

Grow Up: All Scripture is God-Inspired

By Senior Pastor Tom Harrison

June 6, 2021

Key Focus: All scripture is inspired by God.

D assisting; John online 9:30/? Next Step = Bible Basics class tonight 6pm in CLC; United in Prayer (praying for our nation)
“Inspired” literally means “breathed into.” We believe God divinely influenced the writers of the 39 books of the Old Testament and the 27 books of the New Testament. About forty different authors wrote the books of the Bible over approximately 1,500 years. They wrote in Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic on three different continents (Asia, Africa, and Europe), yet it has amazing unity. The books of the Bible do not always present its characters in the most flattering light. Many of its prophecies have already been fulfilled (others are not completed yet). Archaeology cannot prove the Bible is true, as that is beyond its ability, but it does show these are not mythological books. Thus, the Bible is unique. The doctrine of inspiration stresses the authority of Scripture for Christians.

When Paul wrote to Timothy, he was referring to what we call the “Old Testament” or the “Hebrew Scriptures.” Paul wrote the bulk of the New Testament. His letters were accepted by the early church. Nobody knows for certain the exact dates, but Paul’s writings were early.

The Bible can be hard to understand, but we can break it down in simple terms. We have The Bible in Five Words: Creation, Fall, Israel, Jesus, Church. The overall purpose of the Bible is redemption.

APPLICATION: What is the source of authority for your faith and life? How are you engaging in scripture? What is your method for learning and growing? Asbury wants to help followers understand and apply the teachings of Jesus. You will hear sermons from the Bible. We ask our Kids, Students, and Adult Ministries to teach scriptures in age-appropriate ways.

CONTEXT: Paul wrote to a young man he was mentoring, Timothy. Acts 16:1 *Paul came also to Derbe and to Lystra. A disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer, but his father was a Greek.* 2 Timothy 1:5 *I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well.* Timothy’s dad was a Gentile, so he learned the Jewish scriptures from his grandmother and mother as a child. Paul and others

taught him about Jesus. **Grow at Home**

Most NT books are written to churches, but there four are written to individuals. Paul writes his second letter to his apprentice, Timothy. The first is called 1st Timothy 😊. The tone is very different. Paul is on verge of being executed. ***For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.*** (4:6-8) Death is a win. He entrusts the faith to someone who will carry it on. These were his final instructions. He tells of his struggles and that Christians will be persecuted. Be prepared. Be forewarned. In the end, there is great reward. Timothy must continue in his faith.

2 Timothy 3:10-17

You, however, have followed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness,

¹¹ my persecutions and sufferings that happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra—which persecutions I endured; yet from them all the Lord rescued me. ¹² Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, ¹³ while evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. ¹⁴ But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it 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. ¹⁶ All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.

Vs. 16-17 are the strongest statements in the Bible about itself.

All Scripture refers to “The Old Testament.” Paul did not carry a New Testament – he probably wrote before any Gospels were written. However, some of his letters were being used in the early church. The OT looks forward to the coming Messiah. The NT recalls/celebrates the Messiah’s coming. We want to teach you about scripture. It’s why we have “Gratitude/Sermon Journals.” We have a “Bible Basix” class tonight at 6:00 in CLC. If you don’t know anything or you don’t know much about it, this class is for you.

is breathed out This term, “Theopneustos,” is a Greek word “Theos” = “God” and “pneustos” is Greek for “breath” (like “pneumonia”). When we speak, we breathe out words. Gen 2:7 *Then the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.*

by God A drastic cultural shift in the attitudes of the western world regarding human sexuality in the last generation and even in the last decade has occurred. Carl Trueman’s book, *The Rise & Triumph of the Modern Self*, is one explanation of what has happened. Trueman begins by describing a three-tiered worldview. The 1st and 2nd worlds are not about economics or world geography but about theology. Both have a transcendent understanding of life. The 1st world was mythological/pagan, such as the Oracle at Delphi – but they believed in a god (or gods). He calls this belief “FATE.” He refers to the 2nd world as a culture based on FAITH. The Judeo-Christian worlds are examples. He says the 3rd world strips the transcendent and replaces it with the kingdom of self (my terminology). It is not a god or GOD that determines everything – it is ME. This is where he gets the title of his book, “The Rise and Triumph of the Modern Self.” He says our culture is now predominantly a 3rd world culture. The modern self has risen and triumphed because God has been dethroned and how I think and feel (“emotivism”) are ascendent. We do not need external authorities or voices speaking

to us – we are in charge of our own destiny. There is no god or God. It is about I, me, mine, myself. What I determine is right. You must endorse my identity or you are a hater.

He traces the beginnings of this seismic cultural shift to **Rousseau**, a French Enlightenment philosopher, in the late 1700's. Rousseau thought we need to elevate the self over community. His was an influential voice in the French Revolution (which didn't work out so well). Other voices followed. **Nietzsche** started "The God is Dead" idea and replaced God with the concept of "the superman." He was the ideological forerunner for the Nazis. Ideas have consequences. **Marx** had an economic model that cast the world in two opposing factions: victims and victimizers. We know what Lenin and Stalin did with Marx's ideas. The victims overthrew their oppressors and in turn, became victimizers themselves. It is a perpetual cycle that is never satisfied (James 4:1ff has a different worldview). **Darwin** believed humans were part of the animal kingdom and there was nothing special or unique in creation. For him, a human had no ultimate meaning or purpose (teleology). **Freud** believed life was about happiness and it was found through sexual fulfillment. While there is truth in all of these (self-esteem, issues of justice, things evolve, sexuality is important), they do not form our basic core. When Biblical truth and God are replaced by the therapeutic and emotional, and there is not external authority (scripture/tradition) then "truth" is only "my truth" based on how I feel. If you disagree with my truth, you may be a hater and deserve to be cancelled or silenced. History has been replaced by personal experience, testimony, and emotion. Ideas have been replaced by images.

