Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Standing Against Apostasy, Part 2
Scripture: 2 Timothy 3:14-17
Code: 55-16

Let's open our Bibles this morning to 2 Timothy chapter 3, returning to verses 10 to 17 and looking again at the subject, "Standing against apostasy...standing against apostasy."

I believe Paul had three priorities in his life, the Apostle who wrote this wonderful letter. Priority number one was to know Christ, "O that I may know Him," he said to the Philippians. Priority number one was the love of the Lord which ruled his heart, loving and knowing Christ. Priority number two was defending truth...defending truth. He loved the truth. He wanted to hold up the truth. He wanted to stand against error. Priority number three was to do his ministry. First the relationship to the Lord Himself, secondly, the relationship to truth and finally the function of serving.

And so much of what he says throughout his epistles to Timothy has to do with this second priority, this idea of being a guardian of the truth, being a defender of the truth was a very very high priority to the Apostle Paul. It's my conviction, as you well know, that today we have a lot of people in the ministry who have a lot of good priorities but there are very few who seem to be defenders of the truth. There's a lot of relational preaching but not very much powerful preaching. There's a lot of preaching that attempts to make people feel better about themselves and even feel better about how God feels about them, but there's not a lot of powerful preaching defending the truth. There's not a lot of doctrinal preaching, clear, precise, concise, confrontive truth from the Word of God. There are not many who seem to see as the priority of their lives standing for the truth against error, being faithful in the battle for God's Word and its integrity.

Well Paul was such a defender of the faith. And he wanted to infuse that in to Timothy. Paul was a great great soldier of truth. He fought for the truth at every turn in his life, no matter how hard the task, no matter how high the price, Paul's priority was to defend the truth of God. He fought against false teachers of every ilk in order to do that. He endeavored to teach his people so that they would be well equipped to stand against the lies and the errors that Satan would cast in to their midst through hypocritical liars.

And in this epistle, 2 Timothy, he is exhorting Timothy as he did in the first epistle to be also a defender of the truth. He calls Timothy who was in personality weaker than Paul, more timid, he calls Timothy to a faithful diligent effort in the matter of standing strong against apostasy and error and heresy.

He warns Timothy here in chapter 3 that in the last days, that is in the church age in which Timothy lived and which we live, perilous difficult dangerous seasons will come. In other words, through the whole flow of time between the first coming of Christ and His Second Coming, there will be dangerous times for the church. The enemy will attack with his deceptions. He will infiltrate, to deceive, he will do all he can to disrupt the propagation of the truth by discrediting the preacher and disarming him with the truth. Being convinced that what moves the world toward God is God's truth, the enemy always attacks that truth. That is why Jude so explicitly says, "Beloved, while I was making every effort to write to you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints for certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only master and Lord, Jesus Christ."

Jude says what Paul says, fight for the truth...fight for the truth. We need desperately people like that today, just as Paul wanted Timothy to be like that because we live in dangerous times, in many ways we live in more dangerous times for as verse 13 says, "Evil men and impostiter...evil men and impostors will proceed from bad to worse," and we are in the process of seeing them get worse and worse. Certainly the accumulation of heresy, error, apostasy and the accumulation of years makes it worse now than it was even in the time of Paul and Timothy. So whatever was relevant to Timothy then is relevant to us today as we face the dangerous seasons that come against the church.

Now as Paul calls Timothy to face these dangerous times, which he describes in detail in verses 2 through 9, he calls Timothy to take a look at his equipment, his qualifications to be a defender of the faith, beginning in verse 10. He gives three necessary safeguarding elements or factors in the life of a person that enable them to stand strong. Timothy has all three. And they're good for us to understand.

