

Sunday Sermon

5/5/24

Series: God-Breathed

Passage: Various

Title: How We Got our Bible

Good morning, Church! Praise the Lord! Happy Cinco de Mayo. Mexican is the second most popular cuisine in America next to Chinese, so it think that gives us reason to celebrate.

This morning, we'll be continuing in our series "God-breathed." This is our third week in the series. The last two weeks, we looked at evidence – external, internal, experiential – concerning the Bible being a unique, supernatural book. There really is no other book or religious writing like the Bible. No other book stacks up. No other book has had impact. No other book changes lives like the Bible. One book inspired, "breathed-out," written by God.

This week we will transition from the evidence for the Bible to the subject of how we got the Bible. Most of us have little to no idea. We would all love to believe that one day the first bible descended on a cloud, glowing in radiance accompanied by an audible voice from heaven saying, "This is my Word. Don't screw it up." Did it happen like that? How did it happen? We should know.

So we're gonna go after that this morning, and to do that, we're going to start at our theme verse for the series 2 Timothy 3. 2 Timothy 3:16 is probably the classic biblical passage on the authorship of Scripture. Let's start one verse before that this morning in 2 Timothy 3:15. But before we do that let's pray. **[Pray]**

The apostle Paul was writing to his disciple, Timothy, and he said these words. He said, Hey Timothy, ***"from a child you have known the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus."*** And then he says the familiar words: ***"All scripture is God-breathed and is 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."***

Now notice in verse 15 where it says that ***"from a child you have known the sacred writings..."***

I have to use that as an opportunity to plug the significance of Children's Ministry and Family Discipleship. Don't ever think that a decision to follow Jesus Christ is something that only a student or an adult can make. We have precious children right here, right now, in our classrooms, and I thank God that we have people volunteering, and taking the time, pouring their lives and the truth of God's word into them. What an important ministry. They should be honored among God's people. And even more than that, I would encourage you at home, we are the primary disciplers of our children. Take the time at home to teach God's Word to your children, that they might turn their eyes to it. That they might know it and understand it's value.

And Timothy, who was a powerful force for God, is just one example of someone who had known the Scriptures from the time he was a child. Now, what did he know about the scriptures? Look at the text. He knew from childhood, that the Scriptures are able to make you...what? Wise. **“...wise unto salvation.”**

I praise God that I'm a second-generation Christian in my family line, but I did have a great-great grandmother, who was this little old Italian lady, who also knew the Lord and who prayed hard for her family. And she was an evangelist. Not a formal evangelist, but she loved to share the good news about Jesus to anyone who would listen. And she would pray for her family and for her future generations that we might be wise to the way of salvation. And because of her, there is one whole branch of my family tree that are born-again Christians. My side of the tree has taken a little longer to come around, but that didn't stop God from answering her prayers. My parents weren't saved until they were in their 30s, but their salvation led to the salvation of me and my sisters, who now all have families who are growing up to know and love the Lord, who from childhood, know the scriptures which are able to make you wise to salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

Isn't that a great testimony? Don't ever stop praying for your kids. Things might not transform right away, but God is never finished in his pursuit of us.

Now let me ask you this question, loved ones: **Are you wise to the ways of salvation?** Are you? Scripture says in the book of Proverbs, **“There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death.”** – Prov. 14:12 Instead, Acts 16:31 – **“Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved.”**

Can you look to a time in your life where you have accepted or received the free gift of salvation found in Jesus Christ? Now, if you're not sure that you've made that choice, you can make that choice this morning by taking the word of God, which I'm sharing with you, and believing its message - making the choice to receive Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord of your life. If you're not sure, loved one, please, if you're not sure, make that choice today. These are God's words. He wrote a book - a book that is able to make us wise to the way of salvation.

And then notice what it says, **“all scripture is God-breathed.”** Now it's interesting that in verse 15, the word that's used to describe scripture is the Greek “hieros grammata” which means ‘sacred writings.’ It was a reference to the Old Testament. What Timothy had known since he was a child was all of the God-inspired writings called the Old Testament. But now in verse 16, he uses a different word, ‘graphe,’ when he says “all scripture.” In other words, what he was doing was drawing a contrast.

