

Trusting the Bible

by Stewart Ruch

Trusting the Bible is essential for following Jesus and making our lives simpler, clearer, and freer.

Duration: 31:40

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, John 14:15, 2 Timothy 3:16-17

Topics: "Bible"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of making the Bible the foundation of the household of God. They highlight the significance of reading and praying with the Bible constantly, as it is the embodiment of divine revelation. The speaker encourages a childlike faith in the Bible, acknowledging its complexities but asserting that it can be understood and received. They also warn against false teachers who claim to follow Jesus but teach false things, emphasizing the need to trust the Bible and be equipped for every good work.

Transcript

This is Church of the Resurrection in Wheaton, Illinois. This week's sermon is by Bishop Stuart Ruck and is part three of our Fully Scriptural series. Dr. Timothy Laniak is an Old Testament scholar and he chose for a year-long study project to study the behaviors of shepherds in the Middle East.

As an Old Testament scholar, he had great interest in the way in which shepherds figure prominently in a biblical theology of how God meets his people, how God leads his people. So he literally spent a whole year traveling with shepherds and being a part of their culture. During that year, he heard this account of Turkish shepherds.

This occurred in 2006. And in the account, the shepherds had taken what is very rare for shepherds, which is a little break. They were having lunch around their campfire.

They weren't being as usually diligent as they were with their very large flock of sheep. And they returned from their lunch to discover an absolute disaster, and it was this. Somehow, one of the lead sheep, and there are sheep leaders and sheep followers among the sheep, one of the lead sheep got on the wrong trail, began to make its way to the edge of a cliff.

On that trail, following its tail, were many, many other sheep to the point in which 1,500 sheep went over the cliff. This resulted in fatality for 500 of them. The other 1,000 were fortunate enough to land on a very

soft wool pillow.

I couldn't resist sharing that detail. I just thought it was interesting. It has nothing to do with the sermon.

Don't think, oh, if I don't follow the Word of God, but I follow those who don't follow the Word of God, they'll suffer more than I will. Don't think that. All right.

But I think it raises a really important question that I would like you to answer for yourself, and it's this. Who are you following? On whose trail are you? And to answer the question, who are you following, is to answer the question, whose voice are you listening to? You have the choice to decide whose voice will have significant influence over you. Whose voice? Whose voices? Is it your newsfeed? Is it your Snapchat? Is it the people that you're living with? Is it a particular governmental leader? Who has the most prominent voice in your life? I'm assuming you are here because you have already dedicated yourself to being a follower of Jesus, or you are here because you're considering it.

Someone might have even brought you this morning and said, come to my church. I want you to learn more about Jesus. So I'm guessing that we have a spectrum this morning of those who've been following Jesus for many, many years and those who are exploring following Jesus.

Either way, this teaching will be important for you, because to follow Jesus is to follow His words, and His words are the Bible. To follow Jesus is to follow His words. They're deeply and completely linked, and His words are the Bible.

The Bible is called the Word of God. So you cannot say, I'm going to follow Jesus and then decide what in the Bible I will follow. Indeed, there's a simple, beautiful, almost childlike reality for any who would follow Jesus, that they're given an embodied way, a concrete way, a tangible way to follow Jesus, which means learning, following, obeying, understanding, studying His word, the Bible.

They're deeply and completely linked. We're in a series called Fully Scriptural. Here is what we as spiritual leaders want for you and for us in this series.

It's this, that you'll love Jesus more, because you've come to love His Bible more. As you go deeper into Jesus, you'll go deeper into His Bible. There won't be any gap between your love for the Lord and your love for the Bible, and I know sometimes there is in our actual lives, and because you're loving Jesus more and you're loving His Bible more, then very simply you will read it more.

You'll study it more. You'll trust it more. In life and death situations, as well as everyday decisions, indeed, the voice you are listening to has everything to do with how next week is going to go for you.

It has everything to do with how you will live your life in 2018. It has everything to do with what your life will be like when you reach the end of your life, which is where Paul is when he writes this letter called 2 Timothy that we'll be studying. It has everything to do with where and how you will have lived your life at the end of that life.

Did you trust the Bible? Did you trust Jesus? The two parts to our outline this morning, we are on page 996 if you have one of the Rev's Bibles, 2 Timothy chapter 3, and I want to break our outline into two parts, and it's pretty simple. Trust the Bible, part one. Trust the Bible to the end, part two.

Before we look at the text in 2 Timothy, the writings are in 2 Timothy chapter 3, I want to talk about how reliable the Bible is. What I'm going to do is talk about how reliable the Bible is, how the Bible is the revelation of God himself, and how the Bible makes following Jesus real. That's the first whole point with three sub points.

