

SOLA SCRIPTURA

Pastor Lucas Almeida—Centra Baptist Church—October 2nd, 2022

TEXT

2 Timothy 3:16–17

ESV

[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.

OVERVIEW OF THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION

It was October 31st, 1517. An Augustinian Monk by the name of Martin Luther wrote up 95 Theses, 95 statements for theological discussion on the door of the All Saints Church in Wittenberg, Germany.

Many of his Theses were aimed criticism at Catholic practices and teachings that he believed were not in agreement with Biblical Christianity. From the doctrine of purgatory to the selling of indulgences, Luther wanted to reform the Catholic church, but this simple act put in motion one of the most important events in the history of the Western World—the Protestant Reformation.

Although this movement began almost unaware, it put in motion a major transition in the history of Christianity from an era of over 1000 years of darkness (the “Dark Ages), to an era of light. With the recovery of the true gospel that was obscured by dogmas and extra biblical authority, and the reestablishment of true biblical worship, the Latin phrase, *Post Tenebras Lux* indeed describes the movement well—Out of Darkness Light.

This movement is still going on today. Actually, it is going on right now as we speak, in our midst, we are a part of, this is our history. So, throughout the month of October we are going to consider our history, the history of the Reformation, in light of Scripture.

One of the most central words that came out of the Reformation was the word *sola*. *Sola* means only, alone. The Catholic Church was happy to affirm the authority of Scripture, the necessity of grace, the importance of faith, the centrality of Christ, and the glory of God. But the reformers fought and died to add to these the word alone!

The Five Solas of the Reformation are the five pillar doctrines the Reformers affirmed. And along with them, we too affirm them.

- Sola Scriptura = Scripture Alone
- Sola Gratia = Grace Alone
- Sola Fide = Faith Alone

- Solus Christus = Christ Alone
- Soli Deo Gloria = To the Glory of God Alone

At the heart of the Reformation there was a return to the sources, a return to the fountain of revelation, a return to Scripture as the sole authority over every aspect of the Christian life.

CONTEXT OF 2 TIMOTHY

The book of 2 Timothy is Paul's appeal, in his advanced age, to his young disciple, Timothy, to carry on the message of the gospel that was first entrusted to him. He writes this book knowing that his time on earth was nearing the end. So, he says,

2 Timothy 2:2—...and 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 is the cycle of church history. One generation teaching another the mysteries of the gospel. Church history has been built on a long structure of generational discipleship as we see in Paul's relationship with Timothy. And it is because this structure that we see in 2 Timothy 2:2 is still working today that you and I have come to know the Lord.

So, we turn today to our passage in 2 Timothy as Paul instructs his young pupil. This is one of the most important passages in the entire Bible about the Bible. The Bible is God's authoritative word for us, so we can live our lives today filled with righteousness and hope.

THE NATURE OF SCRIPTURE

"All Scripture is breathed out by God..." Paul coins a term here that was never used anywhere else in Greek literature; biblical or non-biblical. He says that all Scripture is *theopneustos*, meaning God breathed or inspired by God. This is a very high view of Scripture. Scripture is what comes out of the mouth of God. In other words, when the Bible speaks, God speaks.

Inspiration refers to the source/origin of Scripture—Scripture comes from God. So, if God is perfect, his word is perfect. If God is holy, his word is holy. If God is trustworthy, his word is trustworthy.

As protestants, we don't look for the source of God's words in men. We have no pope, prophet, bishop, or any ecclesiastical figure that speaks on behalf of God. Not even a pastor holds such authority. My words only have authority if they rightly explain the words of God—the Bible.

Friends, we don't preach this book Sunday after Sunday and model our lives after it day after day because we like a set of ancient Hebrew narratives, or because we

have received it as family or cultural tradition. Friends, this book shapes our lives because these are the very words of God!

Now, did you notice the short three letter modifier in the beginning of the verse? *“ALL scripture is breathed out by God...”* Scriptures don't simply contain the Word of God, they are, in their totality the word of God.

I recently met someone who told me that his Christianity was comprised only of the words of Jesus. But that doesn't work, does it? Because if you believe Jesus's words you have to believe the totality of Scriptures because Jesus spoke of the words of Scripture as that which attested to him!

But not everyone accepts Scripture as being from God, right? But what are the reasons why people reject Scripture as inspired by God?

Three reasons why people reject Scripture as inspired by God:

- 1) Ignorance
- 2) Intellectual rejection
- 3) Moral rejection

THE PROFITABILITY OF SCRIPTURE

Now that we've established the nature of Scripture, let's consider what scripture does. Scripture is *“profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness”*

When we say that something is profitable, we mean that, if you invest in it, it will yield a reward. We saw this very clearly in 2020, didn't we? I mean, how profitable was that year for Zoom? We were all on it, weren't we? Until we became zoomed-out, and the product lost its profitability. Now we would pay not to get into a Zoom meeting, wouldn't we? Same was true was masks, hand sanitizers, delivery services—temporary profit.

But the Word of God is always profitable. As we devote ourselves to the Word of God it produces rewards of eternal life.

