CITYLIGHT
CHURCH

SERMON NOTES & TRANSCRIPT

The Value of the Bible

Why Scripture Is Inspired, Trustworthy and Powerful

The Bible is inspired, trustworthy and powerful, and breakthrough is built on the back of revelation, so nothing gives you more access to what God wants to do in your life than being engaged in the Bible.

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SERIES
We're Rooted in the Bible, Week 1 of 6

MAIN TEXT
2 Timothy 3:14-17

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01

Sermon Transcript

Amen. All right, join me in 2 Timothy chapter 3 this morning, if you will — 2 Timothy chapter 3. We are going to start a brand new series this morning. It's going to be a six-week series called We Are Rooted in the Bible. We've been talking through value statements for our church. We've preached on two of them so far, being we're building everything on Jesus. How many of you know that's a good value right there? And then we're also relentlessly driven by the mission. That's why we're having a Trunk or Treat this weekend. We're just making it happen. Or, as me and Ashleigh have started calling it in private, TORT.

Because we write it on the dry erase board fast. T-O-R-T, TORT. Hallelujah. And so those are our two values we've talked about so far. Today we're going to get into a new value: we are rooted in the Bible. We're going to be talking about this for six weeks, but today I'm going to lay some foundation.

> **2 TIMOTHY 3:14-17** ESV
>
> 14 But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it
> 15 and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for
> salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. 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.

So starting in 2 Timothy chapter 3, verse 14, it says, "But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it, and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work." Somebody say amen to that. So again, we're going to start a series today called We Are Rooted in the Bible. But I want to start this message with a confession. Everybody gets tense when the preacher gets up and says something about confessing. But I want to make a confession to you. I became a Christian. I was born again in 1997. So toward the end of 1997, in the fall, I gave my life to the Lord.

And thank God I'm still saved. Amen. And I don't like that y'all didn't respond to that, like you might question it. "I'm not sure, preacher. We haven't been around you long enough. You said you have a confession to make." But I was born again in 1997. In 2004, I went into the ministry full time right out of high school. I started traveling with an evangelist. I worked in a church. I did quite a few things there for a few years. And then in 2006, I had settled down into a church for the greatest purpose: to find my wife. Amen. Hallelujah. And that year, in 2006, I became a credential holder with the Assemblies of God.

And so 1997, I was born again. 2004, I went into the ministry. 2006, I became a credential holder with the Assemblies of God — a minister on paper, a minister with a card. Amen. And not one I had to print for myself. Praise God. Hallelujah. But I did not start reading the Bible until April 14th, 2011. And you may say, "How do you know it was April 14th, 2011?"

Because Apple Photos is awesome, and I was able to reverse engineer that date. Amen. And so April 14th. So for nearly 14 years as a Christian, seven years in the ministry, five years as a credential holder with the Assemblies of God, I had no personal interaction with the Scripture of any substance.

Obviously, I had a Bible. I carried a Bible around. I was with the Bible, but the Bible wasn't with me. I could just preach it like that. Amen. But I was not regular in the Scripture. In fact, right now, I've been saved about 28 years, somewhere in that ballpark. You can pretty much slice it down the middle — my time in the Word and my time out of the Word. I can tell you, time in the Word has changed my life. The Scripture has changed my life. The last 14 years have been dramatically different than the first 14 years. And the reason I tell you this is because for the next six weeks, I'm going to be talking to you about how important the Bible is.

And we're going to shift gears in the middle of this thing to where I start talking to you about a quiet time with the Lord holistically. We're rooted in the Bible, but I'm going to shift to talking about the whole spectrum of spending time with the Lord. But the reason that I tell you this is because if you don't know where I started, there is a foothold for condemnation to come in on you. And I need you to know: I was saved for 14 years. I was in ministry for seven years. We saw hundreds of people saved. We saw God move in a powerful way in our ministry.

We were in moments where we saw the glory of God move in our ministry appointments, and I still wasn't in the Word. So there is no condemnation for you if you are not currently a Bible reader.

> **ROMANS 8:1** ESV
>
> [1] There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

However, there is also no excuse. Because if you want to go to the next level in your life, you not only have to know better, you have to do better. Amen. This will be a good... Y'all have to say amen a lot, or the people sitting next to you will just be going, "They don't read the Bible." So you've got to lean in. Now, since 2011, I will tell you, I have read the Bible a little over 30 times.

That's the best we can figure. I didn't track it well in the beginning. I've tracked it well for the last five or six years. But I've read the Bible through and through. I'm about to finish it up in the next week again. And then I'm already getting bogged down on, should I buy a new Bible? Should I get on a new plan? But I want to make sure that, as the pastor of this church, because I know the power of the Word, I want to make sure that I'm constantly driving you back to something you have access to. And that is time in the Scripture. You have access to that.

Now, when I talk about being engaged in the Bible — you're going to hear me use that phrase some, being engaged in the Bible — this is the standard that I consider being engaged in the Bible. Now, I know some of y'all leave sermons from preachers sometimes, and it sounds good, but you're kind of like, "I'm not sure what that means." I always want to over-explain this stuff, because the truth will set you free.

