

“Continue in God’s Word”

October 14, 2018

2 Timothy 3:14-17

I. Introduction

It was July of 1961 and the 38 members of the Green Bay Packers football team were gathered together for the first day of training camp. The previous season had ended with a heartbreaking defeat when the Packers squandered a lead late in the 4th quarter and lost the NFL Championship to the Philadelphia Eagles. The Green Bay players had been thinking about this brutal loss for the entire off-season and now, finally, training camp had arrived and it was time to get to work. The players were eager to advance their game to the next level and start working on the details that would help them win a championship.

Their coach, Vince Lombardi, had a different idea. He took nothing for granted. He began a tradition of starting from scratch, assuming that the players were blank slates who carried over no knowledge from the year before. He began with the most elemental statement of all. “*Gentlemen,*” he said, holding a pigskin in his right hand, “*this is a football.*”

Lombardi was coaching a group of three dozen professional athletes who, just months prior, had come within minutes of winning the biggest prize their sport could offer. And yet, he started from the very beginning. Lombardi's careful coverage of the fundamentals continued throughout training camp. Each player reviewed how to block and tackle. They opened up the playbook and started from page one. Six months later, the Green Bay Packers beat the New York Giants 37-0 to win the NFL Championship.

Even for those of you not “into sports,” I think the message is clear. When things get tough, when you feel you are about to drown with all the issues that are confronting you, the best thing to do is to go back to the basics. This was Paul’s message to Timothy in today’s Scripture.

As we have already seen, Timothy was feeling overwhelmed. He was being attacked by false teachers from within and without the church—false teachers who were preaching a so-called new and

improved gospel. Others, from within the church, were questioning and resisting this younger preacher who wasn't much like the Apostle Paul. Timothy was even beginning to question himself—was he really following God's leading? If so, why were things getting so difficult? Paul had just told him in [2 Timothy 3:12](#), “Everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.” Now Paul wrote in [verse 14](#), “But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it.” In so many words, Paul was saying, “Let's go back to the basics.”

Paul reminded Timothy of his grandmother and mother who had faithfully taught him the Old Testament Scriptures—back in [2 Timothy 1:5](#) he wrote, “I have been reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also.” It was from their teaching and their lives that Timothy had been ready to receive the Gospel when Paul preached it. The “basics for the Christian life” aren't found in man's writings, but in the Word of God—so Paul made some important statements about the Word of God—the Scriptures.

II. God's Word

A. First, Scripture provides instruction for salvation. Paul reminded Timothy that he had had the privilege of hearing the Holy Scriptures from infancy. It was through the work, the teaching of his grandmother and mother that Timothy was led to saving faith. Since the New Testament hadn't yet been written, the faith of Lois and Eunice were built on just the Old Testament and it was on those writings that those women helped build the faith and devotion of Timothy.

The Old Testament pointed to Jesus Christ—[turn to John 5:37-39](#). One isn't saved by believing the Scriptures, but by trusting the Christ—the Messiah—who is revealed in them. On the road to Emmaus in [Luke 24:27](#), we are told that Jesus “beginning with Moses and all the Prophets...explained to them, i.e., the two disciples, what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.” As Jesus showed, from Genesis through Malachi, that Scripture reveals the holiness, majesty, and loving kindness of God

and his gracious offer of forgiveness and redemption from sin for those who trust in Him and not themselves and seek His grace and His mercy.

Even before the death of Jesus Christ, salvation was available by grace through faith alone—based on the perfect sacrifice that was yet to be made on the cross. [Genesis 15:6](#) says, “Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness.” Jesus put it this way in [John 8:56](#), “Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad.” In a similar way, the men and women mention in Hebrews 11, as well as every other Old Testament saint, were saved “through faith in Christ Jesus.” Whatever they may have known or not known about the coming Messiah, they understood that He would come to suffer for their sins as the sacrifice that would satisfy God—[Hebrews 11:13](#) says, “All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance. And they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth.” In your spare time, re-read [Isaiah 53](#).

B. All Scripture is God-breathed. Paul then wrote that “All Scripture is God-breathed.” The doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture is extremely important and a doctrine that Satan continues to attack—he continues to ask the same question he asked Eve in [Genesis 3:1](#), “Did God really say...” It is inconceivable that God would give His people a book they could not trust. [Deuteronomy 32:4](#) says the He is a God of truth. In [John 14:6](#) Jesus is “the Truth” and in [1 John 5:6](#) we read that “the Spirit is the truth.” As [Hebrews 6:18](#) says, “It is impossible for God to lie.”

