

The Grace in "Grace Bible Church"

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Preacher: Marvin Wiseman

[0 : 0 0] For the next few weeks, and by the way, kind of another announcement, Pastor Marv is playing hooky from church for the whole month of July, and that's why you're seeing me up here.

And then he'll be back in August, and then he's going to be taking the pulpit for the month of August and September, and then he's going to be stepping down. It's something that he's been talking about for a long time, and he's done it once before.

But the end of August is kind of going to be the end of his full-time ministry anyway. He's going to continue to... Sorry?

Oh, the end of September. Thank you. The end of September. But you get to hear from me for the month of July. I've got a few weeks here in the month of July, and so I was thinking, what can I talk about over three weeks?

And so I thought, you know, Grace Bible Church is a great name for a church.

[1 : 0 4] You guys like the name Grace Bible Church? It's, you know, it's not as modern as some other church names. There's a lot of really creative, modern church names.

But it's got a lot to it in those three words. So I thought, let's maybe do a series here three weeks and just kind of going over a little bit about the DNA of our church and where we're coming from and why we're called Grace Bible Church.

And I really don't know much about the naming, the history of the naming of our church, but just knowing what's in our name can talk through those things.

And so the title of this, I don't know, series if you call it is What's in a Name? And the name of a church can tell you some things about it. Some names don't tell you as much.

Some names tell you more. And I wanted to talk through, you know, some examples of some church names and where they come from. If you look in the Bible, you won't typically find a name for a church, right?

[2 : 0 9] But you kind of sort of do. So when, for example, when you read in the epistles, Paul will write, for example, to the church at Corinth, right?

And so these churches were kind of identified by what? By where they were located. The church in Corinth was called, at least by Paul, the church in Corinth. Or he, when he was addressing the Thessalonians, when he wrote to the Thessalonians, he said to the church of the Thessalonians.

So he identified them by the people group, which is typically according to their location as well. There are a few other places. In 1 Corinthians chapter 16, Paul mentions a house church.

He says, he talks about the house that meets, or the church that meets in the home of Priscilla and Aquila, or Aquila and Priscilla. And then even one of the books of the Bible, Philemon, which is written to Philemon, he mentions in the beginning, to the church that meets in your house.

To the church that meets in your house. So that was the church of Philemon. We have denominational churches. So I think in our recent history, a lot of churches have been named by, according to your denomination, right?

[3 : 30] So that makes it easy to identify kind of what you're about. You know, what denomination do you belong to? So you might have the First Baptist Church of Monroe. Or you might have the Tenth Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia.

Has anybody ever heard of Tenth Presbyterian Church? It was actually a pretty popular church. There was a guy named Donald Greyhouse that preached. He was on the radio and well-known. Why would they call it the Tenth Presbyterian?

You know? So if you ever see a church like First Baptist, that just means that they're the first Baptist church in that town. And so I guess the Tenth Presbyterian was really late to the game in getting there.

They were the Tenth Presbyterian Church to arrive or establish in Philadelphia. Of course, Philadelphia is a big city. You might have the United Methodist Church of Omaha.

Here in, or close to where we live in, Xenia is the St. Brigid Catholic Church. And so you know what kind of a church that is.

[4 : 39] I don't know, is this 100% across the board? But it seems like every Catholic church is named after a saint. Is that like a rule that you have to do that? I don't know. But that seems to be the case most of the time.

And then we get into a more non-denominational church. Our church does not belong to a denomination, and it's kind of becoming more popular to not have a denominational affiliation.

So some churches might be identified with just their location. You might have the community church. Well, actually, we've got community church in Tip City, right?

It's become popular to drop the name church from the name of your church, right? So we have, for example, well, even back in Spurgeon's day, anybody know the name of the church that Spurgeon preached at in London?

It's called Metropolitan Tabernacle. So it wasn't church, it was a tabernacle. And that kind of identifies a little bit, you know, they use the Old Testament kind of an allusion to the Old Testament with tabernacle there.

[5 : 50] I've heard of Baptist Temple. I think there's a Baptist Temple in Dayton. Calvary Chapel. Calvary Chapel is a series of churches, lots of churches called Calvary Chapel.

