

## The Authority of Scripture

Geoff Smith 9/8/20

### Sermon Summary

An interesting opening – Geoff Smith asked a question: “Have you ever been tempted to quit this Christian thing?” Have you ever wondered if you cannot go down this road anymore? Have you thought the whole business of God is delusional? Why is prayer not working?

Even pastors get discouraged. Amy Carmichael was an Irish missionary in India. She was never going home. She died in India at age 83. She often felt like giving up. She faced a desert so barren she just couldn't keep going. Her courage was outworn; her hand was on the plough, but, her tears flowed and loosened the grip. She wanted to turn back, yet she served God in India for 55 years without furlough.

Even Timothy wanted to turn back at one point. He faced too many problems. Paul exhorts him with these words: “Timothy my son...fight the good fight, holding on to faith and a good conscience. Some have rejected these and so have shipwrecked their faith” (1 Timothy 1:18-19).

Further, Paul reminds Timothy to continually fan into flame his gift of God, and that God did **not** give him a spirit of timidity, but one of power, love and self-discipline (2 Timothy 1: 6-8).

Geoff mentioned a tough period in his earlier life when all he desired was anonymity. But there are some things you cannot turn away from; they lie too deep in your soul. The reality of Christian life is that it is tough at times, something of which we must always be mindful. Paul warns us that we will face **terrible times in the last days including persecution** (2 Timothy 3:1-12).

As a Christian, what do you do about such dire predictions?

Paul goes on to tell Timothy (and us), “continue in what you have learned and become convinced of” (2 Timothy 3:14). “All scripture is God-breathed, and useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness” (2 Timothy 3:16). Paul concludes his exhortation to Timothy with a **charge**

“Preach the word” (2 Timothy 4:2). When the going gets tough – the tough get going. It means: stand to your post. In other words, if Christian ministry work gets tough, return to the scriptures to keep going.

### **If Scripture is God-breathed, then....**

1. The Bible becomes our **flawless authority**. When God breathes out, it is His very being that is expelled. His breath comes out of His mouth, and since He cannot lie, His word is **always true**. In 2 Peter 1:20, we read that “no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet’s own interpretation”. The men who wrote the Bible were carried along by the Holy Spirit who wrought miraculous inspired writing (2 Peter 1:21). Both the authors and the Holy Spirit gave the world the Word of God. The Bible is divine in origin and divine in meaning. **God has spoken to us in the Bible.**

If God is flawless in every manner, then His words are flawless in authority. God has come out of His privacy and committed himself to us in the Bible.

2. The Bible is our **sufficient authority**. Pastors and commentators break open the Word of Life for the people. Pastors must grapple with teaching the Word. For God has said people must be trained, equipped and sent out into the world bearing His message. The Bible is majestic in its scope. It begins with the account of how all life began and takes people into the timeless future. It really is breath-taking. Think of how precious is the gift of righteousness to you. Especially when you look back to the way sinful living once gripped you.

The nation of Israel is an enigma. To understand it at all, you only need to look into the Bible and the enigma (from the world’s view) suddenly makes sense. In fact, anything about life can be understood once the pages of the Bible have been opened to you by the working of the Holy Spirit within you. All the subjects written about in the Bible come from God – that’s very important to grasp.

What do I do when I want to find out about God? How can I know for certain that I am saved? It is not an intellectual argument to be solved by discourse with another human. Go straight to the Bible and find the

eternal God. For a human, change is a constant. **The only thing that never changes is God.**

3. The Bible is our **final authority**. The world is set up by God. To avoid chaos, God has ordered:
  - a. The principle of governmental authority over citizens.
  - b. The principle of parental authority over children.
  - c. The principle of employer authority over employees.
  - d. The principle of leadership authority over church congregations.
  - e. The Final Authority over all the above is God's Word.

Because scripture covers everything, we must be **content** – and take the Bible as the authority of God. It becomes mandatory for a Pastor to lead his fellowship to an understanding of the entire Bible.

As Christians, we are required to **consult** the scriptures, then **conform** to those scriptures. **That is our responsibility.**

Geoff Smith concluded with an anecdote about a talking kite, who told his owner (a young lad) that he had not been taken out for a flight for ages. That he was tired of hanging on the wall and wanted to see what life was like. So, the boy took the kite down, and outside, and gently let the breeze begin to tug at it. Slowly the kite wanted to go higher and higher and see more, and the boy let out the string until finally it snapped out of his hand. For a moment the kite flew in a dance of joy – free and unhindered. But without a pilot, the inevitable happened. The boy found the kite later, a few blocks away, smashed and wrecked beyond repair. Every human is like a kite – in need of the controlling hand.

## Discussion Questions

1. “Have you ever been tempted to quit this Christian thing?” Describe the circumstances. Was any suffering involved?
2. **Read 2 Timothy 1:6-7.** Discuss this passage. How have you fanned into flame a particular gift of God?
3. **Read 2 Timothy 4:1-5.** Discuss this passage? What is fully involved in the **charge to preach the word**?
4. **Read 2 Timothy 3:14-17.** How does this passage develop scripture’s **flawless authority**? **Read also: 2 Peter 1:20-21.**
5. **Reread 2 Timothy 3:16-17.** How can you trust that the Bible has **sufficient authority** that provides all the answers needed for the world’s many situations and questions?
6. Are you **content** with scripture as your **final authority**? Explain your answer.
7. How does “godliness with contentment” (1 Timothy 6:6) expand on this idea of **contentment**? [Hint: Geoff Smith said we are required to **consult** the scriptures then **conform** to those scriptures].

## Prayer Points

### Prayer suggestions for Life Groups

Bible in schools will be able to continue and that the court case against it (set down for two weeks in October) will fail. *(Also, a new petition calling for an end to religious instruction in primary schools is part of a renewed campaign to make state schooling truly secular)*

The tourism Industry in NZ

Northcross will be a church that lives by God’s word and gossips the gospel