

Missio Dei Fellowship exists to glorify God by delighting in Him and making Him known through the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Theology Bites–The Bible

Selected Passages

PowerPoint Presentation: None

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SermonAudio blurb:

I. Introduction.

- A. Series is because of an important survey conducted that revealed a large divide between the opinions of Americans, including those who would portray themselves as “Christian” and the reality of what the bible actually teaches.
- B. We have considered the necessity of sound doctrine/theology in the first sermon.
- C. For two weeks we consider God as He reveals Himself in the bible. Four basic questions from the survey were answered.
 - 1. God has authority over people because He created human beings.
 - 2. God does not determine all that happens, He simply knows it in advance.
 - 3. Humans exist to bring God glory and to enjoy Him.
 - 4. God is a perfect being and cannot make a mistake.
- D. It is this last one which I want to build off of in this next section which focuses upon a biblical, orthodox understanding of the bible.
 - 1. The last three sermons of this series all had one thing in common, I used the bible to make my point.
 - 2. But what do we do when we think about the bible itself? How should we approach it. Better yet, what convictions should you hold regarding the bible if you wish to call yourself a Christian.
 - a. Not all Christians will have the same view as what I will espouse.
 - b. What I wish to teach on an orthodox view of the bible.
 - c. My audience is less to a person who is not a Christian than to those who call themselves a Christian. Do you have an orthodox view and practice regarding the bible?
- E. By God’s grace we will all walk away with a higher and more glorious vision of the Word of God and its sufficiency, authority and perfection.

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1. A couple decades ago a battle was waged in our denomination— SBC— over the bible. The question was whether the bible was inerrant (without errors) in its original writing and infallible (incapable of errors) in all ways.
 2. That battle was won but also then lost as too many forgot the subtleties of Satan, who merrily did an end-around and demolished the Scripture’s authority and sufficiency.
 3. This is seen in a multitude of ways in the modern church in America.
 - a. Psychological integration.
 - b. Church Growth movement.
 - c. A rise in mysticism and experientialism—meaning signs and wonders movement.
 - d. All of these, and many others serve to direct our attention from the authority and power of the scriptures to effect any change in a person.
 - e. The result is that no longer will most endure sound doctrine, truly their ears seek to be tickled.
 4. This is at the core of our counseling ministry that we hope we will see make an impact on our city. Counseling that brings people to the scripture where they might have a proper and true diagnosis and answer.
 5. Sadly, when I look at the survey that was done it explains what I already knew, that even those inside the church do not know what to do with the bible.
- F. Review the slides.
1. The similarity of each question: The issue for the Christian is who is the ultimate author of the bible and is it both accurate and by implication it is authoritative.
 2. Today I want to begin to establish a wise way to approach our view of Scripture.
 3. As one of my daughters likes to say when I don’t get a joke, “This is a thinking joke Dad.” In the same way this sermon is a thinking one.

II. Approaching the Bible with wisdom.

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- A. The challenge in this sermon is how do I “prove” that the answers I gave regarding those slides are correct?
- B. Behind this is the reality of assumptions and presuppositions that every person in this room posses.
 - 1. For the Christian the goal would be to have “Christian” assumptions and one of those is the bible is true.
 - 2. Frankly it is doubtful that one can truly be a Christian and consider the bible to be not true.
 - a. It alone is what tells us how we can be right before our Creator, how to be forgiven, how to escape God’s judgment. It explains to us the Cross, the purpose of Jesus’ death and the necessity of His resurrection.
 - b. It tells us that there is God, that there is only one God, that he is a Triune God and that He is the sovereign creator of all that exists, including each of us.
 - c. It explains to us what is wrong with this world, what is wrong with people, including each of us.
 - d. It defines what sin is both in deed and in essence.
 - e. It tells you about Jesus, that He is both God and man. That He alone is the eternal mediator between the God the Father and us.
 - f. We learn only in the bible about the Holy Spirit who makes us alive and keeps us safe until the end of time.
 - g. Only in the bible can we learn about the Church into which every Christian belongs and how it is to work.
 - h. The bible tells us how we are to live in a manner that fits our name as “Christian” and how it is pleasing to God. It also tells us what we are not to do or be.
 - i. It is how we know that God is faithful to all His promises and it is how we know what happens after death.
 - j. We are told of the horrors and reality of hell. We learn of the certainty of God’s judgment.
 - 3. When one claims to be a Christian but then rejects the truthfulness and the accuracy of the bible, that claim becomes very weak.

