

A People Who Submit to the Absolute Authority of Scripture

- *I invite you to turn to 2 Tim. 3 this morning
 - we are continuing our series “Blueprints of a Biblical Church”
 - Southern Baptists have longed been known as people of “the Book”, referring to the Bible
 - and to be a people of the Book, means that we submit ourselves to the absolute authority of God’s Word

- *I think the best text, is a familiar text that we have looked at before...
 - in fact, if you took good notes, much of this is going to sound familiar to you, b/c we looked at a 2 years ago
 - but it is so important, and foundational, it is worth looking at again...

2 Tim. 3:15 – 4:2

¹⁴ But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it ¹⁵ and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶ All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for

training in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: ² preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching.

PRAYER

A People Who Submit to the Absolute Authority of Scripture

*The first characteristic of the early church mentioned in **Acts 2:42a**, is that *“they devoted themselves (continually) to the apostles' teaching*

- that is the most foundational trait for any God-honoring church, is a continual devotion to the Word of God
- this should not be surprising to us...
- from cover to cover, it is always the Word of God that forms and shapes, enlivens God's people
- From Gen. 1, where God speaks the universe into existence
- to God giving the Law to His people in Exodus, where He tells them to

write them on the doorposts of their homes and gates, and bind them on your hands

-to the exhortation to Joshua and to every King that followed,

Josh. 1:8 *This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it.*

-to the Psalms that call us to delight in God's Word, to meditate upon it, to hide it in our hearts that we might not sin against God

-to the Prophets, who call us back to God's Word over and over again

-that it is only through the Word of God, that dry bones live!

-that God's people flourish and Grow...

-In the NT the Word, became flesh and dwelt among us, in Jesus

-and salvation comes by "hearing the Word" and believing

-and then we're to build on the solid foundation of Christ and His Word rather than the shifting sands of culture

-and on and on we could go....

-from the very beginning and throughout the Bible, God's people have always been marked by a faithfulness to His Word!

*And likewise, it is always the temptation of the church to veer from God's Word

-we see that from the beginning too, don't we?

Gen. 3:1 *"Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?"*

-Did He actually say that?

-Do we really have to? Is God's Word authoritative in our lives?

-and much of Scripture chronicles a people who resist God's Word and the tragic consequences that follow

*One of the things that concerns me today, are the many pastors and church leaders who are more fearful of being out of step with culture than they are out of step with God's Word...

-and so they chase after this trend and that trend, hoping to attract the world...

-but true Biblical, Christianity requires a denial of the world and its values and behaviors

-and a commitment to the unchanging Truth of God's Word

*In chapter 3:1-13, Paul describes the pattern of decline that will plague churches "in the last days"

-and then he provides the answer to such

decline beginning in v14

-with the simple charge of this:

v14a ¹⁴ *But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed...*

-which Paul identifies in v15 as the “*Sacred Writings*” and in v16 the “*Scripture*”

-Timothy, Continue in the Word!

-a charge that I believe is not just for ministers, but for the Church!

-we must Continue in the Word!

-or we are not faithful, we are not a Biblical church

*I want us to consider this command to “continue in the Word”

-and what it means for us as the People of God...

First, I want to look at the reasons “why” Paul says to continue in the Word, and then “how” we must continue in the Word

First, let’s look at the reasons we should...

1-Continue in the Word – Why?

-Paul gives us several of them...

At the top of the list is the fact that...

A-The Scriptures are given by God

-the reason Paul wants Timothy and the church to continue in the Word, is b/c this is not an ordinary word

-this is not an ordinary piece of literature

-this is not Aesop’s Fables, or Chicken Soup for Soul

*These are the “*holy Scriptures*” he writes in v15

-that phrase is used here b/c that is what Timothy would have learned from his grandmother Eunice and his mother Lois

-referring to the Old Testament

-from them he had learned of the great events and the great passages, the wonderful promises of God

*Down in v16a Paul expands it a bit...

