

# SERMON TRANSCRIPT

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SPEAKER

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SERIES

What's So Special About The Bible?

PART

5

TITLE

The Sufficiency Of The Bible

SCRIPTURE

Hebrews 1:1-4, 4:11-13



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It's good to see a Providence family. Hope you've had a good week. If you're a guest with us this morning, we're thrilled that you have joined us. If you're in the room or at home, we are glad that you are here. I hope that this time is going to be really encouraging to you. We're going to actually finish up a series that we started a few weeks ago, What's So Special About The Bible? Before we get there, I want to pray for us. Okay? Father in heaven, I asked that you would be gracious to us and that you would reveal to us, with clarity, what you desire for us to see in the pages of scripture.

Would you help us to see wonderful things, not only about what is true and about our life, but more importantly, would you help us to see and to adore and to begin to worship and to be reminded that Jesus Christ is worthy of our worship. I ask that you would pour out your Spirit upon us, that you would do what the Bible says is only possible if the Holy Spirit comes and is poured out upon us, that we would be able to understand your word, that we would have curiosity for it, that we would desire it, that we would be inclined to it, that we would lean towards it.

We asked that you would do those things in our life. I pray for those who are here who have honest skepticism about the credibility of the Bible, if it can be believed, and if it is relevant for today, I asked that you would use today and that you would use it as a contribution in their life, what you've been doing and using other things to be able to help them to not only see, but to rest and believe in the accuracy, the credibility, the inspiration, and the authority and sufficiency of the Bible. Would you help us as a church family to hold fast to it, to love it with all of our heart, as it points us to love you with all of our heart.

We look to you in faith, would you speak through weakness, and we pray this in Christ's name. Amen. There's a lot of things in the world that have been popular, and then they became obsolete. You think about road-maps, you think about encyclopedias, phone booths, phone books, CDs, cassette, tapes, VCRs. To this list of once really popular items that have become obsolete in time, many people in our culture and in the world would add the Bible. Perhaps you have thought or asked, or maybe you've been asked yourself questions such as how can the Bible that was written so long ago, before so many discoveries and anthropology and psychology and history and invention and truth and philosophy, how could it possibly be relevant when it's so old?

Or maybe some of you have been asked or maybe you've thought, "How can the Bible be any source of authority for our life when it contains so much reprehensible behavior?" Or maybe you have been asked or you have asked yourself, "How could Christians consider the Bible to be a final authority when they themselves lay aside some of the laws, in particularly the Old Testament, and they hold onto others?" These are all really good questions, and they're all really old questions. In fact, a book in the New Testament called Hebrews was written just 30 years after Jesus rose from the dead. In the Book of Hebrews, the author seeks to answer many of these questions.

As we seek to consider what is so special about the Bible, what I want to do or try to do is to lean on the Book of Hebrews this morning, to be able to not only answer these questions, but also to show you the enduring

sufficiency of the Bible. Simply stated, I believe it is the final Word of God. If you desire to look at fuller notes on this, the notes of this actual sermon, either right now or later, you can find them at [pray.org/bible](http://pray.org/bible). But what I really hope you'll do is to turn in your Bible right now to Hebrews chapter one. We're also going to look at Hebrews chapter four. Just a few verses in each of those two chapters. If you don't have a Bible, there should be a Bible in a chair near you. If you don't have one at home, please take that home as a gift.

We would love for you to have it, for you to read it, and one day for you to love it. The first readers of the Book of Hebrews that I'm asking you to turn to, that we're going to spend our time in this morning, were mostly Jewish people who would become Christians. They heard the gospel about Jesus Christ and they put their faith in Jesus Christ, but now they're facing certain challenges. Some of them were facing real and present danger in persecution, and as a result of that, they were tempted to abandon Christ and even return to their former way of life. Perhaps some of you who have, at some point in your life, trusted Christ, you've gone through a season and maybe you're in that season right now where you really wonder, you're tempted to return to your former way of life before Christ.

