

The crown jewel of the time

Part 1

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[00:00:01] It has been said, by way of example, that the best way to look at a diamond or a jewel that shines brightly, is to put it on a dark cloth, on a dark background.

I suppose in 2 Timothy chapter 3, there is no lack of dark background.

But my main exercise this evening is to speak about what I would call the crown jewel of the end times, a sure resource, and it is summarized in a very brief phrase in verse 16, by saying, all scripture is given by inspiration of God.

But let's just first very briefly look at the verses in their context. Paul's last epistle, written to relatively young Timothy.

[00:01:08] When I said dark background, I think Timothy knew what he would mean by it.

People loving pleasure, loving money, loving themselves, more than God.

An outward profession was still there, but no power.

Plenty of opposition, I think Timothy had absolutely no lack of people who came and opposed him.

And you might say, the one visible resource he had on earth, his fatherly mentor and advisor, the Apostle Paul, actually his spiritual father, he was just about to depart. [00:02:03] It's actually his farewell letter. And he says, the day of my departing has come. I am already the drink offering.

And he knew that this last support he had was just about to vanish.

I think that's in very brief word, as a brief sketch, the background of these verses. We start in verse 14, but you may just see in verse 13 that Paul says specifically, but evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse.

You might say, what sort of prospect is he giving Timothy to encourage him? After all, that was his purpose in writing this letter. He wanted to encourage this younger, youngish brother in his service. But what he says is, things will become worse and worse. [00:03:05] Seducers will be there, deceiving

and being deceived.

Interesting to me that it doesn't say first that they are deceived and then that they are deceiving. But it seems that as they go about deceiving, they end up being deceived more and more themselves. But then it says in verse 14, but continue thou.

No matter what people do around you, no matter whether today, scriptural truth is being given up, even by professing Christians, Paul's word very clearly says, but thou. Timothy was meant to be different, a contrast.

And he says to him, continue in the things which thou hast learned and has been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them. [00:04:03] He says early on, thou hast fully known my doctrine.

And he refers specifically, not so much to any achievements. He didn't say, and you know that I travelled the world and I went to this place and that place. But he says, you know my sufferings. You know what sort of persecution I have endured. And I think that's the first base of confidence or comfort he gives to Timothy.

He says, you haven't learned from someone who just sat in his armchair and wrote good books. You learned from someone who lived and who suffered for what he preached. But then he says, there's a second source of comfort.

In verse 15, and that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures.

[00:05:08] When he starts speaking now about the holy scriptures, then these are of course the scriptures of the Old Testament. And it is interesting to me that he refers now to Timothy's childhood.

And he says, actually you've known this for a very long time. I think Timothy was only converted afterwards. But he had a mother and he had a grandmother. And we know from this epistle that the faith first dwelt in his mother and grandmother. And then in Timothy. And therefore, I believe we're justified in thinking that these two sisters played a vital role in forming this vessel called Timothy.

[00:06:04] Perhaps just a little sort of practical note.

When it says here, he knew the holy scriptures from his childhood. Sometimes we tend to think the scriptures are far too difficult for children. But God seems to have given children an ability which is just about amazing to absorb stories.

And I think everyone who has tried it out has noticed that they can't even get enough of them. And even when you tell them the story the second time, they say, oh yeah, I know that one. Tell me again.

They don't say, I know that one, don't tell me. And I think that's how it worked with Timothy, that he had been told when he was young. And it turned out to be a seed sown and God gave growth.

[00:07:01] If he knew the Christ of the Old Testament, it would have made it much easier for him to receive the Lord Jesus when Paul presented him and said, actually, he is the Christ of the scriptures whom you knew about. And then Paul adds something else about the scriptures. It says, which are

able to make the wise unto salvation.

It's probably what all parents want, wise children.

Much is offered by way of education today and that can give a certain type of wisdom.

If you are very lucky, it will make your child a Nobel Prize winner. But it won't give wisdom unto salvation. And Paul says the real wisdom, which you want children to have, you can actually find in the scriptures. [00:08:03] And that's what happened with Timothy, who had become a servant of the Lord. Which takes us to verse 16, where Paul makes this stupendous and utterly amazing and bold statement.

He says, all scripture is given by inspiration of God.

I'd like to stay for a while with this sentence. And first of all, we need to ask, of course, what is inspiration? The term is used very loosely in modern English.

