You Can Trust the Bible
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A number of months ago I had the privilege of speaking on the campus of UCLA, of sharing with them the significance of Christian faith and the significance of the Word of God, the Bible. We had a wonderful day; it was a unique event which I enjoyed very, very much.

At that time, of course, since that was a message given other than at our church, some suggested that I might share the things I shared there with you here. It is a message really that pulls together bits and pieces of much of the things that I have taught through the years. Its intent is to demonstrate the validity of Scripture and the message of Scripture, which is the message of the Lord, Jesus Christ.

We live in a world for the most part that has no absolute standard for life and for behavior. We are under a fluctuating morality. Morality shifts with the whim of the people. The basic standard for behavior is whatever feels right. And that philosophy, which is pervasive in our society, do whatever feels right, whatever's right for you, whatever you really want to do, runs contrary to everything we know about in our world. A relative philosophy of life is contrary to the absolute world in which we live.

In our world, for example, science is based on absolutes. Our entire universe is built on fixed laws, invariable laws, laws that cannot be violated without tremendous and far-reaching and fatal consequences.

We can send satellites into space; we can send rockets into space; we can send people into space and we can accurately predict exactly the sequence of events that will take place, the trajectory of the rocket, the space occupied by the satellite or the space station or whatever it is. We can predict exactly how it will rotate around the earth. We can predict exactly, if it reentered, how it will reenter, where it will go and where it will land and when it will land, because everything is built on mathematics.

The entire universe is mathematically consistent. It is absolute in its scientific definitions. Whether you're talking about biology or botany or physiology or astronomy or mathematics or engineering, it is controlled by unalterable and inviolable laws.

Can you imagine, for example, if the laws of engineering were variable? What would happen? You would build a great skyscraper based upon laws that a week later changed. You'd have an unbelievable disaster. But the laws never change.

We live then in a world of fixed laws and yet strange to say we want to live in a world morally of relative laws. We want to live morally as if there were no laws, as if there were no rules. We want to determine our point of reference in our own mind.

As a man said to me on an airplane flying from New York City recently, he said, "I will determine in my own mind what is truth for me." So in the physical world we're very happy with fixed laws but as soon as we move into the spiritual realm, we want to abandon fixed laws. But they still exist, you cannot exist without laws in the moral and spiritual dimension any more than you can exist without laws it the physical dimension.

Our Creator, who made the universe, made it in terms of its physical identity and its moral and ethical identity as well, and he built morality into life. And just as there are physical laws, there are laws in the spiritual realm as well.

Let me give you an illustration, people ask me all the time whether I believe that AIDS is the judgment of God. And my response is yes, AIDS is the judgment of God in the same sense as sclerosis of the liver is the judgment of God, in the same sense as emphysema is the judgment of God. You say, "What do you mean?" If you drink alcohol you're liable to get sclerosis of the liver. If you smoke cigarettes you're liable to get emphysema and if you chose to violate God's standard for sexual purity, you're likely to contact venereal disease such as AIDS. It is a law. The Bible describes it as the moral law of sowing and reaping.

If you choose to violate God's sexual standard which says one man, one woman, married and that's the only place sexual relationships are to take place, if you violate that then you expose yourself to the law, the fixed law of morality that says, break God's law and suffer the consequence. Sowing and reaping.

Let me give you another illustration. Gravity is a fixed law. Gravity is a fixed law. Now you may come along and say, "I don't believe in gravity. I do not believe in the Law of Gravity." And you may advocate that, you may write a book on that. You may go on a speaking circuit and deny gravity but when you jump off a building, you will die. Because the Law of Gravity is not dependent on what you believe.

There have been some in history, who have, in their sort of Messianic complex, tried to defy such laws, they don't last too long. It doesn't matter what you believe, when you jump off a building you won't go up, you won't go sideways, you'll go down. You don't have an option. It's never a question of what you believe, it's a law. And the law will go into effect as soon as you put it to the test. And that's true in the physical area and it's also true in the spiritual area.

You can't, you see, segment the two apart. You can't say the physical world has laws, the moral world has none. You have dichotomized the world. You can't do that. To segment life into a physical dimension in which fixed laws cannot be violated and the spiritual dimension in which they can be violated is an impossible dichotomy. For the same Creator who made the whole thing built it all on fixed laws, moral and spiritual.

The question then comes, where do we find the spiritual laws? Now the physical laws are visible to us in the world but where do we find the moral laws? Where do we find the fixed standards of human behavior which violated bring about disastrous results?

Where do we find out what is right and what is wrong? Has our Creator given us a standard? And the answer is yes, and this is where you find it, in the Bible. The Bible claims to be the revelation of God in which God delivers the fixed laws of moral and spiritual conduct. It is His revelation and there are many compelling reasons to believe that.

There wouldn't be enough for me to say to you, "Well, here's the Bible, you gotta believe it." You're gonna say, "Well, now why should I believe the Bible? There are a lot of sacred books, a lot of them. Why would I believe that this is the right one? There are a lot of people who say they speak for God. There are a lot of people who say they have revelations from God. How do I know the Bible is really authentic?"