Reliable, revelation, and real. For many of us, if we're used to this, and again I'm not saying everyone is, but it's it's like a book. It's not as if we remember that we're actually also carrying around an ancient manuscript.

Indeed for many of us in current educational ways, this is one of the only ancient manuscripts you probably have ever dealt with. That may not be true for some of you, but for many of us it is. So this is an ancient manuscript, but one key question when you work with ancient manuscripts is how reliable is that ancient manuscript? Well let's look at some other first century ancient manuscripts to compare them to the New Testament, an ancient manuscript.

Josephus, a Jewish historian, wrote in the first century, same time the New Testament was written, first century. For scholars of Josephus, they know that the first copy they have of what he wrote in the first century, the first copy is 9th century, eight centuries later. There are seven copies from the ninth century of the original first century document.

If you're a Roman history scholar and you work with Tacitus, first century writer, he too has his first copy emerge of his writings in the first century in the ninth century similar to Josephus. There is one copy in the ninth century of his first century writings. When you look at the ancient document of the New Testament, written at the same time, the first copy that you can see, that you can study is the fourth century.

I've seen it. I once had about five hours layover in London. I break-necked it onto a train.

I literally ran to the British library and there I saw before me the fourth century copy of the book of Revelation by John. I just sat there. I had my hands, I made a spectacle, but I had my hands on the glass case.

I was that close. Three hundred years after John actually wrote that, 500 copies in the fourth century of a first century ancient document compared to one copy of Tacitus, nine, seven, nine copies of Josephus. Just as the ancient manuscript is utterly reliable, but that's not enough.

That doesn't make it God's word. What makes it God's word is the revelation of God. Key verse, obviously, verse 16 of 2 Timothy, chapter three, all scripture, all scripture is breathed out by God.

It's a beautiful phrase. It's a unique phrase. If you looked at the word in the original language, it actually has the word spirit in it because spirit and breath and wind all interplay together in the original Greek language.

That's true as well in the Hebrew language. So you see the words, it's a compact word, spirit breathed or God breathed. The ministry of the Holy Spirit, the gift of the Holy Spirit, the breath of God.

To say it's utterly connected to who he is. Your breath is so connected to who you are without breath. You don't exist with breath.

You exist and you speak. You bring profound case between what you speak and who you are. And with God, there's no gap between what he has said in the Bible and who he is for all eternity.

No gap. That's funny. That's why we love the Bible.

Because we love Jesus. We love the Father. We love the Holy Spirit.

There's no gap. God breathed. All scripture is God breathed.

It is a revelation of God. Okay, let me give you a three word definition of the Bible that helped me many years ago. And it comes out of our Anglican heritage.

In the 16th century, there were theologians trying to be very clear about what the Bible was. And there was work happening. There was reform work happening vis-a-vis how the Bible was being read and how the Bible had been understood in centuries prior.

So these reformers developed what's called 39 articles of religion. The idea is that in the 16th century, they said this teaches us and clarifies for us. For example, the Bible.

And here's how they define the Bible. Three words. God's word written.

Simple. It's really packed. It's God.

His word. He has spoken. The clarity of God.

The word of God. The logic of God. Go back to sermons in December.

It's God's clarity written. God's word written. Article 20 of the Bible.

And they call it the 39 articles of religion because there's no gap between who God is and what God says. And that's hard for us to relate to. So you can't project your own life on God in this way and go, oh, God's like me.

No. No, there's often a gap between what we say and who we are. It's one of the the traits of our sinful nature.

We don't always do what we say. We don't always speak the honest reality. That can play out in a lot of different ways.

I was doing premarital, many, many years ago, young priest, and I was doing premarital for a couple. I didn't know them very well. And we did several sessions so I could get to know them and do my best to help them prepare for marriage.

In the very last session, two months before their wedding date, I, without question, without any sense of wondering if it was the case or not, caught the to-be-husband in a complete lie. He had lied to me. He had lied to his fiancée.

It was obvious, it wasn't like, I think so. It was a situation whereby it was obvious and it was a serious lie. It wasn't a little, like I said I come at five and I came at 5.30, very serious lie.

And I leaned in and I said, his name wasn't Brian, but Brian, here's what you said and here's what you did. You lied to me and you lied to her. Can you admit that? No, he said he didn't lie.

Let me just ask you again, can you admit that? I didn't lie. That's okay. I can't do this wedding until you've gotten clear that you lied to her and to me.