Other of these first readers, they faced a very different experience, and that was that they believed that the Bible was needed, but insufficient. In other words, they would've essentially said to you, "Look, Jesus is my savior and the Bible is my book, but I live in a community where there's Jewish people and Greek people and Roman citizens and people from all over the Roman empire who have come and they have different philosophies and ideas and truth statements, and some of them don't sound all that bad. If we would synchronize these things and harmonize their ideas with our ideas found in the Bible, then perhaps we could enjoy the benefits of all of these systems, and not only that, that we would be seen as more inclusive in our community."

I want you to know that the temptation to abandon or to add to Jesus is ultimately driven by a belief that Jesus and the Bible are deficient. If this is where you stand, if you have either one of those ideas, I want to encourage you to read through the whole Book of Hebrews. Maybe not right now, but maybe sometime, maybe this week, to read through the Book of Hebrews. We won't be able to look at all of it, but the Book of Hebrews was written to show you and me the unparalleled, unrivaled supremacy of Jesus Christ over all things, and the unparalleled unrivaled sufficiency of His word, which is the Bible. Hebrews chapter one, starting in verse one says, "Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets. But in these last days, He has spoken to us by His Son whom He appointed the heir of all things, through whom He also created the world."

"He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of His nature, and He upholds the universe by the word of His power. After making purification for sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high." Then in chapter four, starting in verse 12, we find these words, "For the Word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of the soul and the spirit, of joints and of the marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. No creature is hidden from His sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of Him to whom we must give an account." What is so special about

the Bible? The first thing I want you to see that we find here in Hebrews is that the Bible is the word of the gracious and glorious God.

In other words, it's a hard sentence to actually put together in a concise way. What I want you to see is there is one God in the world. He is absolutely glorious, absolutely gracious, and He has spoken and where He has spoken is in the pages of Scripture, the Bible. Before we would consider how and what God said in verse one and two, we should examine what the author of Hebrews points our attention to, and that is not what God said, but that is God's Son. The author of Hebrews points to Christ like a diamond that's spinning on a motorized wheel, and there's bright lights that shine upon that diamond. Every time the tour guide of the diamond, the light, hits a new facet as it turns, the author of Hebrews goes, "Now, look at that. Yeah, look at that."

The first thing he says when he looks at Christ is he says, "Just look. He is the heir of all things." Even for those of us who don't even know what that means, that does sound spectacular, doesn't it? Right? All things, the heir of all things, and that's exactly what he says to us. This Son, who God has spoken to, finally is the heir of all things. It's remarkable. This heir is the prince of heaven, the Son of God. He was in heaven, unrivaled wealth, worship, everything, and voluntarily, the New Testament says, "Chose to become poor so that you and I could become spiritually rich." He came to this earth, and in life, He chose poverty. The Bible even says He had no place to lay His head. In His death, He died naked without clothes.

In His burial, they put His body in a borrowed tomb, and then Jesus Christ rose from the dead on the third day. Several weeks later after He rose from the dead, the Bible tells us that He ascended into heaven to His rightful place from which He came. If you look at Revelation chapter five, you don't have to look there now, but you can see what takes place when the Son of God, the Christ, returns. In chapter five, what we're told there is that God the Father is sitting on the throne, and in His hand is a scroll. The Bible tells us that in the scroll is the title deed to the entire universe, to heaven, the earth and everything in it. This is really important. It's sealed. It's sealed seven times.

In Roman law, if you created a will for yourself, you would go to the magistrate, and to authenticate it, it would be sealed seven times. Then when you died, the rightful heir, and only the rightful heir, would take the scroll to the magistrate and would open it up, and how you knew, it was being opened... had opened seven seals, and only the rightful heir had the authority to do that. Here in Revelation five, God Almighty is literally holding the scroll, the title deed to everything, and the question from an angel is proclaimed through heaven in verse two, "Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?" Who's the rightful heir over all things? At that moment, after a brief time of tearful silence that no one was qualified to come, it says that the Son of God, who appeared as a lamb who is slain...

You remember when John the Baptist saw Jesus the first time, he says, "Behold, the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world," the sacrificial system where individuals, after they had sinned, would take a unblemished lamb to the priest and sacrifice it in order to atone for their sin. John the Baptist says, "There is the

final sacrifice. There is God's provision, His final lamb." In the Book of Revelation, when Christ comes back to the earth, it says, "There's the Son of God." It says this, "Who is worthy?" Suddenly, it says that the Son of God, as though He's a lamb that was slain, appears, walks up to the throne and takes the scroll out of His father's hand, and He begins to open it and all of heaven, in verse 12, begins to erupt, "Worthy is the lamb who was slain, to receive." You know what receive means?

