

## Scripture Alone (not first)

This message serves as an introduction to a ten part message series on Gospel words and phrases called *Gospel Dictionary*. It lays the foundation for all that will be said in the coming weeks concerning the *biblical* Gospel.

As throughout history, there are many *different* gospels being preached within the visible Church today which are actually no gospel at all. Examples include the social justice gospel, the prosperity or word of faith gospel, the gospel of politics and social reform and the gospel of new age spirituality. All these and more have served to confuse and deceive the innocent and scratch the itching ears of those who refuse to endure sound doctrine.

This series (Gospel Dictionary) intends 1). to bring the Gospel of Jesus into clear focus and 2). to bring us into alignment with the biblical Gospel and as such, we must approach the Bible as the only source of its revelation and **not** just its primary source.

During the Protestant Reformation of the 16th Century, reformers held to the doctrine of the Five Solas, the Latin word for *alone*. They are gratia, fide, Christus, scriptura, Deo gloria. The Protestant reformers held these views in protest and contrast to the false doctrines of the RC Church, specifically their doctrine of *prima scriptura* meaning, "Scripture is the *primary* source of God's revelation but not the *only* source." Such sources for revelation apart from the Bible put forward by the RC Church were the Pope, his bishops, their political influence and the practices and traditions they prescribed.

In the 18th Century John Wesley borrowed from the doctrine of *prima scriptura* when he developed his methodology for biblical reflection and founded the Methodist Church. He preached that though scripture was primary; reason, experience, and tradition were co-authoritative sources for divine revelation.

At Liberty Church we believe that the Bible is the **ONLY** source of divine revelation and the **SUPREME** authority in all matters concerning the church. All truth necessary for one's salvation and Christian life is taught explicitly or implicitly in Scripture. We recognize the need for secondary authorities such as teachers, preachers, church councils, creeds and personal experience, but none of these things are co-authoritative with the rule of Scripture. All secondary authority is subject to reform and must be held to the scrutiny of scriptural revelation (see Galatians 1:8).

For a few moments let's look at five doctrines pertaining to the supremacy of Scripture.

## **The Sense of Scripture**

The Bible makes perfect sense and its meaning is able to be understood.

**Neh 8:1-4:** *Here we see an example of a historical narrative... This text is descriptive.* The people gathered to hear the word of God not stories, experiences, opinions, political endorsements, self help principles or a call to respond to social justice issues... When the people heard the word, they mourned but the priests exhorted them to celebrate. When we hear the Gospel, it should cause us to rejoice at what God has done for us.

**Neh 8:8:** The pastor's job is to help the people understand clearly the true sense of the word of God, to rightly divide the word of God. (2 Tim 3:14-17.)

2 Timothy is the last letter Paul writes. (4:6) Look at what he charges young pastor Timothy to do... whether it's popular or not, preach the word. (4:1-5)

**Q:** Why preach the Word and not reason, experience, tradition or opinion?

**A:** Because the word of God is the **ONLY** universal standard for truth. (*Absolute truth cannot be built around one's personal experience but rather, experience must be built around absolute truth.*)

A: Only the Scriptures give us the authority to speak for God. (Jeremiah 1:2) God gives His word in order that we should tell it forth for God to perform. (1:12)

## **The Standard of Scripture**

Canon: General law, rule, principle or criteria by which something is judged. The 66 books of the Holy Bible are considered to be the Canon of Scripture.

The Bible is Infallible (perfect/precise), inerrant (without mistakes or errors), immutable (unable to be changed).

Q: How can we call the Bible the standard for truth?

A: Because of its source.

## **The Source of Scripture**

God is the source of Scripture, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit through men and women within a specific cultural and geographical context. God did not simply dictate His Word to the biblical writers nor did he animate them to write. Rather, God inspired (breathed out) the writing of the biblical authors through visions, declarations and illuminations that produced in their minds the knowledge of divine truth to be recorded and preserved for humanity.

On many past occasions and in many different ways, God spoke to our fathers through the prophets. But in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, and through whom He made the universe. Hebrews 1:1-2

Everything God is saying today he is saying by Jesus and his finished work. The Canon is closed. There is no new revelation. Jesus, the word of God incarnate (made flesh) who is the express image of God and radiance of His glory is all that needs to be said.

Because the God who, “Was and is and is to come,” is the source of the Bible, it transcends time and is applicable and profitable for everyone who reads it and does what it says.

Q: Why did God give His word to humankind?

A: Because He is holy and His creatures are sinners unaware. In order for us to see our sin we need it to be revealed to us. This happens when we are confronted with God's law.

## **The Scope of Scripture**

The entirety of Scripture is the testimony of Jesus.

You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. John 5:39

Q: Why is Jesus the scope of Scripture and not rules and laws for sin avoidance, principles for behaviour modification or various facts about human history?

A: Because Jesus is God's solution to the sin problem.

## **The Solution in Scripture**

Scripture presents a big problem, sin! From the second chapter of Genesis to the second last chapter of Revelation, sin presents a big problem but God presents a bigger solution, a permanent solution to sin, the Gospel of Jesus Christ!

The first reference to Jesus is found in Genesis 3:15 and from that point forward Jesus and his work become the main focus of the biblical text either *indirectly* through types and shadows in the OT or *directly* through the Gospels, letters and Revelation of Jesus in the NT.

Jesus is the Word of God who took on flesh. Now, by his spirit, he lives in us. This is our hope of glory (Colossians 1:27) That God's divine revelation is dwelling in us permanently. We can know the truth and the truth will set us free. That sounds like good news!

## **Conclusion**

In the Words of Paul to the Colossians (3:16)

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.”