

The Word of God in Biblical Perspective
The Divine Majesty and Sufficiency of God's Word
"Divine Inspiration Defined"
II Timothy 3:14-17
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July 19, 2009 – Morning Sermon

God has laid this new series on my heart which includes five specific texts on the divine majesty and sufficiency of God's inspired and inerrant Word. I believe this is a crucial issue of the day so I really want to encourage you in these coming Sunday mornings as we finish out this summer season with this series on these particular texts all clustered around this issue of God's inspired and inerrant Word, its majesty and its sufficiency. To finish out this summer season on Sunday evenings we will be in one of my favorite studies on the sovereignty of God and the moral agency of man. Have you ever wondered how God works sovereignly and yet we're responsible? I don't know of a better book in the Bible to teach us on this than the book of Jonah where Jonah is running and God is pursuing. I'm calling the entire series the reluctant prophet and the redeeming God. God is going to pursue him and deal with him and we'll have the wonderful opportunity to study how the reluctant prophet is redeemed by God and what that means in our life. You can read through Jonah this afternoon and we'll start the study this evening.

Now look with me in our text for this study. II Timothy 3:14-17 says, **14** *But as for you (Timothy), 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 competent, equipped for every good work.*

The grass withers, the flower fades, this is the Word of our God. It abides forever. It's the Truth.

The summer series that I was seriously thinking about was a study of the priestly prayer of Christ in John 17 and I do commend you to study it and look at it. It is what Jesus prayed before He went to the cross. He, the High Priest, bearing the sacrifice Himself prayed this prayer in John 17. As you go to the passage you will find that He makes seven requests in this prayer. In John 17:17 one of His requests is "Sanctify them in the Truth. Thy Word is Truth." Here's the question. Was that a flourish of a man facing death, trying to ascend the heights of the throne of God by making statements that aren't true or did He utter the Truth that day when He said, "Thy Word is Truth"? Notice He didn't say, "Thy Word contains Truth," "Thy Word becomes Truth," "Thy Word is a collection of Truths" but He said, "Thy Word is Truth." That's what I want to bring us to.

It is my conviction that there is a renewed attack from Satan. It's not new. He attacked this issue in the garden. He didn't just come up and say, "Adam, Eve would you like to sin?" Here's what he said; "Has God said, is God's Word true, is God's Word veracity?" Do we have a trustworthy Bible? Is it inerrant? Is it infallible? Is it reliable? Is it the Truth? Right now you are watching the deconstruction of a nation and part of

what allows it is the dissolution of those churches that at one time brought the salt and light of the Gospel and we are watching that dissolution of churches. Now, there are some amazing that startle us, that even within the ordained clergy we are mainstreaming sexual perversion and promiscuity. We are amazed at how that is happening in denominations and how God's Word is just set aside but while we look at startling moments like that these issues were actually won and lost 70 to 90 years ago when these same churches and these same denominations decided God's Word is not true. That is when you remove the foundation the buildings crumble brick by brick by brick by brick.

So today in this renewed assault by Satan has God said, is God capable, does God have enough power to give us His Word? Is God trustworthy enough to give us a Word of veracity and truth? Is God's Word not only true but is it cohesive? Is it actually reliable? Does it have a consistent message over 1400 years of its collecting by the power of the Holy Spirit through 40 plus authors, is there a message so we can say the Word isn't full of truths but the Word is Truth, singular? Can we say that? I would like to take these 6 Sundays to address this issue, not as a lecture, not in terms of essays but in going to very specific texts that God declares the majesty, the sufficiency, the inherency of His Word. Then do you believe it?