First of all, a strong defender of the faith, a person who has great spiritual courage, a person who fights the enemy, who guards the truth, who battles against the lies of Satan is usually the product of a strong example as spiritual mentor. Mentor means teacher or model. Like produces like. And where you have a strong defender of the faith, you usually have the product of another strong defender of the faith. Verse 10, Paul says, "You followed my teaching, my conduct," and "my" should be in there every time, "my purpose, my faith, my patience, my love, my perseverance, my persecutions and my sufferings." You followed me, the key verb "followed," you followed my pattern. You followed my ministry duties, teaching and conduct. You followed my personal character characteristics. What were those? Purpose, faith, patience, love. You followed even in my difficult experiences, perseverance, persecution and suffering. You followed me, verse 12 says, and you should have expected that. Anybody who lives godly in this present world will be persecuted, will suffer affliction. Why? Because evil men and impostors will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. Satan's

intensity increases and so those who stand against that will be persecuted.

But Paul says to Timothy, you have this going for you, you followed me. And that word, as we mentioned last time, parakolouthen(?) means to pattern your life after, to take as your example, take as your pattern, take as your model someone else. You took me as your model. You traced your life over mine, you patterned your living after me...so much so that I mentioned to you in 1 Corinthians 4, Paul says, "If I send you Timothy, he will bring you into remembrance into my ways. He will reproduce me in your midst because he is indeed a reproduction."

The first characteristic then that we looked at of a strong defender of the faith is that he is usually the product of another strong defender. And that is why I am so committed to the fact that we must invest our lives in building that strong generation of godly men who will defend the truth against the attacks that are incessantly coming against it and tragically and sadly being ignored by many who claim to be preachers and teachers of God's Word. We need a strong generation of men who will not compromise, who will stand for the truth against apostasy. And we looked at that last time.

Let's go on then to the text which remains for us to examine. The second element in the man who stands strong against apostasy is he has strong convictions built in to his spiritual foundation...strong convictions built into his spiritual foundation. Now I'm going to give you just a little insight personally out of experience. It is my experience that the men in this generation that I know of, that I would consider great strong defenders of the faith, uncompromising men who have the heart of God and the heart of Christ toward His truth...not talking about belligerent men, but I'm talking about men who really stand for the truth...are usually the product of a deep, deep rooted biblical background. Not always. Sometimes men without that background can be mentored by someone else. But when you look at the men who are the leading Pole Stars, if you will, the points of reference, the uncompromising throughout history, usually they had deep roots in a family and a home and an environment where there were strong, strong biblical convictions.

A number of months ago I had the privilege as a member of the board of trustees of the Moody Bible Institute to be in the process of selecting a new president to replace Dr. George Sweeting upon his retirement from the presidency. We were asked to submit names of men that we thought were worthy to be considered for such an eminent responsibility as leading the Moody Bible Institute with all of its ministries. That organization exceeds 100 years in age, it has a very wide, wide and diverse ministry and it takes competent leadership to handle it. It also takes someone who is a strong soldier of the cross.

We were asked to submit names. Interestingly enough about a half a dozen names came in. They were either, and I can't remember, six or eight names. And those names were resented to us in a confidential mailing before the ultimate selection of Dr. Joseph Stowell whom you know, he's been to our church and is a dear friend, those names were submitted to us. And as I came back to the board

after looking at those names, I brought up a point which fascinated me, as I went over those names of men who were suggested to be president of that institution, every single one of the men suggested from different men on the board had one thing in common, every single one of them was the son of a well- known teacher of God's Word...every single one of them, without an exception. Why? Because there is something latent and inherent in that kind of spiritual roots that makes distinctive people. And those kinds of people who are distinctive enough for a role of leadership like that are the kind of people that are born out of foundations that have tremendous convictions. And that was not a shock to me, although it was a very interesting thing to notice.

Men of conviction are usually formed out of the soil of a strong parentage and a strong teaching environment. It starts with childhood. Let's look at verse 15 and see this point illustrated in Timothy's case. "You, however, unlike the evil men and impostors by way of comparison, not like them, but you, however, continue...present imperative command...keep on continuing in the things," what does he mean by that? The doctrine based on God's Word, the truth that never changes. "You continue in the things you have learned...the things you have learned and become convinced of, or assured of, or confident of."