That's what happens to the heir of all things. "To receive power and wealth and wisdom and mind, and honor and glory and blessing." What I want you to see in this is this, is that this rightful heir over all things is the one who is speaking to us in the Bible. The diamond continues to turn and the author of Hebrew goes, "But wait a minute. Not only is He the heir of all things, He's the creator of all things." He's the heir of His own creation that was designed for His own pleasure and glory. The New Testament says, "By Him, all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities, all things were created through Him and for Him." If you can see it or if you can't, He created it.

Whether it's sun or earth or light or water, wind, birds, beasts, fish, dirt, trees, natural laws, He created it for Himself, for His pleasure. He's the creator of all things, and this creator God is the one who speaks to us in the Bible. The diamond continues to turn, and the author of Hebrew goes, "But wait a minute, you also have to see this. That He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of His nature. He's the visible brightness of the glory of God. He is the visible rays of light that flow from its source. He is the perfect imprint of the Father's deity and nature and character." This is why Jesus said, when He was on the earth, "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father," and this is the one who speaks to us in the Bible.

The diamond continues to turn, the author of Hebrews says, "Oh, there's another thing you got to see. He upholds the universe by the word of His power." Our lives, every nation, every planet in the universe and everything in them is held together because Christ declares that they remain intact. When Christ no longer declares for you to remain intact, you won't. This earth won't. Our nation won't. He has this kind of power and it flows from His mouth, and this is the one who speaks to us in the pages of the Bible. The diamond continues to turn and he wants to show us one more feature, a feature that adds grace to all this glory, and he says that this the one, the Son of God, who made purification for sins, and after doing so, He went and He sat down at the right hand of the Father.

God saw our sin problem, and He sent Christ to save us from it. Jesus live without sin, He died for our sin, He rose from the dead, and unlike the human priest who received people all day, every day, never was able to sit down because people kept bringing lambs and bulls and goats in order to atone for the guilt in their own heart. There was always a line. But the Son of God, He died, and what does it say? "When Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, He sat down at the right hand of God." You know why He sat down? Because His work was done. The sacrifice was complete. Nothing else was needed.

Because of Christ, if you today, if you have a guilt problem, meaning you've sinned and you feel guilty about it, you feel shame about it, the Bible pleads with you and with me not to try to run from that guilt, or to numb yourself to that guilt, or to redefine that guilt as being actually a right thing, or to make some kind of sacrifice or atonement to a church or a charity in order to try to absolve yourself from that guilt that urges you to run to Christ who forgives the guilt, who takes the guilt away entirely. First John 1:9 says that, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Now, why? Why should this vision, this picture of Christ's glory and grace plunge us into the Bible? Because number two, the Bible is the final Word of God. There's all kinds of people who have ideas about God. That's what you have to do. If you don't open a Bible, you have to invent it. You have to imagine something, and there's a lot of people that imagine all kinds of things about God. Some people imagine Him to be this impersonal force, this eternal energy, that if we can simply identify some way to become enlightened or to grow in our discernment or intuition, that we can tap into some of that aura or energy. But in their view, God is utterly impersonal. But what you find in the Bible is something so remarkable, and that is not only is God personal, He's relational.

It's amazing what the Bible tells us about Himself. It says that He hears. That's a relational capacity quality. He speaks. It's a relational capacity. He says that He emotes, He feels, He remembers, He forgives, He tells, He makes promises, He keeps His promises. All these things are relational. Then what He does is He creates us in His nature. In His image, not His nature. In His image. What that means is this, is that a relational God created you, which is why you have ears to hear, not only Him, but each other. You have a mouth to be able to speak. You have eyes to be able to see. This is why when a branch touches you or a stick or a rock, or when a human being touches you, you tend to know the difference. It's because you're relational by nature.