> **JOHN 8:32** ESV
>
> [32] and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

Amen. But first you've got to know the truth. I mean, somebody's got to say the truth. Hallelujah. So I'm going to tell you what, to me, this is my standard for being engaged in the Bible.

Being engaged in the Bible is reading the Bible at least four days a week. Now, the reason for this is I believe if you do it four days, you win the week, because four beats three. So as long as you cross four times a week, you've at least won the week. You've read the Bible more than you haven't. Now, there is another reason that I just heard about in the last few years. I don't remember how recent this survey was, but the Center for Bible Engagement did a survey. This is incredible. And they found that people who read the Bible one day a week, two days a week, and three days a week show virtually no improvement in their spiritual development or quality of life compared to people who do not read the Bible at all.

But at four days a week, the results in people's lives skyrocket. The chart absolutely takes off. And here's what's even more interesting: from four days to five days to six days to seven days shows virtually no change again. There's something powerful about reading the Bible at least four days a week. So that's the first qualifier. The second qualifier is that you read through the Scripture at least every 18 months — every 18 months. There are some ways that we engage with the Bible that aren't actual Bible engagement. I've got to break the news for you, but the verse of the day ain't going to get you through it.

If you go to the hospital today and they say those scary words, "stage four," verse of the day don't cut it no more. Amen. So at least reading every 18 months — that means that you're spending probably at least, bare minimum, nine minutes a day reading the Bible. And then the last quality is that you repeat this when you finish, or at least intend to repeat it. So you read it all the way through, and then you read it all the way through again. You rinse and repeat. Amen. You rinse and repeat. Now, by those standards — and I don't have a study on this, but I've kind of extrapolated the information —

by those standards, only less than 2% of American Christians, less than 1% of Americans, but less than 2% of American Christians, are engaged with the Bible. So if you do not read the Bible by the standard that I just mentioned to you, you're not alone. Likely most of the people in this room would be with you. That is likely. That's statistically what we see. So this morning, what I want to talk to you about as we start this process of being rooted in the Bible — I want to talk to you this morning about the value of the Bible. The value of the Bible. If you're ready, give the Lord a shout of praise.

Amen. Thirty-five of you are ready. Amen. Hallelujah. Number one. Number one: the Bible's valuable because the Bible is inspired. The Bible is inspired. We started just a moment ago in 2 Timothy chapter 3, which says this phrase in verse 16, that the Scripture is "breathed out by God." Some of your Bibles use the phrase "given by inspiration." Given by inspiration, or inspired. That's the theological term. And the word — the Greek word for inspiration — is theopneustos. Theopneustos. And it's comprised of two words, one being theos, God, and pneustos, breathed. So the translation, "it is God breathed," is very accurate.

But the Greek word for breathed is very, very interesting, because it's the same root word for breath, for wind, and for spirit. It's the same word for all three. In fact, if you look at Acts chapter 2, it says that there was a sound as they were gathered in the upper room — a sound as of a mighty rushing wind. The root word there is pneustos. And then they were all filled with the Holy Spirit. The root word is pneustos. Both places.

> **ACTS 2:2-4** ESV
>
> 2 And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where
> they were sitting. 3 And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. 4 And they
> were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

So when we see this, the best way we can tell, from even just the Greek word, outside of the systematic study of Scripture, is that the Bible is inspired in that the Holy Spirit was placed on men by God and they wrote the Scripture.

But every word in the Scripture comes from God. Another way to say it is like this: God is the author. Men were His quill. So He, yes, used men to pen the text. Yes, that's why we have to look at context. Yes, it's important for us to know that God did not just hit the ground with a fire and a scroll pop out. There is a practical way that this happened. But it is inspired. It is from God. It is God breathed. In fact, there are four times in the Scripture that God breathes. There's four times in the Scripture that God breathes. The first time He breathes, He gets man.

> **GENESIS 2:7** ESV
>
> 7 then the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.

The first time He breathes, He gets man. The second time He breathes, He initiates the church. He initiates the church.

> **JOHN 20:22** ESV
>
> 22 And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit.

The third time He breathes, in 2 Timothy, is He gets a Bible. That's the third time. The fourth time He breathes, which He has yet to do — He hasn't done it, but the next time He breathes will be the fourth time — and at that moment, Jesus will return.

> **2 THESSALONIANS 2:8** ESV
>
> 8 And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth and bring to nothing by the appearance of his coming.

When God breathes, it's powerful. You are one of the breaths. You belong to the second breath. And you can hold in your hand the third breath. That's how powerful the Word is. Now, we don't just believe that the Bible is inspired.

We believe — and this is a theological term — we believe it as an organization, I believe it as a person: we believe in what's called verbal plenary inspiration. Sometimes that's pronounced verbal plenary, depending on your level of education, hallelujah. But verbal plenary inspiration. And the best way to explain that is that we believe that every word in Scripture is inspired by God. Every word is from the Lord. Not just the thoughts, not just the concepts, not just the big ideas that you like. Every word is from God. And because the Scripture is from God, it has the final authority on everything.

I've said it before. I will say it again. The Bible says it. I believe it. That settles it. Amen. Hallelujah. Number two: the Bible is trustworthy. The Bible is trustworthy.

