

- ***READ II Timothy 3:10-17*** As Paul is seeking to continue to encourage his younger preaching son in the faith concerning some of the difficulties that he is going to face, he warns Timothy that he is going to face these difficulties and persecutions because *“Evil people and impostors will become worse, deceiving and being deceived.”* Boy on boy hasn’t this statement continued to ring true throughout the ages and even into our day.
- There have been many efforts put forth by different religious people and peoples to counteract the evil people and impostors that lived during their time, but maybe the most well known took place during what is known as The Reformation. In Europe during the sixteenth century, there was a strong movement against the religious and political power that had been accrued by the Roman Catholic Church (RCC). Many religious people had grown weary of the unabashed power held by the Roman Catholic Church, specifically the papacy...the office and authority of the pope.
- In order to stand against what had been the practice of the RCC for centuries leading up to this point, the Reformers adopted what they believed to be a more accurate approach to the salvation that God offered. Instead of the church charging for the forgiveness of sins, they believed, in a very simple understanding of the salvation that is offered by God. This understanding is common known as the *Five Solas*, meaning five things that alone are necessary for men to be saved by God. John Piper explains them in this way, *“The five solas were their attempt to summarize biblical teaching on salvation. That God makes us alive and is completely for us: By God’s grace alone, on the basis of Christ alone, received through faith alone, to the glory of God alone, with Scripture alone as the only, final, decisive, authority on truth.”* Simply put, all of these things are sufficient for salvation.
- While I would agree with the basic ideas and foundational concepts of these five *solas*, I recognize that the full extent of my understanding of how these things are applied is different from that of the reformers and those who today subscribe to reformed theology. I feel confident that this would be true for the first four *solas*, but I think I would agree fully with that fifth *sola* that centers around the all-sufficiency of the Scriptures, and I believe that Paul would agree, as well, considering what he says to Timothy within this text that we opened with.
- Back in **II Timothy 3:14**, we read of Paul’s admonition to Timothy for him to remain strong through continuing *“in what you have learned and firmly believed. You know those who taught you, and you know that from infancy you have known the sacred Scriptures.”* Paul’s point is crystal clear. If Timothy wanted to overcome the difficulties that he was going to face...he had to lean upon the Word of God with every ounce of his being. Good brethren, we must recognize our need to do the exact same thing. We must be a people of the Book. We must be a people who are completely dedicated and committed to God’s Word, and within this text and another we will see that there is good reason for this being the case.
- This morning, we are going to look into this text and the text of **Hebrews 4:12** so that we might learn what the Word of God can do for us and how it is able to do such a thing. Let’s open up God’s Word together this morning so that we might all grow to be more fully equipped and motivated to stand strong against the evil people and impostors of our own day by fully relying upon God’s Word that He has so graciously blessed us with.

I. What The Word Of God Does (II Timothy 3:16,17)

A. The Word of God teaches.

1. Paul begins by reminding Timothy that he has such great belief in the Scriptures because they are “God breathed.” (*theopneustos*) The Holy Spirit moved men by His power to write exactly as God would have them to write. (**II Peter 2:20,21**) Sure what they wrote were their own words, but they were more than the mere words of men. More importantly they were the words of the mind of God. They were divine in nature because of their origin.

2. Because they are more than mere words of men, they are profitable in a way that far supersedes what men are capable of doing for one another. Paul first tells us that God's Word is profitable for teaching. It is able to inform us of everything that God wants for us to know regarding Himself and His desires for us as His people. It teaches us what is right by His standards.
3. We all know of those questions that people have concerning different aspects of our reality, and they become frustrated with the fact that God hasn't informed them of such things in His Word. But we must understand that everything that God wants us to know about Him and His Will are readily available for us to read and learn about within His Word. He desires for us to have a beneficial knowledge of Him, and His Word is the means by which we can know Him.

B. The Word of God rebukes

1. The Word of God is also profitable because it offers teachings concerning what is wrong. Throughout the inspired Word of God, we find men and women who did things that were against the will of God and they serve as examples that we might learn by. It might be that we find ourselves doing the exact same things that they were rebuked for. In that way, we too are being rebuked by God's Word so that we might know that we are acting contrary to God's will.
2. One of the most clear instances of this being the case is found in **Romans 1:18-32** where Paul is writing about the sins of the Gentile world as they turned their backs upon God. The Word of God is clear when it states in **v.32** that those who practice such things are deserving of death. Not only are they deserving of death, but so are all of those who approve of such wicked actions. We cannot read these verses without the opportunity presenting itself for us to be rebuked if we find ourselves participating in or approving of these same actions.

C. The Word of God corrects.

1. Yet, it isn't just that God's Word rebukes us and then leaves us out to dry without any hope. No, it continues to be profitable to us by helping us to be corrected in our behavior. It teaches us what is right, and it also teaches us how to get right because God wants for us to be able to stand before Him in righteousness.
2. Concerning how the Word of God corrects, Albert Barnes wrote, *"The Scriptures are a powerful means of reformation, or of putting men into the proper condition in regards to morals."* The fact that God sent Jesus into the world to set an example for us to follow shows us the lengths to which He desires for us to not only know what we are doing wrong, but He desires for us to change and begin doing what is right, and that is exactly what His Word seeks to do for us.

