

TEXT SERMONS

SERIES: *THE RICHES OF SALVATION*

Message #18

“THE PLATFORM OF SALVATION”

I Peter 1:22-25

“Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever, because ‘All flesh is as grass, And all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, and its flower falls away, But the word of the LORD endures forever.’ Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you.”

The two political parties in our country hold their party conventions to nominate candidates for office. At those conventions they adopt “The Party Platform” – that is, the mission and vision statements, strategies, goals and tactics of their parties. Their candidates for office then advocate their platform in campaigning for election.

We Christians also have our “platform.” We did not have a convention and formulate it for God prepared it; it is the written revelation of God in the sixty-six books of the Bible. Our eternal salvation is based upon this inspired, infallible, inerrant and eternal Word of God. Therefore,

“Think of it carefully, study it prayerfully,
Deep in your heart let its oracles dwell;
Ponder its mysteries, slight not its histories,
None can ever love it too fondly or well.”

In over fifty years of ministering the Word of God, I have reluctantly come to this conclusion: the average Christian is biblically illiterate. Although carrying the Bible, they do not care for the Bible enough to saturate their minds with its truths. It is affirmed with their lips but is not confirmed in their lives. They say they are bound to it but in actuality they are bored with it. Many have started out to be Christians but have not yet read the instructions. Consequently, and increasingly so, the trend is to depend upon anything and everything else other than the pure, undiluted truth of God to build up the church of Jesus Christ.

A new minister was asked to teach a boys’ Sunday school class in the absence of the regular teacher. He decided to see what they knew, so he asked who knocked down the walls of Jericho. All the boys denied having done it, and the preacher was appalled by their ignorance. After the morning service he asked to meet with the boys parents. He told the parents, “Not one of the boys knows who knocked down the walls of Jericho.”

The parents were silent until finally one spoke up. “Preacher, this appears to be bothering you a lot. But I’ve known all those boys since they were born and they’re good boys. If they said they didn’t do it, I believe them. Another parent said, “Let’s just take some money out of the maintenance fund, and fix the walls.” And another said, “I’m all for that and I’ll paint them

once they are put back up.” It’s a humorous story, but it illustrates a serious point. Too many Christians are ignorant of what the Bible says.

I was the guest speaker in a church service, many years ago, when the pastor had a testimony meeting as part of the service. He asked for persons to give their favorite Bible verse. One fellow stood and said, “If at first you don’t succeed, try, try again.” I looked at the pastor and could plainly see that he was embarrassed. But the worst was yet to come. A lady stood and said, “I don’t know where it is found but my favorite verse is: ‘Every tub sits on its own bottom.’” Of course, neither statement is in the Bible. How well do we know our Bibles?

I suspect that the majority of Christians in this country do not really know their Bibles. Why is that? It’s because they are not spending time in The Book! The verses we are studying in this message strongly underscore the importance of the Word of God to our salvation as well as our edification.

There are two major truths in these verses, with which the first chapter of Peter’s first epistle ends, that I will emphasize in this message: first, the nature of God’s Word, and secondly, the necessity of God’s Word.

I. THE NATURE OF THE WORD OF GOD.

The nature of God’s word is seen in its authorship, its authority and its agelessness.

A. Its Nature Is Seen In its Authorship. - *“the Word of God.”* (I Peter 1:23)

That the Word of God is not of human origin should be evident to any serious and honest searcher of its contents. Think this through: “A good man could not have written the Bible, and a bad man would not have written it” said commentator Adam Clark. In other words, man could not have written the Bible if he would, and would not have written it if he could. Why?

There are two self evident propositions in those two statements: first, a good man could not have written the Bible, because it tells us 2,008 times that God is the Author! Therefore, if a man wrote it, he was a great liar, and consequently could not be a good man! Second, a bad man would not have written the Bible if he could, because it tells what he is, and he would be unwilling to write the truth about himself! Your Bible’s author is no less than the almighty, eternal, all-wise God himself! The book is “the Word of God” as our text states. The poet set it down as follows:

“This is the greatest book on earth,
Unparalleled it forever stands;
Its Author is God; its truth is divine,
It is inspired in every word and line,
Though written by human hands.”

B. Its Nature Is Seen In Its Authority.

Notice two phrases in this passage: the first in v.23 - “the Word of God” and the second in v.25 “the Word of the Lord.” I state emphatically that the Holy Scriptures are the only

absolute and sufficient guide in all matters of faith and practice because they are stamped with the authority of God!

At least five hundred times in the first five books of the Bible we read the phrase, “the Lord said” or “the Lord spoke.” Three hundred times again in the historical books we find the same phrases. Twelve hundred times in the prophetic books we read the same phrases or: “hear the Word of the Lord,” or “this is what the Lord says.” The Bible authoritative because it is God speaking!

C. Its Nature Is Seen In Its Agelessness.

It “lives and abides forever.” (v.23) And, it “endures forever.” (v.25) The books of men are only for time – God’s book is for eternity.

Generally, a book is produced by a writer in his own generation – but God’s Word took at least 1,500 years to write, spanning 30 generations of the world’s history. Books that were a rage a few years ago are forgotten today. The older a book is, the smaller its chances of surviving.

But the Bible, recorded by men who died 2 to 3 thousand years ago, is not only still in existence today but is the most widely circulated book in the world, even though century after century opponents have berated, banned and even burned it. The Bible is the world’s only indestructible Book!

