

THE BIBLE

SERIES: DOCTRINE | WEEK 1 | 8.29.2021


[Teaching today: Pastor Lee Wiggins]

Good morning, so good to see all of you. You have a treat coming up yet this morning, our teens are going to be leading us in worship. It was unbelievable last hour, so be looking forward to that.

Those of you joining us online, good morning, welcome wherever you're at in the world thanks for jumping on with us. And thank you all for being here, all up there on the balcony and all over this place. So thank you so much for being here.



I am so excited to be leading into a new series called DOCTRINE, before we do, can we just take a pause for a moment and go before our Lord.

 Thank you, Jesus, for revealing yourself to us. Oh, how we long to know You, to know the God of creation, to get beyond ourselves. Would You speak to us this morning, would you teach us? And Lord, I pray that each person would leave here more convinced that this Book that they have in their hands is the most important Book ever written, that it is true, and it will guide their lives. Lord, for the person that is watching on right now who is struggling, hurting, in pain, in need, I pray that even hearing about the fact that You have divinely revealed yourself to us that that in itself would be an encouragement this morning. We ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

Doctrine, let's just jump right in here. Doctrine simply meaning instruction and teaching. By the way, we're going to define a lot of words this morning because definitions matter and knowing what these words mean help us understand really crucial things. So when we say we're going to be studying doctrine, it's the instruction and teaching from the authoritative source known as the Bible, and we're going to be looking at a whole bunch of different teachings all drawn from the Bible that are absolutely ground-level basic teachings that you need to know. Today though we're going to start out by talking about this [HOLDS UP HIS BIBLE] because if we're going to say, "Hey, here are the teachings from the Bible," we need to be certain that this *is* a legitimate Book. That this *IS* the place of all authority that we can go and get God's revelation to us from this Book, but if we're not sure of that then we can't be 100% sure that we can go there. The moment we become sure of that – everything changes.

When we talk about doctrine, when we talk about the teachings of the Bible, 1st Timothy 4:16, if I was to pick a verse that would be a theme verse for this series, this is what it would say:

¹⁶ Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers.

– 1 TIMOTHY 4:16 (ESV)

Knowing truth, getting the truth right, making sure what you know and you believe, making sure that it is truth is going to save your life. And Paul when he writes this young pastor, Timothy, says know the truth.

So why do we study doctrine? A wrong doctrine or a wrong teaching is never an only child. When you get one thing wrong immediately following other things end up being wrong. Wrong doctrine, wrong teaching leads to wrong practice, wrong life decisions; right teaching leads to right practices. And what

we want for you is that you'll be able to take this Book and know what the crucial main teachings are of this Book so that you know how to live your life.

So oftentimes we talk about, you know, you need to know your Bible, you need to know the teachings of the Bible, you need to stick with the truths of the Word of God, you're like *Yes, yes*, and then you're like [SHRUGGING], *What are those?* And we hear these little one-offs, they sort of sound like a quote at best. We're going to be talking about the major things that the Bible teaches over the weeks and the months ahead, and what my hope for all of us is in this is that we'll just grab on to this, wrap our arms around this, and dig into it because for most of us we've never been taught this. We've been going to church all of our lives and we've never been taught these major doctrines. We assume that is something for a pastor to know, we hope this pastor knows it, maybe some really smart person in here that has just sort of gone down the rabbit hole on that, maybe for them, but we'll just trust that everyone else knows. I'm just gonna tell you: You need to know this. And I don't know where else you can go to get this information. We're going to give it to you in the weeks ahead.

Listen to 2nd Timothy 4:3:

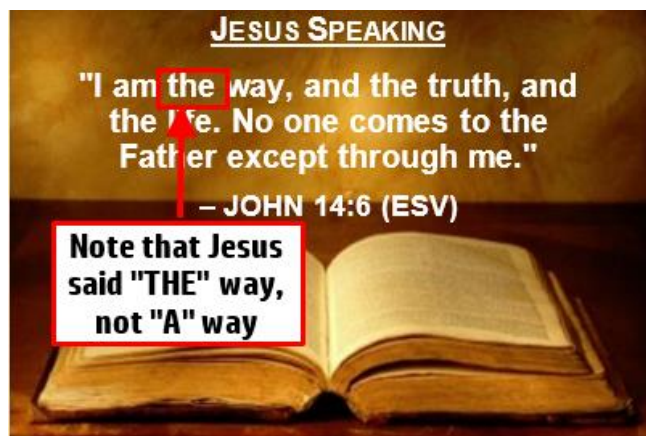
³ For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, ⁴ and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.

