

Sermon Brief

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October 10, 2021

Text: 2 Timothy 3:12-17

Title: Wintonbury Values - Authority

Subject: Jesus is Lord.

Complement: The Bible has supreme authority in faith and conduct.

Textual Idea: Since Jesus is Lord, His inspired Word, the Bible, has supreme authority in our lives.

Sermon Idea: Our beliefs and behavior flow from whom we revere.

Interrogative: What or who has supreme authority in your life?

Key Points:

1. Jesus is our Lord, and we are to seek to please Him.
2. God's Word has supreme authority in every part of life.

What do I want people to know? I want people to know that our authority for living comes from Jesus' lordship as communicated to us through God's Word.

What do I want people to do? I want people to (1) commit to Jesus as their Lord, (2) cherish the Bible as God's Word, (3) repent of any disobedience.

What need am I addressing? I am addressing the need to acknowledge Jesus and His Word as our authority.

Wintonbury Values -Authority

2 Timothy 3:12-17

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A few weeks ago, I shared about how my mom came to know Jesus through a guy at the DMV. Well after that, she became quite a student of the Word of God, and she wasn't ashamed to share it! She would walk around with a huge John 3:16 button on her shirt, to my great embarrassment, telling everyone she met how they needed Jesus and to read the Bible. Among those she sought to influence were the people in the church she had previously attended. As she taught the Bible to these folks, they started asking questions of their priest! Eventually, he asked to meet with my mom to set her straight and instead found that he was unable to deal with her points from Scripture. He sent her to the area bishop. After that fruitless meeting, the bishop sent her a note that read, 'Dear Rollande, just remember that when Christ came to earth, He came to found a church, not a book.'

The point the bishop was making was that spiritual authority is in the institutional church, not the Bible. Is he right? Spiritual Authority. Where do we find it? Some find it in church leaders, some find it in reason, some find it on Instagram, and some, like my mom, find it in this book – the Bible. Which is it? What if they don't agree? Starting this week and over the next two months, I'm going to be taking us through Wintonbury's values. This is a follow-up to the message I did two Sundays ago on **(LCD) our vision and mission – we want to see our communities transformed by God's presence. We do that by seeking to help individuals and communities experience God, become more like Jesus, discover their calling, and impact their world.** What binds us together as a community on this mission are our **(LCD) Values**. Fourteen in all. I'll be looking at them two at a time in pairs of seven. The first pair, the biggest words on this word cloud are Jesus and The Bible. Together they represent our **(LCD) authority value. Specifically, Jesus: We love Jesus Christ as our Savior and King, and The Bible: We treasure the Bible as the Word of God which reveals the truth about Himself, ourselves, and the world.** We love Jesus and treasure His Word; they are completely in synch with each other and have authority over us - like my mom believed. Let's talk about that.

Turn with me to 2 Timothy chapter 3. 2 Timothy is a letter written by the Apostle Paul to his disciple Timothy at the very end of his life. Like anyone else at the end of their lives, Paul is going to pass on what is most important to him. And what is concerning Paul is that people are turning away from Jesus and the Scriptures. They're following the political correctness of their day and their own selfish desires, all in the name of God! In light of the rampant godlessness, Paul goes on to tell Timothy to avoid false teachers who encourage these behaviors and then reminds him to follow his, Paul's, example of godly living even though it resulted in tremendous persecution. He then picks up at verse 12, *"In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,* ¹³ *while evildoers and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived."*

There are two convictions that the Apostle Paul shares here that drive him, strengthen him, enable him to remain faithful to Christ in spite of the painful persecutions and the rampant false teaching described in verse 13. The first conviction is in verse 12, *“everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.”* It’s a conviction borne out of experience, but also out of a deep desire and value, listen now, Paul is willing to be persecuted because he values living a godly life in Christ Jesus. Don’t miss that. Paul doesn’t submit to suffering because he values suffering; he submits to suffering because he values Jesus! Jesus is the focus of his life.

And because he values Jesus, he wants to live a godly life. The word here for “godly” is interesting. It is a word that meant an attitude of reverence that carried forth in one’s actions. One commentary put it this way, **(LCD) “To live godly is to live with a reverent awareness of God’s sovereignty over every aspect of one’s life, and the attendant determination to honor him in all our conduct.”** Notice godliness starts with an “awareness of God’s sovereignty,” or we might say His authority, “over every aspect of one’s life.” Is Jesus truly lord of all? Is He your authority at work, on the highway, at the grocery store, “Lord Jesus, what should I buy?” Seriously, it begins with an attitude that Jesus is your authority in EVERYTHING! But note that it doesn’t stop there, “the attendant determination to honor him in all our conduct.” Phew! That is what Paul says he wants, to live a godly life in Christ Jesus. Is that true for us?

