

15th November 2020 10 am What Jesus Believed about the Scripture (The Power of God's word – part 2)

Service led by Fiona Dowle, Talk by Andrew Attwood, Interview by Dot Powell with Caroline Ramsay ("What the Cross Means to Me"), prayers by Kevin and Fiona Dowle.

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Greeting

[Andrew:] Morning Fiona! Good to see you. Are you well?

[Fiona:] I am, thank you. Are you?

[Andrew:] It's lovely lovely to see a bit of sunshine.

[Fiona:] Yeah, that makes a real change from yesterday, doesn't it?

[Andrew:] Absolutely. I could hardly get out the house yesterday.

[Fiona:] Yeah,

[Andrew:] I will leave you to it and I'll see you later. Okay?

[Fiona:] Okay, all right. Thanks Andrew.

Notices

So good morning everyone and welcome to our service from St John's in Kenilworth, and if you're visiting us on YouTube and you're not normally visiting, you're most welcome. And, and if through the service there's things that sort of spark a thought and you want further information or to chat through something with one of us, please get in touch with the church office. There should be the email address at the end, for you to see there. So, this week's notices.

And as usual, there's the 6pm service, and that's on YouTube this evening, and so you'd be most welcome to join that service, and also just as a reminder, because of the new second lockdown, the quiet space is opening again today, and it's from one o'clock till 3pm this afternoon in the church building for those who would value a quiet space for private prayer, and again that is happening on Wednesday from 10 till 2.

Psalm 95: 3, 6-7

Okay, so let's turn to God now. In Psalm 95 it says this.

3 For the LORD is the great God, the great King above all gods.

...

6 Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the LORD our Maker;

7 for he is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care.

Just let those words sink in. The Lord is our Maker. And we are under His care.

Confession

Even as followers of Jesus, the Bible reminds us that we do still sin. And that means to think and say and do things that are wrong and displeasing to God. So, let's pause, and for a moment bring before God anything from the past days that we need to ask His forgiveness for.

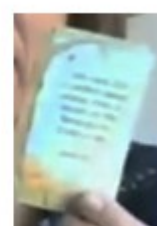
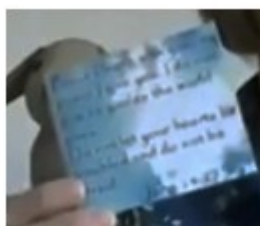
Lord, we thank you that even though we have sinned against you, you are a merciful God and a forgiving God, and we praise you for that. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Introduction

So we're continuing our mini-series today on the Bible, and Andrew will be speaking to us about that later, about what Jesus believed about the Bible, and as Graham reminded us last week, the Bible is still the most widely read book in the world, it's the best selling book of all time. I even checked that out through the week and it's really interesting to see the facts and figures. If you don't own the Bible and you would like one please get in touch and we'd be more than happy to provide one for you. Now I don't know how good your memory is, and I don't know if thinking back to school days, if that's been a number of years ago, whether you had to learn to recite things, either at school or perhaps in Sunday school, and I certainly remember going to Sunday school when I was growing up, learning Bible verses, and you're often set challenges of verses to remember, sometimes with the incentive of winning a prize and that was actually good because it implanted verses of Scripture into my mind and into my heart, but learning Bible verses is a good thing to do and when recalled they can help you personally and it might even be that you're prompted to share them with others. And back in the Old Testament in the book of Deuteronomy, it says that we should¹...

18 Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds; tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads.

So clearly, we're not going to tie them on our foreheads now, but perhaps I don't know if any of you have little cards like this, with Scripture verses on and you can perhaps Bluetack them in strategic places around your home, maybe onto the back of the bathroom door or near the kettle or somewhere where you can just read little portions of Scripture. And that can be really good. And for the children they've got lots of activities today and one of them is to cut out the outline of a foot,



and that is to remind them of today's Bible passage that they're looking at on the road to Emmaus and it says 'walk with Jesus'. So that's another good visual reminder. So, as we read the Gospels, we can see how Jesus both fulfilled Scripture in the different circumstances He found Himself but it's also how He used Scripture when He talked to different people and I think we're going to sort of hear more about that later when Andrew speaks to us. And so yeah, that's just an encouragement maybe to put little verses of encouragement around your home, and try to learn them, and that would be a really good thing to do as well as your regular Bible readings.

