

“Faith by God’s Word”
John 2:22
(Preached at Trinity, May 31, 2017)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. After Jesus and His disciples left the wedding they traveled about a day’s journey to Capernaum where they remained for a few days. They then traveled to Jerusalem for the Passover.
2. As Jesus entered the Temple He found the chaotic scene of commercial transactions going on. The entire area was filled with the sounds of animals braying, the sound of coins changing hands, and loud bantering as pilgrims tried to get the best deal. It was hardly a scene conducive to worship.
3. In a great display of fury, Jesus made a scourge, overturned the tables, and drove out the entire group.
4. At this point Jesus would have been a nobody. He grew up in Nazareth doing lowly work as a carpenter’s son. Now, all of a sudden, Jesus marches into the Temple and empties the place. The merchants and money changers had probably conducted this activity for years. Who does this man think He is barging in and throwing us out?
Jesus was actually claiming to be the Son of God, - "Take these things away; stop making My Father's house a place of business" (V.16).
5. They wanted proof of His authority. They demanded to see a sign.
John 2:18 NAU - "The Jews then said to Him, "What sign do You show us as your authority for doing these things?"
6. Throughout His ministry Jesus declared the wickedness of seeking a sign. This is because it is contrary to faith.
Luke 11:29 NAU - "As the crowds were increasing, He began to say, "This generation is a wicked generation; it seeks for a sign, and yet no sign will be given to it but the sign of Jonah."
Matthew 16:4 NAU - "An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign; and a sign will not be given it, except the sign of Jonah." And He left them and went away."
Mark 8:11-12 NAU - "The Pharisees came out and began to argue with Him, seeking from Him a sign from heaven, to test Him. ¹² Sighing deeply in His spirit, He said, "Why does this generation seek for a sign? Truly I say to you, no sign will be given to this generation."
7. We can see this with the Rich Man and Lazarus. The rich man died and went to the place of torment. He begged for Abraham to send Lazarus from the dead to warn his brothers. Surely they would believe if they witnessed the supernatural sign of one returning from the dead. Abraham’s answer was clear – If they will not heed the Word of God nothing else will move them.

Luke 16:27-31 NAU - "And he said, 'Then I beg you, father, that you send him to my father's house-- ²⁸ for I have five brothers-- in order that he may warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.' ²⁹ "But Abraham said, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.' ³⁰ "But he said, 'No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent!' ³¹ "But he said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead."

8. What a contrast we see with the disciples who received Christ by faith. While the Jews sought an outward, visible sign, the disciples received the Word of God. Notice they put the Words of Christ alongside the Scriptures.

John 2:22 NAU - "So when He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He said this; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had spoken."

9. The Jewish leaders rejected the words of Christ outright. The disciples treasured them in their hearts. They wouldn't understand fully until after the resurrection three years later. Although they didn't understand them fully at this time they held on to them. The Holy Spirit would in due time illuminate their minds with understanding.

10. The word Scripture is in the singular so they probably had a single Scripture in mind.

Perhaps they were calling to memory **Psalm 16:10**

"For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol; Nor will You allow Your Holy One to undergo decay."

John 20:6-9 NAU - "And so Simon Peter also came, following him, and entered the tomb; and he saw the linen wrappings lying *there*, ⁷ and the face-cloth which had been on His head, not lying with the linen wrappings, but rolled up in a place by itself. ⁸ So the other disciple who had first come to the tomb then also entered, and he saw and believed. ⁹ For as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead."

- a. The truth is, however, Jesus is found throughout the OT Scriptures.

John 5:39 NAU - "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me;"

- d. In addition, the "word which Jesus had spoken" most likely refers to the particular teaching of Jesus regarding His resurrection but also has a much broader scope.

Matthew 24:35 NAU - "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away."

John 5:46-47 NAU - "For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me, for he wrote about Me. ⁴⁷ "But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?"

Luke 24:44 NAU - "These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled."

11. Compare their belief in the Word of God with the nature of those who believed because of the miracles. The disciples believed having not yet seen. The false professors believed only in what was seen.

John 2:23-24 NAU - "Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name, observing His signs which He was doing. ²⁴ But Jesus, on His part, was not entrusting Himself to them, for He knew all men,"

12. Tonight I want to remind you again of the importance of God's Word. It is indispensable for salvation and for our progress in the faith.

