

## We Believe the Word of God

Various Passages

Pastor Mike Chalmers, March 5, 2023

Thank you, Quentin. And actually, I bring blessings to you from Prairie Chapel as well. As Quentin was saying, we're just thrilled to be a part of the partnership of the Gospel around the Lower Mainland, and really a number of churches who have been standing on the Word of God, and seeing what the Word of God does, as we just get out of the way and let God work. So that's been really a wonderful thing for us as well.

So, for a bit of an update for Prairie Chapel, we have had, as you have had, an incredible few years. Lots of trials, but also lots of triumphs as well as the Lord has truly been at work. We have had a number of people looking for a new church because of lockdowns and because of all the different things that the governments have been doing. And also, sadly, all of the things that so many churches have been doing to diminish the role of the Word of God in the public worship of the saints. And what we've seen is I was just saying to somebody earlier that we've had visitors that have come to us and have been trying to find good churches and have literally come to us and said, "We can't find a church that teaches the Bible." And we just asked them, "Well, what are they teaching? What are they talking about?" And they'll say, "Well, they speak about themselves. They tell stories; they talk about whatever's going on in the world, but they are not focused on the Word of God." And so we've had many people that have come to us, just hungry for the Word of God. We've had unbelievers that have come in as well being brought by friends who are actually much more receptive to have discussions on spiritual matters because of what's happened.

Some of you may know that we had a flood a year ago, Christmas, just in the lead up to Christmas 2021. And as the Sumas Valley of course flooded, and it's a 70 kilometre square area, our church was one of those that was flooded very badly. And just as a way of seeing what God has really been doing at our church, in the lead up to that for about a year, we had been going through with all of our men, actually a group of our men that were training up for leadership in some capacity, either deacon roles or potentially future elder roles, pastoral roles, etc. We've been going through *Essential Christian Doctrine*, by John MacArthur, and going through all of the theology. And the goal was, okay, we're going to train you guys in systematic theology, so you'll really know your Bible, not just Genesis to Revelation in sequential order, but also the themes of the Scripture and the major doctrines of the Scripture. And then the idea will be we'll do about 75% doctrine in these meetings in about 25% church business where we just deal with the things that are going on in the church. And then the goal would eventually be to have about 25% doctrine and 75% matters of the church so that we can, we can bring these young leaders, young and old I should say, leaders into greater roles in the church, as we seek to build up the church. And when the floods happened, we had a chance to preview what it would be when we flipped from 75% doctrine, 25% church business, to mostly church business. And so you can understand when you have an entire floor of a building, all the furniture is ruined, all the flooring is ruined, the walls have to be

deconstructed, you know, all that gyprock taken down because that water just wicks up, and of course, because of all the oil and the chemicals and waste that was part of the water, it was all contaminated. So we had to mitigate that. And what we did was we took these men, and just set them loose on taking care of the church building. And this group of men brought us back into our building in under seven weeks; we were restored to the point where we could worship again in our own church. So it just gives you a little bit of an idea of one crisis on top of another. COVID, which we've all been through, but then also a flood on top of that, and the church really got to see what the Lord is doing in a real practical way. And it encouraged everybody; it allowed a lot of newcomers to take ownership of the church, made it kind of their own, you know. "I did the gyprocking," somebody would say or, you know, "I did the flooring," or whatever, and they could have that sense that they really were investing themselves, even in the practical work of the church. It was a reminder to me also of the necessity of the normal things that we do for church, not only the spiritual things matter. We have things like a building. I mean, you're doing a building fund now, and you understand, there are things that facilitate the spiritual and those can't be neglected either. And so that's been a great reminder for us.

And all that to say, you know, bringing us fast forward now, and we've really just grown in our numbers, but also our numbers of members and committed people to the church. And so we've just been really amazed at what's happening. Even as we have heard stories of churches that have abandoned the Word of God who have been shrinking in numbers, churches like yours and churches like ours have been growing, as we just simply stick to the text.