> **2 PETER 1:17-20** ESV
>
> 17 For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic
> Glory, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased," 18 we ourselves heard this very voice borne from
> heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain. 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.

2 Peter 1, starting in verse 17, says, "For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, 'This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased,' we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain. 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, knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation." What that is to say is that even though men are involved in the writing of the Scripture, that does not compromise its trustworthiness. And there are three theological terms that I could give you this morning that I'm not going to give you. But those three theological terms are: inerrant — the Bible is inerrant, it is without error; infallible — the Bible is infallible, it does not fail. God will do what He said He's going to do.

Amen, it's infallible. And third, this one's probably the most important one right now: it's immutable. It does not change. It does not change. The Word was the Word yesterday. The Word's the Word today. And the Word's going to be the Word tomorrow. Amen. Hallelujah. But instead of talking about these three words in detail, I want to give you kind of some practical reasons that you can know that the Bible is trustworthy. The first reason is that it's reliable. It is reliable. When it comes to the early New Testament manuscripts and fragments that we have, you'll hear from time to time people say, "Well, you can't trust the Bible because men have messed with it over the years.

They've changed what it means." Well, when we go back to the earliest manuscripts that we have access to, some as early as the second century — okay, we're talking 100 to 199 AD, all right? Or whatever they call it now. Praise the Lord. CE, C-B-B-C-C-C, I don't know. Oh, I'm praising in tongues up here. Hallelujah. But some of these manuscripts go back to as early as the second century. When you look at all of these manuscripts that we have access to, which by the way is roughly 25,000 — so this isn't a small sample. Like, Gallup can call like 4,000 people on the phone and call it a survey and make statistics out of it.

We're not talking about a small number. We're talking about 25,000 copies. There is only 0.5% variance in those copies. And of the 0.5% — meaning 99.5% of those copies are all in agreement — of the 0.5%, none of them change any major theological issue. None of them challenge any theological issue. And most of that variance is people spelling stuff wrong when they copied it. So I could have helped with this. Amen. So it's insignificant stuff, but smart people in smart places that do smart things can look at all of these manuscripts and see what's actually supposed to be there.

They know how to look at that stuff. I know that the internet blog has got you worried about the Bible, but I'm telling you, the Bible is trustworthy because it's reliable. The second reason it's trustworthy is we get to see the results. We get to see the results. Now, I could tell you what the Bible says about the results that it's going to produce. And I could also give you testimonies of what I've seen in my life and other people's lives. But I actually want to tell you what Harvard

University has discovered about the Bible. In 2017, Harvard University's T.H. Chan School of Public Health created something called the Human Flourishing Index.

And the Human Flourishing Index is designed to measure what activities increase a person's quality of life and decrease a person's quality of life. They measure several things, five things mainly: happiness and life satisfaction, mental and physical health, meaning and purpose, character and virtue, and close social relationships. The intention of this study was not to find out what Bible reading did for people. It just happened to be one of the things that they measured as an activity.

And when they measured it, they discovered that people who regularly read the Bible scored 19% higher across the board on the index compared to those who do not. I'm telling you, the Word works. Amen. Hallelujah. Now, since we're talking about the trustworthiness of the Bible, I want to refer to this chart for a moment. And I want to explain to you a little bit about Bible translations. Because if we're going to read the Bible, we want to read a good one. Amen? This is a very simple concept. The Bible was not written in English. King James did not write the Bible.

Okay? The Bible was not written in English. It was written in Hebrew in the Old Testament, Greek in the New Testament. And there's a little bit of Aramaic just sprinkled in there to keep things spicy. Hallelujah. All the Cajuns ought to appreciate that. Amen. And so you have two different styles of Bible translation that take the Bible from the original language to English. You have what's called formal equivalency, and then you have what's called dynamic equivalency. Don't let the preacher get hurt up here, but we've got insurance now. I can fall. Amen.

After all them years of worrying about preachers falling off the stage, I'm going to be the one. Amen. And so a formal equivalency essentially is a more word-for-word translation. Now, you can't do a strictly word-for-word translation, though you can find them, like a Young's Literal Translation, but they don't make any sense. It's like someone talking in gibberish. Because how many of you know, like, Spanish to English? You can't just do word-for-word because the sentence structure is different. It's the same thing with these ancient languages. So formal translations are a little more literal, a little more word-for-word.

They are what I prefer. Probably the most literal you can get is the New American Standard Bible. I love the New American Standard Bible. It's actually my favorite, but you've probably noticed I use the English Standard Bible, the ESV. The ESV is an incredible translation. I would encourage you, if you want a more literal translation, this is probably the one you should use. Then you have the New King James Version, which is an update from the King James Version. Now, I want y'all to hear me. I don't have a problem with the King James Version, but if you're not a Bible reader today, I would not recommend getting one, because you have to translate it twice.

You've got to translate it from Hebrew to Elizabethan English, back into whatever you know. I actually was listening to somebody read one this morning. Instead of a little girl, they called her a damsel. So, well, I guess also if you like dragons, I don't know, because you've got to rescue the damsel, amen. And it's a great translation. If you're in it, keep it. If you're not, New King James should be as far on that spectrum as you go. Then there's kind of the middle of the road. You have the New International Version. It's a great middle-of-the-road version. That's what Ashleigh uses all the time.