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- a. In my earlier days there was a theologian named Clark Pinnock.
 - (1) Well known as a conservative theologian and champion of the Christian faith.
 - (2) In 60's he was a stalwart defender of the truthfulness of the bible. He was one of the early theologians that helped begin to move the SBC back to a solid, conservative theological position.
 - (3) But by the time the 70's came he began to doubt that the bible was accurate and true.
 - (a) The result was a reconsideration of almost every key doctrine of the Christian faith. Reconsideration that led to rejection.
 - (b) This led him to believe that the Holy Spirit was at work in other world religions.
 - (c) He taught that salvation was found in other religions but that it was because of Jesus Christ.
 - i) Essentially he said that people outside of faith in Jesus who show a measure of godliness will be given eternal life because God's love through the death of Christ has made forgiveness for everyone whether they knew it or not.
 - ii) This is very similar to the current position of the RCC.
 - (d) This then led to a rejection of eternal punishment, otherwise known as hell. Believed in annihilationism.
 - (4) By the turn of the millennium he had moved into becoming an active advocate of the theory known as "Open Theism" that haunts the church today.
 - (5) He died in 2010 and only the Lord knows his state.
- b. He is only one of many who started out in one place and ended in another.

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- (1) It is worthwhile to note that not everyone moves so strongly to the opposite end, but in my experience most do given time.
 - (2) I would argue with the one who does not believe in the accuracy and trustworthiness of the bible that whatever reason is given as to why they don't ultimately reject orthodoxy is going to be an inconsistent one.
 - c. There is a reason I think that many though find themselves coming to a new position related to the bible and therefore biblical doctrines is how they determine the truthfulness of the bible.
- C. There are two ways to approach this subject:
1. Axiopistic—this is a person who brings in a great deal of outside thought, logic, and argumentation into the discussion of bibliology, specifically regarding the Bible's self-statements regarding its truth, inerrancy, infallibility, authority and preservation.
 2. Autopistic—this is a person who holds to the belief that the Scriptures themselves are sufficient to determine the truth, inerrancy, infallibility, authority and preservation of itself. It does not rely upon outside arguments to help buttress the Bible's own declarations about itself.
 3. Notice that both positions carry presuppositions.
 - a. One assumes that the proof of the trustworthiness of the bible is found outside itself. It is found in the world of reason, logic, history and science.
 - b. The other assumes that the proof is found within the bible itself.
 - c. Some simply reject this second way by saying it is circular, but though true, it is also true of everything.
 - d. Example of evolution, in whatever form you wish, no proof, no ability to test its **ultimate** claims, and therefore it ends up in a circular argument that is built on an assumption.
 - e. This is not to say that external evidences regarding the Scripture are not helpful, but they cannot be the determining factor for what we believe.
 4. Here is what one theologian writes:

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“[T]he words of Scripture are ‘self-attesting.’ They cannot be ‘proved’ to be God’s words by appeal to any higher authority. For if an appeal to some higher authority . . . were used to prove that the Bible is God’s Word, then the Bible itself would not be our highest or absolute authority: it would be subordinate in authority to the thing to which we appealed to prove it to be God’s Words. If we ultimately appeal to human reason, or to logic, or to historical accuracy, or to scientific truth, as the authority by which Scripture is shown to be God’s words, then we have assumed the thing to which we appealed to be a higher authority than God’s words and one that is more true or more reliable.” (Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, p, 78).

- D. How does the bible present itself? In an autopistic manner.
1. 2 Timothy 3:15-17.
 - a. Emphasizes the product. It is God-breathed and profitable. “Inspired” is not the best term to use. ESV is better with “breathed out by God.”
 - b. In vs. 15 we have the power of the scripture.
 - (1) Here is one place where I find my argument that apart from believing that the bible is wholly true and trustworthy that no one can truly and rightly be saved.
 - (2) Notice how the bible is described as the source, the place, of true wisdom.
 - (3) Notice then what that type of wisdom exists to do.
 - (4) And why? Because it ultimately points us to Jesus Christ where salvation is found and in Him alone.
 - c. In 16 the product of the scripture.
 - (1) Because it is God-breathed it brings value and power into those who read it and believe it.
 - (2) It become “profitable.”
 - d. In 17 the purpose of the scripture.
 - (1) Jesus prayed on behalf of us that we would be made holy and set apart for God. How this was done is in the word of God (John 17).
 - (2) The bible does not work to no purpose. Here in vs 17 it says that the Christian, through the Word, because it is God-breathed, equips us for all that we are to be and do.