-he says, ¹⁶ *All Scripture is breathed out by God...*

-what an incredible declaration!

-Paul creates a new word by putting two words together...

Theos – God,

Pneustos – Breathe

-Paul realized that God was using the Apostles and prophets in his time to breathe out His Word

-All Scripture, the Old and New Testaments are God breathed!

-Inspired by God...

*Notice, all parts of it are inspired by God himself!

-we don't get to choose the parts of the Bible we like, which commands we wish to obey, which doctrines we will believe

-all of it is from the Spirit of God, all of it is

binding!

*In fact, b/c the Bible is “inspired by God” it is also inerrant

-that is, it is without error, b/c God is without error

-The Bible says, “The Law of the Lord is perfect” (Ps. 19:17)

-“Your Word is pure” (Ps. 119:140)

-“Your Word is truth” (Ps. 119:142)

-“all your commandments are truth” (Ps. 119:151)

-Every Word in the Bible is truth b/c God-breathed it

-it is 100% completely true

-When the Scripture says, God says!

-When God says, the Scripture says!

-they are one in the same!

*Because the Bible is inspired by God, and therefore without error, it has authority over our lives

-the Bible is the Truth with a capital ‘T’

-it is the ultimate source of truth in our lives

-it trumps all others sources of truth!

-there is no higher authority to go to!

*It is not very popular today to hold a high view of Scripture like this...

-our culture believes that truth is relative

-that the truth is whatever you want it to be

-that the Bible is not enough, that we need to look to other sources to give us Truth!

*But Paul, in his dying days, did not tell Timothy to be trendy, to be creative...

-OR to look to other places for the Truth...

-Paul knew God had given us something timeless: the sacred Scriptures, the Word of God

-he should "continue in it!"

Another reason we should continue is b/c

B-The Scriptures make us wise for salvation

v14-15 ¹⁴ But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it ¹⁵ and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

-from childhood, Timothy was taught the Word of God, and that was good, b/c..

B-The Scriptures make us wise for salvation

*There's only one book that can make you wise for salvation, and it's the Bible!

-the reason is, b/c this book is about Jesus Christ!

the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

*Jesus said in **John 14:6** *"I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."*

-a person cannot be saved a part from knowing the person of truth, Jesus Christ

-and the way you know the person of truth is through the Word of Truth, Scriptures!

*These are Christ-centered Words!

-the Bible is a book that leads us to salvation, b/c it leads us to Christ

-from Genesis to Revelation, the Bible is unfolding the redemptive plan of God, through Jesus

-it's climax is the person and work of Christ

-the OT anticipates Christ

-the NT explains Christ

-He is promised in the beginning, He is there in the middle, and He is exalted at the end, as the object of our worship for all eternity!

-this is a "HIM" Book, it's about book about Jesus

-a book that makes one wise for salvation!

(Platt, Commentary, 198-199)

Third,

C-The Scriptures are profitable for sanctification

v16 All Scripture is breathed out by God and

profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,

-the Word of God is profitable, or useful...

C-The Scriptures are profitable for sanctification

First for “teaching and reproof”

- these two are about doctrine, our beliefs
- All Scripture is useful for teaching
- not just the book of Romans, but the narratives of the Old Testament
- not just the Gospels, but the Psalms
- all of it is useful!

*And when the whole counsel of God is taught, there will also be reproof, or rebuking

- that is, it will show us where we have gone wrong, where we have sinned
- we’re sinners, and we can’t change until we recognize our sinfulness and our need to change

*Then there’s “correction and training for righteousness”

- these two have to do with our conduct
- “correcting” means to straighten out
- those who accept the correction of God’s Word will begin to find their lives straightening out

- and they will be ready for the Word's positive effect of "training in righteousness"
- where we begin to live out the Truth of God's Word

*And so God's Word has divine power to change lives!