Despite my best efforts to get her a new Bible, she keeps going back to the Bible she's had for years. That's it right there. I just bought — that's not in print anymore. I just bought some more of them for when that one inevitably falls apart, just in case. So NIV. You also have the Christian Standard Bible. It's a great translation. I don't particularly like it. I think it reads funny. But CSB is good. Then all the way over here to like an extreme dynamic, you have the New Living Translation. If you are not great with reading, I would encourage the New Living Translation.

It's incredible. And actually, even if you are good with reading, it's still a great translation. But you can't get down in the words the further over here you get. You can dig into a word over here. These are thoughts. These are words. Is everybody with me on this? Now I want to talk to you about a couple of translations you need to stay away from. So I want to be clear on this this morning. The first one is, you don't have to stay away forever, but you've got to stay away to some degree from The Message. The Message is a great Bible. It is not a great everyday Bible.

The Message is one man's paraphrase of the Bible. Now, to his credit, the man who paraphrased it is genius. But it's a paraphrase, and we know this. It is not the Bible. So you can use it if you want to read through it. I think that's fine. But you shouldn't use it all the time. And what you definitely shouldn't do is come argue with me about something that you read in The Message Bible. Amen. So I'm going to hand you a link to this message. Amen. About The Message. Hallelujah. So The Message — the way I would say this is, it's insightful, but it's not inspired.

Now, there are other translations you have to stay away from altogether. One of those being the New World Translation. If you happen to get your hands on a New World Translation, that is the Jehovah's Witness Bible. It is a deceitful Bible. It is full of lies. They have changed things that have intentionally changed the meaning of the text. It is bad news, bad news, bad news. Do not use a New World Translation. And while we're on it, even though it's not a Bible, if you have a copy of the Book of Mormon, throw that bad boy in the trash today — or hang on to it for another month.

That paper will probably start a fire real nice when it gets cold. Amen. Crossed over now. So those are both filled with lies. You need to stay away from them. There's another Bible version that is getting very popular that I'm going to encourage everyone to stay away from as well. It's called the Passion Translation. The Passion Translation is a version of the Bible that lacks integrity of translation. These Bibles are translated from the original languages to English with large committees — large committees, lots of accountability. The Passion Translation was one man saying he heard from the Lord and got a new way to translate the Bible from the Holy Spirit, and started translating the Hebrew and the Greek on his own.

By the way, if you listen to that and you have any whereabouts on the Book of Mormon, it sounds exactly like what Joseph Smith said. Stay away from the Passion Translation. It lacks integrity. It's not terrible on paper, but the philosophy behind it is terrible. It is the worst thing that the charismatic church has ever put their seal of approval on. I am disgusted that we have so many people using it in the pulpits. Let me just say that to you, preacher: if you're using the Passion Translation, you need to get real and get you a real Bible. There's a thousand options for you, and you chose the one that's going to be a nonsense problem for you and your church.

Get rid of that nonsense. Get it out of your church. Get it out of your pulpit. Sorry, that wasn't for y'all. I'm feeling that, though, amen. Passion Translation. Number three. Number three — how do you transition from that? Good God Almighty. Number three: the Bible is powerful. The Bible's powerful.

> **HEBREWS 4:12** ESV
>
> 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, verse 12, it says, "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." It says that the Bible's like a sword.

It's a sharp sword. But how can you work with a sword? Well, you need to grab it by the handle. I think I set somebody's Siri off in here, amen. "Remind me to buy eggs at 4:30 p.m." It's helping them out, amen. The way you handle a sword is that you have to grab the handle, amen. You have to grab the handle. If you don't grab a sword by the handle, you'll get cut, you'll get hurt. You'll be sitting back going, "I can't believe all of this happened." Well, you mishandled the sword. You've got to grab the sword by the handle, not by the blade. But not only does it protect you, it also keeps you in control of the battle.

So long as you've got the handle, you're in control of whatever you're facing, in Jesus' name. So the handle puts you in charge. Now, I want to show you what the handle is this morning, because I know what the handle for the Bible is.

> **PSALM 119:160** ESV
>
> 160 The sum of your word is truth, and every one of your righteous rules endures forever.

Psalm 119, verse 160 — I think this is one of the most important verses in the entire Bible — says, "The sum of your word is truth." The sum of your word is truth. I don't know how long you've been out of math class, but in case you need a refresher, the sum means when you add it all up. When you add it all up, that's the truth. So the handle for the Bible is the cover.

That's the handle right there. See, you get a handle on the Word, and then you've got everything in there, because the sum of His word is truth. See, some of y'all are defeated, and you don't know why, because you walk around saying, "Well, the Bible says..." Well, honey, what else does it say? What else does it say? "Well, the Bible says the greater is he that's in me."

> **1 JOHN 4:4** ESV
>
> 4 Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.

Yeah, but not when you willfully go do stupid garbage all the time. "The Bible says no weapon formed against me."

> **ISAIAH 54:17** ESV
>
> 17 no weapon that is fashioned against you shall succeed, and you shall refute every tongue that rises against you in judgment. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord and their vindication from me, declares the Lord."

