

FBC Service Sunday November 17 2024 2 Timothy 3:14-16 The B.I.B.L.E.

Song – The B.I.B.L.E

Nothing will change our lives more powerfully, wonderfully and gloriously than a genuine love for God's Word.

Many in our culture today view the Bible as a set of rules . . .an instruction manual for life. Others see the Bible on the same level as a historical novel. Still others just see it as the dusty record of a superstitious faith.

Born again believers do not view the Bible as just a bunch of rules. They hold as foundational the divine inspiration and supreme authority of the Old and New Testament Scriptures, which are the written Word of God—fully trustworthy for faith and conduct.

Who among us has not heard fellow believers testify of their experience of reading the Bible, only to be in awe and wonder that the Scripture verses they were reading, were exactly the Word from God they needed. They testified to the Bible's uncanny ability to speak to them.

How many of us in times of personal Bible study have been uplifted, when the power of God's Word burst like a lightning bolt upon us because of its relevance for that moment in our lives?

Do you recall those two men on the road to Emmaus who encountered Jesus right after his Resurrection? The greatest Bible teacher who ever lived outlined the Word of God to them starting with Adam.

And as he did so, an astonishing thing happened! We're told their "hearts burned within them". The Scriptures were transforming each of them with the truth and insight of these words.

Make no mistake, the Bible is like that. God, through the Holy Spirit still speaks to us through the Bible.

But sadly in an advanced country such as ours, we find the words spoken by the prophet Amos in his day, have now come true in ours. **In Amos 3:11 he wrote there was a famine of the word of the Lord.**

Who can deny in the twenty first century, **there is a famine in the land today.** Not a famine of food and water, but a famine of the word of the Lord.

Go into the churches of the great denominations. There you will find everything but the clear word of the Lord.

In hundreds of thousands of churches across our planet, there are men and women standing in pulpits who give no clear word from God **Too few pastors are preaching, "This is what the Lord says."**

That uncertainty has produced a generation of men and women in the pews who are confused and disillusioned. They aren't sure where to turn to get a clear word from God.

Spurgeon quoted Mary in one of his sermons in the garden after Jesus' resurrection –
"They have taken away my Lord, and I don't know where they've put him."

Although there is no shortage of religious thinkers and speakers and writers, modern theology has no sure, clear and resonant word from the Lord. **Quote above!**

And because there's a famine of the word of the Lord, men and women have turned away from their Creator, and Paul writes in Romans, "*there is no fear of God before their eyes.*"

The Bible says in I Corinthians 14:8, "*If the trumpet gives an uncertain sound, who will gather to go into battle?*"

My brothers and sisters, the issue in the twenty first century is this: Has God spoken?

And if God has spoken, did He speak the truth?

And if God has spoken truth, where can we find it? Those are the great questions of our time. **Has God spoken? Has He spoken the truth?** Where can we find the true words of God?

In the old days, our spiritual forefathers sang, "How firm a foundation ye saints of the Lord is laid for your faith in his excellent word." They sang it with all their hearts because they believed it was true.

But in our day, though we sing those words, many people do not really believe it. They're not sure if the Bible really is the Word of God.

No issue is more pressing. Modern theology today is in crisis over biblical revelation and over the question of its authority.

So, I come this morning to remind you that there's nothing more important than for us to be well grounded in what we believe about the Bible.

What we believe about the Bible is fundamental and foundational to everything else we're trying to do as a church.

The key words in the FBC statement of faith are these: "We believe in the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures." **What do we mean by the term verbal inspiration?** Let me clarify.

Verbal inspiration means word-for-word inspiration. it's fundamental to everything we believe about the Bible, and it's here at the heart of 2 Timothy 3:15-17.

This is the most important passage in the Bible on the inspiration of Scripture. It's the bottom line. It's the key passage. It's the touchstone, the lodestar.

2 Timothy was Paul's last letter. He wrote it from prison in Rome. Not long afterward he was executed by the Emperor Nero. He's writing to Timothy, his young son in the faith.

