

Remain in the Word

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[0 : 00] I miss hearing all of your voices as we sing. We have some people here, and I'm glad at least that we can sing together with. We unfortunately can't really do Passing of the Peace.

We are all scattered about, so please just turn with me right away to 2 Timothy 3, verses 10-17. We're taking a little break from our series in the Book of Acts for this morning.

We were actually scheduled to have a guest preacher today. He was going to drive up from Pennsylvania, but for obvious reasons, he couldn't come up, and I had to fill in last minute because that was a way to retreat earlier this week.

And so I'm preaching a message I had prepared before, although it still took a lot of work to make it more applicable to our congregation. But it's something that I haven't preached on yet for our church yet.

So please turn with me to 2 Timothy 3, verses 10-17. We pray for the reading and preaching of God's Word.

[1 : 11] Father, we come to the reading and preaching of your Word.

We don't come to it like we come to any other book. We come to it trembling. We come to it in awe because we know that here you meet us.

Here you address us as your people. Because your Word is the scepter by which you rule over all creation. So we humble ourselves before you now.

We ask that you would speak to us. Help us to think of your Word, relate to your Word, and submit to your Word, as we ought to teach us.

And in it, bring us to an encounter with your Son, Jesus Christ. Fill our hearts with His beauty and His glory today.

[2 : 38] We ask in His precious name. Amen. 2 Timothy 3, verses 10-17. You, however, have followed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, my persecutions and sufferings that happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra, which persecutions I endured.

Yet from them all, the Lord rescued me. Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it, 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.

All scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. After decades of research, pollsters George Gallup Jr. and Jim Castelli concluded that, quote, Americans revere the Bible, but by and large, they don't read it.

[4 : 20] And because they don't read it, they have become a nation of biblical illiterates. According to a survey, over 50% of graduating high school seniors in our country think that Sodom and Gomorrah were husband and wife.

12% of adults think that Joanna of Arc was Noah's wife. And over half cannot name the four Gospels.

When asked who preached the Sermon on the Mount, many people responded, Billy Graham. Not only are people in our culture increasingly ignorant of scripture, they are also increasingly contemptuous of scripture.

I remember, this feels like forever ago now, but in 2008, when then-president-elect Barack Obama announced that Rick Warren would be the minister who prays at his inauguration, there was a

public outrage because Warren believed in the biblical definition of marriage as the union between a man and a woman.

And to quell this controversy, Rick Warren did a round of interviews, including one with the Today Show with NBC, where he was interviewed by Ann Curry. And during that interview, in an effort to cast doubt on the reliability of scripture as a moral guide, Ann Curry asked Warren, But the Bible, which you claim is the authoritative source for morality, also teaches that people who eat shellfish should be put to death.

[5 : 51] How can you believe such a thing? Warren goes on to give a good answer about how Christ fulfilled the Old Testament law and so on, but he doesn't challenge her on the misinformation because nowhere in the Old Testament is there a death penalty prescribed for eating shellfish.

Our culture is biblically illiterate. People don't know the scriptures. Most of them have never read the scriptures. And yet there is this widespread assumption that the Bible is a regressive relic full of error and barbarity and bigotry.

The fact that a TV anchor and their staff didn't bother actually to check the Bible exposes their presumptions about the Bible. And in light of, in this kind of climate, it can be increasingly more intimidating for us to turn to the scriptures, for us to turn to the scriptures as our authority, to use the scriptures, to minister the scripture to others, to reference the scriptures for our life, as our source of morality, as our guide.

But 2 Timothy 3, 10-17 teaches us that in order to live a godly life in Christ Jesus, we must remain in the word of God.

For it is what makes us wise for salvation and equipped for every good work. In the passage immediately preceding this passage that we read this morning, Paul talks about the godlessness that will characterize the coming days.

[7 : 28] He warned Timothy about false teachers in the church who are lovers of self and pleasure rather than lovers of God who have the appearance of godliness. They have the appearance of godliness but not the power of true godliness.

These people are always learning but never able to arrive at a knowledge of the truth. Sometimes people think that they are being humbled by always learning, always questioning, but never arriving at an answer, never making a decision about Jesus.

But if God has revealed his truth to us in his word, refusing to believe it and continuing to seek out alternatives is not humility but hubris.

So in verses 10 to 13, Paul offers himself as a contrast to these false teachers as an example of the godly life that we are to live that Timothy should follow. So he says in verses 10 to 11, you, however, have followed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, my persecutions and sufferings that happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra, which persecutions I endured.