1 Deuteronomy 11:18

What the Cross Means to Me

So, in a moment, we're going to see a short clip on video from Caroline and Dot. So thank you to them for that, and that's about what the Cross means, and then straight from that, without coming back to me and we'll continue with two songs to help us in our worship. Thank you.

[Dot:] So Caroline, could you tell me what the Cross means to you personally?

[Caroline:] I think at different times in my life it's meant different things but recently I think, with the lockdown and a very different way of life, it's come to symbolise for me the fact that God has a plan, and that although we might not be able to see it, His plan is working itself out and I find that very comforting. I think when I look at the Cross, I see the fact that for a very long time, the Crucifixion was part of God's plan. But the people who were witnessing what was going on couldn't see that plan, and even at the very end, the Jews were expecting a very different Messiah to one that they got, despite the fact there were all those pointers through the Old Testament. And I think at the moment that's making me feel very comforted in that it feels, I suspect very much like a Jew in occupied Rome, you know, territory with Roman occupiers, that nothing's going the right way, but actually God was in charge, and the plan was working itself out, completely unlike what they had expected it to be. And I guess they were probably quite disappointed by initially, what happened. And so I'm very aware that I can rely on God, even though I can't necessarily see His plan coming to fruition, and I might not understand it when it comes to fruition. But for me at the moment the Cross is a symbol that I can trust that God's in charge, and that whatever the result of the plan is will be the right one, but it might take quite a long time for us to understand that.

[Dot:] Yeah, I think you're right and it's now that it seems to still be going on, it's not coming to an end, it's even more challenging, isn't it, to keep holding on to that, you know, keep holding on to that bigger plan.

[Caroline:] Yes. And then you add in climate change and everything that we were worried about before the pandemic started and you do think, well, what's going on here? How is this going to come right? But I was reading Exodus, and when Moses says, "Fear not, stand still and see the salvation of the Lord." And I feel like I need to stand at the foot of the Cross. Look at the Cross and say, it's alright, He's got this.

[Dot:] That's fantastic. Thank you.

1st Song: He Will Hold Me Fast

1. When I fear my faith will fail, Christ will hold me fast;
When the tempter would prevail, He will hold me fast.
I could never keep my hold through life's fearful path;
For my love is often cold; He must hold me fast.

Chorus:

He will hold me fast, He will hold me fast;
For my Saviour loves me so, He will hold me fast.

2. Those He saves are His delight, Christ will hold me fast;
Precious in his holy sight, He will hold me fast.
He'll not let my soul be lost; His promises shall last;
Bought by Him at such a cost, He will hold me fast.

Chorus

3. For my life He bled and died, Christ will hold me fast;
Justice has been satisfied; He will hold me fast.
Raised with Him to endless life, He will hold me fast
'Till our faith is turned to sight, When He comes at last!

Chorus

2nd Song: 10,000 Reasons

Chorus:

Bless The Lord, O my soul,
O my soul,
Worship his holy name;
Sing like never before,
O my soul
I'll worship your holy name.

1. The sun comes up,
It's a new day dawning;
It's time to sing your song again.
Whatever may pass
And whatever lies before me
Let me be singing
When the evening comes.

Chorus

2. You're rich in love
And you're slow to anger;
Your name is great
And your heart is kind.
For all your goodness
I will keep on singing
Ten thousand reasons
For my heart to find.