That brings me to the message for this morning, I actually want to talk to you about the Bible. I've spent some time recently going through our own doctrinal statement, and our doctrinal statements are very similar, if not identical, yours and ours. And I've wanted to teach through various aspects of it because it's one thing to just have a doctrinal statement. It's another thing to really own it as your own. To know what your church believes on every issue from the Word of God to Christ to the church to end times and all of those different details. My intention this morning is to teach through one single issue that your church and ours share as a non-negotiable part of what we believe, a non-negotiable part of what we teach.

Jude 3 tells us, it gives us our call to maintain biblical doctrine, saying that we are to contend earnestly for the faith, which was once for all handed down to the saints. And I am keen to share with you the biblical and historic position of the Church of Jesus Christ on the Holy Scriptures, the Word of God. It's no secret that any reasonable and historic statement of faith flows from the Word of God. But what you believe doesn't just flow from the Word of God; it flows from what you believe about the Word of God. If your church believes the Word of God is just some poetic collection of writings from an ancient and ignorant society, you might have a statement of faith based on Scripture, but as you go through the Bible on Sundays, you are going to behave more like a book club that happens to be studying the Bible than a church full of the vitality of the Spirit of God because your affection for the Word of God is in

proportion to your love for Him, and for everything that He has ever said in His holy revelation to mankind.

So today, whether you love the Word of God, or you haven't really seen it for what it is, I invite you to consider the Holy Scriptures. What is the Bible? Who wrote it? Who is it for? And how much does it govern in the life of the church? And even in the individual life of the Christian? How much does it apply even to the unbeliever? That might sound strange to think that the Bible holds sway on someone who isn't a Christian. But the truth is that the Word of God speaks to believers and unbelievers alike. To the believer, it gives us every detail we would ever want or need to live for Christ. To the unbeliever, it calls everyone to repentance and faith, and pronounces certain judgment on those who will until the very end, refuse to bow the knee to the king.

So please turn in your Bibles actually, back to Hebrews 4. I'm glad we are coordinated today to look at these wonderful passages on Scripture. I'm glad that you read from Psalm 119 also. Just such a great and rich text. We'll look at a few different texts this morning. But this will set the tone. This great chapter of Hebrews chapter four. And I'll read from verse one,

Therefore, let us fear, while a promise remains for entering His rest, any one of you may seem to come short of it. For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as they also; but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard. For we who have believed enter that rest, just as He has said,

“AS I SWORE IN MY WRATH,  
THEY SHALL NOT ENTER MY REST,”

although His works were finished from the foundation of the world. For He has said somewhere concerning the seventh day: “AND GOD RESTED ON THE SEVENTH DAY FROM ALL HIS WORKS”, and again in the passage, “THEY SHALL NOT ENTER MY REST.” Therefore, since it remains for some to enter it, and those who formerly had good news preached to them failed to enter because of disobedience, He again fixes a certain day, “Today,” saying through David after so long a time just as has been said before.

“TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE,  
DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS.”

For if Joshua had given them rest, He would not have spoken of another day after that. So there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God. For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His.

Therefore let us be diligent to enter that rest, so that no one will fall, through following the same example of disobedience. For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.

Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

In this passage, we read of those who did not enter the rest that God alone offers. And the writer of Hebrews asserts that they did not enter His rest because they did not receive the Word of God by faith. What we believe about the Word of God has to begin there. We receive the Word of God, we believe the Word of God, we embrace the Word of God, we submit to the Word of God, we obey the Word of God, by faith. And we who have received the Word by faith have entered that rest; we have rested from our works. We have given up on striving through our own strength, hoping to somehow reach heaven as though we could work our ways to heaven, as though we could ever be good enough for heaven, no one can. We have understood the futility of that endeavor. God has shown us our sin. He has shown us His Holiness. And we have come to the end of ourselves. We cried out with Isaiah, “Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.” And we've confessed our sin to God and confess Jesus as Lord, we've been forgiven of all our sins. The word has worked mightily in us to convict us of our fallenness and depravity, and of our need for the great physician, the Lord Jesus Christ. And that same Spirit, who by the word, opened our eyes and regenerated our hearts.