Yet from them all the Lord rescued me. Paul knows that Timothy has been following him and observing his life and so he is exhorting Timothy now to follow his example and I don't think Paul is arrogant as he does this when he points to himself as an example.

[8 : 56] It's not arrogant for a doctor to tell a resident come and watch me and learn from me. Likewise, it's not arrogant for a mature believer to tell a less mature believer to come with me and watch me.

Imitate me as I imitate Christ. And I think, in fact, it would be irresponsible for us not to do that because spending time with someone and learning from their life and example is an important aspect of Christian discipling.

So the Christian faith has to be taught and it has to be caught. And by no means is Paul claiming to be perfect. He knows that all that he is is by the grace of God.

But nevertheless, Paul's life was consistent with God's teachings and he demonstrated faith, patience, love, and steadfastness in his life. But note the surprise items on this list of things that Paul cites as an example of godliness.

Not only has Timothy followed Paul's teaching, conduct, aim in life, faith, patience, love, and steadfastness, he is also followed and he is exhorted to continue to follow Paul in his persecutions and sufferings.

[10 : 06] And we're familiar with what he's mentioning here because we've been going through the book of Acts. We've seen what he suffered in Iconium and Lystra. He was stoned and left for dead in Lystra.

God didn't keep Paul from suffering and persecution, but he says that from them all the Lord rescued me. Paul didn't pray to be kept from these sufferings and persecutions, but the Lord did rescue him through them.

The Romans persecuted Christians for a number of reasons, but mainly because they refused to worship the pagan gods and claimed that there was only one God. They heaped insults upon the Christians and scorned them as an exclusive, antisocial, and narrow-minded sect.

Likewise today, persecution is an unavoidable reality for the Christian. As Paul continues in verses 12 to 13, indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ will be persecuted, while evil people and imposters will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.

Persecution is not a cause to doubt and question what we have learned and firmly believed. It is all the more reason to believe that what we have learned is true, because all who desire to live a godly life in Christ will be persecuted.

[11 : 28] If we are not persecuted by a godless world, we were just talking about this last week, it's a sign that we do not have an authentic faith and witness. Persecution is evidence of a godly life and therefore a cause to rejoice.

Remember what Jesus said in Matthew 5, 11 to 12, Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

for you. When we are persecuted for our faith, then we are like the true prophets who were persecuted before us. When we are persecuted for our faith, then we are following in the footsteps of our Lord Jesus who was crucified.

Paul is preparing young Timothy here for persecution. Be prepared, Timothy. If you live a godly life, if you live according to the Bible, you're not going to be popular.

No, you're going to be persecuted. So don't think it's strange when you are persecuted. All who desire to live a godly life will be persecuted. But as for you, Paul continues in verse 14, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings.

[12 : 47] The relative pronoun here, whom, is plural in the Greek. So we know that it's referring to more than one person that Timothy learned the Christian faith from. Since Paul notes that Timothy has been acquainted with the scriptures from childhood, it is likely that the whom refers to Timothy's mother, Eunice, and his grandmother, Lois.

Earlier in 2 Timothy chapter 1 verse 5, Paul has said to Timothy, Timothy's father was a Greek unbeliever, so Timothy got his Christian upbringing from his mother and grandmother.

And Paul is telling Timothy, take these women who have taught you the scriptures very seriously. don't dismiss what they have told you as old wives tales.

Don't dismiss them because they are not current with the times. Take these women of godly character very seriously. Be very slow to walk away from what your mother and grandmother have taught you from the scriptures.

I want to take some time this morning to directly address the younger members of our church because so many children teens and young adults walk away from the Lord after they leave their parents' house.

[14 : 17] If you have had the privilege of having parents who brought you up in the instruction and discipline of the Lord, remember what you have been taught and don't depart from it. Don't throw away what you have learned from them just because what you have been taught is scorned by your peers and professors and mocked in the media.

Remember that all who desire to live a godly life will be persecuted. And remember who taught you. Remember their life, their teaching, their faith, patience, love, and steadfastness, their persecutions and sufferings.

I also want to address the parents in our church. What your children most need to be acquainted with first and foremost is not their schoolwork.

It's not the SATs. It's not their extracurricular activities. Soccer, baseball, piano, dance. It's the sacred writings.

That's what Timothy was acquainted with as he grew up. What kind of aim in life are you modeling for your children and imparting to them? Are you aiming for Harvard?