The "kingdom of self" is not a hard sell. It explains why when kids go off to college and find the Christian faith with all its ideas restrictive challenged, it's a no-brainer for many. The Book of Judges, that period of chaos in Israel's history, has a repetitive theme: "Everyone did what was right in their own eyes." Everyone doing their own thing didn't work out well for them. The third world culture inevitably collapses.

What's our response?

Don't despair (lament, depress, hand-wringing anxiety). This is the greatest time in the history of the world to be alive. We have problems, but we've always had them, and they will always remain. Modern medicine, technology, science, transportation, communication, even our food choices – who would trade this for the 17th century when there were no antibiotics? While 43% of millennials in America may say they don't know, care or believe in God, the world is more than just America. It is estimated there will be more Christians in China in 2030 than in America and by 2050 China will be a majority Christian nation. There is a God, and God is in control. Read 1 Timothy 3:10-17 again. Paul told Timothy how to live in a culture that was hostile to Christianity. He was not in despair. He knew who he was and how to live. He felt he was in a "Win-Win." He said, *"I can do all things through Him who strengthens me."*

Let's not go on an attack ("polemic," angry, sarcastic, bombastic, cynical, snarky). *Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness that God requires.* James 1:19-20

Instead, there is a 3rd way, "self-differentiation." This means I can disagree with someone on an issue while continuing to stay emotionally connected to others.

We have a wonderful narrative to share with those who currently live without any sense of something greater than just myself. Let's learn that story of the faith and share it with others.

Peggy Lee had a song called, "Is That All There Is?" She sang she watched as a child when her house caught on fire and burned down. She asked, "Is that all there is to a fire?" Her dad took her to the circus when she was 12. She said at the end, "Is that all there is to a circus?" When she fell in love with a boy she asked, "Is that all there is to love?" Here's how the song ends: *I know what you must be saying to yourselves. If that's the way she feels about it why doesn't she just end it all? Oh, no, not me, I'm not ready for that final disappointment. Because I know just as well as I'm standing here talking to you That when that final moment comes and I'm Breathing my last breath, I'll be saying to myself. Is that all there is, is that all there is? If that's all there is my friends, then let's keep dancing. Let's break out the booze and have a ball. If that's all there is. Luke 12:19-21 And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.' But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?' So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God."* Last week we shared the names and pictures of 89 members of Asbury who went to be with the Lord. Is that all there is to them? Is there no future hope? Rousseau, Nietzsche, Marx, Darwin, and Freud don't have any answers because they don't offer anything more than just ME and my identity. They don't have any purpose, other than to try your best to be happy. Is that all there is to life – eat, drink, and be merry? Christian response is called for. We believe that Jesus Christ is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. We believe Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. We believe He is the Resurrection and the life.

The result is that Biblical truth and a theological focus have been replaced by the therapeutic and emotional. External authority has been replaced by internal authority. God is dead. Truth is “my truth” based on how I feel. If you disagree with my truth, you are a hater and deserve to be cancelled or silenced. History has been replaced by personal experience, testimony, and emotion. Ideas have been replaced by images.

The kingdom of self is not a hard sell. It explains why when kids go off to college and find the Christian faith with all its ideas and restrictions challenged, it’s a no-brainer for many. They eagerly jettison their spiritual foundations and embrace what makes them feel good. The Book of Judges, that period of chaos in Israel’s history, has a repetitive theme:

“Everyone did what was right in their own eyes.” Everyone doing their own thing didn’t work out well for them.

My core identity is not rooted in ME (Rousseau). I’m not Superman (Nietzsche). I’m not a victim who needs to eliminate the victimizers (Marx). I’m not just another animal (Darwin) without a purpose. My sexual fulfillment does not define me (Freud). I reject these false identities. I have a different identity: I am a new creation **in Christ**. Furthermore, we have a wonderful narrative to share with those who currently live without any sense of something greater than just me. Let’s learn our story of the faith and share it with others.

Peggy Lee sang a song, “Is That All There Is?” She watched as a child when her house caught on fire and burned down and asked, “Is that all there is to a fire?” Her dad took her to the circus when she was 12 and when it was over she asked, “Is that all there is to a circus?” She fell in love with a boy and asked, “Is that all there is to love?” The song ends with this: *I know what you must be saying to yourselves. If that's the way she feels about it why doesn't she just end it all? Oh, no, not me, I'm not ready for that final disappointment. Because I know just as well as I'm standing here talking to you That when that final moment comes and I'm Breathing my last breath, I'll be saying to myself. Is that all there is, is that all there is? If that's all there is my friends, then let's keep dancing. Let's break out the booze and have a ball. If that's all there is.*

Last week we shared the names and pictures of 89 members of Asbury who went to be with the Lord. Is that all there is to them? Is there no future hope? Rousseau, Nietzsche, Marx, Darwin, and Freud don’t have any answers because they don’t offer anything more than just ME and my identity. They don’t have any purpose, other than to try your best to be happy. Is that all there is to life – eat, drink, and be merry? Christian response is called for. We believe that Jesus Christ is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. We believe Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. We believe He is the Resurrection and the life. When Jesus comes into our lives, we are forgiven, we receive His grace, the Holy Spirit (our companion/guide), a community (church) a script (scripture), a mission (purpose)...and eternal life.

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.