

INTRODUCTION

Intro: This study took an unexpected turn

I thought we were going to go onto the next verses but ended up with an addendum to part 1

- A. It blessed me as I was putting it together so I hope it is helpful to you
1. **My goal is to remind you of what an incredible book it is**
 - A. What a gift it is to us – what a privilege to be able to read the words God has written
 - B. I want you to be amazed because of this book – I want you to love your Bible
 - 1). To so desire it that you couldn't set it down – miss it when you can't read it for a day
 - 2). Remember a story about John MacArthur – so busy he missed reading his bible a few days
He finally got alone in his office – he grabbed his bible and just held it to his chest – hugged it
 - a). I can relate to that – this book is too good to let it slip in your life
This book is too important – you stopped reading it and your life starts to slip
 2. **We've spent some time making a declaration of what we believe here**
 - A. We believe that the Scripture is authored by God
 - 1). Therefore it is trustworthy and reliable – it contains no errors
 - B. We believe in the sufficiency of the Scripture
 - 1). By that we mean that the Word is sufficient to lead a sinner to salvation
And the Word is sufficient to grow that saved sinner up in sanctification
 - C. We believe that the Word when obeyed is sufficient to guide a person in their life
 - 1). Into the kind of life that is effective for God by bringing Him glory
And into a life that is satisfying for the believer – bringing them contentment
 - D. We have stated the fact that we reject the foolishness that God's word is outdated and antiquated
 - 1). That it may have been good for the days it was written in when the morals were much different
But it has nothing to say to the modern man living in OC in 2016
 - 2). Looked at idea of immutability – theological term with simple meaning = *God doesn't change*
Mal 3:6 (ESV) “For I the LORD do not change...
Heb 13:8 (ESV) Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.
 - a). Therefore what He said was right 2000 years ago is still right today
What He said was wrong 2000 years ago is still wrong today
 - 3). Therefore if we use our culture to overwrite any Biblical truth to enable a sin we need to stop that
 - a). Everybody sleeps together before marriage – everybody cusses – everybody gets drunk
Everybody lies. If you don't you'll never get ahead!
 - 1a). How about doing what is right and trusting God with the outcome
- Point:** God's word still stands – it is as relevant today as it was when it was written
Psa 119:152 (NIV) Long ago I learned from your statutes that you established them *to last forever.*
- 1). That's bad news for all who want to use the change in culture as a cloak for sin
- Transition:** That's a quick summary of what we've been stating – who we are as a church
- A. This morning I want to remind you of this book's power
 - 1). Why you need to be reading it – why you need to know what it says
3. **Outline: Going to look at two areas that seem difficult**
 - A. We need this book because life is hard
 - B. We need this book because the unbeliever's heart is hard
 - 1). I'm going to build off what we've already seen in this point

I. WE NEED THIS BOOK BECAUSE LIFE IS HARD

1. Life didn't become easy just because you became a Christian

- A. The Bible promises you that there will be trials – but comforts you that God uses them for your good
 - 1). We don't go through anything alone do we? God is in control and all the promises are in play
 - a). The truths of this book promise us that the pain is worth it
The world has pain but it is wasted – the believer has pain but it is always for our good
 - B. That is the difference – storms roll in for all – we have somewhere to go – the unbeliever doesn't
 - 1). Isaiah calls Christ the “Wonderful counselor” – how great is that?
 - a). How many times I've just gone to Him and poured my heart out
“I'm hurting. I'm afraid. I'm discouraged. I'm frustrated...”
 - 1a). I gain a kind ear – a compassionate heart – I find mercy and help
- Question:** But how does the comfort come – how does God speak to me
- 1). I don't hear audible voices – I think I have a few times in my life
 - a). But God usually speaks to me from His Word
 - b). We speak to Him in prayer – He speaks to us through His Word - primarily
 - 1a). He opens up His Word – He may show a sin that is blocking His blessings
He changes my attitudes – redirects my will
- E. Stanley Jones:** The Bible redirects my will, cleanses my emotions, enlightens my mind, and quickens my total being.
- 2). If you're not reading your Bible you're not hearing His voice
 - a). You're trying to live life on your own – it's way too big for you – way to complicated

