

Text: I Peter 1:22-2:3

Title: “The Word of God”

INTRODUCTION

I think it’s one of Jesus most powerful parables or images ...

Matthew 7:24-27 - “Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. 25 The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. 26 But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. 27 The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.”

The storms of life will come. Is your life, your home, built upon the reliable, powerful Word of God?

Do you understand how absolutely essential the Word of God is to your life in Christ? Do you understand how absolutely essential it is for you to know what God’s Word says, and for you to obey what God’s Word teaches?

Open your Bibles with me to I Peter 1:23. Today I want to challenge you about you and your Bible. Everything we believe, everything we do, as the people of God, is based upon the truths contained in the Bible. Read text.

The Word of God is essential to our life in Christ. Here’s how we relate to the Bible:

1. OUR CONFIDENCE IN GOD’S WORD (1:23-25)

ILLUSTRATION – This past week we were stunned at the tragedy that occurred in Tallmansville, W.Va. There was an explosion in a coal mine that trapped 13 miners 260 feet underground. Rescue crews worked for two days to get to the trapped miners. As they did, the families waited nearby at the Sago Baptist Church. Then, apparently, there was a breakthrough. Word began to flow from the mine that 12 of the 13 miners were alive. As you can imagine, a tremendous celebration broke out inside the little church. The governor, who was holding vigil with the families, confirmed the report. Then throng of people who gathered began to sing the hymn “How Great Thou Art.”

That was Tuesday night. And on Wednesday morning if you picked up the newspaper before you listened to any other news, you read the headlines (SEE NEWSPAPER).

“TRAPPED MINERS FOUND ALIVE”

It quoted the wife of one of the trapped miners said to a reporter, “Miracles happen in West Virginia, and today we got one.”

Well, by now you've heard of the tragedy after the tragedy. The reports that came out of the mine that 12 had been rescued were misinformation ... incorrect ... faulty communication. Twelve miners had, indeed, been found, but they were dead. Only one miner was found alive.

The celebration in the church turned to confusion. There really wasn't a miracle after all.

What a tragic turn of events! And we learn from this that people make mistakes, including the media, and we can't always trust what we read or hear or even see.

But I'm here today to encourage you that while you may not be able to always read your newspaper or an internet blog and believe what you read, I hold in my hand writings that you can trust ... writings you can have confidence in ... the Word of God.

Now how do I know that?

- I know it because the Bible is the Word of God ... the Word of *God*. A perfect God would not reveal Himself through anything that wasn't perfect. If God is reliable, then so is His Word. It is futile for us to talk about God's reliability without including the reliability of His Word.
- I know it because there is a record of thousands of years of testimony from people who have found the Bible to be reliable ... people who have believed the Word of God, and have not been disappointed.
- I know it because of what the Bible says about itself.

II Timothy 3:16-17 - All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17 so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

II Peter 1:20-21 - Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. 21 For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

And take a look again at what Peter says in I Peter 1:23-25.

We have confidence in ...

- **The power of God's Word**

SHOW VV.23-25. HIGHLIGHT "born again"

Now Jesus is also called "the Word of God." God's perfect revelation of Himself came to us primarily through Jesus Christ, the Word of God *in person*. And we also know that God gave to us His Word *in writing* so that we can have a written record of the truths that we believe, about Christ, and about the Kingdom of God.

And these truths, summed up and captured in what we call the Gospel, has the power to change lives.

Hebrews 4:12 - For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

We don't just read the Bible, it reads us. It has the power to do amazing things by the Spirit of God when that seed is planted in our hearts and minds.

- **The perfection of God's Word**

Everything connected with humanity is infected with the virus of sin and imperfection. But not God's Word.

SHOW VV.23-25. HIGHLIGHT "imperishable"

The word "imperishable" means it doesn't decay ... it's not corrupted.

Now you may say, "Wait a minute. Didn't God use human beings to communicate His Word? They could have made a mistake. Yes, and that's why we have confidence in ...

- **The preservation of God's Word**

SHOW VV.23-25. HIGHLIGHT "living and enduring"

Because God is living and enduring, His Word can only be living and enduring.

