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[00:00:06] All right. Good to be with you today. We're in second, Timothy. If you have your Bibles, I hope that you do a second. Timothy, chapter three. If you turn there with me. Great to have Pastor Tony back for sure. He got really the last one. Encourage you guys to continue to be praying for Tim and Kathy and let's stand together. Let's stand together as we read the Holy Scriptures. You know, we stand because we're unified in the belief that this book is the inspired word of God, and that is worthy to have all authority in our lives. Right. Right. Oh, my gosh. Come on, help me out. All right. And as we read it, God, God is speaking to us. So if I said nothing else, this would be an answer to prayer for some of you guys. If I said nothing else, after just the reading of this, we could say, Hey, God has spoken to us because this word is living and powerful. The Bible says in verse 16 of chapter three, second Timothy all scripture how much all Scripture is breathed out by God. By the way, this is the English standard version. All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training and righteousness that the Man of God and the woman of God may be complete equipped for every good work and father. We do believe we do believe that the book that we have in our hands is your inspired word. It is God breathed. You do speak it. It's not a dead book. It's a living book. And you've revealed yourself to us through the Holy Scriptures. God, that is something to be reckoned with. I prayed today that. While we affirm that with our lips, we would believe it in our hearts and the weight of it God, the real weight and the significance of those statements would would be met in concrete ways as we surrender, as we yield.

[00:02:12] God is we give you place as you have authority over our lives. Fathers speak to us today. We pray in Jesus name. Amen. You can have a seat. Some of you may remember this in 2011, the infamous atheist Richard Dawkins. Yeah. You guys ever hear of this guy? Yeah. Yeah, pretty much. But he and his atheist friends had this idea to market atheism in London. And so what they did is they rented out marketing space on the side of busses in London, and they put this statement, this slogan on those signs. They said, There's probably no God. So stop worrying and enjoy your life. That was their message, by the way. That pretty much is the the that is the message of atheism with a predisposition against Christianity, because there's a lot embedded in that. Right. There's probably no God they had to ad probably because they didn't want to get sued. They couldn't absolutely say there is no God, there's probably no God. So stop worrying and enjoy your life now before you sneer. Or maybe after some of you have sneered already, I want just to let you know that sometimes you know that. That sentiment permeates our culture. And in fact, some of us might be singing that sentiment when we are singing John Lennon's blockbuster song Imagine, because when you sing that song, you sing these words, Imagine there's no heaven. It's easy if you try No hell below us, above us only a sky. Imagine all the people living for today. Imagine there is no country is it's it isn't hard to do nothing to kill or die for and no religion to imagine all the people living life in peace. Yoo hoo hoo hoo hoo. I'm not going to sing that.

[00:04:14] But that is the same sentiment, right? Almost as if natural selection or philosophical materialism is the way that you and I can have peace. Right? The idea is, if we could just remove God from our lives, the product of that would be peace. I know for some of you, I probably just ruined the song, but you need to really think about what you what you're saying, because there is an argument to be made that the calamities of the 20th century can can. Most of them can find their root cause in atheistic evolution. I say all of that to you today. To say this, we find ourselves in great contrast as we every Sunday morning gather together. We have this interesting habit of bringing this book. You know, we bring a book. It's God is the center of our service together. Don't make a mistake here when I say that we center ourselves around the word of God. I'm not saying that the Bible is God. What I am saying to us today is that we believe it's a very interesting habit that we have, and I know we're just accustomed to it, but probably some of us before we were Christians, we criticized Christians for this. We thought, man, you guys, you're just so weird. You're so weird. You bring this old book, it's 2000 years, all this anachronistic. It's out of time. It's out of touch, it's out of date. It makes no sense. And you all gather together and you do. You have this really weird ritual of reading this book and studying it and and thinking that that God actually speaks to you through it. And now this. And now you are that person. You are those people. And this is what we do.

[00:05:54] We have a fascinating habit on Sunday mornings, and you have a fascinating habit in your devotional time of taking this book and opening it up and and having the audacity to believe that God actually speaks through it. And and we have this habit, we have this ritual, we have this tradition because we do believe there is a God, regardless of what Richard Dawkins and his buddies have to say. We believe we believe that there is a god and we believe that that this God has spoken and that he does continue to speak. Now, you understand, as you're out in the world and you say that to an atheist, they say, man, you're backwards to believe in the Bible. You're just backwards to believe in the Bible. Your people, your individuals holding us back from progressing. And then you talk to somebody who's an agnostic and they say, well, you know, well, probably there's a metaphysical realm. Like, you know, you could probably put your money on that. But but if there is, why would we believe in a God who has only spoken through one faith, this Judeo-Christian faith? And then there's a bigger, larger body of people who say, you know what, I do believe in God. I do believe in God. I do believe in the God of the Bible. And I believe this book is special, but I'm just not necessarily sure what that means. And in fact, like, this is a really important question to deal with because recent studies have shown that among Christians there is a decreasing belief in the inspiration of God's word. In fact, it's precipitous. It's significant. Fewer and fewer Christians actually believe that the Bible is the inspired word of God, and this has real concrete ramifications, because if in fact and this is not a fact, but but for those who erroneously think this, if the Bible is not God's word, then there's really no need for me to live under the authority of it.

