

DEAR TIMOTHY...

AN 8 WEEK SERIES IN THE BOOK OF 2 TIMOTHY

Connect group questions

2 Timothy 3:10-16 – Dear Timothy... all scripture is God-breathed

1. Read 2 Timothy 3:10-16. If you have different translations read the passage from several different translations.

THE CONTEXT OF PAUL'S PERSECUTION AND SUFFERING

2. Read verses 10-12 again. This refers to the suffering Paul endured in Psidium Antioch, Iconium and Lystra. The record of this persecution is found in Acts 13 and 14. read Acts 13:44 to 14:20. After being chased out of 2 cities and stoned almost to death in a third, how do you think you would have responded?
3. Read 2 Corinthians 11:16-33. Here Paul lists the extraordinary litany of suffering he has endured for the sake of the Gospel. Once again, how do you think you would have responded if you had been subject to all this? Why didn't God protect Paul more? Do you think any good possibly came from Paul's suffering?
4. What applications can we make from experience to our own lives?

EXHORTATION: HOLD ON TO YOUR FAITH

Read 2 Timothy 3:14-15

5. In verse 14, Paul asks Timothy to reflect on the lives of those who had discipleshiped him. How might this help us if we are undergoing trials or difficulties? What kinds of qualities in others might be an encouragement to us?
6. In verse 15, Paul tells Timothy that another key for staying strong in his faith is focusing on the scriptures. What, in particular, does verse 15 say that the scriptures can do for us? Explain.

ALL SCRIPTURE IS GOD-BREATHED

Read 2 Timothy 3:16

7. The Bible teaches, rebukes corrects and trains us. Explain the subtle differences between each of these. Give practical examples if possible.
8. The Bible is "theopneustos" or God-breathed. Explain what this means. Are there mistakes in the Bible? In what sense is it inspired by God? Do you have difficulty believing in the inspiration of the Bible?
9. What evidence is there of the Bible's inspiration? How might we help someone who is struggling to believe in the Bible's inspiration?
10. What struggles do you experience in reading the Bible regularly? What has helped and what tends to hinder? Share some practical suggestions for being more regular and more effective in your Bible reading.

Oh Lord, help us to have a passion for your Word. Place within us, by your indwelling Holy Spirit, a desire to read your message to us. Help us to obey your Word and put it into practice, that our lives may glorify you and our faith remain strong through all that life may bring us.

Date: 9 June 2019
Services: 730, 930 Tewanin and Peregian
Series: Dear Timothy
Title: ... all scripture is God-breathed
Passage: 2 Timothy 3:10-16
Outline:

1. Introduction
 2. The Context of Persecution and Suffering
 3. Hold On To Your Faith
 4. The Scriptures are God's Inspired Word to Mankind
 5. Challenge: Believe, Read and Live God's Word
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• INTRODUCTION



• In this morning's passage we come to one of the key verses of the NT.  ***"All scripture is inspired by God, and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that all God's people may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."***

- It stands alongside another 3:16 verse - John 3:16, ***"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."***
- - These are two pivotal "3:16s" of the Bible. Jn 3:16 - affirms the person and work of Jesus, 2 Tim 3:16 affirms the divine inspiration of the Bible.
- - It's an extremely strong statement about the Scriptures isn't it?
- - And right up front, I need to ask you, do you believe this? Do you actually believe that the Bible is inspired by God? That it's not just the fallible writings of humans, but the infallible, unchanging, authoritative Word of God? Because if you really do believe that, it should have a huge impact on your commitment to reading it and living it.
- - But first, we need to understand the context within which Paul writes this extraordinary statement. Because Paul begins this passage by speaking of his experience of terrible persecution and suffering.



• THE CONTEXT OF PERSECUTION AND SUFFERING

- - Read 3:10-12 ... ***"You, however, know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, persecutions, sufferings—what kinds of things happened to me in Antioch, Iconium and Lystra, the persecutions I endured. Yet the Lord rescued me from all of them. In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted."***
- - Paul is referring here to the terrible persecution he received in three cities as he preached the gospel - in Antioch, Iconium and Lystra - which you can read about in Acts 13 and 14 - persecution which resulted in him being stoned almost to death - or possibly actually stoned to death - because the people of Lystra, after stoning him, dragged his dead body outside the city gates for the wild dogs to feed on, but the disciples gathered around him and prayed and he got up and walked away. It's an incredible story in Acts 14.
- - But this is only a very brief reference to his sufferings. In 2 Corinthians 11, he goes into much greater detail. He recounts an incredibly long list of torture and persecution that he has endured because of his faith in Jesus, and his commitment to preaching the gospel.
- - He has received 39 lashes from the Romans, not just once, not just twice, not 3 times, but on FIVE separate



occasions! And this wasn't with an ordinary old whip, but a multi-braided whip, known as a scourge, with each braid having a sharp piece of bone or metal at the end which would have ripped deep gouges in Paul's flesh. FIVE separate times!

- - But that's not all! In that same passage, he also says he was beaten with rods by Roman soldiers and THREE separate occasions. These were thick, heavy rods, much more dangerous than a baseball bat. These tended to break bones cause internal bleeding.



