

## **Is Your Faith Grounded?**

**2 Peter 1:12-21**

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At the end of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, which is Matthew 5, 6, and 7, at the end of the seventh chapter of Matthew, Jesus told a parable that you're all familiar with. It's about the wise and the foolish builder. Two men built a house, and one man was wise and built his house upon the rock. When the wind came and the floods beat upon his house, his house stood strong because it was built upon the rock. The foolish man built his house on sand, and when the floods came and the wind blew it knocked down his house, and his house fell. Jesus said, "Great was the fall of it." Now, Jesus applying or interpreting that parable said, "The wise man is the one who hears My sayings," context Sermon on the Mount, "and puts it into practice," or does them. "The foolish man is the one who doesn't hear or obey My Word, and it's like building his house upon the sand."

You're either a wise builder or you're a foolish builder. You're either building your life and your marriage and your ministry and all about whichever it is God has called you to do on the rock of Jesus Christ and His Word, or you're building your house upon your own philosophies, concepts, or ideas. You're either a wise builder or a foolish builder. Peter wants us to build our house upon the rock. He wants us to be standing on the growing faith that we have in God's Word.

Just a quick, quick review without going into the text, Peter first wanted to make sure that they had a real faith, and we talked about, "Is Your Faith Real?" Secondly, we saw that we're to have a growing faith last Wednesday night, that we need to add to our faith virtue, temperance, and all those attributes. Tonight, thirdly, we move to "Is Your Faith Grounded?" Here's chapter one of 2 Peter, "Is Your Faith Real?"; "Is Your Faith Growing?"; and thirdly, "Is Your Faith Grounded?" A real faith, a growing faith, must be grounded on the solid rock of Scripture. Peter doesn't want us to be swept away by false teachers.

Remember, and we'll get to it in 2 Peter 2, Peter's going to be talking about false teachers, warning them about them. Before he gets into the issue of the false doctrine, he wants us to have the real faith, the growing faith, the grounded faith. Just a little peek at 2 Peter 2:1 where it says, "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you," and we're going to launch into that in 2 Peter 2. Before he does that, he wants us to be grounded and growing on the Word of God. The best way to be able to detect error is to know the truth of God's holy Word. Christians are to be grounded, growing in the Word of God, they will not be led astray by false teachers. Peter makes clear in our text, verses 12-21, that we are to be standing on the foundation of God's stable, immovable, eternal, rock of Scripture.

Simply stated, there are three affirmations about God's Word that Peter makes. They're seemingly simple, which is good, but they're not simplistic. So, three statements about the Bible, God's Word, in our text. The first is: Men die, but God's Word lives. Men die, but God's

Word lives or God's words are abiding forever. Let's look at the text, verses 12-15. Peter says, "Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth. 13 Yea, I think it meet,"—right or necessary—"as long as I am in this tabernacle,"—that tabernacle reference is to our physical bodies likened unto a tent—"to stir you up by putting you in remembrance."

Notice this key word in verse 12, you have the word "remembrance," and then again in verse 13 you have the word "remembrance." Verse 14, "Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle,"—which again, is his body—"even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me. 15 Moreover I will endeavor that ye may be able after my decease"—which is talking about his death—"to have these things always in remembrance." Go back to verse 12 and notice that it starts with a "Wherefore," so whenever there's a "wherefore" you ask yourself, what is it there for, right? He's kind of concluding or wrapping up or he's teeing off what he said previously. And previously, verses 1-11, where I mentioned the fact that he's saying, "Is your faith real? Is your faith growing? Is your faith grounded?" Based on what he said last Wednesday in the text from verses 1-11, we know that we are to be growing in God's Word.