He was saying, “Not just the sacred writings, not just the Old Testament, but listen, all scripture is God-breathed.” There were some new writings of the early church referred to as the ‘graphe,’ or ‘the writings’ that were immediately or very quickly recognized also as God's

Word - on par and of parallel authority as the Old Testament. And so, when he says, "All scripture is God-breathed," he is making a truth statement about God's Word, Old and New Testaments: That's it's not...as some people have said, it's just the part that speaks to you that's from God, no.

Not just the part that agrees with human wisdom. No, all of it.

Not just the parts that bring us comfort. No, all of it. The parts that convict us as well.

Not just the parts we love to hear, but the parts that are hard to hear.

All scripture is God-breathed, or given by inspiration of God.

In that word 'God-breathed' have the imagery of a sailboat. I don't do a lot of sailing, but I understand the concept. The boat can only go where the wind takes it.

And in the same sense, the human author writing down the words, could only write down the words that Almighty God wanted him to write. Because as the wind acts in a sail, so the Spirit of God acted in the heart of the author. The scriptures are God-breathed. God, (blow) wrote the scriptures through the pen and heart of the human author. God wrote a book. More specifically, the Holy Spirit chose the words.

Now, there's been a lot of confusion over the years about exactly what we mean by that. When we say that one of our core values here at PCC is biblical fidelity – what exactly do we believe about the Bible? Charles Ryrie, the famous professor from Dallas Theological Seminary for many years, said this, **"Just to illustrate how times have changed: not many years ago, all one had to say to affirm his belief in the Scriptures was that he believed the Bible was the 'Word of God.' That's all you had to say. But people began to attack the scriptures and it became necessary to add the word 'inspired Word of God.' Later you had to include the 'verbally inspired Word of God.' Then, to mean the same thing, he had to say the 'plenary, verbally inspired word of God.' More recently, it's become necessary to say the 'plenary, verbally inspired, infallible Word of God. Today, one has to say the 'plenary, verbally inspired, infallible, inerrant in the original manuscripts, Word of God.'"**

And as people have continued to attack and attack and attack the Word of God, listen – there are so many people, as well as whole schools and denominations that carry the Christian label, who want to say they believe the Bible is God's word, but when you press them, they don't mean that at all. They mean part of it. They mean some of it. They mean the part that speaks to you.

We don't mean that. We mean the whole book. All of it. Because so many have given themselves to attacking God's word, we have to be real precise about what we mean. So here's what we mean:

"Plenary" means from cover to cover.

"Verbal inspiration" means God chose the words, not just the concepts. In this let me show you a verse. Look at John 14:26. John 14:25 says this, Jesus said, **"These things I have spoken to you while being present with you. (26) But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your**

**remembrance all that I have said to you.**” Isn't that a great promise? So he says, “Hey guys, just hang on, when it comes time to get all this stuff down on paper, the Holy Spirit is going to be in you, and he's going to help you remember everything I said.”

In fact, John 16 even expands on that. Notice John 16:12. Jesus said, **“I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.”** In other words, there was a whole lot of things Jesus wanted to teach the disciples, but they couldn't even handle it.

So what happened to all that teaching? Well, here it is, verse 13, **“However, when he, the Spirit of Truth, comes, he will guide you into all (circle that – all) all truth, for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and He will tell you the things that are to come.”**

Notice that the disciples were promised insight from the Holy Spirit. Notice the guidance that the Holy Spirit would give them as the scriptures were going to be written. God has been incredibly invested in the writing of his book.

The Holy Spirit chose the words. So now you might say, “Ok, the Holy Spirit chose the words, but the HS part isn't where my struggle is. My struggle comes when you start to get down into the human part. As long as it's with God, I'm tracking, but then when people get involved, when the human authors start writing it down, I mean, how do we know they got it right?”

Fair question. We briefly visited this verse last week, but I think it's helpful to go back there. 2 Peter 1:20 reveals this great truth for us, **“Knowing this first that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of men, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.”**

I believe the answer is all right there. Notice that the Scripture did not come by the will of man. It was God's will to reveal himself. And in that, he chose to use human authors to communicate his message. This is really a phenomenal thing, He wrote through the personalities of the human authors.

Then notice the next part, the scripture did not come **“by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke...”** Notice that wasn't just any person writing God's word. The central characters of Scripture are the main authors of Scripture. Moses, David, the prophets, the apostles - holy men of God. God chose the kind of man that he could really communicate through - pure vessels, clear channels, men with direct feed capability, men with a lifetime of experience of knowing and downloading God's heart to man. He chose very, very special holy men. That should give us confidence as we read it.

