

The WORD OF GOD—The Written Record of THE FAITH

TEXT: 2 Timothy 3:10-4:4

THEME: The Bible—God-breathed, inerrant, and sufficient.

2 Timothy 3:10-4:4

¹⁰ But you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance,

¹¹ persecutions, afflictions, which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra -- what persecutions I endured. And out of *them* all the Lord delivered me.

¹² Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.

¹³ But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.

¹⁴ **But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned *them*,**

¹⁵ **and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.**

¹⁶ **All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God [God-breathed], and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,**

¹⁷ **that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.**

^{4:1} I charge *you* therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom:

² **Preach the word!** Be ready in season *and* out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.

³ For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, *because* they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers;

⁴ and they will turn *their* ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. NKJV

INTRODUCTION: Today there is constant pressure on pastors and all other preachers and teachers to preach, teach, and emphasize something other than the Bible—the Word of God—in their preaching, teaching, or public speaking. What's more, believers of every stripe are told they must have this book, or that DVD, or some teaching series to really make their faith come alive.

In the last few years there have been numerous books written telling us how we have to pray in order to have a successful prayer life—contemplative prayer, circle maker prayers, sun stand still prayers and so on. However, it's largely a bunch of unbiblical nonsense at best, and dangerous practices leading into witchcraft and occultism at worst. But it's not any of these things that will change your spiritual life for the better—we need to read and study the Bible, and pray with plain speaking to the Lord.

Try using the model prayer Jesus gave us in **Matthew 6:9-13** and **Luke 11:2-4**. Not as some mindless recitation, but using it as a pattern for what and how we should pray. The Lord doesn't use any gimmicks, and a lot of the prayer is actually about the rather mundane affairs of daily life. But it's the little things about daily life that add up to big stress.

There are some good studies on prayer in the life of the believer. I still like Andrew Murray's Bible Study titled **With Christ in the School of Prayer**. The works of E.M. Bounds on prayer are very good as well. You could also use the psalms—praying through the psalms or the other great prayers of the Bible. Whatever resources you may use to help you get started in your prayer life, the best and most real and sincere prayer comes from the heart of the person to the God we worship—the Lord Jesus Christ.

Yet my emphasis today is on the Bible—the Scriptures, the Word of God. It is the Word that we need, and not the books, CD's, DVD's, or conferences of popular pastors, preachers, authors, musicians and singers, and other conference speakers. God, through the Bible and prayer, will change your life. These books and things can be tools to lead you into a clearer understanding of the Bible, but it is God who changes your life through His Word. On the other hand, these books and things can lead you astray from the truth of the Bible and into error, myths, fables, and destruction.

Psalm 138:2 says, "I will worship toward Your holy temple, And praise Your name For Your lovingkindness and Your truth; For **You have magnified Your word above all Your name**" NKJV.

The NIV translation of **Psalm 138:2** says, "I will bow down toward your holy temple and will praise your name for your love and your faithfulness, for **you have exalted above all things your name and your word.**"

The Hebrew actually allows for it to be translated either way. The point is that God's Word—the Bible—is the authority over our lives because it is His Word to us.

1. IT IS THE HOLY SCRIPTURES, WHICH ARE ABLE TO MAKE YOU WISE FOR SALVATION THROUGH FAITH WHICH IS IN CHRIST JESUS.

1. It is the Bible, and not worldly wisdom and knowledge, that prepares us for salvation.
2. The believer must continue in the things the Bible teaches—continue living it, continue growing in grace, continue growing in the image and likeness of Jesus Christ.
3. **1 Peter 1:23** says that we have been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever.
4. **Romans 10:14-17** says,
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? ¹⁵ And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!" ¹⁶ But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our report?" ¹⁷ So then faith *comes* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. NKJV

- You cannot even be saved apart from the Word of God, so it's **that** important.
- **John 20:30-31** says,
³⁰ And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; ³¹ but these are written that you may believe that **Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God**, and that believing you may have life in His name. NKJV
 - To be a Christian, you must believe that Jesus is the Christ (the Messiah of Israel), the Son of God—God in human flesh.
 - He wasn't just a good man, a good teacher, or a great role model.