[00:07:58] Right? I mean, that's the that's the connecting piece there. If God hasn't spoken or maybe like he might have spoken, but we can't say definitively that this is the word of God. Well, it alleviates us from having to respond in real, concrete ways, because the fact is this when we open the book and we believe that God speaks, you know, that there's a response that's demanded just by the very nature of us saying that this is God's word, like, in other words, you can't just get off the hook by sitting in a service and listening to someone read the Bible. And then walk out and have no change. You can't do that like you can't do. I mean, you can do that, but, you know, you'd be really, really wrong to do that because the book is but is is the word of God. And when God speaks, right? I mean, you know how it works when significant people in your life speak. Significant people like maybe your boss speaks. There's an expectation when your boss speaks that you're actually going to do what is being asked of you or, you know, when when your wife speaks. When your wife speaks and you know. I could do better at this for sure. But when you're in a loving relationship, when you're in a loving relationship and there's real relational equity that you have with somebody and that person means something to you, you don't just disregard their word. Right, because there's value there. Well, if that's true for significant relationships, if if it's true in the work world, how much more how much more to the God who loves us, to the Almighty God, the creator of heaven and earth? You know, when I say inspiration, what do I mean when I say inspiration? Or we just read in second Timothy Chapter three All Scriptures Given by inspiration of God.

[00:09:55] What does that even mean? Well, it means that that the word is God. Read the Bible from Genesis one one to Revelation 22:21. Every single word in every single sentence, in every single paragraph, in every single book is actually breathed forth by God. It's direct revelation from God to and through people. Let me just reread these verses again. Second, Timothy three, 16 to 17. And this is like a seminal section of Scripture on the inspiration of the Bible. All Scripture, all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and it is profitable for doctrine. I've not had the time today to like go through each of these things, but obviously doctrine is the settled system, a belief that is conveyed through the Holy Scriptures and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof or correction, for instruction and righteousness that the Man of God in the woman of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. So it starts out with all scripture is given by inspiration of God. I just want to say right here, because I'm going to pick this up later, that when you read the word scripture in the Bible we're talking about, it is synonymous with God's word when you see that word. We're talking about holy writings. The holy writings. We're talking about the Word of God. So Scripture equals God's word. Let me give you a more technical definition of inspiration today. Inspiration is your way by his spirit. And I say yahweh on purpose, because you can you can say God. But when I say God, like, I may know what I mean, but there may be all sorts of other ideas about which God I'm talking about. Right. There's a whole pantheon of gods that are worshiped and referenced in our culture.

[00:11:51] And so we've just got to be specific. Okay. Well, how do we be specific? Well, we use his name. We use the name that he revealed himself by to Moses and to the other patriarchs, Yahweh by his spirit, God and Father of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the Godfather of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Yahweh, by His Spirit, spoke to and through chosen individuals over the course of history in various political, geographical and cultural context, as instruments through which he revealed himself. We're talking about divine revelation, which he revealed himself, and his purpose is to humanity. And so God selected God chose individuals across the course of time in very different cultural contexts with with significantly different life experiences through which he revealed himself and his divine purposes. And they wrote as the Holy Spirit moved them. And what we have today, from Genesis to Revelation, we call the canon or the collection of Scripture. Now, I just want to I just want to qualify that because sometimes, you know, when we think about the canon of Scripture or the collection of books, we have this idea that it's just a compilation of different books with different ideas and different stories. But that's not what the Bible is. The Bible is a single, highly integrated book. It's a single, highly integrated book. And the various books and the Bible is probably better to to view them as chapters in a book. There's one story that's being written, and then what did God do? God inspired various individuals across the course of history, and as they were writing, as they were moved by the Spirit of God, they contributed a chapter that fit into a greater narrative. The story of God. This amazing story. You're going to hear a lot about this in the gospel.

