

The All-Sufficiency of Scripture

“Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart, since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God; for “All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, but the word of the Lord remains forever.” And this word is the good news that was preached to you” (1 Peter 1:21-25).

The Bible is the inerrant word of God, given through the work of the Holy Spirit through the prophets and apostles.

The questions before us are:

Is Scripture enough?

What does it take to bring people to God?

Do we need an angle to present the gospel to a hostile and unreceptive world?

And if, God forbid, someone should be offended or reject the message, does that mean we have failed?

I. THE SCRIPTURE PROCLAIMS ITS OWN SUFFICIENCY.

Consider again 2 Timothy 3:16-17: “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.” (NIV)

This passage clearly declares the inspiration of the Bible.

The word, “*inspired*” is from a Greek word which means “God-breathed.”

But this verse also loudly proclaims the ALL-SUFFICIENCY of scripture in meeting the needs of every person.

Because Scripture links inspiration with all-sufficiency, the Bible is both wholly inspired AND wholly sufficient, or it is not inspired at all.

How does this passage teach the sufficiency of scripture?

Scripture Teaches Truth.

The word translated “*doctrine*” or “*teaching*” has reference to the content of scripture.

The Bible is the operating manual with all the facts (truth).

We cannot please God without knowledge of this truth.

Scripture Reproves Sin (profitable for reproof).

The Hebrew writer describes God's word as a 2-edged sword that cuts deep and exposes our innermost thoughts and motives.

4:12-13: *"For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account."*

The term for "naked" was used of criminals who were led to execution – a dagger to the throat would force him to look up.

The Bible exposes us for who we are. It not only defines our actions as right or wrong, but it discerns our thoughts and intentions.

Scripture Corrects Behavior.

The Greek word for "correction" literally means to "straighten up or lift up."

Scripture is profitable for restoring us to a proper spiritual posture.

It does not leave us hopelessly groveling in the guilt of our sin (since it has reproved us).

It sets on the right path again.

Scripture Trains in Righteousness.

It disciplines us in the things that are right, or according to God's desire.

It develops in us the fruit of the Spirit who delivered it (Galatians 5:22-25): *"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit."*

II. TRUE DISCIPLESHIP INVOLVES TRUSTING IN THE SUFFICIENCY OF GOD'S WORD ALONE.

Consider Jesus' statement in John 6:63; 66 and 68: *"It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life...From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more. Then Jesus said to the*

twelve, 'Do you also want to go away?' But Simon Peter answered Him, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.'"

Peter recognized the sufficiency of Jesus' words to supply his true need.

Even apart from the miracles that caused others to follow Him, Peter was willing to follow without the promise of being fed a meal or to be entertained.

The Apostles consistently called people to the all-sufficient Word.

Paul wrote to Timothy (1 Timothy 4:6): *"If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine which you have carefully followed."*

Paul said to the elders of Ephesus (Acts 20:32): *"So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified."*

Peter wrote in 1 Peter 2:2: *"As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby."*

James 1:21 says: *"Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls."*

III. THERE IS A NEED FOR DISCERNMENT OF SCRIPTURE.

Many have lost confidence in the sufficiency of scripture to do God's work because they have failed to learn its truth and how to apply it to their problems.

Paul tells us that the Word of God is a vital part of the Christian's spiritual armor.

It is the only offensive weapon He has given. Ephesians 6:17: *"And take....the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."*

The sufficiency of the scripture to answer the temptations of Satan is exhibited through Jesus' ability to properly apply the right truth in the right circumstance.

In Matthew 4:1-11 Jesus answered Satan's temptation each time with, *"It is written..."*

How is your skill with the sword of the Spirit?

In Paul's description in Ephesians 6:17 (sword of the Spirit), he uses a word that doesn't indicate a large battle sword we often think of.

The word describes a small sword (like a dagger or knife) that was sharp on both

edges, and could be inserted with precision.

The term he used for “word” in this verse means a single, specific statement -- to apply a single statement of God to the specific circumstances of my life.

The sufficiency of the Scripture can only be evident when we seek to communicate all the truth God has revealed.

We cannot avoid doctrine because it appears to be confrontational or unappealing to the unconverted.

Matthew 28:19-20: *"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."*

Paul gave Timothy a solemn charge to preach the word in 2 Timothy 4:1-5:

"I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry. "

CONCLUSION:

Charles Spurgeon used to tell the story that during the reign of Nero there was a great shortage of food in Rome.

There was plenty of food in Alexandria, and ships regularly came from that city.

But as the hungry people gathered at the dock to await the shipment, they were miserably disappointed.

The tyrant Nero had ordered the ships to bring back only sand to be used in the arena. But the people needed corn, not sand.

Then one of the merchants spoke to the shipmaster and said, *"Take good heed that you bring nothing back with you from Alexandria but corn; and whereas aforetime you brought in the vessel a measure or two of sand, bring not so much as would lay upon a penny this time. Bring nothing else, I say, but wheat, for these people are dying; and now we must keep our vessels for this one business of bringing food to them."*

We need to make sure that this church is dedicated to no business other than carrying the only food that starving people need -- no sand.