What role then does the Word take in our lives? The Word works according to the Spirit. We now live according to the Scriptures, to the glory of Christ; and as members of His Church, the Bible is a universal guide for every tongue and every tribe and every nation, every people. The unbelieving world believes that the Bible is just a book that can be disregarded because they don't believe it, but whether you believe the Bible or not, listen to this, has no bearing on whether it's true, has no bearing on its power. Nor does a man or woman's lack of belief have any impact whatsoever on the future, the future of the church, or what the Word will do in the years to come till Christ returns.

Well, what have we just read? What does the Bible say about itself, “For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.” No other book is like this, friends, no other book is like this. No other book has this precision, sharper than any two edged sword. No other book has this armor piercing power to lay bare the souls of men, like a sword cuts

through joints and marrow, yet not only to the limitation of what is physical, but spiritual, discerning between the individual thoughts of every person. No one in this room has thoughts that are not seen by God that are not understood, that are not heard. And not only to the thoughts, but the motivation behind those thoughts; intentions that sprang from the overflow of the heart. Listen to Matthew Henry on the Word; He says this. "It is powerful. When God sets it home by His Spirit, it convinces powerfully, converts powerfully, and comforts powerfully. It is so powerful as to pull down strongholds, to raise the dead, to make the deaf to hear, the blind to see, the dumb to speak, and the lame to walk. It is powerful to batter down Satan's kingdom, and to set up the kingdom of Christ upon the ruins thereof. It is sharper than any two-edged sword. It cuts both ways. It is the sword of the Spirit. It is the two-edged sword that cometh out of the mouth of Christ." And he's referencing Revelation 1:16 there. The word is powerful. This is what we believe about the Holy Scriptures.

But we need to establish some fundamental truths about the Word of God. This is what we believe, and really it is what every biblical church believes. So let's look at the glory of the Word which reveals the glory of Christ to us; the authority of the Word which is to have first place in our lives; and the sufficiency of the Word, which not only means that the Bible is enough to teach us about eternal life and living for Jesus, but also means that we handle this book differently in the church than any other writing from any other source. It's another thing to treat it, like the gold that it is. So we're looking at the glory, authority, and sufficiency of the Word of God.

First, the glory of the Word. The glory of the Word of God is absolutely singular in its nature. The Bible itself uses many synonyms to describe it because of the greatness of its value. The Psalms alone use eight different terms for Scripture. And in fact, in just those few passages, those few scriptures that we went through in Psalm 119 today, most of those, if not all of those synonyms we're seeing. These are the different synonyms, the precepts of the Lord, the law of the Lord, the judgments of the Lord, the ordinances of the Lord, the statutes of the Lord, the testimonies of the Lord, the promises of the Lord, and of course, the word of the Lord. Through the Old Testament and New Testament, we read of the Scriptures, the promises, the prophetic word, the counsels of the Lord, the instruction of the Lord, and still other terms. There are so many synonyms that are used for the Word, and you understand even in any language, synonyms are not totally synonymous. The reason we have synonyms is because there's shades of meaning for every word, one word doesn't mean the same thing. And the Word of God has so many features, so many attributes, so many qualities, that even just one word, the "Word" or one word, the "Scripture" is not enough to convey how much this Word does, and how much we should value, the Word. These are terms for different parts of what we know as the Bible. They can also be used for the totality of Scripture.