Well let me give you five proofs, okay? Five reasons for believing in the authenticity of the Bible as God's revealed standard of moral behavior, and they go from the lesser to the greater, all right? They're in an ascending order, these five.

Number one; here is the number one reason for believing the Bible. Let's call it experience, experience. One reason that I personally believe the Bible is true is that it gives the experience it claims it will give. For example, the Bible says that God will forgive our sin if we come to Christ. I came to Christ and God forgave my sin and freed my heart and soul and mind from guilt. And I have been freed from the bondage of sin in the sense that I am not under the pile of guilt, because Christ has delivered me. The Bible said God would forgive my sin, I put my faith in Christ and God did.

The Bible says if any man be in Christ he's a new creation. 2 Corinthians 5:17, "Old things have passed away and behold new things have come." I gave my life to Jesus Christ; I found that happened to me. My desires changed, my attitudes changed, my approach to life changed, the things I loved changed. I had a new nature.

I used to crave sin and crave things that were not right. Now I crave righteousness and crave things that are right. My whole constitution is different. My character is different. The Bible said that would

happen and it did.

Now millions of people all over the world have put the Bible to the test of experience and it indeed has proven itself true. They've experienced the power of the Word of God. The Bible says the Holy Spirit will come into your life when you give your heart to Christ and he will empower you to represent Christ, to proclaim his truth, to speak for Him. I've experienced that. I've experienced that.

The Bible says that when the spirit of God's in your life God will use you as an instrument to change others lives. I've experienced that. There are many things in the Bible that experience validates. Now that's an acceptable argument. In fact it's a pretty powerful one. When you hear somebody give a testimony of how Christ changed their life, that's remarkable to hear. And many people have come to faith in Christ because of the changed life of someone else and they have said, "If the Bible can do it, as it says, perhaps it can do it for me."

Now, even though it is an acceptable argument, it's a weak one and I'll tell you why. Experience, while acceptable, is the weakest of the five because that makes you the validator of truth and that makes the validation subjective rather than objective.

Truth ought to be something outside of you and the Bible ought to be true if you never experienced it, right? It ought to be true in itself. I mean after all, you could probably line up a Mohammedan, a Buddhist, a Hindu, a Hare Krishna, Christian Science, Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses and every other kind of religion and cult and they could all tell you about their experience, too.

And then there are those people who think they see pink elephants but they don't. And then there are those people that get high and hallucinate on who knows what and they have experiences, too. So we don't want to get ourselves in a situation where we just buy into something because somebody says it happened to them. We need more evidence than that.

Let's go to a second line of proof then. Ascending up the scale, science, science. Most people assume that the Bible is scientifically incorrect, that what's in the Bible doesn't match with science and this antiquated old book is scientifically illiterate. That's not true. That's not true.

If you go to the Bible you're gonna find there the most plausible explanation for the existence of the universe anywhere in science, anywhere. And the most plausible explanation for understanding the universe and the existence of life is simply this, God created everything.

Now the alternative is that there was no Creator. So you can take your choice. You can believe God created everything so that the effect had a cause or you can believe that nobody created everything. In fact, you can take this as your view of life, nobody times nothing equal everything.

Personally I'd rather take the thought that God equals everything by creation. So when you talk about science, the Bible is not nearly so hard to believe as is an anti-biblical evolutionary view point which would say nobody times nothing equals everything.

Once there was a puddle, and who knows where the puddle came from and once there was in the puddle a one-celled thing and one day the one-celled thing said to itself, "Let's be two" and they separated and the two got carried away and the next thing you know, here we are!

Now if you call that scientifically plausible you have defied science because science is really a study of what is observable and nobody times nothing is not observable. So the Bible, looking at science, is the most plausible explanation. It also has the most plausible explanation of the state of the globe, the state of the earth.

Evolutionary people tell us that the earth has gotten into this shape by years and years and millennia and centuries and on and on, millions upon millions upon millions of years and it's slowly, gradually shaped itself into what it is now. And science does not sustain that.

So what looks, as you examine it, as if it's very, very old is only thought to be very, very old if you accept the thought that everything has always continued at the same speed and that's not true. In the Flood, God accomplished through the power of a world wide flood, the reshaping of the face of the earth in a brief condensed period of time, not over millions and millions and millions and millions of years of a supposedly equal amount of forces acting upon the earth. Much more plausible to accept catastrophe.

Someone has reduced it to something as simple as this, how would you get a fossil of a leaf? How would you get a fossil of a leaf? How long do you have to leave a leaf in your backyard until it becomes a fossil? It will blow away. No amount of time would create a fossil. The only thing that would create a fossil would be if your ground opened up and slammed shut on that leaf or if a glacier came through your backyard and pressed that leaf against stone.

Catastrophe, not uniformity creates the earth the way we see it now. The Bible makes that explicitly clear in the catastrophe of a six day creation speeding up all the processes and the universal world wide flood.

And then as you look deeper into the Bible you find it scientifically touched on many, many things. For example, in Isaiah 40:26 it says it is God who creates the universe. It says He holds the stars together by his power and it says not one star is missing. Think of that. Not one star is missing. God created them all, now follow this, and sustains them all.