So, "Wherefore I will not be negligent,"—Peter did not want to negate the responsibility that he had to ground God's people in God's Word—"to put you always in remembrance." I pointed out that in verses 12, 13, and again in verse 15, the word "remembrance" is repeated. There is nothing wrong with reminding God's people of the truths of God's Word. There's nothing wrong with repeating doctrinal truth. You don't just teach one time, one thing, and never return. It's going over and over and over and over sometimes the foundation, sometimes the essentials. I've said, and I believe it's true, that if it's new, it's not true; if it's true, it's not new. If it's the true Word of God, it's been taught before, it's been explained before, and we're not going into any new revelation we just want new inspiration and transformation of our lives from the old truths of God's Word. So, "I don't want to neglect, but I want you to remember these things."

If you've sat under my teaching for very long, you're going to hear me repeat things over and over and over again. I feel like Peter saying, "I want to remind you these things." ". . . though ye know them, and be established in the present truth,"—again, notice the reference to truth that Peter wanted them to be established in. "Yea, I think it meet"—right or important or necessary—"as long as I am in this tabernacle." Now, Peter uses in this text the word "tabernacle" or tent for our physical bodies. In 2 Corinthians 5, which is a classic passage on that subject, the Bible says, "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle,"—tent—"were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

Do you know your body is likened unto a tent, and many lessons from that picture or metaphor, but one of them is that your body that you're in right now is not a permanent dwelling. If you're getting old, you can praise God for that. There's coming a day when you will move out of this tent into a body that will be glorified, like the body Jesus had when He rose from the dead.

Years ago, when I was quite young, I couldn't do it today, I spent three months, three months, in a three-man pop tent, and there was no mattress under me. When I got out of that little tent, it

cured me from camping the rest of my life. I have not been back in a tent since 1972. Don't ask me to go tent camping with you.

Sometimes in our own bodies our tents are getting shabby. They're leaning. They're leaking. They're torn. The stakes are coming up. They're flapping in the wind, and we're ready to move out. It speaks also of the frailty and the weakness of our human bodies. Our bodies are likened unto tents, and believe me, as you age you realize how painfully true that is that my body is just a tent. We look for a body that God is going to give us that will be eternal in the heavens. And, no weakness, no pain, no sorrow, no suffering, no cancer in that new body. It will be a glorified, new-and-improved you, which will be for all eternity.

He says, "Yea, I think it"—right—"as long as I am in this tabernacle,"—this body, this tent—"to stir you up"—that's what Peter's going to do here—"by putting you in remembrance; 14 Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle." Let me make some statements about this text. Peter knew that soon he would die. He says in verse 14, "Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle."

Actually, Jesus indicated to Peter in John 21, He said, "When you were young, you went here, you went there; but when you're old someone will take you by the hand and lead you where you do not want to go." The text actually says, "This spake he, signifying by what death he should"—die. Tradition tells us that Peter was crucified, but he didn't feel worthy to be crucified like Jesus, so he requested to be crucified upside down. Whether or not that's true, we don't know, but that's tradition that Peter was crucified by the Roman government upside down. He mentions in verse 14, ". . . I must put off this my tabernacle"—my tent, my body—"even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me." That is a direct reference to John 21 where Jesus told Peter how he would die and that he would be led where he did not want to go.

Also, notice in verse 15 of our text, "Moreover I will endeavour that ye may be able after my"—get this great word here—"decease to have these things always in remembrance." Peter is saying, "I'm going to die, and I want something to be left after me. I want to leave you this Scripture, the Word of God, so that when I'm gone you have something to build your life upon." It's so very, very important.

The word "decease" there can be translated exodus—my departure, my decease, my exodus. It's used in Luke 9:31, and we're going to get into it in our text in just a minute where Jesus on Mount Transfiguration met with Peter, James, and John, Peter being one of them, and Moses and Elijah showed up. It says they were discussing His exodus—His decease, His departure—on the Mount of Transfiguration, so His death.

Now, a little thought about that is that when a Christian dies, he doesn't cease to exist. Death is not the cessation of existence, it is just a moving of location. When you die...and by the way, the etymology of the word "death" or "die" literally means separation. When a person dies, their immaterial part, the soul and spirit, separates from the material part, the body, so you move out. You don't POOF into nothingness and cease to exist, you're still there, but you are out of

your body. So, you move from this tent into heaven.