– 2 TIMOTHY 4:3-4 (ESV)

Paul says to Timothy a time is coming when they won't endure sound doctrine, the truth of this Book. I'm sad to tell you that that time is here where people, as he says, will bring around themselves teachers that will tell them what they want to hear. That time is here. And so as a result of that there is a ton of confusion. There are so many opinions. There are so many teachings and it can get really confusing really fast. I, just this week, came across a, I believe it's a brand new opinion survey where 3,000 "Protestant Christians" – whatever they determined that to be and I guess self-labeled as such – 3,000 of them were surveyed from the ages of 18 to 55 and they found that from when they last did this in 2010 to now or when they did it in 2020, there had been a significant decline in Bible-based beliefs, which isn't a real surprise. But as you dig down into the survey a little bit you find that those who agree with "core Christian doctrines" – that's what we're going to be walking through over the next weeks and months – fell from 47% to 25%. Well, what does that mean?

I found two examples that were extremely troubling in this survey. Sixty percent said that there was more than one way to salvation. Our Bible is extremely clear. Jesus says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father but by me." Sixty percent, sixty percent of those who claim to be born-again Protestants said there was more than one way. **There is only one way to God.**¹

Here's another one, 30% said that either Jesus had sinned while He was here on earth or they weren't sure if He had sinned or not. We believe that Jesus never sinned, that He was the sinless perfect sacrifice for our sins, and if He was not He could not



¹ 1 Timothy 2:5 (ESV): **For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,**

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have taken our place and taken the punishment on Himself that was due to us.² So you can see that even among church attenders key foundational principles are no longer clear and have not been sealed into our minds. We haven't made a decision.

Some of you may be saying, "It's funny that you're bothered by that, I'm curious about that myself." You've got to be with us for all these weeks. You gotta come every time and you gotta jump in with us during the week. There are going to be a whole lot of opportunities for questions, even as Pastor John just shared with you where you can text in your questions, tons of information is going to be downloaded to the website – <https://www.cfdowntown.com/doctrine>. Jump on with my wife and I this Thursday night at 9 o'clock, Bible Study Hub on YouTube³ or on the church's social media channels, because we're going to continue to answer your questions. And it's important that we have the right doctrinal worldview because if we do that will impact our lives.



Oftentimes when we ask people, like, "What would you want to hear us talk about?" We'll hear something like, "Well, talk to us about the cults or other religions." What's hard about that is if we talked about other religions or cults and this kind of thing, each one has their little thing and there's always a new angle that those groups are coming from. Here's what we need to be able to do is not be able to manage every false doctrine that's coming our way, but we need to know the truth so that when a false doctrine comes our way we're alerted to it. Because what my observation has been is very often I'll hear something and I'll think, *That sounds pretty good*. Then I'll stop and say, "Wait a minute, but what about this?" And that's the little red alarm flashing light that goes off in your mind because you know truth and you step back you say, "Something's wrong with that," and you begin to say no. And you don't go, "Well, it's pretty good, so I guess it's okay." It's not okay. And so as we know truth it's going to help us a ton.

One of the things that I'd love to throw out to you is a little way of thinking through what you know. We like to divide it up into basically three categories of convictions, persuasions, and opinions. Most of what we're going to be talking about in the weeks ahead are *convictions*. They're things that we're sure of from the Bible. You have very few convictions. Convictions are something that are a cornerstone, they hold everything else up. You get this conviction wrong and you will spend an eternity away from God, you will miss Heaven. These convictions will determine where you attend church. Maybe for some of you when you found that some of your convictions were taught here you said, "*This is the church I want to be at.*" Hopefully when you moved to this area you looked at our doctrinal statement [online](#) and said, "Yes, that's what I want to believe."

