

Sermon: The Bible Is God's Word

Text: [I Peter 1:22-25 ESV](#)

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[I Peter 1:22-25 ESV](#) ²² Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart, ²³ since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God; ²⁴ for “All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, ²⁵ but the word of the Lord remains forever.” And this word is the good news that was preached to you.

Introduction: “I am a Christian because God says so, and I did what he told me to do, and I stand on God's Word, and if the Book goes down, I'll go with it.”

- Billy Sunday

(Information taken from *The Best of Josh McDowell: A Ready Defense*, p. 27ff.)

“The Bible was written over a 1500-year span of time, over 40 generations, and written by more than 40 authors. These writers are from every walk of life including kings, peasants, philosophers, fishermen, poets, statesmen, scholars, etc.

The Bible was written from different places, from three continents, using three different languages, and at different times and moods yet it holds together as one piece in its intent. Some have called the Bible: *God's Scheme of Redemption*.

There are now more than 5300 known Greek manuscripts of the New Testament. Add over 10,000 Latin Vulgate and at least 9300 other early versions, and we have more than 24,000 manuscript copies of portions of the New Testament in existence. No other document from antiquity even begins to approach such numbers... In comparison, the *Illiad* by Homer is a distant second with only 643 manuscripts that still survive.”

When comparing the closeness in time of the original manuscripts to the earliest copy, the Bible wins hands down. We have copies within 50 years of the original Bible manuscript, whereas it is 500 years for the *Illiad*. The Dead Sea Scrolls (first discovered in 1947) have shown that copies over 1300 years old are for all practical purposes the same as the earliest copies (the Hebrew O.T. was completed about 400 B.C.).

The Bible is the foundation for the Church as it is used, memorized and shared with others. If the foundation is destroyed, so is the Church. **I Peter 1:25a** “but the word of the Lord remains forever.”

I. The Bible Is Never-Changing.

I Peter 1:22a ESV Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth

There have been many translations and versions of the Bible over the centuries, but probably no more than in the last 100 years or so. In the the early 1900s there was the KJV (originally in 1611) and the 1901 ASV with others. Now we have the NKJV and the NASB. The 1946 RSV has become the NRSV. Even the Roman Catholics have made changes from the Jerusalem Bible (1966) to the NJB. Currently the NIV (1978) is the most popular translation and it has seen revisions in 1984 and 2011. There are many other translations available now. About ten years ago I switched to the ESV (2001) with revisions in 2007, 2011, 2016. For the most part translations change to better communicate the Word of God to the current culture. Yet, real truth never changes - ever!

A. The Bible is inspired by God.

In the old KJV (AV) it says: “All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God,” The NIV uses the phrase “God-breathed.”

II Timothy 3:16-17 ESV ¹⁶ All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

So just as God breathed life into the clay that became Adam, He breathed life into ideas and words written down about Jesus and the Church.

Because God’s word is inspired, it is useful and practical for life now as well as what will serve us as a guide to eternal life. These are not dry, dusty, dead words that have lost their meaning in a new more-informed age. They are timeless in value for all of life and serve the Church in Her mission to share the Good News!

B. The Bible is perfect truth.

Psalm 18:30 ESV ³⁰ This God—his way is perfect; the word of the Lord proves true (*flawless*, NIV); he is a shield for all those who take refuge in him.

There are a lot of things that appear to be perfect, true, or flawless until you closely examine them. Diamonds are one example.

Illus. One of the first cars I ever bought was a 1969 Ford Torino GT. It was black. I bought it at night. It was raining. All black cars look good at night in the rain, but in the light of day, I saw a less-than-perfect car. (Also a Toyota Celica GTS) I was mesmerized by the leather seats that you could pump up to fit perfectly and the great sound system.

The Bible is perfect truth because it comes from the perfect Source who is able to use imperfect authors to relay His word without error. **I Thessalonians 2:13 ESV**
¹³ And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers.

II. The Bible Is Eternal.

I Peter 1:23 ESV ²³ since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God;

Isaiah 40:8 ESV ⁸ The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.

A. The Bible is from imperishable seed.

God's word never spoils or goes stale. When Moses was leading the people of God out of Egypt, God supplied manna - bread from heaven. This food spoiled and could not be kept and held over except for Sabbath. But now, we have Jesus who is the Bread of Life. **John 6:35-40 ESV** ³⁵ Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst. ³⁶ But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe. ³⁷ All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. ³⁸ For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me. ³⁹ And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. ⁴⁰ For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day."

It is our hope that someday *we* will put on immortality because we believe.

The Bible gives us hope for the future. Paul tells the church: **I Corinthians 15:49 ESV** ⁴⁹ Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall [*let us*] also bear the image of the man of heaven.

And the Apostle Paul goes on to say: **I Corinthians 15:50-54 ESV** ⁵⁰ I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. ⁵¹ Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, ⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. ⁵³ For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. ⁵⁴ When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.”

God’s Word continues because:

B. God’s love is eternal.

God wants everyone to have an opportunity to know Him (have a relationship with Him) and accept His offer of salvation. Whether we love God or not does not affect the way He feels and thinks about us. In fact, Scripture says that “while we were still sinners Christ died for the ungodly.”

Isn’t it great that no matter how many times we fail in our attempts to live a godly life as a Christian that God forgives and continues to love us if we will only turn back to him?

