

The Last Days Perilous Times

by John McGregor

The purpose of Scripture is to guide us into a personal relationship with Jesus, to teach us and reveal God's truth, to reprove and convict us of sin, to correct us and bring us back to God, to train us in spiritual discipleship, and to empower us to live a righteous life.

Duration: 41:20

Scripture: Psalm 119:1-2, Psalm 119:17, Matthew 6:33, 2 Timothy 3:16-17

Topics: "Perilous Times"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. He highlights that money and good works cannot earn salvation, but it is obtained by recognizing one's sinfulness and inviting Jesus into one's heart. The Scriptures are described as essential for understanding sin, recognizing the need for a Savior, and knowing the glory of Jesus. The sermon also discusses the profitability of the Scriptures, particularly in teaching, equipping believers for good works, and guiding them in the right path. The preacher encourages the audience to engage with the Scriptures through hearing, reading, studying, meditating, and memorizing, and warns against relying solely on external tools and resources.

Transcript

Second Timothy chapter three, and especially verse 16 and 17. But I want to read some verses from Psalm 119, just as we move into our message time this morning. And our thoughts, of course, are on the purpose of Scripture, and this is the second message on the purpose of Scripture.

So Psalm 119, and the first little, two little sections, the Aleph and Beth. Each section in this psalm starts with a Hebrew letter of the Hebrew alphabet, and so if you're ever looking for the Hebrew alphabet, you'll find it there in Psalm 119. Psalm 119, verse one says, "Blessed are they whose ways are blameless, those who walk according to the law of the Lord.

Blessed are they who keep His statutes and seek Him with all their heart. They do nothing wrong, they walk in His ways. You have laid down precepts that are to be fully obeyed.

All that my ways were steadfast in obeying Your decrees. Then I would not be put to shame when I consider all Your commands. I will praise You with an upright heart as I learn Your righteous laws.

I will obey Your decrees. Do not utterly forsake me. How can a young man keep his way pure by living according to Your word? I seek You with all my heart.

Do not let me stray from Your commands. I have hidden Your word in my heart that I might not sin against You. Praise be to You, O Lord.

Teach me Your decrees. With my lips, I recant all the laws that come from Your mouth. I rejoice in following Your statutes.

As one rejoices in great riches, I meditate on Your precepts and consider Your ways. I delight in Your decrees. I will not neglect Your word." And the psalmist captures there so much of what we want to look at this morning as we consider these verses again from 2 Timothy chapter three.

Dear Heavenly Father, thank You for this time that we can come and raise our voices in worship and lift our hearts in worship. We live, Father, in times that are difficult and we understand that there are many situations that can come along to discourage a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. And yet, Father, we know that You have given to us Your word and that we so appreciate that You have protected it through the years that we might indeed know it and follow it in this day.

We want to surrender these moments to You, Lord, and pray that You would take Your word once again and just strengthen our lives through it in a very deep and very personal way. Lord, You know each of our hearts today. You know the burdens that we carry and the blessings that we bring as well.

And whether it is burden or blessing, we pray that Your word would speak to us this morning hour. In Jesus' name we pray, amen. Well, we want to think about the purpose of Scripture and last week we talked about the first two of five things, really, that are involved.

The Scriptures, it says here in this passage, are able to make you wise to salvation through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. And so as we think about the Scriptures, that's the purpose of Scripture, is to guide us into that personal relationship with Jesus, saved, knowing that He did something in the heart that we could not do. Our world is often content with a reformation, but instead the Lord Jesus does not just reform the old and make it look a little better.

He makes a total colossal change on the inside so that we now have a personal relationship of love with Him and that salvation is priceless. Money can't buy it, works can't get it. It comes to us by faith as we step out to recognize I am a sinner and I need a Savior and we invite Him to come into our hearts and lives.

Salvation comes to us through the Scriptures. It is the Scriptures that help us to know what sin is and what a sinner is and what a Savior is and how glorious is our Savior in Jesus. Second thing we looked at last week, and this is just a little recap because when you do two messages that continue, if your mind is like mine, you might have missed a thing or two from last week, so just a refresher.

The second thing that we looked at is that the Scriptures are profitable for four things. And the first of the four, which we looked at last week, was teaching. And I liked the fact that it says all Scripture is profitable.

Now, is there anything else that we could say that about? Some things are profitable for a season, but all Scripture is profitable. All of it. And for teaching.