Chorus

3. And on that day
When my strength is failing,
The end draws near
And my time has come,
Still my soul will
Sing Your praise unending
Ten thousand years
And then forevermore

Chorus x 2

Readings: John 16:12-15 and Luke 24:25-27

[Fiona:]

Thank you, Lord, that You hold us fast. Thank You that You are rich in love and mercy, that Your love never fails. And we bless You for that.
In Jesus' name, Amen.

So before Andrew comes to speak to us, we've got two readings. If I bring those to you now. The first one is from John chapter 16 verse 12 to 15.

12 'I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. **13** But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. **14** He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you. **15** All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will receive from me what he will make known to you.'

And the second reading is Luke chapter 24. And that's reading from verse 25 to 27.

25 He said to them, 'How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have

spoken! 26 Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?' 27 And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

Talk

So we just pray for Andrew now.

Father God, I just simply ask that you would bless Andrew as he speaks to us. And that as he brings your word, may we hear you, the living Word. Amen.

[Andrew Attwood:]

Amen.

Thank you, Fiona thank you for that. Thank you for the readings too. Morning everyone again. It's good to see you here. It is really good to have a bit of sun after some darkness, isn't it.

I remember when I was a teenager, I think back then we were the second wave of Monty Python fans. I remember my mum buying for me, I think it was for a birthday, a really thick volume of the script of *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*. And yes, we were that annoying generation that would learn Monty Python lines and even whole scripts. I can remember sitting in 6th form rehearsing with my friends. "We are the Knights who say Ni! And we demand the shrubbery!" There was all kinds of crazy stupid things that we used to do. We used to pour through this book of mine, and learn all of the different kind-of classic one-liners from the Holy Grail where the Black Knight has been pretty much dismembered and he goes, "'Tis but a scratch." So all of these words are embedded in me, all of these ideas are embedded in me, because I had the script and I learned it and I enjoyed sharing those repeatable funny lines with my friends. So that was one of my first experiences, if you like, of treasuring, and almost reverencing, a bit of text.

These days, we live in what has been called a post-truth era. Absolutely everything is questioned these days, and nothing is regarded as totally reliable. We've been kind-of smeared with this ever since I think Donald Trump came to power in the US. And yet, human beings need to know what is true and trustworthy. It is part of how we are wired, to look for something that is reliable and true. I sometimes wonder if this atmosphere of living in uncertainty is one of the major causes behind our anxieties, maybe even our anger, maybe even some of the mental illness that is around. I was thinking the other day, what kind of things do I definitely need to know, without any kind of hesitation. Some trivial ones:

- Will my internet signal be okay today? You kind-of hope when you're doing these online things, "Please God, don't let broadband die today.
- You know, again connected to things with the internet, will my online order arrive? I've got two books that should have arrived four days ago, and they haven't come yet and that's really annoying me.
- At a more personal level, when you start thinking about what do I need to know to be true - Do my friends really like me? Do my friends really like me? These are questions that you would imagine a child in a playground asking, but adults ask those questions of themselves too. Do my friends really like me?
- A more practical question that you really do need to know at this time of year: can I trust my central heating this winter?
- I think as we head into some of the outworkings of what's happened with lockdown and COVID restrictions and the impact on the economy, some

people will be asking themselves, "Will I get paid this week or this month?" That's a pretty frightening truth to consider, isn't it?

- Again, thinking politically now: can I trust my leaders, my local leaders or my national leaders? Is there a big question mark there that makes you nervous of what you're hearing?
- Again back to America, can we trust the US election result? There's a chunk of people in the US who are really doubting whether it was a fair election, seemingly against all of the evidence.
- Even more potently, some of us are asking, "Will the new COVID-19 vaccine actually work?" We really hope so, and all the evidence is pointing that way, so we really do hope and pray that the vaccine is going to be a brilliant, brilliant solution.

Now some perhaps big, big questions of 'need to know'.

- Am I really loved? Am I really loved?
- And to do with ourselves and God, am I truly forgiven and promised an eternal future with God? Am I truly forgiven and promised an eternal future with God?