We all can be very tempted to lie, but admitting, confessing, repenting, that closes that gap between who we are and what we say. God need not repent of this. He always is who he says and does what he says, but it's so important that this is integrated, so important that I couldn't marry this young woman to this young man knowing that he had lied.

Indeed, marriage built on trust, relationship with Jesus built on trust. The title of the sermon is Trusting the Bible because to trust the Bible, to trust the word of God, is to put ourselves joyfully like a child under the word of God, in the word of God, believing the word of God. Oh, it will bring suffering.

Paul says, everyone who follows the Lord is gonna suffer. It'll be even persecution. It won't be easy, but it will be simpler, much simpler.

I'm calling us through this teaching to a childlike trust in the Bible. This isn't to say the Bible can't be scholarly studied. It's beautiful to study the Bible and all the things that are there, unless it obscures your love for the Bible.

Don't let anybody take your love for the Bible away. Beware of that. Bible teachers should love the Bible more than anyone.

Bible teachers should have more of a childlike faith in the Bible than anyone. Bible teachers should have a life and a conduct that is a biblical life and a conduct that when it's not, they're quick. He or she to repent.

There's a great book title. It's by the son of Stephen Covey. Stephen Covey is a marketplace thinker, 80s and 90s.

His son wrote a book, The Speed of Trust, The One Thing That Changes Everything. That's a really good title. The Speed of Trust, The One That Changes Everything, which is to say, when we trust the Bible, it gives our life quote unquote speed, which is to say simplicity, clarity, freedom.

Trusting the Bible in your Christian life is the one thing that changes everything. But Paul knew this. This is why he's teaching on this.

We'll get to this in just a moment. But he knows he's handing off. He knows he's near his death.

This is the last letter that Paul wrote. So he's like, I gotta get them clear about the word of God. They have to know that all scripture is God-breathed.

It'll train them for righteousness. It'll correct it or reproof. Trusting the revelation of God in the Bible that makes following Jesus real.

It's real when we trust the Bible. Indeed, one really great thinker talks about the Bible as the embodiment, it's a fascinating word, the embodiment of supernatural revelation. In other words, you don't have to go ha, like I don't know what God said.

I don't know what he wants. I live with this capricious God who may punish me for doing something I didn't. No, no, no, no, no, no.

No, no, it's the embodiment of supernatural revelation. Canon theologian Stephen and I were talking about how we just love how the Bible is here now. I mean, as Anglicans, we love sacramental stuff.

We simply just say we love that matter matters. So this thing's huge. You know that every single word from this particular Bible was read before we moved in this building? We prayed 24-7 and we read the Bible 24-7, which is to say what? Oh Lord, make the Bible the foundation of the household of God.

The prophets and the apostles. Every word was read before we worshiped in this space. The embodiment of divine revelation, which is to say that when you follow Jesus, you can follow the Bible.

It's such good news. It's such a relief. You can have childlike faith.

Childish, no. No, there are different genres. Yes, there's poetry and there's history.

There's letters. There's complexities that are a part of it. But the Bible can be understood.

The Bible can be received. It's the word of God written and it makes following Jesus real. My son, Ellison, who's 18 and I've been watching this series of short films made 15 years ago called Band of Brothers.

Okay, well hold up. Parental advisory. I know I mentioned the movie.

You do your research ahead of time. Episode nine, be careful. Okay.

Now I give my illustration. But time after time, these men of Easy Company in World War II are in extreme combat situations. Their lives are always on the line.

And the only way that they have even the possibility of living is they have to obey the one who is leading the platoon, leading the squadron. And they have to hear him. And they have to do exactly what he says.

That's it. That's the gift of the Bible. It's our commanding officer.

It's he who is the veteran of all things. He who's been through absolutely everything. He's speaking to us.

He's guiding us. He's commanding us. He's encouraging us.

He's correcting us. And we gotta hear that and then we have to act. We hear that and we act.

Father Brett did a beautiful sermon on this two weeks ago. We hear the word of God and we obey the word of God. Jesus said, those who don't obey my commandments don't love me.

John chapter 14. Those who don't obey my commandments, who don't hear my commandments and act on them, they don't love me. It's real.

The Bible makes following Jesus real. We trust the Bible. But Paul's concern is that we'll trust the Bible to the end.

That's a particular context that we're working with for this particular letter. God, that's what I want for you. I want you to follow the Bible to the end.

I want you all to get to the end of your life whenever that comes in God's sovereign plan. And I want for every sheep of resurrection to be able to say before God and those around them, it was really hard. It was a lot of suffering.

But I followed the Bible to the end. See what Paul says, it's beautiful. Look at verse 14 on page 996.

