

All Scripture is God-breathed

2 Timothy 3:10-17

Introduction

There is an increasing antagonism towards Christianity in our culture. I wonder if you have felt it. It was particularly acute before the election. There are threats to religious freedom. If the Greens had their way there would be no further tax exemptions for churches and Christian schools would not have the right to appoint people that uphold their ethical standards. So one of the first acts of the LNP is going to be to introduce a bill to protect religious freedoms, because those freedoms are under attack.

Our society once held a high view of the church, but now it seems Christianity is viewed as toxic and dangerous.

The present point of most intense conflict is about homosexuality.

The culture around us has been convinced that homosexuality is not just something normal, but is to be celebrated. And anyone who dares to contradict that message will suffer the consequences.

Israel Folau was banned from playing rugby FOR LIFE for quoting the Bible Instagram while other players are given a slap on the wrist for things like drug use, drink driving and even domestic violence.

It's tempting to react with shock and indignation. How can this be happening?! Some are modifying the Bible's message to accommodate the culture around us and reduce the offence of the gospel.

The simple message from God to us today is twofold:

1. Persecution is the price of godliness
2. Scripture really is the word of God.

1: Persecution is the price of godliness

- Paul is contrasting himself with the leaders in vv1-9

- In verses 1-3 the terrible times are marked by lovers without love: lovers of self, money and pleasure. And a long list of corrupt character traits and behavior.
- In contrast to that, Paul's life:
 - o Verse 10-11: "my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, ¹¹ persecutions, sufferings"
- There is a consistency between his message and his life
- What happened in Antioch, Iconium and Lystra? Persecution? Acts 13-14.
 - o At Antioch (Acts 13) The Jews incited the God-fearing women of high standing and the leading men of the city, stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their region.
 - o Iconium (Acts 14) The Jews who refused to believe stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against Paul and Barnabas. There was a plot afoot among the Gentiles and Jews, together with their leaders, to stone them.
 - o Lystra (Acts 14) Then some Jews came from Antioch and Iconium and won the crowd over. They stoned Paul and dragged him outside the city, thinking he was dead.
- Timothy "knows all about it"
 - o Other translations, "You have followed"
 - o He has been on missionary trips with Paul
 - o He has made this way of life his own
- In fact, it is not really Paul's way of life
- If we look at the list of things that characterize his ministry, we can see a very clear reflection of Jesus. They are all true of him before they are of Paul.
 - o It was true for Jesus
 - o It was true for Paul
 - o It will be true for Timothy
 - o It will be true for some people who want to live godly life in Christ Jesus?
 - o NO – NOT SOME PEOPLE
 - o EVERYONE
- There must be a readiness to pay the price for sincere love for God and his people
- It is not voluntary suffering (masochism). It is the price of a godly life.
- Those who are in the public eye will be persecuted. However, persecution is not unique to those in public office. ANYONE who wants to live a godly life will be persecuted.
- God will rescue from every one.

- If you want a comfortable life then genuine Christianity is not for you.
 - Of course, counterfeit Christianity is available. Evil men and “imposters”
 - IMPOSTERS tells us that they are masquerading as men of God
 - Deceiving and being deceived.
 - I’m glad for this verse because it answers a long standing question of mine.
 - Do false teachers know that they are teaching falsehood?
 - Apparently the answer is “No”. Because they are simultaneously deceiving and being deceived. They are deceiving others and they themselves are also being deceived.
 - These men are not ready to endure suffering for the gospel
 - So they don’t preach the gospel
 - So preach and teach something else
 - A message that pleases people

Illustration

On Monday passed a huge church near Brisbane with huge words “DUNAMIS” which means POWER! It made me wonder what they meant by that. I wonder if their church would be so huge if they change the name to “SUFFERING”!

Richard Wurmbrand

- Lutheran pastor
- Imprisoned in communist Romania
- Persecution was expected
- Before he was imprisoned he took confirmation classes to the zoo
- Asked the children if they were ready to be fed to the lions for Christ
- If they said “yes” then he confirmed them
- Eventually secret police took him away in the night and he was imprisoned
- Witnessed to his guards as they were beating him
- They knew full well what would their fate would be if they believed
- Yet they believed!
- The next day they sat together in the cell with Wurmbrand

The popularity of Jordan Peterson

- Millions of followers around the world on YouTube
- What is his message
- Life is suffering
- Meaning is found by shouldering responsibility and pushing back against the suffering

- People love it

Application

What about us?

- Will we be persecuted?
- Absolutely
- Maybe not imprisoned and beaten with rods ... not yet
- But maybe lose a \$4 million rugby contract
- Maybe lose friends
- Maybe mocked
- Michael Nielson

- Don't be surprised
- Don't be shocked
- Christianity is officially the most persecuted country in the world
- This is not something strange to Christianity
- It is the price of godliness
- Mark out those leaders that are prepared to endure persecution, opposition, difficulty for the gospel. And follow them!
- Set an example for others yourself. Endure hardship for the gospel and set an example worth following.

~ **LINK** ~

Why would anyone do that?

Only if they were convinced that the word of God is true

Which is why Paul stresses that Timothy continue in the word of God.