So we've looked at the God part, and looked at the man part. Now let's look at the book part. That's what we're gonna spend the rest of our time on. 1500 years, 40 different authors, 66 books. How did they get all those little books together into one big book?

If you're taking notes, grab your pen. I trust this will be helpful, in giving us a foundation we can be confident in as we share with others.

Think back to the time when the Canon of scripture was pulled together. The word Canon means 'measuring rod' or 'instrument of measurement.' So when we talk about the Canon of scripture, the 66 books, we're talking about the books that measured up.

Listen: We need to understand. There were a lot more books around than the 66 in your Bible. There were very godly people who measured the books to discern and determine which ones measured up.

So first, let's look at the four categories that the religious writings of the day were separated into. **Four categories:**

### **1) Homologoumena**

Homologoumena means "one word or agreement, undisputed." These were the books that were accepted immediately and recognized as God's word. There was no doubt, and everyone agreed about the Homologoumena.

Here's the second one. You can guess what this means.

### **2) Antilegomena**

These were the books that initially were disputed or doubted. They were not sure if this is really God's word. **You need to know that of the 66 books in your Bible, 5 in the Old Testament and 7 in the New Testament were initially doubted, but all were eventually accepted.**

In the Old Testament, the Song of Solomon was one of them. They thought it was too sensuous. Another was Ecclesiastes. They thought it was too cynical. Proverbs. They were unsure of the authorship entirely. Ezekiel because of its complexity, and Esther because it doesn't mention the name of God. But as they studied and meditated upon it, they saw the incredible sovereignty of God woven through all of these books, and they were received.

In the New Testament, it was Hebrews because it was anonymous, James, 2 Peter, 2&3 John because of authorship, Jude because it quotes from a secular author, and Revelation because of authorship. Now, all of those books, the Antilegomena: disputed at first, ultimately all received and confirmed as God's word.

### **3) Apocrypha**

You may have heard of these 14 to 15 additional books, not scripture, called the Apocrypha. The word Apocrypha means "hidden or hard to understand." All throughout the early church, they were **never** confirmed as God's word. Never. Sometimes, as books were bound, the 66 books of God's Word were put together and the apocrypha was added at the end, but it was never written about as God's Word. It was never considered as God's word. Jesus never quoted from it. The apostles never quoted from it.

Listen: the Apocryphal books were never considered God's word until 1500 years later, when the Roman Catholic Church was under great pressure about some of its heretical

teachings during the Reformation - teachings like praying for the dead and salvation by works - that they at the Council of Trent in 1516, it was then they said, "Hey, we need these books. These are God's word too." Not till 1500 years later. Books originally rejected because they contradict the teaching of God's Word.

#### **4) Pseudepigrapha**

The Pseudepigrapha are the 18 more additional books that were always rejected. No one thought they were part of the scripture. They were just religious writings of the time. They got all kinds of fanciful magical things, like Jesus as a little boy, doing tricks for his friends, and just things that people are like, "Not God's word."

They divided them into those four categories: immediately received; disputed, then received; not received except by the Roman Catholic Church 1500 years later; and never received.

The question this begs: ok, **4 piles. How did they decide which book went into which pile?**

All the early church had to do was eliminate the inferior writings and identify the inspired writings. Who here would agree? That'd be a tough job! So how did they do that? I'm gonna lay it out for us, so we no longer have to wonder. This went on just after Christ. And, listen, most of it was settled by 125 AD. The Bible was written completely by 95 AD. Most of it was settled within 20-30 years. It was not confirmed until the Council of Hippo in 300's AD, but we need to understand that most of the world was together on it almost immediately.

So, here are the five tests that they used to determine and confirm the inspired writings. Each writing, standing alone, had to get through five hoops, or past five tests. Let's call them 5 Proofs of Inspiration. Jot these down – 5 A-words for easy remembrance.

#### **Test or proof #1) Authority.**

It was said of Jesus, that he "***taught as one who had authority.***" – Matt. 7:29. They would ask themselves, "Can that be said of this writing?" Did it speak with authority as people read it? Does it ring of the truth of God? Does it command attention?

Over 4000 times the writers of scripture say without embarrassment about their writings, "***Thus says the Lord.***" Because, listen, when a man has heard from God, he speaks with authority. And if the writing didn't have that kind of authority to it, it was rejected.

