

Devoted to God: Scripture, Part 2

September 23, 2007 - Skip MacMillan

Our Motivation: "In Christ are unsearchable riches" (Ephesians 3:8).

The Bible is an opportunity for God to speak to us:

2 Timothy 3:14-17 - 14But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, 15and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. 16All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Warning by David Wells:

"The Biblical Word is self-authenticating under the power of the Holy Spirit. This Word of God is the means by which God accomplishes His saving work in his people, and this is a work that no evangelist and no preacher can do. This is why the dearth of serious, sustained biblical preaching in the Church today is a serious matter. When the Church loses the Word of God it loses the very means by which God does his work. In its absence, therefore, a script is being written, however unwittingly, for the Church's undoing, not in one cataclysmic moment, but in a slow, inexorable slide made up of piece by tiny piece of daily dereliction" - David Wells, p.9, *Above All Earthly Powers*.

Why the "Church's undoing?" Because by Scripture and through Scripture we come to know God, Christian Beliefs and Life.

1. Move away from Scripture and you move away from the Truth about God, Christianity and life.

What I don't understand is if Scripture doesn't determine your view of God, Christian belief, and direction for life, then what does? And how did you pick this option over something else? Outside of Scripture it is all human opinion. And know this, that opinion will change with time.

2. Move away from Scripture and you become more easily misled.

3. Move away from Scripture and you miss out on God.

The Opposite is True:

1. Move in close to Scripture and you come to know the truth about God.

2. The more you know about what Scripture says the more difficult it is to mislead you.

3. Give God an opportunity to speak.

God's Word defines Himself, Christian beliefs and direction for living.

The end result is God being glorified and you are made into the likeness of God the Son.

God Defined

Where are people getting their ideas about God? Movies, clichés, traditions, etc.

How do we know what God is really like?

When a person says God did this, or God wouldn't do that, what are they basing that on?

False sayings: "Cleanliness is next to godliness", "God helps those who help themselves".

God is:

Is God Compassionate? How do we know God is compassionate?

Exodus 34:5-7 - "Then the LORD came down in the cloud and stood there with him and proclaimed his name, the LORD. 6And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, 7maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished"

Nahum 1:1-6 God
Nahum 1: 7 "The LORD is good"
Nahum 1:7 "He cares for those who trust in Him."

Psalm 86:5 (1 John 4:16 - God is love)

God is eternal, immortal, invisible and the only God.
"Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever" (1 Timothy 1:17).

Jesus is God: Hebrews 1:3 (John 1, Colossians 1, Philippians 2).
"The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven."

Westminster Confession of Faith 2.1

No wishful thinking, speculation or pooling of ignorance, but a definitive statement.
God is Power and Love – His love and power are seen on the Cross.

Without the Scriptures how will we define Him?

Christianity Defined - Scripture helps you know the truth about Christianity

Westminster Confession of Faith – Scripture is "The supreme judge by which all controversies of religion are to be determined . . ." 1.10.

Salvation – Redemption for relationship (grace then works, justification then sanctification).
"We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are"
(Acts 15:11).
Hebrews 2:14-18 is why John 14:6 is absolutely true. Divinity, Atoning Death, Resurrection, Perfect life.

Some have concocted their own deal with God, "God and I have a deal."
But, there is only one deal with God, that deal has His Son strewn up on a Cross to paying for your sins; this is the only deal. Now, do you believe, do you trust in His love, grace and mercy or not? That is the deal.

Forgiveness

"The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. . . . He does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us" (Psalm 103:8-12).

Eternal security or "Once Saved Always Saved"

John 10:27-28 - "My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand."
(Also Romans 8:35-39.)

Because it was Christ who saved you. His life, death and resurrection. It wasn't anything you

did and there isn't anything you can do that He has not already died for. You are secure in Christ. We did nothing to save ourselves, so how could we undo what we did not do?

Suicide

Does a person who commits suicide go to hell? Nowhere in Scripture will you find this. Why do people go to hell? Because they have refused to believe in the love of Jesus Christ's sacrifice. There is nothing to cover their sins; it has nothing to do how you died but whether you believed in Christ or not, period.

Health and wealth "gospel"

This corrupt version of Christianity says God wants you healthy and wealthy and if you're not you lack faith and/or you have sin; you aren't doing something right. You can change your situation by giving the "pastor" more money.

But if I were to read Scripture and if I were to come across Hebrews 11 what would I find? About Abel, Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Rahab, David, Samuel and the prophets: "They faced jeers and flogging, while still others were chained and put in prison. They were stoned; sawed in two; they were put to death by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated – the world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, and in caves and holes in the ground" (Hebrews 11:36-38).

Now, what do I think of the Health and Wealth false gospel?

The poor, widow, orphan, alien

"For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes. He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the alien, giving him food and clothing. And you are to love those who are aliens, for you yourselves were aliens in Egypt" (Deuteronomy 10:17-19).

The Environment – balanced view, love and manage creation, you are responsible for it, but don't worship it.

Women – balanced view, created in the image of God, valued, respected, talented, but still human, sinners.

Alcohol – balanced view, don't get drunk and therefore hurt others and yourself, but you can have a drink.

Sex – God created sex, God says when married - don't hold out from each other – 1 Corinthians 7.

Heaven – Revelation 21 verse; a light at the end of a tunnel?

Without Scripture we are unsure about any of these matters. Where are we going to go to find answers?

Why do we, the followers of Christ, believe what we do?

We allow the Scriptures to define our belief. What do you allow to define yours? Opinion, CNN, college professor, etc.

Direction for Life

Learn how to forgive, love, how to gain wisdom, to gain real hope, how to work and treat your spouse and children.

Negative: Why does God say sex is great but sex is to be in marriage, period?

"The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body" (1 Corinthians 6:13).

Why does God say don't do this? Is He narrow -minded, prudish, killer of fun, or is there something else?

STDs - Every year, there are at least 15 million new cases of STDs, 25% or 3,750,000, are teenagers. Cost, more than \$8 billion is spent each year to diagnose and treat STDs, does not include HIV. One in two sexually active persons will contact an STD by age 25.

AIDS - More than 25 million people have died of AIDS since 1981. That is the total population of SC, NC and GA. In 2005 there were 38.6 million people living with HIV and AIDS worldwide. Children: 2.3 million; Africa has 12 million AIDS orphans. People 15-24 years old account for half of all new HIV infections worldwide. Estimated 6,000 become infected with HIV every day. (From Avert.org).

God sets up parameters. Why? "So that it may go well with you" (Deut. 5:29).

"God's divinity does not depend on your morality."

What kind of God would He be if He did not warn us about this?

What does God want the Scriptures to mean to you?

God wants the Scriptures to be your life!

"When Moses finished reciting all these words to all Israel, he said to them, 'take to heart all the words I have solemnly declared to you this day, so that you may command your children to obey carefully all the words of this law. They are not just idle words for you - they are your life' " (Deuteronomy 32:45-47).

"Jesus answered, 'It is written: Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God' " (Matthew 4:4).

Because in them we learn about the nature of God, Christian beliefs, and direction for Life.

Allow the Scriptures to "create an evolution in your soul".

Allow God to shape your soul and your life through devotion to Him in prayer and the Scriptures.

Allow God's Scriptures to become your life.

"In Christ are unsearchable riches" (Ephesians 3:8).