

2 Timothy 3:12

by Welcome Detweiler

The sermon emphasizes the importance of the word of God as the means of salvation and the authority of scripture in the Christian life.

Duration: 34:55

Topics: "Scripture Profitability", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of the scriptures and their profitability for believers. He mentions four main purposes of the scriptures: doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction. The preacher reflects on the spiritual awakening happening in another place and compares it to the changes and corrections needed in their own community. He highlights that the scriptures are the comprehensive equipment given by God to equip believers for every good work and to live a profitable life on earth.

Transcript

Will you turn with me to 2 Timothy, chapter 3. 2 Timothy, chapter 3. And I want to begin reading at verse 12. 2 Timothy 3 and verse 12. Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned, and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them. And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, truly furnished unto all good works. I charge thee, therefore, before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom. Preach the word, be instant in season, out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and doctrine.

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers having itching ears. And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry." And God will add his blessings to the reading of this portion of his holy word.

If someone were to ask you, what do you consider the greatest gift that God has ever given, I think you already have the answer. Perhaps most of you at least would say, I consider the greatest gift that I have ever received the Lord Jesus Christ, when he gave his son. I remember in Pennsylvania, we used at the Lord's Supper, the little flock hymn book.

And the first hymn in that book, the thoughts of it at least, were something like this. Of all the gifts the father gave, none is greater than the gift of his son. And I think most people will agree that that is true.

The greatest of all gifts. Just this past week, I saw a senior citizen sitting relaxed on a bench, and he was telling me some of the good things that the Lord had done for him. And I said to him, what do you consider the best thing that the Lord has done for you? And he said, well, I'll have to think a little while.

He said, really, I don't know. I don't believe I can answer your question. I'm not sure if I can tell you what is the best thing that he has done for me.

Well, I said, let me answer. I think the fact that he died for me on Calvary's cross, and shed his blood to save my soul, I consider that the greatest thing that he ever did for me. And he said, thank you.

I'll remember that. And if somebody else asks me, I'll try and give the same answer that you gave me, and tell him that that is probably the biggest thing that he ever did for me. Now, I couldn't tell whether the man had really experienced the new birth or not, but at least he was interested in the correct answer to that question.

However, I think that most people can be judged by how they answer that question. It may have been about two years ago that a Christian lady in the Burlington Assembly came to me and said, my father is in the Veterans Hospital, and I would like you to visit him. He's in his eighties, and I'm not quite sure if he's saved.

So I went to visit him, and after we talked a while, I asked him, I said, what do you consider the greatest thing the Lord ever did for you? He said, that's easy. He died for my sins, and he rose again. And when I gave that message to the daughter, she said, now that's what I wanted to hear.

I never had that from his lips. I never heard that before. But he was very spontaneous.

Immediately, he didn't have to think at all. He was able to say, the Lord Jesus died for my sins. But I wonder if you have ever been asked, what do you consider the second greatest thing that you have, a gift from God? I wonder what you would answer on that one.

It may be that you would say, the Holy Scriptures. The Scriptures that I have are probably the second most important thing, the gift that God has given me. And, of course, I think you would be right, because in 2 Corinthians 9, Paul says the Scriptures are, or rather Christ is the unspeakable gift.

And how do we come to know the Lord Jesus Christ? When I turn to Peter's epistle, the first chapter, I read, Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever. For the word of the Lord endureth forever, and this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you. If someone were to argue with me and say, I think the Bible is even more important than the gift of his son, I would have little ground to continue the argument, because how did you find out that Christ died for your sins? You found out through the word of God.

And really, the agency that we use to speak to unsaved people regarding their need of a Savior begins at the word of God. We notice here that it's living and abideth forever. On Sunday morning, I spoke on the subject, the new heavens and the new earth.

Many of the things of this earth are going to pass away, and we are sure of that. But we are also sure that the word of God endureth forever. It may be the only tangible instrument that we have of which we can say, this will never, never pass away.