[15 : 29] Harvard. That's not high enough. Instead of parenting your kids toward Harvard, you should be parenting your kids to heaven, to the kingdom of God.

When they look at your life and example, will your children learn that your aim in life is to please the Lord even through persecutions and sufferings? Or will they learn that your aim in life is health, wealth, and happiness?

Notice the contrast between verse 13 and verse 14. Evil people and imposters will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived, but as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed.

Evil people will go on. They will progress in evil. They will move on, but you must continue in the path that you are on. The word continue more literally means to remain or stay, which makes the contrast with the evil people and imposters who go on from bad to worse a little more obvious. The evil people of this world will continually progress further in their transgressions, but as for you, don't go on. Don't move on. Don't graduate from the Bible and move on to loftier studies and speculations.

[16 : 50] Don't progress from the teachings of the Bible onto new ideas that are in vogue. Don't alter course for every wind that blows. Instead, remain anchor to the word of God.

Don't listen to the people who say that the Bible is old-fashioned, outdated, superstitious, pre-modern, and narrow-minded. Don't leave the word. Remain in the word and stay in the word and abide in the word.

trying to stay up to date with our ever-changing culture is the surest way to go out of date. The surest way to be timelessly relevant is to be in sync with the eternal, unchanging word of God. So don't run after what is trending or what is viral. Those are all fads that pass away like the clouds in the sky, but the word of God is like an immovable mountain in front of which all these clouds pass by and dissipate.

Stay rooted there. But why is remaining in the word important? I'm going to come back to verse 15 a little later.

[17 : 59] Look at verse 16 with me for now. It says, All scripture is breathed out by God. Older translations used to say that all scripture is inspired by God.

This is where we get the doctrine of the inspiration of scripture. But this does not mean that scripture is inspiring like a biography of a Christian missionary might be.

We say things commonly like that was an inspired performance or you inspire me. But that's not what this word means here. The way the English Standard Version has it is quite appropriate. It says, Scripture is breathed out by God. In other words, it proceeds from the very mouth of God. It is God's very words.

It is His speech which is why we call scripture the word of God. We throw that phrase around so much, word of God, that we sometimes miss the staggering import of that statement.

[18 : 59] In the Bible, we are addressed by God Almighty who spoke creation into existence with His words. In the Bible, we hear the very voice of God.

And I don't mean that the same way that we talk about finding a writer's voice in some latest fiction that you read. In every book, the human author's voice, tone, and perspective come through. But that's not what I'm talking about when I say that God speaks in scripture. God's speech is qualitatively different from human speech because whatever God speaks comes into being. Let me illustrate what I mean. God's word is the means by which God accomplishes His will. Listen to this. Psalm 33. By the word of the Lord the heavens were made and by the breath of His mouth all their host.

For He spoke and it came to be. He commanded and it stood firm. God created the universe by speaking. Listen to Psalm 107 verse 20.

[20 : 05] He sent out His word and healed them and delivered them from their destruction. God delivers His people by His word, by speaking. When I say let there be light nothing happens.

I just create some sound waves but there are no electromagnetic waves no light. but when God says let there be light there is light.

Whatever God says happens. So whenever you open this book something is about to happen. And whatever has the breath of God is living. It comes alive. Ezekiel 37 what happens God breathes into the dry bones and the bones take on flesh and return to life.

In Genesis 2 God breathes into Adam and Eve and they become living beings human beings. Likewise it says the word is God breathed it is therefore living.

[21 : 16] That's why Hebrews chapter 4 verse 12 describes scripture as living and active sharper than any two-edged sword piercing to the division of soul and of spirit of joints and of marrow and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

Maybe to use a more modern analogy the Bible is not only a recording of what God has said it is a live stream of what God is saying.

The word of God is the only book in the world that is described as the sword of the spirit in Ephesians chapter 6 verse 17. It is the only weapon that God has given us in our spiritual armory. And how do we handle swords? Not carelessly not without respect. We handle swords with care because it is sharp because it is powerful.

That's why Paul says earlier in 2 Timothy 2 15 that we must rightly handle the word of truth. and this is why scripture is described in verse 15 as sacred writings.

[22 : 26] Writings is a reference to scripture. It comes from the same Greek word. The sacred writings is sacred or holy because its author God is holy. And the basic meaning of the word holy is set apart for a special purpose.

