

TALKING POINT #20
LIVING IN THE CHURCH COMMUNITY #13: THE BIBLICAL CHURCH

PEOPLE OF THE BOOK

The 3 prominent World religions that claim to be “People of the Book” are Islam (with the Koran), Judaism (with the Torah) and Christianity (with the Bible). Each of these 3 groups claims to base their theology, faith and practice on these books. It is an incredible thing to place so much emphasis on a set of writings. So, why do we Christians put so much emphasis on the Bible?

There are many reasons why we trust the Bible so much. Here are the most significant ones for me:

1. We believe the Bible has been proven by history to be the trustworthy Word of God because lives have been changed by it and because the prophecies contained in it have been fulfilled;
2. Jesus is a historical person who is proved to have risen from the dead and was vindicated by God. Consequently, if He placed so much value and stock in the Bible, so should we.

As a result, if we regard the Bible as the inspired Word of God, we then make it the final rule for our faith and practice. The Roman Catholic Church places Church tradition alongside the Bible as an authoritative source, because of their view of the Papacy and Apostolic Succession. However, we in the Baptist tradition follow the Reformation stance of “*Sola Scriptura*” (Scripture alone). This doesn’t mean we ignore Church tradition but that ultimately, the Bible is the final and pre-eminent source of authority for us – if tradition or Church teaching conflicts with the Bible, we put the Bible first.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

There are many passages that affirm the importance and authority of the Bible. Here are a few:

- Hebrews 4:12 – “For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.”
- Isaiah 55:11 – “so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.”
- 2 Timothy 3:16-17 – “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”
- 2 Peter 1:21 – “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.”
- Psalm 119:105 – “Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path.”

NOW FOR US AT FOREST LAKE

The application for us at Forest Lake Baptist Church is both simple and yet profound. We must have an uncompromising allegiance to the Bible as God’s inspired and spoken Word. It also means that we must study the Bible so we know what it says and commands. It is simple in how uncomplicated that is and yet profound in how far-reaching that attitude must be.

CONCLUSION

It is fitting that we conclude a series on the Church Community with the centrality of the Bible because it is there that we receive guidance for our community. God bless you as you study His Word. Next time, we start a new series of Talking Point Papers entitled, “The Church in Life’s Major Moments,” with the paper, “The Church at Birth.”