And you might remember we talked about the fact that one of our great difficulties as human beings is we get to be unteachable. And I'm happy to say guilty. There are times when we become unteachable because we figure we know that.

But there's so much more that God longs to teach us and to give to us and to reveal to us of Himself and of His truth here in His Word. So this morning, then, as we move on, there are actually four other things I want us to think about for a few moments, and let's just take them in order here from verse 16. It says all Scripture is God-breathed and useful or profitable for teaching.

We considered that a little bit last week. Rebuking, correcting, training in righteousness so that the man of God or woman of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. And the next thing that's here that shows us the purpose of Scripture, the word here in the NIV, it's used as rebuking.

Some versions talk about reproof. What does that mean? When you think about a rebuke, what comes into your mind? Pastor Brad. Getting told.

Have you ever been rebuked? I will, it's a good thing you sort of move quickly in there because we'll have to pray for you after the service otherwise. Anyways. This thing, you know, J. Vernon McGee in his commentaries says that rebuking or reproof has to do with convicting.

And so we're gonna consider that reproof or rebuke has to do with identifying what is wrong. Identifying what is wrong. Now that's a pretty useful thing when you consider the purpose of Scripture because it can help us to identify what is wrong.

And there are times when I am quite sure I know what is wrong or who is wrong and then the Lord has sort of put His finger into my heart and mind and life and said, actually, it's not that person at all, it's you. Scripture helps us to come to terms with those things. The work of reproof as we read the Scripture, it brings us under that sense of conviction and the Word exposes what's wrong.

So I'm not gonna ask you to put up your hands or anything but, you know, let's think about things that could be wrong. Well, my attitude could be wrong. And there are some times when I say the right thing but it's coming out of a hard attitude that's all wrong.

Scripture exposes that for us. There are times when my disposition can be wrong, times when my actions can be wrong, times when my thought life can be wrong. You know, I can remember thinking in one of the situations where I was preaching in another land, boy, that guy there sits in the front row every night and he hates me.

One of the advantages of being the preacher is you can see the faces. And when you can see the faces, you know, when somebody's kind of sitting there like, you might wanna think, well, I did. I thought this guy hates me.

And about the third or fourth night into a series of meetings, along comes this gentleman and I figure, yeah, not only does he hate me but now I'm gonna get a lecture. And the man came and said, could I talk to you? All my life I've worked in education and all my life I've told people there's no God. And everything that you said over these series of meetings says that there is one.

And tonight, I just wanted to ask you, could you help me meet him? See, it can be all wrong. You can misread what a face is saying or heart is saying. Scripture reproves us, it rebukes us in the sense of

causing us to just come to a humble place with the Lord and before the Lord.

The word shows us God's commands, doesn't it, as we read in Psalm 119. And in Exodus chapter 20, you see the 10 commandments and you find his commands all the way through Scripture. So as you think about the purpose of Scripture, there's so much in it.

And it goes to the very core of our being, doesn't it? In Hebrews 12, sorry, Hebrews 4 and verse 12, it talks about how the word of God divides even to bone and marrow and knows the thoughts and intents of the heart. Wow. This is one of the reasons why, as we think about this old book, there is so much more to it than just a quick browse through.

Many times I've talked with people who will say, I read the Bible, I sat one week and I read through it in a few days, a few hours. Know what's in there. And I said, well, good for you.

I've been reading it for 42 years, once a year, and I still don't know what's in there because there's so much more. When you think about this thing of reproof, identifying the wrong, let me give a biblical illustration of what that looks like. Saul of Tarsus is a religious young man.

He's a Pharisee. He has all the religion in the world. He knows all that has been given to him of the God of the Old Testament, the God of the Hebrews.

And he is going to demolish this new sect who are following Jesus of Nazareth. He is going to Damascus to tear it apart until in Acts chapter nine and verse three, he meets Jesus who speaks to him. Why are you persecuting me? And there's that exact thing.

He was so sure that he was right until Jesus come along and said, why? He didn't even say, why are you persecuting my church? He said, why are you persecuting me? Oh, dear friends, when you think about this, which we call our Bible and the word of God, there is so much to this book. And it is one of the passions of my heart just to be in scripture. How many of you have ever seen Fiddler on the Roof? I see those hands.

