

Committed to Excellence in Communicating Biblical Truth and Its Application

Orcutt Christian Church

A Grace Driven Church for Grace Needing People!

Worship with others in the Chapel

Sermon on The Mount - 55

Matthew 5 - 7; Luke 6:17-49

A Tree and Its Fruit 03

March 12, 2023

Communion: Gus Arana

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Matthew 7:1-2, 13-23 (NASB)

¹“Do not judge so that you will not be judged. ²“For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you...13“Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. ¹⁴“For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it. ¹⁵“Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. ¹⁶“You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes nor figs from thistles, are they? ¹⁷“So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸“A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. ¹⁹“Every tree that does not bear good

fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20“So then, you will know them by their fruits.

Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing

Most of us know

John 3:16 (NIV)

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

That is a short text that all of us in one way or another relate to.

However those that John in Revelation calls the land dwellers, the people in the world, have their own version of John 3:16 and this is

Matthew 7:1

Do not judge so that you will not be judged.

And land dwellers today do not want to be contradicted.

If you bring up something from the Scripture they will jump on it like a cat on a mouse saying “**don’t judge.**”

So Matthew 7:1 is the land dwellers equivalent of *For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son.*

They will put you on the defense immediately with that quote.

Jesus, on the other hand says we need to be fruit inspectors, and see the results of their teaching.

In dealing with infallibility, there is one pitfall we must avoid by all means.

We must not determine the rightness or wrongness of a person's position by their personal life.

But surely there ought to be some correlation between what a person believes and how he or she lives.

Yet Scripture itself teaches us that it does not always work out that way.

David was a man after God's own heart, but at times he was quite defective in his life.

A person's views should be examined for their intrinsic content of their character, remembering that person also bears the Divine Image, but like we, flawed.

What are Land Dwellers teaching about the Scriptures?

This is important because Jesus tells us there will be *false teachers* who will show up dressed like his **sheep** but inside they are **ravenous wolves**.

And these *false teachers* will condemn you for your belief system if you don't hold the same concepts as they do.

But if you protest they will say *judge not so that you will not be judged*

So what you need to realize is that there are far more *false teachers* today than you would ever ever imagine.

These false teachers go back as far as the Garden of Eden where a *false teacher* led Eve astray by teaching her wrong things, pointing her to the broad way that leads to destruction.

False teachers were at work through out the old testament era.

And prophet after prophet pointed out to the people of Israel there were *false teachers* directing them to the broad way that leads to destruction.

From the time of the old covenant the Jewish people had looked upon their collection of scriptures as being inspired given to them by the inspiration of God.

Do you wonder why?

Because Scripture is *the covenant constitution of the people of God*.

The first written Word of God, the first Bible, was the Ten Commandments, written by the very finger of God on tables of stone.

Ex. 24:12 (NLT)

Then the LORD said to Moses, “Come up to me on the mountain. Stay there, and I will give you the tablets of stone on which I have inscribed the instructions and commands so you can teach the people.”

Ex 31:18 (NIV)

When the LORD finished speaking to Moses on Mount Sinai, he gave him the two tablets of the covenant law, the tablets of stone inscribed by the finger of God.

In the Decalogue, God speaks as the author of the document:

Ex 31:13 (NASB)

I am the Lord your God

That written Word was put in the holiest place in Israel, beside the Ark of the Covenant, where it was to stand as God's witness against Israel

God told Moses

Dt 31:26 (BSB)

Take this Book of the Law and place it beside the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, so that it may remain there as a witness against you.

The written Word was to govern every aspect of the lives of God's people.

Nearly every chapter in Deuteronomy urges the people to obey *all* the laws, testimonies, statutes, commandments, and words of God's written Word.

Nearly every verse of Psalm 119 calls God's people back to these statutes.

It would seem that revival in Israel is always a revival of obedience to the law.

Beyond the Decalogue, God gave other Words to his people. The song of Moses in Deut. 32 is such a Word.

Joshua reaffirms that written law

Josh. 24:25 (NIV)

Joshua made a covenant for the people, and there at Shechem he reaffirmed for them decrees and laws.

God sent prophets; the very definition of a prophet was that he proclaimed God's Word, not words of his own devising.

Dt. 18:18-20 (NASB)

18I will raise up for them a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them everything that I command him. 19And it shall come about that whoever does not listen to My words which he speaks in My name, I Myself will require it of him. 20But the prophet who speaks a word presumptuously in My name, a word which I have not commanded him to speak, or which he speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die.'

Many of these prophecies were written down.