He says, "Now, Timothy, you continue in the things you've learned, don't deviate, remain fixed, hold fast, don't move no matter what the pressure, no matter what the difficulty. Evil may increase, don't you compromise. Hostility may escalate, don't you waver. You stay true, you remain in the things you learned." The verb "learned," matheteuo from which we get mathetes, disciple, matheteuo, to disciple someone. You've been discipled, don't deviate. Continue in what you've learned.

But the second verb is the key, "And become convinced of." That's an aorist passive, pistoo, it means to confirm, assure, convince, establish. And what it has reference to is the things that are fixed and firm beliefs of Timothy, that's what it means. The term means something that is a fixed and firm belief. That's what a conviction is. I have a conviction about this. That means it's non-negotiable. It's not up for grabs. That's...that's someplace where I don't compromise. Those are the fixed, fixed strands on the loom of life into which we weave the rest of the cords of our living. Those are the fixed immovable realities. Those are our convictions. Timothy, don't let anything change your convictions.

What made Timothy such a hopeful prospect for effective soldiering in defending the truth was that he had such strong convictions. He had learned and become convinced of certain things, things that were truths regarding the Word of God.

Now please notice verse 14 again. He says the substance of this, of holding on to this, flows from this thought, "Knowing from whom you have learned them." Consider the quality of your teachers, the character of your teachers, godly, trustworthy people who gave you that foundation.

Now Timothy was sure of some things and the reason he was sure of some things was because they had been taught to him by people he trusted. Let me tell you, the richness of this concept is just overpowering. If you want to convince somebody that something is really true, you not only teach it, you convince them that you also believe it and you also won't compromise on it and you convince them by your living that you're a worthy pattern to follow and that you're an authority to accept. If you want to pass a conviction on to someone else, it isn't as simple as just telling them that it's true, you not only have to tell them that it's true, you have to show them by your living that you believe it's true and you have to show them by your living that they ought to trust what you believe. That's basic. That's how you build convictions into people, by teaching them out of a life that affirms that you do what you teach and that your life gives evidence of the fact that you ought to be trusted to know what you're talking about.

Timothy was to hold his convictions because he was to recall from whom he learned them...the worthiness of his teachers. Now you say, "Who were the teachers?" Look at verse 15, "That from a childhood you have known the sacred writings." We'll stop right there.

The first teachers that Timothy had were those who taught him in his childhood. The word for childhood here is brephos, it is used in Luke 1:41 and 44 of a fetus. It is used in Luke 2 verses 12 and 16, I think, of an infant. It means a tiny, tiny infant. And he says, does Paul to Timothy, "Timothy, you must continue in the things that are your convictions because you know who you learned them from from your childhood on."

Who taught him in his childhood? Go back to chapter 1 verse 5, "I am mindful, or I am reminded, of the sincere or genuine faith within you...here it comes...which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and I'm sure is in you as well." Now you can go back to chapter 3. From the time of Timothy's innocency, from the time of his being a child in the arms of his mother on her breast, she and grandmother Lois taught that little child the things of God and started to root the convictions in his heart. And they had credibility with Timothy. His mother was godly. His grandmother was godly. They were to be believed because they lived what they taught. They were to be believed because they had the character that made their teaching trustworthy. And so, from the time of childhood, Timothy had been taught by his mother and his grandmother. That's a tremendous insight. And while we like to believe and we should believe that the father is the family priest, we cannot for a moment underestimate the power and influence of a mother and a grandmother from the very earliest years of infancy teaching that little one the things of God.

The Jews, you remember, claimed that their children drank in the law of God along with their mothers' milk. And the law of God was so imprinted on their hearts that they would sooner forget their names than they would the Law of God. Formal training begin till the fifth year and by that year that little life had already been infused with convictions passed on by a loving mother and a tender grandmother. And so he says, "Timothy, don't move from your convictions." Remember now, Timothy didn't have all

of that constitutional strength that Paul had. He tended to be a bit weak and somewhat timid. And he's saying to him, no matter what comes at you, no matter how hard the battle gets, you have to stand strong in these dangerous times and that means you've got to bow your back in a sense and stand against the opposition and continually remember the things that you were taught by godly people, your mother, your grandmother who from infancy gave you those convictions.

