

## I. Introduction

- A. Hi. My names Bill. God loves you, but I'm his favorite. I am the disciple whom Jesus loved. I am his treasure, and his pearl of grace price. Who are you?
- B. Quick quiz. One question. When you are out in the sun, and the sun is happily shining upon your skin, your body produces a vitamin. What vitamin is that? Vitamin D.
- C. A lot of experts are saying that when it comes to health and immune function, Vitamin D is the new Vitamin C. You need a lot of it, and when you're starting to feel unwell, you need even more.
- D. Vitamin D is necessary for a healthy immune system, for healthy bones or teeth, for weight regulation, energy, and even mood regulation.
- E. And if you don't get enough in your diet, then you can get it by taking a walk on a sunny day. My lawyer wants me to say stuff about sun protection, but let's just be grown ups about that.
- F. I think it's very gracious of God that God designed our bodies to manufacture a super important nutrient just by exposure to the sun. You don't have to work for it, strive for it, strain for it. Just be out in the sun, and you get it.
- G. There's another kind of exposure I'd like us to think about today. And we're going to go deep.
- H. I hope you're good with that, because I have good news for you today.
- I. We'll start here, in Romans 10:17.
  - 1. *"So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ." (Romans 10:17)*

## II. How We Got our Bible

- A. Many Christians remember this verse as saying faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of *God*. But I just quoted it as saying by the word of *Christ*.
- B. Why the difference? What does it mean?
- C. Let me start by affirming that the Bible is perfect.
  - 1. It is inspired by God right on down to the very words. It is without error in everything on which it speaks. The people of God have the highest regard for the Bible.
    - a) It is the supreme and only authority for our faith.
    - b) It is the supreme and only authority for our lives as Christians. No modern day prophet or apostle has any authority anywhere near the Bible's.
    - c) The Bible you hold in your hands is utterly and entirely reliable.
    - d) I am banking my life on its truths. I am banking my eternity on its promises. Are you? I hope so.
    - e) It is in the pages of Scripture that we not only learn of God, but fellowship with him too.
  - 2. Going deep in the Bible is the crying need of the church today, all across the world. It is the urgent need of every Christian. It's the main thing that our church does... I'll come back to this.
- D. In Romans 5:17, last word here has what is called VARIANT. A variant is what happens when different ancient copies of the same Bible verse have slightly different words.
- E. Every year, archaeologists dig up more and more ancient fragments of the Bible. There's a whole science around this.
- F. The King James Bible was translated in 1611. At that time, in Romans 10:17, the best Greek manuscripts said *by the word of God*, which is how many of us learned this verse.
- G. However, in the 400+ years since the King James Bible was translated, archaeologists have dug up better and more ancient manuscripts of the biblical Greek. They have shown that Paul wrote the *word Christ* in this verse, not *the word of God*. That is why every modern translation says the *word of Christ*.
- H. So, it's faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of Christ. So what's the difference? What's the difference between saying the Word of God vs saying the Word of Christ? To answer that, let's go to two stories in the life of Jesus.

## III. The Road to Emmaus

- A. *"Now behold, two of them were traveling that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was seven miles from Jerusalem. And they talked together of all these things which had happened. So it was, while they conversed and reasoned, that Jesus Himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were restrained, so that they did not know Him." (Luke 24:13-16)*
  - 1. This happens right after the resurrection. The two men are believers in Jesus. They have heard rumors that he rose from the grave. And they are excited and talking about all that.
  - 2. Jesus shows up, but God doesn't something so that they don't recognize him.
- B. *"And He said to them, 'What kind of conversation is this that you have with one another as you walk and are sad?'" (Luke 24:17)*
  - 1. So Jesus pulls up alongside and matches their stride. He asks them, So guys, what are you talking about?
  - 2. In the next paragraph, these guys tell this unrecognized stranger all the exciting news about Jesus.
  - 3. How he died. And now that credible eyewitnesses say he has risen from the dead.
  - 4. They're super excited. And they tell Jesus all about Jesus without know it's Jesus.
  - 5. The men say, We have all these eyewitnesses. We have all this evidence. He rose again. It's shocking. We're still processing it. We have all this eyewitness evidence and it's really exciting.
  - 6. When they are done, they're looking at Jesus with all this excitement in their eyes, expecting him to get all excited too. And Jesus looks back at them and says:
- C. *"Then He said to them, 'O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?'" (Luke 24:25-26)*
  - 1. This is a total downer.
  - 2. Here they are getting all excited about a risen Savior and Jesus gives them a whack upside the head.
  - 3. Why? It's such a downer, Jesus.