2. Where do you go when life gets hard?

- A. I watch believers run to and fro – get a multitude of opinions and end up more confused than ever
 - 1). Especially if they are going to people who aren't reading the Word
They get ungodly counsel: Is 55:8-9 (ESV) *For my thoughts are not your thoughts,* neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD. ⁽⁹⁾ For as the heavens are higher than the earth, *so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.*
 - 2). Watch who you get counsel from – if the person isn't reading the Word they don't think like God
 - a). Only way to give godly counsel is to think God's thoughts
The only way to think God's thoughts is to have your mind filled with His Word

Thought: This is the problem with so many professional counselors - psychologists

- A. They have a foundation built off the thoughts of Freud or Jung
 - 1). Men steeped in personal problems – couldn't even handle their own lives
- B. They gave the world nothing more than the thoughts of man
 - 1). Techniques that can't get to the source of the problem
“Listen. Why you act like you do! It's not always because you're a victim. It's not always your mothers fault.”
 - 2). You're main problem is you – “Everywhere I go there I am!”
 - a). Man is born with a sin nature that is selfish to the core!
He is defensive – guilt ridden because he's not right with God
 - b). Most psychologist admit that guilt is the main problem
 - 1a). They just don't know what to do to remove it
 - 2a). They try to tell you it's because you're a victim
You've been beat up by society – they work on your self-image

- c). The put a band aid on cancer – you feel good for awhile
But the guilt keeps eating away – souring everything
1a). So you self-medicate – try to drink it away
- C. The way to stop that destruction in their life that their own nature is producing is the truth of God
- 1). That truth found in the Gospel of Christ
- a). The creator of mankind has provided the greatest book on psychology ever written
- 2). Truth that gets below the surface – deals with the sinful nature that is pumping out sin and selfishness into your life
- a). That sin naturally produces guilt – what God created the conscience to do
His divine warning system to tell us when our life isn't right
- b). God's truth is able to get to the nature of man and change them there
2 Co 5:17 (ESV) Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a *new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.*
- 1a). Remember that – you see your sin – embrace Christ by faith
And everything changes! New desires – new nature – new goals
- 2a). I was an alcoholic – GONE! *Rescued! Delivered!*
- 3). The guilt was gone! The records were wiped clean
Justification (doctrine) – God accepted Christ's sacrifice and declared me NOT GUILTY!
Here's what God says: Is 1:18 (ESV) "Come now, let us reason together, says the LORD: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool.
- a). That is the cleansing you need – the records wiped clean
- 4). I heard Bruce praying yesterday – beautiful prayer – the truth of propitiation
Worshipping because Christ had exhausted the wrath of God He deserved
- a). Do you realize what happened Christian
You walk around feeling guilty all the time – like God is angry with you!
- 1a). He is not – Propitiation = Christ exhausted that wrath
- b). God putting every sin you ever did or will do on Christ – and crushed Him in your place
- 1a). Jesus stayed engulfed in that firestorm of wrath
Until He cried out "IT IS FINISHED"
- 2a). God's wrath against your sin had been exhausted – no wrath left!
- 3a). God is not angry with you – He may have to get rough – discipline
But all of it is out of love now – never anger

Point: That will heal you – that is the difference between Christianity and any other religion
That is the difference between the truth of Christianity and any of man's psychology

- A. But you must go to the Bible to see those truths – steeped in the Bible
- 1). I think most of the problems Christians have are because they don't read their Bibles
They don't know these truths enough to apply them to their lives in a daily way
- B. Why I wake up every morning and preach the Gospel to myself before I pray
- 1). God I don't come before you based on my own merit – but on the merit of your Son
Thank you that you look at me through His finished work and perfect performance
- a). Thank you that I'm accepted in Him – thank you that you love me – not angry

Transition: My first thought – life is hard

Only the truths in the Bible are big enough to lift you above being victimized

- A. I have nothing against professional counselors as long as it is Nouthetic counseling

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- 1). Means they use the Word of God as the basis for the counseling they offer
 - 2). Get a guy skilled at using God's word to deal with problems – extremely beneficial
 - a). But can I suggest – learn to let God counsel you through His Word
 - 1a). You'll be amazed at its power – what it can do in your life
 - B. Let's move on to the next thought
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II. WE NEED THIS BOOK BECAUSE THE UNBELIEVERS HEART IS HARD

Intro: I know many of you have loved ones you long to see come to the Lord – they seem so hard
I want to encourage you that the Word is sufficient

- A. Isn't that what we saw in the first verse in this little mini-series
Ps 19:7 (ESV) The law of the LORD is perfect, *reviving the soul...*
 - 1). Perfect = comprehensive – complete – lacking nothing
 - 2). Everything needed to save a soul is found in this book – what it is designed for