Those two women taught him. The preposition...I'm sorry, the pronoun "whom" in verse 14, the pronoun "whom" is plural so he has in mind here more than one. And so we reflect back on Lois and Eunice but I think he also includes himself here because in chapter 2 verse 2 he said, "You've heard things from me in the presence of many witnesses." His first and early teachers, his grandmother and mother, no doubt he had other teachers as well that those godly women surrounded him with, but then there came that wonderful teacher, that teacher of all teachers who took Timothy when he was still in his teen-age years and drew him to himself and brought him along on his journeys and poured his life into that young man for a number of years, namely the Apostle Paul. What a group of teachers, Lois, Eunice and Paul and no doubt others.

Lois and Eunice were following that Old Testament instruction in Deuteronomy 6 that they were to instruct their children and they were to talk about the law of God when they stood up, sat down, lied down, walk in the way. All the time infusing those little lives with the truth of God. Particularly did those women teach, it says in verse 15, from childhood you have known the sacred writings, heiros grammata. What is that? That is a name for the Old Testament used commonly among Greek-speaking Jews. It's a stock term in Philo and Josephus, it simply means the Old Testament. Your mother and grandmother taught you the Old Testament. You remember that he had a Gentile father and was dependent then on his mother and grandmother for that intimate teaching of the Old Testament. Certainly after his conversion to Christ, then his mother and grandmother began to teach him the truth of the New Testament, not yet fully completed. And then when Paul came into his life in his late teens, Paul began to top off his teaching by exploding on his young mind all the great revelations and mysteries that God had revealed to him in the new covenant.

By the time Paul had come out of his teen-age years, his convictions...by the time Timothy, I should say, had come out of his teen-age years, his convictions were in place. Let me tell you something, people, the convictions that your young people hold are well in place by the time they get in to their teen-age years...in fact they're well in place even before that. They can only be enhanced, enriched and added to. And Paul came along and had Paul endeavored to teach Timothy a whole different system of truth and morality, Timothy probably would have rejected it all because of the power and impact of the convictions that are poured into a little life. But Paul came and added to and enriched and expanded what Timothy had already learned.

This is vital, parents, know this that you're teaching your children convictions by what you say, by the way you live. And when you tell your children this is a principle, this is a truth, this we can't

compromise and you don't compromise they learn it as a conviction. When you tell them this is a truth, this is a principle, God wants this, we will always obey that and you violate that, they will learn that you don't hold convictions that convictions aren't important and they'll grow up without convictions.

In the case of Timothy, he was given a tremendously strong foundation of convictions. That foundation was then added to and continually expanded by his tremendous relationship with the Apostle Paul. By the way, Jewish parents used two means for instruction of children...one was the memorization of Scripture and two was a question and answer format, that's where the catechism concept came from. First was the memorization of the Word of God, secondly was the question and answer as children asked questions, they gave answers out of God's Word. That's your job, parents, build convictions into your children. Don't just tell them Bible stories, don't just tell them nice things about God, teach them where you cannot bend, where you will not compromise, where you stand no matter what the opposition says.

I thank God for that in my own life. I thank God for a grandfather and a father who poured into my life very very strong convictions about the Word of God, the truth of God and places where you don't compromise.

Timothy had that tremendous background from the very beginning. And so I submit to you that those men who become the great champions of the faith are usually those who have sat at the feet of a spiritual mentor who was a great champion of the faith and, two, who had deep roots in a system of conviction that started from their childhood on.

