

(Guidelines) Illumination Ii

by J. Vernon McGee

The Bible is a supernatural book that requires the Spirit of God to open our understanding and make it real and living to us.

Duration: 24:08

Scripture: Luke 24:25

Topics: "Biblical Authority", "Holy Spirit"

Description

In this sermon, Bishop Pollock emphasizes the significance of the Bible as a corridor between two eternities, through which walks the Christ of God. He explains that the Old Testament foreshadows the coming of Christ, while the New Testament reveals Him in the person of Jesus. The central message of the entire Bible is that Jesus is the Christ. The bishop also highlights the importance of the Holy Spirit in making the words of the Bible come alive and transform lives. He warns against rejecting the Bible, as it leads to condemnation, and emphasizes the value of the Bible as a literary treasure and a source of ethical teaching.

Transcript

Now, illumination means that you and I have a book, and we have said it's a God book. It's a human book written by men who are expressing their thoughts, but when they do that, they are writing down the Word of God and the marvel of it. And the thing that makes it supernatural is that God, without destroying their personalities, He didn't turn them upside down like a fountain pen and write with them.

They wrote what was in their minds and hearts, but the Spirit of God so guided them that many of them actually wanted to look into the things they wrote about but couldn't. That's what Peter says. And they wrote without error.

Now, Moses made mistakes, and he wrote about those mistakes, but the writing about those mistakes, there was no mistake, my friend. That, may I say, is a record that when he's giving to us the Word of God, that we are getting a revelation from God. Now, in view of the fact that that is true, we're dealing with a book that takes more than just mental acumen in order to understand.

Paul made a very interesting statement, and that statement is simply this. He says, and I'll have to turn to it now, it's found in 1 Corinthians 2, beginning at verse 7, but we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory, which none of the princes of

this world knew. For had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

But as it is written, I hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. Now, you and I today get most of what we know through the eye gate and the ear gate, or by reasoning, by thinking, rationalizing. Now, actually, Paul says here that there's certain things that eye hasn't seen, certain things that ear hasn't heard, and there are certain things that you can't even get into your head at all.

Well, how in the world are you going to get them? Well, a great many in the past have taken this verse of scripture to a funeral, and I've heard it used at a funeral years ago like this, that brother so-and-so, he was a great fellow, didn't know too much down here. That's the inference always. But now he's gone up there and he's really got on his thinking cap now, and he knows things he didn't know before.

Well, I think maybe that's probably true. I think we're going to get quite an education, we'll get a new degree when we move up there. But that's not what this verse says.

Paul says there's certain things right down here long before you get to the undertaker. Now, a lot of things down here that you and I can't get through the ordinary natural means that we learn. Well, how are we going to get them? Verse 10 now, "...but God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit, for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." Now, the Holy Spirit has to be our teacher.

Now, you will recall that back on the day of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, he walked down the Emmaus Road and joined himself there with a couple of brethren that were walking along. He entered into their conversation, by the way, and he asked them what in the world it was that had engaged their conversation. Well, the very interesting thing is they said, well, is it possible you've been around here and you don't know what's taken place in Jerusalem? He said unto them, what manner of communications are these that ye have one to another as ye walk and are sad? And the one of them whose name was Cleopas answering said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days? In other words, he says, why, if you were just a stranger around here, you should have known about this.

And he said unto them, what things? And they said unto him concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet. Notice that was. As far as they're concerned, he's gone.

But he was talking to them. And he was a prophet, mighty indeed in word before God and all the people. And they go on, how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death and have crucified him.

And you remember, he predicted that. And the very interesting thing, prophecy had been saying it for years. And then they expressed that faint hope that it died out.

But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel. And beside all this, today is the third day since these things were done. And they went on to tell about it, what they knew and what had been found out when they left Jerusalem, that the women had reported.

Apparently, not many paid too much attention to what the women said. And not only that, verse 24, certain of them which were with us went to the sepulcher, found it even so as the women had said, but him they saw not. And then their hopes dimmed and darkness entered their hearts.

Now listen to the Lord Jesus. And he said unto them, O fools and slow of heart, to believe all that the prophets have spoken, ought not Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them and all the scriptures the things concerning himself. Friend, wouldn't you love to have been there that day and have heard him go back into the Old Testament and lift out the scriptures concerning himself? And when he finally made himself known to them as they sat at the meal, you see, it's when you're feeding on the word of God and feeding on him, that's when he reveals himself in all of his glory.