In dealing with unsaved people, our first question ought to be, do you believe the word of God? I think that that's probably the first question we should ask. And we should expect one of three answers, either yes or no, or I don't know, I'm not sure. If the person says, yes, I believe what the word of God has to say, you can start to the next step and say, well, let's look and see what God thinks of us, what he says about us in his word.

And from there you can go to various scriptures. You have already had the consent of the person, I have confidence in the word of God. But suppose the person says, no, I do not believe in the word of God.

Is that the end of our conversation, or can we go any farther when a person says, no, I don't believe the Bible is the word of God? I think we have reason to help that person who perhaps has been trained in this thought that the Bible is full of contradictions and a number of other reasons that he's heard from other people, and he may have lost his confidence in the word of God. I like to ask a person, how many times have you read the Bible through? And I still have no one to tell me that they've read it through once. But they say, I don't believe in it.

And I ask them, how can you draw that conclusion if you haven't examined it? And they will usually say, well, I heard someone say that it's full of mistakes and so on, and that's as far as it goes. However, I think we have reason to work with people who do not believe the word of God and try to instill in their hearts why he should believe in the word of God. It's the only sound, solid information that we have for even existing conditions, and that must be settled first of all.

Then there are those who say, well, I'm not sure. That hasn't been settled yet. I hear both arguments.

I know some fine Christians, and they seem to enjoy the word of God, and they say their lives have been changed. And I also know some sinners who have no respect for the word of God, and they seem to be getting along all right. So I haven't settled that yet.

Really, the person can't settle the way of salvation until he reaches that point when he can say, I do have confidence in the word of God. So that's the starting point where we begin in talking about the advantages of knowing the Bible. In verse 15 of our reading, "...and that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." Paul is talking here to his son in the faith, Timothy, and he reminds him of some of the advantages he has had in having a Christian mother, Eunice, and a Christian grandmother, Lois.

And, of course, his father was a Greek, and we're not sure. We don't have any evidence that his father was a Christian. So Timothy was raised in a broken home so far as Jesus Christ is concerned.

But Paul draws attention to the fact that you have had the holy scriptures brought to your attention from a child up, and you ought to be thankful for that. I think perhaps some people can say there are advantages to that, and there may be disadvantages to that, because I think each one of us someday have to come to

the place where we have to settle this for ourselves. In my case, I was taught as a child, the Bible is the word of God.

It's trustworthy. It's the only thing that we have. I believed that because I was taught that.

But there came a time when I had to put it to the test myself, when I could say, I no longer believe the Bible is the word of God because my parents and my Sunday school teachers taught me. But now I believe it because I have put it to the test myself. I have settled that question once and for all.

I have known a number of people who were just the opposite of Timothy, who did not have Christian parents and were raised perhaps in ungodly circumstances. When they trust the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior, their enjoyment of salvation is probably far greater than those who were raised in the doctrines of Christ. I think of our Lord Jesus Christ in Matthew 7, tells of a man who had two debtors, and then he gives the account of that and says, which of these do you think loved him most? The one for whom he forgave the most.

And I have found people, say, for instance, like Tom Gould, who gave his testimony here a few months ago. His children have now been raised, or are being raised, in a Christian home, and they are hearing and they are drilled in their hearts, the Bible is the word of God. I just wonder, in days to come, whether those children will enjoy their salvation quite as much as their father and his brothers and sisters who were raised without any biblical background.

So, in case you are here and you were not raised in a Christian home, don't feel sorry for yourself. You may have some advantages in the fact that you were raised in other circumstances and still you have settled that between you and the Lord. Just think for a moment the value of the word of God.

There are missionaries who go into foreign fields and want to reach people. They come into a village and they meet people who have never heard of the Bible, never heard of God, never heard of Jesus Christ, never heard anything. And they start preaching to them.

I have a message for you. God had a son, and he gave his son to die on Calvary's cross, and they tell the message of salvation. But there are some who will ask, where did you get this message? How do you know it's true? And then they pull out their Bible in the English language and say, we have a Bible that tells us.