You can talk, you can remember, you can think, and this God who is so relational, He chose and chooses today, through the Scriptures, to use words, to communicate who He is, so that we can know Him and love Him. This is who God is. What he says in verse one is this, "Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets." Let's start with this word, ways. In many ways. Look, of course, he's speaking of the Old Testament. Long ago, God spoke to our fathers, the forefathers, people in the Old Testament, and he says that He did so in many ways. You read of the Old Testament and you can find that God's speaking through visions and dreams and warnings and proclamations, and even visual signs where God was in their presence and there was a glory, there was a cloud, there was a fire. There was something.

All these ways where God was trying to communicate to humanity His word and His will and who He is. It's really interesting though, and this is where it's ... This is a really important word, but what I really want you to see, because this is what He compares, is this word times. It says in many times. Time doesn't mean many minutes or hours. It's not like we gave really long sermons. That's not what he's saying. When he says many times, the word times can also be translated portions or pieces. Why is that so significant? Well, just like a puzzle that's put together and it's created and developed incrementally, piece by piece, every generation of

people in the Old Testament, they had a fuller picture because more pieces in every generation. God kept speaking generation by generation.

Each person, each family, each generation, they got a little bit more. When they got oh, all this stuff has been stacking up and yet the puzzle wasn't complete, and as a result of that, they anticipated the day when the revelation of God was complete. This is why when Jesus was on the earth and He went in John chapter four and He spoke to a woman at the well, the woman said to Jesus these words, he says, "I know that Messiah is coming. When He comes, He will tell us all things." The picture will be complete. Notice what he says, "Long ago," and through many ways and many times, God spoke through the prophets. But notice what he says, "But in these last days, He has spoken to us by His Son." This is really interesting. The tense of the verb even changes from the word here God spoke, to it's spoken.

Down here when He is talking about His revelation through His son, it's not a completed peace by peace. It's a once and for all. It's a completed action, and this is what Jesus does. I want you to think about what we are seeing here are in these pages when He says to us that He made purification for sins, and as a result of that, He sat down at the right hand of God because no further sacrifice was needed. When it says here that He's spoke these last days, not in pieces, but in completion. This is what He means. He means that Jesus Christ is the savior of the world who ends the sacrifice official system by His death and resurrection, and He is also the revealer who ends the incremental revelation of God by making Him known to the world.

You say, "Well, what's the significant of that?" It's this. In the Bible, we have revelation as sufficient as His salvation. You say, "Put that in practice." When we say to God, "I see your 66 books, but I need one more," it's like saying, "I just sinned again, so come back down to the earth and die again." His death on the cross was absolutely and utterly sufficient, and His revelation to us as the final word is also sufficient for us. Now, do you believe that? When He came and He endorsed the Old Testament, and then authorized the writing of the New Testament by the apostles with the help of the Holy Spirit, He was giving us a word, completion, that was sufficient for life. Many of you say, "Man, there's just so many things, though I wish He would add to it."

Even God knows that. This is what He says to us in the Book of Deuteronomy. "The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law." You see what that means? It means He still knows stuff you don't know, even with a Bible. That's why when we live in this world and we say, "God, why would you let that happen?" We don't always have an answer. But what we have in the pages of Scripture, He tells us when He looks at us and He looks at the world and He looks at what we absolutely need in order to live a life of faith, a life that would please Him, a life that would remove shame or move us away from shame and guilt, He says, "This is enough." Some of us, we hear that, we think, "But wait a minute, how in the world could the Bible be sufficient as a revelation of God when there's so many things about it that just seem a little bit wacky?"

For example, how can the Bible be sufficient if it approves of reprehensible behaviors like polygamy? Well, that's an interesting one. Let's talk about it. There's several Bible characters in the Old Testament that had multiple wives. It should also be noted that they, and especially their wives, were particularly miserable. But even if you remove of personal misery, because there's a lot of people who are in a marriage with just one person that are miserable, that's not the basis of rightness, what we also see within the pages of Scripture is that these same Bible characters, they lied and cheated and raped and assaulted and murdered other people. We see all kinds of reprehensible behavior by people within the Bible. One of the things you have to remember when you're studying the Bible, reading the Bible, is that the Bible is a story of God intervening in a broken sinful world.