Listen, whatever you value will drive your life, it will have authority over your life, and you’ll even be willing to suffer for it. Just consider a childhood hero of mine, **(LCD) Jim Otto**. Otto played center for the Oakland Raiders over a decorated, long NFL career. He was great, a Hall of Famer, and he helped the Raiders win a championship. But listen to this description of what he put himself through to achieve football glory, **(LCD) “Otto’s body was punished greatly during his NFL career, resulting in nearly 74 operations, including 28 on his knee (nine of them during his playing career) and multiple joint replacements. His joints became riddled with arthritis, and he developed debilitating back and neck problems. In his book, “The Pain of Glory” Otto described near-death experiences from medical procedures, including fighting off three life-threatening infections due to complications from his artificial joints. Otto eventually had to have his right leg amputated. Despite his maladies, Otto says he has no regrets and wouldn’t change a thing even if given the opportunity to do it over again.”** Why doesn’t he have any regrets? Because for Jim Otto, football glory was worth suffering for.

We will suffer for what we value. It could be a job, it could be a hobby, it could be all kinds of things. People will throw away their families for their careers, their health for another cheesesteak, their careers for not being vaccinated. People will suffer for what they value. But here’s the thing, not everything is worth suffering for...but Jesus is. In reality, only Jesus is worthy of being our ultimate value, our highest priority, and, therefore, our ultimate authority. At Wintonbury, we’re saying this is our **(LCD) top value, Jesus, we love Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord!** Like Leroy preached last week, treasuring Jesus; like Paul says in Philippians 3, he considered everything CRAP, which is the actual Greek word, no joke, compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Jesus Christ His Lord! Amen! May that be true of us!

It was certainly true of the Apostle Paul who was convinced that Jesus is Lord; a conviction which came from personally meeting Jesus and from another place, verse 14. Talking again to his protégé Timothy, Paul says this, “*But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it,* ¹⁵ *and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.* ¹⁶ *All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,* ¹⁷ *so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”* But, verse 14, as for you young Timothy, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of.

There’s the second conviction. The word for convinced is **(LCD) Pistao and it means “to come to believe something to be true; to be assured of.”** In our day of relative truth, truth is whatever makes sense to you, what a breath of fresh air that Timothy is a young man with conviction. He is assured of what he believes. Why? Paul says it is because of two things: reliable teachers and a lifetime of knowledge of the Holy Scriptures. Aren’t you glad for reliable teachers like Rich who taught and lived the scriptures here at Wintonbury for 40 years?! What a treasure you are Rich!

Timothy had that too. We learn in chapter 1 of this book that Timothy inherited his faith from his mom and grandma. They not only taught him the Scriptures, but they lived it out – godly living. Same with Paul as a godly, adult mentor – taught and lived out the Scriptures. This lived-out teaching brings great assurance of faith to those we influence. How are we doing at that...teaching and modeling the Scriptures in our homes? Tradition dictated that Jewish children be taught the Law starting at age five. Many had it memorized by age 13. Jews were steeped in the Scriptures...it was their life. How we need a return to that kind of thirst and sense of dependence on God’s Word.

Finally in verse 16, Paul tells us something amazing about the Scriptures. He says that ‘all,’ not some, but ‘all’ Scripture is God-breathed. Yes it is true...even though you snooze through the list of tribes in Numbers and the list of laws in Leviticus, it is ALL God-breathed...every word. Now verse 15 calls them the ‘Holy Scriptures.’ The word for ‘holy’ is not the usual word we see a lot, *hagios*, but rather **(LCD) hieros which means, “that which is filled by divine power - that which is holy in and of itself; as opposed to ‘hagios’ (holy), which is something made holy.”** For instance, you and I are called ‘holy’ in Scripture, ‘hagios’ holy, made holy. We aren’t naturally holy.

The Scriptures, like God Himself, are hieros, holy in and of itself, by nature. Why...because it is God-breathed. Paul literally creates a word here by joining the word for “God” with “breathed.” In other words, the Bible is not a human book, it is a supernatural, God book. One of Rich’s profs in seminary, Charles Ryrie, defined it this way, **(LCD) “Inspiration is...God’s superintendence of the human authors so that, using their own individual personalities, they composed and recorded without error His revelation to man in the words of the original autographs.”** So inspiration has more to do with God superintending the process such that what He wanted came through.

Maybe we can understand this a bit better by reviewing this **list of false views of inspiration. (LCD)** The first kind is natural inspiration which states that the Bible was written by a bunch of great writers...nothing supernatural...just excellent literature. The second kind is spiritual inspiration which believes that the Holy Spirit illumined or enlightened the writers and out of that creative injection, they wrote a spiritual work. The third false view is partial inspiration – that only the parts of the Bible related to faith are really the words of God. Good luck trying to determine which words are authoritatively from God and which you can ignore! The fourth view, conceptual inspiration, teaches that God revealed His will in concepts and then the writers described the concepts of God in their own words. The last view, dictation, might be called the robotic view – that the writers were robots, possessed by the Spirit, and were not consciously writing. All of these views miss the mark.

