

2 Timothy 3B

- Last week Paul told Timothy that times were going to be tough for Christians
 - In the last days, people were going to act in increasingly ungodly ways
 - Paul listed 19 vices that would typify the nature of people on earth during our days
 - And as we examined that list, we came to see clearly that this is exactly the world we know today
 - Paul's point was that persecution of believers is not going to be unusual
 - The nature of our days is evil
 - So in the last days, ungodly people will focus their evil hearts against one another and especially against the church
 - Furthermore, the opposition will be led by men who seek to stumble the faithful
 - Unbelievers who come into the church with false teaching
 - Paul said these men would entice weak, immature Christians who are driven by lustful desires
 - Christians who are always learning but never coming to the truth, Paul said
 - The false teachers will pick off some of the weak in the flock, but they will be defeated in the end, just as in the day of Moses
- Therefore Timothy had to be prepared to face difficulties as a pastor
 - Despite whatever temptation Timothy felt to retreat from his God-given role to lead the church in Ephesus, he needed to stay the course
 - A season of persecution wasn't cause to give up on his pastoral duties
 - These seasons are to be expected
 - And a falling away in the church at the hands of false teachers is not evidence that God's people are losing the fight

- They are reason to press forward in the fight so we may rescue them
- Now Paul gives Timothy the recipe for how a pastor (or any Christian) may prosper in the face of trials and the difficulties we experience in our walk
 - And once again, Paul uses himself as an example for Timothy to follow

2Tim. 3:10 Now you followed my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, patience, love, perseverance,

2Tim. 3:11 persecutions, and sufferings, such as happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium and at Lystra; what persecutions I endured, and out of them all the Lord rescued me!

- In v.10 Paul lays out a series of steps that should mark an obedient life
 - He begins with the comment “now you followed...”
 - Paul means that Timothy paid attention to Paul instead of listening to false teachers
 - Paul’s comment suggests that in his time with Timothy in Ephesus, there were also false teachers competing with Paul
 - Apparently, these false teachers were competing with Paul, seeking to lead believers astray
 - Among those who were targeted was Timothy, and yet Paul says Timothy followed Paul, not the false teachers
 - Specifically, Timothy followed Paul through a series of experiences
 - Each step in this chain leads to the next
 - Paul is describing a progression of spiritual maturity and the consequences that naturally follow
 - So let’s look at this chain to understand how mature Christians progress in their pursuit of Christ
- Paul begins with teaching
 - The life of a Christian begins with teaching and everything that follows in their life will turn on the teaching they follow

- Every Christian is called by scripture to seek proper biblical instruction
- But many Christians make little effort in this pursuit or they pursue false teaching that tickles the ears
- If a believer lacks proper instruction, they lack the fuel to drive the engine of their sanctification
 - The Holy Spirit works in our hearts to leads us into a walk of righteousness and holiness
 - But making that journey successfully depends on an understanding of what pleases the Lord

Col. 3:10 and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him –

- The Bible calls for all believers to begin their walk of pleasing the Lord with a renewing (or a making new) of our mind
- We are expected to come to a “true” knowledge
- From what we learn about Christ and about ourselves in scripture, we gain the insight and motivation to obey Christ
 - We learn about our sin and the struggle we must wage against our flesh
 - We learn what pleases Christ
 - And most importantly, we begin to take on Christ’s desires in place of our previous, sinful desires
 - This is a supernatural process, not merely an intellectual process
 - There will be things we learn that change specific thoughts and understanding
 - For example, learning about rewards in the Kingdom may change our attitude toward accumulating wealth here
 - But other times, what we learn doesn’t seem directly related to our responses
 - For example, a believer might read the account of Ruth’s life and feel motivated to become a missionary in Africa

- The word of God is living and active, so it possess spiritual power beyond the words on the page
- That's the power of pursuing instruction
- But if a Christian does not pursue instruction in God's word they are standing still
 - They're like a runner still in the starting blocks
 - The race has begun but they aren't going anywhere
 - Even worse, the writer of Hebrews tells us in Chapter 5 that those who fail to mature in learning will regress
 - A failure to nurture our spirit with the word of God results in our flesh growing stronger at the expense of our spirit
 - Sooner or later, a believer will be captivated by lust or distracted by the enemy's temptations and schemes
 - The word of God has been provided to believers to keep us from these things, as it corrects our wrong thinking and cleanses us of our desires to sin