Perhaps the most simple description of the Bible is what the Reformers simply called God's word written, God's word written. That is what it is. Its source is God. It is preserved for us in written form, it is God's Word written. God's Word has taken other forms. For example, when we look at the prophets of ancient times, we see in them those who took the Word of God as He spoke it to them by visions, by

dreams, by angels, or even by the voice of the Lord Himself out of a bush that burned with fire and was yet not consumed. And who can fail to mention that the letter to the Hebrews begins by its declaration, "God after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets, in many portions, and many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son." As the Son of God, every word that flowed from His mouth was the Word of God. You understand that the word came in many forms, but what we have today is the written revelation of God, God's word written. It's amazing when you think of Christ being known as the Word. Every word that flowed from Him was the Word of God. So much so that John and his gospel identifies the Lord Jesus Christ as the Incarnate Word.

So when we speak of the Word, we need to be precise about what we mean. When we're talking about a statement of faith, your statement of faith. And it says, "We believe the Holy Scriptures," and it tells what you believe about the Holy Scriptures. When we speak of the Holy Scriptures, we are talking of the written Word, what you hold in your hands there, as the Holy Bible. Jesus did not come to do away with the written word, but to fulfill it and to establish it. And He said this, Matthew 5:18, "For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the law until all is accomplished." And when He's speaking there of the letter or the stroke, He's talking about, even in the ancient writings in the Hebrew writings, there were letters and there were strokes and different features and accents that were added. And He's saying that none of those things, in other words, none of what is written will be done away with; none of what has been recorded will be done away with. Those are ink marks on parchment, the idea is even the tiniest detail is relevant, and it will be relevant to you so long as you shall live until Christ return because the nature of Scripture is God breathed. Christ can commend to us the Word of God in such a strong fashion, that none of it will be done away with. Even as you read earlier, Psalm 119:89 there where it says, "Forever, oh, Lord, Your Word is fixed in the heavens." Don't you love just the language of Scripture, how it talks about itself, "Your Word is fixed in the heavens forever."

What we believe about Scripture is in contrast to what we believe about creation. Creation is what we call general revelation, and it is incredible, it is wonderful, it testifies all day long, that God is, that He was, that He is, that He will be. It testifies that there is a Creator, that you were personally created, made by a loving God who made you to be a worshipper of Himself. And so creation is wonderful. Creation leaves us without excuse to live as though God doesn't exist because it is so preeminently evident that He does exist. It's actually amazing to me when you think about evolution nowadays. Evolution gets more ludicrous, the better our technology gets. The more that we can look into the molecule or into the atom or into the cell, the more incredible it gets. In fact, there was something done a number of years ago by Harvard, a team there animated, and you can look it up. It's called "The Inner Life of the Cell." And it is incredible. It is like a city at work. There are these things called walking proteins, and they literally walk as they carry things inside of a cell. When you look into the heavens, and now the Hubble Telescope has even been replaced by a new telescope, and they're looking even farther into what God has made. And it is even more marvelous to see. There is no end to the beauty of what God has made.

And this is the corrupted universe; this is after the fall. Can you even imagine what it was like when it was first made? And friends what it will again be like because in the new heavens and the new earth, all that glory will be restored. So it gets even crazier.

But there's a problem with general revelation, it does not point us to Christ. It can only show us that God is real. It can only show us that we have sinned because we understand that even by our conscience which was given to us, we know right from wrong, and yet we still do what is wrong. So we stand condemned before a holy God who made the world and everything in it. And yet we have no solution until we come to the Word of God and that brings us to special revelation. The Holy Scriptures, which are God breathed, as 2 Timothy 3 tells us, they are God breathed revelation of truth to man. The Word of God tells us who our Creator is, and it tells us who He is by name. Can you imagine? You're standing out there looking at the wonders of the sky and thinking, someone must have made this, who is He? Well, the word of God tells you His name, His name the Lord, Yahweh. And He is a triune God, Father, Son, and Spirit. We did not need Hubble or the James Webb telescope to reveal what our eyes could already see. That the heavens tell of the handiwork of God. And yet, the farther out we probe, the more clear it is that beauty cannot be explained through accident, or chance. The Word tells us we were created specially for His glory.

