

# Holy Scripture

by John Murray

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of Scripture as a living and infallible word of God, and its utility in communicating truth, exposing error, and producing integrity.*

**Duration:** 54:17

**Scripture:** Psalm 119:105, Isaiah 55:11, Matthew 3:17, Romans 15:4, 2 Timothy 3:16, Hebrews 4:12, 2 Peter 1:19

**Topics:** "Scripture"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance and permanence of scripture as the voice of God. He discusses the use of scripture, highlighting its profitability for doctrine, proof, correction, and instruction in ethical behavior. The speaker warns against relying on pious sentiment as a substitute for right conduct and emphasizes the need to be obedient to God's word. He concludes by urging listeners to remember their obligation and privilege to bear witness to Christ through good works and to serve Him with love and obedience.

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## Transcript

Let us pray. O Thou eternal and ever-blessed God, the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only living and true God, it is a great privilege Thou dost bestow upon us that we may come into Thy house, that we may come into Thy place where Thine honour dwelleth and where Thou art wont to manifest Thyself in Thy glory, and we would, O Lord, bow before Thee in adoration, in thanksgiving, and that Thou dost bestow upon us who are so utterly destitute, so utterly sinful, so utterly hell-deserving in ourselves, this inestimable privilege of drawing near unto Thee in accordance with Thine own direction, in accordance with Thine own commandment, and in accordance with Thine own promise, that where two or three are gathered together in Thy name, there Thou art in their midst. And we do pray, O Lord, that we, in humble contrition and penitence, may pour out our hearts before Thee in confession of our sin, for although we are all together as a nun, although there is nothing in our flesh that is well-pleasing unto Thee, we have all gone out of the way.

We are together become unprofitable. There is none that doeth good, no, not even one. But blessed forever be Thy great name, that if we confess our sins, Thou art faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all iniquity.

Do Thou grant unto us the blessedness of the man whose sins are forgiven, whose iniquities are covered, to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and who are therefore cleared in Thine own presence. For Thou

art just when Thou justifiest, Thou art clear when Thou judgest. In that salvation that is wrought by Thee, Thy glory is made great.

Truth met with mercy, righteousness and peace have kissed each other. And do Thou, O Lord, grant unto us that we may truly sing Thy praises to the glory of Thy triune name, that Thou art blest in Christ, reconciling the world unto Thyself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and that Thou hast committed unto us the word of reconciliation, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them. And we pray, O Lord, that Thou wouldst graciously meet each one of us in the particular situation in which we are.

There are no two of us who are alike, nor two of us who are alike before our fellow men, and there are no two of us who are exactly alike even in Thy presence. And we would pray, O Lord, that out of the riches of Thy grace and of Thy glory in Christ Jesus, Thou wouldst condescend in the marvel of Thy grace to come and meet with each one of us, speaking unto us a word in Caesar, rebuking and correcting those who are yet without God and without hope in the world, who have never tasted that the Lord is gracious, bringing them to conviction and causing the arrows of the King to pierce their hearts so that they may be brought to that conviction of sin by which Christ will be precious to them. For the whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.

And Thou didst not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. We pray, O Lord, that Thou wouldst graciously work a work of grace, and may it be true that even in this place this man and that man was born there, and that Thou, the Lord God Almighty, who hast founded Zion, who hast placed Thine own Son upon the holy hill of Zion, would place the irresistible constraints of Thy love and of Thy mercy in Christ Jesus upon sinners, that they may be translated from darkness to light, from the bondage of sin and of Satan into the glorious liberty of the children of God. We pray for Thy people that they may be able today, even in this place, to draw out of the treasures that are in Christ Jesus.

We bless Thy great and holy name, that in Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and that it is out of these treasures that Thou dost bestow grace for grace upon Thy people. And now, O Lord, we beseech Thee that Thou wouldst bless Thy people to the very ends of the earth, wherever there are those, in all nations and kindreds and peoples and tongues, who call upon the name of the Lord Jesus. Do Thou grant that there may be a reviving of Thy people, a reviving of Thy people in faith, in love, and in new obedience, and an upbuilding of Thy church in purity, in holiness, in truth.

Do Thou grant, O Lord, to the nations of the world that Thy mercy may be upon us for the restraint of ungodly passions. O, we pray that Thou wouldst raise up men of integrity, men who would have regard for righteousness and also for peace that is grounded in justice and liberty. And do Thou, O Lord, grant that the walls of opposition that have been erected in so many parts of the earth to the preaching of the gospel may be broken down, and that the word of the truth of the gospel may have free course and be glorified.