#### **Test #2) Authorship**

Was this written by a man of God? Almost all of the books that were initially disputed were only disputed on the basis of authorship, saying, "If we know for sure that the Apostle John wrote it, we will include it. Because we know him to have been a man connected with God." Authorship was very, very important.

#### **Third category) Authenticity**

Does this book tell the truth about God's salvation? Is it consistent with the rest of Scripture? Did you know, this is why there are no contradictions in the Bible. We like to think as though we're the smartest people to ever live. True or false? OK, but believe it or not, there were some very intelligent people 2000 years ago. They didn't even watch TV. And, listen, they got together, some of them, and invested their lives in pouring over these writings and comparing them with every line and every word of the rest of Scripture. And when they plugged it into God's book, and said, "this is God's word," and when they confirmed it together, believe me, they had compared it to the rest of it. And I'm sure they would laugh if somebody today showed up and said, "I found the contradiction of the Bible." They'd be like, "Ok buddy."

Authenticity: does it square with the rest of Scripture? And, again, this is why the apocryphal books were rejected. They didn't square up with the rest of Scripture. They taught inconsistent things.

#### **#4) Alive and Active**

Was it alive and active? Hebrews 4:12 says, "***The word of God is living and active (powerful).***" One of the things they wanted to know was that this letter, or this book, did it change people's lives? What were the testimonies of life change from those who encountered the text? To people in the church, "Hey, what happened in your church when you read this letter from Paul? Hey, what happened in your church when you read this letter from John?" And as the testimonies came back of the lives that were transformed, one of the most important confirming tests was the power or the activity or the aliveness of the scripture. If it was changing lives, it was supernatural. It was from God. If not, it was just the words of man.

**#5)** And then lastly, and I think an additional very important proof, was **Acceptance by the early church**. How did the people of God feel about it? Look up here. It wasn't like today. You know, everyone didn't have a copy. They didn't go to church and pull one out from the chair in front of them. Someone very carefully copied it out, and a messenger would take it to a church, and they would get it and receive it and study it. They had to all get together. There was just one copy of it.

And so one of the things was, that as the churches all over the world at that time, read it, did they accept it? Did they receive it? Did they confirm together? Yes. This is from God. As you might guess, there were some writings that were circulated that would come to a church and people would go, "That's not God. God would never say that. That doesn't square up with what we have over here."

Turn with me quickly to 1 Thess. 2. Paul was speaking of this exact subject of how the early church would accept the word of God. And in 1 Thess. 2:13 he said this, "***We thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of man, but as it is in truth the word of God.***" How the early Church accepted and received what was brought to them was an important test in confirming the word of God.

Well, there you have it. Authority, Authorship, Authenticity, Alive and Active, and Acceptance. Where did we get our Bibles from? God wrote a book. Holy Spirit chose the words. The apostles wrote it down, and then the early church used that test to confirm. They pulled it all together and rooted out the writings that were just the pretenders, and God blessed that entire process.

Let me close with some application: 5 quick questions about that. I think these are appropriate questions in view of the fact that God wrote a book.

#1) Do you own your own copy of God's Word? Do you? If you don't come up and talk to us afterwards and we'll get you one. No problem. We wanna make sure you have your own copy of God's Word.

#2) Are you reading it daily? It takes only 18 hours to read the New Testament out loud. Are you reading it daily?

#3) Are you memorizing it? Are you? Let's look up here. Ps. 119:10, ***"I have hidden your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you."*** Are you hiding God's word in your heart? Are you memorizing it?

#4) Are you obeying it? Jesus says, ***"Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me."***— John 14:21 God wrote a book. Are you living out what he says?

#5) And then lastly, are you letting it guide your life? Are you letting the truths in these pages help you make the decisions you need to make? Psalm 119:105, ***"Your word is a lamp unto my feet and a light to my path."*** Beloved, God wrote a book. And, it's not a secret, now we know how we got it. Are we letting it guide our lives?

Let ready our hearts for communion. In Matthew 26:26 Jesus was eating with his disciples the night before he would go to the cross. And it says, "As they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it, broke it and gave it to his disciples, and said, 'Take, eat; this is my body.' He took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, 'Drink of it, all of you; for this is the blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.'"