[Eph. 5:25](#) ... Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her,
[Eph. 5:26](#) so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word,

- The greatest scandal of the modern church is its intolerance for strong, consistent Bible teaching
 - Most believers who love the word of God and recognize its importance know this struggle
 - Many can tell stories of working in vain to get their pastor to teach the Bible consistently (or at all)
 - Or trying to persuade a small group or Sunday school class to study a Bible book rather than a popular paperback
 - Knowing how many churches have abandoned teaching the Bible as a regular part of Sundays and everyday, we have to wonder what will become of the church?
 - We don't have to wonder very hard, because the result is evident around us

- Paul will address this outcome in Chapter 4, so we'll leave that discussion for next lesson
- Let's move to the next step in Paul's chain: conduct
 - The Greek word for conduct is better translated "lifestyle" or manner of living
 - And naturally, our walk in life will follow naturally from our thinking
 - Our entire educational system is built on this concept
 - We educate and train people to think differently so they will act differently
 - As Paul says

Rom. 12:2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

- By our renewing of our thinking, we will experience a transforming of our walk
 - And that transformation results in a life that proves or testifies to what pleases Christ
 - That is the call on every Christian life
- Occasionally you may encounter a bias against Bible study among some within Christianity
 - Some will say that those who study the Bible "too much" are less likely to serve the Lord
 - This line of thinking suggests that learning can get in the way of living for Christ
 - In the same way that a student can stay in college indefinitely rather than graduating and moving on to a job
- This type of thinking is itself evidence of spiritual immaturity and indicative of someone who lacks an appreciation of the power and necessity of scripture
 - Simply put, it's literally impossible to study the Bible too much, assuming we're talking about a believer directed by the Spirit in study

- The more time we spend in the word of God, the more potential to know Him truly
- And the more we know Him, the more potential for our conduct to please Him
- Even Paul required many years of teaching by Christ in Arabia before launching into his ministry
- And Paul was a Pharisee, someone who had literally memorized the scriptures
- In any church you will find those who walk with the Lord and serve Him faithfully, and those who don't
 - More often than not, those who walk closely with the Lord are those who know Him by His word
 - But when knowledge is lacking or where false teaching reigns, sin will follow
- Timothy knew Paul's teaching, so Timothy followed Paul's conduct
 - And from there came purpose, Paul says
 - Specifically, Timothy felt a call to a similar purpose in pastoral ministry
 - Obviously, not every believer will feel called to the same ministry
 - But everyone will feel called to serve Christ in some respect
 - So teaching leads to a lifestyle of godliness and from a lifestyle of godliness, we find opportunity to serve Christ in some mission
 - Notice this relationship...holiness in living is a prerequisite to our purpose in serving Christ
 - God calls men and women to serve Him first in our putting away sin and walking in love
 - And then secondly through a purpose in serving Him
 - The order of these steps reflects the Lord's priority for His children
 - His first concern is for our holiness
 - He encourages our service, but even our service is intended to drive us into a closer walk with Christ

- So we can't substitute busy-ness for holiness
- Next, Paul says Timothy knew Paul's faith
 - Notice faith falls fourth in this list, after conduct and purpose, so we know this can't be a reference to saving faith
 - Rather, this is the faith that comes as a result of spiritual maturity
 - It is a confidence in the promises and plan of God
 - A way of thinking and living that rests in God's power
 - Speaking from my own experience, I can testify to the truth of these steps
 - As you make your purpose in life to serve the Lord, you find yourself growing in faith
 - You become more aware of your dependence on the Lord, and on His power and work around you
 - That in turn gives you greater confidence to step out
 - Likewise, you develop a sense of patience – the next item down Paul's chain – as you wait on the Lord or suffer through trials
 - You are committed to the course because you have an understanding of what God is asking
 - You have faith to pursue it
 - So your patience grows
 - Patience produces love and then perseverance
 - The chain is a progression of sanctification in a believer
 - Paul modeled this for Timothy and Timothy followed Paul's example to a point
- But when a believer moves down this path, he or she becomes dangerous to the enemy
 - This type of maturing, committed, effective servant is a powerful tool in the hands of the Holy Spirit, and the enemy knows this