Now that introduces us to what science now calls the First Law of Thermodynamics. That ultimately says nothing is every destroyed, nothing. Scientists have recognized that things change form, but nothing is ever destroyed. And that's exactly what the Scripture says when it says God who created all things upholds all things by the word of His power. The Bible thing introduces us to the First Law of Thermodynamics.

Furthermore, nothing is being created. That which is already been created can be rearranged into other shapes and forms but nothing is being created. Science knows that. Matter is static in the sense that it's never is destroyed and it's never being created. And in Ecclesiastes 1:10 it says, "Is there anything of which one might say see this? It is new." And the answer comes immediately. "Already it is existed for ages which were before us." Nothing new and nothing going out of existence. So ancient writers of the Bible, thousands of years before the laws of thermodynamics had been categorically stated were affirming what science calls the conservation of mass and energy.

Now the Second Law of Thermodynamics states that although mass and energy are always conserved, they are also breaking down and going from order to disorder. In other words, while you never destroy matter, and it's never created, it is disintegrating, breaking down. It goes from order to disorder, from cosmos to chaos, from system to non-system.

This is the opposite of the Theory of Evolution which says that somehow matter is in the process of going upward. It is always improving and it goes from the one celled amoeba to complex man. That's not what science and the Law of Thermodynamics law two, says.

It says it's breaking down. Matter breaks down and as it breaks down its energy dissipates and ultimately the world and the universe as we know it will become dead because of the total breakdown of energy. It'll be unable to reproduce itself and it'll become a dead universe.

The Bible says that. Romans 8, it says the whole creation groans under the curse waiting for redemption from the curse of sin which came in Genesis, Chapter 3, when man sinned and brought sin upon the earth.

So the Bible's very scientific. It understands thermodynamics. Furthermore there's a science of hydrology. Hydrology is the cycle of water. You know that because you were in school. You know the cycle of water. Three major phases, do you remember them? Evaporation, what's the second one? Condensation. The third one? Precipitation. And that's how water goes. Do you realize it's all the same water? Do you realize there's no water being created? It's just the same water, it just keeps going around and around and you get it this year and somebody down the road gets it next year. It's the same water.

That's the science of hydrology. Clouds move over the land, they drop water through precipitation. The rain runs into the creeks, the creeks run into the streams, the streams run into the rivers, the rivers run into the sea and the cloud pulls up the water from the sea, takes it back over the land, drops it again, starts the whole process.

This incredibly complex thing is described in Ecclesiastes, book of the Old Testament, in Isaiah 55 from the Old Testament. It says in Ecclesiastes all the rivers flow into the sea, yet the sea is not full. To the place where the rivers flow, there they flow again.

In Isaiah 55, "For the rain and the snow come down from Heaven and do not return there without watering the earth." So Isaiah says they come down, they water the earth, they go back up again. The water keeps running into the sea but the sea never gets full. Why? Because the water keeps being pulled back out again.

Job 36, the oldest book in the Old Testament, verses 27-28 speaks of evaporation and condensation centuries prior to any knowledge of this. It says God draws up the drops of water, they distill rain from the mist which the clouds pour down, they drip upon man abundantly.

It's incredible. In 1500s when Copernicus first presented the idea that the earth was in motion, up until the 1500s everybody thought it was a flat pancake, you know? In fact, they felt that if you went through the Pillars of Hercules at the Rock of Gibraltar, you'd fall off. And along comes Copernicus and says the world is in motion.

By the 17thCentury, you have Kepler and Galileo giving birth to modern astronomy. Prior to that people thought there were one thousand stars in the whole sky, one thousand. I the book of Genesis, first book in the Bible, it says the number of the stars of heaven is equated with the number of grains of sand on the seashores.

God told Abraham, "I'll multiply your seed as the stars of heaven and the sand which is on the seashore." Jeremiah 33:22 says, "The stars cannot be counted." And God is speaking, "As the host of heaven cannot be counted and the sand of the sea cannot be measured, so I will multiply the descendents of David." Today we know there are millions and millions of stars in our own galaxy and millions and millions of galaxies we haven't even seen.

Furthermore, the oldest book in the Old Testament, the book of Job Chapter 26, Verse 7, says God hangs the earth on nothing. Isn't that amazing? Job also says, "The earth is turned like the clay to the seal." Like the clay to the seal, what does he mean in Chapter 38, Verse 14 when he says that? Soft clay was used to write in in ancient times. You took a stick, the stylus and in soft clay you wrote your letter and then it hardened. At the bottom you put your signature.

Most people had their signature on a clay cylinder. They had a stick through it and they would roll it on the soft clay and it would lay their signature down. And when he was saying the earth is turned like the clay to the seal what he's saying is the earth rotates on what? On an axis. Credible. Credible.

The Hebrew word for earth is khug, it means a sphere. The oldest book in the Bible says it's a sphere turning on an axis suspended in space. And yet until the 1500s they believe it was a flat pancake not moving at all, sitting on the top of something.