1. The word of God and the hardness of man

- A. We lose our confidence in the Word – we think that some people – some cultures are too difficult
 - 1). I see this in the church – losing its confidence in the Word – turning to clever techniques
 - a). They bypass the tool God forged for the converting of the sinner
And think that some little technique they come up with will be better

Transition: I just have some examples of God's Word in action – what it can do

Examples Of God's Word In The Sinners Conversion

1. God's Word in the Muslim World

- A. There is probably nobody you'd think is tougher to reach than the Muslims in the Middle East
 - 1). You believe in Jesus you die in some areas – caught with a Bible you can die
Convert to Christianity and in many areas your own family will kill you – honor killings
- B. But there is an awakening that is happening right now in these Muslim countries
 - 1). God is approaching Muslim after Muslim through dreams – Jesus is speaking to them
 - a). So gracious – they don't have a Bible so God reaches them where they are at
 - b). Islam has already prepared them to think of dreams as authoritative
Because Islam started with Mohammad having a dream – they all know this
 - 1a). They accept them as a vehicle of divine revelation
 - 2). In these dreams they feel so loved by Christ – He is calling them to Him
 - a). This causes them to seek out a Bible even if it costs their life
 - b). They see God's love in the Gospel and they decide to follow Christ
 - 1a). They are being converted in droves
 - 2a). Pray for the Muslims – God is reaching out to them
Pray we could be used in the lives of those that have come here

Transition: God's Word is able to save those who seem so hardened towards Christianity – the Muslims

- A. Let's bring it a bit closer to home – to encourage you

2. God's Word and the hardened husband

- A. I have a story about a sinner and Charles Finney shows the power of the Gospel
Charles Finney was preaching in a great revival in Detroit. After the service one night a man said, "I want you to come home with me, Mr. Finney." Some who knew the man said to Finney, "Don't go," but he went. When they got to the man's house, they walked in, the man locked the door, and pulled a

revolver from his pocket. He said, "Don't be afraid, Mr. Finney. I am not going to shoot you. I heard you preach tonight about the Lord Jesus Christ. This revolver has killed four men. Is there any hope for a man like that?"

Mr. Finney replied, "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all sin."

(That's 1 John 1:7 "The blood of Jesus, his Son purifies us from all sin")

The man answered, "You don't understand, Mr. Finney. Down below this apartment where you are sitting there is a saloon. I have helped send men down the road to hell; I have helped men to rob their own children of food and milk. Is there any hope for a man who would run a saloon?"

Mr. Finney replied, "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all sin."

The man continued, "I have been a gambler all my life. I have spent my life taking money from people illegally. Is there any hope for a man like that?"

Mr. Finney said, "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all sin."

The man persisted. "Across the street there is a wife I have abused, a little girl who is disfigured. One night I came home from gambling and drinking in a drunken stupor. The child ran to put her arms around me and I pushed her away from me. She hit the heater, and is terribly disfigured. Is there any hope for a man like that?"

Mr. Finney said, "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all sin."

Soon thereafter Mr. Finney left. The next morning the man stumbled across the street. He had not slept; he had prayed all night. When he got into the house he stumbled up to his room. In a little while his wife said to the little girl, "Tell your daddy it's time for breakfast."

She went upstairs and said, "Mama says it's time for breakfast." The man said, "Maggie, darling, I don't want any breakfast this morning."

She ran back downstairs and said, "Mama, Daddy said he did not want any breakfast this morning and he called me darling."

The mother said, "You made a mistake; you heard him wrong. Go back up there and tell him it's time for breakfast."

In a moment the man came down, took his wife in his arms and his little girl on his knee. "O wife," he wept, "I have sinned against you like few men have ever sinned against anyone, but last night I heard the preacher preach. I heard about Jesus and about the blood of Jesus. The blood of Jesus has cleansed me from all my sin. You have a new husband. Daughter, you have a new daddy."

1). A simple truth out of the Bible and it works a miraculous change – what a book!