Now, that's something wonderful, but we don't have a Bible. And many missionaries have to spend many years translating the Holy Scriptures to those people to whom they are speaking. I'm thinking of Albert Horton, who has for many years been a missionary in Angola.

And he spent many of his years translating the whole Bible from English to whatever the language is in Angola, and even now is writing books in that language and passing them on to the people. How difficult it would be to operate in an area where the language is not known and there are no Bibles. And you can be sure that when those people do have the Bible in their own native tongue, they really appreciate it.

That's a wonderful thing. I wouldn't be surprised that Bibles have less value in America than maybe any other country in the world. They're so common.

Did you ever count how many you have at the house? You might have five. Let's thank God that some of them are ruffled pretty well. You've worn them out and you've laid them aside.

You didn't want to burn them. But if you counted them up, you probably have three or four or five. And they're so common.

Think of the person who for the first time has in his language God's message of salvation. That must be wonderful. I suppose that things that are common are less valuable.

I hear of bird watchers and they like to find some bird that is almost extinct. No one has ever heard of it. And they say, guess what? I have a bird at my feeder and it's an unusual one.

Take for instance the blue jay. That's a pretty bird. Who has ever said, oh, beautiful blue jays.

They're too common. We don't bother with them. We want some that are real odd.

They are really precious. And I think perhaps we do not will have got it as much as some of our Christian brethren who are laboring in fields across the nations where they have to be translated. I want to think too of the Bible being presented to us not only giving us the way of salvation.

That's made clear in verse 15. He says, by the scriptures they are able to make thee wise unto salvation. It does not say that if you have a Bible that indicates you are a Christian.

But you have the privilege of knowing how to become a Christian. And it is only through the scriptures. When we go out to win a soul to Christ, we do not sit down and say, I want to explain to you a very simple plan.

God did this, and did this, and did this. The man has a right to say, what proof do you have? Far better for us to say after he admits that he believes the word of God, take the word of God and read it directly from the scriptures. Peter says, being born again by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever.

It may be that some of us should put a higher regard upon the word of God since we know this is our only communication between God and men. In verse 16, he goes farther and suggests to us that all scripture, or every scripture, is given by inspiration of God. We can turn again to Peter's epistle, and this time to the second epistle of Peter, and read from verse 21, the first chapter.

For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. Here is the authority we have that the word of God is inspired. That is, it's God breathed, and it's a message that comes from our Heavenly Father.

Now in this 16th chapter, verse rather, and this will be easy to remember, I guess it's the preacher's response, ability to help the audience to remember where his scripture are found. All I need to do is refer to John 3.16, and then say this tonight. My main text is 2 Timothy 3.16. All scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine.

In the first five books of the New Testament, you have the gospel made very clear. Not only the details of the gospel, but the history of the gospel going through the book of the Acts. But after that, and I would say that those who place the books in our Bible did a wise thing when they selected Romans for book number six, because after we have the gospel explained, or rather, proclaimed to us, we need to have it explained to us, and that is what is covered in the book of Romans.

And I think that Paul may have had this in mind when he said, all scripture is given by inspiration and is profitable, not only for showing us the way of salvation, but beyond that, for doctrine. I suppose that the

person who reads his Bible for the first time will find out that in the beginning that primarily it's addressing unsaved people. But after he gets to the book of Romans, and from there on all the way to the end, he can say, this book was written mostly for Christians.

There are certain things that are clear in the gospel in these epistles, but a lot of it is written for Christians especially. And Paul covers that in the book of Romans. He says that there were former ways of God communicating, such as in dreams and visions and oral ministry of the apostles.

But now it is written and all scripture is given by inspiration and is profitable for doctrine. You can't get very far without having doctrine. It's profitable beyond the scope of just telling us how to be saved.