In Xenia, there's a church called a House of Prayer. So the Bible talks about the house of God. House is a legitimate name.

And then I've seen churches called, like, the Gathering Place. So place, house, tabernacle, temple, chapel. And then, you know, in modern times, if you want to be really extra, you know, relevant, I've seen out in Washington where I'm originally, or where I kind of graduated high school, I guess where my family's from.

There was a place called the Champion Center. I guess that's another alternative, right? Center instead of church. There's a big church down in Atlanta called World Changers.

And then, you know, it's become really popular to just drop multiple names and just go with a single name.

[6 : 57] That happens with celebrities, right? I think Elvis was, like, the first one to, like, go by a single name. You know, Elvis Presley, but he just kind of went by Elvis. And then it became really popular, and you got Madonna and Sting and Cher.

And my kids are like, who are those people? Don't worry about it. Don't worry about it. And so there's a church here in our area called Fearless.

There's one out in Columbus called Dwell. There's a church that I'm familiar with called Journey, those single names. You know, I like to be hip and cool.

And those names can be helpful. Not disparaging anybody, but these are just kind of the types of names that people will use. I did come across a few more lighthearted, interesting names.

And these are actual churches. So I didn't write down where all these are at. But there's a church called Little Hope Baptist Church. Little Hope Baptist Church.

[8 : 07] I'm not sure what the thinking was there. If it was just a small church or if they don't, you know, their hope isn't big or what. There's a church called Halfway Baptist Church.

I think they just ran out of steam and said, well, we're good with Halfway. Actually, I think that one is located in a town called Halfway, so that makes sense.

There's a United Methodist Church. It's called Boring United Methodist Church. Now, this one is really interesting. I'm not sure who came up with this one.

But I think this was a church in Haiti. And it's called Run for Your Life International Chapel. Run for Your Life. Wow. And then I tried to find the longest church name.

You know, when I was actually in Bible school, we had one of the professors or teachers. They said, now, if you're establishing a church, it's a good idea to try to, when you name your church, don't make it too long.

[9 : 12] Like two, three words maximum. Because otherwise, it's too hard to remember. And, you know, people aren't fond of long names. So there's a church.

I can't remember where this was. It's definitely in Canada somewhere. But the name of the church is St. Francis National Evangelical Spiritual Baptist Faith Archdiocese of Canada. And so St. Francis, they just tried to fit everything in there.

All the different kinds of names throughout history in the past. And so our church name, you know, it's not very modern. It's not very hip. And as much as I like that, you know, we've got some hip people in here.

I think, Joe, I saw you in skinny jeans the other day. Is that right? No, no, no. Okay. That was somebody else. But our name is kind of old school.

But I like it. Anybody else like Grace Bible Church? Tell us a little bit about our church. So I'm going to look at these three words. Grace, Bible, and church. And talk about them a bit. And how does this fit into the DNA of our church?

[10 : 17] So today we're going to talk about that middle word, Bible. In Grace Bible Church, we are a Bible church. And not all churches are Bible churches. All churches should be Bible churches.

We are a church committed to the authority of Scripture. Now, in times past, and even today, there are churches that teach, well, the Bible is unauthority.

There are some who say the Bible is an authority, but they don't really treat it that way. But we here at this church are committed to treating the Bible as the authority, the standard by which we know what God wants from us.

We're committed to teaching the Bible. You know, not teaching, you know, our own personal thoughts and ideas. Not teaching some creed or confession or something that somebody else came up with, even though those might be helpful, just like any Bible teaching.

There's lots of helpful materials out there to try to help our understanding of the Bible. And this is a church where people bring their Bibles to church.

[11 : 29] You know, if I, sometimes I'll come across a new Christian or maybe somebody who's maybe seeking, maybe they're not a Christian yet, and they're looking for a church to attend to, to attend, and I'm not familiar with where they're from or the churches that are there.

And so I said, yeah, a general rule of thumb to find a good church is to find a church where people bring their Bibles and they teach from the Bible. That's generally a good idea.

You're probably going to find a solid church if you do that. If you will, we'll open up our Bibles and we're going to see what the Bible has to say about the Bible.

