

WHAT'S IN A BREATH?: The Breath of God¹ 2 Timothy 3:1-17

INTRODUCTION:

Good morning, Trinity! It is good to see you here today. If you are a guest with us, we want to say a very special welcome to you. I'd love the opportunity to get to know you more. You can connect with us by texting the keyword, TBCMP, which stands for Trinity Baptist Church Mount Pleasant, to the number 94-000. When you send that keyword, a link will be sent back to you and that will take you to a short form. When you submit that form, it notifies me and I look forward to following up with you.

Or feel free to swing by our information center located in the fellowship area. There we have a gift we would love to put in your hands and a way of saying thank you for being our guest today. We are thrilled you have chosen to worship with us today.

SERIES OVERVIEW:

Take your bibles and turn with me to 2 Timothy chapter 3. 2 Timothy chapter 3. We launch a teaching series last week that we have entitled, "What's in a Breath." We are examining some of the places in the Bible where it is said that God breathes. Last week we looked at the fact that God breathed the breath of life into humanity. Today we are going to look at the breath of God, the Word of God.

ILLUSTRATION: UBER

How many of you have ever taken a ride with Uber? How many of you know what Uber is? I realize that Uber hasn't made its way to Mt. Pleasant just yet. Uber is a new way to call a taxi. Anyone can apply to become an uber driver. And you schedule a ride with an uber driver through the Uber app on your phone. They come and pick you up and then carry you to your destination.

A couple weeks ago, I was in Raliegh Durham, North Carolina. I had never been there before. If you are unaware, Duke University is in Durham and happened to be just minutes away from where I was staying. So, having a little bit of free time one day, I scheduled an Uber to take me to Duke so that I could tour the campus. I thought, I am this close to the greatest college basketball dynasty ever, I have to go see Coach K Court!

When you arrange an Uber trip, you see the information of the driver that is coming to pick you up. You also see where they currently are and the route, they are taking to pick you up. And the Uber App also helps you set a pickup location. Then, the app shows you how to get to the pickup location. So, there in the app, I have all the information I need. What car, the driver's name, the license plate number, and the route we are going to take to get to our destination.

Then, once you get in the car with the driver, the app tells the driver what route to take and gives turn by turn directions as well as an estimated time of arrival. I'm always watching the route the driver is taking because I want to know if they ever deviate from the path. That would not be a good thing!

When you use the Uber App, it is important for both the driver and the rider to listen to the guidance given by the app. If we do not listen to those instructions, we will wind up lost.

When it comes to the Bible, it is our GPS. God's Word offers instruction and direction. So long as we hear the voice of God through Scripture, we'll navigate through all of life's ups and downs. However, if we do not listen to God's voice, if we are filling our minds with the voices of culture, we will wind up lost.

ILLUSTRATION: Biblical Literacy

According to a recent study by the American Bible Society and the Barna Group, only 27% of American women and 24% of American men consider themselves, "Bible engaged."ⁱⁱ They defined bible engaged as, "interacting with the Bible frequently in a way that leads to some life transformation." That means that only a quarter of Americans are guided by the Scriptures. 75% of Americans are then guided by something other than God's Word.

My goal here today is to convince us to consider the importance of God's Word and to value it in such a way that we become followers of Jesus that are Bible engaged, in the Scriptures on a consistent basis. That all of us become people that are transformed by God's Word. I want to look at 2 truths about The Bible and then ways we can apply it to our lives.

MESSAGE:

Let's read our passage together. We are going to focus on verses 16 and 17, but I want to begin reading in verse 1 so as to get the context of these verses.

Keep in mind, Paul in writing to the young pastor, Timothy. He is giving this young man very important instructions. You read along in your copy of God's Word. 2 Timothy 3, beginning in verse 1. *¹But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. ²For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy,³heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, ⁴treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, ⁵having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people. ⁶For among them are those who creep into households and capture weak women, burdened with sins and led astray by various passions, ⁷**always learning and never able to arrive at a knowledge of the truth.*** How much like today do these verses sound? We understand that culture is not drifting toward God. Instead, it is drifting further away from Him.ⁱⁱⁱ

Skip down to verse 14. *¹⁴**But as for you** [in other words, Timothy, you must be different. How?], *continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it ¹⁵and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the **sacred writings** [The Bible], which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.* What Paul is saying is that it is so vitally important for Timothy to stay biblically grounded and biblically focused. And the same is true for us today! It is vital, beloved, that we become a people informed, driven by, and focused on God's Word.*

So, then question is, "Why is it important to be biblically focused?" Keep reading. Verse 16. *¹⁶All Scripture is **breathed out by God** [there it is, the breath of God] *and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.**

2 main truths about the Bible that I want to point out today...

