



The Bible: Complete Authority

Psalm 19:7-9

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The last two weeks I was here, I did a two-part series titled “Why Do We Believe In God?” – very fundamental, very basic, but the idea was to show that we believe in God for objective reasons – contrary to the conservative political commentator this week who was saying that Christian belief and theistic approach to life is based on subjective things, whether you believe it or not. That’s just totally false and a total misunderstanding of the situation.

We believe in God for reasons that are objective and reasons that we can point people to consider for themselves that they will then be accountable for because God has revealed Himself in creation. He has revealed Himself in the principle of conscience. He has revealed Himself in the Bible that anybody can pick up and read. He has revealed Himself in Christ. And He has revealed Himself to us personally in our conversions if we know the Lord Jesus Christ.

Those are basic things but it is quite obvious that we need to go back to them again and again and have it clear in our minds that what we believe is not simply matter of personal opinion. It is something that transcends us and things that can be pointed out objective outside of ourselves for others to consider. So that’s what we talked about two weeks ago.

Now today and the next couple of weeks or so, I want to expand on one of those principles. I want to expand on the idea of the canon, the idea of the Bible, because it is so basic through understanding of Christianity and having a coherent world view. And I want to do this even though the question might be asked along these lines – and I want to get a little feel for GraceLife here – the question might be asked: “Why would you teach on the nature of the Bible at Grace Community Church? I mean, isn’t that settled here? Haven’t we been teaching the Bible and the authority of the Bible for many, many years?”

Well, the answer to that question is yes. But Grace Community Church or its congregation is not a static entity. New people come in week after week, month after month. New people come to Christ. Young people and families grow up. And it would be a serious mistake of tragic proportions for leadership to just assume these things and assume that, because they have been taught in the past, that everybody gets it in the present. Because people rotate in and out, and this is so fundamental that I am not willing to take it for granted.

One question that I would ask, just for my own personal information, of those of you that are here: How many of you would say that you came to Grace Church say in the past 10 years? How many of you would fit into that?

That's close to half of the people here. We could whittle the time figure down. But you see that new people come in and we need to teach these things.

The other thing that I would say to the other 50% of you – maybe it was 55%; I don't know how to split those numbers up so much on the spot here – but there is a different danger, a different threat, for those of us who have been here for a more extended period of time and that is that we would take the nature of the Bible for granted. That we, through our familiarity with these things, we would start to get careless, start to take it for granted in a way that would cause us to lose sight of the amazing treasure that we hold in the 66 books of the Bible.

If what we teach about this book is true, this is the most precious possession in the universe. And it wasn't that long ago in the course of world history that it was a rare thing for a family to own one Bible and to have one Bible was a great treasure. And I think there are still places in the world where that is still true. There are reasons why some individuals have Bibles that are stained with blood because people have shed their blood over the years for the sake of this book. Why? Why shed blood over a book that was finished being written two thousand years ago? Why is it that we stand up week after week in multiple situations in multiple settings in this church and simply teach the Bible? Why is that? Why is it that we make that the center piece of what we do in Grace Church? Why is it the center piece of what we do in GraceLife?

We need to have that clear in our minds. Even if you believe it, even if you understand it, it needs to be clear, it needs to be sharp, in our minds and as young people come up even in our midst here in GraceLife. We want this to be clear and unmistakable. We want it to be solid in our minds. And so we are going to address the nature of the Bible this morning so we can better understand in a deeper way why it is that we believe in biblical Christianity.

And to do that, I want you to turn your attention to Psalm 19 this morning – a familiar text that I am happy to preach and to be able to lay out before you this morning.

Psalm 19: I'm just going to read three verses and then over the next week or two, we will look at the remainder of the Psalm as well. Psalm 19, beginning in verse 7. May God give us grace that these words would hit our thoughts and our hearts with a fresh force this morning. David wrote:

The law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; the precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the

Lord is clean, enduring for ever; the judgments of the Lord are true, they are righteous altogether.

