



BELLVILLE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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The Bible is not our Saviour

Luke 4: 14 - 21

2 Timothy 3: 14 – 4-5

~ Brent Russell ~

- When I first started studying at UNISA for my degree in theology I was a rather naïve young man
 - I thought I knew so much about Jesus, God and the scriptures
 - Yet during the first year of my Bible studies course I realized how little I knew
 - I realized how complex and intricate the scriptures
 - I found out how they came to be our Bible
 - I appreciated that what I as the average person in the pew knew was but a fraction of what there is to be understood
 - About the scriptures - about God's word
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- And so as I found out more and more about some of the very real questions about the Bible in my first year, I went through something of a crisis of faith
 - I got to a point when I began to question the scriptures
 - I found my faith crushed, buckled and bent under the weight of this information I had understood

- But later as I recovered my faith
- as I learned to understand more
- as I was able to more effectively interpret and comprehend God's word
- I recovered from my faith crisis
- Whilst my crisis of faith was very real and very difficult to work through
- It was also a turning point in my understanding of Jesus
- It was only through this crisis that I began to fully comprehend Jesus role in my life
- It was only through this testing time that I was able to understand the role of God's word in our lives
- And so sometimes these crises of faith help us to reevaluate our faith
- So let us turn to the scriptures to see what they say about themselves

Read Like 4:14-21

Read 2 Timothy 3:14 - 4-5

- The Timothy passage is where I want us to concentrate today
- Paul writes to young timothy and shares several important points about the scriptures

All Scripture is God breathed

- In the *Garden of Eden* God created man out of the dust
 - Then he Breathed life into us
 - In that moment we inherited some form of *Godliness*
 - In that moment we were given some part of His image
 - It was in that very moment that the life of *God* entered man for the first time
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- And so the Bible tells us that it has also been breathed by *God*
 - We are told that scripture has been "breathed out" by *God*
 - It is as *God* breathes His spirit on the scriptures that they become alive
 - The author of *Hebrews* says that *God's* word is living and active
 - Not merely a bunch of dead letters and words on a piece of paper
 - But a powerful tool that we as the church should use
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- In the same way that a Roman soldier would have undergone training and instruction on how to use his sword
 - So that he might become a more effective soldier
 - So we need instruction and training in *God's* word
 - We need to be taught, guided and trained to use it effectively

- And so Paul tells us what *God's word* is useful for:
- **Teach**
 - To speak of truth
 - To give knowledge about *God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit*
 - To tell us about sin
 - To help us understand in some small way the creator of the universe
 - They allow us to glimpse heavenly things
 - To understand His kingdom and our role within it
- **Rebuke and correct(reproof and upbiilding)**
 - To discipline
 - The *Greek* is much more helpful here it words it slightly differently to your English translation
 - It is there for us to use as a proof - for evidence about *God*
 - To help us in witnessing - to tell of a wonderful *God*
 - To use as evidence
 - There is a depth and a unity in the scriptures that is unmatched in any other book
 - Written over thousands of years by multiple authors
 - Yet having a harmony and unity unmatched
 - But it is also there to restore us to an upright state
 - To restore in us something of *God's holiness*
 - To help us understand where we have fallen
 - And how to come back to our *God*
 - It is there to bring people from outside in by proving who *God* is
 - It is also there to restore those within who have fallen

- **Training**

- God's word is there to train us
- Hopefully far better and more effectively than Rudolph Struaeli trained the Bokke for the world cup
- It is there to prepare us and equip us for ministry
- The Bible contains the doctrines of our faith
- It is there to make us spiritually strong
- To encourage us in tough times
- It is there to prepare us for our lives as Christians
- The Bible is God's instruction manual for life

Make you wise for salvation

- But Paul writes to Timothy
- The Bible is there to make us wise with regards to eternal things
- It is there so that we might have the information we need to be saved
- God as he breathed out his word did not do so to give us a set of rules
- But rather that we might understand what is necessary to be saved
- The Bible contains over and over again God's promises
- And how we can be part of them
- It tells that God wants to bless us and how we can inherit the blessing passed on through Abraham, Moses, David and others to us
- There are things we need to know
- Heaven and Hell
- Sin and Grace
- Mercy, love and forgiveness
- Jesus death and resurrection
- Our death in Him and our resurrection and Glory

- But we need to be careful that we don't turn *God's* word into something it is not
 - That we don't turn it into something *God* never intended it to be
 - Part of the teaching we as *Christians* have often received has been that we must know the scriptures
 - I have shared the same thought and I always will
 - We need to know and love *God's* word
 - We need to memorize passages of it we need to understand how to read it
 - We need to absorb it into our minds like water into a dry sponge...
 - But we need to do this carefully
 - Let me explain...
 - for many *Christians* the bible become an Idol
 - And for me this was the case
 - By crisis of faith happened because much of my faith was in *God's* word
 - Not the object of it - Jesus
 - And it was only because of my faith crisis that I realized what faith really is
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- You see for me the Bible became an Idol it became something so central to my life as to take away my focus on Jesus
 - And this may happen in many ways
 - For me I tried to find the answers in the words
 - If you wanted to know whether it was OK to smoke the answer was in the bible
 - If you wanted to know if gambling was wrong it was in the bible
 - If you wanted to know things they where in *God's* word
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- If you wanted the answers they where all in the Bible

- When we begin to believe that the Bible is the answers to all of life's problems
 - When we believe that the Bible is merely a book that gives us the correct way to do things
 - When we believe that the Bible is there as the guide our lives
 - When we believe that the Bible is what saves us
 - Then we have stepped across a boundary that God never intended
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- If you find yourself in a situation like this then you have quite possibly stepped into a place of idolatry without even realizing it
 - The Bible contains guidelines - but it is not the way
 - It speaks the truth - but it is not The truth
 - It declares hope - but it is not our hope
 - The Bible is the message of God's salvation - but it is not our savior
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- As all of the OT - God's word to ancient Israel points toward the NT
 - All the People and there lives where shadows of the things to come
 - So to the NT points to Jesus
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- The Bible is the signpost to road of faith
 - *But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus*
 - The Bible is there to make you wise - to give you knowledge so that you might have faith
 - And so that your faith might save you
 - But the Bible is not your savior

- John starts his Gospel with the deeply powerful words "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God"
 - God's word is Jesus
 - And the scriptures are given that we might see him
 - They guide us to him
 - They contain his essence so that we might find him
 - Like at a crime scene the investigator wants to find out who has been there and so he dust for fingerprints
 - Then he photos them and uses a computer to find who's they are
 - The prints are a tool for finding the person
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- Jesus is the Word
 - And the Bible - also the word- is like His fingerprint
 - It helps us to find him
 - It witnesses about him
 - The Word of God is Jesus himself