Again, I probably shouldn't mention it because it's a little bit of a rabbit trail, but I don't believe the Bible teaches that when you die before the rapture—you go to heaven, you're with the Lord, you're in His presence—I don't believe you get your body quite yet. I believe you're in what's called an intermediate state. You know, when Paul was talking to the believers in Thessalonica about the rapture, and he says, "The dead in Christ shall rise first," people get all kind of freaked out, "Well, how do you rise first if they're already in heaven with the Lord?" Well, the resurrection there is the body. Their physical body will be resurrected at the rapture. The rapture involves—listen carefully—the resurrection of the dead saints in Christ and the translation of the living saints in Christ. So, if you're alive when the rapture happens, immediately you get caught up to meet the Lord in the air and you have a new, glorified body forever with the Lord. If you die before the rapture, you're in heaven, but you haven't got your body yet, so you're in what's called sometimes the intermediate state, thus we're able to understand that text in Thessalonians, ". . . and the dead in Christ shall rise first."

All of 1 Corinthians 15 talks about the resurrection of the body—just as Jesus' body rose from the dead, so will our bodies rise from the dead. You might say, "Well, how is that going to happen? What if you're burnt in a fire?" Is anything too hard for God? God can resurrect you in any way that you, maybe decay or you're gone, He can resurrect you, and He will resurrect you. And then, we're going to see our loved ones in heaven, and we will know them, which is a cool thought, too. People say, "Will we know each other in heaven?" You think we're going to be dumber in heaven than we are here? By the way, that was Charles Spurgeon who said that. Certainly, we will know each other. We'll be a new and improved you when we have this new, glorified body. How marvelous that is!

Peter wanted them to remember truth, verse 12. He wanted them to remember these things ". . . and be established in the present truth." It's so very important. As I pointed out, verses 12, 13, and 15 have that repetition of the word "remember," so Peter knew soon that he would die. Peter wanted them to remember the truth. Thirdly, Peter left them God's living Word. Notice it there. Peter says, "Moreover . . . after my decease to have these things always in remembrance." And, in John 21, what did Jesus tell Peter to do? "Feed my sheep." That's exactly what he's doing in 1 and 2 Peter, he's feeding the sheep.

Now, some feel, and I think rightfully so, that the gospel of Mark was heavily influenced by Peter working with Mark. Mark wrote it, but he actually interviewed Peter. He got his information from Peter, so it could be Mark's gospel, 1 Peter, 2 Peter was Peter feeding the sheep. Now, just make note, you can peek at it real quick if you want to, 1 Peter 1:23-25 what Peter had to say about the Word of God. He said, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. 24 For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away." Here we have not our bodies like tents but our bodies like grass or like flowers. Look at verse 25, "But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you."

Go back to our text, 2 Peter 1. Peter was saying here that the Word of the Lord endures and we die and we pass away, but God's Word lives and abides forever. It is God's enduring Word, so we can stand on it, we can build our lives on it. It's immovable rock of Scripture.

Here's the second thing that Peter says about God's Word. He says God's Word is sure and steadfast. God's Word is enduring, and we can build on it. God's Word is sure and steadfast. He's going to say experience fades, but God's Word remains. Now, for this, verses 16 to the first part of verse 19 in our text, follow with me. Peter says, "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables." Now, he said, "I want you to remember the truth. I want you to be always in remembrance of the truth, but I don't want you to follow " . . . cunningly devised fables,"—because of the false teachers—"when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty."

Just a little hint before I read any further, Peter in verses 16-19 is going to be talking about the Mount Transfiguration. That's the context. He's going to be describing this awesome experience that he had with Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration. He says, " . . . but were eyewitnesses of his majesty." When he was on the mountain, there was physical sight—they saw. Then, verse 17, "For he received from God the Father,"—referring to Christ—"honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. 18 And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount." Notice verse 19, "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed." Peter says, "We saw, we heard, we were with Him on that mountain. We had that powerful and marvelous experience."

