

THE ROLE OF THE WORD OF GOD IN THE SAVED

As we continue our series on the Word of God, I want us to turn again to II Timothy 3. Last week we noted from verse 16 that all Scripture—meaning the entire Bible—is profitable. What does profitable mean? It means that God’s Word is beneficial...it is helpful...it is useful. How?

From **vs 15**, we see that the Scriptures are what make us “wise unto salvation.” We **would not know** about God’s wonderful plan of how to be forgiven—and how to become His child—if He did not tell us about it in His Word! But He did tell us—praise the Lord—and because He told us, it should motivate us to do 2 things:

1) **Obey the gospel for ourselves!** Believe what God says about **our sinfulness**...and **His holiness**...and **our unworthiness** of heaven...then call out to God for mercy and forgiveness if we haven’t done that. What is God’s response when we do that? **Romans 10:13** “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved.” 2) Not only should we **personally obey** the gospel, we also **need to share it!** Notice on your outline a verse we looked at at the end of last week’s sermon. **Romans 10:14** “How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?”

--Fellow sinners **can’t call** on Jesus for salvation if they don’t believe on Him.

--And fellow sinners **can’t believe** on Jesus if they have never heard of Him.

--And fellow sinners **can’t hear** about Jesus unless the people who know Jesus tell them!

The benefit—the “profitableness”—of the Word of God doesn’t end with just knowing how **to be saved**, though. God doesn’t just want us to be “wise unto salvation”—He also wants us to be wise in **how we live!** He wants us to “walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called”—and gave us the Bible so we would know how to do that! Last week we looked at the role of the Word of God **in salvation**. This morning, we are going to look at *The Role of the Word of God in the Saved*.

First, for the sake of context, it is important to consider... **1. The person being instructed**

We’re in II Timothy 3, look at vs 10. “But **thou** hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience,”

--vs 14 “But **continue thou** in the things which thou hast learned...”

--vs 15 “And that from a child **thou** hast known the holy Scriptures...”

Who is the “**thou**” Paul is writing to? Timothy! How do we know? Because that is the name of the book? No! We know the letter is to Timothy because Paul **begins the letter** telling us who he is writing to!

We are in chapter 3; turn to chapter 1. The very first verse, II Tim 1:1-2, says: “Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus, to... To who (vs 2)? “Timothy, my dearly beloved son...”

Just to clarify, Timothy was **not** Paul’s earthly, blood-relative, son. How do we know? From the book of **First Timothy**. Please turn to I Timothy 1:1. Vs 1 again starts with “Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ...”

--Vs 2. “Unto Timothy, my own **son in the faith**...” It seems, then, that Timothy is someone that Paul led to the Lord.

--Vs 3. “As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest **charge some** that they teach no other doctrine.”

--Turn now to chapter 4:11-14.

--Now 6:11. “But thou, O man of God, flee these things, and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.”

Pretty safe to say that Timothy was not **just** a fellow believer—he was a Pastor that Paul was mentoring! Let’s go back now to II Timothy 3 where we started. The context, then, is that God—through the apostle Paul—is instructing Timothy on how to be a Pastor.

Let's consider next... **2. The purpose of Scripture**

Notice again vs 16-17 "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: ¹⁷That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works."

--In the first part of vs 16, Paul pronounces that all Scripture is God-breathed, then he proceeds to explain how Scripture is profitable; how it is helpful and useful.

--In vs 17, we see the **purpose and result** of what Scripture would do in Timothy's life—it would make him, the man of God, "perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works."

I'm not a mind-reader, but my guess is that some of you are thinking, 'Wait a minute, Pastor—**nobody** can be perfect this side of heaven. How can Timothy "be perfect" if no one can?'

"Perfect" in this verse comes from the Greek word "ar'-tee-os" and is used only one time in the Greek NT—right here. It doesn't mean "perfect" in the sense of sinlessness. Instead, it carries the idea of **adequate, complete, capable, fitted, ready**. "Throughly furnished" means "thoroughly equipped."

Putting these thoughts together, then, Paul is saying this: Scripture is from God—and adequately equips the Pastor to do every good work that God calls the Pastor to do!

Again, I'm not a mind-reader, but it is possible that now some of you might be thinking, 'Okay, Pastor, the Bible is beneficial to **you** because it equips you to do **your** job. But what does that have to do with **me**?'

Here's my one-word answer.... **Everything!** It has **everything to do with you** because the Word that **equips me** is the Word that I am to **preach to you!**

We're at the end of chapter 3; look at chapter 4, verse 2. II Tim 4:2 "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine,"

--We know that "preaching the word" means to share with you what God's Word says. It is not merely **reading the Bible** to you, however. Notice on your outline...