We believe also that all 66 books of Scripture constitute what we call the plenary Word of God, which means that every part of scripture is God breathed. It is not just the New Testament, so we only follow the New Testament; or the Old Testament so we only follow the Old Testament. From Genesis to Revelation it is God breathed. Plenary inspiration also means that every part of it is inerrant and infallible because its source is God; it is inerrant. Inerrant means it has no errors. And when we say that it is infallible, it means that it cannot err. That means that it cannot produce anything but what it was intended to produce. It cannot mistake the truths about reality. It cannot even mistake the truths about the future. What God's Word says will happen is coming. It's coming just as surely as Jesus came the first time, He is coming again. How do we know? We know because the Word of God has declared it. Even as God from eternity past has decreed all things, He has decreed, My Son shall return, only this time, not to save the world, but to judge the world. Are you ready? The Word of God teaches these things. Scripture is not capable of error.

Now, this is interesting in a an ever-changing world. Someone may think, "Well, perhaps I'll grant that Scripture at one time had no errors that were relevant to their culture back in ancient times, in which it was written. But now we live in a modern world, right? There's so much technology and new things to account for. Is it still really accurate? In its assessment of man and the world in which we live? Can it really address all of those hot button issues?" You know, all of the issues of human sexuality that are coming up today, people are saying, "Well, these are new things that we have to understand. The Bible doesn't really deal with these issues." Is that true? The answer is that the Bible resoundingly answers all of those issues. It answers the issue of life and where you came from. It answers the issue of where

you're headed when you die, heaven or hell. It answers the issue of what do you do if you're caught up in a sinful lifestyle?

You know, one of the reasons high tech security is such a booming business is because no one can create infallible software. I'm sure you all know that by now. You can have software that works without errors for a short while, but the moment that hackers learn of its design, they will either exploit flaws, or they will create new technology to cause it to break. And so software must always change and adapt, and a culture that witnesses the need for even the most complex technologies to change and adapt is going to think, "How can the Bible withstand the changing of the times? How can it remain completely relevant at all times?" But the Bible never needs to change. And listen, it is infinitely more complex in its ability to direct humanity than millions of lines of code. What did our Lord say? "And explaining the Word to those who were about to stone Him Jesus said, 'The scripture cannot be broken.'" John 10:35 You cannot outthink Scripture. You cannot disprove Scripture you cannot minimize its power.

Another part of the glory of Scripture is the dual authorship of the Word. The Bible was written by God and man. 2 Peter 1:21, "For no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God." This is the wonder of the Word. God used fallible men, erring men to produce an infallible and inerrant Word. What a wonder. Spurgeon says this, "Here lies my Bible. Who wrote it? I open it, and I find it consists of a series of tracks. The first five tracks were written by a man called Moses. If I turn on, I find others. Sometimes I see David is the penman, other times Solomon. Here I read Micah, then Amos, then Hosea. As I turn further on to the more luminous pages of the New Testament, I see Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Paul, Peter, James, and others. But when I shut up the book, I ask myself, 'who is the author of it?' Do these men jointly claim authorship? Are they the composite authors of this massive volume? Do they between themselves divide the honor, our holy religion answers no. This volume is the writing of the living God. Each letter was paired with an almighty finger; each word in it dropped from the everlasting lips." Do you think Spurgeon loved the word of God? Don't you want to love the Word of God the way that Spurgeon did? You have to trust it the way Spurgeon did, you have to believe it the way Spurgeon did.

Now from the glory of the word, which is that it is God breathed, inerrant, infallible, unbroken and inspired in every part of 66 books, written by God and man, we next look to the authority of the Word of God. Because the Holy Scriptures come from God, they bear His total authority over our lives. In the Protestant Reformation, of which we are all heirs, those who believe, the authority of the Word of God was an essential component that the Pope in Rome, his Archbishops, bishops, Cardinals, and leading priests took issue with. You see, the Roman Catholic Church said that it is the Word of God mediated through the church, mediated through the priesthood of Rome, with the addition of good works that bring souls to either purgatory or heaven, depending on how bad they were. The Reformers said absolutely not. It is the Word of God alone that tells us there's "one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus," 1 Timothy 2:5.