[00:13:48] According to John, this overarching story of the goodness of God in creation at the fall and the purposes of God to redeem humanity. We just we just went through this in start here in Genesis, all of it culminating in the Person of Jesus Christ. The whole story of Scripture culminates in the person of Jesus Christ. Now I say all that today. And you. Like. Well, listen, you know, I don't. I hear you. You say that this Bible is inspired by God, but I don't even believe in God. And so. So riddle me that, Pastor. And so I just this is not the focal point of today's message. But you know me, I just can't help myself. So I want to give you four considerations when we talk about the existence of God for considerations, for things that you need to to really think through, because God has not left us without evidence of himself. So there are four things I want you to think about. Number one is creation. Number two is relation. Number three is revelation. And number four is reason. Number four is reason. So we live every day. Number one creation. We live every day with the evidence of the existence of God all around us. All around us. And I want to remind you today that all of creation exists because of God's word. All of creation exists because God spoke it into existence out of nothing. the Latin. There was nothing. God said something. And then creation existed. And all of life is a product of those words that God spoke so long ago. And we live with the evidence of this all around us, undeniably, you know. And he wrote a very popular New Testament scholar has called these things The Whispers of God.

[00:15:42] Every day you are in, you are confronted with God's creation through which God is whispering to you that he exists, that He is present, that he is a God of love. You know, you go to the Pacific Ocean and you sit on the beach and you watch you watch the sunset and your heart is pacified. There's something that happens is existential, it's visceral, it's real. You watch the sunset and there's something that is moving within you. Listen, if that wasn't the case, the beach wouldn't be packed when the sun is setting and people wouldn't be photographing the sunset. You know, and I'm not talking about just the beauty of it. That's a whole other argument for the evidence of God. But there's something that happens on the inside. And what what is it? Is God speaking through his general revelation, I am here, I am present, I exist, and I love you. Or, you know, you you have a baby, your very first baby or your second baby or, you know, for some of you crazy people, your eighth baby and you know, that baby is born and you hold that baby in your arms and it's like, man, your heart bursting is bursting. You're like, I never knew. I don't even know this little being right. I even know this little dude. But your heart or this beautiful little baby girl, your heart is like blowing up with love. Love. It's unfathomable. It can't even be expressed in words. Like if someone said, hey, you know, just write a paragraph on how you feel right now. The pen couldn't move because it's just that overwhelming and significant. And in that God is speaking to you, God is speaking to you fearfully, wonderfully made in the matrix of the womb.

[00:17:25] I've knit that this little being together, not just a mass of physicality, but with a soul and with a personality. I think about the majesty of the mountains. Like there's not. In Vegas. I mean, some of you go out to lake mead and you're like, Oh, God, you're so present that does this doesn't happen for me, okay? I mean, you know, especially with body parts like poking out of the out of the ground now. But but for me, for me, for sure, it's like I look at the mountains, I look west, I look west. I'm like, man, God, it's amazing what you've done. You drive out to Red Rock and you stand next to one huge monolithic sandstone. Right? And, you know, while you're here in the city, it's all about you. You're so big. And, you know, it's it's all about your ambitions and and how everyone can serve you. And you get out and you stand next to that. You're like, man, I'm nothing. I am nothing. You're dwarfed, right? And it's the majesty of God being conveyed through his creation right outside of my office. Not to beat a dead horse here, but why not? But right outside of my office, there's a rosebush. And you know, when there is a when the roses are in bloom, I stop and I smell them and I stick my face right in that that blossom. And I breathe it in and it's like, God, you're so amazing. Like the simplicity of this and yet the sophistication of it and is so sublime. Like, how how do you do these things? I'm just saying to you, God speaks every day to you if you're just willing to pay attention. I think relation relationships, the relationships that we have, especially love itself, conveys to us that there is a God, that he does exist.

[00:19:13] The indescribable ability of love, the limitless ness of love, acts of sacrifice that would otherwise not be able to be explained. Sacred relationships between a husband and a wife, between parents and the children among your friends. I'm just saying to you today that the philosophy of survival of the fittest has no explanation for love, has no explanation for acts of sacrifice, and the indescribable ability of love and the beauty of those relationships. All of that is God speaking to and through you. Every good and perfect gift comes down from the Father of lights in whom there is no shadow of turning. And then, of course, the revelation of God. Of course we've got the Holy Scriptures, but we've got the Person of Jesus Christ. I mean, if you really, really want to see evidence of God, look to Jesus, look to His life, look to his crucifixion, look to His resurrection, which, by the way, historically is undeniable. He rose again from the dead. And that leaves you to reckon with the God who is real. And not just that, but you can have a personal experience with God, the Father, through faith in the son. This third piece concerning the evidence of the existence of God is 100% subjective. Don't get me wrong here, right? I mean, I know that this is what I'm saying today. I know that God exists because I have experienced him every single day in my life. And now the skeptic would say, Well, Pastor, you can't use subjective evidences, you know, to defend the existence of God has got to be objective. You know, if it's subjective, it's not true. I say, listen, it is subjective and it is true, and I'm going to stand on it. And no one can take that away from me and no one can take it away from you.