Nehemiah 8:5,8 "And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people; (for he was above all the people;) and when he opened it, all the people stood up: ⁸So they [Ezra and others] read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and **gave the sense**, and **caused them to understand the reading.**"

--"Preaching the Word," then is to share what God's Word says and help you to understand it. Many of you **enjoy** hearing the Word of God explained and taught—at least that's what you **tell me once in a while**. Hopefully you're not saying it just to be nice 😊!

But the verse doesn't end there, does it? Notice what else I am supposed to do. What's the next word? "**Reprove.**" What does reprove mean? It means to **convince with solid, compelling evidence**. It means to expose, **to show to be guilty**.

--What about **rebuke**? Rebuke means to **warn** by instructing.

--What does **exhort** mean? To entreat; to implore; to urge. Hearing those things isn't **quite so pleasant**, is it? --We sometimes don't **want to be shown** we are guilty.

--We often times don't **enjoy being warned** about wrong-doing.

--We don't always **want to be urged** to live for God and do right.

Question for you. Is it possible that someone could consider **what a Pastor says** as just "another voice"—another opinion—in the "sea" of opinions? It is, isn't it? The unsaved do that quite often—they have no fear of God and no respect for God's Word—but I wonder if **God's people** do that more often than they realize?

Why is that? Maybe it's **my fault**; maybe I don't say, "Thus saith the Lord" enough! Maybe I don't stress enough that 'These are God's Words—not mine!'

Or maybe—just maybe—God's people don't take **God's Word** or **God's man** seriously enough! I'm obviously not an authoritarian or dictator. If you have been here any length of time, you know that about me.

But there is what I call a “scary” verse in the Bible that applies to all of us! I have it there on your handout: **Heb 13:17** “Obey them that have the rule over you, and **submit yourselves**: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.”

What *exactly* does that mean? I honestly don’t know! But at a minimum, I believe it means that when the Bible is preached, we need to view it as **God’s Word to us**—and **not the opinions** or suggestions of the preacher! Enough of my “thinking out loud!”

Lastly, let’s consider... **3. The profit of the Word of God**

It is profitable—it is beneficial and helpful and useful—to adequately equip me to help you! So **the way** the Word of God was useful **to Timothy** is the same way it is **useful to me** and the same way it is **useful to you!**

In vs 16, we read that the Scriptures are profitable for 4 things: doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness. Jay Adams suggests that they are steps—listed in chronological order—that a Biblical counselor should use in helping someone make changes in their life. Others suggest they are two pairs of two where the first two go together and deal with the **content** of what we should believe while the second two deal with **conduct** and how we should behave. Both approaches seem valid, so I’ve combined them!

A. Content of belief

What should we believe? We can believe **whatever we want**, right? After all, there is **no absolute truth!** Truth is relative; meaning it fluctuates. What “truth” is to you is not necessarily “truth” for me!

Do **you believe** what I just said? **I hope not!** And—rest assured—**I don’t believe it either!** I’m being facetious...I’m being sarcastic. It is **absolutely absurd to believe there is no absolute truth!**

--One plus one will **always** equal two!

--**Gravity**—unless it is interrupted somehow—will ensure your death if you decide to jump off the Empire State building!

--And the “union” between two biological men **will never produce a baby!**

So although it **is true** that we have the **freedom to believe what we want**—God doesn’t **make us** believe what He says—He **has given us absolute truth**—and we have it right here in God’s Word!

--**Psalm 119:89** “For ever, O Lord, **thy word is settled in heaven.**”

--**Psalm 119:160** “**Thy word is true from the beginning**: and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever.”

--Jesus said in **Mt 24:35** “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but **my words shall not pass away.**”

--Jesus said in **John 8:46** “Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I **say the truth**, why do ye not believe me?”

--And Jesus said in **John 17:17** “Sanctify them through thy truth: **thy word is truth.**”

God said it—and that settles it—whether we believe it or not!

Back to vs 16. God’s Word is profitable for... **i. Doctrine**

“Doctrine” means teaching or instruction—but not the **process** of teaching or instructing like I am doing now.

It refers to **content**; the **body of truth** that we are to believe. It is our source document...it is the measuring stick...it is the standard by which we determine the truthfulness of what is being taught. It is where we get our beliefs from—and it is the final authority for our beliefs.

--It is where we get our beliefs about...angels, baptism, creation and Christ

--And where we get our beliefs about... demons, election, forgiveness, and God

--And where we get our beliefs about...heaven, hell, the Incarnation, judgment, and the kingdom

I’m not going to go through **the whole alphabet**—there are no Bible words that start with “x”—but I believe you get the point: we **must get our doctrine**—what we believe—from the Bible!

One last thought before we move on. Although I am to **teach you** doctrine, you are not to depend **on just me** for doctrine. **God’s Word** is your source for your doctrine—not your Pastor. You need to study it **for yourselves**. In fact, the Bereans were commended for “searching the Scriptures daily” to determine whether or not **what Paul was teaching** them was true or not!