As I said, Peter's describing Mount Transfiguration. On Mount Transfiguration it's recorded in Matthew 17, Mark 9, and Luke 9. Matthew, Mark, and Luke all record the story of the transfiguration. What was the transfiguration? Basically, Jesus had told them, "There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see,"—the kingdom of God, come with power. So, at the end of Matthew 16, that statement is made. Some people think that there's an error there in the Bible because they all died before Jesus' return. So, what is Jesus talking about? Well, if you just keep reading the very next few verses right into Matthew 17 it goes right into the transfiguration. I believe Jesus was talking not about a literal, "I'm coming back," but you're going to get a preview. Underline the word "preview." You're going to get an experience that previews the Second Coming and the Kingdom of God in power and glory.

So, "You're not going to die," six days later after that statement He went with Peter, James, and John into a high mountain. It doesn't tell us what mountain it is, and that's not important. It was a high mountain, and He was transfigured. That phrase means there was a metamorphosis, so His deity was allowed to shine through His humanity, which is an amazing thought. Jesus was God in flesh. We sing, veiled in flesh the Godhead see. I like to think of it as pulling back the veil of His flesh, and He allowed His deity to shine forth because He wanted His disciples, who had just gotten a revelation about the fact that even though He's Messiah, He's going to be crucified and slain, and that would not compute in their Jewish brains. In a Jewish brain, the idea was that Messiah would come to conquer and rule as King, and He wouldn't be crucified.

Certainly, even Jews today reject Jesus Christ as Messiah because of the cross. Jesus is telling them, "I'm going to go to the cross, but it will not hinder the Kingdom from coming." It will not hinder the Kingdom from coming.

Sunday morning we'll be in Luke 13, and we're going to talk about the Kingdom of God starts very small like a mustard seed planted in the ground and becomes a large tree where the birds of the air lodge in its branches, like a woman takes a little bit of leaven and puts it in a meal and it leavens the whole lump. It starts small, grows big.

Jesus is going to be crucified, but the Kingdom of God will eventually come in the Second Coming. He wanted to encourage them, and He wanted to strengthen their faith, so He takes Peter, James, and John. Actually, as far as the transfiguration is concerned, there was a vision of Christ transfigured, there was the visitors of Moses and Elijah, and then there was the voice, "This is my beloved Son, in whom"—My soul delights—"hear ye him." What a marvelous experience that is.

Now, can you imagine you're on the mountain, you wake up...and, by the way, they were sleeping up there. These guys had the gift of sleep. It's biblical. And when they woke up, they saw the glory. Peter was the one that blurted out and said, "Lord, this is great we're up here. Let's build three tabernacles, one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." That's when the God's voice came from heaven, the Father's, "This is my beloved Son: hear ye him." They had the vision, they had the visitors, and they had the voice.

By the way, Moses represented the law, and he died and went to heaven. Elijah represents the prophets, and he was caught up in a fiery chariot to heaven. Some say Moses represents the believer going to heaven by death and Elijah represents the believer going by the rapture, which I think is interesting but that's not necessarily what the text is trying to convey, and then there was the voice. This was all about the experience.

Here's the reason for the text on this subject. Peter's going to be saying, "We saw, we heard, we were there, we experienced it." But more sure—listen to me very carefully—more sure than our physical experience of seeing, hearing, being there, is God's immutable, unchanging Word—objective truth. That's why Peter's telling us this. He's telling us this to say, "Build your life upon the Scriptures. Don't build it on experience. Build it on objective truth of God's Word." It's very dangerous to build your life on experience. You need to build your life upon the objective truth of God's holy Word. Peter is telling us here, verse 19, God's Word in Scripture is " . . . more sure"—and reliable than our own experience.