Over time, the doctrine of the Reformation was summarized by five statements known as the five Solas of the Reformation, sola scriptura, sola gratia, sola fide, sola Christus, sola Deo gloria. It is according to scripture alone as our sole authority, that salvation is by grace alone through faith alone, in Christ alone to the glory of God alone. But where did that all come from? You know, right there at the fountainhead, you have sola scriptura. The Word of God alone is the perfect rule of faith and practice. That's where our authority is found. In as much as our authority is God, it is found in His Word. The Word of God is inerrant, the Word of God is infallible. Look to 2 Timothy for a moment. 2 Timothy 3, that great passage. Second Timothy 3:16. It says, "All Scripture is inspired by God." All Scripture is inspired by God, and what? "Profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work." The Word of God is God breathed, and therefore authoritative in our lives.

And it is sufficient. That's what that tells us. If we look beyond the authority of the Word of God to the sufficiency of the Word of God, verse 15, tells us it's wise enough. He said to Timothy, "From childhood, you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus." The scriptures are sufficient to bring us to faith, as they did Timothy, and profitable as we read there for teaching reproof, etcetera. Teaching and training are positive aspects of discipleship. The word of God positively shows you how to live your entire Christian life, and how to respond in every situation you will ever face. Reproof and correction are the negative side of discipleship, and we all need this. We not only need the Word of God to tell us how to behave, and how not to behave. We need divine wisdom to reprove us for folly and correct us when we stray. Praise God for the church.

You think about live stream church now, where you literally have entire regions where people are no longer attending church. Many people have said, "Well, since the COVID crisis and all that went on there, we found that we really enjoyed live stream more than the fellowship," Well, what are you missing out there? Not only are you disobeying God's Word that tells us to get out there, but you're also neglecting your own soul because you and I are not wise enough on our own to go through this life. We must have not only the Scriptures that we study alone; but we must have the community of our church who can help us and who can even alert us to dangers, who can warn us of troubles and who can even see us, who even know us sometimes better than ourselves and say, "brother, sister, you're in error here, you're sinning, repent of that sin, and be restored in the fellowship. We all need that. Some people now even don't want to become a member of a church because they fear to have correction in their lives. I fear for you, if that's you, if you fear to have the correction of brothers and sisters who love you, I fear for you, because that's God's loving way of keeping you safe. Okay? The Word of God is sufficient for all of this, but it's sufficient in the way that He's designed it to be used in our personal lives, in the fellowship of the church, in our evangelism, and so forth. We need divine wisdom.

The Word of God is so sufficient for everything God wants us to believe and to do that sola scriptura sums it up. If you have no other book in your life, Scripture will do. Scripture will be enough, more than

enough. That does not mean you don't have the privilege of reading other helpful works, especially those that draw wisdom out of Scripture and present it to you like the great Puritans or evangelists of the past. But it does mean that no other work is on the same level. Everything we do is filtered through the Word and examined in its light. The Word of God is powerful because of the Spirit of God, He produced it. That's what we read from 2 Peter 1:21, the Spirit of God moved men to write.