Another verse that describes inspiration is 2 Peter 1:20-21, **(LCD) “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.”** The authors of Scripture didn’t gather around the table over Dr. Pepper and Doritos and bat around story boards...”Hey, I got it! How about if he raises his staff like this and then the Red Sea opens up like a Jell-O?” “What is Jell-O?” No, no...the authors of Scripture spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. This word ‘carried along’ is used in Acts 27 of a ship carried along by the wind. You can think of it as the prophets **(LCD) were raising their sails** and the Holy Spirit filled them in order to move the boat in the direction He wanted it to go. The sailors are still very much involved and conscious but they are being led by the Spirit of God. So having an experience with God doesn’t make Scripture divine, agreeing with my opinion doesn’t make it divine, dissecting all the Greek and Hebrew doesn’t make it divine, it already is divine by nature, and that makes it very, very powerful and authoritative for my life as we see next - the end of verse 16 and verse 17.

All Scripture is God-breathed, and, because of that supernatural essence, it is profitable for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness so that the man or woman of God is thoroughly equipped for every good work. The Bible has power, it is God’s Word, that’s why we tell you to open it up for yourself. When you do, Paul says it does **four general things (LCD):** first, God’s Word can teach us what is right, doctrine, the right road to walk on. However, as we go along whistling away, we suddenly run into a billboard that looks pretty interesting called sin. Oftentimes we take that exit and then the word does a second powerful thing, it rebukes us, tells us what we’re doing wrong and points us back to the right way. If we don’t listen, we’ll go off into the land of wandering; but if we do listen, then the Word does a third powerful thing, it corrects us, tells us how we can get back right with God. Finally, if we heed the correction, it places us back on the right road and the fourth thing it powerfully does is trains us in righteousness, God’s way, so that we can keep moving with God in line with His Word.

God's Word is all these things, but it is ultimately meant to be lived out in our lives as the final phrase of our Statement of Faith says **(LCD) The Word of God: We believe that the whole Bible is the Word of God, verbally inspired and without error in the original manuscripts, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and that it has supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct.** The nature of the Bible as God's actual Word gives it supreme authority over everything. All of our lives are meant to be informed and led by God's Word. God's Word doesn't change, spiritual leaders and cultural reason does. That is one reason why the Bible is effective as our authoritative guide: it never changes.

If we believe that this book is truly, verbally inspired of God, then we must acknowledge God's authority in and through it. We must build our lives on the solid ground of God's Word and not public opinion polls, personal experience with family and friends, People magazine, Scientific America, Oprah Winfrey, Dr. Phil, or anyone else. They may have some wisdom but they should not be our base of authority. These are all shifting sand while the Word of God, revealed both through Jesus and the Scriptures, are eternal and sure. So how are you doing with God's Word? Are you cherishing the Word every day? I saw a great **(LCD) question the other day: what is your time in scripture like? Blueberry pie – yummy, can't wait, meat and potatoes – standard fare, green vegetables – yucky, but good for you, chicken broth – only when I need it.** I hope we have Jeremiah's attitude toward scripture, **(LCD) "When your words showed up, I ate them—swallowed them whole. What a feast! What delight I took in being yours, O God, God-of-the-Angel-Armies! I never joined the party crowd in their laughter and their fun. Led by you, I went off by myself."** Jeremiah valued God and His Word above all, regardless of the earthly suffering involved. Paul did too.

May we do so too so we avoid the errors that pop up at places like **(LCD) Camp Quest West** just north of Sacramento, California. Designed for children of agnostics, atheists, freethinkers, and humanists, the mission of the camp is to "promote respect for others with different viewpoints, values, and beliefs." That's not bad, but it goes one step further to say, "we deplore efforts ... to seek to explain the world in supernatural terms and to look outside nature for salvation." It's "a vacation from Judeo-Christian culture," said camp director Rick Rohrer. The camp ends with what director Chris Lindstrom calls **(LCD) "a competition for the kids to create their own religion that everyone can believe in and that will be good for all, for all time."** People creating our own religion is a bad idea...it is a sandy foundation. Instead, I pray that we will be a people who joyfully submit to the Word in flesh, Jesus, and the Word in writing, the Bible, as our supreme authority in all things. Let's repeat together these first two **(LCD) authority values; Jesus: We love Jesus Christ as our Savior and King, and The Bible: We treasure the Bible as the Word of God which reveals the truth about Himself, ourselves, and the world.** We don't have to wear huge John 3:16 buttons like my mom to value God's Word, but we do need to live by it. I pray we do.