

NOT NEGOTIABLE

The Bible's Authority

- Today, I begin a series called, NOT NEGOTIABLE.
- For a couple of years now, I have been lamenting the emergence of a new movement within the church that seeks to deconstruct Christianity.
- Disenchanted with Evangelical Christianity, some are turning away from conservative Christian doctrine to a more liberal devangelical Christianity calling themselves Exvangelicals. The movement is called Progressive Christianity, and it seeks to redefine Christianity.
- Roger Olsen, a conservative Theologian who I am familiar with defines Progressive Christianity this way, “in my experience, ‘progressive Christianity’ signals a paradigm shift away from what has been considered normal, acceptable, standard, orthodox, within the given church or Christian organization.”
- This series therefore is a response to the serious danger of Progressive Christianity. Theology, by its very nature is not progressive, in a sense, it is static. It is based on the timeless, unchanging truth of God’s Word. Another way to title Progressive Christianity is to call it Destructive Christianity. Progressive Christianity is an enemy of Historic Christianity.
- And it is an enemy not from without but from within.
- Author and Podcaster Alisa Childers gives us ***5 Signs Your Church Might be Heading Toward Progressive Christianity***. They are:
 - 1) A lowered view of Scripture - emphasizing personal belief over biblical mandate
 - 2) Feelings are emphasized over facts – what a person feels to be true becomes the ultimate authority
 - 3) Essential Christian doctrines are open for re-interpretation – every belief is on the chopping block, there is nothing sacred
 - 4) Historic terms are re-defined – *love* is redefined as non-confrontative, pleasant and affirming
 - 5) The heart of the gospel message shifts from sin and redemption to social justice – The core message moves away from the gospel to freeing or liberating the oppressed
- For the next several weeks, I want to focus our attention on certain theological doctrines that are NOT NEGOTIABLE. Before I get into the nuts and bolts of this message, let me say that there are primary beliefs and secondary beliefs. **Some beliefs we talk over, some beliefs we fight over, some beliefs we die over.** Those are NOT NEGOTIABLE.
- In this church for instance, we have people who have never spoken in tongues. They WILL go to heaven. We have Calvinists, they too will go to heaven, we have people who believe that if you are truly saved, you cannot ever lose your Salvation, those people WILL go to heaven.

- We have many people in this church who believe the Chiefs are better than the Packers, I'm not sure those people will go to heaven! **JOKE!**
- There can be unity in a diversity of beliefs over secondary issues.
- This series will focus on those things we will die over, the NON-negotiables. Let's look at the first one upon which all others rest.

TEXT: 2 Peter 1:19-2:3

We also have the prophetic message as something completely reliable, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation of things. For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them—bringing swift destruction on themselves. Many will follow their depraved conduct and will bring the way of truth into disrepute. In their greed these teachers will exploit you with fabricated stories. Their condemnation has long been hanging over them, and their destruction has not been sleeping.

INTRO: Today's title... *The Bible's Authority.*

1. The Context of our Text is Peter's Imminent Death: - God had made it clear to him that he would soon die (vs.14). These are some of Peter's last words. "I want to remind you of something."
 - "I am an eyewitness to the fulfillment of the OT!" (vs. 16) "I heard the audible Word of God!" (vs. 18)
 - The Sacred Text corresponds to reality. It is true! The Bible is NOT mythology, fantasy or science fiction.
 - The Scriptures are of Divine Origin. (vs. 20,21)
 - We must guard against false teachers and false teachings.
2. I want to examine three aspects of the Bible's authority.

I. **Qualities of the Scripture**

1. The Scriptures are **INSPIRED!**

2Tim. 3:16 All Scripture is God-breathed... Whatever does that mean?

- The A/G position paper on Inspiration describes it this way, "We understand inspiration to mean that special act of the Holy Spirit by which He guided the writers of the Scriptures. Such superintendence influenced both their thoughts and their actual choice of words, yet also made full allowance for the divergent backgrounds, abilities, and personalities of the writers."
- They didn't dictate the Bible, but they were guided, influenced and superintended by God in every word of the Word.
- We believe that every word of The Word is God's Word.
- This is what it means to take a high view of Scripture.
- We affirm that **every word** of the New & Old Testament of the Bible are inspired.

2. The Scriptures are **INFALLIBLE!**

- Peter says in our text, **2Pet. 1:19** ¶ We also have the prophetic message as something completely reliable...
- The truth and power of the Bible can be trusted. Why?
- Because God said, **Jer. 1:12** "...I am watching over my word to perform it."

3. The Scriptures are **INERRANT!**

David says in **Psa. 19:7** The law of the LORD is perfect, refreshing the soul. The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple.