Infidel scientists have used against the Bible:

- The chemists bottle,
- The astronomer’s telescope,
- The explorers compass,
- The geologists hammer,
- The archeologists spade,
- The skeptical theologian’s pen. But against the attacks of cynics, critics and skeptics, the Bible lives and will endure forever! A poem I have often used regarding the nature of God’s Word is titled, “*The Anvil*” :

“Last eve I paused beside a blacksmith’s door
And heard the anvil ring the vesper chime;
Looking in upon the floor I saw old hammers
Worn with the beating years of time.
“How many anvils have you had?” said I,
“To wear and batter all those hammers so?”
“Just one,” said he, with twinkling eye,
“The anvil wears the hammers out you know.”
And so I thought, the anvil of God’s Word
For ages skeptic blows have beat upon,
Though the noise of falling blows was heard
The anvil is unharmed but the hammers are gone.”

I like to think of Jesus' words in reference to the eternity of the Word of God: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my word shall not pass a way." That makes His Word an abiding reality. Did you ever think about this: the Bible is the only material object that is eternal?

The Bible's authorship, authority and agelessness reveal the nature of divine written revelation in the book that we call the Bible. That makes it the world's most unique Book and the most necessary Book!

II. **THE NECESSITY OF THE WORD OF GOD.**

"this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you." (v.25)

The Word of God is necessary for many reasons. I call your attention to only three which are found in the verses that we are studying:

A. It Provides The Church's Message. - *"the gospel."*

Some men have changed God's essential message over the years but a good question to ask any proclaimer of the Word is this: "Do you preach the gospel that Paul preached?" The essential content of the gospel that Paul preached is recorded in I Cor. 15:1-5 plus other passages. However, Paul did not stop with three basic facts concerning the Person and work of Jesus Christ. He said to the Ephesian elders in *"I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God."* (Acts 20:27)

Communicating the gospel that Paul communicated means not only to articulate the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ, but it means to convey all the great truths of the Bible for they are gospel related.

Illust. Dr. Louis Evans was pastor of Hollywood Presbyterian Church years ago. This was and is a very sophisticated congregation including many notable people. He was preaching a series of messages on the great doctrines of the Bible and after several messages murmurings began to arise within the congregation. Some did not like his preaching because they did not agree with what the Bible said.

One Sunday morning he read I Cor.15 preparing to preach on the subject of the resurrection, when he sensed some were very uncomfortable with the direction of his discourse. For effect, he did a very unusual thing: he tore out the page of the Bible from which he had been reading saying, "This is an unpopular subject; we do not agree with it therefore, let us dispense with it!" First, one man stood and objected, then another and another until the congregation was sufficiently aroused. Finally, Evans said, "It appears you want the whole truth and nothing but the truth so I will preach the truth!" He preached on the resurrection for 50 minutes! Without the Gospel Message, the church has no life-giving message.

B. It Prescribes Church's Method. - *"preached unto you."*

The Greek word translated "preached" is "euaggelizō" and means to declare and announce good news, especially the gospel. The church's major corporate method of

communicating truth is through public preaching and teaching. There have been those who have questioned God's prescribed method of communicating His truth.

The Methodist leader, of Chicago's Ecumenical Institute, Joseph Wesley Matthews, wrote, "That thing we call preaching that we do on Sunday morning, I think that is finished. I think that people in the future will gather at church, let us say, only about every other week, or once a month, and on Easter and Christmas. This is already the trend in suburban churches where attendance is low, and they will read their creed, say a prayer, have communion and go home."

I would say to Mr. Matthews, "As long as God has His faithful witnesses on this earth, preaching and teaching of the Word of God will never be passé. Why? Because of the truth emphasized in I Cor.1:21: *"it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe."*

Jesus, in the Great Commission in Matthew 28, said to teach *"them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."* (v.20) The end of the age has not yet come. Let us keep preaching the gospel!

The Bible is necessary because it provides church's message, prescribes the church's method and, in addition:

C. It Produces The Church's Members. - *"Being born again by the Word of God ..."*
It is the Word of God, the imperishable seed, which brings about the new birth and thereby qualifies one to be a member of Christ's Body, the church.

I Peter 1:23 says we are born again "through the word of God which lives...." In Phil. 2:16 we have the expression "the Word of life." God's Word is alive and it gives life. Only those who are made alive by the implantation of the seed of the Word and the cultivation by the Holy Spirit are born into God's family.

SUMMATION

What have we seen in this brief study of the last few verses of the first chapter of Peter's first epistle? We have seen that:

- The Nature of The Word of God as revealed in its Authorship, Authority and Agelessness;
- The Necessity of The Word Of God in that it Provides the Church's message, Prescribes the church's method and Produces the church's members.

CONCLUSION

What a Book! There is not another like it!

God has given us His written REVELATION;
It was produced by INPSIRATION;
It is understood by ILLUMINATION;
It deserves careful EVALUATION;
It is the preacher's PROCLAMATION;
It brings about personal TRANSFORMATION;
It results in God's GLORIFICATION;
It will be preserved throughout eternities DURATION!

Illust. Mahatma Gandhi, the famous Hindu leader, knew that the Bible was powerful. He stated: "You Christians have in your keeping a document with enough dynamite to explode civilization, to turn society upside-down, to bring peace to this war-torn world. But you read it as if it were just good literature, and nothing else."

Illust. A young boy noticed a large black book covered with dust lying on the top shelf of the book case. His curiosity was aroused, so he asked his mother about it. Embarrassed, she explained, "Oh, that's a Bible. That's God's Book." He thought for a moment, and then said, "Well, Mom, if that's God's Book, why don't we give it back to Him? Nobody around here reads it anyway!" Do you read it? Do you heed it?

"Heed the tidings, the warnings and chidings
Found in this volume of heavenly store;
With faith unflinching and love that's prevailing,
Trust in its promises for life evermore."

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