Thirdly, and one final element, I believe that great defenders of the faith, those who stand against apostasy unflinchingly have a strong adherence to scriptural authority and sufficiency. In other words, that which is deeply rooted in them is that the Word of God is supreme. The people who become the defenders of the faith are not people who are in to a denominationalism, they're not people who are in to some kind of New Wave theology, they're not people who are in to some kind of psychological explanation of the Bible, they're not people who are concerned about their own prosperity, success, about unity at any price, about ecumenism, they're not people in any of that. The people who are champions of the truth are people who are affirming every breath they take the authority and sufficiency of the Word of God. They live on that. They breathe that. They sleep, they eat that. And Timothy had had that tremendous privilege.

In fact, let's go back to verse 15 and see it here. "You have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them and that from a childhood you have known the sacred writings...then this...which are powerful...the Greek says...are powerful to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. We'll stop at that point.

Paul says, "Look, Timothy, you've had a tremendous privilege. Your parents, your mother, your grandmother have taught you the sacred writings, the Heiros grammata, the Old Testament. Please notice this, the Old Testament has the power to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation," do you see that? Don't underestimate the power and the potency of the Old Testament. It will tell you about a holy God with a holy standard. It will tell you about a fallen man who is sinful and unable to reach that holy God. It will tell you about the fact that God demands a blood sacrifice for the atonement of sin. It will tell you about the fact that there is a sacrificial system that is given by God in the Old Testament with all of its structure and all of its far-reaching implications is unable to do the job and is only emblematic of the one great glorious final sacrifice which is yet to come, namely Christ. The Old Testament will tell you about the holiness of God, the sinfulness of God. The Old Testament will tell you there's a gulf between a holy God and a sinful man which nothing can cross, not even a sacrificial system of animals. And it suits man to come in his desperation to the place where he cries out to God for a redeemer and a savior and that redeemer and Savior comes in the New Testament, the new covenant, namely Jesus Christ. The Old Testament can lead you to trust God, to cast yourself on His mercy, to cast yourself on His grace because you have no resources in yourself. The Old Testament will show you you're not saved, you have no human goodness, you can't earn your way to God, you can only be redeemed through Jesus Christ even though He's unnamed in the Old Testament, His presence is pervasive there through the prophetic word. The Old Testament can lead you to salvation.

Psalm 19:7 says the law of the Lord, referring to the Old Testament is perfect, converting the soul. The law of the Lord converts the soul, it makes the simple person wise, shakkom(?) it means skilled in the matters of holy living. Yes, people who read the Old Testament could find out about a holy God. They could find out about sinful man. They could find out that there was a gulf that they couldn't cross by their human works and they could cast themselves on the mercy of God who would forgive their sin in anticipation of the death of Christ prophesied in Old Testament Scripture. The Ethiopian eunuch was saved one day talking to Philip and the source of his conversion came right out of Isaiah 53, he was reading in Isaiah the prophet about Christ and His sacrifice and he was saved. And Jesus said in John's gospel, "Search the Scriptures...the Old Testament...for they speak of Me...they speak of Me."

The Old Testament has the power to lead one to salvation. It led Abraham to salvation and it led many others to salvation, David and Moses and on and on and on. And Timothy, what a tremendous person he is, he's living right in the transition. He had come to understand fully the salvation of the Old Testament. And then given the gospel he understood the salvation reality of the New Testament, the wealth of his personal experience was tremendous.

I have no personal experience in the power of the Old Testament to save, because I never lived under the Old Testament economy. Timothy lived under both. Timothy's mother and grandmother lived under both. Paul lived under both. The Apostles lived under both. They knew what it was to be

led to God through the old covenant, to be led to God through the new covenant.

And so he had a rich and far-reaching and surpassing experience of the power of the Word of God to lead a soul to salvation. Please notice this though, in verse 15 says the sacred writings, the Old Testament, are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation. But notice this, salvation comes through faith which is in Christ Jesus. It doesn't mean that you can be saved by reading the Old Testament apart from Christ. Now that Christ has come there's no salvation under any other name than the name of Christ, Acts 4:12. No one is saved by any other than Jesus Christ, but the Old Testament when it was all alone was pointing to Christ. Now with the completion of the New Testament, the reality of Christ has come clear to us.