Have you ever studied the isostoce, the study of balance? The earth maintains perfect balance. You ever play basketball with a lopsided basketball? Or a lopsided softball that goes through the air like that? Those cute balls you buy at K-mart do that.

Well, can you imagine if the earth was a little bit out of round? About every five minutes we'd go up and come down again and up and come down. You realize that the earth is spinning at a tremendous speed and yet it's in perfect, perfect balance?

Do you also realize that around the face of the earth there are mountains that reach as high as over 20,000 feet high? You realize there are depths in the ocean that go down that far the other way? And do you understand that the combination of the mountains, the depths of the sea, the weight of the rocks and the weight of the water all have to be figured out mathematically by the infinite mind of God so that the earth doesn't go through space like this, throwing us all into outer space every time it turns?

That's why Isaiah, Chapter 40, Verse 12 says, "God has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand and marked off the heavens by a span and calculated the dust of the earth by the measure and weighted the mountains in a balance and the hills in a pair of scales." It's incredible to think about how God keeps the earth in perfect balance.

English philosopher Herbert Spencer died in 1903. He was famous for applying scientific discoveries to philosophy. And he came up with a great discovery for which he was heralded. He said everything knowable in the natural world fits into one of five categories. Everything knowable in the natural world fits into one of five categories. What an amazing categorization.

He said everything is either time, force, action, space or matter, everything. That's good, Herbert. Took him until the 19thCentury before anybody really discovered and identified those categories. Time, force, action, space, matter. Everything in existence fits into one of those categories.

Listen to this, first verse in the Bible, "In the beginning," that's time, "God," that's force, "created," that's action, "the heavens," that's space, "and the earth," that's matter. What Herbert Spencer didn't

discover until the 19th Century, God wrote in the first verse of the first chapter of the first book in the Bible and gave us all the categories we needed for everything.

The Bible is incredibly scientific. It doesn't contain scientific terminology, but it is amazingly accurate. Now somebody says, "Wait a minute." I hear your - you're gonna say, "What about when it says during the time of Joshua the sun stood still? That's not very scientific. Everybody knows the earth was moving around the sun and so if the sun appears to stand still what really happened was the earth stopped moving. But it says the sun stood still."

Well, right and why does say that? Because from the perception of the person on the earth, it looked like the sun stood still and that's what you'd say if you were standing here, looked up, and the sun stayed in the same place for about five hours. From perceptions vantage point you'd say the sun stood still.

To show you this, when you got up this morning and looked to the east, what did you say? "Oh, another lovely earth revolving." No, you called that a what? Sunrise. And tonight about 8:30 you're gonna look to the west and you're gonna say, "Ah, what a lovely earth revolving." That's not an earth revolving, that is a sunset. The sun is not setting from a scientific viewpoint but from your vantage point that's perception.

And so when people in the Bible speak of those phenomenal things that happen in life, they speak of them from perception. Nonetheless the Bible is scientifically accurate. The Bible even tells us in Psalms that the sun makes a circuit from one end of heaven to the other and it was only in the last century that the sun is dragging our whole planetary system in a circuit orbit from one end of endless space to the other while we're going around it.

Let's go to a third area of evidence for Bible authenticity and that's miracles, that's miracles. The Bible includes from beginning to end supportive information to establish the credibility of the miracles that it records. The Bible records miracles and you've got all kinds of eyewitnesses, they're absolutely undeniable miracles.

The most monumental miracle of all is the miracles of the resurrection of Jesus Christ who rose from the dead and just to be sure nobody could doubt it there were over 500 eyewitnesses. Over 500 people saw Jesus risen from the dead who knew that he was dead. His death was verifiable, there's no question about that. The soldiers came by, didn't even run a spear in his side - rather ran a spear in his side, didn't even break his legs because he was already dead, hauled him down off the cross, buried him in a grave. That whole process confirmed that he was genuinely dead. And yet 500 people saw him alive.

Now you're gonna have to deal with that in his book. This book is filled with miracles that were verifiable by a mass of humanity. Two million people walked through the Dead Sea and the walls were up on the side. And when they got on the other side and Pharaoh's army came through, they were all drowned. Massive numbers of eyewitnesses saw that event. This is not some subjective isolated whimsical miracle.

So you have to look at this book and say it's filled with the miraculous which is not subjective but objective which is not unverifiable but which is verifiable historically.

Fourthly ascending up the scale, how do we designate the authenticity of Scripture from an evidential viewpoint? Prophesy. Prophesy. How can you explain that the Bible predicts the future if it wasn't written by God? How can you explain that? For there are so many, many prophecies.

You know there are more than 300 specific prophecies about Jesus alone? Saying where he's be born, where'd he live, Bethlehem, Nazareth, specific things about him, details about his life, what he would say on the cross, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

Three hundred and thirty prophesies and there are myriads of prophecies of other than Christ. But Peter Stoner who is a mathematician who worked particularly in the area of probabilities, wrote a book called Science Speaks, if you find a copy of it you'll enjoy it, we probably have it in our library. He said let's just take eight Old Testament prophecies, okay? Just take eight of them and look at the probability of their coming to pass by accident.

