

MBC – 3/14/2021 Pastor Doug Thompson preaching
 2 TIMOTHY – THE LAST WORDS OF PAUL
“The Word That Comes from God”
 2 Timothy 3:10-16

- 2 Timothy 3:10–17 ¹⁰You, however, have followed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, ¹¹my persecutions and sufferings that happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra—which persecutions I endured; yet from them all the Lord rescued me. ¹²Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, ¹³while evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. ¹⁴But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it ¹⁵and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

I’m going to take a different approach to our passage this morning. For one thing, vv.10-15 repeat much of what Paul has already said to Timothy both in 1 Timothy and in this second letter. But also, I want to go deeper into vv.16-17, which is one of the most important passages in your Bible, about the Bible. I plan on taking at least 2 more weeks these verses. But let’s begin by talking through vv.10-15—

I. The need and the encouragements for Timothy to continue.

Paul just warned Timothy about bad times and bad people in this present evil age – and deceptive, ‘creepy’ false teachers who will mislead people until Jesus returns. We like to think we are too sophisticated to fall for their lies, but we’re not—

- Some of you read about the *Nxivm* (nek-see-um) cult, which was billed as a self-help workshop led by Keith Raniere, who was just sentenced to 120 years in prison. This creep seduced wealthy, intelligent women, including famous actresses to follow him. Then he methodically brainwashed them to become his sex-slaves and even submit to be branded with his initials!

And these wolves will even show up in in our churches, looking like the rest of the sheep – claiming to be New Apostles, claiming the God has spoken to them and He has a message for us—

- I heard an ad on a talk radio station this week that shocked me: it said that God so loved the world that He sent His Son Jesus (that got my attention!) He came to show us the way, the truth, and the life (Uh, no, He is the way, the truth and the life), then it went on to say that we can find the happiness God intended for us if we keep the commandments . . . and I knew this was bogus. It concluded by telling listeners to go to their website: “Countdown to the Kingdom” which is some whacky Roman Catholic prophecy site where you can watch youtubes of “prophets” telling us to get back to worshiping Mary before the end of the world. But how many Christians wouldn’t have recognized the ad as satanic false teaching?

Beloved, we have to be discerning! We can’t let our guard down and be naïve. So Timothy has to stand strong, stay put, and keep on. The key word in this whole passage is in v.14: “¹⁴But as for you, continue.” Erroll and I were just talking yesterday: Ministry is all about faithful persistence – keep at it, don’t give up. Continue to preach, teach, pray, shepherd – in season and out of season. And Paul gives Timothy 2 reasons here to continue—

A.) Continue because of the example you have seen.

- ¹⁰You, however, (in stark contrast to these ungodly frauds,) you have followed *my* teaching, *my* conduct, *my* aim in life, *my* faith, *my* patience, *my* love, *my* steadfastness, ¹¹*my* persecutions and sufferings that happened to *me* at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra—which persecutions I endured; yet from them all the Lord rescued me.

Timothy needs to stand strong because of what he had observed in Paul. Notice that Paul doesn't hesitate to point to himself as an *example* Timothy should follow: "*my* teaching, *my* conduct, *my* aim in life, *my* faith, *my* patience, *my* love, *my* steadfastness, *my* persecutions and sufferings." Paul had such integrity that he could say, "Follow me for I follow Christ!"

- Example is *everything* in making disciples. The church desperately needs godly men and women whose lives we can trace around. Bible "experts" are a dime a dozen on the internet. But when the words you speak are illustrated by the life you live, that's when you will have an impact for the Kingdom.

"Remember what you have heard and seen in me, Timothy." He mentions Lystra – that was Timothy's hometown. When Paul and Barnabas preached there in Acts 14, you remember that the crowd first tried to worship them as gods, then the tide turned and they threw them outside the city, stoned Paul, and left him for dead. Timothy heard Paul preach, witnessed all of this, and this is what brought him to Christ.