- So naturally, as the devil and his army decide where to focus their attacks, they will concentrate on those who pose the greatest threat
- So Paul says those who are maturing in love and perseverance will become targets of persecution
- And those who are targeted for persecution will not escape without suffering as God permits
- Now Paul has reached the main point of his chain of qualities
 - Timothy was suffering in persecution because he was doing the right things
 - He knew the right teaching, which led him to conduct himself and his ministry as God intended
 - As he persevered in love and faith, he became a target in Ephesus, which led to his suffering
- Of course, the enemy's purpose in bringing persecution was to cause Timothy to think twice about pursuing his mission serving Christ
 - If the enemy could convince Timothy that his comfort or his safety was more important than serving Christ, then he could neutralize a soldier in the battle
 - That's the enemy's purpose every time he brings pressure against us
 - He is seeking to prove us unfaithful, to our condemnation and to the shame of the name of Christ
- But the Lord allows the enemy a degree of latitude to work in this way so that His children may prove their faithfulness
 - He tests our hearts in this way, in the same way that Christ was tested by the enemy in the desert after 40 days
 - And such testing is the inevitable result of a faithful walk with Christ
 - It's not a matter of if, but when
 - Paul gives us this truth in v.12

2Tim. 3:12 Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.

- This is a basic principle of scripture
- Christians who desire to live a godly life will be persecuted
- There are four key words in this verse
 - First, the word “all”
 - This principle is 100% true 100% of the time without exceptions
 - No Christian is exempted from this principle
 - Secondly, the word “desire”
 - Persecution is not reserved for the most holy among us
 - Rather, it is an inevitability for any believer who has left the starting blocks and is endeavoring to run the race set before him or her
 - All that is required to receive persecution is a sincere desire to pursue godliness
 - And that brings us to the third word, “godly”
 - A Christian’s goal must be to live in a godly way
 - The word godly here is a reference to the entire chain of activity in vs.10-11
 - In other words, Christians who are moving along this path are desiring to live godly lives
 - Finally, the word “will be persecuted” (one word in Greek)
 - Like the law of gravity, this principle is absolute
 - Christians who make a goal of living in a godly way will attract the attention of the enemy
 - Notice Paul says that we will experience disappointments or tragedy or suffer loss
 - He said we would be persecuted, and persecution means being targeted for suffering because of our godliness

- If a Christian is not experiencing persecution in this way, what does it say about their walk?
 - We should be careful about drawing firm conclusions on this point alone
 - Few Christians endure persecution continually
 - Even Paul had days when he wasn't experiencing persecution
 - Nevertheless, the principle still holds
 - ALL who desire to living in a godly way WILL be persecuted
 - Sooner or later it will happen
 - When you set your life course on the path of righteousness, you are moving in a direction opposite to the world and its god – Satan
 - So you should expect friction
 - So if you never know persecution for your faith, consider whether you are truly desiring to live in a godly way
 - Are you pursuing this chain of spiritual maturity in your life?
 - Or did you get stalled somewhere along the way?
 - If so, then the enemy need not waste time working to neutralize you
 - You already did that to yourself
- Paul continues to alternate between the path of the evil world and the path God's people

2Tim. 3:13 But evil men and impostors will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.

- Paul says that as Timothy pursues godliness, the evil of the world will continue unabated
 - In fact, it will progress from bad to worse
 - The general direction of society is toward greater sin and depravity
 - And certainly history has proven this to be true

- Ironically, the world has convinced itself that things are getting better
 - But that's because the world confuses technological progress with human progress
 - The ease of modern living obscures the reality that the quality of life has actually deteriorated
 - We may have more freedom from simple tasks, but we've filled that free time with sinful pursuits
 - Or we're working more to pay for all the convenience
- Meanwhile, the general condition of the human heart continues to deteriorate
 - The evidence is all around us
 - More people are sicker than ever despite taking more drugs than ever
 - More people are miserable despite more convenience and wealth
 - More children grow up ungrateful and disobedient
 - More marriages are failing
 - More people are addicts
 - More schools are violent
 - Civil society has become violent, intolerant and abusive
 - The arts are dominated by portrayals of sex and violence
 - And even the church culture has become dominated by narcissism, arrogance and superficiality
 - And it's only going to get worse, because the world is deceiving itself even as the world itself has been deceived
 - The enemy has fed the world one lie after another
 - Lies about what matters in life, what constitutes success, what death means
 - And on top of those lies, the world has constructed a super structure of false ideals and false teaching