- from hearers of the Word, to doers of the Word
- the Word is the means by which we are Sanctified, made holy, made like Christ

Fourth,

D-The Scriptures equip for service

v17 that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

- when the Ministry of the Word is working as it should, then the church is equipped to do good works!

-this verse an echo of **Eph. 4:11-12**

¹¹ And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, ¹² to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ,

D-The Scriptures equip for service

*This is a great reminder today of why we gather

for corporate worship...

- while we want to be sensitive to the unbelievers who are with us
- the purpose of our services is the equipping of the Saints
- or as the old saying goes, “*We should gather to worship and scatter to evangelize*”
- we want our services to be focused on encouraging and strengthening and training Christians so that they can take the gospel to those who need to hear it!
- and the Scriptures are the basis of that equipping!

In fact, notice that the...

E-The Scriptures are totally sufficient

- for all of these things!
- notice the word in v17

v17 *that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.*

-competent, perfect...

E-The Scriptures are totally sufficient

-Calvin comments on these verses...

Perfect means here a blameless person, one in whom there is nothing defective; for he asserts absolutely, that the Scripture is sufficient for perfection. Accordingly, he who is not satisfied with

Scripture desires to be wiser than is either proper or desirable.

- in other words, the Scriptures are totally sufficient to meet all of our needs!
- in salvation, in sanctification, in equipping and training for righteousness
- those who think we need to move beyond the Bible to other sources for our growth, are denying the sufficiency of the Scripture
- the Bible contains everything we need for life and godliness!
- everything we need to be the People of God!

*The Word comes from God, it's inspired, inerrant, and authoritative for our lives...

- it leads to salvation, empowers sanctification, equips for service,
- it's completely sufficient!
- therefore, Paul says to Timothy and to us, *"you need to continue in the Word!"*

But how do we do that? What things did he mean by continue in the Word?

2-Continue in the Word – How?

- I think there are at least 4 things Paul had in mind
- ranging from the Church as a whole, down to the individual Christian...

First, Paul wanted Timothy to continue in the Word...

A-Through the Ministry of Preaching and Teaching

-this is immediately apparently by the words following, in **2 Tim. 4:1-2**

I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: ² preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching.

A-Through the Ministry of Preaching and Teaching

- it's clear throughout both of Paul's two letters to Timothy that a Ministry of the Word that involves Preaching and Teaching, is absolutely fundamental in the life of the church
- this includes the preaching of the Word as the center piece of corporate worship!
- the opportunity to "teach" the Word is why we have a Sunday School for all age groups
- these are opportunities for fellowship,

for prayer, for meeting new people,
for getting involved the life of the
church

-but first and foremost, it is about the
teaching of God's Word

-it is what should ground our children's
ministries, our youth ministries, our
Senior Adult ministries and so on

-the central focus of the Church is the
Ministry of the Word, publicly proclaimed
and explained

*Paul told Timothy in **2 Tim. 2:2**

*"what you have heard from me in the
presence of many witnesses entrust to
faithful men, who will be able to teach others
also."*

-this entrusting of the Word to faithful men,
who will teach others, was a staple in
the life of the early church

-it was the reason for their fruitfulness, and it
remains the calling for the Church today!

-preaching and teaching the Word of God!

Which leads us to another way we continue in the
Word...

***B-Through one-to-one encouragement in the
Church***

-entrust to faithful men

-Paul writes in **Col. 3:16**

¹⁶ Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

-teaching and admonishing one another

B-Through one-to-one encouragement in the Church

*It's been said that "Fellowship" is the Word Shared...

-I think that's a wonderful definition!

-our fellowship finds its foundation in the Word that we believe together

-and b/c the Word is so central to our salvation and sanctification, naturally we would want to speak it to each other

-to remind one another of the Truth of God's Word

-teaching and admonishing one another!