Just wanted to be an evangelist for a moment. I love the character of Tevye when he's singing and he says he would be in the holy book day after day and ask questions that would roll our rabbi's eyes. What's he saying? I wanna get to know so much of scripture that I really am getting a hold and a handle and it is getting a hold on me.

Scripture is given to reprove us, to rebuke us, to stop us. And you know, you also find this concept in revival. What is it that causes these great revivals that happen from time to time? It is someone who meets the Lord in the scripture and their heart is convicted and convinced that something is missing.

And as they begin to reach out for that something, God reaches in with his Holy Spirit and it's because of his word. I won't take time, but sometime you can dig through. There are at least 10 revivals mentioned in the Old Testament and every one of them comes about because of the word of God.

And every one of them has a different focus of something that God wanted to do in the hearts of his people. So we see as we think about the purpose of scripture, it was to lead us to salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. It is to teach us and it is to reprove us, to rebuke us in that sense, to convict us of that which is wrong, to identify the wrong.

Then we move on and we find a word here after rebuking is correcting. And correction, I would say, is getting it right. It's one thing to know what's wrong, but it's completely another to get it right, to make it right.

And here's a couple of thoughts as you come to scripture and think about getting it right. Is there an example for me to follow? Is there somebody here in the scriptures whose life is just like mine? Are there not times when we read and we say, that psalmist just, Sean was reading from Psalm 63, that psalmist, he lived where I'm living. I want to know more of him, right? And you see, this whole concept, is there an example for me to follow? When you think about getting it right, one of the things that comes to me from scripture is David, he's a king, he's a man after God's own heart, and yet he commits adultery.

And there comes that reproof, that rebuke from the preacher, Nathan, you are the man. And then we see that example in David's life. He isn't bothered to say, well, let me just make a few excuses here.

Instead, he comes quickly to that place of repentance, and he's getting it right. And you see that as you read in Psalm 51, there's his prayer, and it can help you and I today as well. If David can make a mistake, and it can be made right through the Lord Jesus, it can still be made right today.

So we see that the scriptures can reprove us, they can cause us to come to the place of conviction, and they can also help us as we think about getting it right. And you say, yeah, pastor, but you don't know the world that I live in. I mean, you should see some of the folk that I interact with.

Very difficult in my world, you know, to walk and live this Christian life situation. Oh, okay. Look in 2 Timothy here, just one chapter further over, chapter four, and let me read verses nine through 18.

This is the personal remarks of the apostle Paul as he's drawing his letter to Timothy to a close. He says, do your best to come to me quickly, for Demas, because he loved this world, has deserted me and has gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, and Titus to Dalmatia.

Only look is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, because he's helpful to me in my ministry. I sent Techias to Ephesus.

When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, and my scrolls, especially the parchments. Alexander, the metal worker, did me a great deal of harm. The Lord will repay him for what he has done.

You too should be on your guard against him, because he strongly opposed our message. At my first defense, no one came to my support, but everyone deserted me. May it not be held against them.

But the Lord stood at my side and gave me strength, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed, and all the Gentiles might hear it. And I was delivered from the lion's mouth. The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack, and bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom.

To him be glory forever and ever. Amen. You know, Paul must have known what it was to be injured on so many levels, huh? He says, some deserted me.

Others have gone here and there. This man, Alexander the coppersmith, he did me a great deal of harm. But what do you read in his heart? You read in his heart the truth of where the word of God would take us in times of correction.

He's not Irish. He's not plotting, how will I get even with these guys? For what they've done. No, indeed he has died to self, and the flesh is no longer in charge, but the Holy Spirit is in charge.

He is living by the Spirit and the law of God, and not by the way of the flesh. And in living in the Spirit, he is surrendering all of those things of life to God. The Lord will take care of it.

Friends, how many burdens do we carry? How often do we carry things along that kind of hang around our neck and pull us down? How many things are there that can exist in the human heart that move us further away from God? The word of God is designed not only to bring a sense of conviction, but to correct and to bring us back into that right walk with him. And you know, the further we go down the wrong way, the further we are away from God. I have a First Nations friend up in northern Manitoba, and he had a time in his life of backsliding, and somebody said to him, I thought you were a Christian.

What are you doing here? And he kind of scratched his head, and he said, I guess I'm just taking a little holiday. Doesn't work that way, does it? The further we go down that road, the further away from him we get and we become. So Scripture has so many purposes and uses in our hearts and in our lives, doesn't it? The third word that we wanna consider here from 2 Timothy 3 is the word training.