I'm not saying did you repeat the three questions. How can we know how to glorify and enjoy God? It is by His Word. How can we know who God is and what is required of us? It is by His Word. I am not asking you have you simply repeated that in a worship service as important as that moment is. I am asking you do you believe the Word of God. Do you believe this is the most important instrument that God has placed in this world which the Holy Spirit uses to save His people and change them? That's what I want to drive home to my heart and your heart. I want to give you every reason why I believe the Bible is the Word of God. I do not believe the Bible is man's word about God. I believe its God's Word to man. In fact, I do not believe you and I can know God. We can't be born again without the Word of God. We can't be saved without the Word of God. We can't be changed without the Word of God. We can't grow without the Word of God. We can't know God without the Word of God.

I know God has revealed Himself in creation. The heaven declare the glory of God. I know that day to day the speech of the majesty of God pours forth from the universe to the earth throughout the earth from the rising to the setting of the sun but I would never know this God dwells as Father, Son and Holy Spirit without His Word. I would never know that this God created me with His spoken Word as the crown of His creation without His Word. I would never know that God the Father authored my creation and God the Son accomplished my creation. God the Holy Spirit superintended that creation without His Word. I would never know that God before the foundation of the world authored my salvation. God sent His Son to accomplish my salvation. God sent the Holy Spirit to apply that salvation without His Word. I would not know my God as Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer, the One who upholds me by the Word of His power without His Word. I wouldn't know what to do at a grave site without His Word. I wouldn't know what to do at a sick bed without His Word. I wouldn't know what to do when I meet people in the despair of the vanities of this world without His Word. I wouldn't know what to do with my life without His Word. It is my life, the Word of God.

While we could go into flights of all kinds of ways just to get big crowds from comedy to programs to this to that and the other, it is why the mainstay of this church for

50 years has been the preaching and teaching of God's Word, from the pulpit, to the classroom, to the small group, it is because we know that is our lifeline in the hands of the Holy Spirit in our life. That's what we know.

Now what about that Word? I want to show you just from this first text yet there will be five more that we will look at, but from this first text I would like to lay out seven things that God says through Paul by the Holy Spirit about this, His Word to us. I can't know God without it, be right with God, follow God or hope in God but with it we have reliable, inerrant and sufficient revelation from God. Simply put it is the Truth. But notice how he augments that for our understanding from this passage of Scripture. Paul is kind of like the Elijah of the New Testament putting his mantle on his Elisha. Paul writes 13 Epistles, 14 if you think he wrote Hebrews. I don't think he wrote Hebrews but I think whoever wrote Hebrews under the power of the Holy Spirit spent a lot of time with Paul but I know he wrote at least 13 and in these 13 Epistles that are written for us, 9 of them go to churches, 4 of them go to individuals; Philemon, Titus and 2 to Timothy, creatively named first and second Timothy in our Bible.

The last thing Paul wrote before he died was second Timothy. He might have written this literally hours before his death. So these are last words inspired by the Holy Spirit, to one that he is putting his mantle upon. So what does he tell Timothy? 2 Timothy 3:14, 15 says, ***14** But as for you (Timothy), continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it **15** and how from childhood...* I want to stop right here for a moment and this is not part of the sermon. It is totally an advertisement and a burden of my heart. When I was reading this last Sunday it was really pressed upon my heart that somewhere between 80 to 90 percent of people become Christians do it before the age of 16. That's where they make their first commitment to Christ. This text says "from childhood you have known the Scriptures." I thank the Lord for every teacher and the team here but I am praying "God, would You give us here at Briarwood the best children's ministry possible to bring our children from birth until they step out to these colleges and out into this world, would You give us the best covenant children's ministry possible to bring them the Word of God that they may know the God of the Word?"

It says, the things you have learned from childhood so what does he tell us? He tells us seven things. God has given us His Word and in this part of His Word He tells us seven things about His Word. The first thing is found in 2 Timothy 3:15; *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.* The first thing we learn about God's Word is it is a saving Word. It is a Gospel Word. It is a Word that first of all alerts us, "You need a Savior." Secondly, it communicates to us that you can't save yourself. Thirdly it then tells us, "I've got Good News – salvation through grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, this Word is able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation." The Birmingham Newspaper can't give you that wisdom. It may report that wisdom but it can't give you that wisdom. Your magazines can't give you that wisdom. Your technological journals can't give you that wisdom. They can report it but where do we get the wisdom to know I need a Savior, I can't save myself but God saves sinners and that wisdom is in His Word. It's a saving Word.