And people say things like, the architect was inspired by the Empire State Building. Or a poet was inspired by a landscape or something. Some people have tried to define inspiration.

[00:09:04] Some definitions are very weak. They say things like, inspiration means a higher degree of the ability which everyone else has as well.

I don't think that's what the term means. The term means God breathed.

Which, by the way, is exactly, if you remember, what God did with man. God breathed into man. And what happened? Man became a living soul.

And God breathed his words into the writers who had the task of writing them down. And this made the word alive.

Now you may say, of course, well, if inspiration means that it all comes from God, why did God use so many different people? And why do they write in different styles? [00:10:03] I think for most of you, if I read a little piece of text to you, and I didn't tell you where it was from, and it was, say, from the Gospel of John, you would all be able to tell, even if you don't know the chapter, you'd say this is John's style. Paul is completely different. More argumentative, reasoning, rational.

The same applies to prophets. Think of Haggai in his bold and direct tone addressing the consciences, and you think of Zechariah using visions and images.

Think of the Psalms reflecting the circumstances in which the writers found themselves. So it certainly wouldn't be true to say it is all from God to the exclusion of man. [00:11:02] But nor would it be true to say it is the product of man. And I think this question of the meeting of the human and the divine is always a problem for the human mind. However, the scriptures make very clear statements about it, and I would like to read a few verses to you. The first one is from Acts chapter 1, where I believe we have a very good definition or description of what inspiration is.

It is in the second half of Acts chapter 1 where Peter stood up and he says the following.

[00:12:04] Thank you very much. Now, men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled which, and now the formulation I meant, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake.

Now who spoke?

Who said the psalm?

Was it David or was it God?

The Holy Spirit spoke by the mouth of David.

You can say that, broadly speaking, there are two groups of theories about inspiration. One group of theories emphasizes the part of God and ignores the part of man.

And that theory or that type of theory you could call a mechanistic theory. People imagine that it is a bit like a secretary [00:13:02] who hears a text being dictated word by word and just writes down exactly what is being said without having any input on the result. The other type of theory overemphasizes the part that man has played and ignores or doesn't emphasize sufficiently the part that God has played. And these theories range from saying these are just historical records and expressions of religious people to saying that God gave a special ability to people but the end product is always human and therefore prone to error. And of course, we're not interested in theories. If you ask us here, what theory do you hold? Well, we hold none.

What we hold is what the Bible says, the Holy Spirit spoke by the mouth of David.

[00:14:05] Perhaps you say, well, why speaking about this in any sort of detail?

I read a book which was perhaps about 120 years old and it said the inspiration is on the great attack.

About two weeks ago, I happened to sit against someone, next to someone over lunch and started talking.

He turned out to be a publisher, an evangelical publisher. And we spoke about the issues such publishers face today, if they want to stick to the Bible and its literal meaning and the inspiration of it.

And he said to me, well, it's not a problem actually for most Christian publishers because most of them don't really believe in the inspiration anymore. [00:15:02] He says there are only, in that particular country, there are only a handful who do. You can go a step further and ask what people outside the Christian circle think about inspiration today. And basically, what people say if you believe that the Bible is the word of God today is that you're a fundamentalist. Sounds dangerous, doesn't it? I've allowed myself to write down a couple of definitions I found, which I'll read out to you.

The first one is from a source called Christian Fundamentalism Exposed. And it defines fundamentalists as follows. Christians who cling to the old belief that every word of the Bible was literally true, called biblical inerrancy.

[00:16:04] I'll give you a second quote from what is called the world of fundamentalism. And it says, the

most cherished doctrine of fundamentalism is the inerrancy of scripture. This doctrine holds that the written text of the Bible was inspired by God, that the Bible is thus a record of the actual words of God, and that it therefore can be trusted to be infallible in all its details. Well, I suppose that's exactly what I believe. Many people label that as they like.

In the New Testament, there are, perhaps we can sort of mention this for the younger ones, there are three important passages about inspiration. There is one in 2 Peter 1, the last verse, [00:17:03] and it tells us that when people were writing the Bible, it wasn't their own initiative, but there was really God, the Holy Spirit, behind it.

In 2 Peter 1, verse 21, that's what God says. He didn't say they were moved by their ambitions or their feelings and emotions, but they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

There's another one we should briefly look at in 1 Corinthians, chapter 2, and it goes a step further.

