# Congregational-Presbyterian Church

 **“The Inspired Word of God”**

**2 Timothy 3:14-17**

 **September 3, 2023**

This morning I invite you to turn with me to Paul’s second letter to Timothy 3:14-17

But you must remain faithful to the things you have been taught. You know they are true, for you know you can trust those who taught you. You have been taught the holy Scriptures from childhood, and they have given you the wisdom to receive the salvation that comes by trusting in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work.

Paul is writing to Timothy, his son in the faith, who has been given the task of leading the church in Ephesus. Paul has warned him that there are some who claim to speak for Jesus, but they are deceivers or they have been deceived into thinking their words and actions are in line with the truth of God. What does Timothy need to remain focused on God’s will for him? What will guide Timothy and give him the wisdom he will need to carry out the good work that God has planned for him? What will Timothy rely on when Paul, who is anticipating his death, is no longer available? What will instruct Timothy in living a godly life? The answer to each of these questions is the inspired Word of God.

How can the Bible do this? What is it about these words that enable them to give wisdom for salvation and to be the foundation for Christian living? Paul tells us in verse sixteen: “All Scripture is God-breathed.” The translation I read from says that all Scripture is “inspired by God,” but I prefer to stick with the original Greek word which literally translates “God-breathed” – *theopneustos –* a compound word using *theos*, the word for God, and *pneuma*, the word for breath. What does it mean that the Bible is God-breathed?

That the Bible is God-breathed means that Scripture owes its origin and content to the divine breath, the Spirit of God. In other words, the human authors who wrote the Bible were guided and directed by the Holy Spirit. Without the Spirit, they would simply have been writing human words, thought of by human minds, reflecting human understanding and opinion about God and about ourselves. Through the Holy Spirit these are God’s words, conceived by the mind of God, reflecting the way, the truth, and the life of God. Like Jesus who is himself called the Word of God lived out in a person, the Bible is the Word of God written out in a text.

Paul says the Word makes us wise for salvation. That is, we are told how we may be saved and by believing the words of the Bible, we are given eternal life. Paul also says that the Word prepares and equips us to do God’s good work. It does this by acting as a teacher in our lives. It teaches us what is true, and it helps us see when we’ve gotten it wrong. It shows us how to get back to God’s way, and instructs us how to live in that way.

Think of the Word of God as being like a class room teacher. When I asked our staff this past week about their worst subject in school, several said, “Math.” So, imagine you’re in your math class and your teacher is talking about the Pythagorean equation, which all of us know is a2 +b2 = c2. Then you take the test and the teacher tells you that you got it wrong. But, thankfully the teacher takes the time to correct your error, showing you what you did wrong. Once you understand what you did wrong and how to apply the equation correctly, you are now ready to put it to use in your ongoing math career, brief as it may be.

Paul began our passage by reminding Timothy that the Word of God has been his teacher from childhood. Timothy was raised in a home where faith was lived out by his mother and his grandmother, and central to that lived faith was the Bible. Timothy has a strong foundation in God’s Word, and if he remains faithful to the Word it will give him what he needs to do the work of God.

For these 18 years as your pastor, I have sought to teach you from the Word of God. It has been my teacher since my own childhood in a Christian home. The Holy Spirit has given me a love for Scripture, and it has been my sincere desire to pass on to you what has been given to me. My prayer is that you will continue to read it, study it, discuss it, and most of all allow it to direct every aspect of your life. May the inspired word of God continue to be for you, as it will continue to be for me, a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path.