By the way, whenever we study God's Word we need to put it in its historical, grammatical setting. This isn't a magic word. It's a word really communicated through

real life people, in real life situations. Paul is talking to Timothy who was raised with the Bible from childhood which was able to give him the wisdom that leads to salvation through Christ Jesus. So what Bible did Timothy study? It was the Old Testament. You don't have one message in the Old Testament and another one in the New Testament. There are not two different messages. Thy Word is Truth. It's one message. It is the glory of God revealed in Jesus Christ as Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer and this is a singular message that runs through the Scriptures. It is a saving message.

The second thing about the Word of God is that it is a Christ centered Word. It is a Christ centered message. This Bible that you have and were raised with is able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. Timothy had the Old Testament. I can't do better than St Augustine who said the Old Testament is the New Testament concealed and the New Testament is the Old Testament revealed. This Bible has a singular message. Here is an illustration I have used before but it's the best one I have. My grandmother would make us Christmas gifts. Many times the Christmas gifts she would make us were sweaters. She did it by knitting them. If you go to the store and buy a sweater and you may see on the sweater a pick. Do you know what a pick is? It is when one little piece of the sweater sticks out. Pull the pick its okay but if you have my grandmother's sweater don't pull the pick. If you pull the pick you don't have a sweater anymore, you have a ball of yarn.

The Bible has the singular Truth of the glory of God revealed in Jesus Christ from beginning to end. The Old Testament is pointing to Him with promises, symbols, types and prophesies and the New Testament explains Him. In Christ everything is yes and amen. He's the Ark, He's the Temple, He's the Tabernacle, He's the Wave Offering, He's the Thank Offering, and He's the Atonement. He is the Prophet, the Priest and the King. It is all pointing to Him. So any sermon, any text, or any study that does not lift up Christ as preeminent and glorious, then that text has been misused. It all points to Him. It's all there to exalt Him. The Old Testament declares Him as it progressively unfolds and reveals who He is and why He is coming and what He does. Then the New Testament announces that He has done it, He's risen and He's coming again. It is a Christ centered message.

Thirdly, it is a Divine Word. It's not a man's message. It's not a human message. It's a deity message. It's a God given message. All Scripture is God breathed. It's breathed out by God. Basically what Paul does is he kind of puts together a word that you won't find any where else in your Bible. You will see the concept throughout the Bible but you won't find this word anywhere else. He takes two words and puts them together. It's a contraction. *Theopneustos* – *Theo* means God, *pneustos* means breathed – God breathed. *Pneustos* means pneumatic, pneumonia, air, breath, wind. The Scriptures are here because God by the Holy Spirit breathed them out. Now how did He do it? He did it through means. What was His means? He used prophets in the Old Testament and Apostles in the New Testament.

Let's look at 2 Peter 1:21 which says, "*For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.*" So what do we have? We have God's Word. God's Word did not happen by man got to thinking or man got engaged in philosophy or man got into contemplating and then God said, "I'm going to take what you put together and I'm going to communicate through it." No, that is not what God did. Apostles and prophets were carried along but they were

real men, who really spoke and really wrote. They were also in real life situations. They weren't just sitting there one day and a quill comes in their hand and their hand started trembling. No, Paul has seven questions from the church at Corinth and he answers the seven questions. It's called 1 Corinthians. He puts an introduction, a conclusion and he starts out each answer to the seven questions with "Now concerning..." If you can read it in the Hebrew and Greek you can see the difference between a Jonah and an Amos. They have two different approaches to the Hebrew language. You can see the difference in an Isaiah and some of his refinements. You should see the difference in the way a Peter writes and the way a Paul, lawyer, graduated, gamaliel will write. These are real men in real situations, in real life, writing yet carried along by the Holy Spirit.