The reason this verse means a lot to me, get a little personal, is I grew up in a Pentecostal charismatic, very emotional church. It was light on doctrine, light on Scripture, and real heavy on experience—a lot of personal prophecy, a lot of visions, lots of dreams, a lot of experience, very little grounding in the Word of God—and I saw a lot of believers who are cast " . . . to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine." When I came under the influence of Chuck Smith's through the Bible teaching, my life was transformed. I felt like I was born again, again. I

was a Christian, but I wasn't growing. It was all emotion, all excitement, how high you could jump in the meeting but not how straight you could walk when you hit the ground. That's all fine, if that's what you're in to, but you must be grounded on the Word of God not on experience.

Let me make a statement that's really important, that is, truth is found in God's Word is objective and steadfast. Experience is subjective. The Bible is objective truth despite how you feel, what you see, what you experience. The Word of God is objective truth; experience is subjective. We should never judge Scriptures by our experience, but rather judge your experience by Scriptures because in the church I grew up they were doing things that weren't biblical, but they said, "We've experienced it. I've seen it. I felt it. I've experienced it." The problem is, if it's not found in the Bible, it's subjective not objective.

Have you ever talked to a Mormon, had a Mormon knock on your door? How many have had a Mormon knock on your door? If you're not raising your hand, you don't live in a house with a door. After reasoning with a Mormon all you can from Scripture, what do they say? "But I have a burning in my bosom." With all due respect to that Mormon person, I can eat a burrito and get a burning in my bosom. As a matter of fact, the older I get, the more burning I get in my bosom when I eat burritos.

The criteria for truth is not a burning in my bosom. A Buddhist could have a burning in their bosom, that doesn't tell me it's true. That's subjective. Don't be swept off your feet off of the Scriptures by someone's vision or dream or experience. I've had people coming to me with their dreams, "I had a dream, and I know it was from God. I want you to interpret it for me." I don't know what my dreams mean. Usually they mean that I should stop eating chocolate after midnight. They're induced by candy, not by Christ. You need to be careful.

I have people come to me at this church and say, "I'm a prophet." I'll say, "We're a nonprofit organization." "Thus saith the Lord, the Lord has a message for you." I have a Bible. I know what God's Word says. God has my phone number. He doesn't like me anymore? He doesn't want to speak to me? I don't need a prophet. I'm not saying that we shouldn't have experience, and that we shouldn't encounter God, but it must be supported by clear teaching in the Scriptures, the Word of God, and rightly dividing, rightly handling and interpreting those Scriptures in context, not taking them out of context to support some unscriptural activity that you think is so important. Christians beware of those who build their lives on subjective experience.

So, Peter said, "We saw," and " . . . we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount." I love it, verse 19, "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed," so build your life on the solid rock of Scripture and you will not be led astray.

Here's the third statement about the Bible, Scripture comes from God, verses 19-21. Let's back up to the beginning of verse 19, even though we stopped in the middle and repeat it. Follow me, verse 19. He says, "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed," even though he calls the Word "prophecy," he's not just taking about the

prophetic Word, he's talking about Scripture, period, in general, " . . . a more sure word,"—from God, and that's all of Scripture.

You might say, "Well, in Peter's time that would be Old Testament." Yes, but as we get through this epistle, we're going to find that he claims Paul's writings were of equal par with Scripture, or classified as Scripture as well, which would put us clearly in the New Testament. He says, "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place,"—so Scripture comes from God like a light shining in a dark, evil, wicked world. Certainly, that's a description of where we live today. " . . . until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts." This is either until you find Christ through the Scriptures or it's referring to the Lord coming back and that we're with Him face to face.

Notice verses 20-21. These are two of the most important texts in the New Testament about the inspiration and inerrancy of the Word of God. He says, "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture"—again, he uses that concept of prophecy that he mentions in verse 19—"is of any private interpretation. 21 For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved"—or carried along—"by the Holy [Spirit]."

Let me just break it down real quick and simple. First, Scripture is a shining light. The Word of God is our only light in this darkened world. Years ago I was on an airplane. You know how they have those magazines of stuff you can buy that are really silly and corny? I mean there might be some good stuff in there, but I was just waiting until the plane took off. I'm flipping through this magazine and I saw this advertisement for these house slippers that had lights in the toes. I kid you not. I thought, This is pretty cool! I thought of Psalm 119:105, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." These are biblical slippers! So, you're walking around at night with little headlights on your feet. I thought, I want to buy these suckers, but they only came in pink, so I said, "Forget it."