Now while we wait upon Thee here, O grant unto us that Thy presence may be well saved. Grant us the unction and power and blessing of Thy Holy Spirit so that Thy word may be registered in our hearts with compelling authority so that we may know that it is the word of the living and abiding God and all in Jesus' name. The second epistle of Timothy.

The third chapter, beginning at verse sixteen. Second Timothy three sixteen. All scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works or unto every good work.

There is no more important question that can confront us in this world than the question of a word from God. For there is a finality, an infallibility attaching to every word that comes from God. And last Lord's Day I considered the first part of this text that all scripture is given by inspiration of God.

And the more literal rendering of that is all scripture is God-breathed. And we dealt with the context of this statement of the apostle and also with the import of the statement that all scripture is God-breathed. And when we read that all scripture is God-breathed, that expression has to the same effect as that which you find in the Old Testament to certify the truth, the certainty, and the infallibility of God's voice, namely the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

And it is just as if Paul had said all scripture is the mouth of God, it's the voice of God. Many people will aver that the scripture is a rather dead letter, that it isn't living. And the Romish Church just for that very reason claims that there must be another authority that is living.

And that, they claim, is the Living Church, the Church of Rome, professing subjection to the papal see. What the scripture itself says is that the word of God is the living voice of God, that all scripture is God's mouth. There is nothing dead or ineffective about the word of God.

This word of God is just as if we heard God speaking from heaven. And it is very significant that the Apostle Peter, in that chapter which we have just read, said with respect to scripture that we have a more sure word of prophecy. And what is the force of that comparative, more sure word of prophecy? Well, the comparative is instituted because in the preceding context he had appealed to the voice that they heard from heaven, Peter, James, and John, when they were on the Mount of Transfiguration.

And they heard the voice from heaven, this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And that, of course, was the voice of God the Father. It is very seldom in the New Testament, in the record of the New Testament, that reference is made to the audible speech of God the Father.

There are just a few occasions. But this was one of them. On the Mount of Transfiguration there came a voice, as Peter says, from the excellent glory.

This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And yet Peter says, we have a more sure word of prophecy. That is, we have the word of prophecy made more stable, more sure, more certified.

And what word of prophecy is he referring to? To scripture. And you can see very well why he says that scripture is more sure. Because that voice, which the disciples heard from heaven on the Mount of Transfiguration, nobody else heard.

But these three disciples, and of course Moses and Elijah, who were there also from glory, but nobody else heard it. And nobody else ever after heard it. It was confined to these disciples, of those who were living upon earth.

And of course to Jesus himself, who was being addressed, there was my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. But the scripture is a permanent deposit. And that's why the scripture is more sure.

Because it is available to everybody. To everybody to whom it comes. And you see how inestimably precious is the scripture of God's mouth.

It's God's speaking. As if we heard the word of God directly from heaven. When you read, for example, in this scripture, all scripture is God breathed and is profitable for doctrine, for a proof of correction, for the instruction which is in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished, and do every good work.

That is God speaking to us in certification of the character of scripture as a whole. Now I suppose that if anyone were told that at a certain location, let us say at Burley, on a certain day, on a certain hour, a voice was to be heard from heaven. I suppose that if that were plainly certified that a voice would be heard from heaven at the village of Burley on a certain day, on a certain day, on a certain date, at a certain hour, I'm sure that would be filled with people from hundreds of miles away.

Or they would come to us. That a word from heaven was going to be arguably spoken on that particular occasion. I don't suppose the fields around Burley would hold them.

Just that they would be there out of curiosity, if for no other reason. And yet, in the scripture we have the voice of God just as surely as if God the Father spoke directly from heaven in an audible voice. And it is more sure because it is more permanent.

If God spoke a word at Burley on a certain day, on a certain, on a certain, at a certain hour, all that would be it and it would be gone. And those people who would have heard it would have heard it indeed, but that would be the end of it. But with the scripture there's a permanent deposit, and it's the voice of God with continuousness it is being addressed, speaking from heaven.

Now that's the import of all scripture. And today I'm going to deal with the other two phases of this text. And the first today is the use of scripture, and second, the purposes.

And the four subjects would be in entirety the context, the import, the use or utility, and the purpose. And today we are dealing with the utility or the use of scripture. Paul says it is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction, which is in righteousness.

What is the enumeration? For doctrine refers to the communication and the inculcation of truth. Reproof refers to the exposure of error and correction to the straightening out of what is crooked or perverse. And instruction in righteousness refers to the nurture that produces integrity.