The Holy Spirit is also the agent of its working. He produced it in the first place, and now He brings its effects to pass. When you hear the Word of God, it will be to you as a dead letter unless the Spirit of God illumines its message to your heart. That's really important. Some of you may even understand something like that; you've read the Bible, and you just don't see. You just don't have that sense that you understand it or that it really speaks to you. If that's you, pray that God would open your eyes to the truth of it. I can even tell you from my own testimony, before I was saved, I was raised in the church, but I was not a believer. There was one time when I was really despairing over some of the things that were going on in my life. And I read a passage of Scripture thinking to myself, "Well, I was raised to go to the Bible. I know the Bible has answers; maybe I'll be somehow comforted there." And I read the Bible, and I'll tell you something, I was not encouraged one bit. And I couldn't figure it out. "Why? Why doesn't it encourage me? Why doesn't it help me? What's going on?" And it wasn't until I was saved that I went back to the Bible, and it didn't matter where I turned, I could turn anywhere in Scripture and it spoke to my heart. What happened? What's the difference? The difference is the Spirit of God enlivened my heart to believe the Word. The Word is not going to be anything to you but your judge until the Spirit of God so works in your heart to soften you, take out that heart of stone and put in that heart of flesh. That's where the Spirit is so magnificent in His work. If you're being drawn by the Spirit, He will enliven the message to your soul. The Spirit always works with His word. This is one of the things, and I don't mean to dampen anybody's party, but when you hear about revivals and things like that going on, what's the one thing you want to ask? What's happening there? Is the Word of God being faithfully proclaimed by faithful proclaimers of the Word faithful heralds? Because if it's not, I don't want to hear about something fantastic is happening among a bunch of people who call themselves Christian. It must be the Word of God and the Spirit of God working together to produce any kind of repentance and revival and restoration.

When you forsake your own good works, recognizing that Jesus is the one who was crucified for you, and you believe that He rose again on the third day victorious over sin, and you believe that He is God the Son yet fully man because of His incarnation, it is the Spirit of God that transforms you, regenerates your heart; you become a new creature. Titus 3 says that,

When the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and the renewing by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out richly upon us through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

It's all by grace, and that renewal comes through the Spirit. When you have been transformed by the blood of Christ in the working of His Spirit, you then have a new relationship not only to Him, but to His Word. And you want to live for Him, you want to live out your days studying His Word and learning how to win the ongoing battle with sin, and how to proclaim the love of Christ to others. And you will no longer wage war according to the flesh. You won't have to anymore. You will wage war according to the mind of Christ, by the Spirit of Christ, and the word of Christ. 2 Corinthians 10 says,

For though we walk in the flesh, yet we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.

The Word changes us, and it demands our obedience, it demands our allegiance to God.

This leads actually to a principle of interpretation. That there is actually, this is part of our doctrine of the Word of God, we believe that wherever you turn in Scripture, in any passage, there is but one single meaning of that passage. There may be many applications of that passage, many ways that it will impact you, but there is one proper interpretation. We do not have a mystical scripture that has 17 different layers of meaning, depending on if you have a degree from seminary or not. We have a plain text that was written in common language, both in the common Hebrew and later the Koine Greek, the common tongue of the people. And it has one single meaning. We use the natural way that language works. And our interpretation, therefore, is a literal interpretation. So we not only have an inerrant Word, but we take it for what it says; we don't try to reinterpret it to mean something else, so that we can live in comfort in our sin, or so that we don't have to confront the sin of the world. We use an actual natural way that language works and take the Bible at its word, understanding the historical context and even the context of where Scripture is found in the text. For example, what book is the Scripture we're looking at? Is it in the Old Testament or the New Testament? God does not trick us with His Word. And you'll find a lot of people will say, "Well, I just don't understand the Bible." But often when you dig down enough, you'll find actually they understand it plain and well. They just don't like what it tells them about their sin, or their lifestyle.

So the Bible teaches, for example, that Jesus is coming again, there are no two interpretations or three interpretations of that. First Thessalonians 4 says,

For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.

You cannot teach both that Jesus is coming again, and Jesus is not coming again and be faithful to Scripture. That's what one meaning means. There is but one meaning in any passage. But you can teach in response to the return of Jesus, various applications. How we shall live. You can teach that since our Lord will soon return, our churches should be ready. Our marriages should honour Him more in light of it. The way we labour in our workplaces should reflect our belief that Jesus is coming again. Or perhaps we could simply comfort one another, that while we look out into the world, and we see the wickedness and immorality everywhere, we can be encouraged knowing He's coming soon for us, and we will live with Him forever in bliss in eternity. You could listen to a thousand faithful sermons, never repeating the exact application of the text, but they will all have the same meaning if they're looking for it with proper due diligence. Second Timothy 2:15, of course tells us that we are to be diligent so that we're approved workers, unashamed, rightly dividing or rightly handling the Word of truth. That tells us that there's an onus on us as interpreters. And that's not only for the preacher, the application there is for anybody who's going to study the Word of God, to believe it, or to teach it, you must diligently labour to get to the right meaning. So we can look at these things and understand interpretation should also be plain interpretation of the text. But you should always have the same truth, like Jesus is coming again.