But a lot of churches you look at it they all look about the same, but when you drill down on some of their areas you find out ooh, they're not the same, that's not quite what they're saying. And that's why today we will work hard at defining words so that you understand what is it that's being said, so you'll hear some of these thoughts and concepts so you'll be able to come quickly to the answer of, *Is that what I believe? Is that what they're saying?* and to be able to dial into that. I don't know of anywhere else where you can get this, but what we're going to be teaching this morning is that when you go to a church, whether it's this church or somewhere else, you want to find a church that has a high view of the Scripture.

² Read *Was Jesus sinless?* at <https://www.gotquestions.org/Jesus-sinless.html>

³ Bible Study Hub URL: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCPKBkiGa949L-J7gKKiYRdQ>

Today we're going to be talking about the doctrine of the Bible, or what some would refer to as the doctrine, the teaching of revelation, how God reveals Himself to us. How does God talk to you? And to answer that question you need a church that has a high view of Scripture. If you ever move, and some of you will be moving, maybe some of you just moved here from out of town, we are a church that has a high view of Scripture. We believe that this is God's holy, inspired Word without error and we teach it unapologetically, even when it doesn't feel comfortable in our current culture, in our current times. We continue to teach it going that's what God revealed to us. A lot of us are longing for God to reveal Himself to us, "I want to hear from You, God." And we forget we have His revelation, we have what He's telling us right in front of us. So I talked to you about convictions.

We have this language here at Calvary about big cones, little cones. Big cones, like the big cone, like you never want to cross it, you don't want to ever get it wrong. When you see that big cone you stop, that would be what we would call here as our convictions. Like, they don't change. They were the same a thousand years from ago; if Jesus doesn't return they'll be the same a thousand years from now.



The second thing is you have *persuasions*. Persuasions, any doctrine of truth that you've studied and have gained a level of understanding that that you hold too strongly. These are the kinds of things – we have a lot of these persuasions – like when is Jesus coming back. A lot of really good people in this church have different persuasions on that. You've studied it, even when we get together we can sort of go back and forth a little bit, but one day we're gonna find out for real what the answer to that is. That's a persuasion. You debate why you hold them and that robust debate

in the church, I believe, is actually a good thing, and those positions may change over time. The big cones, those convictions, they must not change. When we talk about the high view of Scripture this is God's Word regardless of what time and period you're in, that doesn't change. But little details, oftentimes they will change.

And then you have *opinions*. Oh my, anyone have any opinions? You have opinion in here—it's too hot, too cold, too bright, too dark, pastor too loud, do I like the video that we started with, did I like the worship today, do I like the way they do the screen, do I like the artwork on it, did I like their logo, do I like the way someone's dressed that's here. Oh, my goodness! Someone said to me this morning, they said, "You're dressed like a pastor today. Thank you." [LAUGHTER] That's an opinion. It's cool. It's cool. Probably someone else has an opinion and said, "No, you're not. You don't have a suit and tie on." And someone else is like, "Why are you so dressed up? You look like a schoolboy." Those are opinions.

Opinions
Any issue where Christ followers can disagree and where there is more than one valid viewpoint.

You know what's sad. Most churches divide over opinions. We get crosswise with each other over opinions, not the big cones. But the problem is most of us don't know what the big cones are. And so we're going to talk, talk, talk in the weeks ahead about the big cones. That's why I say get a piece of paper, get a notebook, when you get home today print out the notes, put it in a notebook. Before you come to church next week pull it up online, it'll be there, print those notes, be taking notes, follow along,

you're going to get an education in the doctrine of the church in these weeks ahead. So the big idea we're going to be talking about the doctrine of the Bible today, the doctrine of revelation, how God reveals Himself, and here's what we want: We want for you to have a renewed confidence that you have the true Word of God. That this is really what God gave us, that it is true, that it is without error, that we can trust it, that it is accurate, that it is authoritative. That's what we're trying to do here today.