You need to know the answers to these questions. You can't leave those things uncertain. But, you see, a key blessing from God is the cast-iron truth which stands the test of time. Graham talked about a feature of God's truth as it being reliable over time. Reliable teaching, it's like an anchor in turbulent times, an authoritative word that stands above all of the guesswork of human beings, that loving message that can be wholeheartedly trusted because of what we know about Jesus Christ.

However, I have detected over the last, say, 5 to 10 years, there is a growing inclination amongst Christians, of all people, to doubt the Bible, often based on unsubstantiated and inexpert criticisms. I find that Christians are falling into a habit of believing parts of Scripture but not the whole of Scripture, and it's kind-of based on this therapeutic pick-and-mix based preference, a pick-and-mix based therapeutic faith, where we say, "Well I like that bit. But I don't like that bit. I'll believe that bit, but I won't believe that bit." Now, is that what God wants?

Let me just do a little bit of background before I dive into today's subject to do with what Jesus believed. The Hebrew Bible, what we would call the Old Testament, was gathered and agreed and affirmed about 200-300 years before Christ. And so when we think, for example, of the Old Testament, that's the Bible Jesus read, and we can have great confidence in the transmission of those texts. You see, another thing to do with Jesus, just to build this introduction to the theme: Christians, we, believe that Jesus was and is the Son of God. We believe that because the Bible says so. We believe that He died for our sins and we trust His words written in the Gospels. We've been spending a lot of time thinking about what Jesus did for us on the Cross. Therefore, if we believe those things, it is possible to work out what Jesus believed about the Scriptures, if there's something in there that He says so. So we if we can find that out, we could be in step with Jesus' attitude to the Bible.

Now before I go into this subject I did want to make one recommendation to you. I think linked underneath this video today² there is a video pointed to by Tim Mackie. Some of you will be familiar with the Bible project. And Tim Mackie, who is a very, very good Bible teacher, has done quite a long video, but it's very much worth watching, to do with how the Bible was actually put together. I've watched this video twice already and I'm getting more and more out of it every time. So if you have time this coming week or even later today, watch this other video by Tim Mackie, because it will give you a profound reassurance about how the Bible was put together in the first place.

2 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j919UrCLbXI> or(extended) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eaqKzYJ151Y>

Let me move to this subject of what Jesus believed and we'll have our first slide for this if that's okay. We've just had read to us Luke 24:25-27. It says this: [see slide].

Now this is a scene that's taken from after Jesus' resurrection, and He's walking the Emmaus road and they're full of doubt and questions, and He's going, "How foolish and slow to believe!" And what did He do? He identifies Himself in every single part of the Hebrew Bible. Just imagine that! Luke is tantalising in his description. We don't get to know what exactly



Luke 24:25-27 "He said to them, 'How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?' And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself."

He identified himself in EVERY SINGLE PART of the Hebrew bible

Jesus taught, but we do know that He went through the whole thing, saying, "That's me. That's me, that there, that's me, that's to do with me, that's what I'm going to achieve." And so it's just marvellous to have such reassurance that Jesus had such confidence in the whole of the Old Testament.

Let me go further. Let's have my second slide. This is where we start to get into details that explain exactly what Jesus believed about the power and authority of Scripture. In John 10 verses 34 to 36 He was in dialogue with people, He was in a debate with people, and He said this to them, [see slide (ESV translation)]



John 10:34-36 'Jesus answered them, "Is it not written in your law, 'I said, you are gods'? If he called them gods to whom the word of God came (and scripture cannot be broken), do you say of him whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'?"

Jesus was saying that scripture is the final, deciding word when debating truths.