- Douglass J. Moo in the NIV Application Commentary writes, "...the authority of Scripture to challenge our beliefs and actions is directly dependent on its full truthfulness. Allow mistakes in the Bible (even in matters of history, dating, geography, etc.), and we have no way of limiting those mistakes."
- IOW – an error in one, brings doubt to all.
- It is inerrant in its original manuscripts. We know that the Bible wasn't written in English, it has been translated and any translations lose a little nuance. But you can completely trust the Bible you hold.
- Paraphrases are NOT translations and therefore are not as reliable. *The Message* is good, but it is a paraphrase. *The Living Bible* (not the New Living Translation) is a paraphrase.

II. Implications of the Scripture

1. It is the very words of God.

- It does not *contain* the Word of God, it *is* the Word of God.
- Over 400 times in the Bible it says, "And God said..." Or, "The Word of the Lord came to..."

2Pet. 1:21 ...prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

2Tim. 3:16 All Scripture is God-breathed...

1Th. 2:13 ¶ And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as a human word, but as it actually is, the word of God...

2. It is the revelation of God to man.

Amos 3:7 Surely the Sovereign LORD does nothing without revealing his plan to his servants the prophets.

- God has gone to great lengths to provide and preserve an accurate revelation of Himself to mankind. He wants to be known!

3. It is the truth.

John 17:17 Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.

Num. 23:19 God is not human, that he should lie, not a human being, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promised and not fulfill?

4. It is eternal (permanent).

Psa. 119:89 ¶ Your word, LORD, is eternal; it stands firm in the heavens.

Psa. 119:160 All your words are true; all your righteous laws are eternal.

Matt. 5:17,18 ¶ “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law...”

- The Scriptures are NOT progressive they are permanent. They are eternally secure. How can we progress past perfection?

5. It carries the highest authority.

2Tim. 3:16,17 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be **thoroughly equipped** for every good work.

- It is the sole authority for our faith.
- You need NOTHING else but the Word of God as an authority for your faith! There is no other sacred text that can add any further **revelation** of who God is and what He requires.
- It is the final authority for our conduct.
- There are other authorities for our conduct. Such as governmental authority, parental authority, legal authority. But the Bible is the FINAL authority for our conduct and when governmental parental or legal authority command us to violate Biblical authority, we are compelled to respectfully disobey.
- The Word of God is our final authority.

III. Practice of the Scripture

1. We must not add to or subtract from the Bible.

Deut. 4:2 Do not add to what I command you and do not subtract from it, but keep the commands of the LORD your God that I give you.

- We add to the Word of God when we affirm other texts as sacred and practice behavior that the Bible condemns.
- We subtract from the Bible when we ignore the clear, universal teachings and commands of the Bible.
- Peter, in our text points to Progressive Christianity saying they “deny the sovereign Lord.” In other words, they think they are smarter than God. They can’t stand His rules finding them restrictive or confining or not in line with their own wisdom.

2. We must be careful to not distort the Word of God.

2Pet. 3:15,16 ...our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him. He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction.

- Peter pulls no punches. He says Progressive Christians are ignorant and unstable.
- Alisa Childers in her book *Another Gospel?* Asked her progressive pastor if he believed in the inspiration of Scriptures. He said, “Yes, of course I do.” Later, she discovered that by

inspiration he meant inspiring, like the writings of C.S. Lewis or other Christian writers. That's a distortion of the Word of God.

3. We must not assign a personal or private interpretation to the Word of God.

2Pet. 1:20 Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation of things.

- Let me quickly outline the process of how the Word works.

- 1) God gave the **INSPIRATION** – He breathed the words.

- He assigned the meaning.
- The **ONLY** interpretation is His interpretation.

- 2) Jesus is the **INCARNATION** – He embodied the Words.

- **John 1:14** “The Word became flesh...”

- 3) The Holy Spirit gives the **ILLUMINATION** – He teaches us the Word

- **Psa. 119:18** Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law.

- Once He opens our eyes, then He brings the conviction.

- 4) We make the **APPLICATION**

- While there is only one interpretation there are often many applications.

CONCLUSION: Have you ever doubted the Bible? Have the difficult passages caused you some unbelief? Are you in rebellion against the Word of God? Is there a strong pull to practice behavior that the Bible restricts? Is the perceived freedom of progressive Christianity attractive to you? Is it tempting to live by your own standards instead of God's?

- Perhaps its time to repent and return to the truth and the power of the sacred text.

Let's pray: Father God. We thank you that you have gone to great lengths to provide and protect Your revelation of Yourself to us. Thank You, God, that You want us to know You in a complete way through the Bible.

- We acknowledge the inspiration, infallibility, and inerrancy of the Word of God. We affirm that the Bible is our sole authority for our faith and the final authority for our conduct.
- We repent, Oh God, for the temptation to doubt and disbelieve the truth of Scripture. We repent of our rebellion against Your laws and commands.
- Help us, by Your grace, and the conviction of the Holy Spirit, to walk in obedience to Your Word. Help us to deny our fleshly appetites to put our ways above Your ways. Heal us Oh God! Heal us and restore us and give us a fresh love for Your Words, lamp for our feet and light for our path. We pray this in the strong Name of Jesus! AMEN!