

## The Supreme Authority of God's Word

### Lesson for Sunday, October 20, 2024

KEY TEXT: 2 Timothy 3:16-17

#### INTRODUCTION:

- ⇒ Read/Tell the story from Baptist history on page three.
- ⇒ The most important thing about Baptists is what we believe about the Bible.
- ⇒ The Big Idea: The Bible is the final authority in all matters of belief and practice.

#### BIBLE STUDY: *Zooming in on God's Word*

1. The Big Picture: *What do we believe about the Bible?*
  - a. Jeremiah 1:4-9 (esp. 9) – We believe the Bible are the exact **words** of God.
  - b. 1 Corinthians 14:37 – We believe the Bible are the **commands** of God.
  - c. Galatians 1:11-12 – We believe the Bible was **revealed** by God.
  - d. 2 Timothy 3:16 – We believe the Bible was **inspired** by God.
  - e. 2 Peter 1:21 – We believe the Bible is the **product** of the Holy Spirit.
2. The Medium Picture (2 Timothy 3:16-17): *What does the Bible say about itself?*
  - a. These two verses have been referred to as the most important verses in all the Bible.
    - i. If they are true, then the only proper response is to build our lives on it.
    - ii. If it is false, Christianity is just another psychological exercise to help us make it through life.
  - b. Within these verses we see several deep theological truths:
    - i. The **Inspiration** of God's Word: "by inspiration of God"
      1. Literally means, "God-breathed."
      2. When we ask, "Who wrote the Bible?" The answer: God did through His Holy Spirit (reference 2 Peter 1:21).
    - ii. The **Inerrancy** of God's Word: implied by the inspiration.
      1. God wrote the Bible.
      2. What do we know about God? He is holy, perfect and incapable of error.
      3. Therefore, if the Bible is written by a perfect God, the content of the Bible must be perfect.
      4. Baptists believe that all Scriptures is without *error* in the original manuscripts.
    - iii. The **Worth** of God's Word:
      1. Doctrine – The Bible teaches us what is **RIGHT** (or true).
      2. Reproof – The Bible reveals to us what is **WRONG** (or false).
      3. Correction – The Bible shows us how to **MAKE** it right.
      4. Instruction – The Bible instructs us how to **KEEP** it right.
    - iv. The **Sufficiency** of God's Word: "thoroughly furnished unto all good works"
      1. The idea Paul is trying to communicate is that the Bible will "super-equip" you for everything you will face in this life.
      2. When we face all the issues of life, God's Word is sufficient to direct us. We need no other source of wisdom.
      3. NOTE: This is the big issue for many Christians!
  - c. If 2 Timothy 3 is true, then the rest of God's Word is true, and we ought to give our lives to knowing and applying God's Word in every area of our lives.

3. The Small Picture: *What does this look like in practice?*
- a. We believe the Bible is inspired by God. What does that mean at a micro-level? Consider these four implications.
  - b. **Verbal:** We believe that *every word* is inspired.
  - c. **Plenary:** We believe *all* the Scripture is inspired.
  - d. **Infallible:** We believe that all Scripture is *unfailing*.
  - e. **Authoritative:** We believe that the Bible demands our acceptance and our obedience.
    - i. This is the main point of application!
    - ii. First, most of us would agree verbally that the Bible is God's inspired Word. But do our lives supports our verbal assent? The Bible is to be believed more than simply as an intellectual exercise. We show what we really believe about the Bible by the way that we live.
      1. Discuss how the Bible should influence every area of our lives – not just the religious areas.
      2. Make the point that the final authority in a Baptist church (our church) is God's Word. It is not the pastor, the deacons, a denominational office.
      3. Baptists do not have another written source. It is our sole book. It is sufficient.
    - iii. Second, if we believe what we have discussed in this lesson, there is always one question that should remain in the front of our minds: What does the Bible say? That question is the answer to every other question!
      1. When we are unsure what to do in a tense circumstance, what does the Bible say?
      2. When we need to work through a disagreement with our spouse, what does the Bible say?
      3. When we are not sure how to manage our finances, what does the Bible say?

APPLICATION: Refer back to the history lesson. How committed are we to what the Word of God says? Would we be willing to be considered an outcast, to be arrested, or even put to death instead of disobeying God's Word? (It takes a lot less than that to get us to miss a Sunday! 😊)

- ⇒ Discuss: What would our daily life look like if we were absolutely committed to God's Word?
  - What are the behaviors that would indicate our commitment?
- ⇒ Discuss: When people ask for your advice/counsel, how do you direct them?
  - Are we quick to share our experience, opinion or our "gut feeling"? Or do we point them to what the Bible says.
- ⇒ TO DO: Give your class a small card that says, "What does the Bible say?"
  - Point out: That question is the answer to every other question!
  - Let's practice this coming week asking ourselves consistently, "What does the Bible say?" Then do it!

How familiar are you with your Baptist history? Often, we go to church and assume that things just continue on like they always have. That, of course, is certainly not true. Throughout the history of Baptist people, there are stories that remind us of the price that was paid so we can experience what we often take for granted today.

Every Baptist should know the name Thomas Hawkes. He was condemned to death on February 9, 1555.

As a child, he was well versed in the Scriptures, and as a result, *he refused to have his child baptized* in the Roman church in England. He believed what the Bible teaches, and what Baptists have always cherished: baptism was for believers and by immersion (as opposed to the sprinkling of babies).

A short while before his death. A group of his friends promised to pray for him in the awful, exact hour of his impending execution. Then they made an unusual request: they asked him to give them a sign that Christ was with him in the moment of his torture. He agreed and decided that he would lift up his hands as a sign that he was at peace.

The day of his execution – June 25, 1555 – arrived, and Hawkes was led to the stake where he would become the fiery sacrifice on the altar of religious prejudice. When he came to the post where he would be burned, a heavy chain was thrown around his waist, and he was secured. Hawkes began to pour out his heart to God in prayer, and the fire was then kindled. Standing among the crowd, his friends stood praying, and straining eager eyes for the gesture of victory.

These are words from an eyewitness:

*When he had continued long in the fire, and his speech was taken away by violence of the flame, his skin drawn together, and his fingers consumed with the fire, so that it was thought that he was gone, suddenly and contrary to all expectation, this good man being mindful of his promise, reached up his hands burning in flames over his head to the living God, and with great rejoicing as it seemed, struck or clapped them three times together. A great shout followed this wonderful circumstance, and then this blessed martyr of Christ, sinking down in the fire, gave up his spirit.*

The grace of God was sufficient, and this truth was proved time and again throughout our Baptist history.

It's hard to imagine, isn't it? That a man would be willing to die simply to avoid his child being sprinkled in a religious ceremony is hard to comprehend. But that was common for the early Baptists. Where did this dedication stem from? Their commitment to completely obey the clear teachings of the Word of God.

*Much of this account was taken from "This Day in Baptist History" by David Cummins and Wayne Thompson.*