



*“You are required to believe, to preach, and to teach what the Bible says is true, not what you wish the Bible said was true.” ~ R.C. Sproul*

R.C. Sproul (1939-2017) was renowned as a champion of the innate power of the Word of God. In his quote above, he identifies a profound and glaring weakness of the American church today. Instead of preaching what the Bible *says is true*, it is now customary for churches to preach what (they) *wish the Bible said was true*. At first glance, the gap between those two may not appear to be significant. However, in reality there is a staggering chasm between them.

Have you ever considered why, in *our* day, the American church is missing the fiery power that it possessed in the days of our fathers? R.C. Sproul once offered the keen observation that,

*“The greatest weakness in the (American) church today is that almost no one believes that God invests His power in the Bible. Everyone is looking for power in a program, in a methodology, in a technique, in anything and everything except the one thing in which God has placed His power—in His Word. God alone has the power to change lives for eternity, and His power is focused on the Scriptures.”*

The implication of this is that if we believe and proclaim what we *wish* the Bible said was true – rather than what the Bible *actually says* is true – we can almost always count on a couple of results. The first result is that we will almost certainly be *comfortable*, because our proclamations and pontifications *will reflect us*, instead of God. When we proclaim *what we wish the Bible says is true*, we will always avoid difficult and uncomfortable issues. The second result of believing and proclaiming *what we wish the Bible says is true* is that we will almost certainly be *powerless*, because we will be disconnected from the power of God’s Word. This is one of the many dangers of topical sermons. In topical sermons, the preacher or teacher chooses a topic and then gathers verses from all over the Bible to support their already settled opinion on the subject. He then uses Scripture to prop up his already existing point of view, without regard to whether those verses actually support what he is attempting to use them to support. Thus, this kind of sermon usually (not invariably) reflects what they *“wish the Bible is is true.”*

However, the aim of Scripture is *never* to make us feel good about ourselves. The aim of Scripture is to *transform* us by the innate power it possesses. In Paul’s second epistle to his son in the faith (II Timothy 3:16 – 4:2), he writes,

*“All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ*

*Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and his kingdom  
– Preach the Word!”*

The Holy Spirit is the Author of Scripture. Therefore, if we want His presence and His power with us, then we must be sure that *we are saying* exactly what *He is saying*. And, we must be sure that our focus is what His focus is. Why has God given His Word, and what is the purpose of us proclaiming what the Bible says? Instruction, rebuke, correction training in righteousness, spiritual maturity, and equipping for ministry. Note that being comfortable is nowhere to be found in the list.

Ok, if we “*believe, preach, and teach what the Bible says is true, not what (we) wish the Bible said was true,*” what should we expect to happen? In Hebrews 4:12-13, the author of Hebrews describes the intrinsic power and effect of the Word of God on our hearts.

*“The Word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. <sup>13</sup> And no creature is hidden from His sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.”*

Notice the attributes that the author of Hebrews ascribes to God’s Word. At first, he seems to be referring to Scripture as an “it,” but then transitions seamlessly to referring to “He.” Why? The relationship between Word and Spirit is so inseparable because the Holy *Spirit* is the Divine Author of the Holy *Scriptures*. So, when we speak of the “Inspiration” of Scripture, we are not suggesting that they are “*inspiring*.” Shakespeare is “*inspiring*,” whereas the Scriptures are literally “*breathed out by God*.” Because of this, the Scriptures are completely unlike any other book on the planet. When we read Scripture, we are dealing with a living and breathing text. While we may believe that we are examining *the Scriptures*, in reality the Scriptures are examining *us*.

For this reason when we approach Scripture a word at a time and a verse at a time, we are forced “*to believe, to preach, and to teach what the Bible says is true, not what (we) wish the Bible said was true.*” If we do, we can count on both God’s *presence* and *power* – because “*God invests His power in the Bible.*”

Meaning? The Lord will always honor the Scriptures. *It’s His Book.*

I pray that you have a wonderful week and I look forward to seeing you tomorrow evening for the Genesis Study, and then again Sunday morning.

May you know the smile of our Heavenly Father this week,



Heath