

What do you believe about the Bible?

2 Timothy 3:14-4:5

10/20/13

As you might know, our theme this month is "Walk with Jesus." Each Sunday during October, our 3rd graders have been walking with Jesus in a special way. Mary has been meeting with them after the 2nd service each week and teaching them about the Bible and next Sunday they will receive a Bible as a gift from all of you, a gift of God's Holy and Life-giving Word.

Our Confirmation class has also been reading their Bibles, because I've given them a Daily Bible reading plan, and we've been reading through a Psalm each day for the last month

Last Sunday I asked our 7th and 8th graders, "Why does God want us to read His Word? and why is the Bible important in our walk with Jesus?"

How would you answer that question?

We have some members who work for the Oakley company, and I was reminded recently, of the story of the Chilean miners and the fact that Oakley donated sunglasses for each miner. So that when they came out into the sunlight, they wouldn't be blinded.

One of my favorite things about following a story like that is to listen for the stories behind the main news story, the "back stories."

And to me they are often just as interesting as main story.
Like hearing the name of the rescue camp above the trapped miners.
Did you remember what they called it?
It was called, "Camp Esperanza" a Bible word, which means Camp Hope.

I loved listening to what was going on at Camp Hope.
Like when the rescuers were able to drill their first bore hole down to the miners... a shaft about the size of a grapefruit.

And the container they were able to send down that first shaft was called the "Paloma"
Which in Spanish means "dove"

And as you can imagine, the first things they sent down the shaft were food, and water, and medicine. But the miners were also able to request other items.
Did you know that the miners received 33 small New Testament Bibles?

And that got me thinking about what I might have requested if I were in their position.
Think about that for a minute.

After food, water, and medicine... what would you have requested?
 Would you have asked for a Bible?
 Would that have been at the top of your list?

In a way that really begs another question.

What do you believe about the Bible?

And I don't mean in general, I mean "What do you really believe about the Bible?"

Do you know how we find out what we really believe?

One way we find out is during a time of crisis.

- Like when the mine caved in, and the miners were trapped half a mile underground.
- Or when the doctor tells you, "I've got some bad news for you."
- Or when you get a call in the middle of the night and one of your kids is in trouble.
- Or your marriage is on the rocks.

Who do you turn to at times like this?

You turn to what you really believe in
 ...what you really trust to get you through the day.
 ...whether it's food, or alcohol, or God.

That's one way we can find out what we really believe.

But there's another way.

We can find out what we really believe in times of crisis or
 we can find out during ordinary times.

And what I mean by that, is the fact that every day we make choices.
 Every week we decide how we are going to spend our time and our resources.
 Every week we choose what we care about.

So another way to ask the question, "What do we really believe about the Bible
 is to ask:

Is the Bible on my bookshelf...or is it in my life?

Does it feed my soul? Does it give me life?

There's another part of the story of the miners that I'd like to share with you.

Carlos Diaz the pastor who secured the Bibles for the miners had each Bible personalized with
 the miner's name and with specially marked verses to encourage them.

A Brazilian newsmagazine reported that each Bible was also labeled with the words,
 "We are praying for your return."

And in each Bible, Psalm 40 was highlighted.

Listen to the words they highlighted:

“I waited patiently for the Lord, and he inclined to me, and heard my cry. He also brought me up out of the horrible pit... and set my feet upon a rock, and established my steps.”

Can you imagine how those words sounded to these miners?

Can you imagine how God fed their souls with these words?

...feeding them with spiritual food, that lasts forever.

Did you know God is just as eager to feed you with this life-giving food?

Today our lives are pulled in so many different directions.

Just think about how much the pace of life has changed in the last 30-40 years.

We keep taking on more and more on

...running here and there, or spending time in front of our TV screens and computers, and smart phones

and as a result I think we're finally realizing that something important is missing

...a hunger for prayer and for God's Word.

That's what was Paul writing about in his letter to Timothy that we heard this morning.

You see, Paul and Timothy have traveled together as co-workers in the Gospel and Paul has called him, “my true son in faith.”

But Paul is also aware that Timothy is still young in his faith...

Paul knows that Timothy is facing some false teachers

and he's in danger of being shaped by something other than God's Word.

So Paul writes to him and tells him to remember the solid foundation he received as a child.

Paul reminds him of his faithful grandmother and mother.

He reminds him of the verses he has memorized

...the Word of God he has stored up in his heart.

And then Paul reminds him why God's Word is so important. In verse 15 Paul writes,

“from childhood you have known the sacred writings

these writings are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

“All Scripture is inspired by God... all Scripture is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction,

and for training in righteousness,
so that everyone who belongs to God, may be proficient,
equipped for every good work.”

In other words, God uses the Scriptures, the Bible, to bring us life.

Through the Holy Spirit God breathes His Word into us.
God’s Word leads us to salvation.
God’s Word changes our hearts

He forms us and shapes us into the image of his Son,
so that we are equipped to serve Him, and glorify Him.

That’s the testimony of Jimmy Sanchez, as he emerged from the mine this week.
He told reporters that he would like to make one small correction to all the stories about life in
the mine.

“There were actually 34 of us,” said Jimmy.
“Because God has never left us down there.”

That’s the gift God wants to give each of you this morning.
...the gift of life in Him.
...the gift of knowing Him, and being forgiven by Him,
...the gift of daily being drawn into His presence

so that we might respond with joy,
and follow Jesus, and walk with Him, and serve Him, and give glory to Him,
with everything we have. Amen