What I want to do this morning is lay out four foundational qualities of the Bible – to freshen your thoughts, to deepen your commitment to study the Bible, to defend the Bible and to obey the Bible. So there are four points this morning that we are going to go through and hopefully come out of this with a deepened appreciation for the treasure that is ours in the Scriptures.

The passage that I just read to you is set up in the form of a number of parallel statements. Each verse gives us two names of Scripture, two qualities of the Scripture and two beneficial effects of the Scripture. Each verse, two names, two qualities, two effects. So if you do the math out on this one, there are six elements in each verse, I just read to you three verses – 50 minutes, 18 points, that’s right. Do the math on that and figure out how long we will be here. No, that’s not true. I’m going to break it up a little differently than that.

But there is a very systematic approach to the way that David presents what he has to say in this Psalm. And today, we are going to look at these four points that are going to clarify and set in your mind why the Bible is God’s primary avenue of self disclosure – why we look at the Bible and say, “This is where the Creator of the universe has made Himself known.” And so the first point is this:

1. The Bible Is God’s Revelation

The Bible is God’s revelation. This is the starting point of Christianity. This is the true starting point for understanding the Bible is that the Bible is God’s revelation. What we mean by that is this is the place where He has verbally made Himself known to the human race.

When we speak about the principles of creation and in conscience, God has made Himself known there, but it is in a nonverbal manner. Whereas here in the Bible, we can read in human language what God has said, where He has made His character known, where He has made His mind known. And so it is more specific – it is more targeted and it communicates more than nonverbal things like creation could do.

Now, setting things up very systematically here – when I use the term “revelation”, here is what I want you to write down about that. A very simple definition; when we say that the Bible is God’s revelation, what do we mean by that? Revelation is this – here is how I am defining it this morning: when we use the term, revelation, we are saying that it is God’s disclosure of His previously unknown truth to man. It is where God has disclosed His previously unknown truth to man.

In the Bible, this unknown truth – God has displayed spiritual truth that we otherwise would not know. What is the nature of God? What is the nature of the Creator of the

heavens? Is He an arbitrary and harsh deity that is remote and uninvolved in what He has created? Or is He personal? Is He loving? Is He still involved?

Apart from the Bible, we do not know the answer to that question. Is this God in charge? Or are there other forces that compete with Him? We don't know the answer to His sovereign rule until we go to the pages of the Bible. Who is man? Who are you? You don't know the answer to that question. What is the source of man? Where did we come from? We don't know the answer to that question unless we look at the pages of the Bible. Is man basically good or basically evil? We don't know the answer to that question unless we look at the Bible.

Who is this Lord Jesus Christ by whom we measure time – where the hinge of time is “B.C.” and “A.D.” – “in the year of our Lord”? Who is this hinge of time called Jesus Christ? We don't know the answer to that question unless we look at the Bible. How is it that I as a man with a guilty conscience, conscious of sin, conscious of guilt – where do I find relief for that guilt that is prominent and lasting and assured? There is no answer to that question apart from the Bible. What is coming? What happens when I die? What is coming at the end of this world? Is there judgment coming?

Beloved, I hope you see from that little brief survey that all of the questions of “why”s that actually matter are locked up in a box that we don't have the key to on our own. The things that really matter when you are lying in bed, when you are lying on your deathbed with cancer, when you have lost someone close to you, when a parent has buried a child, someone has buried a beloved spouse – it is just total darkness. Apart from the Bible, we have to make up things and say foolish things like, “Well, maybe the Man upstairs is looking after me.” That kind of foolishness and hopelessness is what we are condemned to apart from this book.

It is a great blessing to mankind and it should be the anchor of every Christian in this room to say that the Bible is God's revelation. It is where God has spoken. It is where we find definitive, authoritative, satisfying answers to all of those questions that matter. Because in the end, even the best life of fullest prosperity of the things of this earth – when it comes to the point to take that final breath and to step from this known life into the unknown, beloved, it is incumbent upon every man who cares anything about his soul to say, “What happens then?”

