

Session 1

October 16, 2022

WHY WE NEED GOD'S WORD

2 Timothy 3:1-5; 13-17

Among other things, the Bible refers to the word of truth, the Spirit of truth, the testimony of truth, the message of truth, the fulness of truth, walking in truth. Jesus said He was the truth, He bore witness of the truth, and He commanded that we worship in truth. Paul said to rejoice in truth, to speak the truth, and to put on the belt of truth. All this sounds so good; but to quote Pontius Pilate, "What is truth?" Perhaps Jesus summed it up best when He confessed to the Father, "Thy word is truth" (John 17:17). And God's word is the Bible.

In a world of constantly shifting values, believers need to constantly reaffirm the authority of God's inerrant word. If, in the first century, Jude was already warning the church to "contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3), how much more must we contend today? In this week's text, we see why we need God's word more than ever. Three reasons stand out.

The word and its confrontation (vv. 1-5). By chapter 3 in his letter, Paul was warning young Timothy that leading a church would not become easier over time, but rather more difficult. The march of time is unfortunately also a march toward depravity. The offenses in these verses that characterize the "difficult times" that will come (v. 1) are not only glaringly harsh on the outside but saturated with selfish pride on the inside. Increasingly, people will be loving self and money and pleasure while despising that which is wholesome and good and godly. Verses 4(b) and 5 are particularly troubling, because they infer that some of these people will be associated with the church. The misplaced love of verse 4 is given to misplaced devotion in verse 5. The *form of godliness* refers to an outward appearance; and the *denying its power* occurs in a past tense. In other words, the people will continue to display an outward show of religious belief, but deep down they have *already renounced* any influence of it in their lives. For reflection: *So where does the word of God fit in here? And if we must confront the world because of its sin, why do you think Timothy was told to "avoid these people?"*

The word and its instruction (vv. 13-15). No one is naturally inclined to master the Scriptures. While instruction in *sin* is never needed (our sin nature covers that!) instruction in *righteousness* is! Notice Paul's exhortation to Timothy. He should continue in what he *learned* and *believed*, as he was *taught* from the sacred Scriptures. While other influences were surely present, no doubt his primary instruction came from his mother Eunice and grandmother Lois (see 2 Tim. 1:5). This highlights the importance (and responsibility) of *the family* in Bible teaching, and the need to reach children early in their lives (v. 15). Why is all of this so important? Because the Scriptures are the source of wisdom in the most important area of life: *salvation in Christ Jesus*. For reflection: *Why do you think Paul warns against evil people and imposters? (v. 13). Who do you think he is referring to? What role do they play in this discussion?*

The word and its authority (vv. 16-17). Some very important key words appear in this well-known passage. The word *all* is significant. The Bible doesn't simply *contain* God's word...it *IS*

God's word. And all of it is equally *inspired* (literally, "God breathed") (v. 16). In addition, it is all *profitable*. That word means *beneficial, useful, and for our advantage*. The passage concludes with what exactly the Bible is profitable for: *teaching* truth, *rebuking* falsehood, *correcting* errors, and *training* in the things of God. To what end? To make God's people useful for His kingdom's work! (v. 17). For reflection: *If the word of God is so beneficial, why do you think so many people (even in the church) disregard it (at best) and rebel directly against it (at worst)?*