- - But that's not all! He also mentions his stoning - a terrible torture involving being surrounded by a crowd of people who hurled small boulders at you, often breaking bones and causing internal bleeding, usually resulting in death.



- - But that's not all! He also says that he has been in prison "frequently". The Bible only records two or three of these, but apparently there were a lot more imprisonments.
- - I'll stop there, but the list in 1 Corinthians 11 goes on much longer. It's a shocking litany of torture and torment.
- - Paul has been subject to suffering and persecution, far worse than you or I have ever experienced. And even as he writes this letter, he is under house arrest, having been arrested for his faith once more and facing an uncertain future.
- **PAUL'S EXTRAORDINARY EXHORTATION**
- - It's out of this context, that Paul makes an extraordinary exhortation and an extraordinary statement of faith.
- -Firstly the exhortation:



- **EXHORTATION: Timothy, hold onto your faith - don't walk away from it (vv.14-15)**
- - I describe this exhortation as extraordinary, because it is the exact opposite of the viewpoint that many people would have reached had they been in Paul's shoes.
- - Many people come to faith in Christ, and they cruise along OK at the beginning, but when the world turns against them, or they experience personal suffering or tragedy or hardship, they throw the towel in, they walk away from their faith, they conclude, "it's obviously not true, this Christianity business, because if God was there he wouldn't let me be going through all this." And they fall away.
- - Jesus actually spoke about this tendency in the parable of the sower.
- - But Paul, doesn't waver, not for a moment. In fact, he is more convinced than ever that Jesus is the Saviour of mankind, the gospel is true, that it is worth suffering for, that its worth dying for.
- - Paul's exhortation has two has two elements to it...



- **A. Consider the example of others**
- - In verse 14, Paul writes, ***"But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it"***
- - As Christians, we aren't meant to go solo, we aren't islands, we're a community.
- - And when things get tough, looking at the example of those who are older and wiser and more mature than us in the faith, can be a great encouragement. Their faith, and their faithfulness, can be a source of strength and inspiration for us, when things get tough.
- - In Timothy's case, it was his mother and grandmother who had discipled him and whom Paul was encouraging him to continue to look up to and emulate.
- - Are there people in this church that you can look to for strength and encouragement? People who have walked the journey for longer than you. Who have endured hardship for longer than you? Look to them. Talk to them. Consider their faithfulness. And say to yourself, if they can do it, so can I!
- - The second element of Paul's exhortation is:



- **B. Hold Onto The Scriptures**
- - In verse 15. Paul writes, ***"from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus."***
- - You know, one of the things that can happen when life gets tough, is that you can stop praying and stop reading the Bible, those spiritual disciplines can fall by the wayside.
- - But that's the very time when you need to be reading God's word more than ever! It is spiritual Food! It makes you strong! It strengthens your faith!
- - It's ironic isn't it, that at the very time when you need your faith strengthened, when you are facing your greatest challenges, that's often the time when people stop reading the Bible, when they stop feeding on God's Word, and then they wonder why their faith grows weak.
- - Paul says to Timothy, and to us, now more than ever, feed on God's Word, so that you will stay strong until the very end.

- - Let me ask you: How are you going reading God's Word?
- - Now we come to Paul's extraordinary statement of faith:



STATEMENT OF FAITH: THE SCRIPTURES ARE GOD'S INSPIRED WORD TO MANKIND



- - In verse 16, Paul writes, ***"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."***
- This is the pinnacle of this passage, in fact it is the pinnacle of Paul's whole letter, and one of the greatest statements of the New Testament.
- - This is a reference to the Bible - both the Old and New Testaments, bearing in mind that as Paul writes this the New Testament is still being formed and written, and his readers would have understood this word "scripture" to refer to the Old Testament scriptures they have been taught from infancy.
- - It is worth noting, however, that even as the New Testament was being written, it was widely acknowledged by the recipients to be Holy, inspired scripture. Thus, we read in 2 Peter 3:16 (another 3:16 passage) that the Apostle Peter acknowledges the writings of Paul as inspired scripture, even as they are being distributed amongst the 1st century churches.
- - So it's entirely appropriate for us to interpret this verse as applying to the whole of the Bible.
- - I want you to notice the 4 things that Paul says the Bible does for us:



- - It teaches us, rebukes us, corrects us, and trains us in righteousness. Let me explain what each of those mean.



- - If the Christian life is like a path, then the Bible **TEACHES** us the right path to walk - it tells us what we must do to be saved, it shows us the way God wants us to live - how we are to treat others - how we are to obey God.



- - It also **REBUKES** us when we have strayed - it says, *"Hey! You've left the path! That's not how God wants you to live!"* The Bible confronts us with our sin when we stray from God's path.



- - Then it **CORRECTS** us, it says, *"This is how you get back on the path. Stop doing what you're doing and start living God's way again."* This is how you get back on track.