Please notice the Old Testament could give you the wisdom to lead you to salvation, but salvation came through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. And even today this can work. The Old Testament can talk about a holy God. I could show how holy God is. The Old Testament can show how sinful man is. The Old Testament can show how incapable and inept and unable man is to reach holy God. The Old Testament can show how God has put man under His judgment and it can lead man to the desperation where he runs into the New Testament to find the only one who can save, namely Jesus Christ.

So the Old Testament is still leading people to salvation but the salvation comes through faith which is in Christ Jesus. Can I say something to you I don't want you to misunderstand? You're not saved by faith, I'm not saved by faith, we're saved by Christ but that's activated through faith. There's a difference. Some people think, "Oh I believe, I believe. I'm a believer." What do you believe in? "Oh I believe." See. You believe in what? "I believe in believing." That's not adequate. You're not saved through believing, you're saved by Jesus Christ when you believe in Him. Faith doesn't save, faith just links you to the one who does save and that one is Christ Jesus. Faith is the instrument that brings you to the one who alone can save.

And so here was Timothy under the Old Testament teaching all those years growing up, given a tremendous solid set of convictions. Then his mother and grandmother are converted under the ministry, no doubt of the Apostle Paul when they were in Galatia and he came to preach there. They become New Testament believers. They then lead Timothy to New Testament faith. Now he has experienced Old Testament and New Testament faith and he is the richest of the rich. He has come to the salvation which was latent in the old covenant and is now fulfilled in Christ in the new. So by personal experience he knew the power of Scripture. He knew the power of the Old Testament, he knew the power of the New Testament. That's the kind of thing that makes a strong person. Timothy's life experience had been in the Word of God. He saw its power to save. That had a tremendous effect on him.

Not only did he understand that it was able to save, but he understood even more than that. And Paul reminds him of it in verse 16. "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness that the man of God may be adequate equipped for every good work." Listen, Timothy had experienced all of that. He not only had experienced the power of the Word of God to save, he had experienced the power of the Word of God to equip as it says at the end of verse 17. He knew the power of the Word of God. He was a product of the power of the Word of God. He was saved by the power of the Word of God under the Old Testament, he was saved by the power of the Word of God in a sense under the New Testament. He was equipped for every good work by the power of the Word of God as well.

And those, I believe, beloved, who are stalwarts and defenders of the faith are those people who are committed to the Word of God beyond everything because it's the sum and substance of all their life.

Two things, I'm going to wrap this up, two things I want you to grasp out of this last two verses, now listen very carefully. Timothy was, first of all, committed to the divine authority of the Word of God. The key word is authority. He saw the authority of the Word of God. Paul says to him by way of reminder, "All Scripture is inspired by God," better, "All Scripture is breathed out from God." That's authoritative, my friend. The Scripture is the Word of God, not of man. Notice that remarkable verse, every word is critical, "All Scripture," not some, not part, all, pas, it could be translated every Scripture. If it means...it should be translated then it looks at the whole of Scripture. If it's translated every, it looks at every part of Scripture. Whether the whole or every part, it's all Scripture. In John 10:35 Jesus said the Scripture can't be broken. You can't break it anywhere. It hangs together. It is totally together like a fragile piece of glass. Break it in one part and it will crash. It hangs together, it is in total, the inspired Word of God, it is in part the inspired Word of God.

And then he calls it Scripture, what is that? Graphe, writing. It became a technical term for the Word of God, the Scripture, referring to the writings of the Bible. All Scripture...now please notice this, this is distinct from the term in verse 15 the sacred writings. The sacred writings, heiros grammata refer to the Old Testament, here Scripture refers to the Old and the New even though the New was not yet fully written, there were still some books to be penned, still the word Scripture is an all-encompassing word. It refers to all of the writings, all of the writings that God gave us. A little syllogism makes it simple, all Scripture is inspired. The New Testament is Scripture therefore the New Testament is inspired. Better than a syllogism would be the testimony of the Bible itself. So go back to 1 Timothy 5:18 for just a brief verse. First Timothy 5:18 in discussing elders and their compensation and their service, Paul says, "For the Scripture says," and then he quotes two things, "you shall not muzzle the ox while he is threshing," that is a quotation out of Deuteronomy 25 verse 4, the Scripture referring to the Old Testament. Then he says, "And the laborer is worthy of his wages," that's another quote. Do you know where that quote is from? That quote is from Luke 10:7.