- ¹²Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,

If you walk in the Master's footsteps, like Paul did, you will be treated like Him. If you simply speak the words of Scripture today, in certain public places, you know that you could be physically attacked, and you could be arrested. And that reminds us to keep praying for pastor James Coates and his family and church in Canada. He has been in jail now for over a month and will stay there for at least another 7 weeks until his trial – for following Christ and gathering his church for worship, just as we're doing here this morning.

So Timothy needs to keep his courage up, and expect persecution for serving Christ—

- ¹³while evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. (but in v.9 he says, "*But they will not very far, for their folly will be plain to all.*") ¹⁴But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it

Paul means himself, but also his grandmother Lois, and his mother, Eunice, who faithfully taught him the OT Scriptures—

- ¹⁵and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings (OT Scriptures), which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

I.e., because the OT is so full of Christ. Learning those Scriptures as a child prepared Timothy's heart for the Gospel when he finally heard it through Paul.

So the first encouragement for Timothy to stand firm was all that he had learned and seen lived out by Paul, and even by his mother and grandmother – what a rich spiritual legacy he had! Dads and moms, I

hope you are giving your children and grandchildren this same rich spiritual legacy so that their hearts will be fertile soil for the seed of the Gospel. (go home and read Dt.6 together!)

B. Continue because of the origin and authority of God's Word.

2.) The second encouragement for Timothy to stand firm for the Gospel even in the face of constant spiritual attacks by false teachers is God's Word itself—

- the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶All Scripture is *breathed out by God* and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

"Timothy, God has spoken, this is why you keep on. You must speak what God has spoken!" If God has spoken, how can we be silent? This morning we're just going to look at that first amazing phrase: "*All Scripture is breathed out by God.*" We want to see—

II. The origin and authority of God's Word.

- ¹⁶All Scripture is breathed out by God

God breathed out a Book – and this is it – the Bible. The invisible, infinite, holy God-who-is-not-like-us – has *spoken* and *communicated* with us in the Scriptures. I want you to appreciate what you hold in your hands this morning!

Now first thing: you might have a Bible that translates this as "All Scripture *that is* God-breathed is profitable" – or "All God-breathed Scripture is profitable. . ." If you do, get another Bible! Do you see what this implies? – that some Scriptures were God-breathed, and others not so. No, it says, "All Scripture – is God-breathed, and is profitable. . ."

"God-breathed" is such an important word. It's *theopneustos* – from two Gk. words: *theos* = God, and *pneustos* = breath or spirit, so the ESV "breathed out by God" is right on the money. Your Bible might say "*all Scripture is inspired by God,*" but that implies "breathed into," and it might give the impression that men wrote these words, and then God breathed His Spirit into them – kinda like He created Adam and then breathed the spirit of life into him. It's actually more accurate to say that "All Scripture is *ex-pired* by God." Breathed out, not breathed into.

- It's like this: When you speak, your words are "you-breathed," when God speaks, His Word is "God-breathed," so that His Word comes forth from Him as the *perfect* expression of His mind and His will. And all that He speaks is a *self-revelation*, a revelation from and about God.

Now the Scriptures were all *written by men* – not one book was penned by an angel. But these men wrote exactly what the Holy Spirit guided them to write. We read this in—

- Jeremiah 1:9 ⁹Then the LORD put out his hand and touched my mouth. And the LORD said to me, "Behold, I have put My words in your mouth.

We call this the "dual-authorship of the Scriptures." On one hand, God spoke, revealing His truth and keeping the human authors from error. On the other hand, men wrote, reflecting their own personali-

ties, yet, without changing or distorting God's message. Their words were truly their own words. But they were (and still are) also God's words, so that we can say: *"What the Bible says, God says!"*

And we get this from what Peter wrote—

- 2 Peter 1:21 ²¹For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

Men spoke "from God" as the result of being "carried along by the Holy Spirit." B.B. Warfield said this—

