

“All Scripture Is Inspired, Part 2”

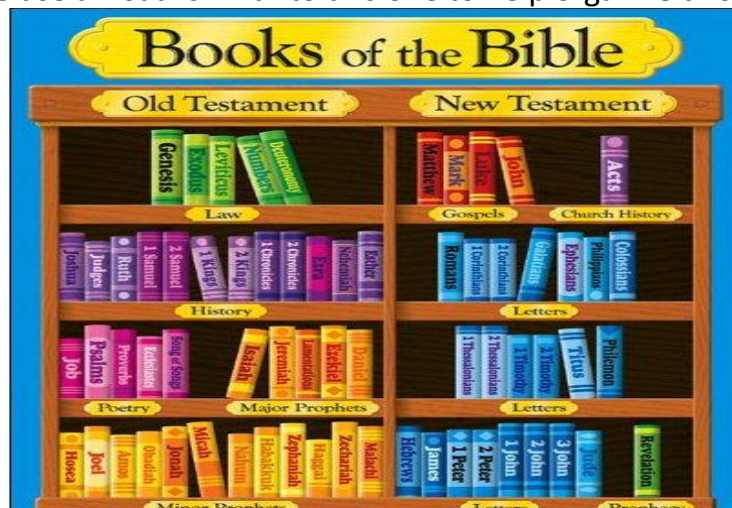
October 26, 2025

First Christian Church

Scripture Text: 2 Timothy 3:14-17

Today is week 2 of our 3-part sermon series that explores the very nature of Scripture as seen through the eyes of a single verse from 2nd Timothy. Last week we worked on the part of verse 16 that says, “All Scripture is inspired by God” and really focused in on the word “inspired”. We recognized that not every word and sentence of Scripture is breathed by God and thereby true and relevant for all time. Verses find their meaning and relevance from their Biblical context. Instead, we landed in the proclamation that Scripture is inspired by God, but written by people. More specifically, written by preachers, and a preacher’s job is to take the inspired Word of God and not only make it relevant and meaningful for their time and situation, but give it feet so people know what to do. As Bible readers, we need to do the hard work of differentiating the God inspired word from the preacher’s application so we can apply the God inspired word to our time and place instead of pretending time and place has not changed.

To help flesh out how that works, I need to remind you of some basic Bible stuff. In membership class, we define the Bible as the story of God’s relationship with humanity. And spoiler alert, it’s a love story. The word Bible itself comes from the Latin word Biblia which simply means “books” because the Bible is made up of many different books. 66 to be exact. In Membership Class we use a visual similar to this one to help organize this book of books.



You know this. We first divide the Bible into the Old Testament and the New Testament – the two sides of the bookshelf. The Old was written in Hebrew and tells the story of God and God’s people – known as Hebrews or Jews or Israelites. The Old Testament can be broken into sections, starting with the first 5 books known as the law or Pentateuch which is the establishment of God’s people and the covenant that binds God and the people together. That is followed by the history books of the Old Testament. They tell of Israel’s journey from 12

loosely confederated family tribes into a nation which then broke into 2 nations; but more importantly, they tell of God's activity in the journey. That is followed by the Poetry and Wisdom section, which is then followed by the prophets in the yellow/orange books. Remember, a Biblical prophet does not foresee the future as much as speak for God. And yes, they are broken into major and minor prophets which are differentiated by the size of the book, not the key they sing in or the impact they had. On the other side of the bookshelf is the New Testament which was written mostly in Greek and tells the story of Jesus and the early Church. The Gospels tell the story of Jesus – His birth, life and ministry, death and resurrection. The Gospels are followed by the book of Acts which tells of the Holy Spirit pushing the Good News of Jesus beyond Jerusalem and even Judaism and into the known world. All the books in blue are letters. The first two shelves are supposedly written by Paul and named for who they were written to, while the third shelf of blue book are letters named for who wrote them. The final book of Revelation is labeled as prophecy which is a God supplied vision of how hard life will get before Jesus returns to claim this world for God. It says no matter how hard it gets, stick with God, because in the end, God wins.