1) The Bible is From God.

Paul says, in verse 16, *¹⁶All Scripture is **breathed out by God.*** Circle or underline the phrase, "breathed out by God." That word, in the original language is a compound word, "theo-nustas," meaning God exhaled. The same breath that we talked about last week that breathes life into humanity is the same breath that has spoken the words in The Bible. This means that the same breath that brought life is the same breath that has spoken living truth.

Hebrews 4:12 says, *¹²For 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.* Listen, when you read the Bible, you're hearing God! It is the very breath of God, His voice.

Sometimes I just wish I could hear God speak to me. Anyone relate to that? But here's the deal, this is God speaking. It is the breath of God. It is alive. If we want to hear God speak to us, we can take our pick!^{iv}

Some people might say to this, "Wait a minute. Didn't Paul write this to Timothy? Isn't this a letter from one human being to another?" Oh, it is so much more than that. What Paul wrote and penned, God spoke through him. 2 Peter 1:20-21. *²⁰knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. ²¹For **no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.***

ILLUSTRATION: Pen to Write^v

Just like we use a pen as an instrument to write words on a page, God used people as His instrument to write His Words to us. When we open this and read this, we are hearing the breath of God, the voice of God.

If the Bible truly is God's Word, and it is, then it has all kinds of implications. I want to mention two implications.

A) If The Bible is God's Word, then it is true.

By His nature, God cannot lie. Therefore, anything God says is absolutely true. For God to speak untruth would be for Him to cease being perfect and therefore cease being God. But He is perfect and His Word is truth.

Historic theological Christianity has always held that God conveyed His perfect, inerrant, Word to His people through human authors. While God used the gifts, abilities, backgrounds, education and style of humanity, He recorded His perfect Word.

Jesus held this same view of Scripture. In Matthew 5:18, Jesus says, *¹⁸For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law [The Scriptures] until all is accomplished.*"

This view of Scripture is vital because we live in a culture that wants to define truth for themselves. And here's the dangerous thing. If we don't like the truth, we modify it. And we even make room for differing and conflicting truths. "Well, your truth is not my truth."

If the Bible is God's Word, then it is true. All of it. It's breathed out by God. It's either all true or none of it is true. It is either all God's breath or none of it is. Secondly, ...

B) If The Bible is God's Word, then it is my authority.

If the Bible is breathed out by God, His Word, that means it has the final say. I don't get to pick and choose the truths I like; you see. If I get to define what is true, then I'm the authority. But as believers in Jesus, we live and operate in a Kingdom that has a King. And King Jesus is the King of all kings. And if our King has spoken to us, then what our King has decreed is our authority.

I've heard people say that God's Word is outdated, that it needs to be modified to be current with the times. No. No it doesn't. While culture's truths have changed over time, God's truth remains the same. If something was true in God's Word 100 years ago, it's true today, and will be true 100 years from now.^{vi} And in the sea of our culture's ever-changing truth, God's Word is an anchor for our lives.

ILLUSTRATION: Doctors and smoking^{vii}

Let me give you an illustration to prove that God's truth is greater than culture's truth. In the 1930s, doctors were used in promoting cigarettes. And doctors were happy to be a part of that because prior to 1950, there wasn't good evidence to show that smoking was linked to lung cancer and other types of cancer. Yet today, we understand the impact smoking has. Science has changed its stance of smoking.

While science has flip flopped over the years, The Bible has remained consistent, uncompromising in its claims to truth. In fact, the more archaeological discoveries are found, the more the Bible is supported. In fact, to date, no archaeological discovery has ever contradicted a biblical reference.

My question is what do you want to anchor your life to? I want to hold onto what has proven itself to be a timeless, rock-solid, truth. That is found in God's Word.

When we say that The Scriptures are our authority, we mean that we align our lives to its truth.

ILLUSTRATION: Hanging Pictures in Offices^{viii}

We have recently displayed our vision statement and our strategy on the walls of our office. We have taken pictures of our church in action and displayed them as a part of each strategy point. If you haven't been in our offices in a while, you need to walk through. Not only is it a neat display, it is a daily reminder to us as a staff team as to what our focus needs to be.

At any rate, we wanted to make sure the pictures were hung on the wall straight. So, we took a level like this. And here's the deal, a level never lies. It's the final authority of what is straight and level. Sometimes what I think is crooked is straight and what I think is straight is crooked.

You know, we never argue with a level, do we? We never say, "Well, this level is broken. It doesn't know what's level." No. We say, "Well, I sure thought that picture was level, but I guess it's not."

