

## Mosaic – The Christian Life – Week 1 – The Word of God Prophets and Losses – Pr Jim Sprengle – August 1, 2021

- I. **2 Timothy 3:14-17** - <sup>14</sup> But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it <sup>15</sup> 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. <sup>16</sup> All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, <sup>17</sup> that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.
- II. **Have you ever been lost in the wilderness?**
- a. When I was a kid, we went on a camping trip with our 4-H group.
  - b. I decided to take a hike with a friend, and we got off the trail somewhere along the way...
    - i. It took a little while of hiking through the woods to realize that we were lost.
    - ii. Even the most skilled outdoorsmen get lost sometimes, and anyone who's experienced it will say the same thing – it's scary and it's hard not to panic.
    - iii. Eventually, we made our way to a forest service road that people were driving on to look for us – it was a huge relief to hear the sound of a vehicle!
    - iv. Today, advice from experts is to stay in one spot rather than keep moving, because it's harder to find a moving target... and many times people just wander around in circles anyway
  - c. I read an article that explained a strange phenomenon in humans – without some kind of anchor or landmark our brains lose direction.
    - i. I can say that moving to Nebraska for a short time messed up my brain because there were no mountains to get my bearings... even in St. Louis – at least I had the St. Louis Arch to use for directions.
    - ii. Michael Bond wrote an article called, “Why Humans Totally Freak Out When They Get Lost” <sup>1</sup>
      1. For hundreds of years children grew up on fairy tales of getting lost – Hansel and Gretel, or Snow White – and many others were rescued after getting lost.
        - a. But in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, children getting lost in the wilderness was one of the leading causes of death!
      2. He goes on to write that a study was done on people trying to walk a straight line in the Sahara Desert, while others were in a dense forest in Germany.
        - a. On clear days with the sun visible, people could go quite a distance in a fairly straight line.

- b. However, when the sun was covered, and no other landmarks available, no one made it any further than 100 meters from their starting point – no matter how far they walked, it was always in a giant circle!
    - c. The study determined that our brains need some kind of anchor to stay on course... we need boundaries and landmarks.
    - d. God's Word is the anchor, the landmark and boundaries that gives us the ability to see beyond the trees.
- III. **Today, St. Paul writes to Timothy with prison bars as his view.**
  - a. Paul is in Rome awaiting execution, and he writes one last letter at the end of his earthly walk for God.
  - b. Paul knows that God's Word is a foundation for Timothy's pastoral ministry – but also for all believers in Christ.
  - c. In this short section, Paul sends a message to us all – Scripture makes us wise for salvation, is God-breathed and profitable for helping us to lead our lives as Christians... in other words it is our anchor for the Christian life.
  - d. So, Timothy, and many other preachers would continue preaching the Word as a prophet calls out to the people – reminding them of the losses that come from ignoring God's Word.
    - i. In Luke 10:16, Jesus tells His disciples, "The one who hears you hears Me, and the one who rejects you rejects Me, and the one who rejects Me rejects Him who sent Me."
  - e. We just cannot ignore or reject the ways God gets His Word to us – through preaching and worship, or individual study.
- IV. **Most agree that God's Word is an anchor in the Christian life...**
  - a. Most would also agree that we don't spend enough time in God's Word, if we spend any time in it all.
  - b. Some of you remember a few years ago when we invited Ted Kober to speak at Ascension.
    - i. Ted wrote the book, "Built on the Rock," which we were studying.
    - ii. He asserts that biblical literacy is a big problem in our churches today
  - c. Without a solid foundation in the written Word, we cannot have a solid foundation in the Word of Life (1 John 1:1), or Jesus.
    - i. Jesus is the embodiment of God's Word, or He communicates all that the Father does to save us, as a perfect human... and also God Himself.
    - ii. But we also have the written Word which reveals the plan of salvation and Jesus.
    - iii. In other words, we don't have an in-person Jesus with us like the people 2000 years ago, but we have the next best thing – the written Word.

- iv. Ted Kober highlights the number of times he went into churches to help them with conflict and struggles, only to find that many of them had less than a basic knowledge of the written Word.
- v. He writes that in study after study, “spending time in the Bible is hands down the highest impact personal spiritual practice.”<sup>2</sup>
- d. If we all know that the Word is so important and gives us the very best results in our relationship with God and others... why do we avoid it?
- e. You have to answer that question for yourself – but any excuse will do
  - i. It’s too hard to understand (many different helps exist)
  - ii. I don’t have time (in 168 hours a week, 30 minutes a day is too long?)
  - iii. It’s boring (it’s not a Tom Clancy novel... but it’s not boring either)
  - iv. I don’t read well (listen to recorded versions!)
  - v. I don’t know where to start (ask your pastor – I will help you)
  - vi. I don’t like Pr Jim’s Bible studies (I don’t like your bible studies either)
  - vii. I’m not disciplined enough to do it everyday (set an alarm)
- f. Of course we can make up excuses for not being in the Word, but for every excuse we have... There is an answer... and the best one is...
  - i. Because God loves you so much and He knows your love for Him will grow when you spend time with Him.

V. **It may be hard to understand, but God loves you beyond measure...**

- a. We might not read our bibles simply because we are not aware of just how much God loves us.
- b. What I mean is that God has spent thousands and thousands of years, with the utter failures and sin of human beings – patiently bearing with us until the time was just right. (Galatians 4:4)
  - i. His plan of salvation was from the beginning (Gen. 3:15) as He promised a Savior to Adam and Eve
  - ii. The Word, the Good News in human form came to us in Jesus Christ – as it says in John 1:1 & 14, the Word was God and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.
- c. Can you think of a more loving and grace-filled way to save us?
  - i. He became one of us – He lived in all the misery and experienced all the losses
  - ii. He even paid the full penalty for the sins that were rightly ours... but turned around and gave us all that He won as He died on the cross.
  - iii. We are directly impacted by that love... we are here because God made sure His Word went from the cross, to the tomb, to life again and on through the writings and preaching that followed.
- d. God loves you so much that He can’t stand seeing you wander around in circles aimlessly – He gives you an anchor to always find your way.
- e. The Word is the foundation for our life as Christians, and we each have a lifetime of work in the Word to allow it to engage us.

f. Praise to God that He puts the Word in our lives constantly to bring us home – as the Word is always profitable. Amen.

<sup>1</sup> Bond, Michael, “*Why Humans Totally Freak Out When They Get Lost*,” Wired (May 13, 2020)

<sup>2</sup> Kober, Ted, “Built on the Rock: The Healthy Congregation,” (2017) Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, (p 52)