contain any error.

Because the Bible is God's inspired word, then it cannot contain error. If we are not able to reconcile something that seems to be an error in the Bible, it must be assumed that there is something wrong with us, not that there is something wrong with the Bible.

Numbers 23, verse 19, says, God is not man that he should lie, or a son of man that he should change his mind.

Has he said, and will he not do it? Or has he spoken, and will he not fulfill it? God can not lie. He would not be God if he could.

[30 : 49] He is truth. Therefore, anything written by him must be true. So the Bible can be trusted, and it should be trusted, even when it's difficult to understand.

We put ourselves under it and say, I'm not the most brilliant person to have ever lived. I hope you know that of yourself. Many of us act like we don't.

But even the most brilliant person to have ever lived is not God. God. So we do the labor of getting in there and trying to work this thing out. Understand it as we should.

So the Bible is inspired, and because it's inspired, it's an error. And it also means that the Bible is authoritative. The Bible is God's authoritative word to mankind. When we speak of the Bible's authority, we are saying that the words of the Bible carry God's authority since he is their author. That makes sense, doesn't it? God wrote the book, therefore, it's authoritative. It carries his weight behind it. So then, to disbelieve or disobey the Bible is to disbelieve or disobey God himself.

[32 : 07] 2 Thessalonians 3, 13-15. Paul writes, As for you brothers, do not grow weary in doing good. If anyone does not obey what we say in this letter, take note of that person and have nothing to do with him that he may be ashamed.

Do not regard him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother. We ought to tremble when we open up this text. When the holy writ comes out before us because it is God himself speaking to us, directing our lives for our good and for his glory.

We ought to endeavor to obey it in every way, every jot and tittle. It ought to bring us great pleasure to do such a work. God's word is inerrant, excuse me, it is inspired, therefore it is inerrant, and it is authoritative.

Fourth, the Bible is God's clear word to mankind. The clarity of the scripture is a doctrine that I run to often as I am confused, as I am perplexed by a text.

I go, oh, but we believe that the Bible is clear, right? That it can instruct simple people. The Bible's clarity means that those who seek to know the truth can know it by the help of the Holy Spirit.

[33 : 33] Those who seek to know it can by the help of the Holy Spirit. A couple of Old Testament texts speak to that. Psalm 19, verse 7, the law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul.

The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. Isn't that good? Isn't that good? And throughout the history of the church, people who most often most readily turn to faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ are the simplest of people, not the most brilliant of people.

The most brilliant of people seem to be their own worst enemies, but people who come humbly to the text. Lord, make me wise. I am but simple.

Psalm 119, verse 130. The unfolding of your words gives light. It imparts understanding to the simple.

Blessed promises found in the scripture. That is not to say that it is always easy. It is certainly not. As I said before, the Bible is an ancient book.

[34 : 44] It was written across centuries. It was written in languages and cultures that we are not first-hand familiar with. Some of our great difficulty is trying to understand the context into which the text was written.

picking up translative challenges in the text. Although I will tell you that more often than not when you try to deep dive the Greek, the English words are really great.

They did a good job. You think, I'm going to unlock some magic in this verse. And you go, no, that's what the Greek word means. It's what they translated it in English. But there is work to be done.

We have to see that the Bible wasn't inspired in English. no version of it no matter what somebody will tell you. This is a translation of the original inspired text.

And so there is work to be done in there. And praise God, there's great kindness toward us. He gives us people who are smarter than us, who do this kind of work and put it in books and let us reference it and create amazing computer programs and teach and teach and teach and teach.

[35 : 49] It's a blessing that we get to sit under other teaching. I hope it's a blessing to you that you sit under my teaching and I labor across texts. I joke, although I probably shouldn't because I should know Greek better than I do, but that I learn Greek a week before you do.

I'm getting into it and working out meanings and trying to bring it to you in its greatest accuracy. So the clarity of Scripture doesn't mean that it's always an easy thing to do.

Christianity is itself an education as we try to pick up this book and know it and understand it and understand it and understand it and understand it and that we might be obedient to our God. This means that there are times that it will take a lot of work to sort out its meaning.