We must proclaim the Word. The Bible is like no other book. It has a glory that is so great, Psalmist said in Psalm 138, that he would worship the God who has magnified His Word with His name. It's an amazing text if you look at that. Some translations actually say, He's magnified His word along his name, and He's magnified His Word above His name, but however you take it, He has elevated His Word in relationship to His own name. If the name of Jesus is the name above all names, then the word of Jesus is the word above all words. The glory of the inerrant, infallible, and all sufficient Word leads us to recognize its authority in our lives. By it, we believe Christ and find salvation in Him. And we live the rest of our days knowing it was not only sufficient to save but is present tense, sufficient to sanctify us to work through us to produce what is good, and honours Him, even as we are led by Him by His Word, all the way home. And while we have breath, we must proclaim Christ, according to the Scripture.

John Wesley knew much opposition in his time, but he wrote in his journals on the power of the Word of God. In 1749, he was surrounded in his house with violent men. Men threw rocks at the windows, smashing them and then forced their way in at the door. And Wesley wrote of this event in this way, he said this, "Believing the time was now come, I walked down into the thickest of them, they had now filled all the rooms below, I called for a chair. The winds were hushed, and all was calm and still. My heart was filled with love, my eyes with tears, and my mouth with arguments, they were amazed. They were ashamed. They were melted down. They devoured every word." What a turn this was. He just spoke the Word of God, even to a hostile crowd. But you notice also how he did that in love. He did that out of concern for their own souls. If you have no fear of men because you have great fear of God, then you'll be able to minister the Word of God to people in very difficult circumstances. And you just have to watch what God does.

You know, when Martin Luther spoke of what was happening at the time of the Reformation, and all that went on, and they were really looking for an answer for what he did. And he said, "I did nothing; the Word did it all." Isn't that the truth? The Word does it all. Does it in your life, does it in mine, it does it in the life of the church. Let's remember the God of the Word and the Word of our God. Let's pray.

Our loving Father, we thank You for Your Word. We thank You that it is inerrant, infallible, and wholly sufficient for life and godliness, to explain anything that we would ever need to understand. It knows us better than any person we know. It knows us, as only God can know us. And You, our Lord, have given us this treasure that we so often neglect, we put it on the shelf, or we forget about it, sometimes for several days at a time, rather than recognizing the daily encouragement that You gifted it to us for. We have this in our hands, we know that there are languages and peoples that do not even have the Word in their hands; they would die to get such a thing, so simple as a written Word, into their own hands, so that they could have the blessing we have. Lord, let us not neglect your Word, but rather let us be filled with it. So that we may even encourage one another in psalms and songs and spiritual songs and all of the different words of Christ, even as we sung earlier. These are such rich words from these musical numbers, all drawn from Scripture. Lord, may in every area of our life, we draw from Scripture. Put it into place, whether we're singing, or working, or looking after little ones, tending to the home, or loving our family, evangelizing our neighbors. God, may we use the Word and may we trust it in such a way that we magnify the name of Christ, and that your Spirit would do all that work that He has promised to do.

We know that the Word always richly works according to its purpose. And yes, sometimes that's according to judgment, but you through Your kindness, save so many. God, would you save many through us? Would you save many through Grace Fellowship? Would you make this place, a place of refuge for weary souls? For those who do not know the truth, would they come to Christ here? And would these people be so encouraged just to watch Your Word at work? We ask all of this in Your name. Amen.