- "The term used here [*"carried along"*] is a very specific one. It is not to be confounded with guiding, or directing, or controlling, or even leading in the full sense of that word. It goes *beyond* all such terms, in assigning the effect produced specifically to the active agent. What is carried is taken up by the one carrying and conveyed by the carrier's power, not its own, to the carrier's goal, not its own. The men who spoke from God are here declared, therefore, to have been taken up by the Holy Spirit and brought by *His power* to the goal of *His choosing*. The things which they spoke under this operation of the Spirit were therefore *His things*, not theirs. And that is the reason why the "more sure prophetic word" [v.19] is so sure. Though spoken through the instrumentality of men, it is by virtue of the fact that these men spoke "as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit," *an immediately Divine Word.*" (from *Prophecy Today*, pp.25,26)

This is the book you hold in your hands: written down by men, but breathed out by God. Amazing. And because God is true and incapable of error, the Word He breathes out is likewise incapable of any error—

- Psalm 12:6 ⁶The words of the LORD are pure words, like silver refined in a furnace on the ground, purified seven times.

In 1978, a group of godly Bible scholars and pastors assembled in Chicago and put together The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy – Let me just read the beginning summary statement—

1. God, who is Himself Truth and speaks truth only, has inspired Holy Scripture in order thereby to reveal Himself to lost mankind through Jesus Christ as Creator and Lord, Redeemer and Judge. Holy Scripture is God's witness to Himself.
2. Holy Scripture, being God's own Word, written by men prepared and superintended by His Spirit, is of infallible divine authority in all matters upon which it touches: it is to be believed, as God's instruction, in all that it affirms, obeyed, as God's command, in all that it requires; embraced, as God's pledge, in all that it promises.
3. The Holy Spirit, Scripture's divine Author, both authenticates it to us by His inward witness and opens our minds to understand its meaning.
4. Being wholly and verbally God-given, Scripture is without error or fault in all its teaching, no less in what it states about God's acts in creation, about the events of world history, and about its own literary origins under God, than in its witness to God's saving grace in individual lives.
5. The authority of Scripture is inescapably impaired if this total divine inerrancy is in any way limited or disregarded, or made relative to a view of truth contrary to the Bible's own; and such lapses bring serious loss to both the individual and the Church. (Amen)

So shouldn't this give us confidence in what we hold in our hands? And a passion to know it, obey it and boldness to share it with others?

But not everyone believes this Book came from God. Maybe some of you don't. And why should we? Well I'm going to give you an answer that might surprise you, and it's this—

III. The Bible is the Word of God because it claims to be the Word of God.

You say, "But don't other books claim the same thing?" Well some, but they just don't pass the test:

- The Book of Mormon claims to come from God, but it fails miserably when you do a fact-check on its archaeology, or history – it's just wrong. And, it contradicts the Bible, which Mormonism claims as one of its holy books (at least the way they interpret it).
- The Koran claims that every word is inspired by Allah, but it doesn't pass the test. It says that Haman (from the book of Esther) was the minister under Pharaoh at the time of Moses (that was 1,000 earlier), that Moses and Aaron's sister, Miriam was the same as Jesus' mother, Mary (who lived 1,400 years later); and that Alexander the Great was a contemporary of Abraham and he was also a Muslim!

And these books don't contain predictive prophecy, let alone *fulfilled* prophecies as the Bible does. But back to my statement: I maintain that the Bible is the Word of God because it claims to be the Word of God. Let me explain by way of a true story—

Many years ago a close friend of mine was struggling with his faith. He decided to throw out everything he believed and start from scratch. He was way smarter than me, so I was intimidated about offering him any counsel. But I said to him that the place to begin was with the Bible, since it's the Bible that tells us what we believe and who we believe, Jesus. He said, "That's my problem: How do I know that the Bible is true?" So I said this to him, "In light of the unique, truthful book that it is, if it claims to be the Word of the living God, then it must be!"