I'll give you the example of the issue of divorce and remarriage that we've been dealing with in the past months. I won't say months, years, but I'm going to say months that I've been diligently working on it.

And we might, at the end of all of that, still not agree on exactly what the text teaches. But those things that are most important for life and godliness, we can know with great certainty.

[36 : 59] What did Peter say in 2 Peter? His divine power is granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness through the knowledge of Him. I'm back in 2 Peter chapter 1.

And then later he says, we have this more sure thing, this prophetic word, which we will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place.

It lights our way, illuminates our path to the day dawns and the morning star rises in our hearts. So the scripture is clear and it can be understood with the help of the Holy Spirit.

Fifth, the Bible is God's necessary word to mankind. God created mankind to be in a relationship with Him, walking under His instruction.

After the record of God creating man and woman in Genesis chapter 1, we read in verses 28 through 30, God blessed them and God said to them, Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.

[38 : 12] And God said, Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of the earth and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food. And every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food and it was so.

So God gives Adam and Eve instruction. He tells them what to do. Be fruitful. Multiply. Fill the earth. Rule over it. He says subdue it.

Have dominion over it. He gives them in the very beginning good instruction. He tells them to have children and to care for the earth.

He'll state it again in Genesis chapter 2 verse 15. Then God, Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and to keep it. And then in Genesis chapter 2 verse 16 and 17, God gives them a command to not do.

He says, You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat. For in the day that you eat of it, you will surely die. Again, good instruction.

[39 : 24] I want good for you. I put you on the earth for a purpose. Do this, but don't do this. And it's in chapter 3 of Genesis that the fall of man is recorded.

Adam and Eve decided not to follow the good word of God, which is rebellion against him. We are all guilty of this. So you see that even prior to sin entering the world, we were designed to live in relationship with God, receiving his loving word to us and obeying it.

How much more needful we are now living with the repercussions of the curse. We all the more need God's good instruction.

It is necessary for us. Epistemology is the study of how we know what we know. If you've been here long, you've heard me do this. I'm going to do it super fast.

So if you've not been around, I'll give you a fuller explanation sometime. How do we know what we know? And all of us have some framework that we come to the world with.

[40 : 36] And it tends to run generationally. So across the past generations, my parents, some of you in this room, not many of you in this room, but some of you in this room, would be considered modernists. It's out of modernism that the scientific method arose.

So anything that could be measurable, tangible, that's what's true. It helps us to define truth. It's measurable. It's tangible.

And modernists tend to think in this way, fairly locked in to this kind of thinking. Faith becomes a challenge to them in that regard. Or in some cases, some of the older generation, they saw that church, quote unquote, worked.

And that became the very evidence for them. Society's going well. Church is part of that. I will be part of church. Church. After the modernists emerged the postmodernists.

Creative names. I fall into that category, postmodernists. Believe that there is truth, but we want to define truth for ourselves. Truth is what we experience to be true. So it's still based in something factual, but I'm going to decide what is and isn't factual.

[41 : 42] I want to feel it to be true. A lot of weaknesses in that as well, to be clear. I don't want to pick on the modernists. Many of you in this room are now what we call post-postmodernists.

Post-postmodernists aren't sure that truth can be arrived at at all. This is the age in which we live. And just dip your toe in the world of social media, and you will see that everyone seems to know, but no one really knows.

And there's a great deal of misplaced confidence in what is true. And no matter how you arrive at what you think is true, none of us are going to get it right, apart from the revelation of God.

We need God to define for us what is true, what is objective, what is absolute. We all need a hook to hang our hat on. Probably only the modernists get that in the room.

We need to go to something that is absolute, something that speaks from without, speaks into our lives and tells us what is true and what is good and what is beautiful.

[42 : 58] The Bible does this. The Bible is necessary for our salvation, and it's necessary for our sanctification. Romans 10, verse 17, So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the Word of Christ.

This is how we come to faith in Jesus Christ. The Scripture, whether preached, or shared one-to-one, or read, is the Word of God that is used as the tool by the Holy Spirit to birth faith in the Christian.

