

Christianity: The Basics No Updates Needed

2020.8.20&23



TALKING POINTS WALKING POINTS

"Talking Points, Walking Points" is a publication of the adult discipleship ministry of Triangle Community Church

Talk together about the glory of God's kingdom. ---*Psalm 145:11*
Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. ---*Joshua 22:5*

Questions for Personal Reflection and Group Discussion

- Pastor Doug noted that the Bible regulates many issues which it does not endorse (such as slavery). What are some issues in your home which you wish did not exist (such as squabbles between your kids), but because they do, you regulate them?
- Have you ever heard someone say (or, yourself ever said!), "The Bible has a lot of good things to say, but it's outdated. There are a lot of things in there that we can't accept anymore. We have a more sophisticated way of looking at things"?

What examples of "outdated" things did Pastor Doug mention (see Sermon Summary)? What others can you think of?

Read Hebrews 1:1-4. What conclusion does this passage suggest regarding its completeness and sufficiency?

What issues have you experienced first-hand which are **beyond** the scope of the Scriptures?

- Many people today want a **direct** word from God---**not** something written in the Bible and generally available to everyone. Why do you think that is appealing? What would be some of the drawbacks to direct communication?

Have you ever wanted something so badly that you convinced yourself that it was God's will? What happened next?

- We've all had frustrating conversations in which the other person fixated on peripheral issues. Since Jesus Christ is the central subject of the Scriptures, what should we do with **our** desires for information which the Bible **does not** give us?

List all of the things that Colossians 1:15-20 and 2:1-4 claims about Christ.

In light of the supremacy of Christ, what did Paul **do** for the Christians in Colossae (see Colossians 1:9)?

What did Paul say would result from gaining knowledge of Christ (see Colossians 1:10-12)?

If you experienced that same outcome, how would your life be different from how it is now?

What steps should you take now to gain that outcome?

Application-Challenge

Accept the Bible as God's final, completed word. Submit to it, and God will transform your life!

Sermon Summary (Key Text: The Book of Hebrews)

Today we often hear people say: "The Bible has a lot of good things to say, but it's provincial and outdated. There are a lot of things in there that we can't accept anymore, because we have a more sophisticated way of looking at things." The book of Hebrews tells us that Jesus came to bring God's final word to humanity. And this final word, when it is received and submitted to, creates a living, dynamic relationship with God (Hebrews 1:1-4).

Twice in the first two verses it says we have a God who speaks, who reveals himself to us through words. We are told that He has given us his final word ("has spoken"). The Greek perfect tense reflects a past action that has an ongoing impact. It is the final word. It is the perfect, completing revelation. It is saying, "In past times God spoke truly to us, but always in pieces. Now, through Jesus' words and works he has spoken to us fully and finally." To "sit" (v. 3) is a metaphor for completion. Jesus' saving work was finished; there's nothing more that can be added to it. Jesus is the ultimate revealer, who ends the revelations of former times, and gives us his final word and his final work. This means that the Bible cannot be improved, updated, or corrected.

The Bible records lots of things that it doesn't approve! Abraham had multiple wives; he also lied and cheated. Others claim that Christians are completely arbitrary—embracing some things in the Bible while discontinuing others. This issue is complex, but it's not arbitrary. The Book of Hebrews teaches that God's law abides eternally, that it never goes out of date (10:16), yet it also says that Jesus Christ's sacrifice ends the need for all of the animal sacrifices for sin. Jesus fulfilled all those ceremonial laws relating to cleanness. The purpose for all of those rules was to show us our inability to approach a holy God without a Savior. Now we have a Savior who makes us acceptable and clean in God's sight. The Bible itself tells us which things no longer have to be followed—and which things do. We don't decide on our own. Some people ask, "Doesn't the Bible condone slavery?" Those who ask this often have in mind the African slave trade—but the Bible condemns kidnapping and selling people (1 Timothy; Deuteronomy 24). Slavery in the Old Testament was more similar to our bankruptcy law; you worked for someone until the debt was paid. The kind of slavery condoned in the Bible involves an arrangement that allows you to pay off your debts without going to prison. You don't own the person; they work for you. You own their means of production until they pay the debt. And there were all sorts of protections for slaves (eg. Exodus 21:27).

My larger point is this: with the coming of Jesus, and with the recorded accounts in the New Testament, we have a completed revelation from God. The Bible is God's final Word. God speaks today through his final written Word. God can, and sometimes does, lead us through thoughts and impressions, but if you're mature, you will never insist in that moment that you are absolutely certain it is from God. Just like in any relationship, you have to have words that you know are from that person. The Bible is those words which we know are from God. If you say, "There are parts of the Bible I think are true and other parts of the Bible I don't think are true," what you're really saying is that your feelings and impressions decide what is true. But the first step in having a dynamic personal relationship with God is to accept the complete authority and the finality of what he's already said in the Bible (Hebrews 4:12-13). When God says something, it happens immediately, because his word is his deed. His word is his power. It's through his word that his power operates. As bond-servants of God, we accept everything he says (Galatians 1:10). God speaks personally and he speaks penetratingly, not by giving you some other revelation, but through the biblical revelation he has already given us. So the first step in having a dynamic personal relationship with God is to accept the complete authority and the finality of the Bible. Do you allow God to have authority over you in areas such as gossip, fear, unforgiveness, and sexual sin (Proverbs 20:19; Philippians 4:6; Ephesians 4:32; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11)—or do you cry foul?

If you leave things out of the Bible that offend you, how will God ever be able to correct you? You won't be willing to accept the great things God says, that you don't want to hear, until you are willing to accept the hard things he says that you don't want to hear. Before you get your doctrine of Scripture straight, you have to get your doctrine of Jesus Christ straight. The Bible is God's final Word because it reveals who Jesus is, and what he has done, in all of his unsurpassable beauty! The Bible is a message about Jesus. He is the central character. It all points to Him (Hebrews 1:3; 2 Corinthians 4:6). It is not until you realize what Jesus has done for you that you will see his beauty and the Bible will become a living, penetrating, life-giving power in your life. Do you see the beauty of who Christ is and what he has done for you? It's all recorded there for you in the Bible, God's final word to man. Once you accept it and trust in it, it becomes the vehicle through which God's living, powerful Word transforms your life.

Bible Text: _____

Date: _____



What idea particularly strikes me from this text? [Note in which verse(s) it is found.]



What question does this text raise in my mind—and how would **this text** answer it?



What about Jesus Christ—his character and/or his redemption—relates to this text?



What action must I take as a result of this text? Be concrete and specific.



With whom will I share what I learned from this text? [and what was their response?]