2 Timothy 3, verse 16. 2 Timothy 3, verse 16.

And it says this, This is Paul writing to Timothy and telling him, you know, Paul is writing to Timothy about his ministry as a minister of Christ.

[12 : 56] The Bible is authoritative. All scripture is given by inspiration. That means it's given by God. Inspiration means God breathed.

It's from him. And so it comes with God's authority. God decided, and I think we can kind of understand why, that he was going to establish his word written down.

And we can probably understand why that would be, right? There have been oral traditions passed down over the past, right? And people will tell stories.

Sometimes you'll tell stories about your family and you'll pass it down to your kids, but nobody ever writes it down. What tends to happen when you do that? It gets forgotten.

It gets lost. Sometimes the story continues, but what happens? It gets changed, right? And people talk about that game you'll play called telephone, right?

[14 : 00] Where you have a sentence or something and everybody whispers it in each other's ear. And once it gets around, what happens? It's a completely different story or a completely different sentence.

And that's what happens with oral traditions. They eventually just change over time. The Bible is a written record of God's word.

Prophets of old in the Old Testament were given words from God and they were told to write them down. And they were written down and then they were copied over time.

Now, some people criticize the Bible and they say, well, the Bible's an old book and it's been copied so many times. And it's just like that game of telephone. Is that true? No, that's why they wrote it down, right?

So it wouldn't be like the game of telephone. It was written down and copied. And is it easy to copy words from one book to another?

[15 : 00] It's actually not that difficult, right? And so over time, people have studied the scriptures and the original manuscripts and have found that even though there are small differences between some of the different manuscripts that have been found, for the most part, they say the same thing.

We were sharing in our Sunday school class a few weeks ago that I can't remember the exact statistics, but something like 90% of the differences between manuscripts are spelling differences.

And spelling differences are easy to, you know, figure out. Oh, they just missed a letter. Sometimes a spelling difference can change the meaning, but not usually, right? And then the rest of the differences are mostly, right?

And there are some more substantial, but for the most part, the differences are fairly small. Sometimes prepositions, things like that. The Bible is a controversial book.

A lot of people don't like the Bible. Has anybody noticed that? And why is that? What's, I mean, the Bible is just a religious text, but the Bible makes observations.

[16 : 13] It makes claims, and it also makes demands on us, doesn't it? And I think that last part is what a lot of people don't like, the demands that the Bible makes and the claims that the Bible makes about, you know, who Jesus is, for example, and what we ought to do and how we ought to live.

And so it's a controversial book. And because of that, the Bible has been scrutinized intensely for 2,000 years. There's lots of people who would love, if they could, to show that the Bible is an unreliable, untrustworthy source book for the Christian faith.

And have people tried that over the years? Many, many, many. And while sometimes people have brought up things that are worth considering, for the most part, people have come up empty-handed.

We have practices called textual criticism, in which people will look at original manuscripts and look and compare them to each other and decide, you know, is this really, do we have good copies?

Has this reliably been handed down over the centuries? And people who are not Christians look at the original manuscripts and they say, these are pretty reliable.

[17 : 39] They may not be true. I don't necessarily believe what's in there. But these have been faithfully handed down over the centuries. It's interesting that other, that there is no other scriptural text, and I'm talking about other religions.

Think about the Koran or the Bhagavad Gita or other religious texts. None has come close to being put under the same kind of scrutiny as the Bible.

Also, the Bible has, is different from a lot of other scriptural texts in that the Bible has a lot of history in it.

Not only history, but also geography. You know, if you read, for example, the Koran, which is a pretty popular, it's probably second most to the Bible, there isn't a ton of history or geography.

That was a little bit, but not a lot. But the Bible has a ton of history, historical narrative, about the, from the beginning of time, through what's happened in the world, how things are the way they are, a lot about Israel.

[18 : 53] And you know, when you put things like history and geography in a book, you put your book at risk. Because now, your book is open to, to be debunked, right?

It can be falsified. You can find out that the history was wrong. You can find somebody else that wrote history, or maybe a few other people, and their history is different from yours. Or you can look at the geography, and actually go to these places that the Bible claims are there, and you can go, and you can find, there's nothing there.

