

Sermon Study Guide

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Date: Jan 23/24'16

THE MAIN THING:

The Bible is the authoritative Word of God, inspired by Him and written through men in both Testaments to reveal His heart and will for us in order to live fulfilled lives that honor God and are a testimony to those around us.

PURSUE RELATIONSHIP: *Opportunities to connect and pray as a group (choose two questions)*

1. Besides the Bible, what is your favourite book? Why does it have meaning for you?
2. What do you think 'objective' truth means? What are some reasons that our current society is not ready to handle 'objective' truth?
3. When did you realize that you needed the Bible to answer the deep questions of life? Why do you read the Bible? If not, why not?
4. What questions have you had about the reliability of Scripture?

PURSUE GOD: *Time that is devoted to the Word of God*

1. In what way does our trust in the Bible as the source of infallible truth begin with our faith in Christ? (Matt 11:27; 28:18; Heb 1:1-2)
2. What does Jesus' interaction with the Pharisees and Sadducees show about His view of Scripture (the Old Testament)? (Mt 5:17; Mk 7:9; 12:24) Cite some examples of Jesus' use of the O.T. in the Gospels.
3. Jesus chose 12 Apostles from among His disciples (Mk 3:14, 15; Luke 6:13) What three qualifications did these men have? (Acts 1:21-22; Jn 14:25-26; 16:13)
4. What special responsibilities did Jesus give them? (Acts 2:42; Eph 2:20; 1 Thess 2:4, 13)
5. What does Paul say is the origin and purpose of God's Word? (2 Tim 3:16-17) What is the intent of God's heart in these verses?

PURSUE MISSION: *Seek to be the community of God's people in your community as you live out your calling*

1. Since the Bible is true, giving such promises as-- Prov 3:5,6; John 14:27; Phil 4:7, 13; 2 Tim 1:7; Heb 13:5; 1 Peter 5:7-- which promise do you need to claim in this season of your life?
2. Share how God's Word has had an impact on challenges you have faced? (Deut 5:29)

Resources:

Norman L. Giesler, *Christian Apologetics*

Norman L. Giesler, *When Skeptics Ask (updated)*

John Stott, *The Authority of the Bible*

<http://www.cschurch.ca/sermons/why-believe/why-believe-in-the-bible-part-1/>

<http://www.cschurch.ca/sermons/why-believe/why-believe-in-the-bible-part-2/>

<http://www.cschurch.ca/sermons/why-believe/why-believe-in-the-bible-part-3/>

<http://www.cschurch.ca/sermons/why-believe/why-believe-in-the-bible-part-4/>

THE WORD (NIV)

Matthew 5:17 "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."

Matt 11:27 "All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him."

Matthew 28:18 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me."

Mark 3:14, 15 He appointed twelve⁶¹ that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach¹⁵ and to have authority to drive out demons.

Mark 7:9 And he continued, "You have a fine way of setting aside the commands of God in order to observe⁹ your own traditions!"

Mark 12:24 Jesus replied, "Are you not in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God?"

Luke 6:13 When morning came, he called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them, whom he also designated apostles:

John 14:25-26 "All this I have spoken while still with you. ²⁵But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you."

John 16:13 But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.

Acts 1:21-22 "Therefore it is necessary to choose one of the men who have been with us the whole time the Lord Jesus was living among us, ²²beginning from John's baptism to the time when Jesus was taken up from us. For one of these must become a witness with us of his resurrection."

Acts 2:42 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

Ephesians 2:20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.

1 Thessalonians 2:4,13 On the contrary, we speak as those approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel. We are not trying to please people but God, who tests our hearts. ¹³And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as a human word, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is indeed at work in you who believe.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, ¹⁷so that the servant of God¹⁷ may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Sermon Study Summary

What do we believe about the Bible? Many today do not believe that objective truth exists. Yet, when a life change happens such as a death, or birth of a child, the questions about the meaning of life and what really matters surface. The search for truth begins. What, or who, are we trusting in? Such answers can be and are found in the Bible – the written word of God. It speaks of all we need to know about God and how we can have a growing relationship with Him, and how we can live this life to the fullest. The Bible is accurate, reliable and trustworthy. Many are not convinced that it is God's Word. How can we know that it is and that we can trust the Bible as our authority?