He said it would be one in ten to the seventeenth power. For just eight of them and there are hundreds of them. Just take eight and they would have one chance in ten to the seventeenth power to come to pass by accident. This is what he wrote.

Here's the amount that ten to the seventeenth power is, we take to the seventeenth power silver dollars and we lay them on the face of Texas, okay? They will cover, you ready for this, the entire state two feet deep. Silver dollars, two feet deep over the whole state of Texas.

Now mark one of these silver dollars with a little X. Blindfold a man and tell him he must pick up only one and he must pick the one with the X. What chance would he have of getting the one with the X? The same change the prophets would have of writing eight prophesies and having the come true by chance. Incredible, and yet the Bible has hundreds of prophesies, hundreds, and Jesus fulfilled hundreds.

The Bible predicts many other things. The Bible predicts that a man named Cyrus would be born a hundred and fifty years before he was born. That he would rise to power in the Middle East and that he would release the Jewish people from captivity. Read it in Isaiah 44 and 45. Sure enough, a

hundred and fifty years later Cyrus the Great became king of Persia and released the Jews just exactly as the prophet had said.

In Ezekiel Chapter 26, God says to the prophet that the Phoenician city of Tyre would be destroyed. In fact he specified that a conqueror would come in, wipe out the city, the city would be scraped clean and the rubble left on the city surface would be thrown into the ocean and the prophecy ended by saying the place would be a place where people dried their fishnets and the city would never be rebuilt.

Now that's an incredible prophecy because Tyre was a major city and yet Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon came, just as the prophecy said, laid siege to Tyre, three years after the prophecy was given. When he broke down the gates he found the city almost empty because all the inhabitants had gotten in boats and shuttled off to a little island off the shore.

The Phoenicians who lived there were navigators and colonizers of the ancient world. They had taken their boats and sailed to that little island about a half a mile away, they reestablished their city on the island during the years of the siege. Nebuchadnezzar when he came and found nobody there destroyed the city, laid it into rubble but since he didn't have a navy he couldn't go get the people so he was unable to do anything about the island city of Tyre and that left the prophecy partially unfilled - unfulfilled - because the rubble hadn't been thrown into the sea and it hadn't been scraped clean and there weren't any fishnets and so forth.

Two hundred and fifty years later came Alexander the Great. Alexander the Great landed at the rubble on his move east as he was establishing the great empire that he was building. He landed at the old city of Tyre, he wanted supplies for his army, he sent someone out to the island and he said, "I want and I demand immediately that you supply us." And they said, "Forget it Alexander. You don't have a navy and you can't get us anyway and we're not giving you anything."

He was so infuriated at what they did that he took all the rubble that Nebuchadnezzar had left two hundred and fifty years ago piled up on top of the city site and he threw it all in the ocean and made a causeway a half mile long, marched out and destroyed the island city.

And just what God had said would happen, happened. The rubble was thrown into the sea, the place was scraped clean and today if you go to Tyre, you'll see nothing is there, it's never been rebuilt and people dry their fishnets there just as Scripture said. Peter Stoner said the probability of that one prophecy coming to pass by chance was one in seventy-five million. But there's no chance to it, it's God's word.

The great Assyrian city of Nineveh, one of the great cities of the ancient world reached its apex during the 7thcentury B.C. and the prophet Nahum comes along and says Nineveh will be wiped out. He

said an overflowing river will crush the gates and the city will be destroyed. Nahum Chapter 1, Chapter 2. That's exactly what happened. The case of Nineveh, a great storm came, flooded the river, carried away the city walls permitting the Medes and the Babylonians to enter the city and destroy it just as God predicted.

And then fifthly in defending the authenticity of Scripture, from prophecy you go to the life of Christ. The single greatest proof, validation of the Bible's authenticity is the life of Christ. You can study the prophecies of Christ in the Old Testament, you can study the life of Christ in the Gospels, you can study the teaching about Christ's life and work in the Epistles, you can study the second coming of Christ in the Revelation, the last book and the most overwhelming indicator of the truth of Scripture is this incredible, unbelievable, supernatural God-man named Jesus Christ. There is no way to explain him away.

There's no human explanation for Christ. If men wrote this book they could never conceive of such a person as Christ. They could never conceive of such wisdom. They could never make his mouth say the profound things it said. They could never conceive of one who could do what He did. They could never have devised such an incredible scheme of redemption as God devised and revealed in this book.

And so ever and always when you read the Bible you're reading about Christ and all that He is and there is no human explanation for Him at all. Not for the prophecies He fulfilled, not for the words He said, not for the miracles He did, not for His crucifixion as the final act in the great atoning work God had planned, not any the explanation for His resurrection other than that they happened exactly as they are stated in Scripture.

There's no explanation for the birth of the church except his resurrection. If the disciples stole His body, why in the world would they all go out and die as martyrs for a body they had stolen? None of it makes any sense if you try to explain away Christ. There is no human explanation for Him.

The Bible then is where you go when you want to get God's standards, God's laws for moral, ethical behavior. We live in a world of fixed laws, physically, morally. The physical laws are observable to us and the moral ones are revealed to us through this book. It's an amazing book, an astounding book.