What's the importance? Listen carefully. Scripture says, and he quotes Deuteronomy, that's Old Testament. Scripture says, and he quotes Luke and that's...what?...New Testament. That is Paul calling Luke Scripture...New Testament is Scripture. Second Peter chapter 3 verse 16, very very important verse, 2 Peter 3:16 speaks of the beloved brother Paul in verse 15 and he wrote to you as also in all his letters, so now he's referring to all Paul's letters. And he says he speaks in these letters of things which are hard to understand...notice...which the untaught and unstable distort...now follow...as they do also the rest of the Scriptures. This is Peter calling Paul's writing what? Scripture...just like the rest of the Scripture. Paul says Luke wrote Scripture. Peter says Paul wrote Scripture. This is Scripture, New Testament, Old Testament.

So God has given us His Word. All Scripture. If you go into the gospel of John you'll find that Jesus affirms the New Testament is inspired Scripture. In fact, when Jesus was giving promises to the disciples, you remember He said things like this, "The Holy Spirit shall bring to your remembrance all that I said," that's a promise for inspiration to the writers of the gospels. You'll remember all I said. They wrote in the gospels the record of Jesus' deeds and words.

Then Jesus said, "The Spirit of truth shall guide you in to all truth, teach you all things," that's a promise for inspiration in the epistles. Guide you in to all truth, truth you haven't yet heard and teach you all things. And then Jesus said, "The Holy Spirit shall bear witness and you will bear witness." That's a promise of inspiration for the book of Acts. And then He says, "The Holy Spirit will teach you things to come," and that's a promise of inspiration for the book of Revelation which caps off the New Testament...gospels, Acts, epistles, Revelation. The four sections of the New Testament and in the implied meaning of Jesus in those words in John's gospel, all are to be inspired by Him. All Scripture...all writing of God, Old Testament, New Testament is inspired. Is...the word "is" is in the right place here, by the way. Some want to say it this way, "All Scripture inspired by God is..." and then they question whether everything in the Bible is inspired by God. Where you put the "is" is very important.

If you say, "All Scripture inspired by God is..." then you say, "Well, maybe there's some Scriptures that aren't inspired." But if you say, "All Scripture is inspired," then you've got no way out. So the emphasis is that the "is" be put where it is now. And that is fair because in similar construction in Romans 7:12, 2 Corinthians 10:10, 1 Timothy 1:15 and 2:3 and Hebrews 4:17, we are forced into the conclusion that the "is" belongs right where it is in the New American Standard, "All Scripture is inspired by God."

Do you realize what a battleground this is? I mean, this is a battleground to really believe that Scripture is the Word of God. Now what does it mean "inspired by God"? Inspired is a poor word, it's a Latin word root inspire, it means to bring in. That isn't what this word means. Theopneustos means "God breathed out." It should say, "All Scripture is expired from God." It isn't that God breathes into a writer and he writes. It is that God breathes out the word and the writer is caused to write it down. It

isn't that God blows on a man and he does something, it is that God speaks and the man records. It proceeds from God. That's why it's authoritative.

So, all Scripture is God-breathed, it isn't God breathing into man some kind of inspiration so he can write, it is God breathing out truth which men then carried along by the Holy Spirit wrote down. God breathed the Scripture and caused men to write it down. It's no different than creation. The greater book is the creation of the world, it says in Psalm 33:6, "By the word of the Lord the heavens were made by the breath of His mouth, all their host." God breathed out all creation and He breathed out His Word. The book of creation He wrote with His breath and the book of Scripture He wrote with His breath. Scripture is God's Word. "Forever, O Lord, Thy Word is settled in heaven," says Psalm 119:89. And in 2 Peter 1:21 it describes the process, "No prophecy was ever made by an act of human will but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God." God spoke and they reiterated His Word. So all Scripture is inspired by God. There's so much more to say about that and next Sunday I'm going to speak on the inspiration of Scripture and just divert from this text because I can't leave it without giving you a good understanding of that.