But as for you, you all, it's plural, continue in what you have learned and firmly believe. Do you see him passing the baton on to the next generation? As he passes on, he goes, you gotta have the word of God, it's God-breathed. All scripture is God-breathed.

As a matter of fact, there were multiple authors of the scriptures, but really, truly, there's one author, God himself. Multiple witnesses, if you will, one author. It's coherent, it's cohesive.

Yes, it might seem at times like it contradicts itself. You have to study that, you have to learn it, but it is cohesive, it is coherent. There is one author, one voice.

And Paul is saying, I hand you, I give you the holy scriptures. Trust the Bible to the end. Train in righteousness.

Verse 17, be equipped for every good work. Okay, here's one of the main things he's concerned about for training and equipping. He has several concerns, but there's one driving one in this book.

And you'll see it as well in 1 John, the apostle John, who's also near the end of his ministry. It's this, that at that point in the early church, false teachers were already coming in, false teachers. Those who were teachers, they had the title of teachers.

They were saying that they were followers of the way, followers of the gospel, followers of Jesus, and yet they were teaching false things. Okay, turning your Bible here in 2 Timothy 2, to chapter two, and you'll see verse 17. He's talking about false teachers.

He says, their talk, false teachers, will spread like gangrene. Very graphic. He names names.

He wants people to know exactly who the false teachers are. Who have swerved, swerved from the truth, saying that the resurrection has already happened. Okay, let's be clear.

He doesn't mean the resurrection of our Lord, that has already happened. He means the resurrection of the people of God. Hebraic teaching, and now a Christian teaching, that the people of God, like their Lord, will rise again.

They are upsetting the faith of some. False teachers upset the faith. This isn't to say that we're not upset sometimes when the Bible is taught properly, okay? So we have to discern here, and you have to do some work yourself here.

The Bible corrects. The Bible rebukes. The Bible reproofs.

It says it twice in the passages that we read, in chapter three and chapter four. That may be upsetting, but are we upset because we've been convicted, or are we upset because we've realized how we've fallen short of the glory of God, or are we upset because we've never ever heard any teaching like that before, and we know our Bibles pretty well, that that hasn't been taught in the history of the church before, and we've learned something of the history of the church, or we've gone to those who know the Bible better

than we do, and know the history of the church better than we do, and we share that, and they go, I've never heard that before. That's the kind of upset we're talking about here.

What Paul is saying is I need you to be trained in the Scriptures to identify false teachers. And brothers and sisters, let's be very clear. As there were false teachers inside the church then, so there are false teachers inside the church now.

Who gave Paul more challenge, persecution, and heartburn? He had it from outside and inside. Unbelievers and believers, false teachers. It's hard to actually know which one gave more, but those inside of the church were of great concern to Paul because he knew that they looked like sheep, but they weren't, and they were upsetting the faith.

They were causing people to doubt, but they have every reason to have true reliability and faith, and you remember Father Brett? Doubt, doubt. Be suspicious of suspicion. That in many ways is what Paul is saying here.

False teachers will again and again separate the words of God from God. False teachers will say, well, I'm creedal. In other words, I believe in the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed, but it's the practices, those pietistic practices, those fundamentalist ethical practices, that's what I can't agree with.

Those things aren't in the creed. Sexuality's not in the creed. Reading your Bible's not in the creed.

Beware those who put forward the creed as the comprehensive word of God. They were never meant to be that. They were never meant to be that.

They're critical. We say the creed every week. We love the creed as Anglicans, but we don't think it's the full counsel of God.

When Paul taught, he taught the doctrine of God and the practice of those who follow God. Doctrine, practice, doctrine, practice. They're always entwined with Paul, but false teachers come along, and they suddenly are often very smart, very articulate, very influential.

Lots of letters behind their name, perhaps. You know, I'm smarter than you can sometimes be, the attitude. It won't be said explicitly.

You know, some of those practices, that's not really what Paul meant, John meant, Peter meant. They'll separate the character of God from the words of God. This is personal testimony for me.

That voice that I talked about listening to for several years, I slowly, almost imperceptibly, came under the voice of what I would call confused teachers. They weren't crossing super bright red lines, but there was a confusion to false teachers, to absolute heretics. It happened when I was in college, when you do a lot of work of figuring things out, and you should do your work, and what does this mean, and how do I understand the Bible, and how do I understand God, and Jesus, you're working through all these things.

It happened in college. It didn't happen at the college I was attending, Wheaton College, it happened at a program connected with Wheaton, and when Wheaton found out what was happening on this program, Wheaton stopped being in relationship with this program, thanks be to God. But there, I was being taught by people who call themselves evangelical, but they clearly wanna separate practice from doctrine.