Perhaps Timothy was tempted to waver, tempted to doubt, tempted to hold back in his proclamation of God's truth. So Paul writes to encourage him in his youthfulness not to be ashamed of God and not to be ashamed of God's Word.

His message is very simple: "Go ahead and preach because you're resting your words upon a sure foundation."

In 2 Timothy 3:14-15, he exhorts his young friend to remain firm in his faith. He does it by appealing to his great spiritual heritage:

“Continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation in Christ Jesus.”

When Paul says, *“how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures,”* he’s reminding Timothy that from childhood he’s been taught the words of God, especially the Old Testament.

He says in verse 15 that the Bible reveals the way of salvation: *“How from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures which are able to make you wise unto salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.”*

The Bible doesn’t save you, it’s the gospel of Jesus Christ that saves you. But where do you find the gospel? Where has God put the gospel? He put the gospel in His book.

Where do you find out about Jesus Christ? You find out about Jesus Christ in the pages of this precious word. The Bible is authoritative in that it leads us to the knowledge of salvation.

“You have from infancy known the holy Scriptures which are able to make you wise unto salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.”

Paul is saying that it’s faith in Jesus Christ that saves.

Then in verse 16 Paul gives us a fundamental doctrinal statement—*“All Scripture is God-breathed.”*

It’s the God-breathed message from the Father and it’s therefore absolutely authoritative in everything it says. **Every word is absolutely true.** Therefore we should believe the Bible and never be turned away from it.

The Apostle Paul is telling us something about the origin of holy Scripture.

He’s explaining to us that it did not simply come from the mind of man. It’s not simply made up by the biblical writers. It comes ultimately from the mind of God.

It means that God breathed out the very words of the Bible.

Sometimes we talk about the inspired writers of Scripture.

That’s not an entirely accurate statement. A much more accurate statement would be to speak of **the writers of inspired Scripture.** It has to do with the very words they wrote.

Inspiration applies to the words of Scripture and not primarily to the writers of Scripture.

2 Peter 1:20-21 says the same thing:

Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet’s own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of men, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

Peter means that when Isaiah sat down to write, he didn't just sit down and say, "I think I'll write some Scripture today."

When Isaiah sat down to write his prophecy, he wrote using his own mind and he put things in his own words, using his own natural style. **No one else could have written exactly what Isaiah wrote.** The book of Isaiah is truly his composition.

Moses could not have written it, nor could David or Jeremiah have written it. The book has Isaiah's "fingerprints" all over it. Yet as he wrote he was "carried along" by the Holy Spirit so that the result was entirely Isaiah's and at the same time the perfect Word of God.

2 Timothy 3:16 and 2 Peter 1:20-21 suggest that as the writers of Scripture put their words on paper, God so controlled them under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, **all that what was ultimately written was exactly what God wanted written. No more and no less.**

So when Moses wrote, it was his style. When David wrote, it was his style. When Luke wrote his gospel, it was his style. And when John wrote his gospel, it was his style.

Those styles are very different, yet as they wrote the words of Scripture and their own styles, God was controlling the process that what they produced was the very word of God.

Which means that what the Bible says, God says.

That's an important point. **We're talking about inspired words from God.** Words breathed out by God.

The Bible is the word of God whether you read it or not. The Bible is the word of God whether you believe it or not. The Bible is the word of God whether you obey it or not.

Inspired Scripture is not just in the parts that we use for our quiet time.

Inspired Scripture is not just for the parts that really move us. We're saying that God inspired the whole of Scripture, not just John 3:16, but all the way out to the very ends of the text. God inspired every part of it.

We believe the Bible is divinely inspired, verbally true, and its inspiration extends to all its parts.

Inspiration involves the words of Scripture and it involves every word of Scripture. Inspiration involves the words in the text and it involves every word in the text. This is an absolutely crucial point because there are some—even in the evangelical world—who do not believe that.

You can't say that the Bible is without error when it speaks on matters of salvation, but when it comes to history, when it comes to science, when it comes to geography, when it comes to names dates and places, there may be errors in there, but in the central message there is no error at all.

I am saying we cannot say that, and as a church flatly deny that, and as a church do not believe that.