Now this was a complicated exchange that Jesus was having there. But what He said right in the middle of that was, "And Scripture cannot be broken." In other words, when Jesus was debating with people, He made it completely clear, that the bottom line for Him was what Scripture said. If Scripture could be understood and described over an issue, that was the final word. That was the deciding word when debating what is right or wrong, what is true or false. So Jesus Himself referred to Scripture to decide whether something was right, true or wrong, or good. Scripture cannot be broken, according to Jesus.

Let's have our next slide. This next slide goes into even more extraordinary detail. We sometimes think that Jesus was kind-of like this freewheeling Holy-Spirit-like man who just did what came into His mind. And He was: He had the hotline to God, but actually He was super-committed to the Law and the prophets. Matthew 5:19 (This is from His Sermon on the Mount) says, [see slide above - ESV]



Matt. 5:19 "Whoever then relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but he who does them and teaches them shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven."

A sharp challenge to any inclination to alter or ignore any single command given in the Law and the Prophets.

So this is teaching to Christians. This is to us, and Jesus is saying, "When you look at the Law and the prophets, don't leave anything out." Don't soften or bend or ignore a single command that was given through the Law and the prophets, because why? Because it points to Him and it's what God's word continues to be. Some of you may read it raise an eyebrow at that and say "Well, are there not parts of the Old Testament that we're meant to just ignore that?" There are some parts that have been fulfilled for sure. Let me see if I can describe in three sections, how we relate to what is fulfilled and what isn't in the Old Testament.

- We all know that Jesus came, and because of His death on the Cross, He replaced the sacrificial laws, all of the laws to do with the temple, and the killing of animals to do with satisfaction for sin, all of those gone because of the Cross.
- We also know that when it came to Jesus' ministry that was spilling out beyond the Jewish nation, because He was beginning to encourage ministry to the Gentiles, culturally distinctive laws, like how they would appear or what they would wear or what they would eat, food laws, all of those things fulfilled completely, because Jesus was sending His, His disciples into the whole world.

So, sacrificial laws fulfilled, cultural distinctives fulfilled. That leaves one area.

- The moral law of God in the Old Testament. Jesus never said that would ever change. He continued to teach, and did so in great detail at a high level, all the original moral law of the Old Testament. And that's why He says, "Do not change, or ignore any of these commandments, otherwise you'll be the least in the Kingdom of Heaven."


Let me go to my next slide. This one's fascinating. This is where you can compare how Jesus related to the Scriptures as a narrative for Him to follow, but also how He lived, day by day. Mark 14:49 says this, [see slide, first paragraph].

Those of you who are familiar with the Gospel accounts will know that on numerous occasions, Jesus would say, "But the

Scriptures need to be fulfilled, the Scriptures must be fulfilled." In other words, Jesus always knew that there was a story that He had to live out because of what the Hebrew Bible was pointing to. There were all kinds of references from those old writings from God that He was in step with because they were clearly what God was calling Him to fulfil. And yet, when you look ahead, you see in John's Gospel He says something that has a different feeling to it. This is in John's gospel [5:19] and it says, [see slide above, 2nd quotation].

But how does that fit together? How can it be that He lives to fulfil the Scriptures, but He only does what the Father reveals to Him, and what the Father is doing? The only answer to that conundrum is this: the Scriptures of the Old Testament in Jesus' mind are the same as His Father's voice. So when He reads Isaiah, when He reads Daniel, when He reads the Psalms, He's hearing the same voice as His Father and they were one. So to Jesus, the Hebrew Bible was the same as His Father's voice. That's an extremely high view of Scripture.