- - Then it **TRAINS US in righteousness** - it gives us the wisdom and skills to stay on the path and not wander off again.
- - That's what the Bible does for us.
- - Of course, it can only do that effectively, if, (A) we read it, and (B) we give it the authority it deserves. And this is where we come to the crowning statement of Paul's argument - and one of the most fundamental assertions of the New Testament.

- - The Bible is not merely the fallible words of human beings



- - IT IS "GOD-BREATHED" - INSPIRED BY GOD HIMSELF. THIS BOOK IS HIS INFALLIBLE, AUTHORITATIVE, UNCHANGING WORDS TO MANKIND.



- - Paul uses the Greek word here, *theopneustos*, which means, ***"breathed out by God" or "breath of God"***. He is saying that these words that we read in this book, have been breathed out by God himself, that these words contain the authority and power of the living God. And when we read them, He speaks directly to us.

- - Do you believe that?
- - I've been a Christian for 43 years, and I am MORE convinced now of the inspired nature of Bible than I ever have been.



- - In fact, there is extremely strong evidence for the Bible's divine inspiration. There is the evidence of the extraordinary number of fulfilled prophecies contained in the Bible. Hundreds and hundreds of them, sometimes written centuries before their eventual fulfilment, by people who could not possibly have foreseen, in human terms, the things that would eventually transpire.



- **** One example is the prophecy of Psalm 22 that contains a description of the crucifixion of the Messiah, yet that prophecy was written centuries before the Persians and Romans had even invented crucifixion. Psalm 22 was written in 600 BC, but the Romans didn't invent crucifixion as a means of punishing criminals until 200 BC - 400 yrs later! There is no human explanation for that, apart from the miraculous inspiration of the Bible by God Himself!*
- *- In my new book, "Making Sense of the Bible", I give a comprehensive overview of the many, miraculous, fulfilled prophecies of the Bible, as well as a whole lot of very helpful insights that will help you to read the Bible, to understand it better, and to put it into practice more effectively. It's a very practical book.*
- - The Bible is a truly miraculous book. Its divine inspiration is evident in the many hundreds of fulfilled prophecies that can only be explained by the intervention of God Himself.



- - But not only is there historical and literary evidence of the Bible's inspiration. There is also personal evidence.
- - I've seen the Bible change countless lives. And it's changed mine. As I read it, I encounter the living God. He speaks to me. He teaches me. He rebukes me. He corrects me. He trains me. He transforms me. He changes my life from the inside out, through the power of His indwelling Spirit and the life changing power of His living Word.
- - But again, let me ask you, do you believe that? Do you truly believe that the Bible is God's Word?
- - It's an important question. Because, increasingly, we live in a world which rejects God's truth, which denies the authority of his Word, and this has even infiltrated the church.



- - SADLY, There's a whole branch of Christianity, liberal Christianity, which now says, *"Those bits of the Bible aren't true. And these bits can't really be true either. And these bits are out-dated. We can just rip those bits out!"*
- **** Much earlier in my ministry years, I was the senior minister at MILDURA Church of Christ. And very soon after arriving there, it became apparent that there were quite a number within the church who didn't believe that the whole of the Bible was God's Word. They would pick and choose which bits to believe and which bits to reject,*
- *So, one Sunday morning I decided to address the issue head on. I took an old hymn book, and pretended that it was a Bible, and during my sermon I started ripping pages out of it and flinging them into the air... "We can't believe this bit, so let's get rid of it. We don't like that bit, let's rip that out..."*
- *People were sitting there gob-smacked. And I could tell that some of them were getting angry because I was desecrating a Bible. And so I said, "some of you are shocked that I would desecrate a Bible like this. Yet this is exactly what we do to the Bible when we pick and choose which bits to believe and which bits to reject. How do you think God feels, when we treat his Word like this?"*
- - The thing is, if you're going to start ripping bits out of the Bible, picking and choosing which bits you will believe and which bits you won't, where do you stop?
- - The liberal church says, "Only SOME scripture is inspired. The rest you can throw away. Disregard." But I want



you to notice something very important here. Verse 16 says ***"ALL scripture is inspired by God ..."*** Not just the bits that are convenient. Not just the bits we agree with. **ALL** scripture. These are **God's** words, and we don't get to adjudicate them!

- **HERE'S THE CHALLENGE TO US ALL**
- - In a world which says truth is relative, we need to stand on the absolute truth of God's word.
- - In a world which says, you can decide for yourself what to believe, we need to say, ***"No. God gets to decide that. Not us."***
- - In a world which bends and sways to the changing winds of popular opinion and political correctness, we need to unashamedly say, along with the great prophet Isaiah:



- ***"The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the Word of God endures forever!" (Isa 40:8).***

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- - As we conclude this morning, I want to encourage you to do three things:



- **1. Believe the Bible as God's authoritative, inspired Word**
- **2. Be committed to reading the Bible daily.** Because it will teach, rebuke, correct and train you. It will feed your soul and help you to grow stronger in your faith.
- **3. Be committed to living the Bible.** To obeying it and putting it into practice every day of your life.
- - Let me finish by reading to you the very first verses of the very first Psalm in the Bible:
- ***“Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers, but whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on his law day and night. That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither.”***