That I'm sharing with you what the Word of God says, that I'm reading to you the Word of God, that you're hearing it proclaimed, sitting in a sermon, listening to it on the radio.

This is the sword that the Spirit wields to bring about salvation of God's people. Not only that, He brings about perfection, sanctification, this process of ever-growing holiness in the life of a Christian.

There is, I would contend, a one-to-one ratio of people who are actively studying and applying the Scripture to holiness. And to those who are finding their lives are struggling, and they're finding themselves caught in habitual sin, or not doing the other altogether, well, they don't do it well at all.

[44 : 15] God has not told us everything in the Bible. The Bible doesn't contain all truth for mankind, but He has told us everything necessary for holiness.

That's why we call it the Holy Bible. It's the absolute resource, the authoritative book on holiness. Deuteronomy 29, verse 29.

The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.

He's given us what we need to proceed in holiness. Jesus prays in John 17. Not too long ago, Clay preached a series through the High Priestly Prayer.

Jesus pray, Jesus prays not that God would take His disciples out of the world, but that He would leave them in the world. Verse 15, He says, I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one.

[45 : 16] They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in the truth. Your word is truth.

As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for their sake, I consecrate myself that they also may be sanctified in truth.

There's the word of God that gives us what we need, equips us to go out into the world and live for Jesus Christ. So, the Bible is necessary.

Sixth and last. I'm moving. The Bible is God's sufficient word to mankind. The Bible's sufficiency means that it contains within it all of the instruction that we need for our salvation and our sanctification.

All of it. We don't have to go beyond the pages of Scripture to figure out how we ought to live as followers of Jesus Christ. That includes things like how we conduct ourselves as a church.

[46 : 29] Many applications of our living. It has everything in it that we need. Beloved, we far too often run to extra-biblical sources.

Some good that points back to the Scripture. Help us to understand the Scripture. I'm constantly promoting books. Constantly. Please be readers. That's fantastic. But read stuff that points you back to the Scripture.

Put you in this text because it is sufficient for the task. We have a culture that is looking for answers everywhere.

Oprah Winfrey has built a career on this. People need help. She's ready to provide it in any way that tickles their ears. We have pastors in our day that are doing the very same thing instead of taking people to the text.

It is sufficient for all of this. I'll bring you back to a text that I read earlier but I'm going to read it in its completion. 2 Timothy 3 verses 16 and 17. All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness.

[47 : 46] All the ways that we need to give application of this text to our lives that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

Everything that we are meant to do, all of it is given to us in this text. It speaks to us about our various kinds of sin, our sins of commission, the things that we're not to do and yet we do them anyway.

And then too often ignored in the church the things that we are supposed to be doing but we do not do. It speaks to us about both sins of commission and omission.

Shows us the way in which we should walk. So the Bible is God's inspired, inherent, authoritative, clear, necessary, and sufficient word to mankind.

I hope you even pick some of this up each Lord's Day when I get up to preach before I read the text and I say, beloved, this is God's word to us.

[48 : 52] It's written for His glory and our good. We would all do well to believe its promises and obey its commands. And most of you don't know that I started doing that when we had a young man who was a member of our church who's now moved away.

Good member, faithful member, left on good terms. He was really struggling with the Bible's inerrancy. Particularly, it's inerrancy. He had read so many garbage books that had him all confused.

And at the end of it all, as I'm speaking with him and trying to bring him back to and apply the apologetics for the Scripture, what really came down to it is that he wanted the Bible's promises but he did not want to obey its commands.

He wanted all the good promises of God but he really wanted to live his life the way he wanted to live his life. And so, the following Lord's Day, I kind of in a flurry just ripped those two sentences out, put them at the beginning of the text to make the point to this young man, I want you to hear this, you can't have it your way.

You've got to take God on his terms. If you're going to have his promises, you have to obey his commands. He gives the evidence of his promises being fulfilled in our lives. This is what 2 Peter,

that's what Peter's trying to communicate to us, right?