The Bible is a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our path. In other words, without the Bible in your life, you're walking in darkness. You think about people live without the Word of God, they don't think biblically, they don't live biblically, they don't compute things biblically, they don't filter everything through the Scriptures. The Scriptures are a shining light in this very dark world.

Secondly, Scripture is Spirit-given, verses 20-21, "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation." Let me explain what he's saying here. He's saying here, when he says, " . . . no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation," he is not saying that an individual can read the Bible, study the Bible, and understand the Bible and interpret the Bible. That is a wrong interpretation of this statement. He's not talking about interpreting the Bible, he's talking about the inspiration of the Bible. There are some that say we leave the interpretation of the Bible to the church, to the priesthood, or to the pastors, or to the highly educated theologians. No. The common layman, the common Christian, can read God's Word, I believe, in the clarity of Scripture and with the Spirit of God in their life, they can understand the Scriptures. He's not saying we can't interpret the Bible ourselves, "Well, what is he saying there?"

The word interpretation in verse 20 is the idea of its origin or source. It's not of private origin or source. In other words, he's saying, "When these guys wrote Scripture, it wasn't just coming from them. It wasn't just coming from their own hearts and their own minds and their own heads. It wasn't originating from man, it came from God. It is the Word of God. He's going to use human instruments to write the Scriptures, and I'll define how that works, but he's not saying we can't interpret the Bible ourselves, but its origin or its source comes from God.

Secondly, I want you to notice that the Scriptures were Spirit-given. Notice the phrase in verse 20, "Knowing this first." That phrase means this is of utmost importance, so listen up. "Knowing this first,"—or in first of importance or first of order. The text is one of the two most important in the New Testament on the doctrine of Scripture, so it's not of private interpretation. Then, verse 21, "For the prophecy"—or the Word of God—"came not in old time"—and, by the way, he's explaining now in verse 21 what he meant by no Scripture is of private interpretation in verse 20. He said, "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man"—it wasn't just man's ideas or man's thoughts.

How many of you ever heard people say, "Well, the Bible was just written by man." All the time, right? Well, yes, but it's also given by inspiration of God, and here's how he explains it in verse 21. He says, ". . . but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy [Spirit]." That is the inspiration of the Bible, written by men, and the word "moved" there means to be carried along. It was used in Acts 27:15 of when Paul was in a small ship that they hoisted the sail and the sails filled with wind and moved them along. It was used of wind filling a sail and moving the ship or the boat over the water. This is a Scripture that says that when men wrote the Bible, they were—listen to me carefully—carried or moved along by the Holy Spirit. They weren't just writing their thoughts or their ideas, they were carried along, borne along. I think the word to use is "superintended" by God the Holy Spirit so that the very words they wrote were the words of God. They were carried along.

Another text, and I'll read it in just a moment, that is one of the greats in the New Testament, there's two, is 2 Timothy 3:16 where it says, "All scripture is give by inspiration." Here in Peter it says they were carried along, in Timothy they were inspired, and the word there means God-breathed Scripture. In the Greek it literally means breathed out Scripture. So, they were carried along and God breathed on them and they wrote Scripture. That's what this Scripture text is talking about.

Look at verse 21 again, "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man,"—again, an explanation of what it means that no private interpretation but they were moved or carried or borne along by the Spirit of God. So, it's built on this text the doctrine of inspiration of Scripture. Let me talk about that. The Bible is a revelation of and from God. The Bible is a revelation from God about God. God cannot be known apart from revelation. You cannot, by searching, find God, God must reveal Himself. We're finite, God's infinite. God is transcendent, and we can't get to God, so God comes to us in His Word. He reveals Himself to us.