What that means is this, is that neither the reprehensible behavior that you see that's being participated and practiced by sinners, nor God's remarkable patience not to wipe them off the face of the earth is not to be seen as approval. In other words, not everything in the Bible is prescriptive, but it's all descriptive. It's describing what was happening in the world, but we're not supposed to obey every verse of the Bible because a lot of people did a lot of bad things that are described in those verses of the Bible. It does require a measure of wisdom, and one of the ways that helps us navigate, okay, well, then when you have all that going on, how do you know what's right? Well, you look at what God does and responds and what He says clearly. At the beginning of His revelation, He wants to talk about marriage.

He says in Genesis chapter two, "Man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife." One wife, one, "And they shall become one flesh." You go, "Well, you know what? It's incremental. Maybe Jesus, when He came, improved upon that." Let's talk about what Jesus said. Matthew 19, "Man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." What this means is that God was absolutely and remarkably patient with sinners, but He only approves of a marriage between one man and one woman. You say, "Okay, what about slavery in the Bible? We know that's reprehensible. We know that's not supposed to take place, and yet it's endorsed in the Bible." One of the things you need to ask yourself, when either you ask yourself or someone asks you, is this, is what form of slavery are you talking about or assuming that the Bible is endorsing?

See, most of us, when you hear the word slavery, immediately we begin think about what? About the involuntary race-based chattel slavery, where a person is stolen, stripped of their dignity and owned as personal property. Deuteronomy 24 in the Old Testament, First Timothy chapter one in the New Testament, both categorically and unconditionally condemn this practice. But in Israel, there was a form of slavery called bond slavery or bond servanthood that was form of bankruptcy law. For example, if you got into debt, you couldn't pay your loan, your debt, you could voluntarily choose to become a bond servant or bond slave to a person that you owed money to until either your debt was paid or you worked for them seven years, whichever was shorter.



During that time, they not only had to protect you, they had to provide food and shelter for you and your family while you worked in that environment. They did not own you, they owned your means of production until the debt was paid. You say, "Well, was this God's best?" Well, no, it wasn't His best. When sin entered the world, everything broke including economic systems, and this is why Jesus came and He died in order to create a kingdom that would be my arc by eternal equity, justice, love and righteousness. Well, what about the fact that Christians set aside some laws and keep others? That's a great question. Many of us even wonder, "Well, which one of these are we supposed to keep and which one ... Should we bring a goat to church today? Should we build an ark?"

Are you building an ark? If you ever read Noah, are you supposed to build an ark? Some of us, we eat pork. The Bible in the Old Testament says, "Don't eat pork." Some of us going to go right after that. We're going to go over to Denny's, and we're going to get a big old pork sandwich, and yet we're going to hold onto don't lie and don't murder and don't commit adultery. How do we make those distinctions? How are we supposed to think about out that? Well, God's revelation that came incrementally in the Old Testament, it included three different kinds of laws. One was civil law, and that was if you were in Israelite, it taught you how to live in Israel. Just like we have laws in Raleigh, well, they had laws in Israel, civil laws.

Then there was ceremonial laws, and that is because God was intervening and moving in His people, there was laws that told people how to remain clean of hearts so that God would not only approve, but be with that people. Then there was moral laws, like don't murder or steal. It's interesting, as God was giving all of these laws to His people, He simultaneously was telling us and telling them that a new covenant was going to be enacted and it would be utterly different. In fact, in Jeremiah chapter 31, He says, "'The days are coming,' declares the Lord, 'when I will make a new covenant.'" A new covenant. You read in Jeremiah 31 about the new covenant, and what it says is this, is that not only will God's Spirit come and live in our heart so that the law won't be written on stone, but rather it will be written on our conscious.

But instead of having to bring a goat to sacrifice for sin, is the Christ Himself will remove our sin. A better covenant. Well, Jesus Christ came, He died and He rose again in order to ratify this new covenant, the New Testament. As a result of that, the Book of Hebrews tells us, in chapter eight, "In speaking of a new covenant, He makes the first one obsolete." What that means is that when we trust Jesus Christ, He makes us clean through and through before God. We're utterly cleansed, approved of, welcomed into God's presence. Therefore, the regulations to be clean in the Old Testament are obsolete because they've been fulfilled for us. But you and I aren't allowed to arbitrarily make that decision.