4. Why did Jesus rebuke them?
  - a) The first clue is when he calls them foolish and slow of heart. There's something messed up inside their hearts. I'm going to interpret this to mean they have a psychological problem that is their own fault.
  - b) The second clue is when he says "to believe." You are foolish and slow of heart "to believe."
    - (1) In other words, there's a problem with their faith. There's a problem with their faith muscle.
    - (2) If there's a problem with your faith, there's going to be a problem with every corner of your emotional health, and your mental health.
  - c) The third clue is when he says they are slow of heart to believe all that that prophets have spoken.
    - (1) And there it is. What is their foolishness? What is their psychological problem?
    - (2) The heart of the problem is *what* they are basing their faith on. What is that?
      - (a) Experiences. Experiences. Experiences.
      - (3) What should they base their faith on?
        - (a) The Bible. The Bible. The Bible. All that the prophets have spoken. All that the NT apostles have spoken.
5. He says, Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?
  - a) Didn't the Bible predict this? The cross. The resurrection. All that the disciples were excited about. Didn't God promise this? Didn't you see this coming a million miles away?
    - (1) You do read your Bibles, don't you? You dig in, don't you?
  - b) Why are you so surprised? Why are you only now getting excited? Why did this take so long?
  - c) You should have been here, in this excited and motivated place, a long, long time ago. As soon as you saw it in Scripture.
    - (1) The Savior of the world would come, die, pay for sins, and actually rise again! Wow! All that is coming! All that is what the prophets have spoken!
6. Oops, but you didn't see it in Scripture because you are foolish, and because you are slow of heart, and because you anchor your faith more in your experience than you do in the Word of God. So all of that is setup for this:
- D. *"And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself."* (Luke 24:27, see v. 44)
  1. When Jesus talks about Moses and all the prophets, he's talking about the exact same Old testament books that we have today.
  2. These books were written over a span of over 1,100 years. The last books of the Old Testament were written about 400 years before Christ. For comparison, may I remind you that our country has been around for about half that amount of time.
  3. So Jesus takes these books which are written many centuries before he ever came into the world, and he starts teaching from them. And what is it that he teaches? He teaches them "the things concerning himself."
  4. Jesus is the celebrity of the whole Bible. He is the only celebrity the Bible cares about. The Bible focuses on him.
    - a) His person. His pre-incarnate glory. His incarnation and birth. His life. His teachings. His miracles. His works. His love. His truth. His arrest. His trials. His crucifixion. His redemptive work. His burial. His resurrection. His ascension. His second coming.
  5. And all of who Jesus is, and all of what Jesus did made something possible, that never would've been possible without him.
    - a) And that would be the grace of God.
    - b) So that we say, the heart of scripture is Christ. The heart of Christ is grace. And the heart of grace is the cross.
  6. When Jesus was on the road with those two disciples, he drilled down beneath the surface level of scripture.
    - a) He showed them himself. He showed them God's grace. He showed them the eternal plan of redemption.
    - b) And he says this is something they should have known all along. It's been right there in Scripture waiting for you all along.
      - (1) Why are you so bedazzled by recent events? Why the surprise?
  7. In other words...
    - a) Jesus took the Word of God, and from it taught the Word of Christ, which means...
      - (1) He showed them grace.
      - (2) He showed them the never failing love of God.
      - (3) He showed them the forgiveness of sins.
      - (4) He showed them how Jesus was there at creation.
      - (5) He was there with Noah when the flood covered the earth, as the Ark of their Salvation.
      - (6) He was there with Abraham as a ram caught in a thicket, the substitutionary sacrifice for Isaac. .
      - (7) Jesus was the passover lamb by which the slaves were set free.
      - (8) He was the pillar of cloud by day and fire by night to protect them on their way.
      - (9) Jesus was there when the Jews wandered in the wilderness.
        - (a) He was the rock that was stuck to bring forth water.
        - (b) He was the scapegoat on the day of atonement, and the sacrificial goat who interposed his precious blood.
    - b) All throughout Scripture, he was to his people their salvation, their provision, their protection, their companion.
    - c) And all throughout Scripture, *he* paid the price, *he* bore the burden, *he* broke the sweat.
    - d) When a maniac king threw three men in the fiery furnace, Jesus walked with them in the flames.
    - e) When they threw old Daniel into the lions den, Jesus shut the lions' mouths.
    - f) He's Jacob's ladder, he's Ezekiel's spinning wheels, he's Hosea pursuing his cheating wife, he's Zechariah's lampstand where the oil never runs dry.