Something that is special. holy is holy. So even though we normally associate the word holy in contrast throughout the Bible, the antonym of holy in the Bible is actually the word common. So Leviticus 10 10 says you are to distinguish between the holy and the common, between the unclean and the clean. holiness is an attribute of God and it refers to God's transcendence that he is far beyond and is separate from, differentiated from the rest of the created order because he is the only creator.

He is the holy one, the one who is set apart. By extension then because the writings take on the character of the author and because the Bible is a living book, it is what God speaks, it is God's act, the book is holy, the Bible is called the Holy Bible.

So don't let the fact that it has covers and pages and ink on paper like all the other books that you read fool you into thinking that it is like any other book you read.

[23 : 52] It's a sacred book, a holy book. I went to a very liberal arts college where every church history and religion class I took, they tried to convince me that God's word is not special, that it is just one of many historical artifacts, religious artifacts, and that it carries no special authority.

But all those reading assignments that I did only reinforced my conviction that God's word really is like nothing else. Even the most remarkable human literature is merely human and therefore common.

the Hindu Bhagavad Gita is common. Confucius' Analects is common. Plato's Republic is common. Karl Marx's The Communist Manifesto is common. Thomas Paine's The Rights of Man is common. I mean Shakespeare's plays are common. Homer's Odyssey is common.

The Koran is common. Tolstoy's War and Peace is common. Tolkien's Lord of the Rings even is common. The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People is common.

[25 : 15] How to Win Friends and Influence People is common. The United States Constitution is a common document.

But the Bible is holy. holy. And note that it doesn't say that the scripture writers are breathed out by God.

The human author of scripture were inspired by God to write God's word. But this verse says more than that. It says that the sacred writings, the writings themselves are breathed out by God.

Not only the red words of Jesus in that version of the Bible that you might have, but every word in these pages of scripture are breathed out by God.

That's an amazing reality. And note also that it doesn't say some scripture is breathed out by God. Sometimes because we do have favorite passages and whatnot, we say, oh, that's a really good part of scripture, as if there's a part of scripture that is not good.

[26 : 22] But all of it is God's word. All scripture is God breathed. Of course, in this case, specifically, Paul is referring to the Old Testament because the New Testament canon hasn't been formed yet, but it is not inappropriate to apply this verse to the New Testament for a number of reasons.

One, Jesus assumed scripture level authority for his own teaching. Remember the Sermon on the Mount? Recall how Jesus says, you have heard that it was said, and then he says in Old Testament scripture, and then he says, but I tell you, because he has the authority to proclaim God's word, he is the incarnate word.

And in John 14 10, Jesus said, the words that I say to you, I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works. He is speaking the Father's words. Ephesians 2 20 says that the church is built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets, and Jesus promised the apostles himself that the Holy Spirit will bring to mind to them the things that he has taught them.

And it's these apostles who, and their close associates who are kind of writing down the eyewitness testimony of these apostles, they are the ones that are responsible for writing the New Testament scriptures.

And in the New Testament itself, there is a recognition that the other writings of the apostles carry the authority of the Old Testament scriptures. For example, in 2 Peter chapter 3 verses 15 to 16, Peter writes, Our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters.

[28 : 04] There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other scriptures. He puts Peter, the apostle Peter is putting Paul's writings in the same category as the other scriptures, the Old Testament scriptures.

One more example to illustrate this, 1 Timothy 5 18, Paul writes, For the scripture says, You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain, and the laborer deserves his wages.

To command not, there are two citations there in that verse. The first citation is from Deuteronomy 25, 4, where it says to do not muzzle an ox when it's treading out the grain. But the second quote is not from the Old Testament scriptures.

The laborer deserves his wages is actually a direct quotation of Luke 10, 7, which is also found in Matthew 10, 10. So Paul is there already referring to statements of Jesus that's in the Gospels as scripture.

So then by implication, all scripture are breathed out by God.

[29 : 17] That means we can't pick and choose which part of scripture to accept and which part to discard. This is not our prerogative because it's God's word and we don't have the authority to pick and choose what part of the king's decree to obey.

Paul completes his thought in the rest of verses 16 and 17. All scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

God's word teaches us. We do not teach God's word. God's word reproves us of our sin. We do not reprove God's word. God's word corrects us of our error.

We do not correct God's word of error. God's word trains us for righteousness, not the other way around. It is so easy for us to place ourselves above scripture, to critique it, to judge it, to evaluate it, but the appropriate posture is to place ourselves under the authority of scripture.

The scripture searches us, examines us, and convicts us, and challenges us, and comforts us. And God's word, it says, is sufficient to make us complete.

