

IX. Thy Word is Truth in Biblical Perspective
The Supremacy and Sufficiency of God's Word
"The Word of God – Its Importance"
II Timothy 3:16–17
Dr. Harry L. Reeder III
September 13, 2015 – Morning Sermon

We are in II Timothy 3 and we'll be here for the next eight studies. I want to set into context these two verses we will be looking at. II Timothy 3:1-4:2a says, [1] *Timothy, understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. [2] For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, [3] heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, [4] treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, [5] having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people. [6] For among them are those who creep into households and capture weak women, burdened with sins and led astray by various passions, [7] always learning and never able to arrive at a knowledge of the truth. [8] Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these men also oppose the truth, men corrupted in mind and disqualified regarding the faith. [9] But they will not get very far, for their folly will be plain to all, as was that of those two men.*

*[10] You, however, 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. [12] Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, [13] while evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. [14] But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it [15] and 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. [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.***

[4:1] I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: [2a] preach the word. The grass withers, the flower fades, God's Word abides forever and by His grace and mercy may His Word be preached for you.

I want to declare to you how vitally important and crucial II Timothy 3:16-17 is. I know what I'm about to say is debatable but here is what I would say; I believe these two verses are the most important and crucial verses in your Bible. I think they are so crucial that we're going to take eight studies to look at them. We will take it phrase by phrase and go to other texts to drill it down for it is certainly crucial for this day and age. I know some of you have heard me say that Romans 6:23 sums up the Bible for people and wouldn't that be the greatest verse in the Bible. Romans 6:23 says [23] *For the wages of sin is death, **but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*** I wouldn't say this one was more crucial, unless it's true, but how do you know it's true? Why do you think it's true?

What about John 3:16? I'm not trying to be political here but I recently heard Donald Trump say he thought the Bible was the most important book out there and then they said 'give us a verse' and I'm thinking 'John 3:16' can you arrive there Mr. gift of Gab. John 3:16 says *[16] For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.* It's a great verse if it's true. How do you know it's true and why would you think it's true?

In 1983 I left Miami, Florida to go plant a church in Charlotte, North Carolina and this congregation, Briarwood, sent me to do that. Then in 17 years I had the privilege to come to this congregation as pastor for which I am grateful for all of that but in 1999 when I left Charlotte to come here they started an event that happens every year called Community Heroes Celebration. It's a celebration of policemen and firemen where we would gather them together, have a meal, then a service to try and encourage and honor them to teach our children in the school how important these police and firemen were, how you're supposed to respond to them and why they do what they do.

This year I had the privilege to go back and speak at the 16th Celebration of Community Heroes. Sitting in front of me were these policemen and firemen all the way from New York. I had the privilege to talk with them and tell them why I believe they are heroes. I do not believe in using that term lightly. It is a very special term that should be used thoughtfully and not lightly. When we understandably are running from something they are running to it. All you have to think about is what happened on 9/11 back in 2001 – everyone running from the Twin Towers, while they were running to it and likely to their death for many of them.

When I finished speaking I walked around and looked them eyeball to eyeball and said something to them that became framed for me about 20 years ago and so it always bleeds through sermon after sermon. That is this; when there was no way, God made a way and that way is His Son, Jesus Christ who is The Way, the Truth and the Life and no man can come to the Father but through Him. I told them that was the most important thing for them to remember. How can you keep running to it and not just merely treat it as a job? How can you be courageous and compassionate? How can you be bold and humble? You can only be all of those things by fixing your eyes on Jesus. Why should you fix your eyes on Jesus? It is because when there was no way, God made a way and that way is His Son, Jesus Christ and He is ready to receive you. He will uphold you even in the day of trouble.

Why would I say that to them? Why would I say God to them? Do you really believe there is one? Way for what? It's a way to be saved. Why do I need to be saved? What do you mean there has to be a way for me to be saved? Did I hear you say 'The Way'? How would you have the sense that you ought to say that? This coming week I'll go to speak to the Police Force of Indianapolis and I will say the same thing. Why would I say those things, that there is a way and that there is only one way and that way is Jesus Christ? I say that because the Bible says that and that's the only reason I say that. I didn't think it up for I'm just reporting it. It's the clear message of the Bible. You need a Savior. You can't save yourself but God in grace and mercy has made a way for you to be saved and it is through His Son Jesus who is the Way, the Truth and the Life. I believe that because the Bible says that and I believe the Bible is the Word of God and the Word of God is true. So if it's true because the Bible is the Word of God and the Bible says it, then I want to preach the Word. That's what we're called to do.