Perhaps as definitive a passage as there is in the Bible is Psalm 19. In terms of speaking about Scripture it is the Scripture speaking about itself and it says of the Scripture, and I'll give you several things that it says. It says it is perfect, restoring the soul. It says it is sure, making wise the simple. It is right, rejoicing the heart. It is pure, enlightening the eyes. It is clean, enduring forever. It is true, producing comprehensive righteousness.

Now let me speak to this for just a moment. It says the law of the Lord, or Scripture, is perfect. That's what it means, perfect. The Hebrew means many-sided or all-sided so as to cover all aspects of a thing, comprehensive. It is so all-sided; it is so comprehensive, that it is able to totally restore the soul. Soul means the person, the whole person, nephesh. It's translated several dozen ways in the Old Testament. It means the person.

The word restore means to transform, to revive. And so what it says is the Scripture is able to totally, comprehensively transform the whole person, tremendous power in this book.

Now you may say I'm not interested in being transformed. Well then the Bible isn't for you. If you like it the way it is, then have it the way it is. The Bible's for people who don't want it the way it is. The Bible is for people who say, "I'd like to be transformed, if you don't mind, point me in the direction where transformation takes place." The Bible is for people who are not sure where they are, they're not sure where they came from, they're not sure where they're going and they certainly don't like the process of getting where they don't know they're going.

The Bible is for people who don't like the things in their life the way they are. The Bible is for people who are tired of their sin. The Bible is for people who wish they weren't driven by the passions that control them. The Bible is for people who do not want to be victims of circumstances. The Bible is for people who have a fear of death, who wish they didn't have so much pain in life, who wish their relationships were all that relationships seem to be able to be.

The Bible is for people who wish they could think more clearly about things that matter in their lives. The Bible is for people that don't have all the answers. The Bible is for people who want something far better than they have, but if that's not you, then the Bible's not for you.

But if you're dissatisfied and there's a sense of desperation in your heart, and you'd like to be a totally transformed person, to be all that you can be, you don't get that way by joining the Army. Only the Word of God can make you all that you can be.

And the key says, the transformation comes through faith in the Lord, Jesus Christ. God came into the world in the form of a man, namely the Lord, Jesus Christ, died on a cross to pay the penalty for your sin, rose from the grave to conquer death. He now lives to come into your life, cleanse your sin, be your Savior, rid your of your sin, your guilt, your anxiety, totally transform the pattern of your life. Only the Bible can bring the truth of Christ to you who alone can transform your life.

The Psalmist also says, the Scripture is not only perfect restoring the soul, that is comprehensive totally transforming the whole person, but it is sure, making wise the simple. That's a profound statement. Sure means absolute trustworthy and reliable. And it is able to make a simple person wise. The word simple means its root meaning is an open door. And the Jews described a person

who was simple as one whose mind was an open door, everything flew in, everything flew out.

Naive, uninitiated, undiscerning, indiscriminating, just allowed everything in and everything out. Simple, without discernment, totally naive, unable to assess, evaluate, hold on to truth, reject error, doesn't have any standard by which to make a judgment.

The Bible comes along through the power of Christ, takes a person who's naÃ¯ve, doesn't understand truth, doesn't know what to keep and what to reject and takes that person and makes them wise. Wise, in the Hebrew shaham, skilled in the spiritual living, skilled in daily living. Wisdom that is not an abstraction but wisdom that is behavior. Wisdom that is conduct.

It teaches you about how to live life, how to live out relationships. The Bible touches every area of life. You want to know about your marriage? It touches that. Wanna know about a work ethic? It touches that. You wanna know about the factors of the human mind? It touches that. You wanna know about motive? It touches that. You wanna know how to get the most out of your life? It touches that. How to enjoy life more? It touches that. How to have joy, peace? It touches that.

It touches attitudes, reactions, responses, how to treat people, how you're treated by people, how to cultivate virtue in your life, every aspect. And you can live life with true wisdom, skilled in the matter of daily living.

And it comes by knowing the Scripture and knowing that Christ was the theme of Scripture. And the Psalmist says the Scripture is right, rejoicing the heart. He means it sets a right path that brings joy to your heart.

As you walk the path of the Scripture, as you obey the word of God, as you live it out, it fills your heart with joy. "Happy are those who hear the Word of God and serve it," Jesus said in Luke 11:28. True happiness comes because you know where you're going, you know you're honoring God; you're walking in the place that pleases Him, the place where He blesses.

You can have a happy life without sin. You can have a happy life without sex outside of marriage. You can have a happy life without drugs. You can have a happy life without alcohol. You can have a happy life without all the material things the world dangles in front of you.

The happy life comes walking in the path that God lays out in the Scripture. He shows you the path and He give you His word and His spirit to lead you down the path and it's a path of joy.

Then he says the word of God is clear enlightening the eyes, pure, clear, enlightens the eyes. Hey, most people live in the world, they don't understand what's going on, and everything's pretty dark. People die, disasters, diseases, war, problems, they can't figure it out. They don't understand the

dark things of life.