That is keeping in the right relationship with Jesus. That we call spiritual discipleship, don't we? Staying in a right relationship. So what happens when two people sort of fall out? We never fall out, right? What happens when two people fall out? They grow apart.

Why is that? No love, they don't talk. Things start to drift away, right? And as you think about this training, we need the convicting power of the Holy Spirit to show us what's wrong. We need the empowerment of the Holy Spirit to help us to do what is right and to get it right.

And we need training to keep in that right relationship with him. Meeting the Lord daily for cleansing and for change. Some people say to me, I read it but I got nothing out of it.

And I said, well, Jesus said now you are clean through the word that I have spoken to you. So you might not feel like you got anything out of it but spiritually it washed over your mind and your soul and it brought you to that place of cleansing. Rather difficult to think about pornography or any other thing when you're focused on the word of the living God, isn't it? And so this training needs to happen.

It is part of our daily walk with him. And some good things to ask. Is there a promise that I can claim as I go to the word every day? Is there a promise that I can claim for today? That's a good thing to lay hold of.

So when you go to scripture, it ought to speak to our hearts in one of these ways. After we have been saved, we've come by faith to salvation in Christ Jesus, it should teach me something. It should show me where something is wrong.

It should tell me how to go the correct way and it should train me up in that walk with him. Now you're gonna say, well, he's Irish and he definitely needs a holiday after I say this next statement. Never has there been a time where we have had more tools, more courses, more this, more that, more of everything.

And we're more in trouble in our society today than 50 years ago. The Bible is still the best seller, but we need to take that time and get into that training where his word is leading us in discipleship. And we're gaining something from it every single day.

I like the character of Hudson Taylor because people looked at Hudson Taylor and said, you can't go to China, you don't know anything. And he said, God wants me to go. I like Gladys Elwood for the same reason.

The Chinese mission said to her, you'll never learn Chinese, you'll never amount to anything, go get a different job. And so she went out and put a deposit on a ticket on the railway to go from London to China by train across the continent. One of the reasons I like Hudson Taylor is that as he was reading one day in the book of Joshua after he'd been told all the reasons why he'd never do anything for God, he read in Joshua chapter one, everywhere that you set the sole of your foot, I'll go with you.

And then he heard the voice of the spirit of God say to him, I'll walk all over China with you, if you'll walk with me. What did he have? Just this book. Just the promises of this book.

Just the spirit that makes the book live in the human heart. Is there a promise to claim? Nora, tomorrow is the big 8-0. Moses only started when he was 80.

So welcome to the beginning, sister. And just as God promised he would go with Moses, he'll go with you. Is there a command to obey? Hey, sometimes not easy to obey his commands.

I think I might have shared this story privately with a few, but I don't know that I've ever told it in a service. We were in South Africa, my dear wife and I, and we were told one morning, you're going to go and speak to 30 black pastors. When we got there, there wasn't a black pastor in sight.

In fact, the people who were there kind of looked like, you really feel welcome when somebody does that. And we went to pray in the two different washrooms. Say, Lord, we're here to obey you.

What is it that you want to do here? Still being the spiritual giant that I am, when we came out and we had to talk to these 30 white pastors and their wives, I said, you go first. And she said, I will, if you come with me. And there we stood.

You know, as we begin to share the word of God that day, the presence of God came into that. And those men and women started to weep in his presence because their lives were full of wounds. And many years of being in the ministry and being criticized and shot at and all the rest that sometimes goes with it.

But you know, in the presence of God and the word of God, there is healing and there is help and there is his touch. And oh, that day, as we tried in our weakness to obey, he just so honored his word. What would happen to our society if our churches became places where people were leaving with tears, but not because they were upset or mad at somebody, but because they met God and he healed the hurt and he lifted that spirit and he mended those emotions that are raw.

And in his love, he surrounded us in his presence. Yeah, is there a condition to meet? It's a good question to ask as you read the scripture. Lord, is there a condition here? Many of the promises are conditional upon our hearts being so right with him.

Is there a challenge to face? Yes, there is a challenge to face today, isn't there? We live in a culture and in a society that is bashing away at everything that this book says. And we see droves of our young people coming out of our educational institutions who've been convinced that there is no God. The fastest growing religion in Canada is atheism.