3. God's Word and a terrified WWII vet

- A. Let me tell you about Henry (also known as Harry) – went to our church in England
- 1). During WWII – was a British soldier who landed on the beaches of France on D day
 - 2). Was warned before he went to France about children called "Hitler's Kids"
 - a). So brain washed by the Nazi regime they would kill for Hitler
He encountered one – 11-12 years old – started walking towards them
Henry shouted out to him to halt – even shot near his feet – he kept approaching
 - 1a). Eventually kid reached into coat began to pull out a gun – Henry had to shoot him
 - 3). This sent Henry into a downward spiral – years of nightmares – tormented
He thought to himself – anybody who shoots a child MUST end up in hell
 - a). He tried everything to stop the nightmares – drinking – wild living
Went to a priest who said – pray the rosary – he knew that wouldn't work
 - b). Lived that way for 50 years! Terrorized by the thought of hell – feeling there was no escape
 - c). One Sunday he hobbled into our church – on two crutches – God was calling Him
In my sermon I preached this truth one truth
"The blood of Christ will cleanse you from all sin. Past, present and future!"
 - 1a). He said to himself – "That's it!!! He gave his life to the Lord and was saved!

- 2a). He started reading his bible – eventually eyesight started giving out
We had to get him a large print edition
- 3a). Eventually he couldn't see that – so we got him the Bible on tape
- d). I had the privilege of baptizing him before he died
 - 1a). I'll never forget that scene – him coming down the aisle with two canes
 - 2a). Then he accused me of trying to drown him!
I just told him we had a lot of sin to wash away
- e). If nothing more ever happened in England – it would have been worth it! A highlight

Point: The Word of God saved a man who had given up hope of ever being rescued from his terror

4. God's word and a clinically depressed man

- A. Let's talk about how the Word of God freed Richard from clinical depression
 - 1). He came in one day – never seen him before – staring at the ground – never looked up
At the end he got up – walked out - Didn't speak a word to anybody
 - a). I thought – weird – I doubt will ever see him again!
 - 2). But he returned – to repeat same behavior – eyes down – never spoke – got up and walked out
 - a). He repeated this pattern again and again
- B. Then one day Richard looked up – and he was smiling – he started talking and talking and talking
 - 1). Sitting under the teaching of God's Word – he was saved and freed from depression
 - 2). He started to devour the Word – started to grow – started to serve
 - a). He became one of the most faithful men in our church

Point: That is the power of the Word – how it reaches into our desperation

- A. I had the privilege of sitting in the hospital with him many times as he was dying of lung cancer
 - 1). One night I visited him in the hospital at Canterbury – a 30-40 minute drive
 - 2). I returned late and got a call from the nurse – Richard wanted to see me again – I'd just been there
 - a). So I made the drive back – and as I spoke with him
He started to tell me about a dream he had – how the devil had taken him into hell
 - b). The Lord showed me that he was dying and was afraid
 - 1a). The devil is brutal in a hospital – when you're dying – he will bring up every past sin
 - 2a). He doesn't want you to die well because it is such a powerful testimony
 - 3a). But the truth of the Bible will answer his accusations
 - 3). I started taking him through the scriptures – Justification by Faith Alone!
 - a). Richard remember what you've learned at church – here is why I love doctrine
The moment you placed your faith in Christ
All those sins were paid for by Him – your record is clean Richard
 - 1a). God has nothing against you
And remember He so honors the sacrifice of His Son
He promised He would never bring those sins up again
 - b). Your trial is not going to take place when you get to heaven
Because it has already taken place on the cross 2000 years ago
 - 1a). Christ was judged in your place
 - 2a). AND God has declared you to be NOT GUILTY = justification
 - c). We spoke for a half hour – theology – doctrine
 - 1a). Then Richard smiled – you can go home now!
 - 2a). It wasn't long before he passed into eternity – resting in the finished work of Christ

Point: Brothers and Sisters I have seen the power of God's Word -it is sufficient

- A. One line of this book can comfort you
- B. Many of you know I've smuggled Bibles into many countries – China, Soviet Union, Viet Nam
 - 1). God gave me a scripture that gave me peace as I was moving towards customs
Threat of prison hanging over my head – would I be caught – when would I see my family again
 - 2). One line – it was enough to comfort me – to give me peace
Jos 1:9 (ESV) Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.”
 - a). Remember that when you witness – when you step out – you don't do it alone

Summary: We are out of time – I love the Bible – I have seen it work again and again and again

- A. As long as you have this book and its truths you have hope
2 Co 10:4-5 (ESV) For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. ⁽⁵⁾ We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ,
 - 1). What are those weapons – prayer and the word
 - a). Be skilled at both – then watch how God uses you!