I love Hebrews Chapter 4, verse 12, I quote it often because I have this visual in my mind, and you'll have the visual here in just a second, listen to this verse, Hebrews 4:12:

¹² For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

– HEBREWS 4:12 (ESV)

That's powerful. When it talks about an active and sharper than any two-edged sword, there's actually the picture that it's making here is of a surgeon's scalpel. Can you imagine a surgeon with a very sharp scalpel having to go to the exact right place to get something out of your body? The Bible says about itself that when you read this it's going to get to the right place within you. These things amaze me. You take allergy medication, you pop a pill in the morning and your nose stops running, how did it know how to get where it was going? Doesn't everything go to the stomach? How did it get to the right place? I'm just always sort of amazed. This Book—when you read it—tells us it's going to get to the right place, it's going to help discern your thoughts and the intentions of your heart, that when you read this all of a sudden a lot of things are going to become clear. How can that be? What other book, what other book has that kind of power let alone relevance in all times?

I have a decent sized library in my office, from time to time I look at books I bought a few years ago and I go, "Yeah, that was pretty cool at the time, but I would never want to read that again. That's weird for now." And I just take it, pull it out and throw it in the trash can. It's just like I'm not going to read that again, that's just nothing. What's amazing with this Book and people say it to me every week that we preach because we're people of The Book here, we read this Book as a church, is that they say, "I cannot believe that something's written so long ago is like so relevant for right today. What you just said I needed that today." That's God's Word. That's how powerful God's Word is.

So the Bible, that's what we're talking about. By the way, the word *Bible* just simply means "book," and so I'll oftentimes say to you when we come in here on a Sunday, "Would you open up your Books." And you talk about opinions, I've had more people complain about me saying that than just about anything

else since I've been at the church for the last decade, "You're not respecting the Bible, you're calling it a book." That's what Bible means. Holy Bible, Holy Book, 39 books in

[Bible Dictionaries - Easton's Bible Dictionary - Bible](#)

Bible [N] [S]

Bible, the English form of the Greek name *Biblia*, meaning "books,"

the Old Testament, looking forward to Jesus Christ; 27 books in the New Testament, talking about the fulfillment of the Old Testament, the birth and the life of Jesus.

Throughout the whole New Testament, the Old Testament is quoted, every section is quoted, Jesus quotes it just constantly making us know that that is Scripture, He even calls it Scripture when He says that. It was written in Hebrew, it was written in Greek, and a little bit of Aramaic, over a period of 1,500 years by about 40 different authors of diverse backgrounds, from many different geographical locations. And this Book has survived the attempts to get rid of it over the centuries, from the Roman Empire to the

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middle ages to the philosophical debates that have said we want to get rid of it, and it continues to survive to a point that it is a bestseller to this day. It never gets on the *New York Times* bestseller list, it is the best seller to this day. It has had insane amount of influence on history, on culture, and changing lives.

By the way, if you're new to the Bible, understand that the chapters and the verses are not – those dividers – are not inspired, they're merely markers to help you be able to get there quickly. They were placed there, the chapters were placed there in the 1200's, and the verses were placed there in the 1500's just basically to help you find things.

I have to tell you my experience with this Book. I grew up in a Christian home, was saved at a very young age, put my trust in Jesus. I'm convinced that at the age of four next to my bed I put my trust in Jesus and I've lived my life just wanting to please Him ever since. But there was a point when I was in middle school, about an hour west of here, Cedar Crest Middle School near Lebanon, Pennsylvania, and I was in middle school and it dawned on me at that time that I was a Christian because my parents had taught me about Christianity, and I believed what they had told me about Christianity, I believed what they had told me about the Bible, and as a result I had believed God and I'd put my trust in Jesus alone to make me right with God. And all of a sudden it dawned on me *what if* I had been born in another religion in another country of a different family, of different parents, of a different mindset, I'd probably believe that. And so it crossed my mind, *Well, how do I know that this is true then?* Like, is this true for me and that's true for them, and that's true for them, and I had been taught no, there's only one way to God. Like, whoa. If we're going to make such a claim then I better find that the revelation from God, the claim that is saying that is true.