You know, the Book of Mormon, something that's only been around for a couple hundred years. And that's an interesting book. It makes a lot of claims. But it actually makes several, many claims about the history of America.

If anybody's familiar, and about kind of how America was populated, and the indigenous people. And it actually makes the claim that Jews came over thousands of years ago, and populated America.

It has claims about animals, and things like that, that you wouldn't typically find in America, except for in a zoo. But a lot of those things, there's no evidence for.

[20 : 06] You look, and you try to find evidence, whether historically, or geographically, through archaeology, and you just don't find them. But with the Bible, you can pick up the Bible, and people have done this.

You know, the 1800s was a tremendous era for archaeology. So many of the incredible finds that we found through archaeology were found around the period of the 1800s.

And you know what so many people did, people who are archaeologists, they picked up a Bible, and they went to the Holy Land. They went to Israel. They went to the Middle East. They took their Bible, and they opened it up, and they read about the lands of the plain, or about the city of Jericho.

And they read all the details about, it was next to this city, or next to that city. And they used the Bible as if it was a treasure map. And they went to this place, and then they started digging.

And you know what they found? They found, a lot of times, exactly what the Bible said was there thousands of years ago. Absolutely incredible.

[21 : 13] And there are so many instances, especially back, you know, a hundred years ago or so, where people said, you know what, the Bible, it's not really reliable. It talks about all these fanciful things about Jericho, and some of these other cities.

And there's no such place. And then somebody finds it. And then there's another, well, maybe they found this one, but not this one. And then somebody finds that one.

And then over, and over, and over, and over again. And it's not that we found every single city or location or artifact that the Bible mentions, but there have been so many that it's, that you start to see a picture, right?

This is a reliable book. This is a book that you can rely on for history. Maybe the words in it aren't true, but historically, it's accurate. The other thing to think about with the Bible and, you know, kind of testing its veracity, its reliability, its trustworthiness, is that the Bible is internally consistent.

You, and I keep going back to the Quran, but people have pointed out in studying the Quran that there's so many places where there's inconsistencies, things where it says one thing and then later, you know, flips to the exact opposite thing.

[22 : 41] And in the Bible, and we won't go into a lot of detail, but there's so much internal consistency as far as the message. Now, are there places in the Bible where some people, there might be some confusion? Yes, sometimes the details can, can cause some confusion and it seems like maybe there's some internal inconsistency.

And, you know, those things we'd like to think, right, are we can, if you study enough, if you understand enough, you can figure them out and resolve them. And some people try to do that.

But when you look at the big picture of the Bible, the amount of consistency is tremendous. And this is a book that wasn't written by one person.

This was a book written by many people. And it's not people who all got into a room together. This was by many people over thousands of years.

absolutely tremendous. It's interesting, too, that the Bible is a book that references itself so many times.

[23 : 46] There's a chart that I've seen. I think we might even have it somewhere in the church here. It might be in one of the rooms. That shows, it draws, it has a list of all the Bibles kind of listed out like this.

And it draws a line each time the Bible references another book of the Bible. And it's just this sea of lines in which the Bible references itself over and over and over again.

You know, a lot of people will say, well, I respect Jesus. I like Jesus. He was a good guy. I like some of his teachings. But I think the Old Testament is a bunch of bunk.

You know, it's bogus. I don't think it's reliable. Did you know that Jesus referenced the Old Testament scriptures? And I can't remember how many books, but most of the books of the Old Testament are referenced by Jesus and other authors in the New Testament.

In fact, I think there's only one and I can't remember if it's the book of Ruth or Esther. It's not mentioned in the New Testament. The other thing to look at in considering the reliability of the Bible is that it's a book that just comes across as true.

[25 : 01] You know, we have so much information at our fingertips today. We can go online. We can go online and we can find a picture of the Dead Sea Scrolls that were found back in the, what, 50s, I think?

And if you're not familiar with the Dead Sea Scrolls, you know, a lot of people were wondering about whether the Old Testament scriptures were actually accurate. Were they really passed down accurately over the years?