Jesus regarded the whole Old Testament as God's written Word

Mt. 5:17-19 (NASB)

17“Do not presume that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not com to abolish, but to fulfill. 18For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke of a letter shall pass from the

Law, until all is accomplished! 19Therefore, whoever nullifies one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

The apostles also regarded the whole Old Testament as God's written Word

Jas. 4:11 (NASB)

The one who speaks against a brother or sister, or judges his brother or sister, speaks against the law and judges the law; but if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge of it. 12There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the One who is able to save and to destroy;

The New Testament is a New Covenant, and thus it involves the giving of divine Words

Jn 12:47-50 (NASB)

47If anyone hears My teachings and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world. 48The one who rejects Me and does not accept My teachings has one who judges him: the word which I spoke. That will judge him on the last day. 49For I did not speak on My own, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me a commandment as to what to say and what to speak. 50And I know that His commandment is eternal life; therefore the things I speak, I speak just as the Father has told Me.”

Jesus Himself did not write any books, but He provided for His apostles to speak and write for God

John 14:26 (ESV)

But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.

By the Holy Spirit's witness and the content of the books themselves, Christians recognize the New Testament, as they do the Old, as God's book.

Thus the church has historically confessed that Scripture *is the Word of God*.

It is God speaking to us.

There are human authors of Scripture, and the content of Scripture reflects their personalities, styles, and experiences. But the humanity of Scripture does not mean that Scripture has less authority than the divine voice at Mount Sinai.

The authority of Scripture is nothing less than the authority of God himself, as the passages just read clearly demonstrate.

When we consider the Biblical record, it is God speaking to us.

The Westminster Theological Seminary NT Scholar, Dr. John Frame, says

“We have, therefore, no right to bring negative criticism against the Bible. As the Belgic Confession states, with the canonical books “there can be no quarrel at all,” (Article 4), “we believe without a doubt all things contained in them...” (Article 5), and “the teaching is perfect and complete in all respects” (Article 7). When God speaks to us, we dare not criticize what he says. Our only recourse is to believe and to obey.”

God gave to the world **two words**.

These two words are God's revelation to us of His will, His purposes, and His desires.

Two words.

The **word of God incarnate** in Jesus Christ.

And the **word of God written**.

It is the word of God written that reveals the word of God incarnate to we human beings.

The Bible is the revelation of God's purposes desirous and will.

The Bible then is the word of God, and it makes no difference whether the writers of Scripture gained their information by direct revelation from God, such as in John's book of Revelation, or whether like Luke did, doing research and interviewing people, or whether they get their understanding from external sources such as court records are even by word-of-mouth.

The Book of Jasher is mentioned in Joshua 10:13.

The Chronicles of the Kings of Israel and Chronicles of the Kings of Judah are mentioned in 1 Kings 14:19,29.

The question that we must ask is whether what they wrote, wherever they may have gotten their words, can be trusted?

This is what is called the doctrine of inspiration, and the doctrine of inspiration, is clearly taught in the Bible itself. Inspiration can be defined as the inward work of the Holy Spirit on the hearts and minds of certain chosen man who then wrote down the scriptures so we can read what God intended.

Our entire Bible from Genesis to Revelation in all its parts are the written word of God to man.

It was the consensus of the ancient Jewish people, as well as the consensus of the ancient fathers of the church, that this word is free from all error in the original autographs, and is wholly trustworthy in matters of history and doctrine.

The Scripture were written under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and the autographs were preserved from making actual, historical, scientific, or any other errors.

The Bible, however, is not a textbook on chemistry, astronomy, philosophy, or medicine.

But when the Scriptures speak of these things, the Bible doesn't lie.

It does not contain error.

The very nature of inspiration renders the Bible infallible which means it cannot deceive us.

Inspiration, the guidance of God's Holy Spirit, extends to all parts of the written word of God and includes the guiding hand of the Holy Spirit even in the sections of the words of Scripture selection of the words of Scripture.

It is true the Bible was written by human **and** divine agencies.

It was the product of God and His chosen men.

The writers of Scripture retain their own style for writing and the Holy Spirit operating within that human context, superintended the writing of the word of God so that the end product was Gods.

Jesus had a human and divine nature, one that was truly human, the other to the truly divine.

Just so, the written word of God is a product that bears the marks of what is truly human and to truly divine.

Inspiration, because it came God, involved infallibility from start to finish.

God the Holy Spirit by nature cannot lie or be the author of untruth.

If the Scripture is inspired at all, it all must be infallible throughout.

But the Bible is not only infallible, it is inerrant.

Inerrant means there are no errors.

Infallible means there can be no errors.

If inspiration allows for the possibility of error then inspiration ceases to be inerrant because God cannot, will not deceive mankind, will not, cannot create error, cannot, will not lie.

Perhaps the most widely held view of inspiration is that the writers were just secretaries taking dictation from the Holy Spirit.

The dictation view says these Penmen of God wrote down words that were dictated to them by the Holy Spirit.

But that theory of inspiration doesn't mesh with the words of our Lord.