1. **It is true and reliable.** In a past series called 'Why We Believe' the subject covered the historical accuracy, manuscript reliability and the testimony of archaeology, not to mention the accuracy of the prophets. It is the only sacred book existing that makes 'specific' future predictions. Some of these are recognized to have been fulfilled centuries after they were made. God's word carries His authority with it.
2. **Jesus confirmed the Bible to be God's Word.** We trust Jesus, and out of loyalty to Him we trust what He believed about the Scriptures. If He saw the Scriptures as true and authoritative for our lives, then how can we have a lower view of the Scriptures than He did? There is considerable archaeological, historical and prophetic evidence available to us (see #1), though it is Jesus' endorsement of the Old Testament Scriptures that identify them as trustworthy. Jesus quoted the OT Scriptures often and did not question their validity or authority. (Matt 5:17) He came to provide the original intent behind the Scriptures and fulfill many through His own life, death and resurrection. When He did challenge the religious leaders it was either to:
 - a. Address the Pharisee's 'adding' to the Scriptures by way of their traditions and laws (Mark 7:9) or,
 - b. Address the Saducees' 'subtracting' from the Scriptures in their denial of the supernatural, including the resurrection (Mark 12:24)

At the time of Jesus the New Testament did not exist. Still Jesus made provision for its writing by appointing, empowering and authorizing His apostles to do so. (Luke 6:12-16) In their writing and ministry they exercised the authority that Jesus gave to them and expected the early church to acknowledge it. (1 Thess 2:13, Eph 2:20, Acts 2:42) Even into the early church fathers (Ignatius, Tertullian) they acknowledged that the apostles were their authority. Thus, later when the New Testament was being put together and the books chosen for it they looked to the authority of the persons who wrote it: the apostles. They had three qualifications that were unique among the other disciples.

- a. Theirs was a personal commission by Jesus, not another, or the church. He chose them.
 - b. He gave them a personal experience of Himself. (John 15:27, Acts 1:21, 1 Cor 15:7-8)
 - c. They were given special inspiration by the Holy Spirit to write the New Testament Scriptures, either by themselves or by one of their personal disciples. (John 14:25)
3. **Because God 'breathed it'.** Christians believe the Bible originated in the mind of God, not man. God chose to deliver the divine message through people. (2 Tim 3:16-17) What we can see from this verse is that 'all' Scripture is God breathed. Not some of it, but all. It was not dictated by the Spirit. The writers displayed their full personalities, writing styles and personal backgrounds while scripting the text, while God guided the writers to write what He wanted to be written. Nothing erroneous was added, nor was anything left out. Thus, because the Bible was authored by God, it carries His authority. When we read the Bible or listen to it read we are hearing God speaking to us. It is useful for teaching, rebuking (showing us where we have falling short of His best for us), correcting (showing us the right way to live), and training in righteousness (the life-long process of learning to live the life He wants us to live). Why? That we may be equipped for every good work. The term means complete or capable. In short, the Bible alone is our final authority in matters of faith and practice.

Out of the Reformation came the principle of 'Scripture Alone'. It means that all truth necessary for you to be a Christian and live the Christian life is found in the Bible and no other source. Other books and teachings may enlighten our understanding and application of the Bible but all that we need to know about entering the Kingdom of God and living fully devoted Christian lives is found in the Scriptures. It does not contain 'all knowledge' or an exhaustive catalogue of all 'religious knowledge'. Not everything Jesus did or spoke was recorded. (John 21:25) Scripture is the supreme authority on any matter in which it does speak. The church was entrusted with the task of teaching and preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. (1 Tim 5:17) As the body of Christ we are not to blindly accept as truth what is being taught but to test what is being preached. (Acts 17:11) No one in the church, nor any church traditions, are above the Scriptures. They must be tested by a higher authority – the Bible.

What does this mean for us today? If the Bible really is God's Word then that means the promises it contains are true. Whatever your situation may be – worry over job loss, making ends meet – He wants you to give it to Him. (1 Peter 5:7, Heb 13:5). Are you frustrated and confused over what direction in life you should take? Trust Him. (Prov 3:5-6) He will bring clarity and guide you in His time and in His way. You may be feeling insecure or lacking confidence in something. Find peace in Him and step out in faith. (John 14:27, Phil 4:13) God wants to encourage us and speak to us and remind us of His faithfulness. To do that we must believe that He is God and that the Bible is the authoritative Word of God. Read it. Study it daily. Hear it taught. Do what it says. Follow Him completely without excuse, believing that His way is the best way. It is how we can live this life to the full and avoid running our lives into the ditch of despair and destruction. God has our best interests at heart. His heart is that of a loving father. (Deut 5:29) He knows how we are put together and what the key is to living this life to the full that we may not only know true joy but that He will use us to transform the world around us.