Well, not when you keep grabbing it by the blade. You can't use it wrong and then be upset.

You can't be uninformed and be upset. So the handle of the Bible is the cover. The Bible is true in its context, in its context. You can't just take the Bible any old way that you want to and use it. The Bible is true in its context. And yes, it's true in its cultural context, but it's true more so in the context of itself. There is a principle in Bible interpretation that says that the Bible will interpret itself. The Bible interprets the Bible. In fact, Martin Luther, the father of the Protestant Reformation, he said, "Scripture is its own light. The best and surest interpreter of Scripture is Scripture itself."

And I just want you to know that when people get around you and are goofy with the Bible, and they get goofy and they act... In this Pentecostal church, y'all ought to be looking at me like you've met three of these people at least. I know hundreds, amen. But when they get around you and they act goofy with the Word, you know why they act goofy?

Because they only have enough Bible to act goofy with. But if you'll get the sum of His word, the truth will set you free, amen? Hallelujah.

> **ACTS 20:27** ESV
>
> 27 for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God.

In Acts 20, verse 27, Paul said this. He said, "I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God."

You can get a lot from a Sunday sermon. You can get a lot from the verse of the day. You can get a lot from your little calendar with the cats and the Bible verses on it, amen. But I'm here to tell you that there is power in the whole counsel of God. Somebody give Him praise in this place. I'm going to try to end this thing, land this plane here. Last year, I was in prayer and I just received a little word from the Lord. And He told me, He said that breakthrough is built on the back of revelation. Breakthrough is built on the back of revelation. In fact, if you look through the Scripture, every time that God did something, there's usually a word attached to it.

There's some type of prophetic word, or a command, or an obedience. Breakthrough is built on the back of revelation. Nothing gives you more control of your personal flow of revelation than being engaged in the Bible. It is the easiest way to open the fountain of revelation and let it flow into your life. I heard a preacher say one time, he said that everything in this book is within the realm of possibility for those who will seek His face. If you will open this fountain of revelation in your life, I promise you'll begin to see breakthrough after breakthrough.

Several biblical examples: King Josiah reformed Judah by revelation.

> **2 KINGS 22:8-13** ESV
>
> 8 And Hilkiah the high priest said to Shaphan the secretary, "I have found the Book of the Law in the house of the Lord." And Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan, and he read it. 9 And Shaphan the secretary came to the king, and reported to the king, "Your servants have emptied out the money that was found in the house and have delivered it into the hand of the workmen who have the oversight of the house of the Lord." 10 Then Shaphan the secretary told the king, "Hilkiah the priest has given me a book." And Shaphan read it before the king. 11 When the king heard the words of the Book of the Law, he tore his clothes. 12 And the king commanded Hilkiah the priest, and Ahikam the son of Shaphan, and Achbor the son of Micaiah, and Shaphan the secretary, and Asaiah the king's servant, saying, 13 "Go, inquire of the Lord for me, and for the people, and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that has been found. For great is the wrath of the Lord that is kindled against us, because our fathers have not obeyed the words of this book, to do according to all that is written concerning us."

Jesus was born by revelation — it was an angel that came and pronounced what was going to happen.

> **LUKE 1:26-33** ESV
>
> 26 In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, 27 to a virgin
> betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. 28 And he
> came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" 29 But she was greatly troubled at the saying,
> and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. 30 And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for
> you have found favor with God. 31 And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his
> name Jesus. 32 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the
> throne of his father David, 33 and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no
> end."

Creation was brought about by revelation. It was the word that created all things.

> **GENESIS 1:3** ESV
>
> 3 And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.

Creation was brought about by revelation. Elijah was saved by it.

> **1 KINGS 19:5-8** ESV
>
> 5 And he lay down and slept under a broom tree. And behold, an angel touched him and said to him, "Arise and
> eat." 6 And he looked, and behold, there was at his head a cake baked on hot stones and a jar of water. And he ate
> and drank and lay down again. 7 And the angel of the Lord came again a second time and touched him and said,
> "Arise and eat, for the journey is too great for you." 8 And he arose and ate and drank, and went in the strength of
> that food forty days and forty nights to Horeb, the mount of God.

Jeremiah was affirmed by it.

> **JEREMIAH 1:5-9** ESV
>
> 5 "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a
> prophet to the nations." 6 Then I said, "Ah, Lord God! Behold, I do not know how to speak, for I am only a youth."
> 7 But the Lord said to me, "Do not say, 'I am only a youth'; for to all to whom I send you, you shall go, and whatever I
> command you, you shall speak. 8 Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you, declares the Lord."
> 9 Then the Lord put out his hand and touched my mouth. And the Lord said to me, "Behold, I have put my words in
> your mouth.

Daniel prospered by it.

> **DANIEL 2:19-23** ESV
>
> 19 Then the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision of the night. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven.
> 20 Daniel answered and said: "Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, to whom belong wisdom and might.
> 21 He changes times and seasons; he removes kings and sets up kings; he gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge
> to those who have understanding; 22 he reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what is in the darkness, and the
> light dwells with him. 23 To you, O God of my fathers, I give thanks and praise, for you have given me wisdom and
> might, and have now made known to me what we asked of you, for you have made known to us the king's matter."