In the book of Romans you have the foundation truths, and I suggest that when you read it again you will look for that and you will find that there are things explained that come up in the mind of every person, such as the two natures in the seventh chapter of Romans and many other doctrinal things that are mentioned in that book. But he goes on. He mentions four things that the scriptures are profitable for.

First of all, for doctrine. Next he says for reproof or for rebuking error. I would pick as a book to illustrate this the book of Galatians, which Paul wrote to the Christians.

He himself was a Jew and at one time as Saul of Tarsus he was absolutely unteachable. But when he became Paul he became teachable and he recognized that there were certain things in the Galatian church that it crept in that were no longer to be practiced by the New Testament church and for that reason this book is written. Also in Titus chapter 2 and verse 15 we read, These things speak and exhort and rebuke with all authority that no man despise thee.

The Bible is profitable for correcting us or changing our attitude towards certain things that need to be rebuked. And in chapter 4 and verse 3 we have also for the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine but after their own lust shall they heap to themselves teachers having itching ears. So for doctrine and for reproof.

The third one is for correction and I would pick for that book perhaps 1 Corinthians. Paul went into the city of Corinth and the record is back in Acts chapter 18 and then after some years and I don't know how many years he wrote the book of 1 Corinthians and there were a number of things that had to be changed. They were drifting.

There was for instance the following of men. They have lost sight of Christ and have substituted Paul and Cephas and Apollos and they were following men instead of following Christ. There was a drifting from the truth and the whole book of 1 Corinthians is written to correct a number of things and I don't want to go into all of those but when you read it again keep that in mind.

Things that people drifted into and now needed correction. Last Wednesday night we had a missionary here from La Paz, Bolivia Mr. Kurt Liffandler and a very enthusiastic man and I'm sure that everyone who was present enjoyed his message. I couldn't help but reflect when he told us about the refreshing spiritual awakening that they are enjoying there a reminder of what happened here some twenty years ago and I thought of some of the changes that have taken place.

Perhaps some of the things that could stand some correction and perhaps changes that were needed in the area of doctrine and various things. Remember that in those early days we had four weeks of gospel meetings. That would seem impossible today.

I don't think anyone in our area has ever attempted lately four weeks of gospel meetings and could say that they were successful. But we can remember those days and we drifted from that and there's no use trying something that won't work because there are certain things that work for a certain length of time and then they need to be changed to something that is more practical and more profitable. At that time our Sunday night meetings were the largest meetings.

People went to their own services on Sunday morning and on Sunday night they flocked to the gospel center. It was probably our most successful time of the week so far as souls being saved. Many of them were saved on Sunday night or as a result of the Sunday night gospel meetings.

All that has changed and I guess we have to blame maybe television or whatever things have changed and it's impossible to take that same routine now these days. Every Christian nearly every Christian brought their neighbors or their friends along. I stood at the door and people were coming in and say I want you to meet Mr. and Mrs. So and So.

I worked with them and I invited them to come. That has changed and today very seldom that people introduce me to neighbors and friends. Whatever the reason that is no longer the case.

Then I think too that nearly everyone that professed faith in Christ was told that the next privilege you have is baptism and also the Lord's Supper. And I think if we look back to those days nearly everyone that professed to be a Christian attended the Lord's Supper and enjoyed it. Enjoyed sitting quietly in the presence of the Lord and worshipping the Savior.

I think I need to mention that there were probably close to 25 or more brethren who were apt to take part and voice their audible praise and worship to the Lord in those days. What happened? I have no idea. But I know that in our day we have drifted and those people that used to attend the Lord's Supper have lost interest in it and it is no longer an important service.

Also, many men who once audibly praised the Lord no longer praise the Lord. I don't understand that. I wonder if Paul had lived in the 1940's and 1950's and were to come back today and I were to say to him, Paul, if there is anything that needs correcting, would you write us an epistle to the Gospel Center and let us know something that you have noticed that you feel needs changing.