- The world is living a lie and repeating it to each other
- So the Church will exist in difficult days, surrounded by evil men and attacked by false teachers
 - Which is why Christians must commit to a godly life even though we know it will lead to persecution
 - We've set our life on a course moving in the opposite direction from the world
 - And that opposite course means the differences between us and the world will only grow

2Tim. 3:14 You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them,
2Tim. 3:15 and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

- As the world grows more evil, we should remain determined to rest in what we have learned
 - Paul says Timothy must continue in what he learned and became convinced of
 - Once again, the secret to maintaining a godly life in the midst of an evil world is to have the right knowledge
 - And then to be convinced of it, which means to have an abiding confidence in the word of God
- In Timothy's case, his conviction was based on the credibility of the one who delivered it to him, namely Paul
 - Remember, the New Testament canon didn't exist in Timothy's day
 - Timothy did have the Old Testament scriptures, Paul says in v.15, and he learned those even as a child
 - But Paul's teaching was new
- Nevertheless, Timothy found confidence in what Paul taught because he knew Paul's position as an apostle
 - An apostle carried the word of Christ to the church

- The apostles validated their authority to author God's word through miracles
- That miraculous power demonstrated these men were called and equipped by God's Spirit in a unique way
- In a sense, we have the same basis for confidence today
 - We place our confidence in the word of God knowing it came to us from Christ by way of his apostles
 - Both the Old and New Testament are the word of God
 - And as such they are the sacred writings, Paul calls them, which means they are the words God provided to man
 - These words have the power to give wisdom leading to a salvation through faith which is by Jesus Christ
 - The scriptures are the chief weapon of the church in accomplishing our mission to reach the world for Christ
 - So that as we contend with the growing evil of the world, we must stay the course of teaching the word
 - Paul's articulating one of the most important principles for the mission of the church: the sufficiency of God's word
 - Paul juxtaposed the problem of growing evil in the world with the church's dependence on the word of God
 - One is the solution to the other
 - Timothy was to continue in the things learned because he had confidence in them
 - And his confidence stemmed from knowing their source and their power
 - The word of God has the power to bring the world wisdom and salvation through faith
 - That faith itself is a product of the word of God working in a heart
 - As Paul says

Rom. 10:17 So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.

- So as the world hates the Church more for its godly stand, the church is supposed to all the more trust in and preach the word of God
 - If we truly want to bring an end to persecution around us, we must be prepared to share the very thing that has the power to address sinful hearts
 - How sadly ironic it is that many in the church today call for a diminished role for the word of God believing it counterproductive to reaching the world for Christ
 - I've heard it said too often that an in-depth presentation of God's word is out of place in the pulpit as it will scare off visitors
 - Or it will overwhelm believers who aren't accustomed to Bible study
 - Paul's response is that the word of God is the only solution to those problems!
 - As we teach the word regularly, the believer grows in conduct, purpose, faith, patience, love and so on
 - And as we present the truth of God's word, unbelieving hearts are moved to faith in Jesus Christ
 - Not everyone will respond this way
 - But there is no better solution
- Paul summarizes the power of God's word in a well-known statement to follow

2Tim. 3:16 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;

2Tim. 3:17 so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

- Paul says that all scripture is inspired by God
 - The Greek word for inspired is a verb, literally translated God-breathed
 - In Hebrew, the words spirit and breath are virtually identical
 - Which is reflected in the Genesis account where God breathes a soul into his body made of dirt

- Since God places His thoughts in the mind of a prophet by His Spirit, we can say the prophet's words are "God-breathed"
 - This is a mystery of God's power working through men
 - That God can move through the thoughts and life of an individual to bring that person to record accurately God's precise words
 - Yet at the same time, the Lord preserves the unique qualities of that person's intellect and personality
- Isaiah's words read very differently than Jeremiah's or Solomon's
 - Nevertheless, these words are exactly as God intended them to be
 - We can suppose that the Lord created Isaiah and Jeremiah to have certain personalities so that their unique writing would result
 - Regardless, the Jewish men who wrote the Bible did so as moved by God's Spirit and recorded words prepared from before the foundations of the earth
- So all scripture is from God and must be given the same authority and weight
 - This is a key point: the Word of God doesn't contain scripture
 - All of it IS scripture
 - We cannot pick and choose which parts are to be seen as from God
 - If it is in the canon, then it is the revealed word of the Creator, and nothing of it is in error
 - Of course, some see Paul making a circular argument here
 - We consider the Bible inspired because it is the canon of scripture
 - And we call the Bible scripture because it was inspired by God
 - And certainly, we must acknowledge that our confidence in the word of God is a matter of faith