I had a Bible, it was rather non-descript, it had like a plastic brown cover on it, I was going to bring it today because I still have that Bible, and I made a decision, here's what I'm going to do. I'm going to, I was in the sixth grade, I'm going to carry this to school and during study halls and open periods and this kind of stuff I'm going to read it and I'm going to decide if it's true. If I find out that it's not true, then I'm just going to blow this off and, you know, I'll just go my own way, you know, I can still do my thing in my Christian home but when that day comes I'm just done with it. But if I find it to be true—this is what I said to God—if I find this to be true, I'll give my life to just serving You because then there's nothing more valuable than what's found between the covers of this Book.

And so I took that Book to school and I began reading it at study halls and the like, and what was interesting is I wasn't the only person reading in study halls and that kind of thing, but every time I opened up my Bible people would make fun of me, just mock me, laugh at me, and this kind of stuff. I was like, ah, you know, I don't laugh at you because you're reading that. I don't even know what it is, I

What is the Bible? The Bible is the best-selling book of all time from many different ranking sources. Estimations state that over 2.5 billion copies of the Bible have been sold since the printing press was invented by Johannes Gutenberg in 1440.

The Bible is the best-selling book of all time, having sold around 5 billion copies

Number one bestselling book of all time? Bible Best selling book of all time.

Not only is the Bible the best seller of all time it continues to be the best seller

The Bible is an incredible paradox. All-time best-seller, the Bible is the world's best-selling and most widely distributed book.

The Bible is the biggest bestseller in history.

The Bible is easily one of the best-selling books of all time.

The Bible - bestseller of all time

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don't know why you're reading that, but it makes no sense to me why you're reading that, I'm reading something that I think is something that has lasted over, you know, thousands of years and is like the most important Book ever written and you're making fun of me? And the fact that this was a lightning rod was one of my first indicators there's something different about this Book. Why over the course of history have they tried so hard to get rid of it? Why do so many people come up against it in so many crazy ways?

I was studying this week for some questions we're gonna answer next Sunday and in Bible Study Hub on YouTube on Thursday night at 9 o'clock, and one of the questions a lot of people will ask is: Why are there so many different books that never got into this Bible? And when they begin to mention the books that they're unhappy about not getting into it, the only ones that they're really wanting to talk about are the ones that are just heretical that would come up against anything that is already said in here that would contradict what the Bible is. There have been people over the years who have tried to destroy the teachings and water this down, and yet this Book has remained solid and has continued.

So my hope is that you will do what I did, open it up and start reading it and see if it's truth. There came a place in my life and a time in my life in the middle of that year where I was like, *This is truth. I'm just convinced.* My hope is that you'll come to that place, too, that you'll make that decision. Don't take my word for it, don't take all the – I'm going to give you a lot of great things and definitions here in the next couple minutes – but don't take my word for it. Jump into it and read it. And by the way, it's meant to be read, not just a bunch of information to be had or, you know, a doctrine that we believe this is how God revealed Himself to us, let's pop it in the corner. No, this is something to be read, something to be known.

So if you start reading it and you start on the left side and you start reading, by the time you get to Leviticus—has anyone ever gotten to Leviticus? Has anyone gotten beyond Leviticus? You get in the middle of Leviticus and you step back and go—and it's great, I know when people are reading certain things because they come to me and go, "Pastor," and especially those who are doing like the one year Bible, right around that time when they're all getting, there people are coming up and going, "Pastor, what is this? Why is this in the Bible? This is weird. Did God really say that? Did this really happen? And why is it there?"

So I'm going to go over some key words. I would mention to you these are not words I have made up, and when you someday choose another church or you're trying to see if an organization that you're giving to is a solid organization that believes as you and I do, these are some key words that are going to be extremely helpful to you in the days ahead. They're also words that come right out of what the Bible says about itself. So the first word that I want to talk about is the word *verbal*. The very words of this book are inspired by God, and I'm going to talk about what inspiration is in a little bit, so not just the thoughts and concepts.

Again, the thing that concerns me about a lot of teaching that you'll hear is that it's mostly a self-help talk and the Bible is used as a nice little quotable throughout the course of that self-help talk. And so it becomes this is God's Word if the concept agrees with me or I like it and I just follow those thought processes. So this being a good Book and me telling universal truth, you're going to be fine with it. No. The very words are inspired by God. Isaiah 55:

¹¹ so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth it shall not return to me empty but it shall accomplish that which I propose and shall succeed in the thing that I sent it.