[50 : 13] Live in this way, make your calling and election sure, right? And then you'll know, you'll never fall away because you're God's, you belong to him and it's this text that communicates that to us and praise God, he saw that, right?

By the work of the Spirit, not because I wrote a catchy phrase but because I opened up the text, right? Each Sunday, I opened up the text and I'm forever grateful for that in his life.

So some application. Read and study the Bible. I hope that's the first and most obvious application. But you cannot read and study the Bible as if you would read any other book.

College students, I think this is especially entrapping for you. I know it was for me when I was in school. There's so much you have to read, right? You're getting information pumped at you all the time.

Do not treat the Scripture like all the other texts you have to read, right? This is a sacred text, right? Written by our God for us. He wants to meet with you in the Scriptures.

[51 : 18] George Whitfield, the great evangelist on the front of your bulletin, said, the Scriptures contain the deep things of God and therefore can never be sufficiently searched into by a careless, superficial, cursory way of reading them, but by an industrious, close, and humble application.

I fear that the rise of the information age and the way information comes at us so fast, particularly through social media, soundbite, soundbite, soundbite, soundbite, soundbite, right?

The 24-hour news cycle. My word, just information is coming like this all the time, that we as a people are losing the ability to sit and be quiet and have deep thoughts, right?

To sit with the text. And we might need to do something dramatic to discipline ourselves back towards being able to really read and study the Bible, right?

Just try to get away from your technology and spend good time. If you're ever up here during the week, you will find me at times pacing the parking lot. I've gotten pretty good at not running into stuff and reading while walking to get away from my computer.

[52 : 31] It's constant stuff dinging at me all the time and distracting me away. What if Satan and his great mastery of lies has promoted these kinds of things?

I'm not saying anybody who invented any of these things is a tool of Satan. But as working us into a place where we are so even unable to read God's word and to think deeply about it, to really meet with him in the scripture, right?

We might read it to check a box, right? Beware the Instagram Bible. Somebody might say, I read my Bible every day and it's some post, some meme that somebody posts. It's a half of a verse taken out of its context.

You might flip open an app. These things can be helpful to us, but we don't really drink deeply of God's word. It may take some serious discipline in our lives.

Reading other books, I will tell you, helps. You read other books, point you to the scripture. It's a good discipline to have. So read and study the Bible. Secondly, meditate on and memorize the Bible.

[53 : 42] Meditate on and memorize the Bible. And I will tell you that if you will meditate, memorization follows really easily behind it. Right? That you really roll a text around in your brain.

That you really think about what it means. I have member health survey results. If you're not a member of our church, this is something we're trying to do every year. There's a big disconnect between everyone's, who filled it out, idea of what they know to be true.

I read the Bible. I understand the Bible. I'm equipped. I've got everything I've got going on. I'm solid on the doctrines. I totally get it. There's a big disconnect between that and obedience.

There's a lot of habitual sin. There's a lack of sharing the gospel. There's a big disconnect between the two. And I know that we desire. I know that we are zealous.

We want to do good works. I don't think anybody in here is just lackadaisical and lazy. I think the disconnect, though, is we say we understand, we say we read, but we don't really meet with God in the Scripture.

[54 : 53] We don't really let Him sink truth deep down into us. Let it take root and changes as a result. So there's a challenge to our church in this way.

So read and study it, meditate on and memorize it, and obey it, and then walk it out. Don't just be hearers, but be doers of the word also.

In closing, you guys are familiar with Martin Luther. October 31st, 1517, nailed the 95 theses on the Wittenberg door because he was in the Scripture, because he was meeting with God in the Bible and saw the heirs of the Catholic Church in this day, kicked off the Protestant Reformation that cried all throughout it, and we cry it to this day, sola scriptura.

The text, the text, the text. He penned this poem. Feelings come, and feelings go, and feelings are deceiving. My warrant is the word of God, not else is worth believing.

Though all my heart should feel condemned for want of some sweet token, there is one greater than my heart whose word cannot be broken. I'll trust in God's unchanging word till soul and body sever.

[56 : 12] For though all things shall pass away, his word shall stand forever. Let's pray together.