We believe that the inspiration of Scripture involves the words of the text **and all the words of the text,** from the beginning of the Bible to the end of the Bible, inerrant and infallible.

The Bible is not a book of history but when it speaks historically it speaks the truth.

The Bible is not a book of geography but when it speaks geographically it speaks the truth.

And most importantly, the Bible is not a textbook on science but when it speaks on the area of science it speaks the absolute truth from God.

Too many churches today want to begin their Bible with Genesis 12. They want to forget the first eleven chapters.

They call it myth or legend or saga or they say it's something like Aesop's fables. Just some stories about Adam and Eve, just some stories about a worldwide flood which are meant to teach spiritual truth.

Here at FBC we believe inspiration extends from Genesis 1:1 all the way through Revelation 22:21.

Every part of it is true. And very specifically this morning, let me go on record that we believe that no theory of science can ever be used to overturn what the Bible teaches about creation and the flood

The Bible is authoritative in that it equips us in every way for everything we need in the Christian life. Look what Paul writes at the end of verse 16 about the Bible. The Bible is useful for **“teaching.”** That is, the Bible is good for teaching truth. It's useful for **“rebuking.”**

You can use the Bible to stand against **error.** It's useful for **“correction.”** It shows us when we've gone the wrong way. It's useful **“for training in righteousness.”** That is, it shows us how to please God. Verse 17 gives us the result:

“So that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

This is a military picture. It's the picture of a believer totally equipped to go into battle. Whatever you need to go into battle you can find in the Word of God.

Around the time of World War 2, a young man went down to Florida to study at a small Bible college. Everyone recognized his gifts as a preacher of the gospel.

As his fame spread across the Midwest, thousands gathered to hear this dynamic young man speak. **He wasn't even thirty years old.** His star was on the rise, and indeed it was.

But in 1949 he was beset with inner doubts about the truth of the Bible. One of his close friends, a Canadian who went to a liberal seminary came back and told him, “You need to give up your view of the Bible. This is the twentieth century. You can't preach the Bible that way anymore.

If you keep preaching the Bible this way, your ministry is going to come to nothing.”

That young man was torn in his heart, and by his own testimony he wrestled with the question, **is the Bible the word of God or is it not? Can I believe it or not?**

Finally, the night came when he knew he had to make a decision and he went out to pray in the woods.

He knelt down and began to pray. **These are his own words:**

“I knelt before my open Bible and said, “Lord, many things in this Book I do not understand. But Thou hast said, “The just shall live by faith.”

Here and now by faith, I accept the Bible as Thy Word. That which I cannot understand I will reserve judgment on until I receive more light.

That was the turning point for Billy Graham.

By his own admission, everything that happened in Billy Graham’s life goes back to that night when he put the Bible down and knelt before God and said, “Oh, God, I do not understand it all, but I am willing to believe it and willing to obey it.” Billy Graham later wrote:

I discovered the secret that changed my ministry. I stopped trying to prove that the Bible was true. I had settled in my own mind that it was, and this faith was conveyed to the audience.

Over and over again I found myself saying, “The Bible says.”

I found that the Bible became a flame in my hands. The Word became like a hammer breaking up stony hearts and shaping them into the likeness of God ...

I found that I did not have to rely upon cleverness, oratory, psychological manipulation of crowds or apt illustrations or striking quotations from famous men.

I began to rely more and more upon Scripture itself, and God blessed. (All quotes from “Give Me That Book” by Robert Coleman in The Alliance Witness, January 7, 1987)

All of us stand exactly at that same position right now. We can do what Billy Graham did. We can say we believe the Word of God is true even though we don’t understand every part of it. Or we can follow the way of liberal unbelief and ultimately drift away from God.

The decision is as sharp as that, and there’s really no middle ground. **Either we believe the Bible is the word of God or we don’t.**

I believe the Bible is the word of God. This church does. That’s why the Bible has such a high position around here.

We have decided that the Bible is the word of God and we’re going to stand upon it.

This is what we believe.

“We believe in the divine, verbal, inspiration of the Scriptures and the absolute authority of the Bible in all matters of faith and practice.”