Why would you believe this Bible and that these Scriptures are the Word of God, the truth? When I was a kid I was drilled on things about the Bible from my mother, father, grandmother, grandfather and the church God sent me to through my parents. God spoke to me through all this as he was working on my heart and one thing we learned was this; the Bible says it, I believe it and that settles it. I remember how that made an impact on me and then after I was converted I actually rearranged that statement to the Bible says it and that settles it. Here's the big question and the reason I'm doing an eight week study on this – do you believe it? It's settled and it's the truth, now do you believe it?

Many of you came today with a library. It was either an actual library or a virtual library. It was a library of 66 books and almost 40 plus human authors. Some of those authors were farmers, tax collectors, some priests, some prophets, some kings, some fishermen and all over the place. The actual library was the book itself with all the pages in it. The virtual library of it is through an iPad or phone that you look at through a screen. I'm not opposed to the virtual one but get one of the actual books if you don't have one and caress it, smell it, look at it, handle it and read it. A virtual Bible is like kissing your wife through a screen door. It's fine to have one for emergencies but get into that Bible, why? It is because it's the Word of God and that means it's the truth. They are called Scriptures and they are called The Scripture, singular. Why? It is because there is an unmistakable clear message in the Scripture (with 40 plus authors over 1600 years) and it is the glory of Triune God revealed in the preeminence of Jesus Christ, our Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer.

How in the world did these 40 plus authors over 1600 years, writing on the burdens of their heart, come up with one singular message of the glory of Triune God revealed in the preeminence of Jesus Christ, our Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer? It happened because there is an Author behind the authors. He is also the Editor working on the human authors. He is also the Archivist that preserves this for us over 1600 years. All Scripture is God breathed. That means it's the truth. That means it's the Word of God. He speaks.

We believe this is so important that we took this entire year to look at one phrase from John 17:17 which says *[17] Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.* These are the words of Jesus. Build up your people in the truth and what's the truth? It is Thy Word. God's Word is truth. So this year we have taken the time to see what the Son of God says about the Word of God. The eight studies we've covered already can be accessed from our website at www.briarwood.org. We went to eight different texts to see this. So I'll summarize what we've covered on this already.

The first thing He said was it's the truth. Thy Word is truth. The second thing we heard Him say was that it was unbreakable. You can't break God's Word for if you try it will break you. Three is that it is readable. It was designed to be preached but it was given to be read. That's why Jesus said on numerous occasions, 'have you not read?' Number four is that it is missional. His Word is to go to the world. Matthew 28:19-20 says *[19] Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, [20] teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.*

Fifthly, it is Christ-centered. Jesus says in John 5:39 *[39] You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear*

witness about me. [27] And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself. (Luke 24:27) There is that singular thread throughout all of the Scriptures. Sixthly, is the Spirit uses the Word in our life. Seventhly, it saves us. It has saving power. God's Word saves sinners.

Finally we heard that God's Word will be fulfilled. He will lose not one. Romans 8:28 says [28] *And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.* You will be with Him in paradise. There is a lake of fire, called hell, for all of those apart from Jesus Christ. All of these things will be fulfilled. Satan, death, sin, hell and the grave, all rejecting the glorious God and Jesus Christ will spend eternity in hell. The Word of God is fulfilled. Matthew 5:17-18 says [17] *Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.* [18] *For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished.* That is what the Son of God said about the Word of God.

What does Paul say about the Word of God? The first thing we found out from Paul is that the Word of God will be attacked in this world by false teachers. That shouldn't surprise us because that was the first thing Satan did in the garden to draw people away from God's glory. Satan attacked God's Word when he said 'has God said? God's a liar for there is a better way than the way God says. You won't die when you disobey Him. The wages of sin is not death for it's life.' So Satan attacks the Word of God and he loves to use false teachers.

Paul uses Jannes and Jambres as examples of false teachers in his passage and now we have a whole bunch more out there. Paul says they oppose the truth and they are imposters. They passed themselves off as preachers and teachers of the Word of God and yet they are imposters and opposers of the Word of God. Satan loves to use them. Every ministry, every church, every denomination, every college and every seminary that departs from faithfulness to Christ always begins by walking away from the integrity of God's Word and it usually begins with false teachers. So it will be attacked but Paul told them that they didn't look at them but they looked at him.

Paul also told us that Word can save us. That Word saved you Timothy. [14] *But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it [15] and 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.* (II Timothy 3:14-15) God's Word is a saving Word.

