

Series: Word of God
Text: 2 Timothy 3:10-4:5
Message #1

IT IS THE INSPIRED WORD!

Introduction

1. Today we embark on a new journey in our on-going quest to know God and to make Him known. This series will not be a particularly lengthy one, but a very important one. Perhaps among the most important that I have ever preached. How we understand the Word of God will make a drastic impact on literally every area of our lives. This is no small matter.
2. Five or so years ago a book was written from a series of messages preached by the late James Boice. The book is called, “Whatever Happened to the Gospel of Grace?” with the subtitle, “Rediscovering the Doctrines that Shook the World.” Boice wrote on what is sometimes identified as the “sola” doctrines – sola Scriptura, solus Christus, sola gratia, sola fide, soli Deo Gloria, or, in English, “Scripture alone, Christ alone, grace alone, faith alone, to the glory of God alone.”
3. These five doctrines certainly were the heart of the protestant reformation. Unfortunately, they have been for the most part lost in the sea of triviality. My objective over the next few weeks is **not** to look at all of these (perhaps another time – and we did actually study them together a couple of years ago) but to focus on the first – Scripture alone. How we view and use Scripture will impact these other doctrines.
4. In the days of Martin Luther, the reformers were fighting for the truth that the Scripture stood alone as the church’s true authority. Our problem with “Scripture Alone” is a little different than that faced by Luther. Most of the evangelical world would accept the premise of the Bible’s **authority**, that it is alone our rule of faith and practice. Whatever we claim to believe, the real issue is with the Bible’s **sufficiency**. The evangelical church and its leadership has discounted the Scripture’s ability to do what is necessary to draw unbelievers to Christ, to enable believers to grow in godliness, to provide direction for our lives, and to transform our society. Since we doubt the sufficiency of Scripture, we freely substitute methods and gimmicks for Biblical evangelism, religious experiences for

a knowledge of the Word, special revelation outside of the Bible for discerning the will of God for our lives, and we trust in money and in the political processes and systems to transform society! So in practice, we don't really believe in the sufficiency of Scripture.

5. So is the Scripture sufficient or not? Can we proclaim and live, “sola Scriptura” – “Scripture Alone?” For the next few weeks we will look at this from several angles. What I say, I believe is the message of Scripture itself. If you disagree, show me from Scripture where I got off track. Perhaps more challenging for you is if you agree. You see, if you really agree, your life will take some new directions that may not be comfortable or safe – but I believe those changes will be right and God-pleasing. Are you ready?

I. WHAT THE SCRIPTURE IS

A. The Scriptures are a book from God

1. That is not new to you. You know 2 Timothy 3:16-17. The Scripture is “God-breathed.” (Some would like to change the location of “is”, making the text say, “All Scripture inspired by God is...” instead of “All Scripture is inspired by God and...” Do you see the difference?)
2. To say it another way, what is in this book is the revelation of God to us. It is God talking to us. Whenever we read it, God is speaking. It is not an impression or a voice. It is a written text. There is no subjection to it. It is before us to read and consider.
3. Timothy learned “from infancy” about this book from God. Most translations (v. 15) say something like “from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings.” Lenski says that the Greek word for “writings” or letters, in the normal sense, is written characters or script. If so, Paul may be suggesting that it from the OT text itself that young Timothy had learned the alphabet and had learned to read. In either case, it was the Scripture that impacted young Timothy from his earliest days. Paul makes it clear that this Scripture is God's Word – breathed out by Him! Because the Bible is from God, you might guess that it would be perfect. King David spoke about this out centuries earlier in Psalm 19.
 - a. Perfect, restoring the soul (whole, complete, sufficient, able to transform the soul).

Even the most broken life can be restored by God, through His Word!

- b. Sure, making wise the simple (His testimony about Himself is unwavering, immovable, unmistakable, reliable and worthy to be trusted, the foundation on which to build our lives). The idiom “simple” is related to “open door.” The image is presented of a naïve person who does not know when to shut his mind to false or impure input. God’s Word is able to make that simple one wise.
 - c. The Word is right and produces joy in the heart. The Word steers us through the right path.
 - d. Pure commands, enlightening the eyes, speak of the non-optional nature of the Word. The Bible is a mandate from God. Those who take it seriously find eternal blessing! It is pure in that it is lucid. The Scripture is not always easy to understand, but it is not mystifying or confusing or puzzling. It is the clear revelation of God.
 - e. Clean and enduring speaks of that which is without evil or corruption or error. It is flawless and timeless.
 - f. True and altogether righteous reminds us that the Word is all-sufficient. Do you understand what I am trying to say here about the Word of God?
 - g. More desirable than gold. God’s Word is infinitely more precious than anything this world has to offer!
4. After Paul speaks of Scripture in 3:16-17, he then charges his friend with these words (4:1-2). Think about that the next time you read the Word. Think about that the next time you prepare a Sunday School lesson or a Bible study or even comment about the Bible to a friend. In the very presence of God and Jesus Christ – in view of His appearing and His kingdom, preach the Word! “Well to me this means...” Don’t you understand, this is His book? Who cares what it means to you! You better care that you appropriately understand it and communicate it. Don’t misquote Him. He is present. And don’t assume that you have anything of great value to share. Proclaim the Word, His Word. That is what matters.

B. The Bible is a book about God

1. It is true that the Bible has much to say about us. But it is much less about us than we

might have expected, and most of that is not very good! Again, it is God's Word and it primarily is a revelation of Him to us.

2. We could never have known any of this without His revealing it to us. The Old Testament is about God (particularly about Jesus – Luke 24). The New Testament is about God – God the Son. It begins with His humiliation and incarnation and it ends with His exaltation and coronation.
3. In Hebrews 1 we are told that “In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son ...” He has spoken to us and the subject is Jesus. Anything that is about us is about our relationship to Him in order that He might be glorified. It is a book from God and it is a book about God. Having said that, it is also important to understand what the Bible is sufficient to do in the lives of those who are impacted by it.