[00:21:10] This is this is a great quote. All right. I'm going to read it twice because it's that good. C.S. Lewis, in this vein of thought, he said, I believe in Christianity, as I believe that the sun has risen not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else. Now, that is so good. Let me just say it again. And this is 100% subjective, right? I believe in Christianity, as I believe that the sun has risen, not because I see it, but because by it I see everything else. The final thing here, just really simply today as as a side note is reason. So we have creation, relation, revelation and reason. I put reason last. You know, typically in apologetics, you know, when you're defending the existence of God, this is where you start. But I'm not really sure that line of argumentation carries as much weight as it as it used to. You know, in our postmodern world. But there are real reasons to believe in the existence of God, for sure. The material world is not eternal. And so if you even though there are many. There are many. This is where I need the existence of God in my life to help me with the world. There are many quantum physicists who are now saying that the material world is eternal, which my view is that that's just an argument around the Aristotelian idea that if in fact there was a big bang, if in fact the material world is not eternal and there was a beginning point, there had to be a prime mover, there had to be somebody who stepped in and said, let's get the show on the road. Well, guess who that is? That's God.

[00:22:54] God is the prime mover. And so the very idea of a starting point for the universe precludes the existence of God. And not only that, but as you look at how fine tuned the universe is. Materialism does not account for that precision. So there is a god. You guys still with me, by the way? Okay. There is a God. He has spoken. Now, the next argument would be, well, listen, maybe there is a god, okay? And he has spoken. But but if there is a god and he has spoken, why is it that he's just spoken in one book? Why? Why just the Bible? Why not the Geeta? Why not the Vedas? Why not the Koran? Why not the sutras? Or maybe more appropriate for our own culture. Why? Why? Why? Why not? Nothing at all. I mean, why even bother? Like, I think that's for a lot of people. And it's like, well, I don't even want to go through the process of having to deal with this complicated issue is better for me, just to kind of subscribe to what Dawkins said. There's probably no God, so stop worrying and enjoy your life. And after what I've just said to you, my response to that is God does exist. He has spoken. So relax. You're loved. Start seeking him through the Bible. That's. That's the response. And I don't want to just like get too deep into this. But, you know, his statement has it has a presupposition to it. It's not just that he is an atheist and against all forms of religion that would subscribe to the existence of God. No, he has a presupposition that that leads directly against Christianity, because if you don't believe that that a God exists, why say, stop worrying? I mean, immediately you're like showing your hand.

[00:24:52] It's a tell because you believe really that there is a god that you have to reckon with and that sin really is a problem. But the overarching story of God is this You are loved, you are loved. This is the message of the Word of God, the great lengths that God has gone to, to rescue you, to redeem you, to restore you to what his original intention always was. That is the message of the Word of God conveyed in the Scripture. And I can't think of anything more exciting. I can't think of anything that would be more of an incentive to pursue this kind of God than by looking in the holy word. Now, I want to give you today and this is kind of the the meat and potatoes of the message. I want to give you today five facts to separate this book from any other book. All right. Five facts, five key things that as you're going to consider them today, I think you're going to see that there is no other piece of literature. There is no other religious book that even comes close to the Bible. And so you can remember it, these five things. I put in an acronym and the acronym is Stamp. God has placed his stamp on this book. And the first thing is, this is Scripture. Just as we read the Bible, maybe you've read the Bible from cover to cover, maybe you've studied these things and and, you know, you've looked into them a little more deeply. But if you have, you know that the Bible asserts that it alone is the Word of God. I mean, the Bible, if you study comparative religions, you know, there's no other book that communicates this point like the Bible does.

[00:26:35] The Bible declares itself to be. It is a very bold it is a very brash. If it wasn't that God, it inspired it, it would be statements full of hubris. It declares itself to be unique. It declares itself to be the very word of God. In fact, there are scriptures in the Scripture that warn people not to add to it, not to take away from it, because it's not just man's word. It is, in fact, God's word. And there are so many scriptures that say this. Let me give you a couple and then you know something else. Second, Peter, chapter one, verse 21, Peter says this for no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. So in Derek's terms, Peter is saying, no, dude woke up one day and said, I think I'll write a book of the Bible. You know, Isaiah didn't wake up one day and think, You know what, I have had a really good week. I feel kind of inspired. I'm going to write 66 chapters, you know, and just fill it with a bunch of prophecy and history. No, that's not what happened. It wasn't the will of man. It was the spirit of God moving in individual's lives, not possessing them, and fully taking them over, but breathing the word through their lives and incorporating their life experiences and their personalities. Listen, this is one thing I love about the word of God is that God incorporates a person. God incorporates the experiences, God incorporates the personalities. And so as you're reading Scripture, like some of us, man, we identify with John, you know, who is a dreamer. He's a mystic, you know, he was the disciple whom Jesus loved.