The Word of God is our plumbline. In a world that seems upside down, The Bible is our level. We turn to our authority, and it reveals what is crooked. We don't tell the Bible what truth to reveal, it reveals the truth to us. This is what it means for God's Word to be my authority.

So, if the Bible is from God and is His Word, then it is true and it is my authority. Now, I realize that if you've been around church for any length of time this sounds so elementary to say that The Bible is from God. But do we live like that's true? This brings me to my second point.

2) The Bible is a Timeless Treasure.

The Bible is God speaking to us. Think about that for a moment. Doesn't that blow your mind?! The God of the Universe is speaking; to us! I mean, if we really believed that, wouldn't change everything about the way we approach the Bible?!

ILLUSTRATION: Tom Brady's Last Touchdown Pass^{ix}

On January 23, 2022, Tampa Bay Buccaneer Quarterback, Tom Brady, threw what we thought was the last touchdown pass of his career. It was a 55-yard pass to wide receiver, Mike Evans. Weeks later, Brady announced his

retirement. What was unknown at that time was that Brady would not stay retired for long. So, the ball thrown in that touchdown became a highly sought-after collector's item.

On March 13th, a man by the name of Rom Firman, purchased that football for \$518,628. Over 500 thousand dollars! It became a treasure that someone was going to display. But that ball became worthless the moment Brady announced his return to football.

Or what about Aaron Judge. Any of you guys at the game when he hit homerun number 62? It was at Globe Life Field. And for us purest, this was the real homerun record. And as the ball was hit, people went crazy going after that ball. On the video replay, you can see a fan jumping out of the stands. I read an article that said that that homerun ball is worth 2 million dollars. Crazy!

But here's the deal. Who is Tom Brady and Aaron Judge compared to the God of Heaven?^x It is crazy to me to think that we would treasure a football and a baseball more than we would the very Words of Almighty God. We have something from God! Do we treasure it?

Consider Psalm 19, verses 7 and 10. *⁷The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul... ¹⁰**More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb.*** Think about that. The Psalmist valued God's Word more than his next paycheck. Do we see it as the timeless treasure that it is?

Verses 16 and 17 of 2 Timothy. *¹⁶All Scripture is breathed out by God and **profitable** for **teaching**, for **reproof**, for **correction**, and for **training** in righteousness, ¹⁷that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.* Paul says Scripture is "profitable." That word carries the idea of being extremely beneficial, or useful.^{xi}

And Paul identifies 4 ways God's Word is beneficial.

A) Teaching

The Bible provides teaching. The word here means authoritative truth. It teaches us what is solid doctrine thereby exposing what is false doctrine. But the Bible also gives practical teaching on how to live our lives. The second benefit is...

B) Reproof

This word means to rebuke, to convict and to convince. In other words, The Bible calls us out on our stuff. It helps us realize our errors. It exposes our errors.

A lot of people avoid reading the Bible because they know it's going to convict them that what they are doing is wrong. But that would be like avoiding a doctor because you have a bump show up. It is important to address the things in our lives that are in error.

So, the Bible is beneficial because of the teaching and the reproof it provides. Third benefit is...

C) Correction

Not only does the bible call us out, but it also restores what is broken in our life. The picture of this word to correct means to set a broken bone so that it can heal. Yes, Scripture convicts us of where we are off track, but it doesn't leave us there. It sets us straight again; restores us. Praise God.

The Bible is beneficial because it teaches, convicts, and corrects. The fourth benefit is...

D) Training

This is to say that The Bible provides guidance. Proverbs 3:5 and 6. *⁵Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. [don't follow your own truth. Instead...]* *⁶In all your ways acknowledge him, and **he will make straight your paths.*** He will guide and direct you.

APPLICATION:

My goal was to convince us of the importance of God's Word. Do you see it? It is God's breath, His voice to us, and it is a timeless treasure worthy of upmost value in our lives. Now, in the short amount of time we have left this morning, I want to make mention of an application point. Just 1 thing.

Since the Bible is from God and is a timeless treasure, ...

Read it.

God wants to speak to you, and He does so through His Word. And He has supernaturally preserved it. So read it.

One of the excuses that I hear, and I have said myself, is that I don't have time. We often live life at such speed that we hardly have time to slow down to read. But we do so at our own detriment.

And truth be told, it's really not a time issue. It's a priority issue. Have you ever looked at your screen time activity on your phone? I was convicted to do that this week in preparing for this message. I found out that I spent 5 hours scrolling through social media this week! WHAT?! I spent 4 hours replying to text messages and 2 hours on email. I guess you could argue that text messages and email is work related. But 5 hours on social media? Come on!

Truth be told we are not spending time in God's Word because it's not a time issue. We're not spending time in God's Word because it's a priority issue. Amen or ouch?

