



THE COMPASS

RED HILL LUTHERAN CHURCH

The Compass:
Encounter-Examine-Explore-Embrace God's Word
On
Your Discipleship Path

Sermon Series: "I Believe." The Nicene Creed
(Pentecost, 2025)
"God's Word." Various Texts.

□ **Day #1—Monday, September 8th. Read: 2 Timothy 3:16-17. –Encounter: God's Word and your life—What do you Hear and/or See?**

The doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture is vitally important; and a doctrine that Satan has attacked from the beginning ("Did God *really* say..." *Gen. 3:1*). It is beyond comprehension that our Lord would command us to go, make, and be disciples (*Matthew 28:19ff*), and then give His people a book they could not trust for such discipleship! God is the God of truth. (*Deuteronomy 32:4*); Jesus is "the truth" (*John 14:6*); and the "Spirit is truth" (*1 John 5:6*). As we see here the very nature of God as Trinity reveals that the nature of the Trinity is *truth-full*. Jesus said of the Scriptures, "*Thy Word is truth*" (*John 17:17*).

The same word for breath and spirit in Greek "*pneuma*," describes what God did to give us His scriptures. God, who is Spirit, "*breathed*," literally, "*in-spired*" (*in-spirit-ed*) the writers of scripture. The Holy Spirit of God used men of God to write the Word of God (*2 Peter 1:20–21*). God used the words, symbols, metaphors, and grammars of particular people in particular times and places. God in His providence prepared the writers for the task of writing the Scriptures. Each book of the Bible grew out of a special set of circumstances. In His preparation of men, in His guiding of history, and in His working through the Spirit, God brought about the miracle of the Scriptures. Let's look at two purposes of the Holy Scriptures reflected here in *2 Timothy 3*:

The Scriptures are useful (*v. 16b*). The Bible is useful for teaching (learning what we believe), for rebuking (what is not right), for correcting (how to get it right), and for training in righteousness (how to stay right). A disciple who studies the Bible and applies what he/she learns will grow in holiness and love.

The Scriptures equip us for every good work (*v. 17*). By studying the Word of God, obeying it, and letting it control one's life, the scriptures provide a "map" for "traveling" through this world. It is worth noting that all of the great saints named in Scripture—Moses, Samuel, Elijah, Elisha, David, and Timothy—were men who were devoted to God's Word. The purpose of Bible study is *not just* to understand doctrines or to be able to defend the faith, as important as these things are. The ultimate purpose is the *equipping of the believers who read it!* It is the Word of God that equips God's people to do the work of God.

When Paul wrote this letter to Timothy, Christians were facing difficult circumstances and challenges (*3:1-5*). These descriptions are as true now as they were in the first century! However, while times may be, and will be, hard, Christians can become better people, even in bad times. We must separate ourselves from that which is false, devote ourselves to that which is true, and continue in our study of the Word of God. This is discipleship. This is *obediently hearing* from Jesus. As God equips us through His Word and then uses us in this world, we will have the joy of seeing others come to a saving knowledge of the truth: Jesus as Lord and Savior!

Consider/Reflect: I can develop a "habit" of reading and applying God's word in my life. [Pray]: "Jesus, I have many habits. I ask you today to help me develop the habit of spending time with you, reading your word, and living that Word in my life. I need you. I want to be like you and glorify my Father through my life. Amen".

□ **Day #2—Tuesday, September 9th. Read: Psalm 12.6-7; Luke 11.27-28. —Examine: The Text and its Context.**

The Bible is not only the first printed book, but also the most translated, sold and read book of all time. God Himself has breathed His very words through human hands onto scrolls and papyrus (See yesterday). Soon, paper and electronic media would be used to communicate these holy words. Although it took over 1600 years, 40 authors from diverse backgrounds and lifestyles, and three languages to write the Bible, it contains a unified single message: the revelation of God and His redemption of mankind through Jesus Christ. Jesus Himself in Luke 11:28 confirms both the *truth* and *message* of the Bible.

At Red Hill, we believe and teach that the Bible is *inspired*, *infallible*, and *inerrant*. This means that you can trust the Bible. As we examined on Sunday, we can trust God's Word because:

It is Historically Accurate.

