

Sunday, September 6, 2020 am

FIRST PRINCIPLES

What the Bible Can Do for You

This morning, I would like for us to go back to the basics. This is something we have begun doing the first Sunday of each month. This serves as an opportunity to present some basic lessons, and also to remind us of some of the basics of God's word to keep us grounded. The Hebrews writer expressed concerns because they had not progressed as they ought to in Hebrews 5:12-14. Thus there was a need to be reminded. We need that too from time to time. So today, I want to present a very fundamental lesson – What the Bible can for you.

One might ask, "Why should I study the Bible?" While there might be preliminary challenges we must consider, such as establishing that the Bible is the word of God (an apologetics lesson), the truth is we need the Bible as Christians to grow the way we ought to. Hebrews 5:12-14 rebuked them for not knowing God's word well enough. May we never reach that point. But that will only happen if we continue to study His word as we ought to.

So as part of our studies in first principles, this morning let us take a few moments to remind ourselves of some things the Bible can do for us.

I. It reveals who God is –

- a. Romans 1:16-17 – Paul declares the gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation. Then in vs. 17, we note that in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith.
- b. We need to know who God is, what He expects of us and so many other things. The only way we can know is if God reveals Himself to us. He has done so through the gospel of Christ.
- c. Paul even elaborated on this in 1 Corinthians 2:9-13 noting that what they spoke through the Holy Spirit, was the revelation of God.
- d. We can also learn about God by studying the teachings of Jesus – since He is "God with us". He Himself said, John 14:8-10, "He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?..."

II. It can introduce you to Jesus –

- a. Romans 1:1-4 Paul began this letter by describing how the holy scriptures reveal Jesus Christ to us.
- b. Acts 4:12, "*Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.*" IF Jesus is our only source of salvation, then it behooves us to learn about Him.
- c. Philippians 3:8-10, after conversion Paul made it his life's quest to know more about Jesus. His goal was to gain Christ, be found in Him and to KNOW HIM and the power of His resurrection...
- d. It is in the gospels that we learn who Jesus is, what He did for us and what the future holds. Most who turn to the Bible (with intent to learn) are searching for Jesus. He IS found within its pages.
- e. John 5:39 – the scriptures "testify" of Me. An observation to be made here – a study of scriptures concerning Jesus verify that His claims are true. Subjects such as prophecy, the reaction of His followers (His power to change), the existence of the church today, external references to Him, and many other proofs give us cause to believe in Him. Hebrews 1:1-2 notes that God has in these last days spoken to us through Him. Acts 1:3 speaks of how He presented Himself alive (resurrected) by many infallible proofs.
- f. Consider also John 20:30-31 as John concludes his account of the life of Jesus. Note that what is written is so that we may believe and that it will lead to (eternal) life.

- g. If you want to learn Jesus, BEGIN with the Bible! Any other resource is ONLY worthwhile as it points toward Him as taught therein.

III. It can make you wise unto salvation -

- a. 2 Timothy 3:15 – Paul noted scripture can make you wise unto salvation. While he likely had the Old Law in mind, his point was that it leads us to Jesus where our salvation is found (Previous point).
- b. Romans 1:16 – the gospel is the power of God unto salvation. Because it reveals what we need to do to be saved.
- c. James 1:21- receive the implanted word is able to save your soul.
- d. It gives us “all things that pertain to life and godliness” (2 Peter 1:3)
- e. BUT, the Bible will ONLY save your soul if you are willing to follow what it says.

IV. It can pierce your heart –

- a. Hebrews 4:12 tells us the word of God is living and active, sharper than a two-edged sword... The point is, that as you read God’s word it can convict you. It can expose your inner thoughts and struggles, your hypocrisies and your hurts.
IT can convince you that you need to change and turn to God
- b. Acts 2:37 – as Peter concluded his sermon on Pentecost, the day the church/kingdom began – many in that audience were convicted and knew there was something they needed to do.
- c. God’s word is a book for the soul – you read it and learn that God is right and you are not. This can lead the honest heart to turn to Him.

V. It can correct you in God’s eyes –

- a. When one comes up out of the water, he is a new creature – 2 Corinthians 5:17 – if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation... Romans 6:3-4 – explains how this happens in the act of baptism, which saves us (1 Peter 3:21, Mark 16:16), washes our sins away (Acts 22:16) and puts us into Christ (Galatians 3:27).
- b. As one who has obeyed the gospel and surrendered to Christ, it doesn’t take you long to learn that you need to keep studying the word. You need to keep learning.
- c. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 - God’s word gives us all that we need. It is profitable (useful) for teaching (doctrine), reproof and correction – identifying what we need to change and how to correct it, and how to live righteous lives as defined by God (cf. Romans 1:17).
- d. So to live godly lives, we keep studying and when we learn that we need to make changes we make them. Just like Paul on the road to Damascus (Acts 9), Apollos who changed his teachings when he learned the way of God more accurately, and so many more (Acts 18:24-26).
- e. Even as Christians, none of us is perfect, so we need correcting. God’s word does that!

VI. It can build you up spiritually -

- a. Acts 20:32 – as Paul was saying farewell to the elders at Ephesus, he commended them to the word of His grace “*which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.*”
- b. God’s word, as you continue to read and study it, will build you up in so many ways.
It helps you focus your life on Him, helps you as you deal with problems, adjusts your attitude and gives you what you need to keep going regardless of what happens to you.
- c. Colossians 2:6-7 speaks of being rooted and built up in the faith, as you have been taught...
Ephesians 4:14 speaks of being grounded so that we will not be “tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine...”

- d. Paul is a great example of this – he was so built up that shortly after leaving those elders he arrives in Caesarea and is warned that if he goes to Jerusalem he will be bound (Acts 21:10-13). He goes anyways, because of his strength.

VII. It can expose error –

- a. 1 John 4:1 calls for us to test the spirits whether they are of God? How do we do that? We have to weigh what is taught with what God’s word teaches.
- b. We live in religiously confusing times. There is so much religious and doctrinal divisions about us. And much of it is based upon a blatant disregard for the plain teachings of scripture. Many will appeal to one passage or another, often in direct contradiction to what others teach OR the truth. How can you learn what is truth and what is error?
- c. There is only ONE way – keep studying God’s word – Psalm 119:104 - *Through Your precepts I get understanding; Therefore I hate every false way.*
Paul warned the Thessalonians many will be deceived with *“unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.”* (2 Thessalonians 2:10-12)
There is also the warning of 2 John 9-11 which speaks of those not abiding in the doctrine of Christ.

The Bible is an important book in so many different ways. Its credibility has been established both externally and internally. And as such, its content is to be considered. We have shown some ways that it can help us. And this lesson is far from exhaustive. But it is my hope that we will be encouraged to open it, read it, study it and apply it. For that is the ONLY way it will help you. What has God’s word done for you? Think about it!