[00:28:20] Some of us we associate with Peter, we're always saying the wrong thing. You know, we've we've just got this this ability to be really on fire on one minute and then totally falling on our face spiritually the next. And then some of us, you know, we we identify with Mary, you know, Magdalene or Mary, the sister of Martha, or we identify with Paul. You know, we're we're really. Yeah, it'll come. We're really sequential and we're really linear and we're all about points, and that's just the way that we think the Bible God uses through inspiration, the personalities and experiences of individuals. And so we read that second Timothy 3:16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God. Not only that, though, Jesus believed that to be the case. Jesus believed that to be the case. He quoted or referenced the Old Testament 78 times. He rebuked the Devil and the Pharisees using the Scripture. He declared the Scriptures to be supreme over tradition. He said the scriptures were indestructible and unbreakable. And, you know, as you read the teachings of Christ, he verified the most disputed stories in the Bible. He verified the historical authenticity of Jonah and his experience. He verified the stories in Genesis about Adam and Eve and Noah. And so the next time someone says to you, Hey, you know those stories? They're just so outlandish. How could you ever believe them? You can simply say, if it was good enough for Jesus is good enough for me. And I don't I don't think that's a copout. There's a story of a girl. She was in the Salvation Army and she was talking about her faith and how she believed in the story of Jonah. And a guy challenged her and he said, You don't believe Jonah was swallowed by a whale, do you? She said, Yes, I do believe it.

[00:30:29] The Bible says it. He said to her like this, with this attitude of incredulity, he said, No one believes that. She said, You know what I'll do when I get to heaven? I'll ask Jonah. And as soon as sarcastically, he said, Well, what if he's not in heaven? What if he's in hell? She said, Well, then you can ask him. It's not a good way to witness. Right. But but it's. But it is funny. The last. The last point on this is that Jesus sought to fulfill scripture when he was on the road to Amais he was talking to those two disciples. They didn't recognize him as the risen Lord. And so, you know, he's talking to them and he's revealing to them who he is. And he says these words. He says, These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses and the prophets and the Psalms concerning me and beginning at Moses and the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures. What are the Scriptures? The Scriptures are the word of God, the things concerning himself. So I'm just saying to you, listen, he says to them, all things needed to be fulfilled. The purpose of my life was to fulfill those things that were written in the whole Old Testament, beginning with Moses and then the prophets and then the Psalms. And then he gave a Bible study. How awesome would it have been to be there for this particular Bible study as Jesus went through the whole Old Testament and revealed how all of it spoke to him, spoke about him. So listen, all of it is inspired from the perspective of Christ.

[00:32:19] And not only that, but the main message of the Word of God is Jesus Christ. The second thing today in our acronym Stamp is transformation is transformation. By that I mean that the Bible uniquely has the power to transform people's lives. And in fact, one of the greatest verifications of the Bible's divine inspiration is God's power transforming your life. So the second thing that evidences that this book is different than any other book is, you know, wait for it. Wait for it is you. It's you. It's your life. Like, let me say it like this. You are exhibit A for the skeptic, for the nonbeliever. I'm not saying they put your trust and faith in you. I'm not saying that there aren't times where you struggle and falter and fail, but the evidence of the power of God should be met being made manifest in you in such a way that people can look at your life and they can say, you know, there's something different, or if they've seen your journey, your before Christ, and then you're in the, in your own in the year of My Lord, they should be able to say, Man, what happened to you? Like what happened to you? You are not the same person and there's no way that anything can just explain this away. Something different has happened. You're you're a different person. And that's when you have an opportunity to testify that this book is not just an ancient piece of literature, but it is living and powerful, sharper than any two edged sword. Your life is Exhibit A. Hey, does your life bear the witness of the power of God's word? It's a great story. A number of years ago, an evangelist by the H.A. Ironside, he was preaching on the streets in New York.

[00:34:04] And a well-known professor from NYU, who was also a vocal and active atheist, started heckling him. And so, you know, Ironside kept trying to preach, but this bitter Professor kept yelling, there is no God. Jesus is a myth. There is no God. Jesus is a myth. And so Ironside kept preaching, but the antagonistic professor became more belligerent. And he began to taunt Ironside by saying, I challenge you to a debate. You're afraid to debate me. And Ironside knew that a debate really wasn't going to prove much. But he said, Sir, I accept your challenge on one condition. When you come to the debate, I ask that you bring with you ten men and women whose lives have been changed for the better by the message of atheism. Bring some alcoholics and some drug addicts who have been set free by atheisism's power. Bring former prostitutes, criminals and outcast. Sounds like Awaken Las Vegas to me. Break free and former prostitutes, criminals and outcasts. Let them tell us how atheism has lifted them out of the pit. And Sir Ironside said, If you can find ten such men and women, I will be happy to debate you. And when I come, I will gladly bring with me 200 men and women from this very city whose lives have been transformed in just those ways by the power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. And so, listen, we are living evidence. We are living evidence that God has, in fact, inspired this book. I want to give you a chart today, very simple. You can take a picture of it. All of these scriptures convey and this is just a snapshot, right? This is just like a brief synopsis of what the word of God does.