When you understand that those are issues, beloved, what you start to realize is what a terrible position the human race is in apart from the Bible. Apart from the Bible, man – speaking individually and as a human race – apart from the Bible, if we were to close the Bible and to destroy every copy and just shut off God's revelation for all of eternity – as if that were possible; it is not, but speaking hypothetically – if we were in that position, apart from the Bible, apart from the God of the Bible, you and I and the whole human race would be doomed to simply stumble around like a drunk in the dark from light post to light post, looking for answers that could never be found. Totally disoriented, unable to think straight, in the dark, and not able to see. That's the picture of humanity apart from the Bible.

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But, when we open the Bible, when we open the revelation of God, we find authoritative spiritually clear answers that we can find nowhere else because the Bible is God's revelation. The fact that you hold the 66 books of the Bible in your hand this morning is the testimony of great grace from the God of the universe that He has made Himself known.

You should have welling up as we are thinking about these things together this morning a deep sense of gratitude that God has worked in your life to bring you to a point where you can have a Bible in your hands and you can read it and that if you are a Christian, you can understand it. No question about it.

Now, I want you to understand, I want us to see these things in a big picture, I also want you to see it in detail because this is such a definitive text and we owe our pastor a great debt for the many times that he has taught us from it.

But, how does this passage teach us the reality of revelation? How is it that this passage teaches us that the Bible came from God? Look at verses 7 through 9 with me again and notice this little phrase "of the Lord". "The law of the Lord", "the testimony of the Lord", "the precepts of the Lord", "the commandment of the Lord", "the fear of the Lord", "the judgments of the Lord". Six times the psalmist uses the name – the covenant name of the God of Israel – uses the name "Yahweh" to indicate that that God, the God of the Bible, is the source of the words in the Bible. He is saying that this law, this testimony, these precepts, this commandment, this fear, these judgments come from the Lord. It is the place where God has spoken.

And so God is the source of the words that we find in the Bible. This does not originate in the thinking of men. The words of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation and all points in between came from the living God, who is the Creator of the heavens and the earth, who made Himself known through the nation Israel and how He redeemed them, who made Himself known in the Lord Jesus Christ, who is in control of all of world history. That God is the God who gave us the book that you hold in your hands today. It is the word of the Lord.

Now the Bible makes that principle very plain in other places as well. Let me remind you of just a couple of familiar passages here this morning. 2 Timothy 3:16 says that:

All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training and righteousness.

All Scripture is inspired by God. 2 Peter chapter 1 – I invite you to turn there just to give your fingers a little bit of exercise. Because I have got 18 points here. We're going to be here a while. You might as well limber your fingers up – 2 Peter chapter 1. Beloved, I can't tell you how important it is to have this clear in your mind. Young people, you have got to have this clear in your mind. Everything that we say today is so fundamental.

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2 Peter 1:20 says:

But know this first of all – first of all: this is a matter of primary importance – that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will – no man generated this on his own thinking, on his own impulse – but – by contrast – men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

The origin, the source, was God who through His Holy Spirit moved in the lives of the writers of the Scripture in order to have them record what it was that He wanted to be said.

Now that passage in 2 Timothy and the passage in 2 Peter variously describe this process in a way that helps us understand how this happened without giving us all of the details. 2 Timothy describes it as a picture of a God breathing out the Scriptures through the human writers – 2 Timothy, describing it as God breathing out His words. In 2 Peter it has the picture of the Holy Spirit coming upon the writers of the Scriptures like a wind coming upon a sailboat and the wind driving that sailboat so that the sailboat is moving on the power of an energy that is not from itself, but it is from outside itself. And so the Holy Spirit carried the human authors along like a wind drives the sailboat with its energy.