No, it is the Bible itself in the New Testament, when Christ came, that tells us which laws are obsolete because of His complete sufficient work on the cross and which laws are intended to be kept and practiced in order to protect human life, family, and culture. In other words, we have to keep reading the Bible to learn. The third and last thing I want you to see is the Bible enables a living and active relationship with God. This is what we find in Hebrews chapter four. I've been married 25 years to my wife. Her name is Tabatha, and it's interesting

after 25 years, I can look Tabatha in the eye and I can tell her things without saying a single word.

But the only reason that I can do that is because for 25 years we've used words. In other words, when I tell her I love her, my eyes look a certain way, and so I can tell her I love her now without using words because she knows what's behind those words and knows what's behind those eyes. In the same way, we've been involved in all kinds of social circumstances, where we talked afterward. There's a context and then we talk. We use words. As a result of that, when you spend time with somebody and you are in a context and then you use words to describe what you felt in that context, what you wish would've happened in that context, I wish you would've just got up and said, "Let's go home because I wanted to get out of that context," whatever it was, now all of a sudden, we can be in that context and I can simply look at her and I can know she wants to go right now. It's time to suggest that we leave.

But why? It's because we used words. Similarly, the only way to have a relationship with God, one that includes wordless adoration and one that includes the ability, when your Bible is at home and you're at work and you wonder what He would have you do right now, is if you build a relationship on His word. One of the great tragedies that I pray for all the time about, for Providence, for you. Because I look around the world today and I look even at Providence today and there's so many people and on the basis of the fact that they do not engage in a relationship with Christ, what happens is this, is if you do not engage in the word, what happens is you call your relationship or what you are doing a relationship with Christ, but actually it's only religion and regulation, and therefore, the relationship feels utterly cold, empty and impersonal.

Therefore, people go, "Man, if that's what the relationship is, who wants that?" Including us. So many abandon it. My appeal to you today is to build a relationship on the basis of His word, to be in His word, to learn from Him, to learn His heart, to understand and who He is, to love Him and His word, and what you'll find is this, is that not only will you become wise in situations to know what He would have you do when your Bible is at home, but you'll experience times of wordless adoration where you don't have to say a single thing and yet you're worshipping Him from the depth of your heart. What you'll find is this, is that you'll experience what you call a relationship will become a relationship and what you'll find is the sweetness of walking with Christ.

Many people who call themselves Christians are literally devoid of the sweetness of what Jesus has made available, because they will not build a relationship with Him through His word. I'm begging you, love the book because it's going to help you love Him. The Bible tells us here that it's living and active. If I say, "Let there be light," nothing happens. I have to turn a switch. God says, "Let there be light," and suddenly there's white light. You know why? The reason there is is because it is through God's word that His power begins to be activated in our life. "The Word of God is also sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of the soul and spirit, joints and marrow, discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart." He uses the metaphor of the human body, and in particular, the intricacies that ... It's not just like separating arm from arm. That's not hard.

It's like one over there, one over here. I got all this space, but separating motives and intentions, joints and marrow, all these delicate places, and what he's saying here is this, he's showing us how precise the Bible can be to cut, open and cleanse. Nothing can be hidden from Him. "No creature is hidden from His sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of Him to whom we must give an account." In other words, God sees what we need to hear. He can see into your heart. He sees everything, and therefore, He knows what you need to hear, which is why in Roman seven, Paul, he's looking at himself and he goes, "You know what? I'm pretty amazed at myself right now. I can't think of a single command that I'm breaking right now. It's amazing."

Suddenly God goes, "Well, I see some stuff;" and He shows him a commandment, do not covet, and all of a sudden, this avalanche of conviction and coveting begins to awaken in his heart, and he's like, "Oh my goodness, I had no idea what was there." You see, the only way to receive a good and bad news that we need to hear is if we read and accept the Bible to be sufficient. What's so special about the Bible? This amazing book contains 66 books that's written over 1,500 years, that tell one coherent story about redemption that culminates in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is credible, authoritative, inspired by God, sufficient and having full confidence that it is, let me encourage you with a few last applications.

