

**“FOR THE BIBLE TELLS ME SO.”**

**Rev. Robert T. Woodyard**

**First Christian Reformed Church**

**January 12, 2020, 6:00PM**

**Sermon Texts: Luke 16:19-31; II Timothy 3:14-17**

### **Introduction.**

This evening is a continuation from this morning, a part two, to our new years emphasis on the importance and value of reading God’s Word faithfully.

The Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus is a story about the adequacy or sufficiency of Scripture. The rich man basically said Moses and the Prophets aren’t enough to convince someone of their need for salvation. He wants something more than the Word of God. Maybe another miracle, maybe some dramatic experience, maybe someone rising from the dead? What God said isn’t enough.

If I told you that God told me that the Scripture is sufficient for our faith and practice and eternal salvation, would you believe me? Would you believe me about the part where I said that God told me? You should only accept one reason for me saying that. If I say it based on Scripture.

Let me give one example.

**II Timothy 3:14-17** But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it 15 and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. 16 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

“In other words, the Scriptures are sufficient in the sense that they are the only (“once for all”) inspired and (therefore) inerrant words of God that we need, in order to know the way of salvation (“make you wise unto salvation”) and the way of obedience (“equipped for every good work”)” (John Piper).

Do you ever wish God would speak to you? Do you ever hear someone say that God spoke to them and wish you could have the same experience? Have you ever prayed and asked God to speak to you in some clear way? And then wait for some voice, all the while your Bible is sitting next to you closed.

What’s the implication of this man’s request? He’s saying God didn’t do enough, God didn’t make it clear enough, God didn’t get his attention. It’s God’s fault not his fault.

In an old Woody Allen movie, *Love and Death*, his character says, “If only God would speak to me – just once, anything, one sentence, two words. If he would just cough. If I could just see a miracle. If I could see a burning bush or the seas part. Or my uncle Sasha pick up the check.”

Do you think that’s true? Do you think a miracle would make a difference? Do you think you would be influenced by someone coming out of the grave? Would that get our attention?

Want evidence to the contrary? Think about Pharaoh and all the miracles he saw, yet his heart remained hard. Think about that other man named Lazarus. What happened when he walked out of the tomb after four days? “The chief priests made plans to put Lazarus to death” (John 12:10).

Jesus Himself rose from the dead, and yet how many in Jesus’ day and now in our day remain unbelieving?

The issue is not enough evidence or proof, the issue is hard hearts and unbelief. We don’t need more, we need to believe what we have already been given.

If everyone buried in Monumenta Cemetery rose from the dead today they could not tell us anything more important than what God has already told us in His Word.

All we need for salvation and eternal life is right here in the Bibles we already have. The person who reads or hears the Bible and yet waits for something more before he will follow Jesus is deceived and hardhearted.

### **The Doctrine of the Sufficiency of Scripture.**

God is God and according to the counsel of His perfect wisdom and will and His own good pleasure He has revealed to us all that is necessary for our salvation and faith and growth in holiness.

*This is called the doctrine of the completeness or the sufficiency of Scripture.*

The Holy Scriptures as we have them in the Old and New Testaments perfectly, completely and exactly contain the will of God for us. Everything that we must believe to be saved and have eternal life is sufficiently taught right here.

This is the perfect record of God’s ways on earth and His deeds for our salvation. This teaches us all the necessary and essential doctrines for salvation and service to our God, making plain our depravity, our deliverance and our duty.

This is all the revelation that God intends for us to have. Jesus said many others things that were not recorded. And inspired men wrote other letters, at least one, maybe two more to the Corinthians and one to the Laodicians. What we have is all that God ordained for us to have.

No other traditions should be added.

No other human writings.

No other decrees from popes, councils, synods.

No other public opinion or private interpretation.

Every other voice must submit to this voice. We are bound by nothing but the Word of God.

This conviction has given great boldness and courage to Christians in every age who have staked their life on God's Word.

This conviction led *Guido de Bres* (author of the Belgic Confession) to write to King Philip I:

“We see that we are bidden to follow only the word of God and not what we think fit, and that we are forbidden to add or subtract anything from the holy commandments of Almighty God.”

