

**November 4, 2007**  
**Pentecost 22**

*"All Scripture Is God Breathed"*

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## **2 TIMOTHY 4:14-17**

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*But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, <sup>15</sup> and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. <sup>16</sup> All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, <sup>17</sup> so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

I am holding in my hand a dried up branch from the grape vine growing in my back yard. I don't know what caused this branch to wither and dry, but it happens to branches on a vine or branches on my plum tree or apricot tree, or the large cedar tree in front of our church. Notice the branches that are dying.

In John 15 Jesus tells us that he is the vine we are the branches. He pleads with us to remain in him with these words, "Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me." And Jesus also gave us this strong warning. "If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned."

What are we going to do when we see other branches connected to Christ the vine not bearing fruit or even worse starting to wither and die? We pray, we stress, we almost go into panic mode. The only way we can keep ourselves and others attached is to stay in the Word, stay in the Word that is God breathed. As Jesus said to us, "My words are Spirit and they are life."

Paul knew that young pastor Timothy would be facing some hard times. He wrote earlier in this letter, "Everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted." He pleads with him to continue in what he has learned, stay in the Word and think of that Word. God's Word is such a beautiful blessing in our life. It is God-breathed. Because it is God-breathed it also breathes life into our lives and even the lives of people we know who are dying spiritually.

### **God's Word has changed your life**

God's Word has certainly changed your life in the past. Paul reminds Timothy how his life had been changed by the Word. "But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you have learned it." Continue. Remain. Stay faithful. Don't give up reading and learning the Word of God that you have learned in your past life. Think of the people the Lord used to bring the Word into your life. Remember those glorious moments. Timothy had his mother Eunice and his grandmother Lois to thank for teaching him the Old Testament Scriptures from his early childhood.

How beautiful it is to see a child learning the Holy Scriptures. See that mother over there reading Bible stories to her children already when they are small. See the dad over here making it the number one priority of every week to have his family come with him to worship on Sunday. A person who had a great influence on my life was my Grandmother Schroeder who lived with us six months out of the year. She had her own room in our large farmhouse. At night before going to bed she would sit in her rocking chair in her room and read her Bible. I could see her reading at night through the crack in the bedroom door. One day I snuck into her room, opened her Bible and looked at how worn each page was. I had just received my first Bible and even though it was the King James Version and some parts were hard to understand, I started turning on the light next to my bed and reading a little each night. Each of us could tell stories and give testimonies of moms and dads, aunts and uncles, Sunday school teachers, and pastors who encouraged us to learn the Scriptures just as Timothy's mother and grandmother did for him.

How soon can you start teaching God's Word to children? Paul reminds Timothy of the life changes that came when he was a little child. "And how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ." The Greek word for infancy is "Brephos" and it means the very little ones. That's how Jesus described the babies that he took up in his arms and blessed. This word was used to describe the baby John the Baptist leaping in the womb of his mother Elizabeth when Mary came to visit. Jesus told us we should not forbid the little ones to come to him because the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. It was Jesus who said that we should baptize and teach all nations of people in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. These blessings of baptism and the Word were intended for little ones.

Away with the strange claims who say they went to Sunday school as a child, sat through church services, heard the Word of God and lived in a Christian home but then really didn't know Christ until they personally accepted him into their hearts when they were 14 or 18 or 21 or whatever. That is to deny what Scripture says about the importance of children learning the Word, and marginalize those great moments of your childhood when the Holy Spirit was working in your life through the Word. God speed the day when we see more parents bringing their little ones for the blessings of baptism and hearing the Word. Oh, how I long to preaching a church filled with the voices of little ones with us in worship soaking up the Word the way sponge soaks up water. Oh, to hear their voices sing, "Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so." For what they sing as child will carry them through hard days.

The God-breathed Scriptures provided you with the wisdom of salvation, already in your childhood. A child can come to know that God created the heavens and the earth. A child can see the huge difference between Adam and Eve created in the image of God and a picture of lower forms of life evolving into a human being. A child can become wise to the truth of their own heart. Instead of believing that they are wonderful exalted creatures parents must serve, children come to believe the truth of their own hearts when it says in Genesis 6, "The imagination of their hearts is evil from their youth."

Away with this strange teaching that says children are not accountable to God until they reach a certain age. From childhood, even from infancy, we learn how far we fall short of God's glory and that we need Jesus to rescue. Children, even the little ones see Jesus as their Lord and God, and they believe in Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and yet one God.

They see the blood of Jesus pouring forth from wounds as he hangs on the cross, and they believe it cleanses them from all sin. That's the faith of a child, the faith we want to carry us through the teen years, and college classrooms, and job success and retirement years, and even to our old age. And when we die we can sing, "Jesus loves me this I know for the Bible tells me so."

### **God's Word will change your life**

Oh, dear Christians look at your past, look at how God's word has changed your life, remember your first love, and then look at how the Word will change your life in the future. Paul reminded Timothy how valuable the Word was to help him become a man of God thoroughly equipped for every good work. "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness." All Scripture is "God-breathed." The Greek word for spirit is the same word for breath. It is the Word "pneuma" the root of the word "pneumatic." Pneumatic tires or shocks have air in them. The Hebrew word for breath and spirit is "Ruach." Both Greek and Hebrew word for air or wind and spirit sound like what they mean. You almost speak these words with air or breath coming out of your mouth.

I am holding a piece of plastic tubing in my hand. If you held this to a candle and blew through the hose, your breath directed through the tube will blow out the candle. The Holy Spirit blew the Word of God through the writers of the Old and New Testament and then caused the right words to fall down into the page of this book we know as our Bible. 2 Peter 1 says, "Above all you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit." All of Scripture is God-breathed. That means we can open up the Bible, and point to any verse randomly and say "This is God's Word."

In 1 Corinthians 2 the Apostle Paul helps us appreciate how this Word of God is God-breathed or brought to us by the Holy Spirit. First he quotes from the Old Testament to prove that we cannot gain an understanding of what God has planned on our own because God's ways are hidden to us. "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him." But then he writes, "God has revealed it to us by his Spirit." He uses the example of another human being. "For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him." I may know what I am thinking but I cannot look into your mind to know what you are thinking. However, God the mighty God, the creator of the universe takes what is in his mind, and reveals it to us by his Spirit and puts it down for us on the pages of the Bible. How amazing is that.

Jesus told his disciples that he would send them the Holy Spirit the comforter or counselor who would teach them all things and bring everything into their memory. When John and Matthew wrote down the life of Jesus and quoted his words, the Holy Spirit helped them remember exactly what needed to be put down on the page. Have you ever stopped at the store to pick up a few items and you could not remember a fourth item? That is why we make lists for ourselves and check off the things as we go along because our memory is faulty. God did not leave his word to the faulty and subjective memories of the apostles and prophets. He breathed his Word through the writers and put the exact words he wanted written down so that we can become wise to salvation. Every time we pick up the Bible to

read we can look forward to major changes coming into our lives as we are strengthened in our faith and grow in our faith.

Paul tells Timothy and us this morning how useful God's Word is in our lives for every challenge that comes in our future. It is useful for "teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness." When I read the Bible I can sit down and say, "Lord what are you going to teach me today about your love for me, or what promise do you have for me, or what rebuke do you have for some area of my life that needs immediate changing." When you know from the words of this God-breathed book that you are righteous in Christ, you long to be trained in that righteousness so every action of your life may please the Lord and draw others into his Word. May the Lord bless you this week as you appreciate even more that all scripture is God breathed. Amen.