That’s the picture, beloved. The source of the Bible is God Himself. In order for you to understand the intrinsic nature of the Bible – what the Bible is in its own very essence – you have to understand and recognize that God Himself spoke through the human authors of Scripture so that what they recorded is properly defined as the very word of God Himself. That’s what we have in the Bible. God used the human personalities of the authors to express His word. God is the God of language; He communicates and He used language to reveal Himself to us.

And so those writers wrote precisely what God intended. And sometimes people will say, “Well, you know if it was written by men, couldn’t there be error written into it?” I’m going to get into this in just a minute. But when you understand that God in His sovereignty, in His illimitable omnipotent power – God overruled, God works through that process – you understand that He is able to protect those human writers from injecting error so that, while it bears the mark of the personality of the human author, ultimately the source is from God and it says exactly what He intended.

Beloved, that is why we call the Bible the word of God. The Bible is God’s revelation. That’s the end of point number one.

Now because we are saying that the Bible is the Word of God, because it is the Word of God – that has an important implication. That has a very important implication and these four points are kind of locked together and reinforce one another.

But the second point is this – I want to use a more technical term here:

2. The Bible Is Inerrant

That's what we teach in Grace Community church. Many years ago, there was a group of scholars, conservative scholars that got together and they issued what is called the "Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy." And they use a definition of inerrancy that I want to borrow here today or to describe the Scriptures. Here is what we mean when we say the Bible is inerrant and article 12 of the statement says this: "We affirm that Scripture in its entirety is inerrant, being free from all falsehood, fraud or deceit."

When we say that the Scriptures are inerrant, we say that they are completely pure – they are completely free from anything that is mistaken, anything that is fraudulent, anything that is deceptive. The Bible is totally reliable in absolutely everything that it affirms; without exception, without qualification.

Now think with me for a moment. Why is that necessarily the case if God inspired the Scriptures? If the Bible is revelation from God, then it is obvious that it is inerrant. And that what we are saying here is most definitely true. If God inspired the Scriptures, they are true. Because – there is a reason for it, this is the way that you think about these things – if God inspired the Scriptures, they are true because God Himself is a God of truth. The character of Scriptures is determined by the God who gave them to us. The character of Scriptures is determined by the God who gave them to us. God is a God of truth, God cannot lie. Therefore, anything He speaks is by definition true; as stated from the other side, whatever comes from Him is free from error.

I want to give you three passages here to just jot down the references to give you a point to remember this on. Titus 1:2 says,

God... cannot lie.

Now it is interesting, this is a side point, but it is interesting. It is a mistake to think about omnipotence as God being able to do absolutely anything without qualification. No. God's omnipotence is animated by His own holy character. So God cannot lie. It is impossible for God to lie. There are some things that God cannot do. God cannot lie. He cannot violate His own holy character.

Hebrews 6:18 says,

It is impossible for God to lie.

It is impossible, that will never, ever happen. It has never happened, it is not happening now, and it will never happen throughout all eternity because God is a God of truth. In the gospel of John 17:17, Jesus said – as He prayed to the Father – He said:

"Your Word is truth."

So, we have these assurances that the Bible is completely true, free from error; it is guaranteed by the character of God Himself. Now with those things in mind, come back to Psalm 19. I want you to see these things in this immediate text as well. In light of those fundamental principles that God is the God of truth, God cannot lie, His word is truth – look at this passage in Psalm 19, verses 7-9 with those simple principles in mind and see how this Psalm requires those same conclusions where it says in verse 7:

The law of the Lord is perfect... the testimony of the Lord is sure... the precepts of the Lord are right... the commandment of the Lord is pure... the fear of the Lord is clean... the judgments of the Lord are true.