It tells us that not only were the writers moved by the Holy Spirit, but it makes a very precise statement in verse 13 of 1 Corinthians 2, [00:18:08] which things also we speak not in the words which man's wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Ghost teaches.

Now you notice the word I emphasised.

Paul says, in words.

And we come back to this, the question whether actually the words of Scripture are inspired. Can you say that every word that is there should be there? But also notice that in this verse here, he says, we, we speak not.

Now who is this?

That is the Apostles.

In 2 Thessalonians, sorry, in 2 Timothy 3, 16, we read all the Scripture. [00:19:01] And you might say, well, this is all the Old Testament. But here, he speaks of the New Testament Apostles, and he says, we spoke in words which the Holy Ghost teaches.

One more point to mention about 1 Corinthians 2, there are three steps on the way for the truth to come from God to us.

The first step is that God revealed himself, and it says, nobody knows what is in man but the Spirit of man. And nobody knows what is in God but the Spirit of God. And it pleased God to give us a revelation of himself, of the things nobody otherwise could have known. That's step number one, revelation.

Step number two, you might say, is inspiration.

God made sure that this revelation was not only given, [00:20:02] but it was fixed in writing.

And it's interesting that humans have been given the ability, only humans of all created beings, to

read and write. And no doubt God wanted to use that because he wanted to fix this revelation in writing. But then there's a third step, and it says, the natural man does not receive the things of God. And you might say this is, you could call it illumination. How the truth comes from the scriptures, fixed in writing, into our hearts, and that again is the work of the Holy Spirit.

But let's come back for a moment to this question of verbal inspiration. Can we really say that every word of the scripture should be there?

[00:21:01] Well, my first answer is 2 Timothy 3, verse 16.

All scripture has been given by inspiration.

But I'd like to add a few more verses.

If you read the Old Testament, and you will find that the Bible is actually unique in that respect, you find the words, thus speaketh the Lord.

I hope I'm not giving you completely the wrong numbers now, but as far as I recall, you find them about 700 times in the Pentateuch.

You find them hundreds of times in Isaiah, in Ezekiel, and many times in other places. You find the term, it is written, about 80 times in the New Testament.

I'll give you a few more examples. [00:22:02] If you think of Deuteronomy 18, the test for a prophet is given.

And the test for a prophet is that the words which he speaks are the words of the Lord.

Moving on to the end of Deuteronomy 29, Moses turns back and he says to the people, these are the words of the covenant of the Lord.

You come to David in 2 Samuel 23, and David says, and the words of the Lord were on my tongue.

You move on to Ezra, and Ezra calls himself, in chapter 7, verse 11, I think, [00:23:02] the scribe of the words of the Lord.

You move on to Zechariah, you might say, almost at the end of the Old Testament. And Zechariah says to the people, you know what your problem is? You didn't listen to the words of the former prophets.

So really, he says, the former prophets, all the other prophets which were before him, they all spoke the words of the Lord.

You then come to the New Testament, and perhaps we can just spend a few moments on considering what the Lord said on the question of inspiration. Starting very early on, the wilderness scene, the tempter arrives, and three times the Lord says, [00:24:04] it is written.

A little later, the Lord was in a synagogue.

He asked for the scroll of Isaiah to be passed to him. He reads of the coming Messiah and the blessing he would bring. And when all eyes are directed on him, what does he say? Today, these words have been fulfilled before your eyes.

He presents himself as the fulfilment of Old Testament scriptures.

The Lord was attacked a few times.

Remember, there was a time when he went into the temple and people had made it into a den of thieves, really. And in this brief encounter, you find that three times he quotes the scripture. [00:25:02] He quotes Isaiah.

He quotes or alludes to Jeremiah.

And then, when he had cast out all the people who were selling things, the blind and the lame came in and he was healing them. And lots of children arrived in the temple and were chanting Hosanna. The religious establishment got very upset. And they said, we can't have this here. There are children all over the place and making a noise. What did the Lord say to them? He says, have you never read?

And he quotes Psalm 8, where it is said, out of the mouths of the babes and sucklings thou hast prepared praise.

Moving on to the sufferings of the Lord, when the tempter arrived on the scene, sorry, the betrayer arrived on the scene, what did the Lord say?

