

2) The Intention of the Word of God Written - 2 Timothy 3:15-17

“(But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it)...and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the Sacred Writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.”

The last time I spoke I began a mini-series on the Word of God. We looked at the Word of God as our sole authority--**Paul outlined for us a major issue: as we seek to serve God and glorify Him in our lives personally and as a church, there is going to be opposition from men**--these men will be in opposition for several reasons.

- 1) The first, because of their **ignorance** of the truth.
- 2) The second, they simply **hate** the truth they do know!
- 3) And third, they are stuck in a **downward spiral** of wickedness--they are going from dark to darker, wicked to wickedder, their depravity is deepening and common grace diminishing.

Paul presents this issue to Timothy with serious warning--**WATCH OUT! YOU ARE GOING TO FACE THESE MEN!** But Paul does not stop there with presenting the problem: Men are in darkness and are going to oppose you. Of course, this would have left Timothy asking the question, *"What am I supposed to do?"* So, wisely, Paul then gives Timothy the solution:

God has literally breathed out His words for you in the giving of Scripture.

The solution is found in God's words and by knowing and adhering to these words, Timothy (and us today) are able to resist and survive these evil opponents and live lives glorifying to God. So, therefore, God's word, the Bible, is our sole authority!

This inevitably leads us to ask the question: "What is the purpose of God's word? What is it's intention?"

Well, before we can understand it's intention or purpose, we need to understand the reader. Does God's word have the **same purpose for everyone who reads it?**

(TWO CATEGORIES!) If we turn to Jesus' words we find that Jesus separates all of mankind into two categories: saved and unsaved, sheep and goats, there are those on the narrow way leading to heaven and there are those on the broad way leading to destruction, those in the light and those in darkness.

So I ask again, does God's word have the same purpose for the Believer who reads it as it does for the unbeliever who reads it?

For the believer the Word of God is the means by which he/she is sanctified.

For the unbeliever it is the power of God to save their soul!

Several months ago I preached a sermon on the difference between Justification and Sanctification. Justification is the actual moment of salvation, when the unbelieving person is regenerated, puts their faith in Christ, repents of their sin, and is justified before God through the righteousness of Christ. Sanctification, on the other hand, is the work that begins at Justification and ends with glorification in Heaven--**it is the continual process of growing in holiness: putting off the old and putting on the new, fighting against sin, striving for holiness.**

So, the Word of God serves two purposes: one for the believer and one for the unbeliever. **Let us first look at it's intention for the unbeliever:**

In the work of salvation, God uses **two means** by which an unrepentant sinner turns to Jesus Christ with saving faith:

The **Word of God** and the **Spirit of God**, also called the Holy Spirit. Let's briefly look at the role each of these plays in the process of salvation.

the Holy Spirit:

★ Role of the Holy Spirit in Salvation:

→ **Titus 3:5,6:** "...He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to His own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior..." **Washed and regenerated by the Holy Spirit!**

→ **1 Thess. 1:4,5:** "For we know, brothers loved by God, that He has chosen you, because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction...." **The Word needs the power of the Holy Spirit--the Word cannot stand alone, neither the Spirit without the Word. They are a team, they go hand-in-hand.**

→ **Finally, we see in Jesus' encounter with Nicodemus in John 3:3-5 the vital role the Spirit plays:** "Jesus answered him, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.' Nicodemus said to Him, 'How can a man be born when he is old? Can he

enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?' Jesus answered, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.'"

In order to be born again, to be saved, one must be born of the Holy Spirit of God! The Spirit must be at work in a person's heart, the Spirit must open their eyes to the reality of their need for a Savior and the infinite beauty and power of Christ's death on the cross!

Now let's look at the role of the **WORD OF GOD** in salvation:

the Word of God:

★ How is the WORD OF GOD the instrument of Salvation for the sinner?

I want to first re-affirm Scripture here which makes clear to us that **there are many beautiful facets that make up our salvation**. There is an actual ORDER OF SALVATION--different events that make up the Believers salvation from God.