2. ALL SCRIPTURE IS GOD-BREATHED.

¹⁶ All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God [**God-breathed**].

πᾶσα **all, every** γραφὴ **writing** θεόπνευστος **God-breathed**.

1. The Holy Spirit moved upon holy men set apart for the task of writing Scripture—He controlled them, and carried them along in the process of writing Scripture.
2. However, the Bible never says the human authors are inspired. **The WRITINGS are inspired (God-breathed).**
 - If the authors were inspired, that would make the inspiration once removed, and subject to human error.
 - It is the **direct verbal revelation of God** the men wrote down that is inspired.
 - We must not think of "inspiration" the way the world thinks when it says, "Shakespeare was certainly an inspired writer."
 - What we mean by biblical inspiration is the supernatural influence of the Holy Spirit on the Bible's writers, which guaranteed that what they wrote was accurate and trustworthy.
 - Revelation means the communicating of truth to man by God; inspiration has to do with the recording of this communication in a way that is dependable.
 - Whatever the Bible says about itself, man, God, life, death, history, science, morality and every other subject is true.
 - This does not mean that every statement in the Bible is a true statement, because **the Bible records the lies of men and of Satan. But the record of it is true.**
 - So the Scripture is inspired—God-breathed.
 - The original autographs of Scripture are inerrant—the Holy Spirit didn't misspeak in giving the writers the revelation. He controlled the authors to make sure they recorded it accurately.
 - The Scriptures are true and dependable. "All Scripture is Godbreathed" (NIV).
 - The doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture is a doctrine that Satan has attacked from the beginning ("Did God really say?" [Gen 3:1]).
 - Warren Wiersbe writes, "It is inconceivable that God would give His people a book they could not trust. He is the God of truth (Deut 32:4); Jesus is 'the truth' (John 14:6); and the 'Spirit is truth' (1 John 5:6). Jesus said of the Scriptures, 'Thy Word is truth' (John 17:17)."

- The Holy Spirit used men of God to write the Word of God (2 Peter 1:20-21).
 - Wiersbe further writes, “God in His providence prepared the writers for the task of writing the Scriptures. In His preparation of men, in His guiding of history, and in His working through the Spirit, God brought about the miracle of the Scriptures.”
3. Sadly, a lot of the effort to undermine the Scriptures is coming from within the Church these days.
- The world has always hated the Bible, but now a majority of the most popular authors, pastors, preachers, and conference speakers are writing and saying things that twist and undermine the Word of God.
 - Anyone who rejects the authority of the Bible is the voice of Satan himself —“Did God really say?”
 - Understand that if they can undermine the Bible, then the Christian faith crumbles.
 - **Jude 3** says, “Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you **to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints**. [literally: **the once for all time delivered to the saints faith**]” NKJV.

3. ALL SCRIPTURE IS PROFITABLE.

1. Profitable for doctrine.

- Doctrine means teaching or instruction.
- It is the Bible doctrines we are supposed to be teaching, and not the ideas of men and women.
- Pastors get a lot of mail telling them they must have the latest program to make the church grow and learn.
- What we really need is the Bible.

2. Profitable for reproof.

- Exposing what is not right.
- Tearing down wrong thinking, wrong behavior, wrong attitudes, etc
- **Ecclesiastes 3:3** says there is “a time to break down, and a time to build up.”
- The problem is that if we tear someone down but don't build them back up.
- How do we fix that?

3. Profitable for correction.

- Restoration to an upright or right state, correction, improvement of life or character. *Edification = building up.*
- Restoration of a person to right relationship with God and man through the Word of God.
- God's Word does not return void (Isaiah 55:11).

4. Profitable for instruction in righteousness.

- Instruction means training (*παιδεία paideia*).