I just wanted to pause at that point, and make a point about how Jesus was in His attitude to the Word of the Lord. It was His life. It was everything He

	<p>Mark 14:49 "Every day I was with you, teaching in the temple courts, and you did not arrest me. But the Scriptures must be fulfilled."</p> <p>Jesus lived to fulfil the story of the bible</p> <p>"Jesus gave them this answer: 'Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does.'</p> <p>To Jesus, the Hebrew bible was the same as his Father's voice</p> <p><small>zoom</small></p>
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lived for. As a young Jewish boy He would have been raised to treasure the Word of God, the written Word of God. Why? It drew Him closer to His Father. It guided His path. He used it to navigate by. That's what it means to fulfil the Scriptures. And it revealed His Father's love to Him. He had so many Scriptures embedded in His head. Fiona was saying earlier on about the memorisation of text of Scripture. Jewish men, Jewish women would memorise and know the Bible, the Hebrew Bible, and it would be meat and drink to His soul too. But here's a thought: Jesus not only loved the Word of God, He submitted to it, even to the cost of His own life. He didn't pick and mix what He preferred. He didn't say, "I like that bit, but I'll ignore that bit." He looked carefully into what it revealed, and went with it, even when it was costly.

Let me have my next slide, and again this is not just looking backwards to the Hebrew Bible, this is where Jesus is pointing forwards, so that we can have great confidence in the New Testament words as well. John 16. Fiona read it earlier. John 16 says this: [see slide]



John 16:12-15 Jesus said, I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you. All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will receive from me what he will make known to you.

This is Jesus prophesying. This is Jesus reassuring His nervous disciples who've

realised that He's going to go somewhere, that He is going to provide for them reminders of what He's already said and done, and more information that He hasn't even told them yet, through the Holy Spirit. Now you may think, "Well, how can we be confident that that happened?" Here's a thought. One of the things that Jesus prophesied about, He prophesied that He would be arrested, flogged and crucified. He got that right. He prophesied that after three days He would rise from the dead. He got that right. Jesus prophesied that the temple in Jerusalem would be destroyed within that generation. He got that right. In other words, when Jesus predicts the future, it absolutely concretely, in a guaranteed sense, happens. So when Jesus was talking to His apostles and saying, "The Spirit will remind you of everything I've done, and He will reveal to you more from me," you can be sure that is what happened.

Let me go to my next slide, this is a quote from J.I. Packer that talks about this. J.I. Packer, who's a brilliant Bible teacher, he talked about this. He said, [see slide]



J.I Packer comments on this by saying **“He had promised the Twelve that the Spirit should come to teach them what in His own earthly ministry he had left unsaid, and He kept His promise; so that the apostolic teaching was in reality the complete and final version of His own.”**

(Did Jesus ever falsely predict anything?) zoom

He said it, and we now have it in the New Testament, the stories of the Apostolic teaching were collated together, written down, verified by eyewitnesses and assured to be a true, accurate

eyewitness account. So we have the Hebrew Bible that Jesus affirmed that His Father's voice, the reliable word of God, that cannot be broken. And we have the New Testament, which is written by His apostles who were inspired, according to Jesus, accurately to report everything He said and did. So think about that. Jesus believed that the whole Hebrew text pointed to Him, He regarded (you

remember from Graham's teaching last week, that Scripture was an authoritative word, remember when He was in the wilderness and He said, "It is written, it is written, it is written," He quoted Scripture over evil), He regarded Scripture as the final word on disputed matters. He condemned the ignoring or alteration of any Scripture, He recognised His Father's voice in the written Hebrew story, and He guaranteed that His teaching would be preserved.

I like this quote: this is this is something I just wanted to read to you from a guy called Andrew Wilson. Several years ago he was in a debate with someone online, who was questioning the authority and reliability of the Bible, and Andrew Wilson wrote a blog about this afterwards and he says this³:

Many of the Biblical passages that people find the most troubling, and the most likely to be 'mistaken', are affirmed willy-nilly by Jesus and the apostles, with complete disregard for any subsequent controversies that might emerge. (For example) creation from nothing, the origin of death among humans, the murder of Abel by Cain, a cataclysmic flood of judgement, the righteous judgement of Sodom and Gomorrah, the Mosaic origin of the Torah, manna from heaven, the reliability of Deuteronomy, the driving out of the Canaanites, Isaiah's authorship of the servant songs, and so on – it's almost as if Jesus and His followers went out of their way to validate all of the most awkward apologetic curveballs in the Old Testament just to make life difficult for post-Enlightenment Western interpreters. Read through the Gospels, and you won't find even a hint that Jesus thought these events didn't happen; quite the opposite in fact.