And this conviction led *Martin Luther* to reply to his accusers:

“Your Imperial Majesty and Your Lordships demand a simple answer. Here it is, plain and unvarnished. Unless I am convicted [convinced] of error by the testimony of Scripture ... I stand convicted [convinced] by the Scriptures to which I have appealed, and my conscience is taken captive by God's word, I cannot and will not recant anything, for to act against our conscience is neither safe for us, nor open to us. On this I take my stand. I can do no other. God help me. Amen.”

The same goes for me. I am a man under authority, under the authority of the Word of God. My conscience is bound to this book. What it says God says. What it commands I must do. By this book I may be held accountable.

This doctrine requires humility on our part to bow to the authority of Scripture and accept it as it is, the very Word of God. Part of our humbly accepting its authority and its sufficiency is accepting the answers it gives and not asking for answers it doesn't give. Nor should we demand answers that are more to our liking.

### **Application and conclusion.**

Remember what you have learned and from whom you learned it and continue to be a student of God's Word all your life. Never cease in your desire to know God and His wisdom and will. If you are breathing, don't stop being a student of God's Word.

Take God at His Word, trust and obey. Don't add to or detract from. Don't put equal weight or trust in the footnotes or study notes in your Bible or in any devotional book.

Don't get taken in by all the talk about lost books of the Bible or the newly discovered sayings of Jesus. There cannot be, nor will there be any new or further revelations from heaven until Jesus returns. This is enough.

Anyone who suggests that they have wisdom or writings that should be read alongside the Bible is saying something contrary to Scripture and is actually diminishing the authority of the Bible.

“The Bible says” takes precedence over “the Lord told me” everytime.

Furthermore, nothing is a sin that is not explicitly or implicitly forbidden by Scripture. So man-made rules about eating meat, or going to movies, or drinking coke, or wearing jeans to church may be individual choices but not a measure of righteousness. Parents can make such rules for a time and season in a family, but if a church raise such a rule to the level of a moral command, they have gone beyond Scripture by adding a rule to Scripture.

Finally, our confidence in the Word of God comes from the Word of God and not from anything else. If real wood from Noah's ark was found would that increase your confidence in the truth of the story? If a piece of the Ark of the Covenant was found would that give you firmer reason of believing? If the Shroud of Turin was proved beyond a shadow of a doubt to be the real burial cloth of Jesus, would that boost your confidence in the crucifixion?

None of these things or anything else can add to or detract from the authority or truthfulness of Scripture.

You can have complete confidence in the Word of God whatever the world may say. It is the verbally inspired, infallible, inerrant, trustworthy and true, eternal Word of God. This is our rule for faith and practice.

This is the source of our life and hope and future. This is the riches of God's grace. This is the riches of God's love. This is the unbelievable kindness of God to us. Blessed is the man who knows this, meditates on this. Let's renew our love of God's Word by reading God's Word that we might know and love Him more. Eternity is at stake, eternity awaits.

“It is written, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.” (Matthew 4:4).

To not trust God's authoritative, sufficient, clear, necessary, inerrant, complete and final word in Bible is not to trust God Himself

God is infinitely good and He knows all that we need and He has perfectly provided what we need in His Word. Scripture is a wonderfully perfect gift from God, an expression of His great

love for us. Psalm 19 and 119 are beautiful psalms written in praise and thanksgiving for the Scriptures. With this I close as I began this morning:

**Psalm 19:7-11** The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul;  
the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple;  
8 the precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart;  
the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes;  
9 the fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever;  
the rules of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether.  
10 More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold;  
sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb.  
11 Moreover, by them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward.

**Prayer:**

Holy Father, thank you for your Word. Thank you for light of the gospel of the glory of Christ that you have caused to shine in our hearts to give us knowledge of you in your Son (I Corinthians 4:4,6). Thank you for your indescribable gift persevered and protected and given to your church to defend and pass on from generation to generation. Thank you for the faithfulness of those who have gone before us and for those who have taught us your Word. Father, receive our thanksgiving and gratitude in the name of Jesus. Amen.