

## God's Word is More than Enough

### 2 Timothy 3:10-4:5 (NIV)

<sup>10</sup> You, however, know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, <sup>11</sup> persecutions, sufferings—what kinds of things happened to me in Antioch, Iconium and Lystra, the persecutions I endured. Yet the Lord rescued me from all of them. <sup>12</sup> In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, <sup>13</sup> while evildoers and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. <sup>14</sup> But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, <sup>15</sup> and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. <sup>16</sup> All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, <sup>17</sup> so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. <sup>1</sup> In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: <sup>2</sup> Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction. <sup>3</sup> For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. <sup>4</sup> They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. <sup>5</sup> But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.

This morning we are jumping in towards the close of a letter written by the Apostle Paul to a pastor named Timothy. Paul found Timothy in a town called Lystra during his second big missionary journey. Timothy's mother was Jewish as well as a believer, but his father was a Greek and obviously not a believer since he did not allow Timothy to be circumcised, kind of like one parent not allowing their child to be baptized while the other parent wants to. It's a mixed religion family. Timothy, though, was a believer thanks to his mother Eunice and his grandmother Lois, women to whom Paul credits Timothy's Christian upbringing. But Paul noticed something more in Timothy than just his faith. The believers of the area spoke well of Timothy. Paul figured he would make a good pastor. So, he took Timothy along on his missionary journey and trained him to spread God's Word.

Now Timothy was working without Paul, shepherding a congregation on his own. Paul knew that Timothy would experience persecutions and sufferings as he had, that there were evildoers and imposters that he would encounter, people who would go from bad to worse. As Paul wrote, "For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths." (verses 3-4) So, his encouragement to Timothy as a pastor was: "Continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it... (verse 14) Keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry." (verse 5)

What does this section of God's Word have to say to you? To me, there's a lot for me to take to heart as a preacher: to proclaim God's Word in season and out of season - when it's convenient and when it's inconvenient; to rebuke, correct, and encourage - especially with great patience and careful instruction. This is something for me to strive for, and I know I have not always done it. For my failings as a preacher, forgive me. I am not a perfect pastor. I have failed people, and I know I will again because I'm a sinner.

You're not a full-time preacher like me, but this letter from Paul to Timothy still has words to take to heart. Maybe you learned your faith from infancy from your mother or grandmother. Maybe you had a religiously divided household like Timothy's. Regardless of whether or not your religious background lines up with Timothy's, you certainly have met someone who doesn't put up with your faith. Maybe they laughed at your faith, the simplicity of it, the incredulousness of it. Maybe they outright dismissed what you believe, blew it off. Maybe they attacked you, told you that the Bible is made up so that simple people have hope. Maybe they told you that the Bible has been corrupted over time, lost pieces of it, been translated incorrectly, and so is false.

The opposition makes you wonder: Is the Bible enough? Is it complete? Is there more? Are there books missing? Is it wrongly, falsely translated? Has the Church covered things up that they didn't want us to know so that we would blindly believe whatever they say? With so many other religions out there, with so many other holy books, how can we know that we believe the right one? Who could ever know for sure? The thought keeps you up at night: What if I'm believing the wrong thing? The attacks against what you hold to be true make you step back a bit, unsure if you are right in this conversation. In the face of such opposition, can I have any confidence that the Bible is the only right way, the absolute truth in a world full of relative truth and sincere believers of other teachings and religions?

Paul wrote to Timothy to address these doubts: "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.” (verses 14-15) Cling to your faith in God and his Word. Why? Not only because you have learned it from your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and from the Apostle Paul, but because what they taught you has made you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

It was not Lois or Eunice or Paul who convinced you, Timothy, that you were saved by Jesus Christ. No, that was the work of God through his Word, which is truth. Timothy was taught the truth that God saw him formed in his mother’s womb as a sinful human being incapable of being perfect as God demanded. It was God who decided that he would take on the mission of being perfect for all humankind. So Jesus as true God from all eternity took on human flesh and made his dwelling among us. He lived perfectly under his own laws and completed them in our place. Then he sacrificed himself on the cross to pay for all our sins. God announced that the payment for our sins was accepted because Jesus rose from the dead three days later. The devil was defeated. God’s blood spilled for us purifies us from all our sins. We are robed in Jesus’ perfection. As Paul wrote earlier in this letter: “[God] has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time.” (chapter 1 verse 9) This is the message of the Bible from beginning to end.

God the Holy Spirit convinced Timothy and you of these truths. He put them in your heart and caused you to believe them. This is the Holy Spirit’s work, not the work of the messengers – of Lois, Eunice, or Paul. The Holy Spirit made you wise to these truths, to this salvation, that you will now go to heaven because of what God has done for you. If you couldn’t relate to Timothy’s religious background or his work as a pastor, you can relate to his faith and how you came to faith because the same Holy Spirit that convinced Timothy of these things and made him wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus is the same Holy Spirit who taught you these truths and planted the faith in your heart of these same truths. This is the salvation you have. What more do you need?

In the face of those who claim that God’s Word is not enough, that it’s false, God says to us, “Continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of.” (verse 14) Why? Not only has God the Holy Spirit brought you to faith in these truths, but all of these truths come from God. “All Scripture is God-breathed.” (verse 16) God gave you his Word. Since it is from God, you know that it is trustworthy because he always keeps his Word; he is incapable of lying. Because it is God’s Word, you know that he is able to preserve it from corruption through generation to generation because the same God who made the heavens and the earth, who commands the winds and the waves with his voice, who raised himself from the dead, is the God who is in control of his Word and its perseverance.

We love supplemental and extra material. We buy the blu rays and DVDs for the behind the scenes footage, the blooper reel, the deleted scenes, the director’s commentary. We buy the DLC (downloadable content) for video games to give us a richer or more full experience. I buy board games expansions because I want there to be more to do in the game, to keep it fresh and interesting. In that same way, we want more when it comes to the Bible. We want there to be stories of Jesus at age thirteen and preteen Jesus and prior to creation God the Father. We want to know more about what heaven is going to be like, how exactly God made the world. We want God to speak to us directly addressing our personal problems and situations. We want Bible DLC or a Bible expansion, additional content. We want more than what we have.

But why was the Bible written? These were written to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. That is what you have. That is what you have learned. That is what the Holy Spirit has convinced you of through the Bible. You are going to live forever with God in perfection. What more do you need?

And then God gives you more in his Word. Not only does it make you wise for salvation, give you God’s gift of perfection, gives you eternal life with God, but God’s Word is also “useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.” (verses 16-17) God says everything that he has given you in his Word thoroughly equips you. You have purpose from God, and you have everything you need to live for God with the comfort of knowing you will live with him forever with all your sins taken away. This is the Word that has been preached to you.

If someone tells you that the Bible is not enough, that you need more, that it is lacking, these are the people who do not put up with sound doctrine, sound teaching. They want you to think like they do and believe with them that the Bible is not enough. When they say that there needs to be more, they are saying that God is not enough, that he is not strong enough to keep his Word, to preserve this Word which makes you wise for salvation and thoroughly equips you for every good work. We fight against them by holding to God’s Word – the Bible – as being more than enough. The Bible is the God-breathed Holy Scriptures that made us wise for salvation through faith in Christ and Jesus, and it is the same Word of God that thoroughly equips us for every good work in his name and to his glory. There is nothing more you need. The Bible is more than enough. Continue in what you have learned and what you have become convinced of because the Holy Scriptures have made you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. Amen.