

**The Faith We Confess:**  
*A Series of Sermons on the Core Doctrines of the Christian Faith*  
**The Holy Spirit: “The Inspirer of God’s Word”**

The Bible claims to be the Word of God. This much we know. This is what the Bible says about itself.

In our text today from II Timothy the apostle Paul tells his young apprentice that “All scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

Now you may recall from last week’s message that the name for the Holy Spirit (*the third person of the Trinity*) in both the Hebrew (OT) and the Greek (NT) means the “wind” or “breath.”

So here in the text Paul says that “all scripture is God-breathed.” To breathe into something is to give it life. God breathed into Adam “the breath of life.” In the same kind of way God gave life to the Bible. He breathed into it his “breath of life.” The Scriptures came from God. The Bible expresses God’s thoughts and God’s desires in human words.

In II Peter 1:21 the apostle says something very similar to what Paul said.

Of the scriptures Peter said, “Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet’s own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.”

What Peter is saying here is that the Bible, though it is written by finite human beings with limited words and thoughts, is the Word of God. It is not that the Bible just contains the Word of God, as if we have to go on a scavenger hunt to find the Word of God in it, but rather it is the Word of God. That’s what the Bible says about itself and that is what the apostles believed as it concerned the Scriptures.

The Nicene Creed gives witness to this fact when it says “We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life... who has spoken through the prophets.”

Whether we believe the Bible to be the Word of God is a whole different matter, but there is no disputing what the Bible says about itself, it claims to be the Word of God.

The fact that God would accommodate himself to us in such a fashion is an act of grace. God, in terms of who He is and what He is like, is far beyond our comprehension and explanation, yet God chose to speak to us in human language so that we may know and understand him.

John Calvin, in talking about how God speaks to us in Scripture through human language had this to say. “For who even out of slight intelligence does not understand that, as nurses commonly do with infants, God is wont in a measure to “lisp” in speaking to us.” (Institutes Book I. Ch. XIII. Sect. 1)

In other words, just as a mother talks to her baby in “baby talk” so that the child will understand her so too does God do the same thing to us in the Bible. God accommodates himself to us. He

gets down on our level and he speaks, or “lisp’s” His Word to us in human words that we can understand.

So when we say that the Bible is the Word of God we are not, by default, saying that it is not also a human book. Though the Bible is the Word of God it is still very much a human book, written by human beings, for human beings, and in the language of human beings. Conservative Christians have as hard a time acknowledging this truth (that the Bible is a human book) as liberal Christians do in acknowledging that the Bible is the very Word of God.

### **You Cannot Prove to Someone that the Bible is the Word of God**

I wish that I could prove to you that the Bible is the Word of God but I can’t. If you came here today with that expectation you will be disappointed.

There are certainly valid reasons one can give as to why the Bible is the Word of God.

- The fact that it tells one coherent story of God’s plan to rescue mankind from sin by bringing forth a special nation (Israel) for the purposes of bringing a Savior into the world to die on the cross for our sins.
- The morality/ethics of the Bible as being good, right, and life giving.
- The archeological discoveries that have affirmed the historicity of the Biblical story.
- The remarkable consistency between the many different manuscript copies of the Bible (there is very little textual variation).

These are all wonderful reasons that people can point to in order to “prove” that the Bible is truthful, but they are insufficient to prove that the Bible is the Word of God.

In order for one to accept the Bible as the Word of God the Holy Spirit must come in and open the heart of the sinner to accept it as such. Without the inward illuminating work of the Holy Spirit the Bible, though it is the Word of God, will remain just another book on a man’s bookshelf.

Why is this so? Because man’s heart is hardened by sin. His soul has been so desensitized to the things of God and unless God does something to shake him from his stupor he shall remain lost.

Here I think of the response of Christ when he was asked about why he spoke in parables.

The reply of Jesus was basically that I speak in this way so that those who don’t see will continue not seeing and those who do will.

The gospel of Matthew says, “Jesus said I speak to them in parables because,

‘Though seeing, they do not see;  
though hearing, they do not hear or understand.

In them (meaning the parables) is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah:

You will be ever hearing but never understanding;

you will be ever seeing but never perceiving.  
For this people's heart has become calloused;  
they hardly hear with their ears,  
and they have closed their eyes,  
otherwise they might see with their eyes,  
hear with their ears,  
understand with their hearts  
and in turn, and I would heal them.'"

In that teaching Jesus said to his disciples I speak to you in parables because the knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to **you**.

In other words, you have been given the Holy Spirit and you have been given me; therefore you can understand and accept the scriptures to be the Word of God, but to those who are not in the kingdom I speak in parables so as to confound them.

The parables of Jesus quite remarkably sum up the nature of Holy Scripture.