This passage, as it speaks about God’s revelation to man, sets forth the highest possible standard of purity and perfection for the word of God, because the Bible is revelation from the God of truth. That is why we believe and teach that the Bible is inerrant. God superintended the writing of the Scriptures to preserve them from error in everything that they affirm and everything that the Bible teaches. God so worked to make sure that it was absolutely accurate, that everything that it affirms is absolutely true and that no error crept into it. There is not a single cell of the cancer of falsehood found anywhere in the Bible. If there was, that cancer would multiply and dominate the whole thing. God, as it were, established a quarantine around the Bible to keep all error out, to keep the purity of truth in all that it expresses.

And so we come back to what we were saying earlier. Whatever the Bible says about God, about man, about sin, about salvation, whatever the Bible says about coming judgment is true.

And let’s go one step further, because this is where you engage the battle with squishy evangelicals. (Laughter) You liked that word, squishy, huh? I didn’t plan that word, but let me write that in. “Squishy” gets a big response. Okay, I’ve got that in for future use.

Squishy evangelicals – evangelicals who I wish would just drop the name, because when we say the Bible is inerrant, we are saying it is without error in matters of science and history as well. We reject the approach that tries to limit inerrancy to only matters of faith and practice, which is where some people try to go to make a truce with scholars in the academic world and with men at-large who want to talk about science and history and they will exclude the Bible from those.

Listen, that does not work at all. Science is a study of creation and God is the Creator. Therefore, what He says about His creation is true. The nature of Christianity is based on historical fact and therefore the history of the Bible is true as well. You can’t kick the slats out of the Bible’s accuracy in science and you can’t kick the slats out on its accuracy in history without making the whole thing come down.

God spoke in human history; God spoke about His own creation. He spoke without error. And so where the Bible teaches and affirms in matters of history and in science it is true and it is accurate, and we believe that and proclaim that without apology. We will draw

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the line in the sand, we will defend this turf to death, because we believe that the Bible is revelation from God, that the Bible is inerrant and therefore that's what's to come here are the implications of that.

What does that mean? What are we saying? We are making an exclusive truth claim. Better stated, the Bible makes an exclusive truth claim. We received the Bible as supreme, as authoritative above all other truth claims, whether they be found in religions or fields of human study. And the reason we believe that is because the Bible comes from the omniscient God of the universe in whom we live and move and have our being – there is no definition of reality apart from Him. And He has spoken in the 66 books of this Bible that you hold in your hands. The Bible is God's revelation. The Bible is inerrant.

And so for example, just to be specific and help you understand exactly what I am talking about here, to give you a little bit of illustration. We affirm that God created the heavens and the earth in six literal 24-hour days because that is the teaching of the Bible – that is the only way that you can read Genesis 1 in any meaningful way, as well as the implications of that passage as you read throughout the rest of the Bible. We affirm that principle without apology and without embarrassment over against those, including scientists, who mock that claim in favor of their own speculations that the universe just happened to come into being by nothing and by no one – that no one took nothing and created everything. We think that's foolishness. And we say, over against that, we have an explanation for the origins of the universe that is coherent and we receive it in submission to what God has said. We believe that without apology. And we will proclaim that to our dying breath. And we will pass that on to the generations that come after us as well.

Listen, beloved, when we say the Bible is inerrant, we say that there is nothing – zero – that corrects the Bible in order to conform the teaching of the Bible more closely to some abstract standard of truth. There is no correction to the Bible. It was perfect from day one when God spoke it and it has been perfect ever since. There will be no discoveries that contradict the truth of the Bible ever. No one legitimately finds error in the Bible when all the facts are known and properly understood.

Now with that said, let me make this clear as well: That doesn't mean that man and Bible scholars themselves have not been mistaken in their understanding of the Bible. Our understanding may be corrected – I'm using that in the broadest, most comprehensive sense possible – man's understanding of the Bible may be corrected, but that only means that man over here on the right has moved closer to what the Bible was always saying all along. There is a big difference between saying man moved closer in his understanding of the Bible than saying man found stuff and we drew the Bible over to what we have now learned since. No. It only goes one direction. It is man getting closer to an accurate understanding of the Bible rather than changing the Bible and correcting the Bible because somehow it was wrong from the beginning. No, no: the mistakes have always been in man not the Bible. The Bible is inerrant. The Bible came from the God of truth; it could be no other way.