- I. First, we need to understand the necessity of the Word of God in Salvation
- A. No man can be saved apart from the Word of God
1. The Word of God is God's means of imparting faith to the sinner. God opens our heart to receive His Word.
Romans 10:17 NAU - "So faith *comes* from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ."
1 Thessalonians 2:13 NAU - "For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted *it* not as the word of men, but *for* what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe."
2 Timothy 3:15 NAU - "and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."
 2. The point made in this passage is that neither group understood Jesus' statement about destroying the Temple and raising it up. But the Jews hardened their hearts towards it while the disciples searched the Scriptures and believed. We call this being teachable.
 Matthew Henry – "The juniors in years and profession should treasure up those truths of which at present they do not well understand either the meaning or the use, for they will be serviceable to them hereafter, when they come to greater proficiency."¹
 3. Even though it took them three years to grasp the meaning of His words they did not despise them. Jesus opened their understanding.
Luke 24:25-27 NAU - "O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶ "Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?" ²⁷ Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures."
 4. This was one of the great pillars of the Reformation – Sola Scriptura
 1. **1689 London Baptist Confession**
 Chapter 1:1 - Of the Holy Scriptures
The Holy Scripture is the only sufficient, certain, and infallible rule of all saving knowledge, faith, and obedience.
 2. Spurgeon's Catechism (Shorter Catechism)
 Q71. What are the outward and ordinary means whereby the Holy Spirit communicates to us the benefits of redemption?
 A. The outward and ordinary means, whereby the Holy Spirit communicates to us the benefits of Christ's redemption, are the Word, by which souls are begotten unto spiritual life, Baptism, the Lord's Supper, Prayer, and Meditation, by all of which believers are further edified in their most holy faith.
 Q72. How is the Word made effectual to salvation?

¹ Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume*, (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 1927.

- A. The Spirit of God makes the reading, but especially the preaching of the Word, an effectual means of convincing and converting sinners, and of building them up in holiness and comfort,² through faith unto salvation.
- B. Saving Faith demands knowledge – (Notitia). There are propositional truths presented in the Gospel.
1 Timothy 2:4 NAU - "who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth."
1 Corinthians 15:1-4 NAU - "Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, ² by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. ³ For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures"
1. The Bible is the only source of knowledge unto salvation – God's appointed means
 2. In the Parable of the Sower Jesus describes the Word as the seed which the sower sows to the saving of the soul
Matthew 13:23 NAU - "And the one on whom seed was sown on the good soil, this is the man who hears the word and understands it; who indeed bears fruit and brings forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty."
 3. The disciples had treasured up the words of Christ in their heart and in due time they "remembered" and "believed."
 - a. What a commendation to parents on the importance of teaching their children the Word of God. What a treasure it is for us to catechize them.
 - b. The very words they memorized as a child may be the words God uses to the saving of their soul.

II. We can embrace God's Word with confidence

God uses His Word powerfully and effectually both in our salvation and in our sanctification. Our faith is increased as we remember His Word.

- A. The Word of God has the power to cut through the heart of the most hardened sinner - God can save even the worse skeptic and scoffer
1. God makes the preaching of the Word effectual
1 Thessalonians 1:5-6 NAU - "for our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction; just as you know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake. ⁶ You also became imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much tribulation with the joy of the Holy Spirit,"
 2. God applies and presses His Word upon the heart of the sinner
James 1:21 NAU - "Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and *all* that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls."
 - a. God has implanted His Word upon our hearts.

- b. He then uses His Word to build us up in the faith.
1 Peter 2:2 NAU - "like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation"
- B. The Holy Spirit takes the Word and illuminates our minds enabling us to perceive and comprehend the spiritual truths of the Word of God
 - 1. This is what has happened to the disciples
John 2:22 NAU - "they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had spoken."
John 14:26 NAU - "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 said to you."
 - 2. This is clearly seen in the case of Lydia
Acts 16:14 NAU - "A woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple fabrics, a worshiper of God, was listening; and the Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul."
 - 3. The greatest power in all the universe accompanies God's Word effectually as the Holy Spirit opens the dead hearts of sinners and applies to them the atoning sacrifice of Christ enabling them to receive the good news of the Gospel

Conclusion:

- 1. We must continue to live in great gratitude for God's wonderful redeeming grace. He opened our mind enabling us to understanding and He granted us faith enabling us to believe to the saving of our souls.
- 2. He is continuing to open the eyes of our understanding, enabling us grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.
- 3. We must continue to hold forth the Word of God to others. It will be successful in saving God's people.
1 Peter 1:24 NAS - "All flesh is like grass, And all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, And the flower falls off, ²⁵ But the word of the Lord abides forever." And this is the word which was preached to you."