On the one hand, they are profoundly clear.

The parables are simple stories with obvious points, but on the other hand, the parables can be so obvious that it can go right over a man's head. He will not get them unless the Spirit illumines his heart and the Spirit will not illumine his heart unless he has been chosen by God to be in his kingdom. "No one can say Jesus is Lord apart from the Holy Spirit." "No one can come to the Father" unless the Father first "draws him" to Christ.

In short, what this means is that you can give man every convincing proof in the world that the Bible is the Word of God, but unless the Holy Spirit is at work in his life his only response will be "so what."

### **What Are You Eating?**

Now how can we know whether we accept the Bible to be the Word of God in our lives?

Some of you might be thinking, "Well of course I accept the Bible to be the Word of God in my life. Of course I believe it to be true." But there is a little test that I would like to put before us this morning. The test is this:

Are you eating the Word of God?

You accept the Bible to be the Word of God if you are eating it.

One of the most common metaphors (symbols) used in the Bible to describe what it is like is that of food.

In the book of Deuteronomy God told the Israelites, as they were journeying through the wilderness (*a time when the physical diet was slim and memories of all the wonderful stew they got to eat when they were slaves in Egypt were still lingering in their minds*), that "man does not live by bread alone but by every word that comes from the mouth of God."

You might recall that when Jesus was led into the wilderness for 40 days of fasting at the beginning of his public ministry, that he was tempted by the devil in regards to pride, worldly power, and his physical needs. The devil told Jesus that if you are hungry then turn these stones to bread.

In reply Jesus said, “Man does not live by bread alone but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.”

In other words, there is more to life than a good hotdog at First RX. Man needs God’s Word to eat in order to live.

In the book of Ezekiel God told the prophet to “eat this scroll” and then go and “speak to the house of Israel.” Then the text says that Ezekiel “opened his mouth” and “God gave him the scroll to eat.”

Of course the Bible is speaking symbolically/metaphorically here. Ezekiel didn’t literally eat the paper or animal skin that the scriptures were written on. What God was saying was to feast on my Word before you preach. Ingest my Word into your life and spirit. My word is your food for life with me. That’s what God was saying to Ezekiel.

Then in I Peter 2:2 we have my favorite image.

The apostle Peter told the church this: “Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.”

The pure spiritual milk that he is referring to here is the Word of God.

Think about a baby. All it wants is food. All it cries for is his mother’s milk. That’s because the milk is the food and without it the baby will die.

In the same way Peter tells the Christian that he is to crave God’s Word because it is his spiritual food and without it he will spiritually die. For the Christian cannot know God, love God, and be in Christ apart from the Word of God.

So this is the test. If we are eating God’s Word, if we are craving it then we can know that we have accepted the Bible to be the Word of God. If not we haven’t.

No person generally speaking, unless he has an eating disorder or lives in poverty and famine, will willingly go without food because he will starve to death. He knows that food is food; therefore he eats it! It is the same way with the Word of God.

Yet there are many anorexic Christians in the church today. (*This term is almost oxymoronic. How can we be Christian apart from eating the Word of God?*) There are Christians who are starving themselves, and are not craving pure spiritual milk. They say they believe the Bible to be the Word of God but they are on a hunger strike.

We Christians often eat everything else. We eat food, the TV, gossip, tabloids and cheap dime store novels. We FOX News and MSNBC. We eat the internet and video games. We eat sports. We eat our hobbies. But when it comes to the Word of God, We starve ourselves.

## **The Call to Eat the Word**

Why is this so?

Paul told Timothy in our passage today that there will come a time when people will not put up with sound doctrine. They will beg the preachers and prophets of God to tickle their itching ears with everything but the Word of God, yet Paul tells Timothy to keep his head; to dig in and preach the Word of God “in season and out of season.”

It seems today that we are in one of those out of season times.

Biblical literacy in our nation is at an all time low. We say the Bible is the Word of God. Sales seem to back up our claim, as the Bible is still a number one seller, yet people’s knowledge of the Scriptures is in steep decline. People often want pastors and teachers to stroke their egos and to not preach the Word of God. Some people even get angry about the preacher going on too long. Some of our stomachs are more worried about beating the Sunday rush to K&W and the one o’clock kickoff.

This is strong, but the call here today is for repentance. I am encouraging every one of us here today to understand that we cannot say that the Bible is the Word of God and yet go on neglecting it. I urge every one of us here to “eat the scroll.” “Drink the milk.” “Meditate on the Law both day and night.”

The inspirer of God’s Word, the Holy Spirit, is speaking to our hearts today as it concerns the Word of God. Quit starving yourselves and quit eating junk food. Eat the scroll. Drink the milk. Do not quench the work of the Spirit in your life.

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.