The autobiography of English philosopher Bertrand Russell written near the end of his life implies that philosophy was a washout to him. In fact he said, "Philosophy has proved a washout to me." That's shocking. Spend your whole life trying to concoct a scheme of reality and coming to the end of your life and saying the whole thing is useless.

Now I don't necessarily believe that I'm Bertrand Russell's intellectual equal, I'm certainly not, but I do know the Word of God and I do know the things that he didn't understand. I know where we came from, I know where we're going, I know why we're here, I understand perfectly about life, I understand everything about death. I understand about relationships. I understand about love and hate.

I know why there are wars, I know they there are diseases, I know why people die, why people live, I know what God has in the future for men who believe, I know what He has in the future for those who don't. I understand what's right and what's wrong. I know clearly what we ought to do, what we ought not to do. So where'd you get all that information? In the Bible.

Scripture deals with every tough issue in life. I can go to a person facing death and we can have a great time, a joyous time because we understand death releases a Christian into the presence of the Lord.

My grandmother died recently when she was 93 years old. She was lying in bed. The nurse in the nursing home came to her and said, "It's time to get up." My grandmother said, "I'm not getting up today." The nurse said, "Well, why?" My grandmother said, "I love Jesus and I'm going to heaven today." She did, that day. She smiled and went to heaven. That's the way to do it.

And when I was a boy I used to go to - when I was a boy I used to go to Christ Church, Philadelphia. And my favorite epitaph is the epitaph of Benjamin Franklin. It says this, "The body of Franklin, printer, like the cover of an old book, its contents worn out, and striped of its lettering & gilding, lies here, food for worms. Yet the work itself shall not be lost; for it will, as he believed, appear once more in a new and more beautiful edition, corrected and amended by its author." That's the way to live life.

Do you have that hope? Are the dark things clearer? Scripture makes them clearer. Christ turns on the light. The Psalmist says the Bible is clean, enduring forever. The only things that endure forever are the things untouched by evil, the things untouched by sin.

And the Bible is untouched; it goes on and on and on and on. Even though it's an ancient document every person in every situation finds it relevant. It never needs to be edited, it never needs to be updated, it never needs to be brought into contemporary understanding. It's never out-of-date; it's never obsolete because it's flawless.

When I was in college I decided to take a course in advanced European philosophy. I don't know why. I was one of two people in the class. Every philosophy I studied was long dead, was long dead. And the study of European philosophy was the study of all the dead philosophies that nobody believed anymore. In liberal arts I took a course in psychology. In graduate school I took another course in psychology. Every form of psychology and psychotherapy I read about is now obsolete.

There's one thing never changes, folks. That's God's word. Never changes, always relevant. And then the Psalmist says in Psalm 19, "It's true, it is true, and produces comprehensive righteousness." It is true. Do you realize what - just to say it's true is incredible?

Let me ask you a question, are newspapers true? Are magazines true? Are politicians true? Are doctors true? Are lawyers true? Are teachers always true? Who knows? You know why people find it so easy to lie? Because they give up on looking for truth anyway.

Pilate, who sent Jesus to the cross said, "What is truth?" Cynical. "What is truth?" I remember one time I was hiking up in the mountains in northern California, speaking at a conference, decided to take a hike, I stumbled across a young man living in the woods in an overturned refrigerator crate. One of those big ones, you know, with the wooden frame and the cardboard? He was right by a stream.

I walked into his little place and asked if he would talk with me for a moment. Turned out he was a graduate of Boston University. He was bombed on drugs. I said to him, after some conversation, I said, "Well, have you found the answers in drugs?" "No," he said, "but at least I've blown my mind so I don't have to ask the questions anymore."

Now that's the despair of not knowing the truth, you just give up. People look for truth. I called up the other day to the Los Angeles Public Library and asked them how many books they had. They told me some huge number of millions upon millions of books and I said, "Oh, I'm just curious about the number of books." And I thought to myself, after I got the number, wrote it down my little pad, how many books is true from cover-to-cover? How many? You tell me. One. One, that's right. Amazing.

We have a lot of technology, not much understanding of truth. Always learning, says Paul, never able to come to the knowledge of truth. And I'm not talking about two and two is four. And I'm not talking about that kind of stuff. I'm talking about truth about life, death, God, man, sin, right, wrong, Heaven, Hell, hope, joy, peace, that kind of truth.

Where do you go for that? This book. This book. You have to go outside yourself. Years ago I heard Cornelius Van Til give a tremendous illustration when I was in seminary, I've never forgotten it, he says basically we live in a space-time box. We bang around in this little deal, you know, bumping into

the sides and doing our little thing. But we can't get out of our box. You just can't get out.

You can't hop out of your little space-time box. You can't transcend time and you can't transcend space. We love to do that in science fiction, don't we? Go into outer space and weird worlds and all of that and we love to even transcend the thought of space. We love to transcend the thought of time. All these silly movies about time machines, that's man wanting to get out of his little time-space box, but he never does, it's all a fantasy.