-teaching speaks of the positive

-while admonishing speaks of the warning from straying from God's Truth

*More than a handshake, or a hug, or a pat on the back... we need the life-giving, encouraging, convicting, Word of God in our lives

-how many times I have been encouraged by

a text or a phone call in which another believer shared a verse of Scripture they had been praying for me
-or how many times I've been kept from stumbling b/c a brother in Christ reminded me of the Word

*And so I want to challenge you Church, let's make this a normal part of our fellowship!
-the Ministry of the Word, not just for pastors and teachers, but for everyone in our congregation!
-as we teach and admonish one another!
-we read it together, and study it together
-and memorize it together
-and encourage one another with it

Third, we should Continue in the Word
C-Through discipleship in the Home

-in the family...
-what a beautiful reminder we see in

2 Tim. 3:14-15a

¹⁴ But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it ¹⁵ and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings...

C-Through discipleship in the Home

-Timothy had become convinced of the

Gospel b/c of 3 people in his life...

- his mother Lois, his grandmother Eunice, and the Apostle Paul
- Timothy's father was a Gentile, and was either an unbeliever or perhaps had passed away; we're not sure...
- but his mother and grandmother poured the Scriptures into Tim's life, and modeled them before him
- and then his spiritual father, Paul, also taught and modeled it for him!

*From his childhood it says, he learned these things...

- in his home, he learned the Scriptures

*Fathers, this is first and foremost your Responsibility and calling

- Paul wrote in **Eph. 6:4**, *Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.*

-the word "instruction" is the same word used in 2 Tim. 3:16, "for *training* in righteousness,

- it is your job dad to teach them and to be a spiritual example for your children
- it should not be left to the mother alone or to the Sunday School or children's ministry
- it's your responsibility!
- bring them up in the Word, Dads!

*How much of an emphasis does the Scripture have in your home?

- are you using the Scriptures to discipline your children, to teach them?
- if the Scriptures are powerful to change hearts, why would you not be using it to discipline and correct?
- are you filling their minds and hearts with God's Word?

*Thank God for Godly grandmothers and mothers!

- but what we need more of is Godly fathers, who from childhood will instill the Scriptures in their kids

Now there's one more way that we must continue in the Word

- and I would suggest to you that the reason why the conversations at Church are so anemic when it comes to the Word
- and the reason why the Word is so often absent in the home

Is b/c we are not continuing in the Word...

D-Through personal Bible study

- the reason why we are not "teaching and admonishing one another is b/c we are not letting

Col. 3:16 ¹⁶ *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly...*

-and the reason why the Word doesn't have a central place in our homes, is b/c it doesn't have a central place of our lives!

D-Through personal Bible study

*Study after study in the last quarter-century has revealed that American Christians increasingly don't read their Bibles, don't engage their Bibles, and don't know their Bibles.

-and what's more, many Christians don't even a regular, daily habit of being in God's Word

-The Word of God is more available than ever.

*The fact that we are too busy to spend time in God's Word

-or that the Bible is too boring for us to give attention to it in our lives; or too difficult to understand

-are lame excuses that are having devastating consequences to the faith

-to the spread of the Gospel

-to the fellowship of our churches

-to the foundations of our families

*You cannot read the Bible without coming to the conclusion that the people of God are people of His Word!

- people who delight themselves in the Word of God b/c of their love for and their desire to know God and follow Him
- how can we believe the Bible is the Word of God—His divinely inspired, inerrant message to us, and not devote significant amounts of time to read it
 - to mediate on it!
 - to study it
 - to memorize it!

*And so let me ask you, Are you continuing in the Word?

- through personal bible intake
- Dads, are you leading your family to prioritize the Word?
- Church members, are you striving to teach and admonish one another with the Word?
- Are you submitting yourself to the preaching and teaching ministry of the Church?
- if someone close to you were to describe you, would they describe you as a Man of the Word, or a Woman of the Word, or a Teenager of the Word?
- This should be our goal!
- This is who we are, in Christ, as the Church
- A People submitting to the Word