– ISAIAH 55:11 (ESV)



Proverbs 30, verse 5:

Every word

— very words, *verbal* —

of God proves true; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him.

– PROVERBS 30:5 (ESV)

And one more, Matthew 5:18, this is huge:

¹⁸ For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished.

– MATTHEW 5:18 (NIV)

Verbal. Every word of this Book is inspired, every word matters. In our world where truth is questioned constantly, to say that every word we can count on—that's a hard pill for a lot of people to swallow. To be able to say that this is God's final word to us put there purposely and meant for you.

Verbally. Plenary. Big words. By the way, I'm not afraid to use big words. One, because you're like really smart people. Seriously, I mean, one of the things I love about this group is you're not going to just take my word for it. You're going to dig down on this, you're going to chase this down, you're going to study this on as many levels as possible to understand this, and so you should. That's even why you're here today. That's why you're going to invite other people to come back next week because this stuff matters and there aren't many places to find out this information. So the word *plenary* means "all Scripture is equally inspired," so that verse in Leviticus that you're going, "What?" is equally inspired with that verse in John—which I would encourage you if you're just starting out and reading your Bible, start in the book of John—those are equally inspired.

Now I'm going to give you a couple verses this morning that I think are going to be really helpful. I'm giving you a lot of verses. By the way, in your notes that you'll see online, on the last page are all the verses I'm using this morning, just print it out. So if you just want all the verses that I've talked about they're all right there, we've just printed out the whole verse there so you can see them. But this verse, there's like two verses today that I would say if you could only remember two verses that you ought to remember this. If you want it in your Bible, open up to 2nd Timothy 3:16-17, star this because this is a key verse in understanding. Listen what it says:

¹⁶ All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

– 2 TIMOTHY 3:16-17 (ESV)

Did you hear the word for inspiration there? All Scripture is *God breathed*. Take a pause for a moment with me if you would, when you open this up to read this and you understand that this is inspired, God breathed, you are receiving the very breath of God. If I told you today I had a dream last night and God told me some secrets and I heard from God and I know some stuff that you all need to know, everyone would be leaning forward on their seats—and we have to be very careful about that. I'll talk about that in a moment, but I want to tell you this, God says this Book, 2nd Timothy 3:16, is His very breath, inspired, every word, verbal, plenary, all equally inspired, the very breath of God. Wow. It is complete and sufficient. All 66 books and I clarify 66 books, 39 of the Old, 27 of the New, because some of you are going to find out that your Bible has some books in it that I don't have in mine, and we're going to talk

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about that on Thursday night, 9 o'clock, Bible Study Hub. You've gotta join me on YouTube, just type in "Bible Study Hub" and you'll find my wife and I talking about that there. A lot of people want to have that conversation, we will talk about it. You have all the books of the Bible, 66, they're sufficient, and why won't we add any more? Listen to Revelation 22:18:

18 I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book,

– REVELATION 22:18 (ESV)

Enough said? Oh, if that's not enough said, let me add a few more. Proverbs 30, verses 5-6:

5 Every word of God proves true; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him.

6 Do not add to his words,

— listen —

lest he rebuke you and you be found a liar.

– PROVERBS 30:5-6 (ESV)

I'm going to give you one more, I don't think this one's in your notes, Deuteronomy 18:22:

22 when a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the word does not come to pass or come true, that is a word that the Lord has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously.

– DEUTERONOMY 18:22a (ESV)

There are a lot of people claiming to be prophets in our world right now, because of the advent of social media they are more visible and you're able to hear them, and there is a tendency for us to find that very interesting. *Oh, they're telling us new information. Wow, they heard from God? They got a special word from God. What's going to happen?* I would warn you, be very, very careful—we have the complete Word of God, it is enough. In fact, theologians would refer to this as the sufficiency of Scripture. The Scripture is sufficient.