- Paideia refers to the whole training and education of children (which relates to the cultivation of mind and morals). It also includes the training and care of the body. It includes whatever in adults also cultivates the soul, especially by correcting mistakes and curbing passions.
- Training in righteousness.
 - Righteousness is doing and thinking what is right, according to God's standard.
 - A Christian who studies the Bible and applies what he learns will grow in holiness and avoid many pitfalls in this world.

4. THE SCRIPTURES EQUIP US FOR SERVICE.

¹⁷ **that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.**

1. The ability of the Scriptures to bring us to salvation, the God-breathed nature of the Scriptures, and the profitability of the Scriptures has the result of **making us complete**.
 - The word translated “complete”, “perfect”, or “adequate” means "complete, in fit shape, in fit condition." It does not begin to suggest sinless perfection. Rather, it implies being fitted or readied for use.
2. It is the Word of God that **equips** or **furnishes** us for **all good works**.
 - In other words, the Word of God furnishes and equips a believer so that he can live a life that pleases God and do the work God wants him to do.
 - The purpose of Bible study is not just to understand doctrines or to be able to defend the faith, as important as these things are.
 - The ultimate purpose is the equipping of the believers who read it. It is the Word of God that equips God's people to do the work of God. That is, living a holy life and being witnesses that lead others to saving faith in Jesus Christ.
3. The fact that the Bible makes us complete and equipped for every good work means the Bible is sufficient for living a godly Christian life.
 - Too many Christians are looking to and relying on other sources and resources to help them live for Christ. You don't **need** that stuff—you **need** the Bible.
 - It's not wrong to look at other things as tools to help you better understand the Bible, but the Bible has to be the focus of the Christian's life and study.
 - But Christians are devouring questionable books and neglecting the Bible. **Read the Bible—read it over and over and over.**
 - **2 Peter 3:3-4** says, “His divine power has given to us **all things that pertain to life and godliness**, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption *that is in the world through lust*” NKJV

5. PREACH THE WORD!

1. Paul's final admonition to Timothy in this passage is to **preach the Word**.
 - The Bible changes people's lives, not the words, ideas, and writings of man.

2. Preach the Word whether it is popular or not (Be ready in season *and* out of season).
 - The Word of God is definitely unpopular now. People are even questioning the morality of preaching the Bible because they say it seems to judgmental.
 - **News flash:** the Bible has judged us all as guilty sinners.
 - **Good news:** the Bible tells us how to find forgiveness and salvation.
3. Convince, rebuke, exhort.
 - Convict, warn, and appeal.
 - Yes, a person must be convicted of sin, and warned of the judgment to come.
 - But we must also appeal to the person that God stands ready to forgive and restore.
 - If there is conviction of sin but no remedy for the problem of sin, we add to people's burdens and sense of hopelessness.
 - The old adage among preachers is, "**He should afflict the comfortable and comfort the afflicted.**"
4. Convict warn and appeal with all longsuffering and teaching.
 - We must be patient as we preach and teach the Word.
 - We will not always see immediate results. In fact, sometimes it's a long time before any results are seen. We have to be patient with those who oppose the preaching of the Word.
 - Above all else, we must preach doctrine (the teachings of the Bible). We cannot simply tell Bible stories, relate interesting illustrations, or read a verse and then forget it.
 - Preaching and teaching is the explanation and application of Bible doctrine. Anything else is just religious speechmaking.
5. This is the reason Paul charged Timothy to preach the Word.

³ For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, *because* they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; ⁴ and they will turn *their* ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. NKJV

 - We live in a time when most of the professing church will not tolerate healthy biblical teaching. **They would run off a Martyn Lloyd-Jones, a Walter Martin, or Walter Maier to get a Joel Osteen or a Rick Warren.**
 - This mentality says that if you won't tell me what I want to hear, then I'll go across town to the church that will tell me how wonderful I am just the way I am.
 - While we do run into people who think they've sinned too much for God to forgive, we meet far more people who think they don't need to be forgiven because they're good people. Both of these extremes are a damnable lie.

BOTTOM LINE: Preach, teach, and live your life by the Word because it alone is what can change lives and lead people to salvation in Jesus Christ.