Should you have a more significant list, uses, for which scripture is given, doctrine, reproof, correction, instruction, which is in righteousness, doctrine is concerned with what is true, reproof and correction is concerned with what is wrong, and instruction in righteousness with what is right. Have you noted the three things? True, wrong, right. And there are no three things in our whole life that are more important than truth, wrong, and right.

No concerns affect us more deeply than truth, error, and right. They are truth and right and the opposite of both. Truth, right, and the opposite of both.

Namely, error. Now, in a perfect world, all we would need is truth, for there would be no opposite. There would be no against.

Have you ever thought of it, that there would be no such thing as against? There would be perfect harmony, powerful. There would be no opposition, no against. The Scripture is not for a perfect world.

The Scripture is for the world that is steeped in iniquity and error. The Scripture is corrective because it is redemptive. And truth is to be corrected by truth, and wrong is to be corrected by right.

So you see how significant is the Apostle's Enumeration. Doctrine, reproof, correction, instruction. Now doctrine concerns the whole range of God.

Respecting God, respecting the world, respecting man, respecting man's highest interests, and respecting man's destiny. And we must remember that we can't do nothing properly without thought. Everything that is properly done involves thought, doesn't it? If doctrine concerns truth, then it concerns the truth, respecting God.

And there is nothing more important for us than thought that is determined by the truth of God and his will for us. Now sometimes people will say that doctrine is very cold, it's very lifeless, it's very dead. And indeed there are lots of people in the church and they get rather weary of doctrine.

They want something that will immediately, as it were, stir their sentiments and their feelings. And they think that doctrine is very cold and dead and lifeless. Well, if doctrine is cold, or dead, or lifeless for us, then there are only two possibilities.

And the first possibility is that our doctrine is not biblical. If the doctrine that is taught in the church is not biblical, then your discernment would require that you would, because doctrine that is not biblical is cold. But, the other alternative is, if we think that doctrine is cold and dead and lifeless and dead, if we think that biblical doctrine is cold and dead and lifeless, well, we're just like those people who are in the cemetery.

Morally and spiritually, we're like the people who are in the cemetery. They are cold, and they are dead. If, if we are not interested in biblical doctrine, it's because we are not interested in God.

And if we're not interested in God, then we are not interested in His will for us, and that is godless. You know, people think oftentimes that ungodliness or godliness is just the notorious bears on its, on its very face the hallmarks of worldliness and ungodliness. People think that that is godlessness, and it is godlessness.

There is open iniquity, there is notorious iniquity that has written across its very brow the condemnation of God. But godlessness is not restricted to that. Godlessness fundamentally is that we are not interested in God.

We're not interested in His will for us. That godlessness in God, and not interested in His will, or if I am not interested in God, or interested, not a very enviable position, not a very enviable. How are we thinking of error, or wrong? You know, a lot of people don't have very much patience with what we call negative preaching.

They want positive preaching, not very patient if the preaching is negative, and that is dealing with what is wrong. Well, a very good friend used to say frequently that if your preaching is not negative, it's not, because the gospel is against sin, it's against, and we cannot be uninterested in error and wrong if we are awake. The waves of unbelieving thought are constantly breaking upon our shores, and they are depositing their corrupt wares, and the salesmen of ungodliness are very ready to peddle them.

And sometimes they have a very plausible story, just as salesmen oftentimes in the ordinary affairs of life come around with very tawdry material, but they have a very plausible story. And if we sit by complacently,

we are inevitably the victims. You know that there is only one thing to do with wrong and with error, and that is to resist it.

If we don't resist it, if we don't offer opposition to error and wrong, then we are caught in its snare. And resistance is the only safeguard against the subtlety of the great archenemy. It was because Eve did not resist the great archenemy that sin entered into the world.

She began to parley with the great archenemy. He had a plausible allegation, and she parleyed with him, and because she parleyed with him, because she did not resist him, she was caught in his snare. And it's the same.

Eve was innocent when she was caught in the snare. How much more ready are we to be caught in the snare of the archenemy if we are not vigilant, if we are not resistant? There is only one thing to do with error, and that is reproof, correction, conviction. That's what Paul is dealing with.

And how helpless we are before the unbelieving currents of thought, which come with a very plausible story, if we do not have the oracles of God right from wrong and truth. Now, friends, I plead with you against the subtle influence of error, of unbelief, of wrong, that come to you with a very plausible story. You will inevitably be the victim if you do not have your constant appeal to the oracles of God.