Secondly, the Bible is given by inspiration of God. We see that there in Peter, they were carried

along, and 2 Timothy 3:16. Second Timothy 3:16 says, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 That the man of God may be perfect,"—or mature—"thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

Now, let me tell you what is not meant by "inspiration." It doesn't mean natural inspiration, so there's the natural inspiration where you write a song or you create a poem or you paint a beautiful picture or you beautifully play an instrument—you were inspired to play this song, write this song or paint a picture. It's not natural inspiration. This wasn't just some talented guys writing Scripture. Nor does it mean that they were given the Scripture by dictation. The Ten Commandments were written by God with His own finger in stone, but the whole of Scripture was not dictated by God.

When Paul was in prison in Rome, and he wanted to write to the believers in Philippi, he didn't hear God's voice saying, "Paul, write to the Philippians. Paul, write to the Philippians about joy and say this," and started dictating to him. That's not how it worked. It's not dictation. It's not mechanical dictation. Paul's hand didn't just start moving when he was sitting in his cell, and it reached over and grabbed a pen and started writing to the Philippians, "Look what's going on." It wasn't Spirit writing, it was Paul just wanting to write to a church that he knew quite well and encouraged them to have joy in the Lord.

Thirdly, real quick, nor was it just conceptual inspirational, meaning that the Bible is not inspired by just broad concepts about God. It's not conceptual inspiration. Now, why am I telling you this? Because there are some so-called Christians and evangelicals that will say, "We believe the Bible is the Word of God," but they don't believe that the Bible is inerrant or without error. They believe in a fallible Word of God. They call it the Bible, the Word of God, but they don't believe in what is called verbal plenary inspiration, and I'm going to break that down for you in just a moment. Let me give you a definition of inspiration that I believe is true and accurate biblically. This is given by Charles Ryrie in his book Basic Theology. He says, "Inspiration is God's superintendence of human authors so that using their own individual personalities, they composed and recorded without error His," that is, God's "revelation to man in the words of the original autographs." Let me read it again. "Inspiration is God superintending human authors so that using their own individual personalities, they composed and recorded without error His revelation to man in the words of the original autographs."

I believe in what's called verbal, meaning the very words; plenary, all of them; are given by inspiration of God. That's why we do word studies. That's why we define words. It's not just a broad concept of the Bible's the Word of God, but we know that the very words were given by inspiration, breathed out by God, they were carried along. God superintended, using their own personalities and style, but it was the very Word of God. The Bible is inerrant.

I want to say theses three things: 1) the Bible is a revelation of and from God; 2) the Bible is given by inspiration of God; 3) the Bible is inerrant. Inerrancy means that it is without error. There are no errors in the Bible, the Word of God. The Bible is the Word of God, God cannot error or lie, therefore the Bible is without error. Sometimes people will say, "Well, I'm a

Christian. I believe the Bible is the Word of God, but I don't believe there was a real Adam and Eve. I don't really believe that story about Jonah being swallowed by a big ol' fish. There's something fishy about that story. I don't believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ or the miracles." They don't believe that the Bible is inerrant or infallible. But God cannot lie and God carried them along, God breathed out His Word, so the Bible is reliable for all faith and practice.

As I said, 2 Timothy 3:16, the Bible is sufficient " . . . for doctrine,"—what is right—"for reproof"—what is wrong—"for correction"—how to get right, and—"for instruction in righteousness"—how to stay right.

In closing, ask yourself this question, are you building your life on God's inerrant, infallible, inspired Word or are you building your life on your own ideas, thoughts, or man-made concepts. You have a world view. It's either biblical or it's secular or it's your own thoughts or someone else's ideas. What is your basis of authority? Why do you believe what you believe? It must be founded and grounded and built upon the Word of God, not on shifting sand. It's the only place to stand for the believer, for the pastor, for our church, for your family, for your marriage, for our nation. Someone said it like this, "To give the Bible its rightful place is to bring health to the church, light to the world, and glory to God. So, you need a real faith, a growing faith, and a grounded faith on the Word of God. Amen?