The theory of dictation violates the human brain and human agency that God has been leading to remember and to write down his words, his will, his purposes, His plans.

The Holy Spirit was at work with the minds and hearts of those writers.

Those writers were guided so what they wrote were preserved from error even as they communicated truth.

Jesus had told the apostles that the Holy Spirit will bring to remembrance everything He had taught them.

And so when the writers of the New Testament remembered what had had been taught they wrote down their thoughts and committed their thoughts to writing.

Their thinking and remembering were put into words.

Some would limit inspiration to only the thoughts of the writers.

But you cannot limit inspiration to just thoughts, for if the words are not inspired, they will not properly convey the thoughts.

And properly conveyed words, then must be no less inspired than the thoughts.

What we can say is that in the life of the church the Bible has been perceived as objective truth, and whether a person believes it or not, or whether he understands it, or fails to understand it, does not diminish its source being in God. So we asked the question, where does this idea of inspiration come from, finds its answer in it being a doctrine taught in Scripture, just as the deity of Christ, the substitutionary atonement, the bodily resurrection of Christ from the dead, and the doctrine of the Holy Spirit.

Martin Luther appealed to the idea that no one should be asked to believe anything that Scripture does not teach. He said in his struggle against Rome that he was willing to recant his opinions if it is shown to him from Scripture that he was wrong.

When Paul wrote to Timothy, he said

2 Tim 3:16-17 (NKJB)

16All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

The Greek word for *inspired* literally means God spirited or God breathed out.

And that is how we have life

Gen 2:7 (NASB)

Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.

It means that God indeed is the author of Scripture and Scripture is a product of his creative breath.

The emphasis is not on inspired writers.

The emphasis is on the inspired Scripture.

Scripture is breathed out.

The Holy Spirit did move the writers and did prompt their thoughts.

But what the writers produced was their own but was also the word of the living God.

Another example of inspiration was given by the apostle Peter

2 Pet 1:21 (HCSB)

because no prophecy ever came by the will of man; instead, men spoke from God as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

Peter claimed that the prophetic word did not come from human impulse.

It came from God himself.

And it was the Holy Spirit who moved on the hearts and minds of the writers to accomplish this purpose.

Scripture did not come down from heaven.

God used human instrumentalities to accomplish the divine purpose of writing.

When Paul wrote to the Thessalonians he said

1 Thes 2:13 (NIV)

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, which is indeed at work in you who believe.

Paul made it clear that what they received and accepted were more than the mere words of man.

It was the word of God.

So we find that the New Testament time after time, in place at the place, affirms the infallibility of Scriptures.

In fact the writers of the Old Testament said that the words they wrote were given them directly from God more than 2000 times.

The Old Covenant says **thus says the Lord**, or something comparable to it, 2000 times.

God used fulfilled prophecy to vindicate the claim of infallibility.

But archaeology has also verified the accuracy of the Bible. I mentioned a moment ago the autographed of the original Scriptures.

We know that the autographs for the most part do not exist today.

I think God did not intend for the autograph to be preserved because they would have been the source of idolotrous worship, just as Sikhism worships it's Scriptures.

But God did not shield Scripture when it became a part of history.

He did not shield Adam and Eve in the garden so as to make it impossible for them to disobey their Creator.

Nor did He shield His son Jesus from the possibility of sin in His humanity.

In the history of the Christian church it has been carefully stated that Jesus in His deity was not able to sin, and that Jesus in His humanity was able not to sin.

He did not sin in His deity, because deity cannot sin.

He did not sin in His humanity, because He always chose to do the right.

God did not choose to preserve the mercy seat that was in the Holy of Holies in the tabernacle and the temple.

It has disappeared.

But in the providential care of God, He has preserved the Scriptures for us so that they have remained free from error.

Any student of lower criticism admits that there have been

copyists' mistakes made by those who diligently sought to reproduce the books of the Bible by hand.

But a copyist's mistake is something entirely different from an error in Scripture.

A misspelled or a misplaced word is a far cry from error.

And by error is meant a misstatement or something that is contrary to fact.

Truthfully if you've ever written a paper you know that at some point you may have done something like this.

When you were typing there is a chance that you made a typographical error or misspelled a word, but that does not negate the fact that you wrote the paper.

And those original autographs were copied as carefully as they could be.

It is a fact that Ezra set up trained copyists, whose job was to transcribe the torah.

And, yes, we find they misspelled words or a misplaced a word.

Anyone who has doubts about the accuracy of the Scriptures that have come down to us by transmission through copyists is simply misinformed.

We can say honestly that the Bible we have today is **the Word of God**.

This is not to deny the existence of textual problems, as we have already said.

But the textual problems are minimal.

One of the world's foremost New Testament scholars, Dr. F. F. Bruce, has this to say in response to those who claim that infallibility is void because we do not have the original documents, and because of variant readings we cannot get back to them:

"The variant readings about which any doubt remains ... affect no material question of historic fact or of Christian faith and practice."