God sometimes breathed His words into the human writers to be recorded much as dictation. He said to Jeremiah in [Jeremiah 1:9](#), “Now, I have put my words in your mouth.” But more often God used men of God to write the Word of God—[turn to 2 Peter 1:20-21](#). The Spirit didn’t wipe out the natural characteristics of the writers. Each writer has his own distinctive style and vocabulary. Through the influence of the Holy Spirit on the Bible’s writers, they wrote God’s truth, accurately and trustworthily. The Bible isn’t a collection of the wisdom and insights of men, even of godly men. It is God’s truth.

This includes the New Testament as well as the Old Testament. Paul wrote in [1 Corinthians 2:13](#), “This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words.” Peter recognized that Paul had been used by the Lord to write God’s Word—[turn to 2 Peter 3:15-16](#). The New Testament is as much God’s Word as is the Old Testament.

As the Word of God, whatever the Bible says about itself, man, God, life, death, history, science, and every other subject is true. But this does not mean that every statement in the Bible is true, because the Bible records the lies of men and of Satan. But the record is true.

C. All Scripture is useful. Paul then wrote, that as the Word of God, “All Scripture ... is useful.” He gave four ways in which Scripture is useful beginning with “for teaching.”

1. For teaching God-breathed Scripture provides the Christian all that is necessary for one to live as our heavenly Father desires us to live, i.e., it tells us what is right. Turn to God’s command to Joshua as he was about to take over as Moses’ successor—[turn to Joshua 1:7-8](#). In [Colossians 3:16](#) we read, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.” God’s Word must be the blueprint for every Christian’s life—[2 Timothy 2:15](#) says, “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.”

2. For rebuking A 2nd work of Scripture in the life of believers is “for rebuking” or reproof, i.e., what is not right. Scripture exposes sin—[turn to Hebrews 4:12-13](#). This doesn’t mean that the Scriptures are useful in finding fault; what is meant is that they are valuable for convicting a person of the error of his ways. Scripture is to be the guideline by which every thought, principle, act, and belief are to be measured. [Psalm 119:105](#) says, “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.”

3. For correcting God’s Word steers us away from sin and towards righteousness—this is the 3rd use of Scripture: “for correcting,” i.e., how to get right. After exposing and rebuking false belief and sinful conduct in believers, Scripture is useful in getting them back on the right path. If one allows the

Holy Spirit to move in his life, Scripture can help him grow in his Christian walk—1 Peter 2:1-2 says, “Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind. Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation.”

4. For training in righteousness Finally, Paul wrote that Scripture is useful for “training in righteousness,” i.e., how to stay right. One must never think he knows all there is to know, no matter where we are in our Christian walk, we need to be like the psalmist who wrote in Psalm 42:1, “As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God.” If you truly love God, you will want to spend more time with Him. And the more time we spend in God’s Word, the more we will be like Him—we will “stay right.” If we spend time in God’s Word, then, as Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 3:18, “we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.”

D. All Scripture equips us for service. Paul closed his challenge to Timothy by writing that “all Scripture equips us for service.” Any Christian can be a man or woman of God by studying the Word of God, obeying it, and letting it control his life. The Word of God furnishes and equips a believer so that he can live a life that pleases God and do the work God wants him to do. The better we know the Word, the better we are able to live and work for God. In Ephesians 2:10 Paul wrote, “For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” James wrote in James 2:18, “Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do.” Later in verse 26 James wrote, “As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.” Scripture equips us for service to God.

III. Conclusion

As I was working on this sermon I was reminded of an acronym for the B-I-B-L-E—**Basic Instructions Before Leaving Earth**. God inspired the writing of His Word—this by the way makes the

Bible different from every other book—it is holy. It has been set apart by God for special sacred uses. It gives instructions concerning life on earth and life after death. It begins with the means of salvation.

Today, with the aid of the New Testament, we have an easier way to know the way of salvation—**John 3:16** says, “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” In **Acts 4:12** Peter made it clear that this is the only way to be saved from an eternity in hell, “Salvation is found in no-one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”

But it doesn't stop there, David summed up this special instruction book in Psalm 19—**turn to Psalm 19:7-11**. The purpose of studying the Bible is not just to understand doctrines or to be able to defend the faith, as important as these things are. The ultimate purpose of Bible study is the equipping of the believers who read it. It is the Word of God that equips God's people to do the work of God. It is God's **Basic Instructions Before Leaving Earth**.

The times are not going to get better, but we Christians can become better people, even in bad times. We must separate ourselves from that which is false, devote ourselves to that which is true, and continue to grow as we study the Word of God. Then God can equip us for ministry in these difficult days, and we will have the joy of seeing others come to a knowledge of the truth and the joy that we are returning the love of the One who gave His life of us. As **Hebrews 12:1** says, “Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses or examples, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.”