

Sermon: The Bible Is God's Word

Text: I Peter 1:22-25

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I Peter 1:22-25 (NIV) ²²Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart. ²³For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. ²⁴For, "All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, ²⁵but the word of the Lord stands forever." And this is the word that was preached to you.

Introduction: "I am a Christian because God says so, and I did what he told me to do, and I stand on God's Word, and if the Book goes down, I'll go with it."
- Billy Sunday

(Information taken from *The Best of Josh McDowell: A Ready Defense*, p.27ff.)
"The Bible was written over a 1500-year span of time, over 40 generations, and written by more than 40 authors. These writers are from every walk of life including kings, peasants, philosophers, fisherman, poets, statesmen, scholars, etc.

The Bible was written from different places, from three continents, using three different languages, and at different times and moods yet it holds together as one piece in its intent. Some have called the Bible: *God's Scheme of Redemption*.

There are now more than 5300 known Greek manuscripts of the New Testament. Add over 10,000 Latin Vulgate and at least 9300 other early versions and we have more than 24,000 manuscript copies of portions of the New Testament in existence. No other document from antiquity even begins to approach such numbers... In comparison, the *Iliad* by Homer is a distant second with only 643 manuscripts that still survive."

When comparing the closeness in time of the original manuscripts to the earliest copy, the Bible wins hands down. We have copies within 50 years of the original Bible manuscript, whereas it is 500 years for the *Iliad*. The Dead Sea Scrolls have shown that copies over 1300 years old are for all practical purposes the same as the earliest copies (the Hebrew O.T. was completed about 400 B.C.).

The Bible is the foundation for the church. If the foundation is destroyed, so is the church. “**but the word of the Lord stands forever**” (I Peter 1:25a).

I. The Bible Is Never-Changing.

I Peter 1:22a (NIV) ²²Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth

There have been many translations and versions of the Bible over the centuries, but probably no more than in this current century. At the beginning of the last century there was the KJV, AS, now we have the NKJV and NASB and the RSV is now the NRSV and the Jerusalem Bible is the New Jerusalem Bible. The NIV is probably the most popular translation used among churches. Translations change to better communicate to the current culture, but:

Real truth never changes — ever!

Because it is inspired by God.

In the old KJV it says that: “All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God,”

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

“Inspired” literally means God-breathed. Just as God breathed life into clay to make man, He breathed life into ideas and words written down about Jesus and the church.

Because God’s word is inspired, it is useful and practical for life. These are not dry, dusty words that have lost their meaning in a new more informed age. They are timeless in value for everyday life as well as eternal life - and certainly for the Church.

God’s word is always timely:

Because it is perfect truth.

Psalms 18:30ab (NIV) ³⁰As for God, his way is perfect; the word of the LORD is flawless.

There are a lot of things that appear to be perfect or flawless until you closely examine them. Diamonds are one example.

Illus. Another example is one of the first cars I bought was a 1969 Ford Torino GT. It was black. I bought it at night. It was raining. All black cars look good at night in the rain. In the light of day I saw a less-than-perfect car.

The Bible is perfect truth because it comes from the perfect Source who is able to use imperfect authors to relay His word perfectly.

I Thessalonians 2:13 (NIV) ¹³And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is at work in you who believe.

II. The Bible Is Eternal.

I Peter 1:23 (NIV) ²³For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.

Isaiah 40:8 (NIV) ⁸ The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God stands forever.”

Because it is from imperishable seed.

God’s word never spoils or goes stale. When Moses was leading the people of Israel out of Egypt God supplied manna, bread from heaven. This food spoiled and could not be kept. But now, we have Jesus who is the Bread of Life.

John 6:35-40 (NIV) ³⁵Then Jesus declared, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty. ³⁶But as I told you, you have seen me and still you do not believe. ³⁷All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away. ³⁸For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. ³⁹And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. ⁴⁰For my Father’s will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.”

It is our hope that someday *we* will put on immortality because we believe.

The Bible gives us hope for the future. And as Paul says:

I Corinthians 15:49 (NIV) ⁴⁹And just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the likeness of the man from heaven.