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The implications of this go absolutely everywhere. And that's why it is so important for us to talk about it and be clear about it. When we teach the Bible – this is one of the implications – when we teach the Bible, we are not offering one opinion among a variety of competing opinions in the marketplace for men to take and choose what they like and what they find most appealing to themselves.

No. We do not have that prerogative as Christians. If you are saved by grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, if you have received Christ for the forgiveness of your sins and you are on the way to heaven, the only assurance you have in that is found in the pages of Scripture. There is no other place where that is revealed.

If you have staked the eternal destiny of your soul on the reality and the truthfulness and the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, you only know that through the pages of Scripture. And what that requires from you is an undivided, heart loyalty and submission to and commitment to the truth claims of Scripture. You can't pick and choose and say, "I'll take Jesus as my Savior but I'll leave the stuff about the Bible for someone else and I'm not going to make an issue of that." No, and even more so, when teachers stand up in the pulpit and open the Bible, understand – speaking from this pulpit in GraceLife anyway, as well as the pulpit at Grace Church – when we teach the Bible, we are calling on all men everywhere to subject their mind and heart and will to the teaching of Scripture. We do that because the Bible is God's revelation, the Bible is inerrant and we do not have the prerogative to diminish the scope of the authority of God's word.

This is very pervasive. This is comprehensive. We aren't offering opinions for men to take or leave at their discretion. We're saying that not because of any inherent authority of the speaker, but because of the authority of the Bible. Everyone who hears, this book has authority over him. That's what we are saying.

Now and that's the context in which the gospel should be preached. I want you to turn for just a moment in this context to Matthew 28:19. We just have to have this straight in our minds about what we are doing. Matthew 28:19, Jesus said – actually, go up to verse 18 because this fits in with everything that we're saying here:

Jesus came up and spoke to them saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth."

All authority resides in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. All authority every where in the universe resides in Him. So what does He say based on that? What does He say to His disciples? He says:

Go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you.

“Throughout all the earth, teach them all that I commanded you. Teach them to observe this.” The truth claims and the authority claims of the Bible are comprehensive over all men. We’re not carving out a pocket for Christians and then leaving other religions to carve out their own truth claims. No, we do not have that option as Christians. Jesus is the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father but through Him.

So, the Bible is God’s revelation, the Bible is inerrant. The third point for this morning, which I have already been hinting at, but I’ll make it explicit:

3. The Bible Is the Final Authority

I’ll be able to short-circuit this because I kind of led into this earlier. When the Bible speaks, the argument is over. When the Bible says something, then that is the end of it. And here in Psalm 19 – go back to Psalm 19 again – the psalmist uses several terms to highlight the Bible’s authority. I want you to see this as well. There is so much packed into these three verses.

First of all, see in verse 7 that David says this is “the law of the Lord.” It is His law; that is a comprehensive term for His revealed will, communicated in His word. God expresses His instruction, His teaching, His doctrine, in the Bible.

Verse 7 again: “the testimony of the Lord is sure” – testimony referring to God’s own statement about Himself. He is true, omniscient, sovereign. Therefore, what He says carries that same authority.

Verse 8: “the precepts of the Lord... the commandment of the Lord” – these terms indicating the precision and the authority with which God addresses us in the Scripture.

The Bible often comes in the form of divine imperatives which we are to obey not only in our actions but in our thinking, beloved. And I guess that’s what I really want you to understand and think about – is that the Bible is authoritative and we are to obey it in our thinking as well as in our external actions.

Psalm 119:4 says:

You have ordained Your precepts that we should keep them diligently.

The authority of the Bible is intended to work itself out in our lives and in our thinking and in our world view.