So when you look through these evidences to do with what Jesus believed, it's overwhelming: one after another after another after another affirmations that the Hebrew Bible, and the New Testament to come, is the reliable Word of God. Now some of you might be going, "So what? I already know that," or "So what? Maybe some people might have different perspectives," "So what?" We are in interesting times. We are in times where the Church and the Christian faith is increasingly marginalised in our society. So the 'so what' is really important when it comes to what we know to be true. There are erosions and dismantlings happening that are fundamental to who we are and what we believe.

You may remember back to the story of Nehemiah in the Old Testament. Nehemiah chapter 4 is where Nehemiah was getting the struggling people of God to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, and what happens? Up pops a bunch of enemies who start to mock Nehemiah and these early attempts to rebuild. There's messages, there's criticisms, there's threats being thrown. And Nehemiah and other people at first are a bit rocked by this, "You'll never do it! It's not going to work. It's not going to happen. God is not with you." That's what they were hearing. However, Nehemiah as a great example to us in this respect, trusted what God had said to him, and kept going. He trusted what God said, "Rebuild the walls," and he kept going. So Nehemiah is a brilliant example in rocky times to know how to apply this solid belief in Scripture.

Likewise, Jesus was rock-solid in His belief in Scripture. Here's a question just to consider. Just imagine if Jesus had been selective in which parts of the Bible He'd chosen to believe. Lindsey and I, we were reading through Isaiah 53 the other morning when we woke up to do some Bible and pray together. Isaiah 53, and it's that poignant, hugely accurate prophetic picture of what God was going to do through the coming Messiah. Some people call Isaiah 53 the first gospel. Just imagine that when Jesus was being raised, and He came across Isaiah 53, He thought, "Ooh, I don't like the sound of that. I think I'll just ignore that bit of the Bible." Just imagine if He did that. Just imagine if the Messiah, out of discomfort or offence or fear of conflict, decided to ignore that part of the

3 <https://kings.church/blog/category/articles/#post-120>

Original video: <https://www.premierchristianity.com/Featured-Topics/Bible-Debate-Have-we-misread-the-Bible>

Bible. Thankfully, He didn't. Thankfully He was wholehearted in His embracing of what God had already said through the Hebrew Scriptures.

So here is the challenge. This is the 'So what?' for all people who would call themselves Christians. If you are a true follower of Jesus Christ, it makes complete logical sense to believe what He believed. Anybody who thinks that they can be a follower of Jesus Christ, and have a superior view of Scripture to Him and say, "Well Jesus just didn't understand some things," that's not following. A follower of Jesus Christ says, "He's the Son of God, so He knows things. He knows things that we don't know." And in this respect He is very clear: the Bible is the Word of God.

So my final slide. What I want to put to you today is this: to what extent does anxiety or confusion or insecurity get to you? To what extent are you unsure or unclear? And to what extent would you like to be free from that? To what extent would you like to have genuine freedom to put your feet on something solid, that doesn't move, to stand on a rock that can be relied upon. I would put



Do you want to be secure and free from anxiety?

**Submit to scripture (like Jesus did)
Study scripture wisely, but with humility before it
Don't ignore or alter scripture - be great in the Kingdom!
Trust God's good and true words: they are life!**

it to you today that your anxieties and fears are going to be changed if you submit to Scripture like Jesus did. That doesn't mean empty-headedly. It does mean we continue to study wisely. It does mean we interpret carefully. But we do so under its authority. We don't stand over it, we get under it and say even the parts we don't fully understand, it's still God's Word. We don't alter, we don't ignore any part, because that, according to Jesus, is how to be great in the Kingdom of God. So I just want to finish by saying this: trust God's Word over human wisdom. It has stood the test of time. There is nothing new that will ever supersede what the Bible has said, because that's what Jesus believed. If we call ourselves Christians, we need to believe what He believed. So I'm just going to pray a simple prayer, and then I'm going to hand back to Fiona.