Now let's focus-in a little more on the New Testament. Like I said, the Gospels tell the story of Jesus' life, but they each tell it a little different. From what we can tell, Matthew's audience had a significant number of Jews who were finding new hope in Jesus. Therefore, Matthew highlights images and stories that helped his audience see Jesus as the new Moses. For example, Moses went up the mountain to receive the 10 Commandments and other instructions from God. Therefore, Matthew 5 begins, "When Jesus saw the crowds, He went up the mountain, and after He sat down, His disciples came to Him." Then He shared what we call the sermon on the mount. That image of going up the mountain to receive the word of God is important in helping us understand who Jesus is as God's new prophet and priest. But Luke says his goal was to write an orderly understanding of who Jesus was, therefore having events in the proper chronological order was important to him. In Luke, Jesus' big sermon is in a flat area. John, on the other hand, put his stories of Jesus in more of an "order of importance" as opposed to chronologically, because his stated purpose was for you to "believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in His name." The 4 Gospels are slightly different, but their goal is ultimately the same. They want you to know who Jesus is, because Jesus is the fullest picture of God we have. And though the 4 pictures of Jesus are slightly different, they come together to give us a better picture of Jesus than any one of them could. All 4 gospels are inspired by God. Even if they don't exactly match, they are still inspired by God, but written by people.

The letters of the New Testament are different. They are still inspired by God but written by people; but their purpose was not so much to proclaim who Jesus is and what He said and did, but to help with administration. What I mean by that is the letters were written by early church leaders to established congregations and other established church leaders. The recipients

already knew the stories of Jesus. They were already believers, followers of the resurrected Lord. The letters were not so much intended to reveal who Jesus was or what Jesus did, as much as help believers live out their faith in the real world. In fact, 1 Corinthians was actually written in response to a letter the church had written to Paul, asking for clarification and advice in specific areas. These letters are inspired by God, but by definition include significant applications to their time and place. And our job as Bible readers, is to squeeze the inspired truth of God from the specific advice to their time and place.

Let's go ahead and work with a specific example. Ephesians is one of the letters written by Paul that was sent to the church in Ephesus. The 5th and 6th chapters of Ephesians contain what we call the "household codes" which include job descriptions for each member of the family. I'm not going to read the whole section, but rather highlighted verses so you get the gist of where we are. Starting in chapter 5, verse 21. "Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives, be subject to your husbands as to the Lord, for the husband is the head of the wife just as Christ is the head of the church... Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her... Each of you should love his wife as himself, and a wife should respect her husband." Continuing into chapter 6, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord... And, fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord... Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and trembling, in singleness of heart... Render service with enthusiasm."

Ephesians here defines a place for slaves in the household. I believe God made God's boldest statement about slavery in the book of Exodus when God bombarded Egypt with 10 plagues and then parted the Red Sea in order to free 2 million slaves from their task masters. God then formed those freed slaves into the people of God. And God continued to work for thousands of years until people finally realized the idea of one person owning another person as property was just plain wrong. And I hope you can join me in saying there is no place for slavery in our world, much less in the homes of God-fearing Christians. Yet Ephesians defines the place of the slave in the home. So, because it talks about a slave's place in the household, and we know there is no place for a slave in the household or anywhere else for that matter, do we just ignore the whole passage? What does our Scripture lesson for this series say? "All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness." That means there is inspired truth here.

I believe the inspired word of God here is about service. Husbands and wives need to love and serve each other because serving one another in love is what it means to be a Christian. It says the husband is head of the wife as Christ is head of the church. And Christ became head of the church when He laid down His life for it. Head of house means lead servant. And wives are to submit to that model of servanthood. And teach it to their children. Not be their children's slaves, but teach their children to be followers of Jesus – servants of one another. That is the

inspired word of God we find when we squeeze this passage together with the rest of Scripture. We actually need to get past the preacher's application for His time and place so we can apply it to our time and place – a time and place where God has abolished slavery and some of the other ills of society. God's abolishing the slavery in these household codes should probably make us rethink some of the other literal interpretations also. Romans 12 says it this way, "Outdo one another in showing love and kindness." That is what family should look like.

"All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness." The key word is "all". All the Scriptures together, when they are held together, is where inspiration is. The Bible is inspired by God, but written by preachers. And what that means for us as Bible people, people who look to the Bible seeking God's word for us in our time, is we need to do the hard work of finding what is God's inspired word – that eternal truth that does not change through time and situations – and what is the preacher or writer's application of that truth for their time and place. It is not easy, but it is the means of finding truth.

Here that truth is we are each to be servants, one of another. Not slaves. God hates slavery. Slaves serve their masters on their master's terms. We are not slaves but servants who control how we serve, so we can serve in such a way that God is glorified and the one we serve finds themselves called to service as well.

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