

March 3, 2024

“The Inspiration of the Scriptures” 2 Timothy 3:16-17

FCF: A low appreciation of the Bible

PROPOSITION: (magnet) The Bible is unlike any other book.
(anchor) We must read it with that in mind.

SCRIPTURE INTRODUCTION:

It’s hard to imagine how some things can be taken for granted and dismissed (**READ**):

An early Renaissance painting of Christ being mocked on his way to being crucified was recently discovered hanging in the home of a French woman who had no idea it was a masterpiece. The painting, “Christ Mocked,” was done by Cimabue of Florence in the 13th century. According to Dominique Le Count, head of the Acteon auction house in Senlis, this work of art is the only one of Cimabue that has ever come to market. The woman who owned the painting before it was auctioned off said that the painting never attracted much attention as it hung for a decade in her kitchen.

Did I mention that it sold for \$27 million? Again, such things are hard for us to imagine.

This is the third installment in our series, “Reading the Bible.” Thus far, we’ve looked at Psalm 19 and the way God speaks to us through His world and His word. Today, we’re looking at 2 Timothy 3. Paul is writing from a Roman jail, awaiting his execution. This is his farewell and final charge to Timothy. Paul is exhorting him to endure hardship, to resist false teachers, to stand firm and hold fast in the faith. And the argument he makes is well worth our hearing.

SCRIPTURE READING: **2 Timothy 3:10-17**

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SERMON INTRODUCTION:

The late J. I. Packer told a story about a man on a city street in England (**READ**):

The man...began pointing at the ground yelling “IT’S ALIVE! IT’S ALIVE!” People quickly followed his gaze and gestures to a large hat on the ground. Several people backed away from the hat while others moved defensively in front of their families. The man continued to shout while moving closer to the hat and then jumping back as if something were about to bite him: “It’s ALIVE! It doesn’t seem possible!”...The man drew near as if to lift the hat with trepidation, and many in the crowd closed in to see what was about to happen while others shrank back in fear of what might be released. He carefully lifted the hat to reveal a Bible! Some people sighed (in) relief. Others turned (with) angry gazes on the man. Still others laughed at the joke he’d made. But the man hoisted the Bible before the onlookers and began to declare again the truth “IT IS ALIVE!!”

Truly, this book is unique. After all, it is alive. And it should be engaged with that in mind.

Which brings us to our text, vv.16-17. It’s worth noting that this is part of a larger context. Paul is giving a reminder, passing on an encouragement, making an argument, building a case. “Stand firm and hold fast.” That’s what Timothy is to do. But why is he to do it? The Bible is unlike any other book. It is great literature and has had great cultural effect. But it is far more than that. Infinitely more. It is unlike any other. And we should read it with that in mind.

How so? By considering three things. First, its origin - where it comes from. Second, its impact - what it brings about. And then, third, its result - what it produces. Let’s look at these.

I. THE ORIGIN

First, its origin - what it is and where it comes from (**READ 2 Timothy 3:16a**).

A) *The Author*

These are some curious words. What does it mean? For starters, it speaks to the author.

1. God-breathed

The Greek word is *theopneustos* - breathed out by God. Just as with any of our own speech.

2. Inspiration

Which is to say all Scripture, these sacred writings, are words spoken by God. They have God as their ultimate origin and source. They are inspired - not to downplay the role of the people involved but God is their author. So the final result is what He wanted - no more and no less.

B) Its Authority

They are inspired. God is their author. Which then tells us about their authority.

1. Infallible

They will not lead us into error. How do we know that? God cannot and will not ever lie.

2. Inerrant

So they are infallible. They will not lead us into error nor are they with error. They are inerrant. So the Scriptures are fully and utterly trustworthy. And they serve as our ultimate authority.

They are of divine origin. Which is why then they have such power.

Application:

But let's be clear. We are not talking about commentaries or even translations. This is about the original manuscripts - none of which we have. But textual experts make clear that this is no concern. For we have so many ancient copies, there are very few variations in the copies, and those variations do not touch any significant points. So we have no more concern there than we would looking at scanned copies of legal documents passed on by an attorney. Think of that.

The Bible is unlike any other book - of divine origin. Let's read it with that in mind.

II. THE IMPACT

Which brings us to the second point - its impact upon us (**READ 2 Timothy 3:16**). All Scripture is said to be profitable. That is, it is useful and beneficial in multiple ways. How so?

A) On Our Belief

We can break this down into two areas. First, its impact on our belief.

1. Teaching

The Scripture teaches. That is, it shows and makes clear what we should believe. Everyone has a doctrine and belief system. Everyone is a theologian. The Bible gives us what is actually true.

2. Reproof

But it also reproofs. It rebukes and convicts. It shows us what we must guard against.

B) On Our Living

So the Scripture is profitable in its impact on our belief. But then also on our living.

1. Correction

It corrects us. It gives *epanorthosis*. It sets us right and puts us straight. It corrects our path.

2. Training in righteousness

And trains us in righteousness. It gives instruction and discipline, keeping us on the right path.

All Scripture is said to thoroughly impact our belief and living, our creed and conduct.

Application:

And, again, this is said of all Scripture. All of it has this sort of impact. The parts that comfort and convict. The parts that cheer and confront the conservative and the liberal, the red, the blue, and the purple. The parts that tell us to be generous with our finances and guarded with our sexual purity. The parts that speak to the preciousness of life and the necessity of justice.

The Bible is unlike any other book - a deep impact. Let's read it with that in mind.

III. THE RESULT

Which brings us to the third point - the result, where it goes (**READ 2 Timothy 3:16-17**).

A) Explicit Statement

1. Complete

Explicitly, it's clear it makes us complete - capable, proficient, able to meet demands upon us.

2. Equipped

And not just that but equipped - furnished, thoroughly equipped for whatever God has for us.

B) Implicit Reality

That's explicitly stated here. But consider the implied reality this confronts us with.

1. Too great

Without the Scripture, the task before us is too great. We are utterly outmatched.

2. Too little

Without the Scripture, what we bring to the table is far too little. We are completely unequipped.

So, on the one hand, this is incredibly encouraging. But it is also deeply humbling.

Application:

With the Scriptures, we are complete, equipped for every good work. Just as any of the great saints before us have been. For the Lord does not send us out, vainly fending for ourselves.

The Bible is unlike any other book - transforming us. Let's read it with that in mind.

CONCLUSION:

All this is to say that the Bible is quite a treasure. At one level, you can see that with the estimated value of the three rarest Bibles. The Codex Sassoon - between \$30 and \$50 million. The Gutenberg Bible - between \$4.9 and \$35 million. The Bay Psalm Book - \$16.5 million. Pretty stunning. But the truth is that truly great values could be put on any Bible - even a water damaged paperback with a broken binding and torn cover. Why? Its message. Its power.

God has provided us with quite a treasure. What does that tell us about Him? What does it tell us about God that He would speak to us this way? That He would take the trouble not only inspire the writers but to preserve the writings? What does that tell us about Him? That we are His treasure. That He is not content to create and just step back and watch. No. He insists on initiating and engaging with us. He is determined to move towards us. That's what love does.

Love communicates. Love speaks. And love sacrifices. Which brings us to this Table...

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