D. The Word of God trains in righteousness.

1. It does this through training us by its teachings. God's Word not only shows us what is right and how to get right, but it shows us how we can continue to stay right before God. It helps to establish within us a proper mindset that will lead to good habits before God.
2. It is the man of God who takes delight in God's Word that meditates on it any and night and becomes planted like a strong tree beside flowing waters that is constantly growing and flourishing in all that he does. **(Psalm 1:3)** Whereas those who care not for God's Word are continually ruined in their wickedness, those who love God's Word and are committed to it will be trained in the way that leads to great blessings before God. That first Psalm ends with reassuring words, *"For the Lord watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked leads to ruin."* **(Psalm 1:6)**

E. The Word of God completely equips.

- How can we approach these words with such confidence? We can do so because Paul further writes that God's Word fully and completely equips for every good work. If we will be a people who are fully committed to God's Word then we can have confidence in being adequately prepared. Whatever it is that God would have us to do, we can do adequately through the instructions of His Word!

To the person that might be hearing this or reading these words of the first time, they might be a little perplexed as to how an ancient book is capable of doing such great things within the lives of those who read it and are willing to live by it. I would suggest that the divine nature of these words ought to be enough to convince us of how it does such things, but to give further evidence I would like for us to turn to **Hebrews 4** and consider what the Hebrew writer states concerning how God's Word is able to bring us to a place where we are able to stand faithfully before God.

II. How The Word Of God Does These Things (Hebrews 4:12)

A. The Word of God is living & effective.

1. While not exactly the same, the sentiment of **Hebrews 4** echoes Paul's thoughts in **II Timothy 3** concerning the need to remain steadfast until the end regardless of what we might face. Here within the Hebrew text, we find the inspired writer focusing on the need to beware of falling short of the promised rest that awaits the faithful in the next life. The Hebrew writer uses the Children of Israel in the Old Testament as an example of a people who were not able to enter into their promised rest of Canaan because of their disobedience. **(4:2-6)**
2. They had failed to enter into their rest, but we still have the opportunity to enter into a much greater rest that was promised by God. The Hebrew writer's encouraging admonition is this, *"Let us then make every effort to enter that rest (a Sabbath rest for God's people 4:9), so that no one will fall into the same pattern of disobedience."* **(4:11)** What could help us to achieve that rest? The Word of God is that which will help us, and we have already seen what it does that helps us, but now let's consider how it does such a thing.
3. Some would argue that the Bible is obsolete and far behind the evolving times that we live in, but the Hebrew author would argue and I would affirm that the Bible is still completely relevant and effective today because it is a living document. It is living in terms of it not being a dead letter. Because it is of the mind of the *"living God"* (**Hebrews 3:12**), the Bible itself must be considered living. In fact, Peter would state such a thing in **I Peter 1:23-25** when he writes concerning the *"living and enduring Word of God"*, *"For all flesh is like grass, and all its glory like a flower of the grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, but the Word of the Lord endures forever."* This text is further affirmation of what was written hundreds of years earlier by the prophet Isaiah in **Isaiah 40:6-8**.
4. God's Word is able to be effective today because it continues to speak to those timeless truths that men of all generations need to hear and accept. That which is against the will of God was against the will of God in the first century, and it will continue to be against the will of God as time continues to progress forward. If we are going to be people who are fully equipped by God's Word then we must trust that it is living and effective in what God would have for it to do. And what God would have for it to do is to enlighten our hearts to the truths concerning the reality that we live in, what sin has done to us, and what God has done in order to remedy the problem of sin within our lives.

B. The Word of God is sharp & penetrating.

1. Further, the Word of God is able to enlighten and teach us because it is sharp and penetrating. Paul would describe the Word of God as a sword in **Ephesians 6:17** when he writes about the need for disciples to put on the full armor of God. We must be willing and able to use God's Word to each others, but this only comes after the Word of God has been used on us to teach us about what we need to do to become right before Him.
2. We can clearly see this in action when we consider the day of Pentecost in **Acts 2**. Peter stands up before the people and reveals to them the truth concerning Jesus, and he does so from the standpoint of what the Word of God has to say on the matter. He quotes from Joel and David, and he finishes by drawing the conclusion from the Scriptures that this Jesus whom they had

crucified was both Lord, Christ, and Messiah. (**Acts 2:36**) Notice that the very next verses says that there were those who were present that were "*pierced to the heart.*" There were some there who experiencing firsthand the sharp and penetrating nature of God's Word. They had been exposed to the truth and they were cut by it.

3. They were cut by the truth because that is exactly what truth does. Jesus stated in **John 17:17** that God's Word is truth, and that truth is able to separate soul and spirit just as a sword does joints and marrow. God's Word is able to expose even our deepest intentions and lay them all out before us in the open. We will without a doubt be shown the truth of who and what we are, and it will be up to us whether or not we will act upon the truths that have been presented to us within the Word of God.

C. The Word of God is able to judge.

1. This leads us to the final point of this text where the Hebrew writer confirms that the Word of God is even able to judge us to the extend of the very thoughts and intentions of our hearts. We might wonder how a book could do such a thing, but again we have to remember that this is more than just a book...it is the mind of God living within our very hands. If God Himself is all-knowing and able to judge our hearts then His book is able to do the same thing.
2. Jesus said in **John 12:44-50** that it is by His words that we will be judged on the last day. If this is the case, then how have we come to know the words of Jesus? None of us have ever had a face to face conversion with Him to know what He would have us to do, so it must be that His words have been delivered to us through the means of the inspired Word that we hold within our hands. It is by the words of this book that each of us will be judged, so how then will we receive the words of this book? How will we receive the Word of God?

This is essentially what it comes down to. How will we allow for the Word of God to impact our lives? It has all of the power in the world to shape us into exactly what God would have for us to be, but it would be able to do so unless we allow for it to take hold of our hearts and shape and transform us by the truths that are contained within it. If we have the desire to be a people who are rightly and completely equipped before God then we must be a people who are committed to continually allowing the words of this powerful book to have a powerful affect upon our lives. May our hearts all be softened to receive the truths of God's Word, and may it transform us into the type of people who are truly ready and able to compete every good work that God has laid out for us to do.