[00:26:01] No one is lost except for one that the scriptures might be fulfilled.

He then warns his disciples and he says, it is written, he will be reckoned among the transgressors.

He also says to them, the shepherd shall be smitten and the sheep shall be scattered. This is about to be fulfilled. And then you come to the moments when the Lord was on the cross and out of the seven words he said on the cross, four were straight quotations out of the Old Testament.

My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Beginning of Psalm 22 and the end of that psalm, it is finished.

[00:27:01] When he said, I thirst, he said it that the scriptures might be fulfilled.

And in the end, he quoted another psalm by saying, into thy hands I commend my spirit.

But of course the story doesn't end there and in resurrection, the Lord Jesus talks to the disciples who are on their way to Emmaus and what he says to them is really widening the scope. He talks to them and starting from Moses and the prophets, he explains to them in all the scriptures that which concerned Christ.

He now presents himself as the object and the deeper meaning of all the scriptures.

But it's not only what the Lord said about the scriptures, [00:28:03] it's also how he used them.

As far as I know, there are only four Old Testament writers whom he quotes by name. The normal formula he uses is simply, it is written or the scripture says.

But he quotes four writers. But what is interesting to me is that each time he does, it is made clear that what he quotes is not the product of that human instrument, but it is directly coming from God. And perhaps we just take the time to look at one example. In Mark 12, verse 26, he speaks to the Sadducees there and he says, and as touching the dead that they rise, have you not read in the book of Moses [00:29:03] how in the bush God spake unto him saying, I am the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob. Now who said this? Where should they have read this? In the book of Moses.

Now, Matthew 22 and verse 31, he says the following, but as touching the resurrection of the dead, have you not read that which was spoken unto you by God?

He refers exactly to the same passage.

Mark says, have you not read in the book of Moses? Matthew says, have you not read that which is spoken by God? And so it is every time when a human instrument is quoted, it is made clear it comes from God. And just notice in this example here how the Lord uses the scripture. [00:30:02] He quotes Exodus chapter 3, I think.

I am the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob. And he uses that little phrase to prove the truth of resurrection. God is not a God of the dead. He is a God of the living. By the time of Moses, patriarchs were dead. Now if the Bible were not verbally inspired, how could the Lord have done this? It was only possible to give this proof because he absolutely relied on the verbal inspiration of the scriptures.

And so one could go on. You could quote in the Acts, you could quote the Gospel writers and in the Epistles how Old Testament writers are being quoted and it just says, and the scripture says.

[00:31:01] No doubt that the words would have to be there. Now some of you may say, well, but hang on a moment. We have got a few different Bibles here, perhaps even in this room. And they are not all exactly the same. So how can you say it is inspired word by word?

And perhaps some have even done a bit of reading and they found that actually there are different manuscripts. And how can you say now it is all inspired? They differ. Well, the first point to make, of course, is what is verbally inspired is the original text in the original languages, Hebrew, a bit of Aramaic and Greek.

As to the manuscripts, if people tell you, well, be careful with the manuscripts, they are all different. I would just like to tell you one or two things.

Until not too long ago, the oldest manuscripts of the Old Testament [00:32:07] were as young as from the year 1000 AD, so say about 1000 years old. In other words, there was a big gap between those copies people had and the originals in terms of time. And of course the critics said, well, it is quite clear that these must be very inaccurate because they are centuries and centuries. Centuries and

centuries later they were written. And then it happened in 1947.

And God was pleased to use a little shepherd boy to confound the wise and the prudent, you might say, the world of the theologians and Bible critics. This little boy was running through the mountains in Israel. Some say he was looking for a goat that was lost. [00:33:01] Some say he was trying to smuggle something. I don't know what he was doing, but he was there. And he threw a stone into a cave he found. And to his amazement, there was a sound. I better don't try it out on the glass now. There was a bright sound.

It sounded like a stone was falling on ceramics or glass. He got a bit curious, went and had a look. He found some old jars with old scrolls in there.

He didn't think it was very interesting. But to his surprise, researchers from all over the world were very interested. And what they turned out and ended up finding in these various caves was the following. Copies, complete copies of every book of the Old Testament [00:34:01] except for the book of Esther. 38 out of 39.