I mean, you can't get out and you can't go into a phone booth, take off your clothes and come out Superman. You can't. You can go in and take off your clohtes and get arrested. You're locked. You're there.

And you bounce around your little box and man bounces around, tries to figure out who's outside and in his mind he says, "Somebody made the box and there's somebody out there." It's rational to think that and it's also in his conscience because the Creator planted it.

So he's bombing around in his little box and he's saying, "Who's out there? I got to get to Him." So he invent religion as a way to poke a hole in the box and discover who's out there but it never does. Religion is just man's invention. It's all self-contained. The only way you'll only know who's outside the box is when the one outside the box comes in. And He did, you know, in this book and through His son.

God invaded our time-space world. First He sent us an Old Testament revelation, then He sent his Son, and then he sent the New Testament revelation and that is exactly what the Bible is, it is a supernatural revelation from the God who invaded our box. And he invaded it not only in the written word but he invaded it in the incarnate word namely Jesus Christ.

So if you want to know the truth, look to the pages of Scripture, look to the pages of Scripture. The Bible is sufficient for the things you need. What do you need? What are people looking for? I think they're looking for a transformation. The Bible calls it salvation and through Jesus Christ your whole life can be changed.

I think people are looking for wisdom. I think they'd like to understand how to live life to the fullest. I think they'd like to know what's right and what's wrong. I think there's a tremendous driving hunger in the hearts of many people for wisdom, for understanding, that comes through Scripture.

And I think people would like to know what the right path in life is. I think they'd like to set their feet in the place where they can have joy instead of anguish over their bad choices. The Bible lays that path out.

And I personally believe that people wish they could see the dark things clearly. I mean, even Rabbi Kushner wrote the book trying to figure out why good, why rather, bad things happen to what, good people. Trying to turn the light on somewhere out there in the dark world to understand it.

People want to see clearly and I also believe people want a source they can go to that never changes, never gets altered, never gets edited, never needs to be updated, it's trustworthy. The Bible is that.

And I think they'd like to know something that's true. I really believe with all my heart that most people seek a transformed life, wisdom to live, a right path to make a right choice to have a happy life. I think most people would like to understand the dark things and have their eyes opened.

I think most people wish they could bank their life on something that doesn't change and fluctuate and I know that people desperately would like to know what is really true, what is really true. And the Bible says I offer all this to you. I offer all this to you.

Jesus said, "If you abide in my word, you shall know the truth and the truth shall," what, "set you free." Well, what do you mean by that? Well, consider a scientist going into a lab and he goes in there and he messes around with all his beakers and Bunsen burners and whatever else and he does his whole little thing and then all the sudden he comes out the door, "Eureka! I found it!" He's now free. Free from what? Free from the search.

That's what Jesus meant. Once you find the truth, eureka, the search is over. You're free from the bondage of the problem. Man searches, struggles, grapples, gropes, trying to find reality until he comes to God's word and he finds everything he needs to know. And all the Word has to say becomes his, becomes yours, through faith in Jesus Christ.

The purpose of the Bible is to reveal Christ so that Christ can come into your life and make the Bible your own so that you can live it and prosper the way God intended for you to prosper. Let's bow in prayer.

While your heads are bowed for this closing moment, God knows your heart, He knows where you are. He knows what relationship you have with Him or do not have. And I just want to stress tonight that Pascal had a wager many years ago, the scientist, he said, "If I commit my life to Jesus Christ and it turns out not to be true, I have succeeded in eliminating one bad option. If it turns out to be true, I've saved my eternal soul." Only a fool would not reason like that.

If you're searching for absolutes in a relative moral morass, if you're wondering where the fixed laws of behavior are that could bring you joy and happiness and clarity of mind and wisdom and

transformed life, and truth and hope for the future. When I tell you they're in the Word of God and the Word of God reveals that Jesus Christ can come into your life, save your soul, give you wisdom, teach you his word, set your feet in the right path, clear up the dark things. Christ wants to do that in your life.

All the Bible promises and all the Bible teaches are yours in Christ Jesus. It's a matter of receiving Him. And the Bible says if you turn from your sin with a heart to follow Christ, He'll come into your life.

Are you tired of your sin? Are you weary of your iniquity? Are you hungry for a transformed life or wisdom, for joy, for peace, for contentment, for truth? Then turn from your sin and receive Christ, the One who died and rose again for you.

Right in your heart, right where you are tonight you can pray a simple prayer, "Lord Jesus, cleanse my sin and be my Lord and Savior." Can you say that to Him? "Lord Jesus, cleanse my sin and be my Lord and Savior. Open my eyes to your Word. Teach me to walk in the way of blessing." Can you pray that prayer? I trust you can.

"Lord Jesus, cleanse my sin, be my Lord and Savior. Teach me your Word, let me in the way of truth and blessing." Did you pray that?

Jesus said, "If you come to me I won't reject you. If you open your heart and believe and receive me I'll come in and make my residence in your life. I'll make my word live in you. I'll grant you eternal life." That's His promise if you will receive Him.

Father, I pray right now that you would open hearts to the Lord, Jesus Christ. Even now, we pray in His name, Amen.

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