2. Scripture really is the word of God

- a) As for you continue
 - a. Would have been tempting not to continue
 - b. To swerve aside and modify the message
 - c. Make it more acceptable to the Jews
 - d. Paul says, don't do that. Preserve the gospel as it is.
 - e. Stick to the Bible.
 - f. Because you know from whom you learned it
- b) On knowing
 - a. Learned it from others
 - b. Became convinced of the truth

- c. Knowledge is not a purely academic, ivory tower enterprise.
 - d. It is organic: we learn from people
 - e. Timothy learned Scripture from infancy
 - i. His mother and grandmother
 - ii. – teaching our children about Jesus is vitally important
 - f. Became convinced
 - i. But he also became convinced
 - ii. There is a process of learning and becoming convinced (v14)
 - iii. They will need to become convinced of it themselves
 - iv. As do we.
- c) Purpose of Scripture
- a. Wise for salvation through Christ Jesus
 - b. In Vietnam – road to success, business manual, life manual
 - c. At one outreach I attended the girl told the guests that the Bible has all the answers for every question you could ever ask!
 - i. Who will win the world cup this year?
 - ii. Sounds complimentary but actually quite silly
 - d. Scripture makes us wise for salvation
- d) All scripture
- a. Both OT and NT make wise for salvation
 - b. Not just the parts that we like
 - c. Genesis to Revelation
 - d. Yes, even Deuteronomy, numbers, Song of songs
 - e. The storyline of Scripture is a great arc pointing toward Christ
 - f. Luke 24:27 and 44: Jesus shows how everything written in the Old Testament is about him.
- e) God breathed
- a. This Greek word is only used once in the whole Bible
 - b. Combination of God and the word for “exhale”
 - c. Hence this excellent translation “God-breathed”.
 - d. Not ‘inspired’ but ‘expired’. Not that men thought about God and found inspiration to write something, like I might write a song about someone who inspired me.
 - e. No, God breathed out Scripture, which is how we speak, isn’t it? When you speak you breathe out.

- f. What that means is that Scripture, the Bible, is the word of God.
 - i. Not that it contains the word of God alongside other words
 - ii. There are some that say that
 - iii. They say men experienced God and were inspired, then wrote the Scriptures and we don't need to take everything they write "as gospel"
 - iv. No, the whole of Scripture is breathed out by God
 - v. Of course, it is a story that enfolds over millennia and there are heroes and villains and peaks and troughs
 - vi. But as one man has described it well, "Scripture is God preaching God to us".
- f) Useful - profitable
 - a. For teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness
 - b. Both constructive and deconstructive
 - c. Scripture not only tells us what to believe
 - i. It teaches us
 - d. Scripture tells what not to believe
 - i. It corrects us
 - e. Scripture tells us when our behavior is wrong
 - i. It rebukes us
 - f. Scripture equips us to live differently
 - i. It trains us in righteousness
 - g. The word of God is confronting
 - h. Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.
 - i. This very important work
 - i. Last week: Some who deny the power of the gospel
 - ii. Are not prepared to listen, or not prepared to change
 - iii. Scripture confronts us
 - iv. That is what keeps us from going astray
 - v. Martin Lloyd Jones,
 - 1. "man is a fool"
 - 2. and the most important work of God which the word of God does is to make him realize it.

vi. We must be ready to be humbled by the word of God

Illustration

Michelle's Pentecostal experience

- A magical view of relationship with God
- The Bible was not their bread and butter
- They thrived on “worship”
- Worshippers would go to get high
- Almost like a drug
- But during the week they had no idea how to live
- They were not being taught, corrected, rebuked, or trained
- Fake muscles
 - o Arlindo De Souza from Brazil
 - o Wanted to get big but was lazy
 - o Injects himself with Synthol – a mixture of oil and alcohol
 - o huge body but can't lift anything more than you or I
 - o He didn't get strong by training

Application

- The Bible trains us
- It equips us and makes us strong in salvation
- In any one group like this there may be a number of different attitudes to the Bible
- Those who mock it
 - o It's the words of crazy middle eastern men with unpronounceable names
 - o Of course, there is no reason to imagine that they are saved
 - o They are mocking the very thing that makes them wise for salvation!
- Those who flatter it
 - o They may love it for its prose and poetry, academic pursuit
 - o But they have no genuine interest in the content
 - o They may give lip service or even kiss the cover
 - o They may even preach sermons about it

- But their message is not derived from Scripture
- It is inserted into Scripture or forced upon Scripture
- Those who delight in it
 - They sit under it and listen to God speaking through it
 - They endure its correcting and its stinging rebukes
 - They do what it says
- May we all be found among the latter
- Give priority to Scripture
 - Listen to it – it is God speaking
 - It is how we do relationship with God
 - We read, God speaks
 - We pray, God listens
- Heed it
- Delight in being taught, being corrected, being rebuked, being trained
- Don't begrudge sermons!
- They are the life blood of the church
- We'll hear more about that next week

Conclusions

- There is a price to pay for being a godly Christian
- That price is persecution
- Don't be alarmed, don't be shocked
- Remember what Jesus said

¹¹ "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.
- Continue in the Scriptures, friends.
- It is the very word of God
- Not our place to tweak it
- Listen to it and let God do His wonderful work on us through it.