Others might say, "Well, I just don't understand the Bible." What I would say to you is, "Welcome to the club." I have a master's degree in The Bible and there are things that I just don't understand. But did you know that if you are a follower of Jesus, you have access to the greatest revealer of the Scriptures? The Holy Spirit. It is the job of the Holy Spirit to illuminate The Bible to us.

I'm confident that the more we prioritize reading the Bible, not only will we come to understand it better, but we will see God's blessings on our lives in every category. The Bible talks about how to manage money, how to have a great marriage, how to raise godly kids, how to be the best leader, how to manage your team at work, how to deal with difficult people, how to respond when the world is upside down, how to pray, how to build your faith, how to have true and lasting significance, and so much more. The Bible is not only true, but it adds value to our lives! So, read it.

CONCLUSION

One of the most important things that The Bible teaches is that not only is there a God, but that God loves us. The Scriptures, at every turn, shouts that God loves you. But The Bible also, in its presentation of truth, lets us know that we are sinful. And that the consequences of our sin have brought devastating results. That God is so holy, and we are so sinful, that we are separated from God because of our sin.

But it is also The Bible that tells us that even in our sin, God still loves us. And He provided a way for us to have a relationship with Him. The most famous verse in all the Bible, John 3:16, says, *"¹⁶For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."*

God has revealed His love for you this morning. He has, in His Word, pointed out our sin. But He has also pointed us to where forgiveness can be found. Do you have a relationship with Jesus? If not, you can do that today.

In a moment, I am going to pray, and we will all stand and sing. But I want to invite you to respond. Maybe you don't know what to do. Simply come this morning and take one of our elders by the hand and say, "I need Jesus." We would love nothing more than to tell you about how you can have eternal life, a relationship with God, through faith and trust in Jesus as Lord.

Or perhaps you have another prayer concern. We would love to simply pray with you as well.

So, I'm going to pray, we will stand and sing, but most importantly, let's respond to the prompting of God on our hearts. Let's pray. [PRAY]

ENDNOTES:

ⁱ Works consulted in preparation of this message: John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: 2 Timothy*, Moody Press: Chicago, 1995; Walter L. Liefeld, *The NIV Application Commentary: 1 & 2 Timothy*, Zondervan: Grand Rapids, 1999; Wayne Grudem, *Bible Doctrine: Essential Teaching of the Christian Faith*, Zondervan: Grand Rapids, 1999; James Leo Garrett, *Systematic Theology: Biblical, Historical, and Evangelical Vol. 1*, BIBAL Press: North Richland Hills, 2000; Todd Kaunitz, *A Disciple's Journey: Bible Open*, sermon preached at New Beginnings Baptist Church Longview Campus, accessed online: <https://vimeo.com/showcase/5394615>; Chip Lusko, *What Would You Do If The Bible Were True?* sermon preached at Calvary Church in Alburquerque, taught Wednesday, August 27, 2008, accessed online: <https://calvarynm.church/connectwithskip/teachings/#!/series/305/sermon/4174/play>; Tommy Politz, *Creatures of Habit: Part 1: The Habit of Study*, preached November 3, 2019, Hillside Christian Church in Amarillo, Texas, accessed online: <https://hillsideonline.com/message-detail?Item=481&Message=484>; Mark Driscoll, *Doctrine: Revelation: God Speaks*, message published by Real Faith, accessed online: <https://realfaith.com/sermons/doctrine-7-revelation-god-speaks/>; Scott Worthington, *Awaken: God's Word*, sermon preached at Hope Church Las Vegas, January 23, 2022, accessed online: <https://hopechurchlv.com/messages/gods-word>.

ⁱⁱ Ed Stetzer, *Facing the Issue of Biblical Literacy*, article published by Church Leaders, February 14, 2022, accessed online: <https://churchleaders.com/voices/417208-facing-the-issue-of-biblical-literacy.html>.

ⁱⁱⁱ Taken from my friend, Todd Kaunitz, *A Disciple's Journey: Bible Open*, sermon preached at New Beginnings Baptist Church Longview Campus, accessed online: <https://vimeo.com/showcase/5394615>.

^{iv} I got this quip from Scott Worthington's message.

^v Ibid.

^{vi} Quip taken from Todd Kaunitz.

^{vii} Information for this illustration was taken from an article published by History.com. Accessed online: <https://www.history.com/news/cigarette-ads-doctors-smoking-endorsement>.

^{viii} Illustration inspired by an illustration used by Todd Kaunitz.

^{ix} <https://www.wfla.com/sports/buccaneers/tom-bradys-final-touchdown-ball-sells-for-over-half-a-million-dollars/>

^x Inspired by Scott Worthington.

^{xi} Strong's Concordance number 5624.