Luke Chapter 16 has a great story in it, it's a scary one, Jesus is telling it. So you've got a guy who dies and he didn't know God and he ends up tormented, and he calls out to Father Abraham and he wants him



The Rich Man and Lazarus

to go tell his family. It's the story in Luke 16, you have to read it. It says he has five brothers, *Go tell them what I'm going through here.* There is a Hell, by the way, we'll talk about that in one of these messages and we're going to talk about what the Bible says about Hell. *Go tell them, go tell them that this place exists, tell them about the torment because I don't want them to go here.* And Abraham's answer is very helpful to us, he says, *They have the law and the prophets.*⁴ They have the Bible, and Abraham says and that's enough.

That's why I beg you if you're leading a small group, use your Bible, teach from the Bible, don't just teach from some dude's book. That's one of the ones I'll be throwing away in a couple years because it's outdated. These are the books [RAISES HIS BIBLE]. Abraham says this is enough to keep your five brothers out of Hell, and then Abraham makes this comment, he says even if they saw a man rise from the dead they wouldn't believe in it.⁵ We have to believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. We're going to be talking about that as well.

⁴ Luke 16:29 (ESV): **But Abraham said, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.'**

⁵ Luke 16:31 (ESV): [Abraham speaking] **He said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.'**

Hey, listen, the Bible is clear, we refer to that as *clarity*. The Bible can be understood, that is what we refer to as *perspicuity*.⁶ And by the way, I just want to clarify this. I have people tell me, "I'm just not smart enough to get all this. I just don't understand it all." No. God's not trying to hide the ball from us. He's not trying to make it hard. He's not trying to complicate it. Oftentimes one of the first things I do when studying the Bible is just read it and say, "What's the simplest understanding of this? What's He trying to say?" He's not trying to hide it from you. So whether you're the brightest person in the room or you're like, "I just, I just don't understand. I'm a slow reader." Stop it. God gave this, meant for it to be understood.

So I want to go back again to inspiration, the three words that we would, like, really say here loud here at Calvary – verbally, plenary, and inspired. Every word equally inspired. Inspired, the very breath of God. God's revelation to us. How do you hear from God? How does God speak to you? How does God speak to us? Two ways which God speaks to us—general revelation and special revelation. And I need to roll fast, my time is running out, when my time runs out I'm just going to stop. So general revelation is this, Romans Chapter 1 said:

²⁰ For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.

– ROMANS 1:20 (ESV)

When you were on vacation a couple weeks ago and you're out on that big roadside pull out looking out over the mountains and the valleys, "Wow! God, You are great!" When you're out camping and you just



get that quiet time and you just walk up into the woods and you stand by the tree and you look up, "God, I feel close to You here." I talk to people all the time, "Yeah, I haven't been at church recently. I sort of, for me, I just go for a walk in the woods." Because in nature, in God's creation, He has revealed Himself to us. You look down [LOOKS AT HIS HAND] and you see blue veins and you realize there's red blood running through there. There must be a God. You see the birth of a baby, you go, "There must

be a God." I had a doctor friend of mine say, "When you study the kidney you become quickly aware as a medical doctor there's a God." That's general revelation. Conscience. How is it that people say, you know, "I don't lie, I don't cheat, and I haven't killed anyone"? Well, where'd that moral law come from? God has planted inside of us in a conscience so that we know the truth. That's called general revelation.

There's sort of this statement that gets made at this moment, "Oh, you know, what about that guy way over there, they never heard about Jesus?" You know, they're in some tribe, this kind of thing, they create this straw man [argument]. They're like, "What if they've never heard about Jesus? How can they respond to Jesus?" And God says I've made myself available, I've shown myself through everything that they've seen. That's why you say I don't kill, I don't tell lies, I have a conscience. It's why you look out and you go, "There must be a God."

So here's what I want to tell you this morning, there's enough information in the world we have around us for you to know there's a God to respond to Him. If you're sitting here this morning and you're going, "I'm just not sure though," I get that. I'm confident there's some of you in this room with that going, "Yeah, I'm glad that you read your Bible when you were in sixth grade and decided there's a God, I'm

⁶ See *What is the doctrine of the perspicuity of Scripture?* at <https://www.gotquestions.org/perspicuity-of-Scripture.html>

just not convinced of that." The Bible says that there's this thing called general revelation, that there's enough out there to prove that there's a God, and here's what I have seen were proven over and over. If you'll just say to God right now, "God, if You're real, show yourself to me." I have seen Jesus show up in ways that are so powerful so many times. Don't take my word for it, just ask Him. He's real. He's there.

