

## 2. The Bible

**While waiting to begin, discuss with your neighbour how you'd answer this:**  
Why do you make such a big deal of the Bible at your church?

Core point: The Bible is God's revelation to us about Himself, pointing to Jesus and teaching us everything we need to know for salvation and Christian living

**Key verse: All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness (2 Timothy 3:16)**

### What is the Bible?

- **Many books** (66) written by human authors over hundreds of years.
    - Authors had different personalities, cultures, & reasons to write (Lk 1)
    - History, poetry, law, prophecy, wisdom literature, correspondence
  - **A single book**, written by a single author (2 Tim 3:16): ex-pired by God
    - A single, perfectly consistent story over almost 1000 years points to – though does not prove – divine authorship.
    - The Bible's answer: as they wrote, God was guiding them by the Holy Spirit - e.g. Jesus' words to the disciples  
John 14:26 - **But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you**
    - Really just one story? Jesus thought so!  
"... beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself" (Luke 24)
- ⇒ Fundamental question: is the Bible a collection of the loftiest human thinking straining from *earth toward heaven*, or is it God revealing himself from *heaven to earth*? If it's the latter – then what you are holding in your hand is the very words of the living God, speaking with absolute truthfulness and supreme authority

#### ASIDE: A God who speaks!

- Contrasted to other idols/pretend gods who are mute
- Our Creator, Redeemer, Father – reveals Himself! Divine Revelation, not divination  
Hebrews 1:1-2 **Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world**

## Huge claim! How can you back that up?

### 1) The Bible's testimony to the Bible

**And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers (1 Thessalonians 2:13)**

- a. Circular argument? It must be when dealing with "highest authority"
  - i. John 8: Jesus faced the same objection
  - ii. NOTE: The atheist scientist or rationalist takes same path

### 2) Jesus' testimony to the Bible (Why accept the Bible as God's word? Jesus did!

- a. "it is written"
- b. Jonah story referenced in Matthew 12 as factual
- c. Matthew 19: Jesus quotes Moses' writing as being God's words!  
**<sup>4</sup>He answered, "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'?"**

⇒ Implication: can't be a follower of Jesus, but reject the Bible's authority!

### 3) The Apostles' testimony to the Bible

- a. 1 Peter 2v 6 – "as it stands in Scripture...." → quotes Psalm 34
- b. 1 Peter 1:23-25: saved through the "living and abiding word of God"  
→ then quotes Scripture → then says "and this word is the good news that was preached to you"
- o 2 Peter 3:15-16: Refers to Paul's letters as Scripture

**And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures**

⇒ The apostle's letters, along with the Gospels, are on a par with the Old Testament as all being Scripture – i.e. God's authoritative word

## What does the Bible do?

### 1) Brings saving faith

Faith comes by hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ (Rom 10:17)

⇒ Implication: this is the primary tool in evangelism!

### 2) Grows you in maturity in Christ

<sup>16</sup>All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

- Teaching; Reproof; Correction; Training

- Equips you: "completely complete" for every good work.

⇒ You will be renewed and transformed by God to the extent that you spend time regularly with Him in his word. Do you?

## So what should we do with the Bible?

- Love God's word! (Psalm 119: a love poem to... God's word!)  
Remember: no-one ever fell asleep during the reading of a will
- Don't worry if it's sometimes hard to understand – 2 Peter 3:16
- How's your daily diet (1 Peter)
- Weekly diet- choose a church where the Bible is front & centre, faithfully taught
- Submit yourself to the Bible, not the other way around!
- Value expository teaching: where the Bible is in the driving seat, not anything else
- Model it to your family, children, friends (Psalm 1, Deut. 6:7)
- Others?

### **Beware the many pulls away from the Bible (or the authority of the Bible)**

- Liberalism / diluting / pick & mix Bible
- A desire for "more" revelation (itching ears – desire for myths in 2 Tim 4)
- Laziness / distraction (Too busy today to not read the Bible!)
- Others?

## Discussion

- What questions do you have (be honest!)
- What tricky questions do/would your friends level at you regarding the Bible?
- In what ways do we have tendencies to view the Bible wrongly (be honest)
- Is it possible to pick & choose certain parts of the Bible, accepting some and rejecting others?
- The Bible is Sufficient, Clear, Final, Authoritative and Necessary (for salvation & sanctification) – which of these aspects do you have questions about or struggle to get on board with? (be honest)
- Listening to and obeying God's word is the primary mark of God's people – do we find this challenging?
- If the Bible is so clear, why do Christians disagree on so many things? How would you answer this?
- Can we know what the Bible teaches or is it all a matter of interpretation? How would you answer this?

## Encouragement from Andrew Randall in "Following Jesus":

*How ever much it confronts, shocks, puzzles or irritates you, everything the Bible says is true. This is what Jesus believed, and to be a disciple is to learn from him.*

*The main way the Bible equips us for very good work is not by telling us what to do for God but by telling us what God has done for us.*

## Further Resources:

- *Taking God at His Word* – Kevin DeYoung
- 4-part seminar from Word Alive: *Is the word really alive?*, by Garry Williams, free to watch on YouTube