Back in the 50s, a little boy was looking for a goat and he threw a rock into a cave to see if he could hear a goat, bah, and he heard instead the sound of something breaking and so he investigated and there was this clay pot that he had hit with his rock and it is shattered and inside the clay pot were these scrolls and people came and investigated and they found these scrolls that were almost 2,000 years old and these scrolls were owned by people called the Essenes who were kind of a sect of the Jews and they found in them the Old Testament scriptures.

They found some other things too and it wasn't the complete set but they found these Old Testament scriptures written on scrolls and up to that point they never we didn't have anything that old and we looked at the Hebrew text and compared it to what we already had that was maybe 500 years old and you know what?

They matched. They were the same and the skeptics were again refuted in their skepticism.

[26 : 41] but the Bible so we have today you can go online you can look at archaeology you can look at all these findings but for most of the history of the church people didn't have access to these kind of academic things to be able to investigate the Bible but you know so many people have been persuaded that the Bible is true because of what it says because there are things in the Bible that the Bible says that couldn't possibly be written and not be true.

A couple just a couple of examples Jesus said something he said love your enemy who would possibly say that? Who could possibly say that?

There's I shared this in the Sunday school class a few weeks ago there's a book the name is escaping me seeking Allah finding Jesus was written by a Muslim he grew up Muslim in the Middle East and he started reading the Bible just investigating he was actually investigating his own faith the Bible is a book revered by the Muslims they consider it a holy book and I think it was that I think it was that phrase that Jesus said he talked about loving not just your neighbor as yourself but loving your enemy and that is something so antithetical to the world why would you love your enemy and it's a powerful thing who would say such a thing and then the greatest story of all time which is the central aspect of the New Testament is that God the creator of the universe humbled himself and gave his life gave up his own life for people that hated him and that story has back when this this whole thing started back 2,000 years ago it shocked people that God would come to earth he would lay down his life he would humble himself and lay down his life for people that hated him how could that possibly be true because for so many years you know thousands of years

I mean the gods people believed in gods or a god he certainly wasn't that kind of a god but even just the idea that there would be a god that would do that opened up people's hearts there's something to this it's shocking but it seems to make sense another thing about the Bible is that has the flavor of truth is that it's a book mostly written by Jews and it's mostly about Jews the bulk of the book is by Jews or about Jews written by Jews and you think if you have a book that you're writing about your own people that it would be a happy book is the Bible generally a happy book about the Jews the Bible is actually a book that shows how rotten the Jewish people were right and you'd think that if somebody was creating up a fanciful tale writing a myth about their own people is that the kind of book that you would write if you're writing a myth about your own clan that you would write about how awful and you you know worshipped false gods and did all kinds of evil things is that what you would write about your people no that's insane nobody would do that if they're creating a myth about about their own people but that's what we see in the

Bible it has this it comes across as it's got to be true Lewis Sherry or Sperry Schaefer said this about the Bible he said the Bible is not such a book a man would write if he could or could write if he would it's not something that that's even possible to get that level of consistency that we find in the Bible and it's not the kind of Bible that you would write if you were going to make something up the Bible is not such a book a man would write if he could or could write if he would so the Bible is authoritative the Bible tells us that we need to listen to it that it's from God and it's reliable and trustworthy the next thing I want to talk about about the Bible is the Bible is a book for everyone and it hasn't always been the case that the

[31 : 36] Bible has been treated like that again back to our Sunday school class we've been looking we actually watched a video called the forbidden book it talks about how the Bible was kept from the masses for hundreds of years we read in the Bible itself about during the times of the kings and who was it was it Josiah I think that found the book of the law in the temple and he said what is this oh this is the book it's called the law where did this come from and it hadn't the book of the law hadn't had been lost for generations they started reading it and so it didn't just happen in the Old Testament the Bible even though it has been preserved has been kept away from the masses of people for a long long time around the 400s the Bible started to even though it was translated in many languages it started to be seen of as a sacred text that well it should just be something that should be preserved or kept for the professionals to read because you know it's dangerous if you let people who aren't professionals or educated to read it and the

Reformation if you know anything about the Reformation period and Martin Luther but others that came before him John Wycliffe was one he was the one of the first ones to translate the Bible into English and then who was the other Tyndale William Tyndale was another big translator of the Bible they put their lives on the line and some of them including Tyndale actually lost their lives trying to get this book out to the masses to the people translated into a language that they would understand that they could read and print it so that they could actually access it for themselves it's a book for everyone not just the professional if you will open up to we'll look at Acts chapter 17 to read about the Bereans now Paul he was bringing a new message to the