Lord Jesus, would You give us grace to have humility. Would You give us grace to have humility before You, so that we can truly put our faith in You and put our faith in Your written Word. In Jesus' Name we pray, Amen.

I'll hand over to you now, Fiona.

Prayerful response

[Fiona:]

Thank you, Andrew. Just for a moment, just allow God to implant what He said to you. You might want to write it down, so it's not lost. Let's have a moment just to pause and to be quiet and reflect.

Lord God, we just thank You for Your Word. Thank You for the truth of Your Word. Help us to trust in the authority and the integrity of Your Word, in Jesus' Name.
Amen.

Intercessions

So we're now going to have our intercessions and Kevin is going to join me as we pray together. Thanks, Kevin. Let's pray.

[Kevin:] 1 John 5:14 says, "This is the confidence we have in approaching God: if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us." Lord, today is an International Day of Prayer for the persecuted Church. And as we discover that almost 3,000 Christians were killed for faith-related reasons last year, we ask for Your blessing on fellow Christians who live in countries who receive hostility and violence for following You. We pray for courage, peace and joy for those facing extreme persecution. Please strengthen Your Church, and help those who are working to support secret believers too. We pray this in Your Name. Amen.

[Fiona:] Loving God, at this time of crisis, when we see so many are suffering, we pray for our nation and our world. Give our leaders wisdom, our health service strength, and our people hope. Lead us through these difficult days to receive the comfort and joy found only in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

[Kevin:] Lord, for the church, we pray that we would carry the Gospel, be salt and light to a world in need. We pray that as Your Church, we would declare simply and boldly the message of the Cross. Give us courage, compassion and kindness in doing so. In Your name we pray, Amen.

[Fiona:] Heavenly Father, we pray now for those who are ill at this time, for those who are in care homes and for those who are housebound. We also bring to You those we know who are grieving, following the loss of a loved one. May they know Your presence, strength and comfort. In a moment of quiet, name those you know who need God's special touch today.

Lord in Your mercy,
hear our prayers.
Amen.

Blessing

So, as we end our time together let's believe and be encouraged by the following words that are found in Ephesians chapter 3.

20 Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, **21** to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

So, thank you for being with us. And thanks, Luke, for the tech and Bye. Have a great week and we'll have our final song. Take care

Song: Build Your Kingdom Here

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Come set Your rule and reign
In our hearts again.
Increase in us we pray.
Unveil why we're made.
Come set our hearts ablaze with hope
Like wildfire in our very souls.
Holy Spirit, come invade us now.
We are Your church.
We need Your power in us. | <ol style="list-style-type: none">2. We seek Your kingdom first,
We hunger and we thirst,
Refuse to waste our lives,
for You're our joy and prize.
To see the captive hearts released,
The hurt, the sick, the poor at peace,
We lay down our lives for Heaven's cause.
We are Your church.
We pray revive this earth. |
|--|--|

Chorus:

Build Your kingdom here.
Let the darkness fear.
Show Your mighty hand.
Heal our streets and land.
Set Your church on fire.
Win this nation back.
Change the atmosphere.
Build Your kingdom here.
We pray.

3. Unleash Your kingdom's power
reaching the near and far.
No force of Hell can stop
Your beauty changing hearts.
You made us for much more than this!
Awake the kingdom seed in us!
Fill us with the strength and love of Christ.
We are Your church.
We are the hope on earth.

Chorus x 2

[For any questions, as mentioned by Fiona at the beginning, email the church office admin@stjohn316.co.uk or ring 01926 853203]

[Transcribed by Hamish Blair with help from <https://otter.ai>]

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