You see, when God first revealed His Word to men whom intended to write it down and pass it along ... God by His Spirit was vitally involved in making sure that the Word was communicated and transmitted perfectly.

God inspired these men, like Moses, David, Isaiah, the Gospel writers and Paul, to write down the truths and the details. We believe that God didn't just leave these men to write what they thought, but that He inspired specific thoughts and words. These men because the "pens" that God used to write out His Word for all generations.

Now God's Word was passed along verbally for a period of time, then it came time for it to be written down. And God was guarding the process so that His Word would be preserved.

In order for the Word to be spread, it had to be copied from one manuscript to another. And God presided over that process as well, protecting and preserving His Word. To the degree that when you compare your Bible to some of those ancient manuscripts, in spite of being thousands of years removed, you hold in your hands an amazingly accurate transmission of the Word first given to the writers of Scripture. Why? Because God has preserved it.

And God presided over the process of determining which writings would be included in the Old Testament and the New Testament, or what is called the canon.

And God presided and continue to preside by His Spirit over the process of translating the Bible into other languages.

Note: Translations are not “inspired,” nor are they perfect. But God is vitally interested in our having a Bible that we can read and understand.

God has presided by His Spirit over this entire process to preserve His Word. Therefore, we can also have confidence in ...

- **The permanence of God’s Word**

SHOW VV.23-25. HIGHLIGHT “the Word of the Lord stands forever”

Now there’s something here about our confidence in God’s Word, but also there is something about ...

2. OUR EXPERIENCE OF GOD’S WORD (2:2-3)

I Peter 2:2-3 - Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, 3 now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.

The Bible is like food that is to be consumed.

Many Christians today are malnourished. You have at your disposal all the spiritual food you need right here in the Bible.

ILLUSTRATION – It’s like a person starving to death in the buffet line at Luby’s. There’s plenty of food, but you don’t consume it.

Note: Every believer, new or old, has an indwelling hunger for God’s Word. It’s basic to the life we have in Christ ... basic to the new birth. But we have to do something to satisfy that hunger. For little children it’s pretty messy. Other people do most of the work. As we grow, we become more discriminating in our taste. We feed ourselves. We have some choice over who we eat. We can handle heavier, richer foods.

So here’s how we experience, or consume, the Word of God.

- **Read it.**

Christian friend, there should not be a day go by that you don’t read the Bible. You eat physical food everyday because you need the strength it gives. You must eat spiritual food everyday, as well, for the spiritual strength and nourishment it gives you.

Several years I started a pattern of reading through the whole Bible one year, then reading through the NT the next. Then I read through the whole Bible the next year.

- **Hear it.**

I Peter 1:25 says, “This is the Word that was preached to you.”

God wants His word preached ... and He wants us to listen to His Word preached. God has gifted and anointed men to preach His Word and we are to listen to them exhort us with the Scriptures.

Note: I realize today that I’m not the only preacher you can listen to. With television, radio, and the internet, you have access to some of the greatest preachers in the world. Take advantage of that.

Now you eat most of your meals at home, but it’s OK to go out to eat from time to time.

And something else ... Bring your Bibles with you to church. It’s important to see it as well as hear it as even to feel it.

- **Study it (by yourself and with others).**

- **Memorize and meditate on it.**

- **Apply it.**

When you meditate on God’s Word, the Holy Spirit helps you to understand how that truth needs to work in your life.

And that leads me to the next thing about the Word of God ...

3. OUR OBEDIENCE TO GOD’S WORD (1:22; 2:1)

God wants us to read His Word and respond to it. Remember, it has power. If we really let it into our minds and our hearts, it will change us. And for that to happen we must obey God’s Word.

I Peter 1:22 - Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart.

I Peter 2:1 - Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind.

What’s happening here is that we are exhorted to apply and obey the truth of God’s word by purifying ourselves and ridding ourselves of the things that are inconsistent with God’s will and God’s word.

Back to where we started ... Jesus said that we are wise, and our lives will be stable when we hear His words and put them into practice.

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