I wonder what that epistle would be like. Paul could say there's no use expecting him because he's in heaven, but if he were here he probably would see some things that could stand correction. Last Sunday a week ago we had Greg Garman as a speaker and I think that most speakers that come to the Gospel Center seek the Lord's face regarding his subject matter and you'll remember that his subject was on Sunday morning that the Ephesian epistle in Revelation chapter 2 thou hast left thy first love and he gave us ten ways of telling how we can detect that we lost our first love.

This is something that sneaks up on us and the first time that we become aware that we do not love the Lord Jesus quite as much as once we did, we sort of resent it because no one can say that, but there is a possibility that we have lost our first desire and if we were to send out a questionnaire, what do you think should be done at the Gospel Center to bring us back to those happy days when we were able to worship the Lord spontaneously? There would be dozens and dozens of answers, maybe hundreds of answers. However, all of them probably would exclude the writer. I have to ask myself sometimes, am I enjoying the Lord as much as I did some years ago? And I have to search my heart and admit that there was a time when I saw in every person that I met a possible person who would enjoy God's salvation if he heard it

and I gave him the gospel.

Today, I think I have changed to the extent that I no longer see a prospect for the gospel in nearly every person I meet. I write them off, that person isn't interested, he'd never be saved and as soon as that attitude comes upon us, we're not going to find very many people who are interested in the gospel. This past Sunday morning, some of you perhaps are reading the Daily Bread by the Radio Bible Class and if so, I want to remind you of what Richard DeHaan wrote on Sunday the 19th.

When British evangelist Gypsy Smith was asked how to start a revival, he said, go home, lock yourself in your room, kneel down in the middle of the floor, draw a chalk mark all around yourself and ask God to start the revival inside that chalk mark. When he has answered your prayer, the revival will be on. Smith's reply made an important point.

Even though we should pray for revival in our churches, we need not wait for a spectacular working of God's spirit in others to experience His power in our own. Smith's reply made an important point. Even though we should pray for revival in our churches, we need not wait for a spectacular working of God's spirit in others to experience His power in our own lives.

In fact, the Lord is ready right now to bless us personally if we will meet His conditions. Are you a believer whose heart has grown cold? Have you become indifferent to the Lord? Have the things of earth and the pleasures of this life taken priority over the spiritual and eternal values? If so, I encourage you to take these steps. Acknowledge your need.

Confess your sins to the Lord. Spend time daily in God's word. Talk to your Heavenly Father.

Determine to say no to every temptation of the world and the flesh and the devil. The Holy Spirit which dwells within you is more powerful than Satan. God has made available everything that we need to live a profitable life on earth.

And that's the subject in verse 17. The goal that God had in mind when He saved us. And some of the translations read like this.

So that the man who belongs to God may be efficient and equipped for work of every kind. Phillips translation. The scriptures are the comprehensive equipment of the man of God to fit him fully for all branches of his work.

And the NIV so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. God wants us to spend our days profitably for Him and He gives us the goal. I didn't touch on the last one which is instruction.

And of course that is included with all the rest. I think Mr. Lifthandler on Sunday mentioned or Saturday, Wednesday mentioned that as they preach the gospel they also disciple these people. So instruction from the word of God is also important.

Let's ask ourselves a question. Am I, have I changed? Do I live exactly the way I did in those early days of my profession? Can I give a good reason for that change? Will I ever be as happy as I was then? This is something that the preacher can't do. I have never been successful in correcting or even exhorting people.

I rather think that the word of God can do that when it comes without any human instrument in the way. If you take yourself in the room and open the Bible and ask the Lord to guide you and direct you. If He shows you there are things to be corrected that will be a blessing to God and also to you.

I covet this for myself and also for you. That we shall get back to that place where we can say I never loved the Lord Jesus any more than I love Him right now. Besides those prayer requests I found three people in the hospital that we should add to them and that is Moda Bell Lyman who is in County General.

Also Francis Jones who attends Northgate Chapel and who was the other one? Eileen Pennington. Gilbert Pennington's wife is also in the hospital. Let's remember these three as we go to prayer.

Thanks in His name. Amen.

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