That leads me to special revelation. God revealed Himself to individuals who wrote down on the pages of this Scripture what God wanted us to know to be able to know Him and He wants to be known, so He goes to great lengths to communicate with you and me who He is. That's special revelation. General revelation and special revelation. The second passage that I want you to write down, highlight, know when it comes to this topic if you could only know a couple, 2nd Peter 1:19-21, says this:

¹⁹ And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, ²⁰ knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. ²¹ For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

– 2 PETER 1:19-21 (ESV)

We'll get into this more as the week goes on as you jump into your small group, as you listen to the podcast, but how did God get His Word through individuals, mankind, the 40 authors on the pages of this Book? It wasn't through mechanical dictation where He just said the words and they just wrote them down, but He used the personalities, He used the backgrounds, He used the different types of situations these different people were in, and He spoke through them.

You've got John on the island of Patmos when he writes the book of Revelation and God says write these things down. You've got Paul sitting down to write to a young man, Timothy, and he begins just to write him a letter to help him know how to lead the church, and God is working through His Spirit to make sure that is the words of Scripture. You've got Paul writing, who wrote much of the New Testament, writing down the words to a church in Corinth that was messed up, and God uses what he has to say and leads what he writes to be inspired by God. This passage says these words "**men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.**" It is a picture of a sailboat with a big sail up and the wind blowing, the Holy Spirit moving these 40 authors along to write the right words.

I tell you all the time that we are a people of The Book, that's what we're raising up high here today, a high standard, a high view of the Word of God. I also tell you that we're all about Jesus, everything's about Christ first here, we're putting Jesus first here. When God reveals Himself, He reveals Himself through Jesus. Hebrews Chapter 1, verses 1 & 2:

¹ Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, ² but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.

– HEBREWS 1:1-2 (ESV)

We're all about Jesus here and God speaks through Jesus. His Word is authoritative, it is truth, it doesn't become truth, it IS truth. Truth is always true everywhere for everyone. And we believe here at Calvary—I used the words verbal, plenary, inspired, and I want to add one more, *inerrant*—it is without error. In the original autographs, in the original writings, original manuscripts, which we no longer have, and if we had them we'd worship them, but it was without error and we believe today that this Bible that

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has been passed on to us is God's inerrant Word. And I'm going to leave us with this, there are going to be some at that point, "Whoa, whoa, whoa, I heard there's all sorts of variations," and I heard this and I heard that. We want to talk about that and we need more time to talk about that because I want you to be confident that this is God's Word, that it is authoritative, that it is without error, and you can trust it.

So I'm going to ask you, I hope you've jumped in, we're going to continue on this discussion next Sunday morning, we'll talk more about this next Sunday morning. If you're not in a small group, go out to the Blue Wall after this service and jump in and find out a group you've got to be in because we're going to be having these conversations. Join Pastor John, what'd you say? Tuesday the podcast will be coming out? [PASTOR JOHN NODS HIS HEAD YES] Make sure you're signed up for our podcast. Make sure you've liked our social media. I don't even know how you do that, but you all know how to do that, just press LIKE and all that kind of stuff, so that you get all the announcements and that kind of stuff.

We want to study this together. I want you to be convinced of it. I want you to grow in this. I want you to learn this, and we are going to just take a journey together. If you think this would be helpful for someone else, ask them to come join us. Show them the video, show them the online, everything's on there, even the transcript will be on there in the next 24-48 hours of even this message. We want you to jump into this. We want you to learn this. We want you to know your doctrine. Don't want you to miss a thing.

I'm going to pray and I'm going to turn it over to our students. You are in for a huge treat right now. Remember – doctrine leads to doxology, great teaching of the Word of God leads to praise of the glorious God we worship.



Jesus,

We praise You. We lift up your name and we just are thankful for these students that are going to lead us to the glory and praise of the name of Jesus right now. It's in your name we pray. Amen.



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