The Bible is true history; real people, real places, in real time. One of the ways you test good history is asking the question, "Does this event/story/information come from *eyewitness* accounts?" The Bible is primarily eyewitness accounts. Moses was there when the Red Sea split. Joshua was there when the walls of Jericho fell. The disciples of Jesus sat in the upper room and saw the resurrected Jesus suddenly appear. The disciples then wrote down what happened and we now read about it! For example, Peter was an eyewitness of Jesus' life and told a friend named John-Mark what Jesus said and did. Consequently, Mark recorded it all in an account called *the Gospel of Mark*. Luke talked to many eyewitnesses, including Jesus' mother Mary, in preparation for writing his Gospel.

The other test of history by which we know the Bible is accurate is the extreme care with which the Bible was copied. Have you ever wondered if, through all of the copies, mistakes were made? We must remember that extreme care was taken when manuscripts were copied in the ancient world. The Old Testament copyists, the scribes, would copy these scrolls with an exacting diligence. They had this long list of rules.

For example, when they had a scroll, they had a specified number of columns throughout it so it would always be the same. Moreover, the length of those columns always had to be from forty-eight to sixty in length and it always had to be exactly thirty letters wide so they could always check it out. To make sure that the manuscripts were always accurate and consistent; the rule was that you had to copy letter by letter and not word by word.

Consider/Reflect: "Jesus teaches that hearing His Word and faithfully putting it into practice heaps praise on Him. He continually extends His Word and unfailingly delivers the blessings it promises. [Pray]: Lord, help me not only to hear Your Word but also to keep it in a pure heart and thereby produce a fruitful life of service. Amen."¹

□ **Day #3—Wednesday, August 10th. Read: 2 Peter 1.16-21. —Explore: The background to this text(s).**

Today, we continue with the reasons we can trust the Bible as God's Word...

We know we can trust the Bible because it is prophetically accurate.

The Bible is filled with literally thousands and thousands of prophecies. Over the centuries thousands of these prophecies have already been fulfilled, every one of them exactly as God said. For example, there are over three hundred prophecies in the Bible about Jesus, the Messiah, dated up to a thousand years before He was born. Prophecies that said where Jesus would be born and how He'll be born; how He'll die, as well as the manner in which He would die! For example, a thousand years before Jesus came and died on the cross, King David in one of his psalms describes what death by crucifixion is like. He didn't use the word "crucifixion" because nobody knew that word. However, a thousand years before the Romans are even thinking of crucifixion, David describes what the death of crucifixion was like. How did he know that? Only God could have told him. It takes more faith to believe it was all just a coincidence than to believe that God planned it!

The Bible is trustworthy because it is thematically unified.

Again, from Genesis to Revelation, we discover the same theme: the creation, redemption, and ultimate consummation of human history at the hands of a loving and just God. Consider: The Bible was written over sixteen hundred years, by forty different authors on three different continents, in three different languages, who for the most part, didn't know about each other. Conversely, the Quran was written by one person—Mohammed. The Analects of Confucius are written by Confucius. The writings of Buddha are written by Buddha. You would expect them to be uniform. The Bible was written by poets and prophets, princes and kings, sailors and soldiers, fishermen and tax collectors, scholars and businessmen. It was written by medical doctors and prisoners.

¹ *Lutheran Study Bible* (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2009).

Additionally, the Bible was written in different locations. Some of the Bible was written in a cave. Some of the Bible was written on ships. Some of it was written in homes. Some of it was written in palaces. Some of it was written in prison. Moreover, in light of all of this diversity, the theme is consistent! It has the same theme of redemption, from cover to cover, over one thousand six hundred years!

Consider/Reflect: “Peter had seen a glimpse of our Lord’s glory on the holy Mount of Transfiguration. We have the prophetic Word of God, on which the faith and hope of our Lord’s triumphant return in glory depends. By God’s grace in Christ, we are now “a holy nation, a people for His own possession” (1Pt 2:9). [Pray]: O Lord, thank You for calling us out of darkness into Your marvelous light. Help us to proclaim Your Excellencies through word and deed. Amen.”²

□ **Day #4--Thursday, August 11th. Read: Luke 24.27; Matthew 5.17-18. — Explore: The background to this text(s).** Jesus trusted the Bible. Jesus proclaimed the Bible as a unique book above all others. Jesus said that the Bible is going to last until the end of time. It’s going to accomplish what God wants to accomplish in this world. Jesus proclaimed the truth of the Bible. Jesus says that every sentence and word of the Bible is true.

It has survived all attacks.