- We are confident in the inspired nature of what we read in the Bible, which is why we acknowledge it as scripture
- But our confidence is not in the assertions of scholars but in testimony of scripture itself and in the power of God to reveal Himself
- Scripture has a self-evident quality to a believer, because it is written by God for believers
 - The author of scripture is the Holy Spirit
 - And believers come to understand scripture because the Holy Spirit is living in us, teaching us all things
 - So the author is also the interpreter, so that scripture is self-evident to a believer who is working in the Spirit
 - As we spend time in God's word, it convinces us of its heavenly origins
- But unbelievers cannot share in this experience
 - The meaning of scripture is beyond their natural abilities to grasp

1Cor. 2:12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God,

1Cor. 2:13 which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words.

1Cor. 2:14 But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.

- So for the world, any assertions about scripture seem circular
- Only if the Lord brings repentance, faith and the Holy Spirit will a person move from the point of understanding of God's word
- From that point, a believer must still be taught (just as you are now) to understand and appreciate the authority and sufficiency of God's word
 - All scripture is from God, so we must accept it all as such
 - And if we continue in it, then we will find it working in our life

- If we ignore it or dismiss some or all of it, we lose the opportunity to gain from it and be changed by it
- Paul gives four key ways in which the word of God works in the life of a believer
 - Before we look at each way individually, take note that the word of God is useful
 - Paul says all scripture is profitable and should be put to work in the body
 - The word profitable means something brings benefit
 - The word of God has benefits for those who use it
- Occasionally I hear pastors saying they won't teach the Bible verse by verse in a Sunday service because they want to provide relevant teaching
 - In fact, the phrase "relevant teaching" has become code for a pastor that doesn't teach in an expository fashion
 - It usually means topical series where a pastor offers folksy advice on life and happiness
 - That's not edification...it's tickling ears
- So the word of God has four principle purposes in the life of a believer
 - First, it is our source for teaching
 - It brings us to a knowledge of the truth
 - As an unbeliever, the Bible teaches us the truth of God in Christ so that we may be saved
 - This is the only spiritual truth available to an unbeliever such that until they grasp this truth, they can find no other
 - For believers, the word of God teaches us the truth about living a life that pleases God while preparing us for what is coming in our future
 - Because the Bible is beneficial for bringing us to a knowledge of the truth, then by definition the Bible presents truth
 - And therefore anything that contradicts the Bible is false

- So that if the Bible says the world and everything in it came into being in six days, then any teaching to the contrary is false
- And if an alternative teaching seems convincing to us, it is only proof of how crafty the enemy can be in his lies
- So when you see a Christian who is suffering in their walk because of ignorance, bring them to the word of God
 - Don't just bring them a verse on a certain topic
 - Too often I hear people asking questions like, "Where in the Bible do I take my Christian friend to show them they shouldn't have sex before marriage?" etc.
 - That's not how we are to use the word of God, for even if we could find a perfect verse, it won't have the magical power to stop their sin
 - They must be taught from God's word in a wholistic fashion so that their thinking changes, which will lead to a change in behavior
- This type of immature thinking about God's word leads believers to fall for false teaching about special prayers or promises in scripture
 - The unhealthy fascination in the obscure prayer of Jabez is one such example
 - Bruce Wilkinson's book proposed that if we followed prayer of this OT character, we would see the same result he saw
 - Such teaching reduces God into a genie, obligated to do our bidding so long as we use the magic words
 - And it diminishes God's word to nothing more than a book of spells or incantations waiting to be discovered
- Secondly, the word of God is beneficial for reproof
 - Reproof means bringing a person back to the truth after they have strayed from it
 - Christians who have been taught from God's word may one day stray away from it
 - Rebellious teenagers, rebellious adults too