Thirdly, he says God's Word is a good news word. Here we are in our sin and under sin but there is a great message and that message is that you can be saved in Jesus Christ. It is a great message of a God who so loved you that He has given His Son. His Son says to you right now if you don't know Him that 'I went to the cross, I paid for the sins of all of my people, come unto Me and believe in Me. Turn from your sins and put your trust in Me. I love you so much that I'll take you just like you are but I love you too much to leave you like you are.' It is able to give you the wisdom that leads you to salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

It is a life transforming message. It is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction and training in righteousness. These Scriptures will be attacked. They have the power to save. They have a good news, Christ centered message. These Scriptures are sufficient for your whole life that the man of God may be adequate and equipped for

every good work. These Scriptures have been given to you who are being saved that you might proclaim it. Preach the Word. Should you counsel? Yes. Should you love, do deeds of mercy and acts of kindness? Yes. Should you disciple? Yes but Timothy proclaim the Word of the Lord. It is His Word breathed out by Him.

I plan to take the next seven studies just to take this text apart. What does it mean when it says all Scripture is breathed out by God? What does it mean that it is profitable? How is it profitable for reproof, correction and training in righteousness? How is it sufficient to equip us for every good work? How can you and I profit from it? It is not just putting it on a table and magic vibes will run through your house. We'll find out what it means to hear it and study to show yourself approved unto God. That is where we're headed. Now we'll go from this overview to a little bit closer view.

You will leave here today to go to various places and you will encounter four views of this Bible. The first view will be those who say the Bible is a book, a good book. It is a book that has words about God from men. Please don't call it a good book for Moby Dick is a good book. This is The Book. It's novel and stood the test of time but some will absolutely hate it, vilify it and do everything they can to turn you against it. They think anyone who holds to it should be mocked and slandered. Some think it's an archaic antique book that has absolutely nothing to do with life. So to some it's just a book.

Secondly, there are those who say the Bible contains the words of God. It's not just a book with words about God from men but contains the words of God along with the words of men. In other words, it has truth and it has error. So how do you know what is truth and what is error? Listen to me and I'll tell you. Then you'll have to stand on their counsel and not God's Word as they decide what is the Bible, like the arrogance of the Jesus seminary we were cursed with for a number of years as it unfolded.

A third view is the Bible becomes the Word of God when encountered by men. That is the Holy Spirit makes it become the Word of God to you at that moment and time when you encounter it. The only problem with those first three views is that the Bible doesn't allow it. The Bible will not allow us to say it is just a book or that it becomes the Word of God or contains the Word of God because the Bible says that it is the Word of God.

The fourth view is that the Bible is the Word of God to men through men by the Holy Spirit. Jesus said this in John 17:17 when He said 'sanctify them in the truth; thy Word is truth.' That is why the Apostle Paul will say to the church in Thessalonica in I Thessalonians 2:13, *[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.* His Word is unbreakable, fulfilled and absolutely powerful. It is living, active and sharper than any two-edged sword. It is powerful to the dividing of the thoughts of men and women. The Bible is the Word of God.

Now the question will be, do you believe it? Any reading of the Bible with any integrity is going to reveal that the Bible doesn't say it's just a book with thoughts and words about God or that it contains the words of God for it says it is the Word of God. The Word of the Lord came to me, Jeremiah said. So the question is whether you believe it or not.

Here is a statement to flesh it out in this takeaway. Because the Scripture is the very Word of God, it is the Truth. Thy Word is truth. All Scripture is breathed out by God so if the Scripture is the Word of God, it is the Truth. Now because of that here are four things to go with it. One is the Scripture is our only supreme and sufficient rule for faith (what we believe) and practice (how we live). Isn't it amazing that right in the middle of the Bible is Psalm 119, the longest work in the Bible and it's all about God's Word, every single verse is about God's Word. That's why growing up in a church they teach you eye has not seen and ear has not heard what is recorded in God's Word.

I remember that song the B-I-B-L-E that says the B-I-B-L-E, yes that's the book for me, I stand alone on the Word of God, the B-I-B-L-E. The Bible! When it says I stand alone it doesn't mean by yourself but you stand on the Word alone. You may end up by yourself like Martin Luther did when all the political and religious world was against him and he spoke to the kings and he said 'here I stand I can do no other for my conscience is bound by the Word of God.' This is the supremacy and sufficiency of the Word of God.