And he agreed with me because he agreed that the alternatives make no sense—

- If the Bible is a fake, then a conspiracy of evil people, over hundreds of years, master-minded to put together a book that would deceive people about their very souls by fabricating miracles, falsifying prophecies, and then wrapping it all in the highest ethical teachings ever written, and claiming they were inspired by God. And at the center of it all is Jesus, who was a willing accomplice in this deception, or a crazy person. And yet, He and many of His followers died horrible deaths to perpetuate this lie? That's just not reasonable. It's really not.

So my friend agreed that if the Bible claims to be authored by God, then it must be, and it should be believed. So we began a study to see if it actually does claim to be revelation from heaven. And we began with 2 Timothy 3:16: "*All Scripture is God-breathed.*" But what did Paul mean by Scripture? Well, he certainly meant all of the Old Testament. So—

A. What about the Old Testament?

Yeah, like over 3,800 times! Over and over we read, "Thus says the Lord!" And this comes from people who knew that their head was on the chopping block if they claimed to speak for God and they were not! But over and over they said, "Thus, says the Lord." "This came from God"—

- HOS 1:1 The word of the Lord which came to Hosea
- JOE 1:1 The word of the Lord that came to Joel
- JON 1:1 The word of the Lord came to Jonah
- MIC 1:1 The word of the Lord which came to Micah

Now, were they lying? Deceived? Or did God speak to them? What about the Psalms of David? Are they just the beautiful meditations of a religious man? Listen to David's own words—

- 2 Samuel 23:2–3 ²“The Spirit of the LORD speaks by me; his word is on my tongue. ³The God of Israel has spoken.

There is no doubt that the OT claims to be inspired by God. But—

B. What about the New Testament?

I.e., what Paul said about the *Scriptures* being God-breathed – does that also apply to the NT? Do the NT writers claim to be inspired? Listen to what Paul said about his writings:

- Galatians 1:11–12 ¹¹For I would have you know, brothers, that the gospel that was preached by me is not man's gospel. ¹²For I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.
- 1 Thessalonians 2:13 ¹³And 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.

And Peter called Paul's writings, “Scripture” —

- 2 Peter 3:15–16 ¹⁵And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, ¹⁶as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do *the other Scriptures*.

Look with me at another—

- 1 Timothy 5:18 Paul is writing here: ¹⁸For the *Scripture* says, “You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain,” and, “The laborer deserves his wages.”

He is quoting two *Scriptures* here, but where are they from? The first one about muzzling an ox comes from Dt.25:4, but what about “The laborer deserves his wages.” Who said that? Jesus! In Lk.10:7 – so Paul is referring to the Gospel writings as Scripture. And listen to Peter—

- 2 Peter 3:1–2 ¹This is now the second letter that I am writing to you, beloved. In both of them I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder, ²that you should remember the predictions of the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles.

Peter put what he and the other apostles wrote on par with the Old Testament prophets because it was given to them by Jesus. Both the OT and the NT writings are “breathed out by God.”

And even in the very last book of the NT, Revelation, John wrote this—

- Revelation 1:1 ¹The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to his servants the things that must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John.

Do you see what John was claiming here? What he was writing was a revelation – *apokalupsis* – from Jesus Christ Himself to the churches. Jesus is both the Revealer and the Revelation!

So the Old Testament claims to be the Word of God, the New Testament claims to be the Word of God. So what? So it must be true, because the alternative makes zero sense: That it's a fake, a fraud? The result of a devious conspiracy? And I didn't even bring up the fact that it is authenticated by science, history, archaeology – it contains hundreds of fulfilled prophecies – *and* it continues to transform the lives of people, daily, around the world: it's just a fake? That's ludicrous. If it claims to be God-breathed revelation from heaven, it must be.

- Someone said, "God has signed every page of the Bible and we have every reason to believe that His signature was not a forgery."

Well to finish the story, after our study, my friend came to the conclusion that all Scripture is breathed out by God and must be believed and obeyed. *But this if this is true, then it also means that—*

IV. God is *still* speaking through His Word.

Yes, in the Bible, *God* has spoken. But beloved, in the Bible, *God is still speaking!*

- Many years ago, our family visited the National Archives in Washington D.C. and we saw the original Declaration of Independence—on the other side was this map . . . It was a moving thing it was to see the actual document, it was like being transported back to the time when Thomas Jefferson penned this document.