The story of God's Word is a story of God's love for the world, you and me. It's a story that points to Jesus, God's ultimate gift given to humanity so our sin could be forgiven. Without that gift we would be forever without hope. Have you accepted God's gift this morning? God calls us to a great exchange, Christ's life for my life. He gave himself for us, so that we might give ourselves to him. And to all who understand that, who would follow him and believe in his name. He says to us, "Come and eat. Come and drink. Partake in the fruit of my gift of life."

As we come forward and receive the elements this morning. Please hold them until all have been served, and then we will take communion together.

# *God-breathed*

*Why I believe the Bible*



***“From a child you have known the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.***

***All scripture is God-breathed and is 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.”***

***- 2 Tim. 3:15-17***

***“There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death.”***

- Prov. 14:12

***“Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved.”***

- Acts 16:31

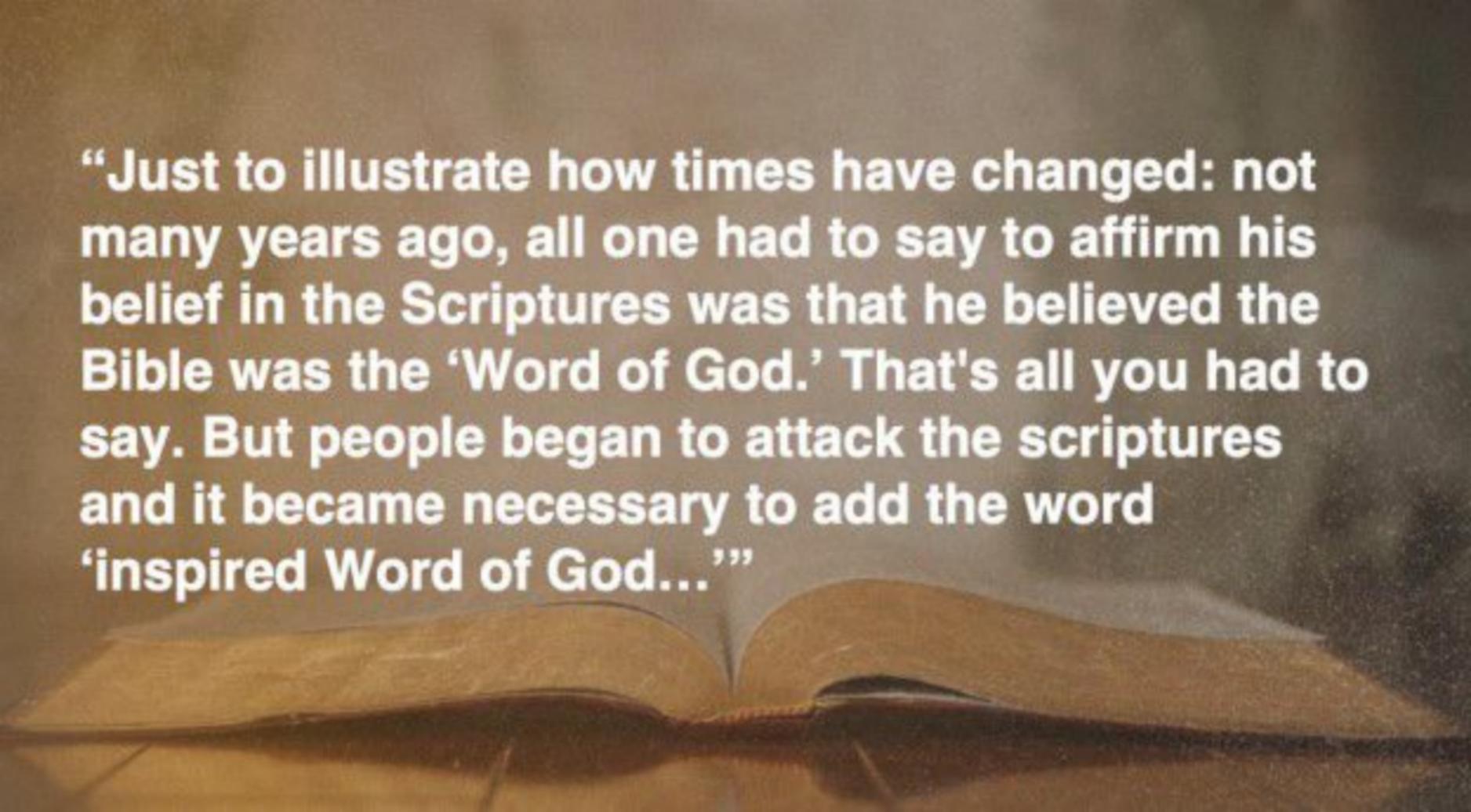


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**- 2 Tim. 3:15-17**

**“Just to illustrate how times have changed: not many years ago, all one had to say to affirm his belief in the Scriptures was that he believed the Bible was the ‘Word of God.’ That's all you had to say. But people began to attack the scriptures and it became necessary to add the word ‘inspired Word of God...’”**