- (1) Wherever there was salvation, there was Jesus. Wherever there was forgiveness, there was Jesus. Wherever there as love, there was Jesus. Wherever there was—in all the epic history of the generations of history—wherever there was mercy, lovingkindness, grace, peace, salvation, and joy, there was Jesus.
8. Don't be confused by the division of your Bible into the Old Testament and New Testament. Both testaments unveil the wonderful covenant of grace.
9. But both testaments set that grace against the backdrop of law. It's the bad news that makes the good news shine more brightly.
10. When preachers preach the covenant of law, you can always tell.
  - a) They load you with duties and control you with rules. You feel beat up. You feel condemned. You feel guilty and ashamed. They make you afraid. Or they make you proud because you think you're better than somebody else. There's no good news here. The law is frustrating. The law brings about wrath.
11. Our job is to extract the word of Christ from the Word of God. It is to dig for gold. To find the good news.
12. Because when preachers preach grace, they give birth to faith. And faith gives birth to Love, joy, peace, and hope.
13. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of Christ.
14. When Jesus opened the Scriptures, and when he taught them all these things about himself, he was using the Word of God to proclaim the Word of Christ.
15. That is the difference between the two.
  - a) The Word of Christ is the proclamation of a new covenant, which is really an old covenant of grace, as old as Abraham.
  - b) The Word of Christ is the declaration of the God who loves you because of the Savior who died for you.
16. And when this grace preached, things happen.
  - a) The broken places in your psychology get healed.
  - b) The demon influenced in your soul get delivered.
  - c) The dead places in your heart come back to life.
  - d) And faith is born that really believes God works all things together for your good.
17. Jesus opened these very Scriptures. On page after page, he showed them all these things concerning himself.
  - a) That had to be the most awesome Bible study ever in the world.
18. As the story goes on, Jesus and the disciples finish their journey, they sit down to eat, and suddenly they recognize Jesus. They realize it's him. He says goodbye, and literally vanishes from their sight...
- E. *"And they said to one another, 'Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?'"* (Luke 24:32)
  1. There's something really deep that happens in a person when they hear the word of grace. I mean real grace. Unmixed grace. Scandalous grace. Did not our hearts burn within us, while he opened the Scriptures to us.
  2. Why? What was happening? What internal gears of truth and grace and the Holy Spirit were spinning and meshing and sparking and burning inside their hearts? What was happening? Romans 10:17 was happening.

#### IV. Romans 10:17

- A. *"So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ."* (Romans 10:17)
  1. The machinery of heaven was manufacturing a golden faith in them.
    - a) All they had to do was to hear. They just listened. They put themselves in the place where the Word of Christ was delivered. And that was enough. You say, I don't have faith? I say you need to hear more good news. You say, But my faith is wimpy and weak? I say, you need to hear more good news. Because this is how faith comes.
  2. I have to say that this is a new way of thinking for me.
  3. I always thought that faith was a hard thing. I taught that. I said that faith is mighty struggle. It is THE struggle of the Christian life. The struggle to believe. I've taught that. I've even put it in books. I take it back. I didn't get that part right.
  4. Faith is created inside you when you hear the word of Christ. That's Romans 10:17.
    - a) Place yourself in the sunshine, you body manufactures vitamin D. Place yourself in the sound of the Word of Christ, your spirit manufactures faith.
- B. Mary and Martha
  1. *"Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word. But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, 'Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me.'"* (Luke 10:38-40)
    2. Martha... the perfect host, making the perfect dinner. Something to do for Jesus. She wants to impress Jesus. She wants to serve Jesus. She wants to give to Jesus. All good things. Nothing wrong with any of it.
    3. Mary... the eager student. When it says she sat at the feet of Jesus, that's an idiom, a figure of speech. Paul sat at the feet of the Rabbi Gamaliel. It's not literal. It means to make yourself a student. To drink in their teaching. That's Mary. She made herself Jesus' student and heard HIS WORD.
      - a) What an awesome Bible study that had to be. Probably the same lessons he would teach on the road to Emmaus in a couple of weeks.
    4. Which picture is your picture of Christianity? Which picture is your picture of the correct way to relate to Jesus?
      - a) Mentally, emotionally, psychologically... is your life more like a Mary or a Martha?
    5. So there's Mary, hearing the word of Christ. There's poor Martha burning out in the kitchen. She bursts into Jesus, tells him off, and gives him some directions. Sounds like some people in some churches I know.