[00:35:50] But each of these Bible verses talk about what the Scripture brings to your life. You are born into relationship with God through the incorruptible seed of His Word. First, Peter Chapter one you're able to distinguish good from evil. The pathway to answered prayer is through knowing God's will is through the Word of God that you are transformed. Jesus said this Sanctify them by your truth. Your word is truth. John 17:17 It reveals your heart. It grows you spiritually. It cleanses your life. Jesus said to his disciples, You are already clean or cleansed by the words that I've spoken to you. It prevents you from sinning. I adhered in your word, in my heart, that I might not sit against you. It empowers you for the purpose of God. It guides you your word. As a lamp unto my feet. It is a light unto my path. And the Word of God is called the scriptures of comfort. It is the Bible. It is God through his inspired word that comforts you and brings you hope. All of these are ways that you experience the power of God on a daily basis in your life. The third letter obviously is A and it just stands for archeology. And we're talking, of course, about the science of history, the science of archeology that verifies whether past events really happened. And I just want to say to you, archeology and history all verify the events of the Bible. It, in fact, did happen, all of it, but especially the life, the crucifixion, the burial and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. You can't just dismiss the Bible as ancient history. That probably didn't happen. If you were going to do that, you would have to dismiss all of ancient history, because the science of history verifies the Word of God.

[00:37:51] Every time an archeologist sticks his shovel into the sand, he pulls out or she pulls out something else that proves that the Word of God is, in fact, the word of God. And I would encourage you, if you struggle with this, go with us to Israel in March 2023, because it'll all be laid out before your very eyes. The next one is a little complicated. Is manuscript evidence. Manuscript evidence. This just simply means that there is a science behind Bible translations. There is a science behind Bible translations that leaves us with an absolute confidence that we hold today in our hands the same thing that was written in the original writings. Obviously, these are not the original writings, but there is a science behind Bible translations that helps us have the confidence that what we have today is the same as what was originally written and distributed among the churches. And we know that that's the case because of all of the existing surviving manuscripts. There are 5800 manuscripts for the New Testament in Greek. 10,000 in Latin. 9000 in various other languages. There are 24,000 copies or parts of New Testament books. And then not only that, but the Apostolic Fathers quoted copiously from the New Testament. So you can take if you read the Apostolic Fathers, you know those leaders after the apostles, if you take all of their writings and collect them together, they quoted so much of the New Testament that you can actually reconstruct a whole New Testament from that. And I say all of this to say to you today that you can trust what is written in your English Bible. When I gave my life to Christ, I had a muslim friend, you know, a well-meaning, quote unquote Muslim friend who I gave my life to Jesus.

[00:39:49] I went from like partying to preaching, and he he hit me up, you know, not too long after I gave my life to Jesus. And he showed me this document. It was a picture. And he said, Hey, you can't trust your your your English Bible, because there are all of these other translations between your English Bible and the original Greek. So he said, you know, you've got Greek, you've got Coptic, you've got Latin, you've got German. And you went through all these, you know, different translations. And finally you have your English Bible, which the idea obviously is if you have all of these other translations between your translation and the original language translation, then there's a huge possibility for error in that. But you know that that's just a lie. That's false. That's not the way Bible translations work. Your English Bible is based off of a Greek translation. All right. I don't want to get super complicated today, but I think this is important for you to understand this and bring up the next slide. So. You got that? Take a picture of it. This is. This is important. All right. So there are two philosophies for Bible translations, English Bible translations. One is through the Texas precept is the received text. This is Erasmus, who compiled a Greek manuscript. And then from that Greek manuscript comes the King James version. Obviously, ten days. New Testament, the Geneva Study Bible. Luther's translation of the Bible from Greek into German. And so there's that philosophy of translation that roots all of translations in Erasmus's great text or the received text. On the other hand, you have the eclectic text or you have the critical text, which is a more modern approach to translating the Bible from Greek into English.

[00:41:54] And that is based on over 5500 manuscripts beginning from the second century A.D. all the way to the 14th century A.D., and also verified through various translations in other languages. All of the English modern English Bibles today that we use are based off of the critical text or the eclectic text. So if you look at the line on the top, we use the new King James version. That's obviously based off of Erasmus's Greek text, the Texas receptors. But all other translations come from this critical text. So you've got a new American standard. You got the English standard version up on the left as far as you can go. And then what you'll notice above that line of Bibles is an arrow with two arrows pointing to the left and to the right. And this is the idea of how translations work is either a word for word translation or it is a progressively thought for thought translation where you're not just thinking about translating the word word for word, but you're considering what the original author's intent was when he wrote the book. And so the further you get to the right, I think there's an argument to be made that in some ways it stops being a translation and becomes kind of a commentary on the Bible because the people translating it are inputting their ideas as to what the original intent was. What we aim to do is we work from translations that are word for word. If you're studying, if you are teaching and preaching, you know, my view is word for word is always the way to go. That's not to say that the other translations aren't good. The NIV is a great translation. The new living translation is a great translation.

