

“BIBLE 101”
“What Does the Bible Mean and Why Does it Matter?”

The Bible, the Holy Scriptures contains some of the most hotly debated topics. What can you believe? Do you have to believe every word? If you don't, does that mean you are not a Christian? Last week we heard the history of the Bible in around 15 minutes. The time that our scriptures reflect is several thousand years, but what has been written and passed down, was written over a couple of thousand years. This “Word” of God is a living word and one that invites us into a deeper spirituality and a deeper faith. Last week we looked into the history of the scripture. This week, we were invited to bring a favorite bible or our phone or tablet to be blessed. I pray this week, that Word might be opened in new and wondrous ways as we deepen our faith in Christ. The scripture is helpful for learning and deepening our relationship with God and our spirituality. May this week, the Word found both in our Bible and in Jesus be made real in new and wondrous ways.

Things I'd like to remember from today's sermon: **“What Does the Bible Mean and Why Does it Matter?”**

Prayer for the Week

Your word is a light to our feet and a lamp to our path. Your word is a glue of the universe wherein the whole creation coheres. Your word is the address of promise and command by which we live. Your word has come fleshed among us full of grace and truth. For all that we are more dazzled that your word is carried, uttered, acted by frail vulnerable human agents. We ponder and give thanks for those who this day: Speak your word where it is desperately needed. Act your word for newness and peace and justice In thanks for your word, we pray for courage in the name of the one who emptied himself. Amen
*(adapted from a prayer by Walter Brueggemann, in the book **Awed to Heaven, Rooted in Earth**)*

Study Guide

Monday, September 17, 2018 Timothy 3: 14-15

“Continue in what you have learned” the author writes, “knowing from whom you learned it.” Throughout the ages, men and later women as well, have taken time to instruct children, youth and adults in scripture. For thousands of years, those teachers invested time, thought, and energy into children in order that they might grow in faith, understanding and wisdom. *How do we live so the Word grows in us, changes us, encourages us and instructs us in faith? How do we learn? Can you list those teachers who encouraged your learning and understanding? Say a prayer for them today, and a prayer for those currently teaching and inspiring a new generation of learners.*

Tuesday, September 18, 2018 Proverbs 4: 1-9

Proverbs is filled with short sayings and verses encouraging children, particularly, to be faithful. They are called to pay attention to their parents teaching about faith and to focus on wisdom. Wisdom is “personified” as someone to love and care for. Get wisdom and get understanding, the reading of the proverbs states again and again. If you honor wisdom, wisdom will honor you. Throughout the Hebrew Scriptures, holding fast to the commandment and the law is upheld as the highest good. Boiling down that law and those commandments always leads to: Loving God and loving others. Wisdom is understanding what the love of God looks like in life toward the people that God has created. Wisdom never promises to make things easy, just that through wisdom, one is offered understanding, grace and faith. *How do you “get wisdom?” How do you find understanding? In what ways does the study of scripture help you find the wisdom of God and a knowledge of faith?*

Wednesday, September 19, 2018 Proverbs 4: 10-14

Here the pursuit of wisdom is likened to a race. Stay on the path that wisdom provides, the road of the law and prophets. Walking or running, wisdom will strengthen and comfort you. In some ways, this ties right into Isaiah 40 that speaks of God’s strength. Even young people will grow weary but not God. Proverbs offers the promise that the wisdom God offers will strengthen anyone who holds fast to that wisdom. We don’t always learn this wisdom of faith from family, although we can. There are teachers, preachers and others who mentor in the path of wisdom. *Today, spend some time in prayer and in the Word and ask God for the wisdom to discern and understand where God is leading you.*

Thursday, September 20, 2018 2 Timothy 3: 15-16

This particular scripture is often used to defend the “infallibility” or “inerrancy” of scripture. Note, it does not say that the scripture is absolute or without error. The verses actually say that scripture is “inspired and useful for teaching and for training...that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work.” There is nothing in these words that would encourage believers to be debaters, text proofers or anything other than children of God who are growing in wisdom and understanding (like Proverbs instructs people to do.) It is important to know that the only scripture the writer of 2 Timothy had was the Hebrew scripture or what we call the Old Testament. There was no new testament... Scripture is inspired by God, and useful for teaching and training. So much of what was used in the early days was used so people would know God, love God and follow Jesus. Jesus noted that all scripture could be understood in the great commandment: Love God and love your neighbor as yourself. *What scriptures help you follow Jesus and live out the great commandment?*

Friday, September 21, 2018 2 Timothy 3: 16-17

2 Timothy points out that scripture is to encourage and inspire believers to do “good work” in the name of God. Scripture is to help people of faith be strengthened for good in the world. God’s children are called to love God, love others and to feed, clothe, house, and make the world more like the reign of peace and righteousness that Jesus promised. *How does scripture inspire you to be more faithful, more loving and more just? How does scripture inspire you to good works in the name of Christ?*