- When that day comes, their friends and family wring their hands wishing they had the perfect words to bring them back into a walk with the Lord
 - Our first response ought to be prayer, followed by a patient counsel to that person to spend time in God's word
 - Because if they spend time in God's word, they will be under His counsel and not ours
 - And the Lord may use His word to bring reproof, a return to the things they once knew
- Once again, we're not talking about pointing them to a killer passage or verse that answers all life's questions and settles all concerns
 - We're talking about an abiding in the word of God
 - If a person who is living in sin or under false teaching is willing to return to the word of God, then this is a good sign in the first place
 - If they remain there, then the Lord will bring them back on track
- Thirdly, Paul says the Bible is useful for correction
 - Correction is different from reproof
 - Reproof meant bringing someone back into living under the truth they once knew
 - Correction means changing someone's understanding concerning the truth
 - For example, a Christian living a life of fornication needs reproof
 - They need to be convicted over their sin and return to living a life of purity
 - The word of God can bring that conviction and lead them back to righteousness
 - On the other hand, an otherwise upright Christian may hold to a belief in Evolution
 - For that individual, the Bible can be a source of correction
 - It leads them to a proper understanding of the truth of origins

- So a reproof brings someone's behavior into agreement with scripture
- While a correction brings someone's thinking into agreement with scripture
- Scripture can also act to correct groups of people or whole churches or denominations
 - So that if the church has moved away from the word of God for a time and has adopted false teaching, this too can be corrected
 - Provided the church returns to a study of God's word
 - We see powerful examples of this in Israel's past, when in 2 Kings 22 Hezekiah discovered the scrolls of the Law under the temple
 - And it caused him to bring the people of Israel back into agreement with the Law
- So if you're troubled by what you see happening in your particular small group, or Sunday school class or church or denomination, then the solution is to lead them back to the word
 - If they spend time in the word of God, over time it will correct the group
 - In time, the word of God is like a compass that points to the truth
- Finally, Paul says the word of God is beneficial for training in righteousness
 - The word for training is typically used in reference to helping children develop good habits
 - It means discipline
 - So Paul is saying that a regular diet of God's word develops in us a discipline of righteousness
 - This is the ultimate aim of study in God's word
 - As we learn and as we are reprov'd and corrected, we begin to live a life patterned after scripture
 - And as we practice this new pattern, it forms new habits, new disciplines
 - So we become trained in righteousness

- The training begins in our mind but eventually becomes a matter of muscle memory, so to speak
 - We become accustomed to living in righteous ways
 - So that over time we reflect that learning in our life
 - It is the fruit of our years of study
- Another false critique I encounter from time to time is that people who study the Bible a lot are less like Christ in their behavior
 - They become puffed up in knowledge but less loving or focused on reaching the unsaved
 - Such thinking suggests that we either study the Bible or we serve the Great Commission
 - One gets in the way of the other
 - Such thinking is 180° away from the truth
 - The best evangelists are typically the best representatives of Christ
 - And the best representative of Christ will be the person who thinks and lives most like Christ, who is trained in righteousness
 - And the person who has spent a lifetime in the scriptures will be the one trained in righteousness
- Finally, notice that Paul says all scripture is useful in these ways
 - Not just certain areas of scripture
 - So if someone needs correction or reproof, we need not take them to Hebrews 5 or 6
 - If someone needs to be instructed on marriage, we don't necessarily need to go to Ephesians 5 or 1 Peter 3
 - If we want someone to understand that Jesus is the way of salvation, we don't necessarily have to send them to John 3:16
 - These passages are fine, but so is a passage in Genesis or in Revelation
 - Remember, the word of God is not a recipe book or a dictionary

- The truth it holds and the power it can supply are not limited to specific words or thoughts
- Rather it works in the heart in mysterious ways, because it is living and active
 - So a man reading Isaiah can become a better husband
 - A woman reading Ruth can become a better wife
 - A child reading about Daniel in the lion's den can appreciate the faithfulness of God
 - And a young man appreciating the power and wisdom of God in the flood story in Genesis can come to believe in Jesus Christ
- That last example is my own, and it's proof to us that the Bible is not a regular book
 - It's the eternal word of God revealed to us so that we might find eternal life
 - And so that we might live to please God
 - This was the tool Paul called Timothy to use to help the church stand firm during difficult times and among evil men
 - Our days are even more difficult and even more evil, so we need the word of God all the more