But this book says there's a God. Regardless of what you do, he's unavoidable. We're going to have to do some business with him sooner or later.

Oh, my friends, there is a challenge. And the challenge is we need that passion for this book to burn so brightly in our hearts and to strengthen us as we interact with people who need to know his truth. The last thing that I want to speak about for just a few minutes is here in verse 17.

All of those other purposes are so that the person of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. We're not supposed to have our head in the sand. We're supposed to be able to do those good things that flow out of being saved and knowing Christ.

They don't save us, but the scriptures equip us for it so that we're secure and ready. And you know how to get the scriptures so into your heart and life, right? There are five ways. Can you name them? You hear it? You read it? You study it? You meditate on it? And you memorize it? Now, oh, I'm going on holidays on Wednesdays, so I'm safe.

Are we doing it? We need to take scripture into our lives in all five of those ways. Assured and cleansed, washed daily in the word, filled with the spirit, full of the word. They used to say of the British preacher, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, that if you cut him, he would bleed bible.

In other words, no matter which way you pushed him, he quoted scripture. It just flowed out of him. That's not a bad complaint.

Oh, that his tribe might increase manifold. You know, the power of this word is so immense. It's not about being arrogant or puffed up in what we know.

It's about being humble about the one that we know and the word that he's given to us. I have a friend, he's retired. Now, I was in the RCMP for a long time, and when we were over in Vermilion, Alberta, he was posted to Manville.

He was a great Christian singer, and he stopped a guy going through the little community of Manville one night, and the guy pulled over, and he was doing 160 in a 50 zone. Figure out the cost of the ticket. Brad's working on it.

It's up there. As he was sitting there, he said to Reg, my policeman friend, Constable, I deserve it. Give me the ticket.

I was, I left my wife and kids in Saskatoon. I'm going to Edmonton to have a good time, and I just wasn't paying attention, and so now I gotta pay the bill. So give me the ticket.

And my Christian friend said to him, here's your ticket, but would you permit me to give you something else? Here's a little book that has the word of God in it, and it's a good book, and could I just suggest to you before you go and have a good time, why don't you sit down in a quiet corner in the hotel somewhere and read this book, and maybe, just maybe, you'll never run into another fellow like me. Days later, Reg got a call. It was a lady.

She said, you don't know me. I live in Saskatoon. I called to give you thanks for giving a ticket to my husband the other night.

You gave him a little book, and as he read the word of God, he gave his heart to Christ, and he's come home a different man. See those key words? A different man. It was the word, and it was the believer, equipped, not ashamed of the master, but able, not in an arrogant way, but in a gentle way, to share.

You know, fulfillment comes from the working of God as he speaks to us, and from the fullness of his spirit. Dear church, it's a nice thing when the pastor digs something out that's worthwhile listening to, but it's so much more when I open the book and God speaks to me. That personal, private moment with him where you know this word is just for you.

I need to wrap things up. When you put this whole package together, it helps us to see that when a person comes to Christ, it's about life change. The word of God is to teach us, to rebuke us, to correct us, to train us, and we need that time anchored in his word.

So as we just think about that for a minute, let me be Irish, is there a passion in your heart for the word? And if not, don't leave this place today and say, well, we had a nice service. Meet him and ask him for a passion for it. I spoke at CBC one day about a passion for scripture.

One of the teachers who used to pastor here, Bill McAlpine, said to me, John, all year we've studied this book academically, and now you come and hit us in the bread basket. And it's true, if we don't love the book, we can't love the Lord of the book. So my friends, let's just think on that as we come for a moment of prayer.

And just quietly in your heart, wherever you're sitting this morning, do you have that passion for his word? Do you need that teaching, reproving, correcting, training, equipping? I do. I need it so desperately. Otherwise my old flesh nature will take over, and I'll not live in the spirit, but in the flesh.

So just as we're at the place of prayer, would you make this a moment, just a quiet, private moment with you and him? And refresh and renew that passion for his word. And even through the summer months, as we think about vacations and so on, we're looking to be refreshed physically. But oh friends, how important it is to be refreshed spiritually.

Dear Heavenly Father, thank you for your word. Thank you that the word of God is profitable, all of it. For teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training, for equipping.

Father, would you stir our hearts with a fresh love for your word. In Jesus' name we pray.

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