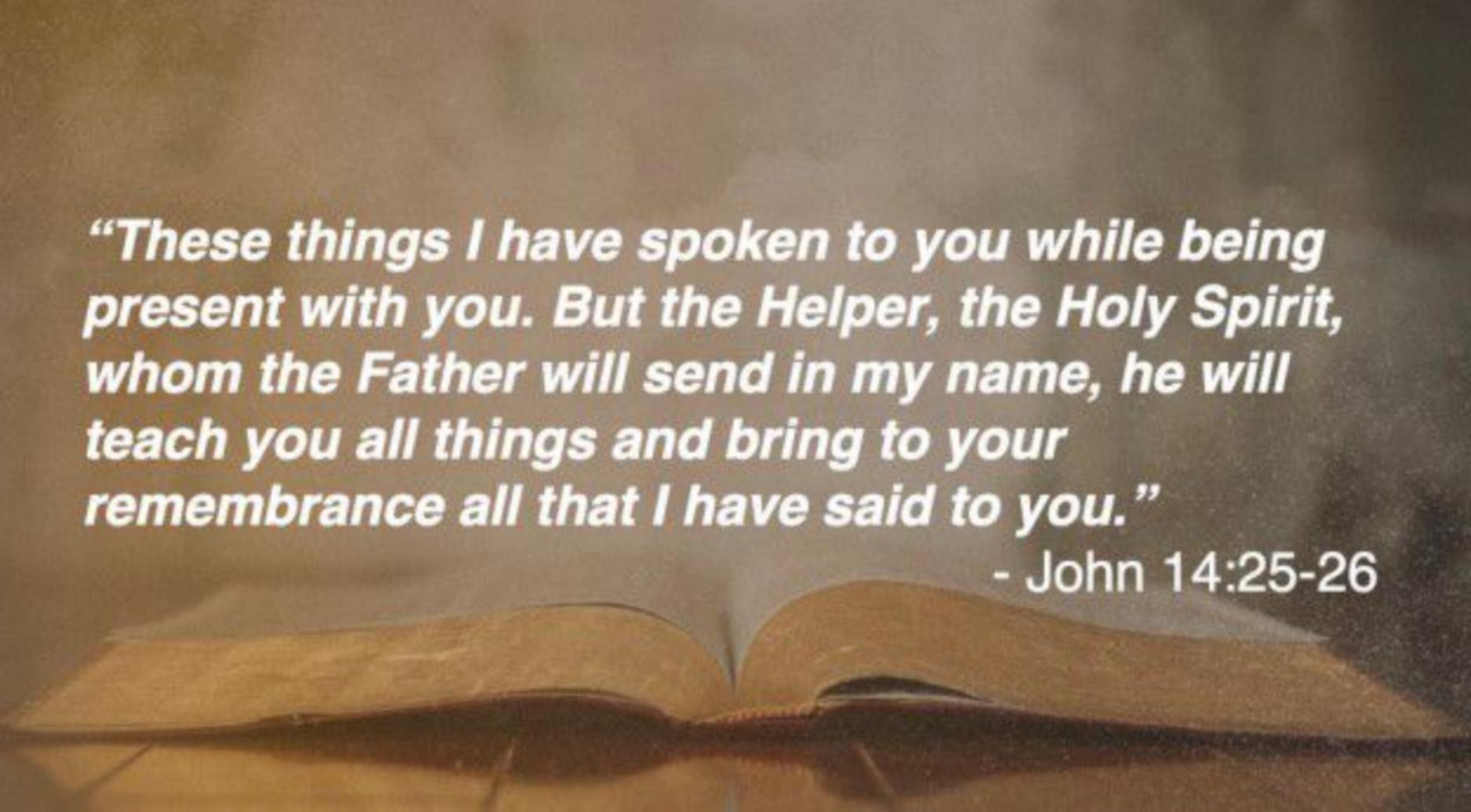
An open book is shown at the bottom of the frame, lying flat. The pages are a light tan or yellowish color, suggesting age. The book is centered horizontally. The background is a dark, textured surface, possibly a wall or a backdrop, with a subtle gradient from light to dark.