The material was dated with the radiometric or whatever methods they use today. And they were dated to be as old as 1 to 200 years before Christ. And the researchers were happy and they said, now we've got what we've been looking for all the time and we'll now compare the Leningrad manuscript to these old ones and we'll point out all the differences and mistakes. And they were very disappointed because they were word for word except some very, very minor deviations the same.

The critics also had some favourite theories, for example, about the book of Isaiah. They weren't very happy at all that Isaiah had predicted that a few hundred years later, King Cyrus would live and what policy he would pursue, [00:35:04] that he would send the Jews back to their own land and that this actually happened. And so they said, well, actually, the second half of Isaiah, where this prophecy is, starting in chapter 40, that was written a lot later by Mr. Deutero-Isaiah, the second Isaiah.

Now, in this cave, there was an Isaiah scroll.

And it went from chapter 1 to chapter 66, all in one.

But the best about it was the place where chapter 40 started. It was on the bottom line of a column.

Don't think the critics were very happy with that. And so one could go on. Yes, there are minor differences between manuscripts. But if you just compare and think that of famous works [00:36:05] like Caesar's Wars, there are about nine old copies and nobody ever doubts that the text is true. And I'm told of Tacitus, there's only one. And nobody has a problem with that. Now, of the Bible and Bible parts, there are 5,500 manuscripts, handwritten, on papyrus, on animal skin, and what have you.

And the accuracy in which it has been transmitted is far better than the accuracy of any other book.

Now, the translations.

Perhaps that worries you more than the manuscripts. Some translations are quite different from others.

So I suppose we're all using translations here. [00:37:02] So are we actually entitled to say, it is written, this is the word of God? Well, I'd only make two points on this. The first one is, if you are using a translation, then try to use a good one. Try not to use something that just paraphrases and uses sort of modern journalism-type language. Try to use one that is accurate. But the other thing is that the Lord also used translations. And the other New Testament writers also used translations. They used the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament. And that translation is not always very exact.

But the Lord uses it, and he says, it is written. Now that's a great comfort, I think, for us. We can use a good translation, and we can say, it is written.

[00:38:04] There are, of course, some problems, some difficulties in the Bible. Some people read, we've just done this actually, from different Gospels, and they find minor differences. Some people discover difficulties. Some people think they discover contradictions. Now as to those, I would say broadly speaking, 90% of the problems can be attributed either to ignorance or to bad intentions.

There are some real difficulties, but very often it's a matter of praying about it and understanding why one evangelist presents things in a different way than another. And once we've understood it, it makes it more beautiful. Difficulty goes away, and we see it's the beauty of the inspired Scriptures.

[00:39:02] And then there are very, very few real difficulties.

I think there's one king in the Old Testament, and if you compare Kings and Chronicles, in one place it says he was 22 years old when he became king, and in the other one it says he was 42 years old. Now that possibly could be a result of an error in copying. But I don't think anyone's faith will be shattered by that difference. I don't think any Christian doctrine hinges on differences between manuscripts.

In our passage, after this little excursion on inspiration, we should just continue.

We have seen so far, just to summarise a little bit [00:40:05] before finishing on the last verse here, we have seen that God has given the Bible. We believe in the verbal and plenary inspiration. Verbal meaning every word that is there in the original should be there. Plenary meaning it applies to all the Scriptures. Now that last point actually is very important with respect to verse 16 here, because some have translated it like this. They have said, all Scripture that is given by inspiration of God is profitable.

Now that's not what it says.

The force is all Scripture has been given by inspiration.

And that's what we mean by plenary. It applies to all the Scriptures. [00:41:01] Just in case, there are one or two here who are still worried about the New Testament books, because most of the references we had were about the Old Testament. I'd just like to mention two more things. There's a very interesting verse in 1 Timothy 5.

Paul quotes two passages in one verse.

In 1 Timothy 5, verse 18, it says the following.

But the Scripture says, thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn, and the labourer is worthy of his reward.

The introduction, the Scripture says, refers to two sentences. It refers to two quotations.

[00:42:01] Thou shalt not muzzle the ox, and the labourer is worth his hire. Remarkably, the first one of them is from the Old Testament, Deuteronomy, I think, and the second one is from the New. It's Luke.

And what Paul does is he puts the writings of Luke on exactly the same level as the writings of the Old Testament. And he puts the two on one level and says, the Scripture says.