Breakthrough is built on the back of revelation. Now, normally in a message like this, this would be the moment where I throw up a QR code and say, "Now you download this Bible reading plan. It's going to change your life."

And this would be the day I'd get y'all to go home and start reading the Bible today. I'm actually not going to do that, which is a little strange for me, because normally when I do stuff like this, I only have one Sunday with people to do it. But I've got plenty of Sundays with y'all. So I can take my time, amen. So I'm actually not going to encourage you to go home and try to jump into the deep end of the pool today. Over the next several weeks, we're going to unpack things that I believe are going to help you greatly and prepare you for the new year. And you can start 2026 with a relationship with the Scripture that you may not have now, or maybe at another level than what you have right now.

But if you'll give me a few weeks, I really believe I'm going to set you up for success as we talk through this, especially these first four weeks. And then for those of you who have sat here this morning and you say, "Well, Pastor, I read the Bible a whole lot and you really haven't preached anything that helps me this morning" — hang with me. I think, one, I have some insight on these things that are going to help you over the next several weeks. But when I get to the second half of this series, for those of you who are faithful to the Scripture, I am going to rock your world.

You have the Jason Mayfield guarantee on that, amen. This will crescendo throughout the whole series. And I believe by the time we get to the end of it, you're going to be able to jump in at your level and start receiving from the Lord in a way that you have not been able to thus far in your journey. So the Bible is inspired, it's trustworthy, it's powerful. Next week, we're going to start talking about the first of four levels of hearing from God. And I'm going to teach you the first level of hearing from the Lord. The Bible's inspired, it's trustworthy, it's powerful.

If you receive that this morning, give the Lord a praise. Amen.

02

Preaching Notes

Before You Preach

This message opens a six-week series on the value "We're rooted in the Bible." It lays the foundation for the whole series, so it is more about why the Bible matters than how to read it. Say so at the end: there is no reading plan this week. The series builds toward that.

Start with the confession. It sets the tone for the next six weeks: no condemnation for anyone who is not reading the Bible yet, and no excuse to stay there. If your own story is different, find the honest version of it; the point is that a person can be saved, serve, and see God move, and still not be in the Word.

Three cautions. First, two statistics in this message (the Center for Bible Engagement finding and the Human Flourishing Index figure) should be checked against their sources before you preach them. Second, the "less than 2%" figure is an estimate drawn from the standard below, not a published study; present it that way. Third, the translation section names the New World Translation, the Book of Mormon and the Passion Translation as Bibles to avoid. Say it plainly and without mockery.

Introduction

> 2 TIMOTHY 3:14-17 ESV
>
> 14 But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you
> learned it 15 and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to
> make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. 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.

Today we begin a six-week series called **We're Rooted in the Bible**. We have been working through the values of our church: we are building everything on Jesus, and we are relentlessly driven by the mission. Today we start a new one: we are rooted in the Bible.

A CONFESSION

- **1997:** born again in the fall.
- **2004:** in full-time ministry right out of high school, traveling with an evangelist and serving in a church.
- **2006:** credentialed with the Assemblies of God.
- Served in churches ranging from about 120 people to more than 3,000.

But I did not start reading the Bible until **April 14, 2011**. For nearly 14 years as a Christian, seven years in ministry and five years as a credential holder, I had no personal interaction with the Scripture of any substance. I carried a Bible around. I was with the Bible, but the Bible wasn't with me. We saw hundreds of people saved and saw the glory of God move, and I still was not in the Word.

Since then, I have read the Bible through a little over 30 times, and the last 14 years have been dramatically different from the first 14. The Scripture has changed my life.

I tell you this so condemnation has no foothold. "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1).

If you are not currently a Bible reader: no condemnation, but also no excuse. If you want to go to the next level in your life, you not only have to know better, you have to do better.

Because I know the power of the Word, I want everyone in our church engaged with the Bible. It is something every one of us has access to.

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE ENGAGED IN THE BIBLE

I want to define my terms, because "you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free" (John 8:32). Here is the standard:

- **Read the Bible at least four days a week.** Four beats three: cross four and you have won the week. The Center for Bible Engagement found that people who read the Bible one, two or three days a week showed virtually no difference in spiritual growth or quality of life from people who did not read it at all. At four days a week, the results took off, and going from four to seven days showed little further change.
- **Read through the whole Bible at least every 18 months.** That is roughly nine minutes a day. The verse of the day will not get you through. When the doctor says "stage four," the verse of the day doesn't cut it.
- **Repeat.** When you finish, start again.

By that standard, my estimate is that fewer than 2% of American Christians are engaged with the Bible. If that is not you yet, you are not alone.

This morning I want to talk to you about **the value of the Bible.**

1. The Bible Is Inspired

We began in 2 Timothy 3, where Paul says, "All Scripture is breathed out by God" (2 Timothy 3:16). Some Bibles say "given by inspiration." The Greek word is *theopneustos*: *theos*, God, and *pneō*, to breathe. It is God breathed.