Jewish people about this gospel of the grace of God and you can imagine that for the Jewish people who are hearing this message there would be some level of skepticism but one of the interesting thing that Paul does even though this is a new message is he used a lot of tie-ins especially when he talked to Jews tie-ins to the Old Testament he showed how there's a connection between his message of grace and about what Christ did for the world and what was spoken about in the Old Testament but in Acts chapter 17 verse 11 says this these were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica in that they received the word with all readiness and they searched the scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so therefore many of them believed and also not a few of the Greeks prominent women as well as men they heard this message they heard this idea this new idea that they'd never heard before they'd never come across and they said you know what

I'm going to weigh this against the scripture this is an example for us today are there anybody ever come across a new idea before sure you might be searching on the internet and coming up to a YouTube video and somebody's you know has this new idea and you know sometimes it can sound really great but what should we do with new ideas and sometimes it may just be new to us right we're all in a constant state of learning sometimes it might be a religious idea or maybe it may be a non-religious idea but we can search the scriptures and say well what does the Bible have to say about this but notice how this wasn't professionals this wasn't priests or other kind of academics teachers of the law these were just regular Jewish people who were looking at the scriptures well what does the scripture have to say about that you know the other dangerous thing and we see this in the

Reformation if we only allow the experts access to the Bible because only they can understand it what's the risk well what if they get it wrong well what if I get it wrong well we need to take that responsibility don't we and God expects us to he expects us to open up the Bible for ourselves we know that experts aren't always right why because they all disagree with each other and there is a lot of times agreement on many things but there's a lot of disagreement as well teachers are good and biblical but we need to search and confirm and verify what's in the Bible for ourselves another consideration when it comes to the Bible is that the Bible is a book that is meant to be understood and a lot of people don't realize that a lot of people treat the Bible as if it's a book of mystery it's a book where there's just questions asked in fact there are certain kind of sects of

[37 : 16] Christianity where it's popular just to ask questions and asking questions is great we should always be asking questions but the Bible isn't just a book of questions and mystery the Bible is a book of answers answers to most to all of life's important questions let's look at Deuteronomy chapter 29 this is the book in the law the law of Moses that says this Deuteronomy 29 verse 29 the secret things belong to the Lord our God but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever that we may do all the words of this law now this is specifically speaking of the law of Moses but the law of Moses this is the word of God and it was specifically for the children of Israel and it says you know what there are secret things there are things that

God has not revealed there are some things that maybe God didn't reveal in the past but he waits and then he reveals it at a later time there are things that God has never revealed and maybe never intends to reveal and that's true but the Bible is a book where God reveals things to us and that's what Moses is saying here in Deuteronomy God has secrets there are things that are kept secret that we don't know but God has given us these scriptures why?

so that we can know these things that God wants us to know so that we can understand the Bible is meant to open up the eyes of our understanding in fact Paul prays that for the Ephesians in the book of Ephesians chapter 1 I'll go ahead and turn there if you want to turn there as well but in Ephesians chapter 1 he's praying for the Ephesians he says I've got this prayer that I pray for you on a regular basis in verse chapter 1 Ephesians 1 verse 15 therefore I also after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints do not cease to give thanks for you making mention of you in my prayers that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ the Father of glory may give you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him the eyes of your understanding being enlightened that you may know what is the hope of your calling and what is the riches of his glory of the glory of his inheritance in the saints and what is the exceeding greatness of his power toward us who believe

Paul's prayer for the Ephesians is that they would grow in their understanding that their eyes would be enlightened and the Bible is a book of enlightenment there's another psalm and we won't take the time to turn there but psalm 119 verse 30 actually I think it's 130 but in psalm 119 it says this the entrance of your words gives shadows and fogs it gives understanding to the simple is that what it says no the words the entrance of your words gives light God's word opens up our eyes it gives light gives light to our eyes that we can see the things that we have not seen doesn't mean that everything is always easy to see it takes work sometimes to search the scriptures and figure out what God's saying but God wants us to know what he's revealed to us he wants us to understand it and so for the most part the Bible is a book that if we if we work on it if we spend some time we can find out what is true we can find out what