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e. 2 Peter 1:19-21.

(1) The ultimate Source— From God.

(a) When it says “interpretation” in vs 20 it is speaking of the origin of word or prophecy.

(b) The words of the prophets were not released from their own minds.

(2) The middle channels—the prophets.

(a) Acts 27:15, 17 uses the term “moved” in vs 21 to describe a ship being driven along by the wind, unable to control it.

(b) This is a good description of what a true prophet would experience. Over and over again the bible describes it this way:

i) “The word of the Lord came.”

ii) “[blank happened] according to the word of the Lord.”

(c) These prophets had confidence in the Word they were receiving. So much so that David sang, “This God– his way is perfect; the word of the LORD proves true; he is a shield for all those who take refuge in him” in 2 Samuel 22:31. (Repeat)

i) God’s way is perfect.

ii) Therefore His word is perfect.

iii) Therefore we can trust those words and find refuge.

iv) In other words, the doctrine of the bible is not some vague or intellectual exercise in reality. It is the very “stuff” of life.

v) When I see a person who does not know Christ or does not rest in the truthfulness of the Scripture I see a person who has no real idea where they are going, why they are going the way they are and what is the purpose of it all.

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vi) The bible answers all of these.

III. Conclusion.

- A. Bruce taught us not that long ago about the sufficiency of the bible. In that message he took us to Psalm 19.
 - 1. The first part of the Psalm is on the way that God has revealed Himself in and through His creation.
 - 2. In the second half David describes the glory and power of the Word of God and then its consequences.
- B. The glory of God's Word.
 - 1. The law of the LORD is perfect, restoring the soul (7a).
 - a. Declaration: Unblemished, without defect, needing nothing else to support it.
 - b. Result? Restores the soul.
 - (1) It is able to take a broken, twisted sinner and through Jesus Christ make them whole again.
 - (2) It is able to take that wandering, foolish Christian and draw them back to righteousness.
 - 2. The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple (7b).
 - a. Declaration: It is sure.
 - (1) It is not a wishy-washy thing that never settles anything. It is a firm foundation.
 - (2) Jesus said that the one who hears God's word and obeys it is like a house built upon the bedrock. It will not be destroyed.
 - 3. The precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart (8a).
 - a. Declaration: It is right.
 - (1) This means that they are straight and correct. They do not wander nor slowly fade away.
 - (2) The word also gives the sense that when something is "right" it is agreeable and pleasant.
 - b. Result? It brings joy.

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- (1) We are not left without a guide. The holy scripture is to be our guide. And there is the promise that as it becomes that guide and standard that joy is to follow.
 - (2) The rebel hates God and therefore hates His Word, but the one who loves the Lord loves His word and loves to do His word.
4. The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes (8b).
 - a. Declaration: It is pure, meaning clear and unobstructed.
 - b. Result? It enlightens the eyes.
 - (1) The word opens our eyes and shows us what really is.
 - (2) It allows us to see things clearly and to focus on what is true and right.
 - (3) It enables us to have hope as we see that God is present and at work, even in our times of great trial and affliction.
 5. The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever (9a).
 - a. Declaration: It is clean it means just that—no uncleanness, no impurity, no tainting of lies.
 - b. Result? It endures. There is never a time when the Word will be out of date.
 6. The judgments of the LORD are true; they are righteous altogether (9b).
 - a. Declaration: It is true, there are no lies and what it declares is trustworthy.
 - b. Result? We can trust those judgments.

Community Group Questions

- **Come up with as many ways as your group can to describe what a Christian's life would look like if they believed the bible was true and authoritative.**
- **How does trusting the bible affect how we interact with non-Christians in simple life situations like parenting, diets, jobs, or recreation.**
- **What questions do you have regarding the bible that the sermon raised?**