[ORDER OF SALVATION:]

Predestination
Effectual Calling (the Irresistible Grace of God)
Regeneration
Faith+Repentance
Justification
Adoption as Sons & Daughters
Sanctification
Perseverance
Union w/ Christ
Glorification

Now, some of these "events" happen simultaneously. For instance, effectual calling, regeneration, faith+repentance, and justification are: **"Not chronological, logical."** They happen simultaneously, yet assume a perfect order: one cannot be justified without first repenting and believing. BUT one cannot repent and believe unless they are first regenerated or made alive, and they are not made alive unless they have been effectively called by God! So we see this order of salvation over and over in Scripture.

So, back to the Word of God as the SECOND INSTRUMENT of the BELIEVER'S SALVATION:

Look first to our TEXT:

2 Timothy 3:15: "...and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the Sacred Writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus."

The Sacred Writings, the Word of God the Bible, are able to make us wise for salvation--let's dig into this a little deeper. How exactly does Scripture do this?

REGENERATION → James and Peter tell us of this power of the Word for **regeneration** (when God raises us from our state of **spiritual deadness and brings us into a state of spiritual life**, thus enabling us to repent of our sins and believe with faith in His Son).

James writes (James 1:18), "*Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.*"

...and Peter writes (1 Peter 1:23), "*...since you have been **born again**, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God...*"

So...the Word is essential in Christ's work of REGENERATION!

FAITH+REP. (CONVERSION) → Further, the acts of repenting of one's sins and putting one's faith in Christ, often referred to simply as 'conversion', also requires the WORD:

We see this in **Romans 10:12-17**, "*For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing His riches on all who call on Him. For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.' How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, 'How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!' But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, 'Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?' So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.*"

→ **It is an interesting picture Paul paints here:** He explains salvation simply: **call on the name of the Lord!** But then he asks the obvious: **How will they know** who to call upon unless it has been preached to them, **unless they've heard?** Faith comes from hearing Paul says--**hearing what?** Hearing the **word** of Christ--these words we have here in the Bible! Remember, the inspired words

of God.

That is how the unbeliever comes to faith--**through the word!**

{ ★ side note: Acts 13: The Holy Spirit AND THE CHURCH sent them... ★ }

JUSTIFICATION / INITIAL SANCT. → The Word of God, the Bible, is also critical in God acting as Judge declaring the sinner GUILT FREE and RIGHTEOUS. This initial cleansing of the Believer from guilt and sin is completed through the Word!

In Ephesians we find Paul speaking of the relationship Christ has with His church. He says that Jesus gave Himself up for the church by dying on the cross in order that:

Ephesians 5:26: “...that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the Word...”

→ Paul is speaking here of the initial cleansing of Christ’s bride, the church, through the Word of God--the Word is the cleansing instrument by which our guilt and sin is washed away. Further...Jesus says in John’s gospel:

John 15:3: “Already you are clean **because of the Word** that I have spoken to you.”

So...it is clear that the WORD OF GOD, coupled with the Holy Spirit, is the means by which the Believer is JUSTIFIED AND INITIALLY CLEANSED!

EVANGELIZE: You see, in order for any of this “salvation stuff” to make any sense a person must first see themselves as unrighteous, as a sinner who is going to stand before a PERFECTLY HOLY AND RIGHTEOUS JUDGE IN GOD the FATHER...that recognition is the beginning of salvation! **No one takes medicine or goes to a doctor if they think they are perfectly healthy!** Who goes to the doctor? Those who know they are sick, right? It is the same with Jesus Christ--if you do not see yourself as needing a savior, Jesus Christ means nothing to you! He may seem like a great guy who taught some really profound things and did some crazy miracles--*but that will be all He is to you.* So, it is crucial that we first see ourselves **as we truly are:** sinners by nature who need a Savior.

It is then that we run to the cross and cling on to it for dear life! It is then that we take the medicine the doctor prescribes; *that we obey the words of Jesus:* “Repent

and believe the Gospel!” It is then that we turn from our sins and put our trust in the work of Jesus Christ on the cross.