Our forbearers in the Westminster Confession don't start off with the Gospel or the doctrine of man or the doctrine of God in chapter 1 but they start off with the Scripture because you can't know the God of the Word without the Word of God. It is the Word of God that reveals Him. Yes, creation declares there is a God but I would never know He dwell as Father, Son and Holy Spirit without the Bible. I would never know that the Father loves me so much that He gave His Son to go to a cross to save me from my sins without the Bible. I would never know there is a heaven to gain and a hell to lose but through Jesus Christ, without the Bible. I wouldn't know how to love my wife or nurture my children without the Bible. I wouldn't know how to live for Christ in the market place without the Bible. I wouldn't know how to speak to a government without the Bible. I wouldn't know how to do anything in my life without the Bible. I wouldn't even know how to worship God without the Bible in Spirit and in truth. Thy Word is truth. This is why Satan has attacked the Word ever since the garden and that's why he still attacks it.

Secondly, while all truth is not in the Scripture, all that is in the Scripture is the truth. Did everything that Jesus preaches get put in the Bible? No. John 21:25 says *[25] Now there are also many other things that Jesus did. Were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written.* When Jesus preached something, was it true? Yes, so all truth is not in the Bible. 2 plus 2 equals 4 and that's a truth from God's general revelation but that is not in the Bible but all that is in the Bible is true. It doesn't become true, doesn't contain truth. That's why we say 'here is the Word of God. It is the truth, it doesn't become the truth or contain the truth, it is the truth of the Word of God.' All truth is not in the Bible but all that I need is in the Bible and all the Scripture is true. Jesus said it is the book of Truth. It is called the sword of truth.

Thirdly, you can never know God and His Word exhaustively but you can know God through His Word increasingly, accurately, intimately and savingly. O Lord, who has known Your way or thought Your thoughts? Who has become Your counselor? Your ways are inscrutable and I can't get to the bottom of it. Even in heaven you'll never know the Lord exhaustively for you will be learning forever. Even in heaven we're the finite trying to understand the truth of the infinite. So you have the great joy of

learning forever, hopefully without research papers. You can know Him increasingly for tomorrow you can know more about Him than you know today. You can know God accurately because His Word is true and He never contradicts Himself. You can know God intimately and personally because these 66 books are His love letters to you. Most of you can know Him savingly for faith comes by hearing and hearing the Word of Christ. Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my pathway.

John 17:3 says [3] *And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.* How can you know God? You can know Him from His Word and by the power of His Spirit. Our word of pardon today was these things have I written that you might know that you have eternal life. How can you know I have eternal life? It is because it is written in God's Word which is the truth. All who believe in Christ, I lose not one of them.

Fourthly, you can know the Word of God and not know God but you cannot know God and not know His Word. Passing a Bible test does not mean you have a saving relationship with Christ. You cannot know Him without His Word. So ultimately and pointedly your decision as to what you believe about this Bible will ultimately be determined and reflected concerning your decision what you believe about Jesus. The Bible doesn't save you, Jesus saves you but your decision about this Bible will determine your decision about Jesus because it's the Bible that tells you that you need Him. It's the Bible that tells you that He alone can and surely will save you.

This is the Bible that warns you of a hell to come and a new heavens and new earth that He has purchased. He says He is preparing a place for you that where He is there you may be also forever. It is the Word of God and we can't go through and pick and choose. I know there are tough verses and doctrines in the Bible and if you don't believe there are tough verses and doctrines then you haven't read it. If you edit those out then you have just said to God, 'I (you) believe that I (you) am the supreme rule of faith and practice.' We surrender to this Word that we might surrender to Christ. We come to the Word of God to know the God of the Word in Christ.

A culture in the 20th century said you couldn't believe the Bible to be rational, reasonable, in a virgin birth, miracles, water to wine, fish and loaves for Christians will be laughed off the map. Christianity is really the ethics of the Sermon on the Mount – marriage, divorce, sexuality, truth, love one another etc. Now we're in the 21st century and they still say God doesn't show up in a miracle so you can't believe it. You can't believe the Sermon on the Mount anymore either and what it says we now say is sin. What it says that was true we now say is false. What it says is virtuous we now say is bigotry. So where will you stand? For Christ on His Word? The B-I-B-L-E that's the book for me, I stand alone on the Word of God, the B-I-B-L-E. May the God of the Word be exalted. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, thank You that we could sing this Word, pray this Word, read this Word, confess this Word and one could very inadequately preach this Word but there is a Holy Spirit who gave this Word and will bring this Word to the hearts of men and women. So today Father if there is anyone reading this that heard from this Word that there is a God who loves them so much that He sent His Son and will take them right where they are but He will not leave them where they are because He loves them too much, would You bring

them to Yourself. For those who have already come to Him, help us not to be conformed to this world but to be transformed by the renewing of our minds that we may have a life and heart for Christ because we have the mind of Christ. The Word of God is the truth. Father, I pray this in Jesus' Name, Amen.