For example, they wanted to make clear that, like, reading your Bible every day, that's just fundamentalist, you know, rigid Christianity. Why would you read your Bible every day? I remember reading my Bible one morning, I hadn't yet heard that lecture on you shouldn't read your Bible every day. I read my Bible that morning, and one of the professors comes by who I admired, very charismatic, very bright, and just kinda looked at me, kinda sneered in a very subtle way, still reading your Bible every day.

I didn't read my Bible every day for four years after that. I wanted to imitate him. That's what we wanna do, right? We learn by imitation.

Does the creed say read your Bible every day? Does the creed say how you should practice your marriage? Does the creed say how you should live your sexuality what the Bible does? So Paul's saying, beware of false teachers. You need to be trained in righteousness, trained in the Bible. You all can learn your Bible.

Many of you have. You all can discern false teaching. Now, let me be really clear about this point.

Paul is operating in a particular apostolic office, okay? So I'm not asking you all to just go out naming false teachers, although I'd like you discerning false teachers. What Paul's doing here is he's operating in an authority that he has as an apostle. Later on, apostles would gather in council, and they would name false teaching.

This was a very clear false teaching that the people of God will not rise again. So he's naming that, he's clarifying that. There's a process here that is very important.

I want you to hear that, but I also want you to hear, train in righteousness. You can discern a false teacher who will upset the faith. We always seek to be fresh as we teach the Word of God and learn the Word of God, revived, renewed, but we never wanna say anything new about the Word of God.

The Reformers didn't say anything new about the Word of God in the 16th century. They revived what had been said about the Word of God for the first five to seven centuries of the church. More on that next week.

When I returned to the Bible and the Lord after those four years of following false teachers, my responsibility, by the way, I had to repent. I fell in love with the Word of God again. I actually trusted that it was Jesus's words.

I literally covered my entire small one-bedroom apartment with post-it notes with the Word of God. It's like I wanted to be inside the Word as much as possible, the embodiment of divine revelation. Finally, the contra to this negative piece, beware of false teachers, is put yourself under true teachers.

The Holy Spirit is the truest teacher of all. You have the Holy Spirit. If you're a follower of Jesus, you're a follower of Jesus.

So as you read the Bible, you read the Bible and the power of the Holy Spirit. You can read the Bible with the church. I'll talk about that next week.

But part of what that means is that those who've been called to have and minister the authority of the Word of God, minister the authority themselves under the Word of God, are pastors and bishops. The church has had this understanding from the very beginning. This isn't to say that we don't need great

scholarship.

Pastors and bishops should be scholars of the Bible. And there are particularly those who are called to Old Testament, New Testament scholarship, church history, theology. Praise God.

If they themselves are under the Word of God's authority, if they themselves are coming at it humbly, if they themselves have a conduct like Paul, where he says, you followed my teaching, but my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, you should know those who are teaching you things. You should know what their lives are like. Not every intimate detail, but you should know something about them.

And they should be transparent about those things because their life should be in accordance with what they're saying because God's life is in absolute accordance with what he's saying. And when our lives as sinners aren't in absolute accordance, then we repent, sometimes publicly. And that actually validates our teaching.

That's what Paul is saying. My love, my steadfastness, my persecutions and sufferings validate that I'm a teacher of the gospel and of Jesus who himself was persecuted and suffered. Follow true teachers.

Trust them as they trust the Bible. Trust their authority. Put yourselves under their authority.

Peter talks about that in 1 Peter in a way that makes our American independent sensibilities squirm. You don't have to be American to squirm with that one. Yeah, it's hard to be under authority.

The word of God, those who teach the word of God, as long as they are true to the word of God. Trust the Bible. And in conclusion, I just wanna give testimony.

You know, I came out of those years where I stopped trusting the Bible. The whole counsel of God. And I married Catherine.

And I came into my second family. And actually my mother and father-in-law are here today. 50-year missionaries on the field in Brazil who have a testimony.

Now, they're not near the end, God willing. One's in her 70s, one is in their 80s, and my mother-in-law is the younger one. But I look at them.

Now they can look back. And they can say, we trusted the word of God. We trusted the Lord Jesus.

In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen. Thanks for listening.

Our vision at Church of the Resurrection is to equip everyone for transformation. As part of that vision, we'd love to share dynamic teaching, original music, and stories of transformation. For more of what you heard today, check out the rest of our podcast.

To learn more about our ministry, visit churchres.org.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/28/SID28768.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/stewart-ruch/trusting-the-bible/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net