And once we do that, once we repent and put our faith in Christ, He washes us of our sin, He takes away the guilt of our past sins, He puts on us the robe of Christ’s righteousness, bringing us back into a right relationship with the God the Father!

★ So, the purpose and intention of the Word of God for the

UNBELIEVER WHO READS IT, is that it might bring them to

SALVATION!!! Along with the Holy Spirit of God, the Word is absolutely necessary to save!

WHAT THEN IS IT’S PURPOSE AND INTENTION FOR THOSE ALREADY SAVED?

Go back to our text:

★ **2 Tim. 3:16, 17:** *“All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, (that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.)”*

The **first intention** that the Word of God has for the believer is teaching. Literally: **THAT WHICH IS TAUGHT, or DOCTRINE.**

→ **DOCTRINE:** Without doctrine and we cannot grow to maturity in Christ--as Believers, doctrine is our spiritual food by which we grow strong and healthy.

Doctrine is not something to be scared of or rejected. Sadly modern-day evangelicalism has all too often discarded doctrine in the name of love or unity. They have thrown out some of the most critical elements of God’s Word in order to avoid offending particular social groups or demographics. **This is WRONG and I want to show you why...**

TAKE FOR INSTANCE the...

→ **Doctrine of God:** The Doctrine of God, answering

questions such as: Who is God? What has He done? What is He like? How do we worship Him? The Apostle John tells us in

John 4:24, *“God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”*

If we are to obey this command we must understand something of what God has revealed to us about HIMSELF!

Further, there is the...

→ **Doctrine of Salvation:** Propitiation, Imputed Righteousness, Adoption, Regeneration, Redemption, **WHAT DO THESE WORDS MEAN? THEY ARE IMPORTANT!**

Many Christians simply think simply in terms of a “broad-stroke work of salvation” and yes, in a very real sense, that is all we need **BUT if we are going to enjoy, in it’s fullness, the life and gift God has given us we must understand it in its fullness and its different dimensions.**

FOR EXAMPLE: A Beautiful Diamond. Yes, it is a diamond simply put. However, if you get a microscope and examine it under the microscope, what do you find? Hundreds of incredible facets to this diamond which are the essence of it’s beauty!

GOD IS MY FATHER!!!! Do we appreciate that? We’ve been **ADOPTED BY GOD AS HIS CHILDREN!!!** He is the perfect, loving Father that you and I never had--was never possible to have on this earth! No matter whether you have or had a very real, faithful earthly father or not, God is the perfect father and He makes that truth clear in Scripture--we have been adopted as His sons and daughters!

ALSO...WE HAVE CHRIST’S RIGHTEOUSNESS!!! Do we live with this confidence? **That in God’s eyes we are perfect--we have not only been forgiven, we have been declared RIGHTEOUS!** Has this reality struck you? Sure, we can understand God saying: I forgive you.

But do you realize, and live in the realization, that Jesus has imputed His righteousness on you?

Understanding these facets of our own salvation not only reveals the deeper

beauty of God’s grace but it allows us to live with the proper confidence

and

comfort that God has intended for us to enjoy.

→ **Doctrine of Man, Sin, Satan:** Who do we wage war against? Many people assume that sin originates and ends with Satan--Satan is tempting me, Satan is making me fall, Satan is pulling me away from God. **Do you know that the majority of your shortcomings and temptations arise out of your own heart without the help of Satan?**

"If the devil were eradicated today, the world would still be full of sin tomorrow!" - Charles Vuolo

SCRIPTURE IS CLEAR: Mark 7:20-23: *"And He (Jesus) said, 'What comes out of a person is what defiles him. For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.'"*

THE WORLD: Do we understand the affects the world has upon us? The influence it has on our hearts? Or do we simply blame everything on Satan → "SATAN MADE ME DO IT!"

Having a right understanding of the DOCTRINE OF MAN, SIN, and SATAN has a direct influence in how we live from day to day!

These issues confront us every day, from the moment we wake up until the moment we

fall asleep (and often in between).

→ **Doctrine of Sanctification:** What has God already done in me? What is my role in sanctification? DO WE LET GO AND LET GOD?? Do we say, "I just need to do better! I need to do everything!"