God wants us to know some people say well you know you can't really know the mind of God in fact Job or one of Job's detractors one of his quote friends talked about well who knows the mind of the Lord that you might instruct him you know do you think that you know more than God and that well that's a good point right are we the instructors of God well that's certainly not the case but Paul says this in 1 Corinthians 2 16 he says this for who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him that's from the book of Job but we have the mind of Christ we have his mind we have the mind of Christ written down in black and white for us to read we can read this and we can see the mind of Christ God wants us to know what is in his mind another thing that I found interesting is if you read through the gospels and Jesus and Jesus has these 12 disciples and he's got other disciples too but mostly you know his close knit group is the 12 and do you ever notice that sometimes

[42 : 34] Jesus gets annoyed with his 12 like he gets a little like annoyed and he'll say why don't you guys understand this it's in the Bible in fact there's a phrase that he used and I can't I didn't count how many times but it's maybe close to a dozen times in the gospels he says have you not read have you not read aren't you guys opening up the scriptures aren't you reading it's right there these things that I'm talking about and I can just see Jesus rolling his eyes right Jesus expected people to read the Bible and to understand it it's right there it's clear and it doesn't mean that it's always going to just jump out at you sometimes you have to dig a little to understand but the Bible is a book of revelation not a book of concealment another point to make this or another verse to make this point is in

Deuteronomy 6 6 and 7 the law Moses says in the law that we should teach these things to our children and so the scriptures are something that's not just accessible to adults the scriptures are accessible to children we can teach the scriptures to children they're accessible and maybe children won't understand to the degree as adults but they can understand some things and really children can understand a lot of things if we put the word in front of them they can grow and understand one of the verses you know because I don't certainly don't want to say well the Bible is a book that's just you know easy to understand everything there are some challenging things in the Bible Peter in his second epistle says this in 2 Peter 3:16 he says Paul teaches some things that are hard to understand so even Paul or Peter the apostle you know struggled with certain things that Paul was teaching in our

Sunday school class on the book of James James is somewhat of a controversial book because James seems to contradict Paul in some things and so that really throws a lot of people off what's going on is James right is Peter right are we supposed to mix the things they're saying together how are we supposed to handle this so it takes some diligence in learning how to approach those differences or those apparent differences and I'll finalize this point with one thing there are some people that teach the Bible in a way that makes it seem like it's too lofty for mortal men to understand and typically people who teach the Bible in that way are teaching false doctrine almost always because they want to you know they have some kind of a secret knowledge that only you can access through them and a lot of false teachers kind of use that approach when we teach the

Bible these are simple truths some things are challenging most things are fairly straightforward but it's something that's accessible to everyone the next point the Bible is a book that is meant to transform us to change us it's not just so that we can grow in knowledge and become academic and win a debate or something like that and you know some people enjoy doing that more than others Romans 12:2 let's see what Paul says in Romans 12 verse 2 we'll start with verse 1 I beseech you therefore brethren by the mercies of God that you present your bodies a living sacrifice holy acceptable to God which is your reasonable service and verse 2 and do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind that you may approve what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of

God later on I'm trying to remember where this says in the New Testament but if it's Peter or John but it talks about renewing your mind with the word of God the washing of the water of the word and the scriptures are a way to renew our minds to transform us by transforming our minds to know what God's like when we grow in our understanding of what is true of what God's like then we are transformed we become more like him you know when there's a phrase I've seen thrown out there and it's especially relevant in the age in which we live there's a lot of people today who it's popular to reject reality you know we live in a world that has objective reality but people treat things as if well truth as if it's

[47 : 57] I get to pick my flavor of ice cream right I get to choose whether I'm a boy or a girl like it's like it's a selection plate and when you reject reality what happens your life breaks when you reject the law of gravity right and you decide that I'm not going to I'm not going to abide by that I'm going to pretend it doesn't exist bad things happen so we need to be people who pursue reality and that's what God's truth is God's truth is just objective reality but when we when we know what's true when we know how things really work then that impacts our lives when we reject or don't know how things really work it causes destruction and pain and misery in our lives so the