[30 : 35] That's so encouraging. It can make us complete, equipped for every good work. It doesn't get us part of the way. No, it's sufficient to make us complete, lacking in nothing.

It doesn't equip us only for some good work. It equips us for every good work. Scripture, as God's revelation to us, is sufficient. We don't need any additional revelation to know and obey God's will. All we need to know in order to be equipped for every good work is here. All we need to know to be made wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus is here.

Do you really believe that? ■■an? I think many of us know this in theory but not in practice. And when the push comes to shove, when the rubber meets the road, we turn elsewhere to figure out what we should do and how we should live.

But instead, we should say what Peter said to Jesus in John 6, 68, Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. And that brings us back to verse 15 Which tells us that scriptures are able to make us wise for salvation Through faith in Christ Jesus Nothing else will make us wise for salvation Salvation is found nowhere else Why?

[32 : 03] Not because we worship the Bible Not because the Bible is God Not because the Bible itself saves us But because only the Bible leads us to Jesus Christ Who alone can save Scripture is where the gospel of Jesus Christ Is recorded permanently and preserved reliably The inscripturated word is where we meet Jesus The incarnate word, the Son of God Scripture is, we're right to say The source and final authority of all our doctrine It is not less than that But scripture is also not

merely an encyclopedia of doctrine It is more than that It's a relational book It is a book by which God enters into a covenant relationship with us It is the book by which God makes his promises to us And we pledge our allegiance to him by submitting to the word The Bible reveals Jesus to us

In fact, the Bible is all about Jesus Jesus said in John 5, 39 You search the scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life And it is they that bear witness about me Jesus said We find eternal life in the scriptures They were right to search the scriptures Because they think they could find eternal life there Why? Because the scriptures bear witness about Jesus I feel like I've been mentioning this book a lot lately But just the illustrations tend to just fit The Insanity of God The author, Nick Ripken Tells the story of five Muslim believers Where Christians are intensely persecuted He writes Quote This is these men The five Muslim telling the story of their conversion How they came to know Jesus They said One of the five men told me I dreamed about a blue book I was driven Consumed Consumed really By the message of the dream Look for this book The dream said Read this Bible I began a secret search But I could not find a book like that Anywhere in my country Then one day I walked into a Quranic bookshop And saw this sea of green books Lining the walls I noticed a book of a different color On a shelf in the back of the store So I walked back there And pulled out a thick blue volume To discover that it was a Bible It was published in my own national language I actually bought a Bible In the Islamic bookstore Took it home And read it five times That's how I came to know Jesus Another one told me I dreamed about finding Jesus But I didn't even know How or where to look Then one day I was walking through the market When a man I had never seen before Came up to me in the crowd He said The Holy Spirit told me To give you this book And he handed me a Bible And disappeared in the crowd I never saw him again But I read the Bible He gave me three times

From cover to cover And that's how I came to know And follow Jesus Each one of the five men Told me a different variation Of the same story Each one of them Had come across a Bible In some unusual Miraculous way Each one had read The gospel story of Jesus Each one had decided To follow him Why does God use the Bible In this way Why is the Bible So precious to us Because it's in the Bible That we meet Jesus Our Savior Our Redeemer Our King Our Great High Priest Our Lord Because in the Bible We see Jesus Hanging on the cross Bearing the weight Of our sins Because in the Bible We see Jesus Rise victoriously From the dead Because in the Bible We behold the glory Of the Lord Jesus And we are transformed As we behold him Every single one of us

Came to faith in Jesus One way or another Because we read the Bible Or because we heard Someone proclaim the Bible To us What if I told you That there is a place You can go to Meet personally With Jesus I know the address What if I told you That there is a number You can dial On your phone To hear Jesus' voice Brothers and sisters We can do Precisely that Right here in the scriptures Let us stay here Remain here Linger here Let's pray

[37 : 06] Lord We are so privileged Where we live To have Unrestricted Access To your word It is so affordable It is available For free There are so many Resources That help us To understand it better Oh Lord Help us not To take your word For granted Just because We are near it And familiar with it Let us not lose sight Of what a wondrous Book it is What power There is Within Hunger for you

Drive us So that we might Know you more That we might Hear you In Jesus name we pray Amen If you'd like to Share your book And bear your Youtube And put this I'll wear you For in fact If you could Help us Feed us Where we reign There is To us 2 Question Your Make In Your Off 3 Before Ann This To us Here The Thing Talk To us Feel It