- C. *"And Jesus answered and said to her, 'Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her.'"* (Luke 10:41-42)
1. Look at the contrast between many things and one thing.
  2. Mary has chosen the good part... literally means Mary has chosen the best dish.
  3. In that great spread of religious options, that grand buffet of even Christians dishes spread before you, the best choice by far is always to hear the word of Christ. Because that's where faith comes from.
  4. And faith is where every good thing in your life comes from.
    - a) I have one thing to ask of you before we look at one more verse. Wherever you go, wherever your path may take you, find a church that preaches the grace of God... and then plug into it. Be a church-going person. Be a church-going family. Don't check out on that. The world is watching. Faith comes by hearing, and be in that place of hearing till your dying day.
  5. One more verse to drive it home.
- V. The Author and Perfecter
- A. *"Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."* (Hebrews 12:2)
  - B. There it is. Jesus is the author of your faith. Jesus is the perfecter of your faith, he brings it to maturity. He creates it. He matures it. He strengthens it. When you keep on looking unto Jesus, faith keeps on growing within you.
  - C. This is one of the ways where so many churches have gone off the rails. Not enough about Jesus. The practical stuff crowds him out. Or the moral stuff or the political stuff. The experiential stuff, the emotional stuff. There's so little Jesus, and so little of his cross. And because there's not much of Jesus, true faith is weak.
- VI. Jesus
- A. May I talk for a moment about Jesus? May I tell you his good news?
    1. He's my Savior and my Sanctifier. He's my Healer and my Coming king. He is perfect God and perfect human, the Unique Person of History and the Celebrity of the Universe.
      - a) Behold what manner of man is this, who stands between God and man.
      - b) He eyes are as a flame of fire, his fan is in his hand.
      - c) He's the lion of the Tribe of Judah, the King of kings is he.
      - d) Behold what Manner of man is this, what manner of man is he.
      - e) He's the Lord of Glory, he is the great I am.
      - f) He's the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the End.
      - g) His name is Wonderful, the Prince of peace is he.
      - h) He's the everlasting Father, throughout eternity.
    2. Look unto him, and be saved. Look unto him, and he healed. Look unto him, and gain faith for today and hope for tomorrow.
  - B. I'm trying to tell you about my Jesus. About your Jesus.
    1. He shed his blood for you. He endured the cross for you. He's your Savior. He's your Redeemer. He's your Liberator. He's your Sacrifice. To his name, there's no equal. To his fame, there's no peer. To his love, there's no likeness. To his beauty, there's no compare. To his truth, there's no terminus. To his mercy, there's no measure. He is gentle to the lowly. He is patient to the broken. He opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. He is a friend of sinners. He is a shepherd to his sheep. He is glorious in his grace, precious in his peace, and bounteous in his blessing.
  - C. I'm trying to help you look at Jesus, to let more faith be born in you, and let greater faith be given.
    1. He forgives all your sins. He provides all your needs. He heals all your diseases. He is your mediator. He is your intercessor. He is your bodyguard. He is the hand that holds you and the friend that knows you. He is the light that guides you and the judge that pardons you. He'll lead you beside still waters. He'll restore your soul. You can't live without him. You can't have heaven except in his name. No one comes to the father without him., When you have Jesus you have everything you need.
      - a) Nothing to fear. Nothing to dread. Nothing to regret. Nothing to fret over. Nothing to lose sleep over. He saves. He keeps. He satisfies.
    2. Behold, he makes all things new. Is your heart heavy today? He'll carry your burden. Is your soul dazed and confused? My Lord knows the way through the wilderness. All I have to do is follow. Is there more stress than you can take? There remains therefore REST for the people of God. Is death on your horizon? Jesus will meet you at those gates, and bring you to your everlasting home. Jesus... he's..
      - a) Immortal, invisible, God only wise.
      - b) In light, inaccessible, hid from our eyes.
      - c) Most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days.
      - d) Almighty, victorious, thy great name we praise.
    3. Child of God, you are never alone. Never forsaken. Never forgotten. Never defeated. Never rejected. Never abandoned. Never condemned. Never unwanted. Never uncared for. Never unblest. Never separated from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.
    4. My heart is burning within me. I hope yours is too.
    5. Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.
    6. What a friend we have in Jesus.
    7. Let us honor him.