Bible is a book written by men but authored really fundamentally by God and that's what we read in Timothy there God breathed God inspired and so when we read the Bible we get to know the author of the Bible and you know you can get to know somebody right through different things you know another way we can know God is through the creation right the Bible actually says in Romans that we that everybody can know a little bit about God through the creation and the same way with any artist right you can go to an art house and you can look at a painting and here's a painting where it's a beautiful picture with sunshine and rainbows and something like that and over here on the other side is another painting with dark shadows and nasty images and that tells you something about the artists right about where they're coming from about their focus in life about the things that interest them you know we've got a happy painting over here and a dark painting over here tells you something but it doesn't tell you very much and so nature can reveal certain things about God it can actually reveal quite a bit but when we have words written down in black and white these tell us so much more and so we can know what God is like what his intentions are towards us what we're like by reading the scriptures in Philippians chapter 2

Paul is encouraging the Philippians to have the mind of Christ he says this let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus and then he goes on to describe Jesus Christ laying his life down for us and so when we look and see what Jesus was like what he did for us that transforms us our minds are renewed and we become more like him and that's ultimately the goal of the Christian life is to become like our savior to become like him we study we read to understand the scriptures we search the scriptures that we might be like him we want to know him we want to be like him

I'm going to finish up with this it's easy to think well I'm pretty familiar with the Bible and to say well I get a lot of information at church about the Bible and that's good enough but that's not how we should treat the Bible I want to throw out a challenge this is a pretty solid church with a lot of great people a lot of you know more about the Bible than I do and it's a tremendous it speaks a lot to the history of this church and the DNA of this church but the Bible is a book that we should be feeding on regularly the scripture itself talks about the

Bible as bread that we should feed on and so I ask this question are you feeding on the word of God regularly are you searching the scriptures when kind of new ideas come up and we should commit to feeding on God's word regularly every day is a good idea and sometimes we can find that's hard to do our lives are busy we have all kinds of things going on but just taking the time to look into the scriptures to read it for ourselves to make sure that we're familiar with the kinds of things that are being spoken whether it's from a pulpit or a YouTube video or a book that we've read that we're familiar with the scriptures that are being expounded on so we can make judgments for ourselves sometimes this requires building habits and as parents we can build these habits into our kids to take the time every day to read the scriptures to open up the scriptures to understand and as we read them

[53 : 44] I think it's always a good idea to pray and ask God could you open up my eyes just like Paul prayed for the Ephesians that the eyes of their understanding would be enlightened we can pray the same thing for ourselves as we open up the Bible God this is a book that you want me to understand and I'm doing the work I'm being a diligent one I'm being diligent to study the scriptures to read them I ask that you would open up my eyes as I read the scripture to understand the things that you're saying so that I might live the life that's pleasing to you and become more like you amen all right we'll finish up there I guess one last thing you know the Bible isn't just a book for Christians the Bible is a book for everyone even those who may not be believers yet but it's a book that has stood the test of time sometimes when I'll go out and share the gospel with people

I'll mention the Bible and the Bible is the most popular book in the history of the world did you know that it's been printed more than any other book by far any other book it out it outsells what's that popular kids book the Harry Potter series right Harry Potter series has sold so many but the Bible outsells it every single year the Bible does it's a popular book the Bible has changed many people's lives and if the Bible has not yet changed your life I challenge you to open it up and see you know some I've heard someone say this about the Bible some people some people might ask is the Bible really relevant to my life is it really relevant the Bible at a fundamental level is a book about who lives and who dies and all of us you know this life we're mortal beings we don't live forever but we can and that's what the Bible talks about if you have any desire in your heart and I think most of us do to live forever the Bible can show you how to do that through

Jesus Christ open it up read about Jesus and what he did for you amen let's close in a word of prayer Father the scriptures it's a big book sometimes it can be confusing but we're so grateful that you did not leave us without showing us the way without a path forward without revealing yourself to us I ask that you would work in all the hearts in this room Father to commit themselves to open up the scriptures to study your word to read it faithfully so that we might know you and be changed by you through this wonderful amazing revelation that you've given us amen