First, if you've been here, it shouldn't surprise you, let's read the Bible. If all of this is true, God forbid, we keep it closed. The book is written by a God who's glorious and gracious. He alone is worthy to declare what is right, noble and good. We do not have the authority or the wisdom to declare anything right, noble and good, but we can read and echo His word. Read the book. Read the Bible to your kids, read the Bible to your friends, to your parents. Enjoy the Bible, struggle with the Bible, rest with the Bible, be confused by the Bible so that later you can become wise in the Bible. Second, let me encourage you to trust the hero of the Bible. Is it interesting that after He says that He so spoke His complete word, then He says, "And He's the heir of all things?"

What's the partnership between a Son of God who speaks and the Son of God who's heir of all things? I think this is what it is, He has at His disposal because He owns all things, everything needed to fulfill His promises. He comes to us and He says, "Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Do you know why He can say this? Because He's the heir of kingdom of heaven. He owns the whole thing. He can make this promise. Those who are poor in spirit doesn't mean financially poor. It means that they recognize that I have a sin problem that I can't pay, and that humility moves them to look to Jesus Christ who is spiritually wealthy, who died for them, who rose again. You see, the Bible has one hero and it's Jesus Christ, and your life is intended to have one hero, and it is Jesus Christ.

My question is, is He the hero of your world? Is He the hero of your marriage? Is He the hero of your life, your soul? Has He forgiven you? You can trust Him right now by admitting your sin, by putting your faith and trust in Christ by saying, "I believe in your death and resurrection that it was for me, and I confess you as Lord of my life," and the Bible says that you will be forgiven. Why not do that now? Finally, let me encourage you to hold fast to the Bible. This, I mentioned last week, will become increasingly difficult as our culture

grows increasingly antagonistic against those who love the Bible. I'm 48, so I'm old. But for those of you who are young in the room, I believe with all of my heart, whatever age you are under 48, to get to 48, it's going to be more difficult for you to walk with Christ.

There's going to be a steeper headwind in front of you to hold fast to the Bible than there was for me in the years that it took for me to get to 48. It is going to become more difficult for you. Let me fortify your resolve, all of us, by reminding us of Christ's promise at the end of the Sermon of the Mount, when He said, "Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain fell and the floods came and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall because it had been founded on the rock." Let me say one last thing, and then we're going to pray. I promise you, no matter how much headwind, oppression, assault, ostracism that you face to hold fast to the Bible, no matter how harsh those winds, how heavy that rain, I promise you, you build your life on Christ, your life will not fail.

It will not fall. He will be faithful to His promise and His word. He will bring you home. I beg you, hold fast to the Bible. Let's pray together. Father, I ask that you would give us the courage to hold fast. For those of us who know and love, and yet who do not prioritize the Bible in our life on a daily basis, would you cause us to make incremental and yet consistent change in our priorities and time to place your word over our life, to build a relationship with us and with you. I pray for those who are considering trusting Christ, that you would open up their eyes, even now, to help them to see just the brilliance of Jesus that's put on display even in the text that we looked at. I pray for those who are skeptical about the integrity, the credibility of the Bible, that you would help them.

Lord, would you confirm in their spirit that this is true. Now God, as we have the privilege, not only to sing, but to observe a few people being baptized this morning, would you give them courage and confidence as they bear witness of their faith in you, would you give us excitement and celebration in our heart for your grace at work in their life. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. In just a moment, we're going to sing one last song. I'll have you stand. We're going to sing one last song. But before we do, in the middle of that song, we're going to see a few people being baptized, which is just an amazing privilege. Jesus told everybody who has put their faith and trust in Jesus Christ to bear witness of that faith in public by being baptized. When people go under the water and then they come out, it's a picture.

It's just a visual picture of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. Those that are going to be in the water, who have put their faith in Jesus Christ, that's what they've done. This water's not going to cleanse them, it's not going to purify them. Jesus has done that, and they have put their faith in Jesus. But because of their love for Christ, they want to obey Him and His word by even being courageous to stand before all of you, many of whom that you don't know and they don't know you, to say that they're not ashamed to be associated with Jesus. As they demonstrate that courage, I want to encourage us as a church family that believes in Jesus Christ, that when they come out of the water, let's be exceptionally excited for them and for what Christ has done in their life. Would you stand? Let's sing together.



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