II. WHAT THE SCRIPTURE IS SUFFICIENT TO DO ...

A. Change people

1. Listen carefully. Paul confirms for Timothy “from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures **which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.**”
2. Paul reminds Timothy that there will be significant pressure to turn away from the Word and teach the things that people want to hear, but he is to keep his head, endure hardship and do the work of an evangelist. Not the least of that included that he was to preach the Word to lost people in order that they might hear the Word and be saved. Don't miss what Paul said to Timothy in verses 10-15. He hardly sugarcoated his life experiences. Timothy had watched Paul endure persecution and hardship. He had gone through some of that with Paul. He had witnessed the evil people and the imposters. He had watched Paul keep his cool and remain steadfast in his life and his doctrine. He had seen the patience and the determination and the consistency and the tenacity. Timothy had clearly seen that Paul practiced what he preached. He also heard as Paul explained to him that it was the sufficiency of the Word of God that had equipped him for every good work – the same Scripture that would equip Timothy for that same good work. It would change Timothy and it would change those to whom

Timothy proclaimed it.

3. Paul made it very clear in Romans 10 that salvation cannot come without the Word. But when the Word is communicated, it is the power of God unto salvation. My friends, please understand, it is not by human persuasion that people trust Christ (though we ought to be passionate about Him when we speak of Him), and it is not by long emotional pleas or other techniques that people are saved (though some have genuinely responded when these things were present – but it was in spite of, not because of and in reference to the Word and the Spirit). The issue is that the Holy Spirit must take the Word of God and open the eyes of the lost to see their desperate need and God’s adequate solution.
4. That is why Paul says to Timothy. Preach the Word. There is nothing else we have to say that will bring lasting change to people. The Word of God is sufficient to change people from the inside out! To say that the Scripture is profitable for **teaching**, for **reproof**, for **correction** and for **training in righteousness**, is to say that all a person needs to be taught for salvation is found in this book. It is the greatest instrument to counteract religious falsehood and in rebuking the sinning person. It functions in correction by setting up straight those who have stumbled and fallen. It not only shows our faults and restores to the right path, but it aids us in walking in that path. That is the Word of God! All that we need for life and godliness is found in our obedience to what is recorded in this book!

B. Change the church

1. To bring her to maturity. In order to be mature we need to be taught. We sometimes need to be corrected. Occasionally we need to be rebuked. Paul tells Timothy that the Word of God taught to the people of God will result in the people of God being thoroughly equipped to do the work of God, and that will result in the glory God! (v. 18). But without the Word of God, the people of God will turn aside from the truth of God to myths of men and they will end up at best spiritually infantile and more likely spiritually bankrupt and shipwrecked. Do you see why Paul said to Timothy, “Preach the Word”? The wonder of it all is that as we proclaim the Word it is like giving milk to a baby and meat to an adult. As we are fed by the Word, we grow and are

nourished and we come to maturity. The Word is sufficient for that! Listen to 2 Peter 1:3-4. Where does such knowledge come from? It comes from the Word – the Scripture! Amazingly we turn to everything else for counsel. We are told that many of our problems can only be solved by those who are trained in counseling. So we pay \$150-\$200 an hour to someone to repeat back to us what we have told them and then we say, “Wow! You really understand me.” But the problems are rarely solved because the source of the problems have a Biblical solution that is rarely considered! Scripture alone.

2. To provide for her direction. We say we believe the Bible is God’s Word and it is our authority for faith and practice, but we live something different. Does the Bible tell us how to make decisions? I say yes! I don’t need a series of circumstances of a liver shiver or a warm feeling. Neither do I need God to talk to me in an audible voice or even in a still small whisper. He has told me what I need to know in the Bible to make the decisions that I must make daily. So, what should I do? Does the Bible say anything about this issue? Will the decision I am trying to make bring glory to God and accomplish His purposes? In essence, you consider Him and then make a decision. You do not need to wait for a sign or a voice. You need to be a student of the Scripture. Scripture alone!

C. Change the world

1. Consider Timothy and Paul’s situations. Paul was in prison about to be martyred for his faith. What good could he do in prison? He told us in chapter 2. “I am suffering even to the point of being chained like a criminal. **But God’s word is not chained.**” Timothy was working in a pagan city (Ephesus), with a group of people who were easily distracted, who wanted to chase after the newest teaching and who criticized Timothy for what he believed and taught. How in the world can he or we possibly make a significant impact on the world in these kinds of settings?
2. Paul’s counsel – “Preach the Word.” “Keep your head in all situations. Endure hardship. Do the work of an evangelist. Discharge all the duties of your ministry.” It is Scripture alone that makes the difference. We are changed by the Word of God! Will there be opposition? Yes (4:14-15). Will we feel like we are alone and without

support? Probably, at least part of the time (4:16). Will some turn away and chase after foolishness and the latest fad? Almost for certain (4:3-4). But we have the Word of God. The Bible is God's Word. And God's Word is powerful. It is the power of God unto salvation for everyone who believes! (By the way, as Paul was about to be executed, did you note what he longed to have with him? He asked that he might be brought the books and above all the parchments – that would have been the Scriptures!) It was the Scripture that was sufficient for every need – even at the point of martyrdom.

Conclusion:

1. The point is simple. God has communicated with us about Himself. He has told us who He is, and how we should respond to Him. We have been assured that His Word is sufficient for what we need for life both now and forever.
2. The real question is do we really believe in the sufficiency of Scripture? Is the Bible enough or do we need something more?