Can I tell you: the Bible is nothing like that. It's not some musty old antique from another time. It comes from the living God and is alive with His life. God *still* speaks through this Book.

- How many times have you picked up some book, written back in the 50's or 60's that was considered to be piercing and insightful when it was written, and you laugh because it's so out of date! Man's ideas are out of date as sooner than your new iphone! But pick up this Book, and it's like picking up this morning's newspaper--delivered right to your door! It is up-to-the-second *relevant* because it is alive with the life of God.

Really, it even goes beyond that. Do any of you remember a show from the 90's called "*Early Edition*" about a guy who got tomorrow's newspaper delivered to him, today? That's a better description of the Scriptures because they even contain events that are yet to happen. Only God can write a book like this. *Let me show you what I mean—*

1.) Thirty three times in the NT, we read the phrase "*It is written,*" not "it was written." In the Gk. it is in the *perfect tense* referring to something completed in the past with continuing activity in the present. I.e., "it is written" really means, "It stands forever, written." When God's Word is heard or read or preached, it is, at that moment, the same God-breathed Word as when it was written.

2.) Another phrase the NT uses when quoting the OT is *legei gar--*"For it—or, For He--says,"--not *said--* but *says*, present tense--do you see what both of these phrases are saying? "God spoke, and what was

spoken was written down in a permanent record, and God is still presently speaking through these word! Look with me at—

- Galatians 4:21 ²¹Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not listen to the law? (i.e., “Why aren’t you listening to what it *says* – right now?”)
- Galatians 4:30 ³⁰But what does the Scripture *say*?

Now this is a funny way to talk about an ancient book, written by Moses 1,500 years earlier. Paul says, “Don’t you hear what it *says*?” And how is it saying it? Through the Word that *stands written* – God Himself was still speaking, and is still speaking!

3.) And look with me at a fascinating passage in--

- Hebrews 3:7–9 ⁷Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says, [present tense] “Today, if you hear his voice, ⁸do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, on the day of testing in the wilderness, ⁹where your fathers put me to the test and saw my works for forty years.

The writer of Hebrews was quoting from Ps.95. Now think with me: the Holy Spirit was speaking on four different occasions-

- The first was in the wilderness wanderings when God spoke and Israel hardened her heart.
- The second was when Ps. 95 was written, the Spirit was exhorting those people not to repeat Israel's sin.
- The third was when the Spirit spoke again to the first century readers of this epistle to the Hebrews.
- When is the fourth time that the Holy Spirit says, "Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts!?" Today! Right now! God is speaking--do you hear His voice?

4.) One more—

- Hebrews 4:12–13 ¹²For the word of God is (present tense) living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. ¹³And no creature is hidden from *his* sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of *him* to whom we must give account.

Do you notice that the subject changes in v.13?—In v.12, it’s talking about the Word, and then in v.13 it switches to God, it says, “And no creature is hidden from [not *its* sight, but] *his* sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of *him* to whom we must give account.” So the *Word* pierces and exposes, and nothing is hidden from *God’s* sight. You see, you can’t separate God from His Word. “*What the Bible said, God said?*” No, “*What the Bible says, God says!*”

All Scripture is breathed out by God. The true and living God has spoken, and still speaks in His Word. *This* is how you know God. *This* is how He speaks to you. *This* is how He reveals His will for your life. Don’t let anyone tell you anything different.

If you are a Christian, that's the ultimate proof, right? You know that the Bible is true because you trusted Christ, and He saved you! Romans 1:16 says that "the Gospel is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes." John 3:16 promises that "God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."

You believed in Jesus, and God saved you! There's your proof. And the Gospel of Jesus Christ has transformed millions of lives throughout history and around the world.

So beloved, don't stop listening and don't stop believing – because God is still speaking in His Word. And we have much more to say – next week.