**“Later you had to include the ‘verbally inspired Word of God.’ Then, to mean the same thing, he had to say the ‘plenary, verbally inspired word of God.’ More recently, it's become necessary to say the ‘plenary, verbally inspired, infallible Word of God. Today, one has to say the ‘plenary, verbally inspired, infallible, inerrant in the original manuscripts, Word of God.’”**

**- Dr. Charles Ryrie**

***“These things I have spoken to you while being present with you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.”***

**- John 14:25-26**



***“I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. However, when he, the Spirit of Truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will tell you the things that are to come.”***

***- John 16:12-13***



***“Knowing this first that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of men, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.”***

**- 2 Peter 1:20**

The Canon of Scripture:  
Discerning the Inspired Writings  
4 Categories:

1) Homologoumena



**The Canon of Scripture:  
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**4 Categories:**

- 1) Homologoumena - accepted immediately**
- 2) Antilegomena**



The Canon of Scripture:  
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**4 Categories:**

- 1) Homologoumena** - accepted immediately
- 2) Antilegomena** - disputed then accepted
- 3) Apocrypha**



**The Canon of Scripture:**  
**Discerning the Inspired Writings**

**4 Categories:**

- 1) Homologoumena** - accepted immediately
- 2) Antilegomena** - disputed then accepted
- 3) Apocrypha** - NOT accepted until 1516 by RCC
- 4) Pseudepigrapha** - NEVER received



The Canon of Scripture:  
Discerning the Inspired Writings

**5 Proofs of Inspiration:**

**1) Authority** - Does it speak with God's authority?

*"[Jesus] taught as one who had authority."*

– Matt. 7:29



**The Canon of Scripture:**  
**Discerning the Inspired Writings**

**5 Proofs of Inspiration:**

- 1) Authority** - Does it speak with God's authority?
- 2) Authorship** - Who wrote it?



**The Canon of Scripture:**  
**Discerning the Inspired Writings**

**5 Proofs of Inspiration:**

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- 2) Authorship** - Who wrote it?
- 3) Authenticity** - Is it consistent with the whole?



The Canon of Scripture:  
Discerning the Inspired Writings

**5 Proofs of Inspiration:**

- 1) Authority** - Does it speak with God's authority?
- 2) Authorship** - Who wrote it?
- 3) Authenticity** - Is it consistent with the whole?
- 4) Alive and Active** - What was its impact?

***“The word of God is living and active (powerful).”***

**- Hebrews 4:12**

**The Canon of Scripture:**  
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**5 Proofs of Inspiration:**

- 1) Authority** - Does it speak with God's authority?
  - 2) Authorship** - Who wrote it?
  - 3) Authenticity** - Is it consistent with the whole?
  - 4) Alive and Active** - What was its impact?
  - 5) Acceptance by the Church** - Was it received?
- 

**The Canon of Scripture:**  
**Discerning the Inspired Writings**

***“We thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of man, but as it is in truth the word of God.”***

**- 1 Thess. 2:13**



## Application: 5 Questions

1) Do you own your own copy of God's Word?



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- 2) Are you reading it daily?



## Application: 5 Questions

- 1) Do you own your own copy of God's Word?
- 2) Are you reading it daily?
- 3) Are you memorizing it?

*"I have hidden your word in my heart,  
that I might not sin against you."*

- Ps. 119:10

## Application: 5 Questions

- 1) Do you own your own copy of God's Word?
- 2) Are you reading it daily?
- 3) Are you memorizing it?
- 4) Are you obeying it?

***“Whoever has my commands and keeps them  
is the one who loves me.”***

- John 14:21

## Application: 5 Questions

- 1) Do you own your own copy of God's Word?
- 2) Are you reading it daily?
- 3) Are you memorizing it?
- 4) Are you obeying it?
- 5) Are you letting it guide your life?

*“Your word is a lamp unto my feet  
and a light to my path.”*

- Psalm 119:105