That root shows up in the words for breath, wind and spirit. On the day of Pentecost "there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind" (Acts 2:2), and "they were all filled with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:4). The Holy Spirit came on men, and they wrote the Scripture.

God is the author. Men were His quill. He used real people in real settings, which is why context matters. The Bible did not fall out of the sky on a scroll. But every word comes from God.

FOUR TIMES GOD BREATHES

- He breathes, and He gets man: "the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life" (Genesis 2:7).
- He breathes, and He initiates the church: Jesus "breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit'" (John 20:22).
- He breathes, and He gives us a Bible (2 Timothy 3:16).
- He has yet to breathe the fourth time. When He does, Jesus returns: "the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth" (2 Thessalonians 2:8).

When God breathes, it is powerful. **You are one of the breaths. You belong to the second breath. And you can hold in your hand the third breath.**

VERBAL PLENARY INSPIRATION

As a church and as a person, I believe in verbal plenary inspiration: every word of Scripture is inspired by God. Not just the thoughts, not just the concepts, not just the big ideas you like. Every word.

And because the Scripture is from God, it has the final authority on everything. The Bible says it. I believe it. That settles it.

2. The Bible Is Trustworthy

> **2 PETER 1:17-20** ESV
>
> 17 For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic
> Glory, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased," 18 we ourselves heard this very voice borne
> from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain. 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.

Men were involved in writing Scripture, but that does not compromise its trustworthiness. I could give you three theological words:

- **Inerrant:** it is without error.
- **Infallible:** it does not fail. God will do what He said He would do.
- **Immutable:** it does not change. The Word was the Word yesterday, it is the Word today, and it will be the Word tomorrow.

Instead, here are two practical reasons you can trust it.

FIRST, IT IS RELIABLE

People say men have changed the Bible over the years. But we have roughly 25,000 manuscripts and early copies of the New Testament to compare, some as early as the second century. This is not a small sample. The copies agree at about 99.5%, and the small variance that exists does not change any major teaching. Most of it is spelling and copying slips. Scholars can compare the copies and see what the text says.

SECOND, WE SEE THE RESULTS

I could tell you what the Bible says it will produce, and I could tell you testimonies. But consider the research. In 2017, researchers at Harvard developed a measure of human flourishing. It looks at five areas:

- happiness and life satisfaction,
- mental and physical health,
- meaning and purpose,
- character and virtue,
- close social relationships.

The goal was not to study Bible reading. It was one of the activities measured. People who regularly read the Bible scored 19% higher on the index than those who do not. The Word works.

CHOOSING A TRANSLATION

If we are going to read the Bible, we want to read a good one. Most translations are good enough to get the job done, but you need to know a few things.

The Bible was not written in English. The Old Testament was written in Hebrew, the New Testament in Greek, with a little Aramaic sprinkled in to keep things spicy.

There are two translation philosophies:

- **Formal equivalence**, more word for word. A strictly word-for-word translation reads like gibberish, the way Spanish does when you translate it word for word, but these stay close to the words. The New American Standard Bible is probably the most literal. The English Standard Version is an incredible translation. The New King James Version updates the King James. The King James is a good translation, but if you are not a Bible reader yet, you have to translate it twice, through the English of 1611 and then into your own.
- **Middle of the road:** the New International Version and the Christian Standard Bible.
- **Dynamic equivalence**, thought for thought: the New Living Translation. It is a great translation, especially if reading is hard for you, but the further you go this direction, the less you can dig into a single word.

Some to handle with care, and some to avoid:

- **The Message** is one man's paraphrase. It is insightful, but it is not inspired. Read it alongside a Bible, not instead of one.
- **The New World Translation** is the Jehovah's Witness Bible. It changes the text in ways that change the meaning. Do not use it. The Book of Mormon is not a Bible at all. Both are filled with lies.
- **The Passion Translation** lacks integrity of translation. Our major translations are made by large committees with a great deal of accountability. This one was made by one man who said the Holy Spirit gave him a new way to translate. Stay away from it.

3. The Bible Is Powerful

> HEBREWS 4:12 ESV
>
> 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.

The Bible is a sharp sword, and every sword needs a handle. Grab a sword by the blade and you get cut. Grab it by the handle and it protects you and keeps you in control of the battle.

Here is the handle:

> PSALM 119:160 ESV
>
> 160 The sum of your word is truth, and every one of your righteous rules endures forever.

The sum is what you get when you add it all up. **The handle of the Bible is the cover.** Get a handle on the whole Word, and you have it all.

Some people are defeated and do not know why. They keep saying, "Well, the Bible says." But what else does it say? They quote 1 John 4:4: "The Bible says greater is he that is in me." Not when you willfully keep doing what you know is wrong. They quote Isaiah 54:17: "The Bible says no weapon formed against me." Not when you keep grabbing it by the blade.

The Bible is true in its context. It is true in its cultural context, but even more in the context of itself. The Bible interprets the Bible. Martin Luther put it this way: "Scripture is its own light. The best and surest interpreter of Scripture is Scripture itself."

People who act goofy with the Bible only have enough Bible to act goofy with. Get the sum of His Word, and the truth will set you free.

> ACTS 20:27 ESV
>
> 27 for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God.