You have another reference in Peter's Epistle, where he speaks about the writings of the Apostle Paul and the other Scriptures, again implying that Paul's writings are part of the Scriptures. And actually, I forgot to mention this. Another problem, of course, people have about the Bible is, well, who decided what books would get in there and which ones wouldn't? [00:43:04] And how can we know it's right? Well, the books that came of God had such a power that they were recognised as coming of God. And godly people, Ezra may have been one of them, collected them, and this is what became known as the canon. But when the Lord was on earth, he referred to, for example, the prophets as a known collection, assuming that everyone knew what was meant. He referred to the Scriptures and assumed that everyone knew what was meant. So I think we don't need to be worried about the canon of Scriptures. And just one more point on this. As for the last book in the Bible, from which we read this afternoon, the Revelation, it's interesting that that last book, which probably in time was the last as well, [00:44:03] so nobody could endorse it afterwards, that book starts with its own statement that there is a blessing.

It begins by saying there's a blessing in reading the words of this book, and it finishes by saying there is a curse or a punishment for adding to or omitting from the words of this book. So I think we can be reassured that what we have is a very accurate copy-stroke translation of the words God actually gave for us. And he gave them to us for a reason. 2 Timothy 3, verse 16.

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable. All Scripture is profitable.

Perhaps not all our comments are profitable, for that's our fault, but all the Scriptures are profitable. [00:45:05] And we need to work out what the thought is in each Scripture and what the profit is we can draw from them. And for doctrine, if we want to live in a way that pleases the Lord, we first need the right doctrine, just as you need a good map to find your way, say, from Scotland to Catford. It is also profitable for reproof.

If somebody is going the wrong way, you want him, A, to realise that it is the wrong way, and B, you want to show the right way.

It is useful for instruction in righteousness. And then we come to the end result in verse 17.

That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. [00:46:05] The man of God. I heard it said recently that although there are a few, I think five or six in the Old Testament,

there is only one in the New. Anyway, that's true. It's Timothy who is called the man of God. But if we look at the verse here, I think it's generic. It's a place that is vacant.

It's a place that you and I can take, if the Lord gives us grace for that. It just says, the man of God. It's a vacancy that is on offer.

And the question is, do we want to fill that vacancy? Well, God has given us a resource to do that. I think the Old Testament examples of people called man of God show us that they were people who relied on the word of God, [00:47:01] and they were people who stood for God, irrespective of the opinion of the day. And what Paul really says to Timothy is, you can become, you can be such a man of God, and really anyone can, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished.

I think it's not so much the sense here of being fully grown, but it's in the sense of being equipped. Having the right equipment for the service we are meant to do. And I don't think we can do much useful service for the Lord if we do not use and have the word of God. And then it actually says, unto all good works.

You may say, well, I've read that before. Somewhat it should be furnished or fit for all good works. But the qualification was different in chapter 2. [00:48:03] It said, if you want to be a vessel to honour, you need to dissociate from the vessels to dishonour. And then you can become a vessel to honour, which is fit for every good work. Now, that's one side. But here we learn you need something else. You also need to rely on and to profit from the word of God in order to be equipped, to be furnished for all good works.

I think these few verses must have been a tremendous encouragement for Timothy. He saw all these opponents rising up. He saw Paul was about to go.

But there was one thing that would remain with him, and that is fully reliable scriptures telling him what to do, giving him guidance for his service, but also giving him food. [00:49:06] And I'm just asking myself whether we enjoy this as much as we should. You know, God has not given us a big library to walk through. Honey. I really enjoyed it.

It's something, I think we would say, a delicatess today, which you would look forward to. It is a light for the way and a hammer.

And with regard to difficulties, the whole section here reminds me of a word Isaiah said in chapter 59. He said, when the enemy shall rise up like a flood, the Lord raises, I see some of you know it by heart, raises up a standard, a banner.

And I think this standard or banner is really this firm basis [00:50:03] Paul gives here to Timothy, the inspired word of God. And may the Lord give us that we enjoy it and that we benefit from it, and that as a result we take that place of man of God equipped for every good work. If we could sing one more hymn, number 462.

I think we sing it frequently, perhaps a bit more consciously after what we have considered. O gracious God, our Father, we thank thee for thy word to every saint so precious that speaks of Christ the Lord. 462.