But let's go to the second aspect for the context here. Timothy was called to adhere to the authority of Scripture, but secondly, its sufficiency. Those men who stand firm and true for the Word of God are men who not only affirm the authority of Scripture but they also affirm its sufficiency. Notice what he said, "All Scripture is inspired by God and useful," the Word is useful, profitable. "It is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work." Now, folks, that's useful. Scripture is sufficient to equip the man of God for every good work. What a statement. What a statement!

Remember that phrase "the man of God" has a primary reference to the elder, the pastor, the teacher, the leader, but also to anyone and everyone who names the name of Christ. And Scripture is useful for four things, the four necessary elements of spiritual growth...one, teaching. What does that mean? Imparting truth. Two, for reproof, refuting error. That's the negative side. Three, correction, that literally means to straighten someone up. That's rebuilding, restoring. And then training in righteousness, paidion, a word referring to a child, spiritual training. The Bible is adequate to teach, to correct or reprove, that is to refute error and produce conviction, to straighten someone up, restore and rebuild them and train them in righteousness. With the end result that the man of God, the leader, the pastor and every other Christian may be adequate. That means perfect, mature, complete, fully qualified. I would translate it "able to meet all demands." Equipped for every good work. Equipped is fully outfitted, adequate and equipped are two verbs that are almost synonyms. The process is complete by the Word of God.

Beloved, get that in your head, will you? You want to teach people? You want to correct people? You want to straighten up people? You want to train them in righteousness? You want to make them absolutely adequate? You want to equip them for every good work? Then give them...what?...give

them God's Word.

Well where did we ever lose sight of that? What a travesty that so little of the teaching of God's Word is done. Scripture is adequate. Scripture is eminently adequate to fully equip every believer for every good work.

Now, you see, that's the kind of thing that is deep in the heart of a man who is a man of strong conviction. The person who stands strong affirms by personal experience the power of the Word to save and the power of the Word to equip. And because he lives a Word-oriented and a Word-centered life, he stands to live and die in the defense of that which he knows to be authoritative and sufficient, namely that Scripture, the Word of God. And when you're looking for a person to be a spiritual defender of the faith, you're looking for someone then who has had a strong example as a mentor, someone who has had a strong foundation with convictions built in from his youth and someone who has a strong commitment to Scripture based on personal experience in salvation and his own equipping. When you get that kind of person, you have a champion to defend the faith. And God is still looking for those kind of men today.

Now there's so much more that needs to be said about verses 16 and 17 because they're just crucial to understanding the process of the inspiring of the Bible and I'm going to take next Sunday morning and talk a little bit about how God breathed out His Word. We'll wait for next Lord's day for that. Let's bow in prayer.

Father, we know that You have called upon us to guard the truth, to love the truth, to live the truth, proclaim the truth, understand the truth. And we ask, Lord, that You might first of all help us to deep down in our hearts make the commitment to be faithful each day to spend time in it. Save us from that common sin of believing a book we don't understand, or believing a book we don't love to study, believing a book we don't read. Lord, help us not to be so hypocritical. Give us a fresh and a new love for Your Word and a desire to see it preserved from all the encroaching folly and error of men who would twist and pervert it as hucksters corrupting the Word of God out of insincerity to gain their own ends. I pray, Father, that You'll help us to raise a generation of men like this in the Master's Seminary and the college and in our church and I pray that that might occur all around the world, that there might be great strength fused into the church in these dangerous times. To that end we pray for the sake and for the sake alone of the exaltation of Jesus Christ, our worthy Savior. Amen.

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