Verse 9: “the fear of the Lord is clean” – fear means holy reverence. It emphasizes that human response to God and His word that feels the weight of it. You hear the law of God and you should feel the need to submit to it in light of God’s holiness and greatness. His word exposes our sin. It exposes us as finite creatures. And that causes us to reverence Him in a greater way because of His surpassing greatness.

The difference between creature and Creator, of sinful versus holy, finite versus eternal – all of those things engendering fear of the Lord because you have recognized you are in the presence of One greater than you.

And then in verse 9 he says: “the judgments of the Lord are true” – judgments referring to God’s declarations, God’s assessment, of various aspects of human life, actions, and accountability. The Bible’s authority – the Bible’s judgments – are over believer and unbeliever alike. All of humanity is swept up under the final authority of the Bible.

Now beloved, when we say these things and as people that have been redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ, those of us that have been rescued from certain eternal damnation and have been placed into God’s kingdom on the road to heaven, beloved, what you should have in your heart – what should be deepest in your motivations – is a sense of undying loyalty and commitment to be faithful to this Word as that which has revealed Christ to you, that which has revealed the gospel in the way that has secured your eternal good and your eternal blessing, as the words of the vehicle by which your reconciliation with God was achieved and is now made known to you because it is the Bible that teaches us about the atonement of Christ.

And so beloved, what I want you to see is that there should just be a total sense of affection and love and loyalty to this Word that makes any thought of denying it unthinkable – that makes any thought of betraying it unthinkable – because you realize that in this word is your life and your eternal life, as it were.

Now with that said, we guard this treasure with grace and humility. We are not boastful and arrogant about this, because we are sinners saved by grace. But in that context, we say and we look at it with an unyielding firmness that refuses to be swept along with the spirit of our age. We step outside of the spirit of our age in our commitment to the Scriptures because we believe it is the final authority and we have good reasons to believe that.

Final point for this morning:

4. The Bible Is Complete

The Bible is complete. It is God’s revelation, it is inerrant, it is the final authority, and finally, the Bible is complete. To state it differently, the Bible is sufficient. The Bible is enough.

What we mean by this is that the Bible is complete for absolutely anything necessary for your spiritual life and godliness. If you are pursuing the knowledge of God, if you are pursuing comfort in your sorrows, if you are pursuing strength to meet the trials of the day, if you are looking to face death with courage and assurance, the Bible is enough to supply your spiritual need.

Look at verse 7 with me again in Psalm 19 where it says:

The law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.

The Bible is perfect because it is without error. But even more than that, this word carries the idea that the Bible is complete – it is whole, it is entire, it is without blemish. The Bible contains all that we need for salvation, all that we need to know God, all that we need to trust God, all that we need to live righteously for Him. The Bible has that transforming effect.

You can turn there if you want. But I'll just read this in 2 Timothy chapter 3, going back to this passage again. As Paul writes to Timothy – 2 Timothy 3:15 – he tells Timothy, he says:

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.

The Scriptures are sufficient to lead a man to the knowledge of salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. It is in the Scriptures where our sin is exposed, where Christ is held forth as the Savior through His death and resurrection and the call to repentance and faith is made. That's all you need. It is sufficient for salvation. And then he goes further. We read verse 16 earlier:

All Scripture is inspired by God, profitable for teaching, reproof, for correction, for training and righteousness, so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

So if you are an unbeliever, Scripture is sufficient – it is enough – to lead you to salvation through faith in Christ as you study what it says. If you have now been saved – you are born again, you are indwelt by the Holy Spirit – Scripture is sufficient to teach you everything that you need and to equip you spiritually and in your heart for every good that God would lay before you. If you have opportunities of service, Scripture equips you for that. If you are burdened by trials, Scripture helps you overcome that. If you are facing the fear of death, Scripture gives you the perspective that you need to live that in a way that keeps you trusting in God and obeying Him through all of those vicissitudes of life. Every good work, the man of God is made adequate by these inspired Scriptures.

