

# Large Group Teaching on Authority and Sufficiency

---

## Authority of the Bible

- † Why do we believe the Bible has authority in our lives?
  - Because we believe the Bible is inspired from God, we believe it carries his authority.
  - We have an inner testimony of the Holy Spirit which prompts us to obey what we have learned in the Bible.
  - The Bible itself declares its authority.
  
- † What does the Bible say about its own authority?
  - 2 Chronicles 34.21 NIV: King Josiah speaking: “Go and inquire of the LORD for me and for the remnant in Israel and Judah about what is written in this book that has been found. Great is the LORD's anger that is poured out on us because those who have gone before us have not kept the word of the LORD; they have not acted in accordance with all that is written in this book.”
    - ☛ Josiah recognized God’s expectation that his people would obey his written revelation.
  - Matthew 5.19 NET: “So anyone who breaks one of the least of these commands and teaches others to do so will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever obeys them and teaches others to do so will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.”
    - ☛ Jesus referred to the biblical scriptures having authority, calling for obedience to, and dissemination of, their content.
  - Hebrews 10.5-7 NET: “So when he came into the world, he said, ‘Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me. Whole burnt offerings and sin-offerings you took no delight in. Then I said, ‘Here I am: I have come– it is written of me in the scroll of the book– to do your will, O God.’””
    - ☛ Jesus set an example of obedience to biblical commands.
  - Matthew 4.3-4 NET: “The tempter came and said to him, ‘If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become bread.’ But he answered, ‘It is written, “Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.”’”
    - ☛ Jesus used scripture as authority in his teachings.
  
- † We are a church that believes in the authority of the Bible. How should that impact how we operate as a church? What role should the Bible play in our decision making, compared to tradition and experience?
  - Because we believe in the authority of the Bible, we use it as the basis for all we believe religiously and for a guide in all that we do.
  - Religious traditions and spiritual experiences can be valuable, but we must consider them subordinate to the Bible, and go to the Bible for their affirmation and interpretation. Any teaching or thought that contradicts the Bible is not from God.

---

## Sufficiency of the Bible

- † When we say the Bible is sufficient, what do we mean? Is it sufficient for reaching every goal or for answering every question?

- We believe the Bible to be sufficient for achieving God's purposes for it. Because we believe the Bible is inspired from God, who cannot make an error, we believe the Bible is sufficient for his purposes of it.

† What are God's purposes for Scripture?

- Luke 24.27 NIV: "And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself."
  - ☛ Scripture can lead us to know Jesus, God.
- Romans 15.4 NET: "For everything that was written in former times was written for our instruction, so that through endurance and through encouragement of the scriptures we may have hope."
  - ☛ So scripture can give us encouragement and hope... hope of what?
- 2 Timothy 3.14-17 NET: "You, however, must continue in the things you have learned and are confident about. You know who taught you and how from infancy you have known the holy writings, which are able to give you wisdom for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. Every scripture is inspired by God and useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the person dedicated to God may be capable and equipped for every good work."
  - ☛ So scripture can guide us to salvation through faith in Christ.
  - ☛ Scripture is useful for teaching, reproof, correction, training in righteousness.
  - ☛ Scripture is useful in bringing us to be equipped for God's work.
- 2 Peter 1.4 NET: "Through these things he has bestowed on us his precious and most magnificent promises, so that by means of what was promised you may become partakers of the divine nature, after escaping the worldly corruption that is produced by evil desire."
  - ☛ So scripture is useful in helping us become sanctified, like Christ in character.
- Psalm 119.9 NIV: "How can a young person stay on the path of purity? By living according to your word."
  - ☛ So scripture can help us live a righteous life.
  - ☛ As part of this, praise passages can inspire us to worship.

† Do we believe there is truth outside of the Bible? Does that challenge the sufficiency of the Bible?

- We do believe in truth outside of the Bible. The Bible itself says God revealed himself in nature. All truth is from God, including that discovered through science and history [though not all of what purports to be scientific or historical truth is accurate].
- This does not challenge the Bible's sufficiency, because God revealed the Bible for specific purposes, and it meets those purposes.

† We say scripture reveals God and Christ to us. Can we perfectly comprehend God or Christ?

- We cannot humanly comprehend everything about God, for he is perfect, infinite, and beyond our imagination; if he were not beyond our comprehension, then he would not be God!
- However, while mysteries still exist in our minds about God, we can trust that all of what he has revealed for us to know about himself is in the Bible.

- † If we believe all this regarding sufficiency, what role should the Bible play in developing our personal life philosophy or the theology of the church?
- Because of the sufficiency of the Bible, we rely on it for developing the theology of the church and our life philosophy.
  - While we see value in understanding historical views and in using reason to help understand God's revelation, the diversity of the views developed over time suggests it is wise to take all teachings from tradition and reason and check them against the Bible.
  - We will find that the defining doctrines of the early church and what became the orthodox church agree with the Bible, but there are many traditions and ideas that conflict with the Bible, and in those cases we need to be willing to rely on God's revelation alone.
  - Also, while we value personal experiences with God and personal inspirations from the Holy Spirit, the diversity of views which develop in groups of Spirit-led believers suggests it is wise to take all conclusions from personal experience and inspiration and check them against the Bible.
  - Because the Bible is God's inspired word, we know that we should interpret all things by this revelation, and that no thoughts which conflict with the Bible can be from God.