And this is their comment. And they said one to another, did not our heart burn within us while he talked with us by the way and while he opened to us the scriptures? You see, we're studying a book, friend. It's different from any other book.

It's not that I'm just believing today in the inspiration of the Bible. Why, I believe that this is a closed book unless the Spirit of God will open your heart and make it real, by the way. And so I find that he continued teaching at that time because when he returned to Jerusalem, he appeared to the disciples.

And then will you notice down in verse 44 of Luke 24, And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses and in the prophets and in the Psalms concerning me. Let me pause there. He believed Moses wrote the penitent.

He believed the prophets spoke of him and that the Psalms that all of them pointed to him. Now, here is the great verse. Then opened he their understanding that they might understand the scriptures.

And friends, if he doesn't open your understanding, you're just not going to get it. That's all. And that's the reason we ought to approach this book in great humility of mind.

And I do not care how high your IQ is. I hope I'm talking right now to some young graduates of some of our seminaries today who think they know it all. Well, may I say that I went through that period too.

I thought when I was in seminary, I knew it all. But I found out since then that there are one or two things I don't know. I'm going to keep reading here because it's important.

And he said unto them, thus it is written and thus it behoove Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day and that repentance and remission of sin should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And you're witnesses of these things. Now, will you notice how they're going to witness? They're going to have to have a little help.

In fact, they're going to have to have a whole lot of help. Verse 49. And behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you, but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be imbued with power from on high.

In other words, you will have to have a teacher to open the word of God to your understanding. Now, I go back to 1 Corinthians again and this passage that I was reading. And he goes on to say, Paul does in 1 Corinthians 2, verse 13, which things also we speak not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, their foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they're spiritually discerned. I'm never disturbed when one of these unbelievers, even if he's a preacher who comes along and says today he no longer believes the Bible is the Word of

God. He never did believe it, to tell the truth.

But may I say to you, that's the way he should talk. I mean, after all, if you're not a believer, you couldn't believe it. It takes the Spirit of God.

And that's the reason I quoted Bishop Hadley the other day when he said, there is more meaning in every word of holy writ than we shall ever get out of it. And you know, it was Mark Twain that made a very interesting statement, and he was no believer. He says that he was not disturbed by what he did not understand in the Bible.

He said what worried him were the things he did understand. And there are things you can understand, and it's that that keeps many away from the Word of God. It was Pascal who said, human knowledge must be understood to be loved, but divine knowledge must be loved to be understood.

That's very, very important to get, by the way. There needs to be that illumination. It was Robert Alfred Vaughn who made this statement, speaking of these unbelievers in their conceded rejection of the light without until they have turned into darkness their light within.

And that's what Paul meant when he says that they would not receive the love of the truth, and God would let them believe a lie. The unbelievers said some harsh things about us, but God has said some very harsh things about it. I'd like to give you this statement of Bishop Pollock.

He says, the Bible is a corridor between two eternities down which walks the Christ of God. His invisible steps echo through the Old Testament, but we meet him face to face in the throne room of the new. And it is through that Christ alone crucified for me that I have found forgiveness for sins and life eternal.

The Old Testament is summed up in the word Christ. The New Testament is summed up in the word Jesus. And the summary of the whole Bible is that Jesus is the Christ, a statement by Bishop Pollock.

And it was Mr. Spurgeon who said, I can never doubt the doctrine of plenary verbal inspiration since I so constantly see in actual practice how the very words that God has been pleased to use, a plural instead of a singular, are blessed to the souls of men. May I say these are tremendous statements coming from men of the past, and it's very difficult to eliminate and to blot out what these men have said. The wisdom of the ages has not really settled in us today.

As a generation, we've really got the world in a mess. Now, we were talking about illumination, the fact that the Spirit of God must take these words and make them real to us. The reading of the Bible can become almost profitless, pastime by the way.

And it is a book, though, that will bless you, even if you do not have the spiritual truth open to you. It's a, Goethe said, the mere ethical teaching of the Bible would alone stamp it as the greatest literary treasure of mankind. May I say to you that that was one of the saddest things that took place when the Bible was taken away from the public school, why they took away the best production of literature, and then they flooded it with some of this dirty, filthy, modern literature today.