The Bible is the most despised, derided, denied, disputed, dissected, debated, the most outlawed, the most destroyed, and the most banned book ever in history! Millions of people have died because they refused to give up their Bible. It’s still illegal in some countries. Today, if you take a Bible into North Korea you can be killed for it. Yet it is still the most read book in the world, the most published book in the world, the most translated book in the world, the bestselling book in the world and it is still making a difference in people’s lives. Additionally, the Bible is the greatest single source of music, as well as the greatest single source of art!

It has transforming power.

Nothing can change the lives of people like the Bible...Or, better said, the Spirit of God through the Bible! Tens of thousands of lives have been changed. If the world could be changed solely through human behavior by laws, politicians would be the saviors. But, as we see every day, all of the laws in the world are not going to change the human heart. *God’s changes the heart and He does it through His Word.*

Consider/Reflect: Jesus believed the Bible was true and commanded us to trust His word. What does the above texts say we are to do once we hear the word of God? Jesus came to bring God’s message of salvation to people who have lost hope. How does putting the Word of God into *practice* help you stop being a slave to your own desires?

□ **Day #5— Friday, August 12th. Read: Ezra 7.10; Psalm 1.2; Psalm 77.11-12; Luke 11.27-28. —Explore: The background to this text(s).**

The Bible is known by many names: “Holy Scripture,” “The Word of God,” and of course, “The Good Book.” The Bible is meant to be read, but more so it is meant to be lived. While there are many people who know a lot about the Bible, fewer still live the Bible. Today, if you have not already done so, set a goal to read the Bible, pray, and meditate on God’s word daily. You can decide how much time. However, a good suggested time is 30 minutes a day that can be set aside to read a passage of Scripture, think, reflect, and meditate on that passage, and then to ask the Holy Spirit to help you apply the truth that has been revealed to you. Do you feel that you cannot do thirty minutes? Start with five minutes and build up. It is important that you begin and let the power of Scripture transform your life!

We need to read the Bible “meditatively” as well as to study the Bible intellectually. Your goals should be to study God’s word with “the head;” doing research with study tools such as a concordance, Biblical encyclopedia, or Biblical dictionary, as well as to take time to simply “reflect” on a passage of Scripture letting that passage or verse speak to a particular situation in your life. Of course, this is not an either/or situation. We can intellectually study the Bible and have our lives transformed AND meditatively read the Bible with head and heart and have its truths change our hearts and minds. Remember, in both instances the goal is *transformation*—not just *information*.

Going Forward: I need to diligently study and reflect faithfully on God’s Word.

Prayer: “Open your Word to me living God. May I be more than a hearer, empower me to apply what You have revealed to me in my life. Change me Father, through the in-depth study of your Word and through my personal reflection on Your Word. May You use both to make me like your Son, my Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.”

Consider/Reflect: “Even strong believers and spiritual leaders among God’s people may find themselves troubled by times of weakness in their faith. But God’s powerful Word strengthens us. As we focus on the Gospel, the message of God’s mighty deeds for our redemption, He will strengthen our faith.”³

□ **Day #6-Saturday, August 13th. Read: Psalm 119.105-114; Psalm 46.10; Psalm 27.1.—Embrace: God and His guiding you through His Word.**

One of our core, spiritual disciplines at Red Hill, one of the practices that the Holy Spirit uses to deepen our faith and relationship with Jesus, is through engaging God’s Word. There are many ways to read and study Scripture. Below, we offer some practical direction when it comes to reading/studying Scripture...

Ask God to Meet you in Scripture. Ask God to speak to you and EXPECT He will. As you read, certain ideas may strike you. You may feel a “prompt” to take some action such as a change in attitude.

Read the Bible in a Repentant Spirit. Read the Bible with a willingness to surrender everything. Resolve that you will be obedient to scripture.

Meditate on a Fairly Brief Passage or Narrative. Immerse yourself in a short passage, maybe a few verses. Read it slowly, let the words sink deep into your soul. If you are reading a story, use your imagination and place yourself in the story. The goal is not to get through Scripture, but to get the Scriptures through us.

Take One Thought or Verse with You Through the Day. Choose one verse and think about it throughout your day. For example, *Psalm 18.2* tells us: “*The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.*” For a day, let your mind continually return to these words.

Allow This Thought to Become Part of Your Memory. Memorize small passages of scripture. It is amazing that as we memorize Scripture, God will bring them to our attention when we face situations in which we need comfort, discipline, and/or direction.

Going Forward: Read the Bible using the five-step process above.

Consider/Reflect: [Pray]: “Holy Spirit, shape me through Your Word. May I discern Your direction, Your comfort, and Your presence through what You reveal to me through the Scriptures. Amen.”

3 Ibid.