[00:43:47] The new Revised Standard version is a good translation as well. But we've used the new King James version for the last 15 years. I am changing to the English standard version starting today. So which for me personally, I'm looking forward to the Word of God being conveyed in a fresh way that like there's there's no change in the content or in the meaning, but there is a different way in which is presented. And, you know, sometimes we need that different way in our lives as we're reading the Scripture so that, you know, the soil of our heart can be tilled. You can keep the new King James version and you can, you know, study, long read along with us and you'll see where the differences are. There are variations, but there's a whole science behind variations. And the variations, we're just talking conjunctions and maybe some different words that are used so you can trust your English Bible. The final thing is prophecy. I hope you're still with me. Prophecy. The Bible alone details future events with absolute perfection, right? We're not going to talk about this because we talk about it a lot. There are 2500 or so prophecies in the Bible. 2000 of them have been fulfilled. God says in great detail future events. He lays them out and they are perfectly fulfilled and only God would be able to do that. So if you're still a skeptic at this point, you might be thinking, Well, that's all well and good, but if there really was a loving God, surely he would communicate in more than one ways. Like if you're saying that God's a loving God, you know, it doesn't seem very loving to me that there's only one book and there's only one way.

[00:45:32] And I just want to flip that around and say to you, because God is loving, there is only one way. Because God is loving, there is only one way. You know that we misperceive things when we start with ourselves instead of starting with God. You know, if you really want to know yourself, you don't start with knowing yourself. You've got to know God first. First and then you have the lens, then you have the framework to understand who you really are because you are a creation of the Lord. But if you start with yourself, you're going to get it all backwards. We are products of the Enlightenment. We start with the basic goodness of humanity and what we think we deserve. And so what we think we deserve, because we're so good for God to speak in all of these ways. But the fact is this if we do that, we will sweep sin underneath the rug. We will ignore the catastrophic consequences of sin. We will deny the greatest characteristic of God, which is His love and the great lengths that He went to, to rescue us and to redeem us, to restore us to right relationship with him through the giving of his only begotten son. Now, you have to start with God and you have to start with Jesus Christ. Otherwise, the beauty of God is lost. The grand narrative, the story of God is lost. Your value in the story of God is lost. And then you're left with nothing more than empty hedonism of the material world. And so you would say, like John Paul, Art said, life is an empty bubble floating on the sea of nothingness. But you know that that's not true because of the person of Christ Jesus.

[00:47:09] I just want to wrap this up today by saying to you, when we look at the Scriptures, never forget that Jesus is the key. He is the key. He taught his disciples to pray. Your kingdom come, your will be. You guys know how this goes. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on Earth as it is in heaven. And did you know that he was the fulfillment of that prayer? He was the fulfillment. God culminated this story, this great story of restoration and redemption and rescue. After the fall, when Adam and Eve had transgressed in sin, said it was a hopeless situation. But God intervened. But God stepped in. And this whole beautiful story culminated in the Incarnation and the perfect life and the crucifixion and resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ. And now, through Jesus, God bids you to come. He beckons you to come, just as you are with all of your stuff, with all of your madness, with all of your addictions, with all of your craziness, with all of your me first attitude, you can come to the Person of Christ and be reconciled to God so that the fullness of having listen, so that the fullness of heaven is poured into your heart like we're today. Today we're not going to reduce we're not just going to reduce the gospel to a free pass to heaven, right? Jesus is more than then your ticket to heaven. He is heaven present in your life now the fullness of God dwells within you, through the Person of Jesus Christ. And today, if you've never put your trust and faith in Him, Hey, the Gospel has been shared to you, but you've always viewed it as maybe some good advice or man's will.

[00:48:54] It is neither of those things. It is the Word of God when the Gospel is shared. Is God speaking to you. It's God conveying to you is not God pushing you away. It's got opening his hands up to you and saying, Come to me, come to me. You're weary, you're burdened, you're heavay laiden, you're lost it. I am the thing that you have been searching for all along. And you know that I love you. You know that I love you because I gave my son today. If you've never taken that step to put your trust in faith, in Jesus Christ and and engage in this beautiful, eternal relationship with God, the father, he is speaking to you today to come. Now, the question is this Are you going to ignore and avoid the voice of God, or are you going to say yes to him? Let's pray. Father. Thank you. God, we. We do thank you. That you have spoken. And you're a good, loving God. That's what your word declares. Today we pray for all those souls who have yet to take that step of faith and believe. We pray today that. They would receive your word as your word. And today they would leave this place. God reconciled. And redeemed new creations in Christ. Jesus born again by the Spirit of God. Today as our eyes are closed. We want to close our service today by giving you an opportunity to talk in this moment, in this moment, to enter into an eternal relationship with God. To have God himself embrace you, to have God himself restore you. To have that emptiness in your heart filled. To have the confusion that's been hanging. On your mind lifted. To have the dejection.