God's Word is not only beneficial for the giving us the **content of our belief**, it is also useful for... **ii. Reproof**
What does "reproof" mean? It's difficult to know exactly because the Greek word it comes from is only used one time—right here. Here are a couple of possibilities.

a) It can mean exposing our sin and convicting us of it. (Adams; Cole)

b) It can also mean confronting or rebuking an opponent—like a false teacher! (Fee; MacArthur)

Both are certainly true, but I look at it as the flip side of teaching doctrine. Not only is **truth to be taught**—the **errors of false teachers** are to be exposed! Paul exhorts Timothy that he is to confront false doctrine—and those who teach it—at least 6 times in these two letters! (I Tim 1:3,10; 4:1; 6:3; II Tim 3:1-9; II Tim 4:3)

We must move on, but here's a reminder about how much God **hates false teaching**.

Galatians 1:10 "As we said before, so say I now again, if any man **preach any other gospel** unto you than that ye have received, **let him be accursed.**" Here's the second "scary" verse I've given you today! This one's not for us, though—it is for those who **teach a different way to be saved** other than God's way—through Christ!

God through Paul says that if you **preach a different gospel**; if you teach that baptism saves...or that church membership saves...or that giving money saves...or that doing good works saves, **let him—the one who teaches that—be accursed!** In other words, let that person hear from Jesus these words: "depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:" (Mt 25:41). Sobering words...

The Word of God is not only profitable—useful—for the **content** of our belief, it is also useful for...

B. Our conduct and behavior

God doesn't just want us to **believe** right—He wants us to **behave** right. He wants us to live in a way that shows we belong to Him. He wants us to **live as Jesus lived**; He wants us to **be holy because He is holy**. And He has given us what we need in this Book. Notice the verses from II Peter that say that very thing:

II Peter 1:3-4 "According as His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain **unto life and godliness**, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue: ⁴Whereby are **given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature**, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."

Simply put, God's Word—His great and precious promises—give us what we need to be saved—and what we need to live a godly life! What's our next word in vs 16?

i. Correction

What is correction? Here again we have another Greek word that is used only one time in the NT. It means to "stand something up" or "make something stand again." (Adams; 139). Interesting thought, isn't it?

--The consequences of our sin often times "knock us down"

--The Bible—when we read it humbly and thoughtfully—will often "knock us down"

--God can orchestrate events in our lives that will "knock us down"

But what does God's Word do? **Stands us up again**. God's Word gives us **hope again!** God's Word **puts on the right path** again! God doesn't just show us **what is wrong** in our lives—He shows us **how to fix it!** He shows us how to get right with Him...and others...and even ourselves!

Lastly... **ii. Instruction in righteousness**

So how is "instruction in righteousness" different from "correction" that we just looked at? I found it interesting to learn that the word for "instruction" has to do with raising a child and means "discipline" and "training." It means to cultivate the mind... and train the thinking...and curb desires and passions.

In other words, it is a **continuance and furtherance** in living a God-pleasing life once you start. Maybe this example will help. Someone who has an addiction doesn't want to just break their addiction **for a day**—they want to be **free from it for life!** They want to develop new friends...and new habits... and new ways of thinking so they don't fall into that temptation in the future.

God's Word does that in our lives. It doesn't just show us what **is wrong**; it shows us what **is right**—and how to **keep doing** what is right. It **puts us** on the right path...and **keeps us** on the right path...and brings us **further down the path** than we are right now.

God's goal is that we grow in Christ-likeness—and His Word is what grows us!

How is the Word of God profitable—how is it useful—to those of us who are saved?

--It is profitable for **doctrine**—meaning the content of our faith; the body of truth that we must believe.

--It **exposes sin** in our life and confronts us with it.

--It **corrects us by lifting us up** and showing us the right path to walk.

--And it **keeps us on the right path**, training us in a way that we become more and more like Christ.

God's Word **can do that**—that is part of why He gave it to us.

God's Word **has done that**; thousands—if not millions—of believers can testify to that fact.

And God **wants to use** His Word in your life to do that.

The question is: Do you believe God's Word can do that **in your life**—and are you **putting God's Word into your life so that will happen?**

So what does God want you to do with what you heard this morning?

I believe God wants us to honestly evaluate what we believe about His Word.

1. First, do you believe that it contains all we need for eternal life?

--If so, we need to make sure we belong to Christ—and that we are telling others their need to come to Him!

2. Second, do we believe God's Word contains all we need for living a **godly life**?

--If so, do you read it and treat it like it gives you all you need to be godly?

3. Third—along the same line—do you believe God's Word is sufficient for **your problems**? If the Bible gives me everything that I need to do the job God wants me to do, it also gives you everything **you need** for **your** life's problems.

--Again, do you read it and study it and treat it like it contains the answers?