And Paul goes on to say: **I Corinthians 15:50-54 (NIV)** ⁵⁰I declare to you, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. ⁵¹Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed— ⁵²in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. ⁵³For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. ⁵⁴When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: “Death has been swallowed up in victory.”

God’s word continues:

Because God’s love is eternal.

God wants everyone to have an opportunity to know Him and accept His offer of salvation. Whether we love God or not does not affect the way He feels and thinks about us. In fact the Scripture says that “while we were still sinners Christ died for the ungodly.”

Isn’t it great that no matter how many times we fail in our attempts to live a godly life that God forgives and continues to love us?

II Timothy 2:11-13 (NIV) ¹¹Here is a trustworthy saying: If we died with him, we will also live with him; ¹² if we endure, we will also reign with him. If we disown him, he will also disown us; ¹³ if we are faithless, he will remain faithful, for he cannot disown himself.

God continues to try to communicate His eternal love to us through His word. For us to come to a saving knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ:

III. The Bible Is Essential.

I Peter 1:22 (NIV) ²²Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart.

James 1:18 (NIV) ¹⁸He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created.

If by obeying the truth, we can be pure before a Holy God; wouldn't it be important for us to know what the truth is?

Illus. There is a lot of talk during summer months about e-coli and salmonella poisoning. Both of these bacteria can kill you, but both are easily killed by washing hands and utensils and cooking at proper temperatures. You can't look at a hamburger and tell if it is contaminated. It takes proper precautions, close inspection and testing. It's what you don't see that might kill you.

Cults many times have their own so-called Bible or translations. What you don't see in them is a divine Jesus. What you don't see is Jesus as God in the flesh. What you don't see is the Bible as the only ground of faith. It is always the Bible plus something else. The Bible and God's Church will stand up under close examination. Christ's Church needs to be pure - free from contamination.

Many church groups today are in trouble because they have abandoned the Bible. They have abandoned the Truth. The Bible is to correct culture, not the other way around.

**So the Bible is meant to be the way
To new life in Christ Jesus.**

This new life is what gives us the power and ability to live a moral, ethical life. The truth of God's word is not lost on pages, but lived out everyday in worship to God.

New life is only possible Jesus tells Nicodemus - if you are born again (lit. "from above"). This is not done in a vacuum, but through the power of water and Spirit. It is in response to the Word of God that Nicodemus is afforded this opportunity.

God has created everyone, and we are indeed His; but we do not become a part of the family until we have been born again by means of water and Spirit.

**There is a new standard of conduct for a Christian, so the Bible is essential.
Because it joins ethics and morals with being born again.**

The new motivation for ethical and moral behavior is to make God look good - to make the church attractive to an ever-increasing pagan culture.

(The following is from: *Wishful Thinking a Seeker's ABC*, pp.120-22, by Frederick Buechner) "In Hebrew the term *dabar* means both "word" and "deed." Thus to say something is to do something. *I love you. I hate you. I forgive you. I am afraid.* Who knows what such words do, but whatever it is, it can never be undone. Something that lays hidden in the heart is irrevocably released through speech into time is given substance and tossed like a stone into the pool of history, where the concentric rings lap out endlessly.

Words are power, essentially the power of creation. By my words I both discover and create who I am. By my words I elicit a word from you. Through our converse (conversation) we create each other." Words and deeds are who we are. Words and deeds declare to a world whose we are!"

Conclusion: It is the Word of God that came to the prophets and their forefathers, but now it is available to everyone directly who has ears to hear. The problem today is that people do not recognize the Bible's uniqueness. Some confuse an inspiring talk or enthusiasm — with the Word of God.

Today there is a real temptation to measure things by our experiences, but it should be the Scriptures that help us interpret what is really happening.

John 20:8-9 (NIV) ⁸Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed. ⁹(They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.)

They were robbed of the importance of the experience because they did not understand Scripture.

The Apostle John records Jesus saying, **John 5:24 (NIV)** ²⁴"I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.

So we have the Eternal Word (John 1:1ff) Who offers eternal life. The Bible is God's Word to us today to believe or reject what it says especially about Jesus. Eternal life awaits those who believe in Jesus.