Quite hypocrites for men to say they didn't want the Bible taught to their children because it contained stories that might soil their mind. Believe me, my friend, they're getting them soiled today in our schools and in the name of freedom. And it's nothing in the world but dirt.

Why is it that when we talk about freedom of speech, what we really mean is we want to talk dirty, and we want to look dirty, and we want to be dirty. That's freedom. Well, it is because man is totally depraved.

When he's given freedom, that's the direction he wants to go. It was John Milton who said, There are no songs comparable to the songs of Zion, no orations equal to those of the prophets, and no politics like those which the Scripture teach. It's a wonderful book just to read.

It was Webster who said, If there be anything in my style or thoughts to be commended, the credit is due to my kind parents for instilling into my mind an early love of the Scriptures. What about you today, Christian parent? Are you making a Daniel Webster in your home, or a little hippie? You'll be making one or the other, I can assure you. And apparently, Webster thought it came about because his parents taught him the Word of God.

May I say to you, the Spirit of God, though, will have to open your mind and heart if you're going to understand spiritual truth this year. And Paul, writing to the Corinthians, in 1 Corinthians 2, verse 13, Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Spirit teacheth, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. And may I say to you that Paul says that the Spirit of God is our teacher.

And that's one of the reasons that we have prayed that the Spirit of God would teach us on this program, because may I say, if He doesn't teach me and teach you, we're not going to get anywhere as far as the Bible is concerned. We're dealing with a supernatural book, if you please. The Lord Jesus Himself said in John 6, 63, It's the Spirit that quickneth, the flesh profiteth nothing.

The words that I speak unto you, they are Spirit and they are life. A great man of the past made a statement concerning one of the greatest writers of the past, and he says his words, if you cut them, would bleed. Well, may I say to you, that's true of the Word of God.

And the Lord Jesus said, The words I speak unto you, they're Spirit and they're life. And the Spirit of God can make it real to you. And in John 17, in his great high priestly prayer, in verse 18, he made this statement, For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me, not the thoughts, the words which thou gavest me, and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.

It was back in Exodus 20, verse 1, where Moses wrote, And God spake all these words saying. It was God who did the speaking. That's what Moses wrote.

It's very difficult today to reject the Bible without impugning it as an evil book. Now, notice what he said in John 3, verse 17 and 18, For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God.

In other words, may I put it very frankly to you, the Lord Jesus said that if you don't accept this Word, you're condemned. If you accept it, you're saved. That means that you've accepted and received him as the Savior of the world.

Now, I want to make just one or two other statements. You remember that when Simon Peter answered him after he had inquired of them, What are men saying about me? And they said everything. They still say that.

You can get about as many answers today as as many people as you happen to ask, and therefore there are many viewpoints of him. But he said to Simon Peter, or he said to the apostles, and Simon Peter answered, and I think he answered for the others, Whom do men say that I am, and whom do you say that I am? And he said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. Now, you remember what our Lord said to him? He said to him, Flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven, and he is the one.

And blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah. And I say to you, only God today can open up the Word of God for us to really understand it. And our Lord said, the Father opened it for Simon Peter, and the Lord Jesus taught them and opened up their understanding before he left.

But he said he was going to send the Holy Spirit, as we saw in Luke, wait for the promise, because he's the only one that can make this thing real. And he had said to them, yonder in the upper room, you will recall, in John 16, verses 7 through 11, I have yet many things to say unto you, but you cannot bear them now, howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come. He will guide you into all truth, for he shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak, and he will show you things to come.

And he went on, he'll take the things of mine and show them unto you. And may I say I leave this subject of illumination by saying only that the Spirit of God today can open your mind and heart to see and to accept Christ and to trust him as your Savior. How wonderful.

I have always felt, as I entered the pulpit, how helpless I am, because, believe me, Vernon McGee can't convert anyone. And I feel just that way before this microphone right now. But I not only feel weak, but I also feel that I'm mighty, not mighty in myself, but that the Spirit of God today can move out you unto where you are, riding in your car, in your home, doing housework, sitting down at a meal, or wherever you might be, in your place of business, wherever you might be, right now, the Spirit of God can take these dead words and make them real and living to you, incorporate them into your life, and give you an excitement, an enthusiasm that only he can give today.

Now, may I say that it's nice to take all the vitamin pills that you can today. My doctor keeps me loaded with them. But I want to say to you, my friend, the Spirit of God can give you something that vitamin pills can never give you.

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