You can get a lot from a Sunday sermon, from the verse of the day, or from a calendar with Bible verses on it. But the power is in **the whole counsel of God.**

Conclusion: Breakthrough Is Built on the Back of Revelation

Last year in prayer, I received a word from the Lord: **breakthrough is built on the back of revelation.** Look through Scripture, and whenever God does something, there is usually a word attached to it: a prophetic word, a command, an act of obedience.

Nothing gives you more control over the flow of revelation in your life than being engaged in the Bible. It is the easiest way to open the fountain. I heard a preacher say that everything in this book is within the realm of possibility for those who will seek His face.

- King Josiah reformed Judah by revelation (2 Kings 22:8-13).
- Jesus was born by revelation, announced by an angel (Luke 1:26-33).
- Creation was brought about by revelation: "And God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light" (Genesis 1:3).
- Elijah was saved by it (1 Kings 19:5-8).
- Jeremiah was affirmed by it (Jeremiah 1:5-9).
- Daniel prospered by it (Daniel 2:19-23).

Have the congregation say it with you: **breakthrough is built on the back of revelation.**

Normally this is where I would put up a QR code for a reading plan and tell you to start today. I am not going to do that. Over the next few weeks we will unpack things that will set you up for success going into the new year, so you can start 2026 with a relationship with Scripture you may not have now.

If you already read the Bible faithfully and feel you did not get much today, hang with me. This series will build over the next five weeks. Next week: the first of four levels of hearing from God.

The Bible is inspired. It is trustworthy. It is powerful. If you receive that this morning, give the Lord a praise.

03

Scripture List

Every passage read, cited or alluded to in the message, in the order it comes up.

Read

Read aloud in the message.

2 TIMOTHY 3:14-17	14 But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it 15 and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. 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 PETER 1:17-20	17 For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased," 18 we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain. 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.
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.
PSALM 119:160	160 The sum of your word is truth, and every one of your righteous rules endures forever.

Cited

Named or quoted along the way.

ACTS 2:2-4	2 And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. 3 And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.
ACTS 20:27	27 for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God.

Alluded to

Drawn on without naming the reference.

ROMANS 8:1	1 There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.
JOHN 8:32	32 and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."
GENESIS 2:7	7 then the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.
JOHN 20:22	22 And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit.
2 THESSALONIANS 2:8	8 And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth and bring to nothing by the appearance of his coming.
1 JOHN 4:4	4 Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.
ISAIAH 54:17	17 no weapon that is fashioned against you shall succeed, and you shall refute every tongue that rises against you in judgment. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord and their vindication from me, declares the Lord."

2 KINGS 22:8-13	8 And Hilkiah the high priest said to Shaphan the secretary, "I have found the Book of the Law in the house of the Lord." And Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan, and he read it. 9 And Shaphan the secretary came to the king, and reported to the king, "Your servants have emptied out the money that was found in the house and have delivered it into the hand of the workmen who have the oversight of the house of the Lord." 10 Then Shaphan the secretary told the king, "Hilkiah the priest has given me a book." And Shaphan read it before the king. 11 When the king heard the words of the Book of the Law, he tore his clothes. 12 And the king commanded Hilkiah the priest, and Ahikam the son of Shaphan, and Achbor the son of Micaiah, and Shaphan the secretary, and Asaiah the king's servant, saying, 13 "Go, inquire of the Lord for me, and for the people, and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that has been found. For great is the wrath of the Lord that is kindled against us, because our fathers have not obeyed the words of this book, to do according to all that is written concerning us."
LUKE 1:26-33	26 In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, 27 to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. 28 And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" 29 But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. 30 And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. 31 And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. 32 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, 33 and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."
GENESIS 1:3	3 And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.
1 KINGS 19:5-8	5 And he lay down and slept under a broom tree. And behold, an angel touched him and said to him, "Arise and eat." 6 And he looked, and behold, there was at his head a cake baked on hot stones and a jar of water. And he ate and drank and lay down again. 7 And the angel of the Lord came again a second time and touched him and said, "Arise and eat, for the journey is too great for you." 8 And he arose and ate and drank, and went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to Horeb, the mount of God.

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Pastor Jason Mayfield

SENIOR PASTOR, CITYLIGHT CHURCH

Pastor Jason Mayfield is the Senior Pastor of Citylight Church in Saraland, Alabama, where he and his wife, Ashleigh, lead a church devoted to Building Lives on Jesus. His preaching is rooted in the Bible, full of hope, and grounded in one conviction: an incredible life is built on the finished work of Jesus Christ.

For more than 20 years, Pastor Jason has given his life to the local church. He has been credentialed with the Assemblies of God for 21 years and ordained for 14, and he has led revitalization in churches that went on to rank among the Top 100 Fastest-Growing Churches in America. He carries a deep conviction that the church can be both excellent and supernatural, and a passion for revival.

He is an author and the creator of Tear Up Your Bible and POWER 27, a daily rhythm of Bible reading, prayer and worship. His resources have helped more than 100,000 people go deeper in the Scriptures. Above every title, his greatest joy is seeing people meet Jesus, be filled with the Spirit, and grow into everything God has called them to be.

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