God has spoken, and he has spoken with authority, and he speaks with authority to every situation in which we are placed. There is no situation. Now are we thinking of righteousness? Paul speaks not only of doctrine, he speaks not only of reproof and correction, but he also speaks of righteousness, the instruction which is in righteousness.

Now that is the question of behavior. We call ethical behavior. And when we think of the many voices that clamor for our allegiance in this sinful world, and when we are awake to the tired sentiment that is often the substitute for right conduct, how necessary it is to address ourselves to the only infallible rule of the fact, it is not at all unnecessary for us to be warned against the highest sentiment, frothy sentiment, that will place a veneer over the most malignant bond and make it appear to be right.

The apostle set forth the basic sanction by which behavior is to be regulated in this world. And it is interesting to notice in what context he brings it in. He tells them to be obedient to their adherence in the Lord.

And then he gives the reason. For this is right. It is very significant, very important.

A great deal of psychology, and of the psychology of education and nurture today, is built upon an entirely different hypothesis. People think that it is not wise to lay down the law or to their grandchildren or whatever children they may be, that it is not good psychology to lay down a law. It is not good psychology to appeal to right, better to appeal to expediency, better to appeal, better perhaps to appeal to their happiness and all that.

But the appeal for right is oftentimes today in popular psychology and the psychology of education under eclipse. Oh, the apostle Paul was of a very different mind. The apostle Paul knew very well that the basic institute of nurture, the basic institute of culture and nurture for life, is the family.

And he says to children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. And he is talking to little children, and he expected little children to understand the sanction that attaches to right. Able to understand.

Just want to get into your life, and let that regulate your behavior throughout the whole of your life. Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. And be instructed in what is right.

And when the sense of right is engenerated, and when the sense of right is instructed by Scripture as the fabulatory word of God, then both understanding and conscience will speak with one voice. When we are properly instructed in the word of God, then both understanding and conscience speak with one voice. And there is no substitute, my friends, for such culture.

It is the mark of the man of God. Integrity. Oh, what beauties.

Right feeling. Right heart. Right.

Right. The happiness that is not grounded in white. Or the expediency that is not in accord with white.

Is happiness that is not worthy of the name. The only blessedness is the blessedness. Oh, my friends, do thrive as that word which gives direction.

Do not be dependent on the word of man or the whims of current of his ability, the primality, the authority, the infallibility of a boy or a girl who stands upon that right. He is a man of God. He is a boy of God.

He is a little girl of God. He is a woman of God. Or she is a woman of God.

Now we have the purpose. The purpose is stated here to be that the man of God may be perfect. Hullo, you friends.

Now, sometimes I think we get away from Biblical terms just because we have a certain distaste for piosity that is not... There is a piosity that is offensive to all discerning people. To be distinguished from piety. And I think that sometimes in our circles we react against even Biblical terms because we have a distaste for piosity.

A distaste for piosity we indeed ought to have because it's only hypocrisy. Here is an expression which I'm afraid is not very much in our lives and perhaps not very much in our thought. And it's this expression.

I'm the man of God. The man of God. The man of God is God's man.

And it means that he is the man laid hold upon by God. He is separated unto God. He is possessed by God.

A man who is not his own. Who is not his own servant. And who is not even the servant of men although he serves men.

That's the man of God. He's the dedicated man. That is the God-dedicated man.

He's the consecrated man. He is the man who lives for God. Who speaks for God.

And who speaks for God. Now, that the man of God of which Paul here speaks may be perfect. That is complete.

Thoroughly furnished unto every good work. That's the way Paul speaks. Thoroughly furnished unto every... You see, it is completeness.

It is thoroughness. It's all along the line of this man's equipment. Mark, you see, the universal terms that Paul uses.

That the man of God may be perfect. Thoroughly furnished unto every good work. So it's completeness all along the line of divine... Now, this doctrine is nothing less than the great doctrine or sometimes stated to be the sufficiency.

That there is no situation in which we are placed. Nor the man that arises for which Scripture as the word of God, as the deposit of the manifold wisdom of God is not sufficient. It is Scripture as God's oracular word that provides us with the equipment, the furnishings, the investment to prepare the man of God for life and behavior in the kingdom of God.

And you see, as Paul speaks, until we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God and to a perfect man and to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ that we might be filled unto all the fullness of God. Now, Mark, what a redemption, what a salvation that is in Christ's contemplation. It's not simply a bare salvation.