So how did we with over 40 plus authors with over 1400 years get one message? It was because we had one Author carrying them along for His purpose which was to reveal the Truth of the glory of God in Jesus Christ. But we have a God given message and God can't err. God will not contradict Himself. That's why when there are difficult things to understand and there are difficult things to understand, while we are grateful for pastors, preachers, teachers, counsels, creeds, confessions and catechisms but the final rule of interpretation of God's Word is God's Word itself because God can't contradict Himself. So is there a tough text? Let me go to the simple ones because the simple ones will enlighten me for the tough ones. God can't err. So I have a God given message. I have a saving Word. I have a Christ centered Word. I have a divine Word from God to man, not man's word about God but God's Word to man.

Number four is I have a teaching Word. All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching without apology. That's why we have expository messages. You don't need from me my thoughts last week. You need a pastor, teacher, a Bible student, a small group leader and in your own study what we need is to know what God has said in His Word. What does God's Word say? Have you ever heard a person say "God said it, I believe it that settles it"? I like this one better; "God said it that settles it." What if someone doesn't believe it? It doesn't matter. It will matter a lot for them eventually but whether someone believes it doesn't change the fact that it's true. God said it that settles it. I pray that you and I will believe it.

It is God's Word but it's not a magic word where I buy one, put it on the coffee table and we won't put a drink on it because we don't want a circle on it therefore our home is going to be holy because it has these vibrations that run out from the coffee table all over. No, you need to study the Word. Read the Word. His delight is in the Law of the Lord and in His Law he meditates day and night (Psalm 1:2). This is the Word of God. It is designed to be studied, preached, and taught to the people of God and to the world that they might become the people of God. The Christian life is not intuitive. The Christian life is informative from the Word of God. It's not by reflex. It is the things you have learned. Paul says Philippians 4:11, "I have learned how to be content." I have learned how to get along. I have learned what to do with much. I have learned what to do with little. I have been taught what it means to be a man, a husband, a father, a Christian man, a Christian husband, Christian father.

What does it mean to be a pastor of His church? What does it mean to be a missionary, to be sent? What does it mean to disciple? What does it mean to bear up? The Bible says amazing things like, "Rejoice as you engage in the sufferings of Christ." Do what? I would rather avoid sufferings. No, it says to rejoice in the sufferings of

Christ. They were perishing yet they pursued. How in the world do you pursue while you are perishing? You want to live then die to yourself. God, I have to learn this life from Your Word. It is a teaching Word.

Fifthly, it is not only a teaching Word, when it's taught by the power of the Holy Spirit it is a transforming Word. I know I'm swimming upstream here when I say we have teaching down to 7 minute vignettes in worship services because what we value today is experience. People want to experience something in worship. I know many are going to struggle with this but I believe if you build your Christian life from experience you have just opened the door wide open for Satan. He can give you religious experiences through which he will introduce religious heresy and error all through your life. But if you build your life from God's Word having learned it, hearing it taught, studying it, embracing it, setting it in context and understanding it now you have something to interpret the experiences of life.

Now you know how to stand beside a grave, sit at a sick bed, and embrace a victory. Now you know its life transforming when you know. It transforms our life. It reproveth. All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, reproof, correction and training in righteousness (2 Timothy 3:16). God takes you right where you are. His Word says so. God never leaves you right where you are. His Word says so. He will change you from faith to faith, from life unto life as you grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ your Lord.

Number six is it is an equipping Word. It equips you in every area of life and how to deal with the issues of life. Lord, how can I worship You? It is not by intuition. He says, "Worship Me in Spirit and Truth. I want you to learn what pleases Me in worship." How do I evangelize? God says He will teach you. He will transform your life so He can equip you that the man of God may be competent. We now know how to live our lives in our families, as the citizen of a nation, as a part of the Kingdom of God. We know how to be a part of the church of Jesus Christ. God equips us, disciplines us, directs us and He not only teaches us how to worship, evangelize, disciple and love one another but He teaches us in every area of life as He equips us to be men and women of God, not of the world. We are in the world but not of the world. We are men and women equipped of God.