II Timothy 2:11-13 ESV ¹¹ The saying is trustworthy, for: If we have died with him, we will also live with him; ¹² if we endure, we will also reign with him; if we deny him, he also will deny us; ¹³ if we are faithless, he remains faithful—for he cannot deny himself.

God continues to try to communicate His eternal love to us through His Word.

For us to come to a saving knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ:

III. The Bible Is Essential.

I Peter 1:22 ESV ²² Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart,

James 1:18 ESV 18 Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

If by obeying the truth, we can be pure before a holy God; wouldn't it be important for us to know what the truth is?

Illus. There are, from time to time, reports about e-coli and salmonella poisoning. Both of these bacteria can harm you (even kill you), but both are easily killed (defeated) by washing hands and utensils and cooking at proper temperatures. You can't look at ground beef and tell if it is contaminated. It takes proper precautions, close inspection and testing. It's what you don't see that might kill you.

Cults (like the JW's and the Mormons) have their own so-called Bible or translation. What you don't see in them is a divine Jesus (Creator/Maker of heaven and earth). What you don't see is Jesus as God in the flesh. What you don't see is the Bible as the only ground of faith. With them, it is always the Bible PLUS something else or even someone else's words. The Bible and God's Church will stand up under close examination. Christ's Church needs to be pure - free from contamination.

Many church groups today are in trouble because they have abandoned the Bible. They have abandoned the Truth. The Bible is supposed to correct and inform culture, not the other way around. I am not here to entertain you and give you human ideas as to how you might reach your full human potential. I am here to share with you God's truth for all ages and people groups.

So the Bible is meant to be the (only) way

A. To new life in Christ Jesus

This new life is what gives us the power and ability to live a moral, ethical life. The truth of God's Word is not to be left on pages, but lived out everyday in worship (service) to God.

New life (transformed life) is only possible Jesus tells Nicodemus - if you are born again (lit. "from above"). This is not done in a vacuum, but through the power of water and the Spirit. It is in response to the Word of God that Nicodemus and people today are afforded this opportunity.

God has created everyone, and we are indeed His; but we do not become a part of His family until we have been born again by means of water and the Spirit.

There is a new standard of conduct for a Christian, so the Bible is essential.

B. The Bible joins ethics and morals with being born again.

The new motivation for moral and ethical behavior is to make God look good, i.e. “glorify His name, and this helps the church to be more attractive to an ever-increasingly pagan culture.

The following is from *Wishful Thinking a Seeker's ABC*, pp. 120-122, by Frederick Buechner:

“In Hebrew the term *dabar* means both ‘word’ and ‘deed.’ Thus to say something is to do something. I love you. I hate you. I forgive you. I am afraid. Who knows what such words do, but whatever it is, it can never be undone. Something that lays hidden in the heart is irrevocably released through speech into time is given substance and tossed like a stone into the pool of history, where the concentric rings lap out endlessly.

Words are power, essentially the power of creation. By my words I both discover and create who I am. By my words I elicit a word from you. Through our converse (conversation) we create each other. Words and deeds are who we are. Words and deeds declare to a world whose we are!”

Craddock Stories, pp. 33-34

Some years ago, some of us who were ministers, pastors, and teachers in seminaries were asked to form a group and, before a large body of students and laypersons, to say who was the most influential person apart from our parents in the formation of our lives and our movement to ministry. (SOLICIT NAMES) We had two or three weeks notice, but it was a difficult matter for me. Finally, when my turn came, I stood up and gave them a name they had never heard of. I said, “Miss Emma Sloan.”

As children, we called all women “Miss.” Miss Emma Sloan was an elderly woman, single. She taught me in the primary department, and since there was nobody to teach us as juniors, she went right on with us, and taught us for years. She gave me a Bible. She wrote in the front: ‘May this be a light to your feet, a lamp for your path. Emma Sloan.’ She taught us to memorize the Bible; she never tried to interpret it. I don’t remember her ever explaining anything. She said, ‘Just put it in your heart, just put it in your heart.’

She used the alphabet, and we'd go around the room saying verses. A -- A soft answer turns away wrath. B -- Be ye kind, one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, as God also in Christ has forgiven you. C -- Come unto me, all you who labor and are heavy laden. D -- Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. E -- Every good and perfect gift... F -- For God so loved the world... Don't worry, I'm not going to go on.

I still remember all that. She didn't explain it. We learned from the King James Bible all those verses. I had to say to those students and church folk that Sunday afternoon, 'I can't think of anything, anything in all my life that has made such a radical difference as those verses. The Spirit of God brings them to my mind appropriately, time and time and time again.'

Conclusion: It is the Word of God that came to the prophets and their forefathers, but now it is available to everyone directly who has ears to hear. The problem today is that many people do not recognize the Bible's unique importance. Some confuse an inspiring talk or enthusiasm - with the Word of God.

Today, there is a real temptation to measure ideas by our experiences, but it should be the Scriptures that help us interpret what is really happening.

John 20:8-9 ESV 8 Then the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; 9 for as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that he (Jesus) must rise from the dead.

Q. They were robbed of the importance of the experience why?

A. because they did not understand Scripture.

The Apostle John records Jesus saying: **John 5:24 ESV** 24 Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.

So we have the Eternal Word (**John 1ff**) who offers eternal life. The Bible is God's Word to us today to believe or reject what it says especially about Jesus. Eternal life awaits those who have believed (and continue to believe) in Jesus. Faith is not a one-time experience, but a holy lifestyle to which you are invited this very day!