A great many people's salvation comes from hell not just getting delivered to work. And you may be thinking of Scripture in its discrete parts, in its component parts, in its elements. Or you may be thinking of Scripture in its total extent.

And Paul has both in view when he says all Scripture. All Scripture in its total extent, it's Scripture in its discrete parts. And what he says is that in all its extent and in its discrete parts it is directed to this end of furnishing the man of God and to every good work.

And the apostle makes no distinction. All Scripture is pertinent to faith and practice and it is only all of Scripture that will perfect the man of God so that he will be thoroughly furnished unto every good work. Now, why is that the case? Just because, as Paul says, all Scripture is God-breathed and there is no detail of what the mouth of God has spoken that is dispensable for us.

We cannot begin to carve the Scripture. We cannot begin to neglect part of it or any of it because it is all indispensable for the furnishing that God has in view for those whom he has chosen. Now it is true that not all Scripture is of equal importance.

Scripture has its center and Scripture has its circumference. Scripture is like an organism. It has its more vital parts and it has its less vital parts.

And of course, Scripture has its central message and it has that which is not so central. But you see, the point is that it is a perfect man of God that the Scripture has in view. A perfect man of God.

And it is a perfect man of God that the Scripture is going to equip. Not a mutilated or maimed man of God. And it is not a man of God prepared unto some good works or not a man of God prepared partially for every good work.

Nope. But thoroughly furnished unto every good work. You get the point.

Thoroughly furnished unto every good work. Only Scripture in its entirety is adequate to that great purpose. And Scripture serves that purpose because it is all the Word of God in its center and at its periphery and in all that lies in between.

It's the Word of God serving a great variety of purposes because life itself is very complex. But the man of God is one who has to be thoroughly furnished. Now, how dare we? Some people in reformed churches are daring to do.

How dare we? In the face of such an inspired statement maintained less than the Scripture in its completeness and perfection as God's Word and blessed be God. That is the kind of revelation that God is giving. Some weeks ago, the ends of the ages, we are those upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

We are living in the confirmation age. We're living in the last days. Paul indicates it.

What is the significance of the last days? That we are in a peculiarly privileged position. Don't you know that we are in a position more privileged than the Apostle Paul himself? Because the Scripture has not yet reached its completion when the Apostle Paul was saying these words. It hadn't yet reached its completion.

There are books of the New Testament that had yet to be written. God hadn't given his complete final revelation because the Scripture in its entirety had not yet been completed. You may be thinking sometimes that it would be grand to be living back in the days of the Apostle Paul.

Yes, it would have been people who lived in the days of the Apostle Paul. Because you have a complete Scripture, a finished Scripture. And that's what makes our lot peculiarly a privileged one and peculiarly a privileged one.

Blessed be God that he has given us his Word with finality, with completeness, with perfection as a lamp to our feet and a light to our path, as a light that shines in a dark place until the day dawns and the day stars arise in our place. Plead with you, my beloved friends, that you pay earnest heed to the study of this Word. Remember it is men of God, women of God, children of God, boys and girls of God.

But God has a view in his redemption. There is nothing that is more important for us than that we should bury ourselves in the Word of God and that our hearts and minds should be saturated with that Word that it would be hidden out of the pen. And oh, my friends, pay heed and give time to the reading of the Word that it may dwell in you richly in all wisdom and that you may be fully equipped, thoroughly furnished as the people of God to bear witness for truth against error and on the side of right.

Oh, thou eternal and ever-blessed God, we pray thee that thou wouldst impress upon us indelibly the truth of thy Word. May we receive it in faith and love, lay it up in our hearts, and practice it enough that we may go on from step to step and that we may go on from one measure of grace to another until we come to the fullness of that stature which thou hast appointed for thy people. And blessed forever be thy name, that thou dost give us exceedingly great and precious promise that we might be partakers of the divine nature and escape the corruption that is inferred through lust, that we might also be filled unto all the fullness of God.

Oh, Lord, do thou may appreciate our great privilege, may lay hold upon us, may redeem the tithe, and may give ourselves wholeheartedly and done with servitude to the Savior who came into this world that he might redeem his people from all iniquity and purify them unto himself, a people for his own possession, zealous of good works. Blessed be thy great and holy name, that thy people are created unto good works, and may they never forget the obligation and the privilege that belong to them in bearing witness to him who died and rose again that he might be Lord over the dead of living. May we realize more and more the

Lord's great joy in serving him.

May we love him with all our heart and soul as we serve him, in obedience to his revealed work for his name's sake.

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