One may be thinking, "Harry do you know how complex life is?" Yes and the seventh thing is God's Word is a sufficient Word. It is a saving Word, a Christ centered Word, a divine Word, a teaching Word, a transforming Word, an equipping Word and it is a sufficient Word. 2 Timothy 3:17 says, "*that the man of God may be **competent, equipped for every good work.***" God's Word is sufficient.

I remember when I first became a Christian and Cindy, my wife, will tell you that I stayed up that night and read the New Testament. I woke her up at 5:30 the next morning and said, "I finished the New Testament, what do you do next?" She opened one eye and said, "Read it again." You can't get to the bottom of God's Word. One verse can be a life time and as glorious and refreshing as it is as you reflect upon it, as you study it, the nuggets get more golden and the water gets more pure the deeper you go into it. So what do we do with this? How does this transform us in where we started in this study?

I want to give you three takeaways from this study. The first thing is in light of this majesty and sufficiency of God's inspired and inerrant Word, this day embrace this

Truth that God's Word is foundational for every Christian and every church that names Christ. God's Word is foundational. I had the opportunity because of frequent flyer miles and the graciousness of a few people to spend my study sabbatical in Scotland. When I was there I spent about 6 different meetings with some of my brothers and sisters from the church in Scotland and related denominations. We all came to the conclusion that some of the issues that are being dealt with now in terms of the ordination of those who have embraced sexual promiscuity and sexual perversion and mainlining it in the pulpits of the church, as horrific and overwhelming as that is, the issue was really way back when God's Word as the only rule of faith and practice was denied as sufficient and inerrant. That's where the issue was. We have read about it in our own papers here. We are watching the dissolution of mainline churches and professing Christians.

My friends, it begins with either the skepticism of or the neglect of God's Word as foundational. In other words, tomorrow morning when you get up what you do with God's Word is going to be a lot more important than what you do at breakfast. I'm all for breakfast and that's obvious but what you do with God's Word is much more important. God's Word is more important than the vacation you are planning. I'm all for vacations. I believe all of these things have their place but there is nothing more foundational in my life than God's Word. What about Jesus? I can't know Him without His Word. Jesus isn't my feel good teddy bear. He is God's Son who has come into this world and has revealed Himself in His Word as glorious, majestic, Redeemer and Lord. I need His Word to know Him. I need a pulpit to be faithful to preach Him to me and teach me about Him. I need a small group leader who will guide me. I need to be disciplined. I need to open my Bible and thank God for all of these people and the vast majority who have died for Christ since the ascension of Jesus Christ. The vast majority died so you could have a Bible in your hands in your language, not as a good luck charm but as something to know, study, read and believe.

It is not feel good religion that will make you stand in a broken world. We are in a broken world. The ship of my life is sailing through rough seas. When I sail through these rough seas I need ballast in my soul. I need something with weight in my heart and my mind. It's God's Word that puts ballast in the soul that puts gravitas in the heart and fills the mind. Now I know what to do and where to do in a country that needs the witness of Christ, at a grave side, at a sick bed. I know what to do and where to go because God's Word is now the anchor that anchors me to Christ by His Holy Spirit.

The second takeaway is because Satan has attacked from the garden and will attack, defend God's Word, not because my defense is necessary but do it because Jesus did. You attack God's Word and Jesus used that as an opportunity not simply to defend it but to unfold it. I want to show you a passage in Matthew 22 of a simply statement of what Jesus does. I just absolutely love this text. The Pharisees and the Herodians were the conservatives of the day and they were going to attack Jesus and entangle Him in His words. This is an uneven match. They haven't got a chance. Matthew 22:15-22 says, **15** *Then the Pharisees went and plotted how to entangle him in his words. 16* *And they sent their disciples to him, along with the Herodians, saying, "Teacher, we know that you are true and teach the way of God truthfully, and you do not care about anyone's opinion, for you are not swayed by appearances. 17* *Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?" 18* *But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, "Why put me to the test, you hypocrites? 19* *Show me the coin for the tax."* *And they brought him a*

denarius. 20 And Jesus said to them, "Whose likeness and inscription is this?" 21 They said, "Caesar's." Then he said to them, "Therefore render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." 22 When they heard it, they marveled. And they left him and went away.