That means that the variant readings do not impact inerrancy.

Which means we can say honestly today that the Bible we have is the word of God.

And no part of doctrine has been affected by copyist errors.

The problem we face is from the attack of modernist professors and modernist ministers.

Those who advocate inerrancy take the Bible in its plain and obvious sense.

The charge that they are "*wooden-headed literalists*" shows the bias of those who make the charge.

All that is meant by saying one takes the Bible literally is that one believes what it purports to say.

This means that figures of speech are regarded as figures of speech.

No evangelical takes figures of speech literally.

Nor does any evangelical suppose that when Jesus said, "**I am the door**," He meant He was a literal door.

The Scriptures use living language, as we all do.

To say that **the sun rises and sets** is illustrative.

To claim from its use in Scripture that the ancients who wrote this were saying the sun revolves around the earth is not true.

We who are supposed to know so much more than the ancients still use the same kind of language, and no one in his right mind would conclude that we teach that the sun revolves around the earth.

Recent church history indicates it is possible to destroy the idea of biblical infallibility by providing interpretations of Scripture at variance with the plain reading of the texts.

It can be accomplished also by consciously or unconsciously by a-priori presuppositions that do the same thing.

A couple examples will make this clear.

Take the virgin birth of Christ.

The account of the virgin birth requires a belief in miracles, in the supernatural.

No one can accept the virgin birth without also believing in miracles.

But there are numbers of people who are convinced that the miraculous cannot occur.

Their interpretation of Scripture rests on a presupposition that makes it impossible to believe in the virgin birth.

For if the supernatural does not happen, the virgin birth could not have taken place.

If one's basic presupposition is to accept the Scriptures, then the supernatural and the virgin birth are no stumbling block.

When you look at church history, inerrancy was the position of the universal church until the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

The early church faced numerous controversies, but none with inerrancy.

The important issue was the preincarnate and incarnate Christ.

The church had to grapple with the person and the nature, or natures, of the incarnate Christ.

Did He have a human and a divine nature?

If so, did these two natures exist side by side?

If He had two natures, was He two persons or one person?

This Christological dilemma was settled by saying that Jesus had two natures, a human and a divine, that were not blended into one nor were they to be confused with each other, but they existed side by side in the one person.

The person of Christ had to be made clear by the early church.

But for some 15-16 centuries there was no attempt to define the doctrine of inspiration of the Bible.

After the 19th century there began the struggle over Biblical truth when German rationalism invaded the church.

Edward J. Young, a long-time Old Testament teacher at Westminster Theological Seminary, said in his volume *Thy Word is Truth*:

"If the autographs of Scripture are marred by flecks of mistake, God has simply not told us the truth concerning His Word. To assume that He could breathe forth a word that could contain mistakes is to say, in effect, that God Himself can make mistakes. We must maintain that the original of Scripture is infallible for the simple reason that it came to us direct from God Himself."

About 1850, radical German modernism invaded the theological world of Great Britain.

Charles Haddon Spurgeon was undoubtedly the best known and most popular preacher of his time.

He delivered a sermon in 1855, which was devoted to biblical infallibility,

I think you will enjoy the poetic way he preaches:

Then, since God wrote it, mark its truthfulness. If I had written it, there would be worms of critics who would at once swarm on it, and would cover it with their evil spawn; had I written it, there would be men who would pull it to pieces at once, and perhaps quite right too. But this is the Word of God. Come, search, ye critics, and find a flaw; examine it from its Genesis to its Revelation and find an error. This is a vein of pure gold, unalloyed by quartz or any earthy substance. This is a star without a speck; a sun without a blot; a light without darkness; a

moon without paleness; a glory without a dimness. O Bible! it cannot be said of any other book, that it is perfect and pure; but of thee we can declare all wisdom is gathered up in thee, without a particle of folly. This is the judge that ends the strife where wit and reason fail. This is the book untainted by any error, but is pure, unalloyed, perfect truth. Why? Because God wrote it. Ah! charge God with error if you please; tell Him that His book is not what it ought to be Blessed Bible, thou art all truth.

Spurgeon's words portray what the situation was among British Christians in his day.

They indeed were turning away from the old faith.

It is happening throughout the church today.

And there are consequences that always follow disbelief in the full reliability of the Bible.

This disbelief leads inevitably to a denial of many of the basic doctrines of the Christian faith, such as the virgin birth of the Messiah, His many miracles, His walking on water, His healing the blind and lame, and His bodily resurrection.

I'm not here to tell you how to think, or what to think.

But I am here to tell you to think.

So, we hear our Lord saying to you and I

Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. 16 "You will know them by their fruits.

More next time.

Prayer and Invitation