What do we say about this when we say the Bible is complete, to say the Bible is sufficient? We are saying that the Bible makes you adequate for every situation that you encounter in life. Beloved, you don't have to look beyond the Bible to resources that you don't have. Everything is in the Bible. God's people never need to look beyond His written words to find what they need for spiritual life.

In fact, to take this a little step further, God has specifically precluded that from us. In Deuteronomy 4:2 – I'm going to give you a few different Scriptures here, just jot them

“Complete Authority”

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down – God has intended the Bible and has made it clear that the Bible would be the only standard, the complete standard for spiritual life. Deuteronomy 4:2 says:

You shall not add to the word which I am commanding you nor take away from it.

Then look at Proverbs 30:5-6 as well and Revelation 22:18-19. Almost the very final words of the Bible, God says as He closed the canon once and for all, He says:

I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues which are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city.

We do not need to look beyond the Bible for any instruction about faith and doctrine that is necessary for our spiritual life. Indeed, God has said, we cannot. It is not just that we do not, it is not that we will not, it is that we cannot.

So let me say this as I am closing. Watch out, beloved. Young people especially that are coming up and entering that college age and high school ages and as you are forming your understanding of life and your world view, watch out for people who say, “Yes, we believe in the Bible, but we believe that there are these other books as well in which God has spoken. There are other places where God has spoken that you must believe and obey.” They give a superficial affirmation of the Scriptures, but they are actually denying it when they say you need something else in addition to the Bible. That is a lie from hell! That is absolutely a lie from hell. The completeness of Scripture, the sufficiency of Scripture, is affirmed in the Scripture in a way that preempts any other truth claim – that preempts any other authoritative writings from God.

So just to be specific, the sufficiency of Scripture excludes and condemns the book of Mormon. It excludes and it condemns Catholic tradition that is held up on an equal plane with Scripture. It excludes Mary Baker Eddy. It excludes Charismatic revelations. It excludes Ellen White. And it excludes countless others because the Bible is complete. It is perfect. It has everything that the man of God needs to live his Christian life. It has everything that is needed for the unbeliever to come to saving faith in Christ.

Anything that tries to inject something additional, alongside of it or above it, is false by definition. So protect yourself from that. If those things were necessary, Scripture would not be complete and everything that the Bible said about itself would not be true.

Those teachers, those religions, cannot have it both ways. You either take the Bible alone as your sole authority or you don't take it at all. You cannot have it both ways. So let that help you in your discernment.

Why do we teach the Bible? We recognize the majesty of the Bible, the wonder of the Bible. It is God's revelation, it is inerrant, it is authoritative and it is complete. So we seek to honor God by proclaiming His word. That is our commitment.

Beloved, do you believe the Bible? Do you obey the Bible? Do you defend the Bible?

You must. It is God's Word. To deny the Bible or to disobey the Bible is to deny and disobey God Himself. Let us uphold the majesty of His Word and the authority of His Word both in our own approach to Scripture and the way corporately we proclaim and defend it to the world that God has brought before us.

Let us pray.

Father, what can we say? Your words are magnificent and we honor Your word and we believe, Father, as we honor Your word, we honor You because You are the one who gave it. We thank You for the Scriptures. We commit ourselves afresh today to study them, to defend them, to proclaim them and to obey them. Give us grace to that end.

And Father, to those that are here or those that may listen later that find themselves quivering and vacillating in the face of the onslaughts of false philosophies from the world and from other religions – Father, to those who have come under hearing of this Word today, we ask that You would give them grace and open their eyes and strengthen their hearts, Father, so that their convictions would carry them, that Your word would carry them through the confusion and give them clarity and a conviction in their heart that in the Bible, in the 66 books of the Bible, we truly have Your word and we have the clarity for all that we need for life and godliness and for salvation in Christ.

Thank You for the Bible, Father. Thank You for Your grace.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

This transcript was prepared by Shari Main.