How do we strike a balance? Phil. 2:12-13: *"...work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure."*

UNDERSTANDING THIS BALANCE IS INVALUABLE: *Justification is monergistic* (GOD to MAN, one way traffic), *sanctification is synergistic* (GOD to MAN, MAN to GOD, two way traffic).

A wrong understanding of this has led to widespread false doctrine in the church! 'Emergent Church' leaders have confused this important distinction and led thousands into believing a false Gospel! Tim Keller, Pastor and Author, said:

"It is bad to detach conversion from discipleship but it is also bad to confuse them. The Reformers agreed that justification and sanctification were both by-faith-not-works, yet they also said justification was monergistic and sanctification was synergistic. It's an important distinction or else it is not Christ that saves us but our following of Christ that saves us."

DO YOU SEE HOW IMPORTANT THIS IS? WE MUST VALUE DOCTRINE!

Two more...

→ **Doctrine of the Church:** Sanctification is never commanded to be done alone! We are commanded to be a part of community...WHAT IS THE CHURCH SUPPOSED TO BE? HOW IS IT SUPPOSED TO BE RUN? WHO IS SUPPOSED TO BE IN IT? WHO IS OUT?

→ **Doctrine of End Times:** Finally, what is coming for us? Where is our confidence? Is Christ coming again? Has He already come? WHAT ARE WE SUPPOSED TO BE DOING IN THIS TIME BEFORE HIS RETURN? **Are we echoing the words of John who, when Jesus said, "Surely I am coming soon." said, "Come, Lord Jesus!"**

DO YOU SEE THE IMPORTANCE OF THESE ISSUES? Doctrine is not for the Seminary Professors and Pastors. The purpose of God's Word is to teach each and every believer God's doctrines. WE NEED TO HAVE A PASSION FOR THIS STUFF! WE NEED TO BE ON FIRE FOR GOD'S TRUTH.

Literally, we need to count God's Word as more important to us than our daily food!! Could you imagine the impact we would have upon this world if every believer understood, believed, and acted on these truths?

THE SECOND INTENTION OF THE WORD of GOD FOR THE BELIEVER IS FOR REPROOF AND CONVICTION:

→ **REPROOF/CONVICTION:** This is the same word used in Matthew 18:15, *"If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother."*

The Scripture is the “straight-edge” which shows us that we are crooked! We may think, “Man, I’m doing pretty good!.” That’s when Scripture comes in and, as Jay Adams said, “Scripture knocks us down and then sets us up again.”

FOR EXAMPLE: It’s like bad technique on the sports field. I may have problems with my kicking so how will I correct it? **If I’m first shown where my technique is bad!** Scripture shows us our bad technique! Which leads us into the next INTENTION of the WORD of GOD FOR THE BELIEVER:

→ **CORRECTION:** God not only shows us where we’re wrong but He does so in order to improve us! To get us back on the right path towards holiness. BASIC PUT OFF, PUT ON DYNAMIC.

Ephesians 4:22-24 “...to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self...”

The FINAL PURPOSE or INTENTION of the WORD of GOD FOR THE BELIEVER IS THAT OF:

→ **TRAINING IN RIGHTEOUSNESS:** The process by which we learn to avoid the wrong and do the right.

FOR EXAMPLE: Training for a sport--I train my body and mind to slowly get better and better. **The goal is Christ-likeness, conformity to Christ.** It requires training, it requires sacrifice, it requires making our minds and bodies slaves to righteousness! Romans 8:29: “...He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son...”

IN CONCLUSION:

There are **TWO GREAT NEEDS OF MANKIND: Justification and Sanctification.**

Paul is saying, “Timothy, the Scriptures were the means by which you were saved! The power of salvation lies in scripture--it contains the gospel. But they do not end there, post-conversion the Scriptures are now going to teach you, convict you, correct you, and train you in order that you may grow in holiness and Christ-likeness!”

I pray that we become people who are increasingly consumed with a passion for God’s Word and for discovering the MANY FACETS OF THIS INFINITELY BEAUTIFUL DIAMOND. Let’s pray.