Isaiah 55:10–11

[10] *“For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven
and do not return there but water the earth,
making it bring forth and sprout,
giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater,
[11] so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth;
it shall not return to me empty,
but it shall accomplish that which I purpose,
and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.*

This is why, at Central Baptist Church, we seek to make the Word of God the centerpiece of our individual lives. We shape and saturate our services with the Word of God. We preach the Word seeking to understand what God is saying in the Bible. As individuals we prize and prioritize private devotions. We instruct our families to practice family devotions. We are a Word filled church because we believe the Word of God is the only means by which we can come to know God and receive from him life eternal.

John 6:68—*Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life..."*

Now, looking back at our text, we find four words explaining how the Scriptures are profitable—teaching, reproof, correction, and training. These four words are also coupled in two different ways.

Positively, Scripture teaches, and it trains. This means, when we don't know what to do, Scripture informs us of what is right and equips us to do it. Not only does scripture instructs us in the way of truth, but it also trains us to walk in it.

Negatively, Scripture reproofs and corrects. Underline the word "reproofs" and the word "corrects." This means, when we do what we shouldn't do, Scripture informs us of what is wrong and enables us to change.

Now, this process is progressive. We are not to flip the pages of the Bible looking for that one verse that is going to just put our lives together. No, it is by saturating our thoughts day in and day out, submerging our minds in the truths of God's word day by day. It is by sitting under faithful expository preaching week after week that we start seeing the process of sanctification bearing fruit in our lives.

ILLUSTRATION: *Have a New Kid by Friday: How to Change Your Child's Attitude, Behavior & Character in 5 Days*

And what is the result of this "Scripture saturation?" Righteousness. Right living. A life that is ever being shaped by the word of God is a life that is always growing in displaying the righteousness of God.

Brothers and sisters, how has Scripture changed your life lately? What are some ways in which the inspired word of God has reproofed you and corrected you? Christians shouldn't simply believe what they believe because they've always believed it. Christians believe what because they have been so shaped by this word.

Friends, we can't expect the word to shape us unto righteousness if Scripture reading is not a significant part of our daily lives. We can't say we desire to live lives that honor God and ignore the fact that he is actively speaking to us today through his word. Daily time in Scripture is an indispensable part of the process of sanctification.

But friends, not only is Scripture able to teach us to live righteous lives, but it is also

able to lead us to the righteousness of Christ.

2 Timothy 2:1—...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.

[GOSPEL]

THE SUFFICIENCY OF SCRIPTURE

Christians most often undermine the authority of Scripture not when embracing doctrines like inspiration or inerrancy; no, scripture is most often rejected on the level of its sufficiency.

Sure, the Bible should inform how we think about God, church. Yes, we need the bible in order to know God's plan of salvation—the gospel. But when it comes to my personal life, the Bible should have anything to say?

Should the Bible dictate how I think of my marriage? Raise my children? Pursue my vocation? Should the bible influence how I vote? How I think about vacation? How I plan for retirement? How I think about retirement?

One of my friends came to faith after hearing the gospel about 10 years ago. After embracing progressivist positions for his entire life, he heard a sermon on the sanctity of human life and came under conviction that the pro-abortion position was wicked and sinful. After hearing that sermon, he said this, "I guess once you become a Christian every area of your life has to change." YES! That's right! Before we were our own morality, now, the word of God teaches us what is right and wrong in EVERY aspect of our lives.

Look at **verse 17**, "...that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work."

Colossians 2:8—See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ.

Friends, the world has an agenda for your mind. The world wants to push a narrative for your life. We have seen this so clearly lately, haven't we? The world attempting to divide us through tribalism and Critical Race Theory, and yet the Word of God says that we are one new man in Christ Jesus. The world attempting to push a non-gender binary narrative where the beautiful distinctions between man and woman are considered evil, and yet the word of God says, "Male and female God created them."

Friends, if we detach our thinking from scripture, even just partially, we will fall into great folly. But if we believe the word of God speaks and informs every aspect of our lives,

and if we live our lives in light of it, we will be complete and equipped to do the God that God has called us to.

Five years after nailing his 95 Theses to the door of the castle-church at Wittenberg, Martin Luther was summoned to an official church gathering called the Diet of Worms in order to officially recant his positions against the pope and the authority of the Catholic Church. His response:

“Unless I am convinced by the testimony of the Scriptures or by clear reason (for I do not trust either in the pope or in the councils alone, since it is well known that they have often erred and contradicted themselves), I am bound by the Scriptures I have quoted, and my conscience is captive to the Word of God. Here I stand, I can do no other. God help me.”—**Martin Luther** *at the Diet of Worms in 1521*

Luther went on to be excommunicated from the Catholic Church, and yet, his faith in the authority of God’s word alone only grew. He went on to translate the Bible to the German language, making God’s word available to all. And friends, this newfound devotion to the Word, to the reading of the Word, to the proclamation of the Word shed great light on a people who for over a millennium had walked in darkness, in complete ignorance of what God says in his word.

Friends, sola scriptura is a reminder to us that we have a God who speaks, and the words that come out of his mouth will forever be our only standard of faith and righteousness.