There's another group standing by who saw what happened to the Pharisees and said, "Well we'll handle Jesus." They were called the Sadducees. Let me just do this because preachers have to do this. The Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection and that's why they were "sad – you – see." Okay we now have that out of the way. Now the Sadducees try to trap Jesus in His Words. Matthew 22:23-33 says, **23** *The same day Sadducees came to him, who say that there is no resurrection, and they asked him a question, 24 saying, "Teacher, Moses said, 'If a man dies having no children, his brother must marry the widow and raise up children for his brother.' 25 Now there were seven brothers among us. The first married and died, and having no children left his wife to his brother. 26 So too the second and third, down to the seventh. 27 After them all, the woman died. 28 In the resurrection, therefore, of the seven, whose wife will she be? For they all had her." 29 But Jesus answered them, "You are wrong, because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God. 30 For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. 31 And as for the resurrection of the dead, **have you not read** what was said to you by God: 32 'I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? He is not God of the dead, but of the living." 33 And when the crowd heard it, they were astonished at his teaching.*

Here they come attacking a Biblical truth out of God's Word that is true in Jesus Christ who is the Truth and the Resurrection. Jesus says, "You err, you're wrong because you don't know two things. One is you don't know the power of God. The resurrection is no problem for God and His power. He spoke it all into existence with a single word. Secondly, you don't know the Scriptures." This is very important, look at what He says again in Matthew 22:29-31; *because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God. 30 For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. 31 And as for the resurrection of the dead, **have you not read** (your Bible) **what was said to you by God.*** Moses wrote it but notice that Jesus didn't say Moses who God used but Jesus told them who said it, "by God" through Moses. This is God's Word.

Harry, do you believe in the inerrancy of the Word of God? I absolutely do down to the jot and the tittle. Jesus did and in fact His whole argument turns on one word and the crowd goes away astonished. They asked Him, "Do you believe in the resurrection?" He said, "Let me tell you what Moses said, 'God said through Moses 'I am' the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.'" When did Moses live? He lived over 400 years after the death of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Jesus said, "I am is what God said! I am the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Moses wrote it. God said it through Moses and God is not the God of the dead but of the living. Abraham lives and therefore I declare to you the resurrection all on one little word – I AM!"

There is a third takeaway and it's very brief. Do you know the Scriptures? The telling statement He makes to the Sadducees is not "have you had religious contemplations?" They had those. The telling statement was "have you not read?" My third takeaway is it is foundational so defend it because it's the Truth but even more use

it. Read it. Study it. Hear it. It is a hammer that will break our heart. It is a light that will light our life. It is a balm of Gilead that will comfort our soul. Jesus loves me this I know for the Bible tells me so. Have you read it? Do you hear it? Do you believe it? Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, thank You for these moments we could be together. Thank You for the enormous privilege to open up Your Word. It is the Truth. For some reading this they have come seeking or perhaps looking. They have heard Your Word that says Jesus will give you the wisdom to salvation in Him. O Lord, please don't let anyone finish reading this who has not been made wise unto salvation in Christ. Father, for those who do know You not only will they pray for those who right now would say 'Jesus I have heard, I believe and I come to You and put my trust in You'. But for those who have already made that commitment may they with Timothy love to learn Your saving, Christ revealing, divinely given, instructive, transforming, equipping, sufficient Word. It's the Truth and may they be able to say 'Jesus loves me this I know for the Bible tells me so' I do pray this in Jesus' Name, Amen.