[00:51:06] Healed in your life by the acceptance of the father through the son. That you today could be called a son or a daughter of the living god. This morning, if this is you and you know, you've for some reason, you know, you can answer this. You've put this this real concrete response off today. Today, God is calling you out. He's calling you to come. He's calling you to decide. And today, if you want to choose to put your trust in faith in Jesus Christ, I want to pray for you this morning. Most important decision you'll ever make in your life. And I'm just going to ask you today to simply acknowledge that this is you by raising your hand. Just stretch your hand up high today. You know you need to walk with God. You need God in your life. See you over here on my right. Stretch your hand up right now. God bless you and God bless you. And I see your hand. I see your hands over here on my right and over here in the back. Thank you so much. Today is your day. It's your day to experience the Father. It's your day to discover how much he loves you. It's your day to receive his help. And you can come just as you are today. It's not going to leave you that way. Anybody else, which is raise your hand this morning. Today if you're a Christian and just sincerely today. You know, maybe. Maybe. You've just lost a spiritual edge with. Your relationship with God, maybe for you. You know, it might not be this extreme, but, you know, we say familiarity breeds contempt and you're just so familiar with the Bible and and and yet, you know, you're missing something.

[00:53:15] You're missing something. There's a hungering and a thirsting that's just not there like it used to be. Maybe you've had you've plateaued spiritually. And it's not like you can pinpoint one particular sin, but, you know, you've plateaued and and you feel stuck. I'll just tell you right now that I for sure have felt that way. And the way that I get out of that is by asking God to help me, and he's present to help you right now. Maybe today you need that. You just need that reviving Christian in your life, that you need that new sense of anticipation that when the book is opened that you know God's going to speak to you. And maybe today there are things that that you need. You know, you've been pursuing God for answers, but not really for him. You've been after his hand, but not after his face. If this is you today and you just need that fresh work of God, spirit on your heart, would you raise your hand? Thank you. And God bless you. And see your hands over here on my right. Over here on my lap in the back. Thank you as well as you're here. It takes courage to. To raise your hand and see your hands over here. But you'll never regret it. I see your hand in the back. Thank you. You're. You're not too spiritually advanced for this either. You know, when. When we start to think that we're just so advanced that that these things are beneath us. We better raise our hand right away because there's a problem, of pride there. I see your hands. Thank you. You put your hands down. Father, we are grateful today that you're moving among us. We pray that you blesses lives now, just supernaturally father your present.

[00:55:09] And we believe that with all of our hearts, God in Jesus name. Amen. It's all stand together today. Hey, you know, I'd mentioned to you today that when God speaks, there needs to be a concrete response. And it's good that you raise your hands. It's good that I was able to pray for you. And I'm going to ask you guys, please don't leave. Right. I mean, you may have lunch appointment. You may have kids to pick up. This is important. So just stay put. But God's word, when God speaks, it demands a concrete response. And so today, if you raise your hand, we want to give you an opportunity to respond in a concrete way. And what I mean by that is this We want to give you an opportunity to come forward today, maybe for you. You need to put your trust in faith in Christ. You know, it's this is the very first step of faith you're going to take now. Now's the time. The Bible says today is the day of salvation. You need to come forward this morning. I want to lead you in a prayer. Maybe today as a Christian, you know, you just need that new work of God's spirit, whatever that means for you. You know, you need to respond to what God is doing in your life and you need to come forward today as well, so that there is a moment in time where you can say you are obedient to what God had laid upon your heart. Pastor tony is going to lead us in a song of worship today if you raise your hand or maybe you did it. But this really does apply to you. Make your way forward so I can lead you in prayer.

[00:56:32] Let's bow our heads together. I'm going to lead you in a prayer today as we thank God for everything that he is doing in your life right now. In this moment, as he has stirred your heart, as you have taken these steps, as you today are going to look to Christ in prayer and believe that as you pray in Jesus name, through the person of Jesus, that the father, the father, his embrace is going to be upon you. His grace is going to fill your life, that he is going to day by day demonstrate to you. How deeply your loved. Because you've been accepted in the beloved, you belong to God. So I encourage you today just to, you know, pray these words with your whole heart to the father and believe that as you do, he's going to answer. You can pray this out loud after me. Father. Thank you for loving me today through Christ. I receive your love. I accept your love. And I choose to trust in your son. He is my savior. And He is my Lord. Fill me with the fullness of heaven. Fill me with the power of your spirit. In Jesus name, I pray. Jesus. All God's people said, amen. We'll give God praise today. Church.