

What's So Important about the Bible?

by Chris Famisaran

Good morning, everybody. Some of you, you're probably realizing I'm hobbling a little bit, I'm fine. It's more a matter of me being stubborn. I sometimes get inflammation in my knee. And I didn't take the medicine in time, early enough. And so it decided to flare but I'm fine. Thank you.

Let's go ahead and pray. Father in heaven. Thank you, Lord, that we could gather together as a church family. Be with us, especially as we know, the dive deep into what the meaning of the Bible is for us, and how it can help us in our lives. In Jesus name, amen.

There is a story told of a rancher from South Dakota. He got engaged and eventually married his bride. And as a wedding gift from his grandfather, they were given a wonderful leather bound Bible. And so of course, they're very appreciative of this wonderful gift. And so they wrote a thank you note. And then they put the Bible on a closet shelf out of the way. Well, sometime later, a, he saw his grandpa, his grandpa asked, Hey, how's that Bible? And the son is like, Oh, it's great. Thank you. We really appreciate what a wonderful gift that you gave to us. But over time, Grandpa kept asking him, Hey, how's that Bible? Oh, it's really great. This went on for several months until finally, the grandson pulls the Bible out because his grandfather had been asking him about it. And he starts to open the Bible. And as he opens the Bible, \$20 bills fall out of his Bible. And he counted all of the bills. And in total, there were 66 \$20 bills. Now, for those of you who are mathematically smart, anybody want to take a stab how much I came up to 66 times 20. I had to use a calculator. So don't feel bad. It's \$1,320 said nice wedding gift, amen. And this story is not new. It's old. So imagine how much more actually was worth back then whether it was 20 years or 50 years. 100 years. And well, wonderful, gracious gift that the grandfather gave the couple after they realize, okay, Grandpa really, really, really wants us to read this book. They unpacked and unfolded the Bible. And they were able to read passages I think for the grandson had been some time since he'd read the Bible. For his bride, it was a new experience. And while the money was wonderful, the true treasure was the treasure that would last a lifetime because money. It can come and go. But love, grace, how to treat one another, to live your life to help raise your kids. That is priceless.

So the Bible, to some it may just be a collection of writings over many, many, many, many years thrown together. But for us as Jesus followers, the Bible reveals God's character, wisdom for life, the source of hope of building up our faith. So today we're going to look and see that the Bible is important and fundamental for our faith.

So the Bible, what is it comprised of in our tradition? How many books are in the Bible? [66] Okay, so we break that down how many are in the Old Testament? 39 So 66 minus 39 How many books in the New Testament? 27. And there are different types of books in the Bible. And some of them they're not even books, their letters poetry, for instance, we find that some of the genres that we can find is narrative. When we think about the book of Acts, or Exodus, especially we were talking about the Hebrews who left Egypt to go to the promised land, it tells their story of how they got from Israel, sorry, Egypt, to the promised land. And it's not just these books, you look at numbers, and First and Second Kings, it tells stories. There's other types of genres in the Bible, for instance, that have poetry. When you read the

book of Psalms, it's also in many ways, although their prayers it's also poetry. There are other books in the Bible such as wisdom, I think of Song Solomon, Ecclesiastes, Proverbs, I believe it was last year, we went through the book of Proverbs, and we found there's a lot of wisdom that we can take from the Bible. Of course, we also have a big category in the Old Testament is that of prophecy of being prophetic. We've talked about how Jesus was prophesied born to be eventually come into this kingdom was born, and yet it was prophesied many, many years before, I think of the major prophets, Daniel, Jeremiah, Isaiah. And then you also have the Minor Prophets, Hosea, Amos Malachi, Joel, Hosea. And then we also have the gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, which specifically focus on the life of Jesus. We also have the epistles, the letters, anywhere from trying to get my memory right, first and second Corinthians. For Paul all the way to I think, is it Thessalonians or Timothy. And then you also have letters from Peter, of Jude of John. James. Oh, and there's also Philemon, but that also belongs to Paul, I'm trying to think. And then we also have the letter to the Hebrews. And even though technically, it's not the same versions, St. Paul, older manuscripts that it's based on the Greek text. Not necessarily name's Paul. But to me, I, I believe Paul wrote it and if not, okay. It's inspired and also reflects, in many ways, the reason why I think Paul doesn't name himself is because he doesn't want to be the focus. Paul didn't exactly have the best reputation. And he had a great reputation in some areas, but in others. And so he took himself out of that, because this was such a beautiful and important letter to the Hebrews. He didn't want his name, to tarnish this opportunity to be able to share with the Hebrews. And the last category is the apocalyptic Daniel and Revelation. And so, when we look at the Bible, okay, there, there are many books, letters thrown together, to create what we have here. What I believe this to be is really the revelation of who God is. It's an opportunity to share who God is with us, God's love for us, and how we can live our lives. Amen.

So we've gone through the different genres of the Bible, how was the Bible assembled? Why believe? I'm not mistaken scholars before Jesus, the Old Testament was essentially put together and then later by about 400 ad, there were several councils, they essentially said, Hey, we're gonna have these. These books, the, the Gospels, the epistles, Revelation, they all had to be related to Christ, either they had to know who Christ was, or know the sources, and that's kind of became was called the canon. Alright, the rule. And so the New Testament in many ways was put together so that again, we could share who this Jesus was. Now, these letters have been circulating, but it hadn't been put all together. And so in God's wisdom he was he was able to impress the people. Look, you need to put this Bible together.

So the Bible. In John 1:14, let's go to John 1:14. The Bible reveals the character and love of God. Let's go to John 1. We've already kind of gotten a little bit of a preamble on this, when we talked about this on Christmas Day. In the beginning was the Word the Word is with God, and the Word was God, He was with God. In the beginning through Him, all things were made without him, nothing was made in Him was life and life was the light of all mankind, the light shines of the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it. And in verse 14, okay, the word or the Logos as it says, in the Greek, verse 14, The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us, we've seen is what, and the glory of the One and Only Son who came from the Father full of grace, and truth. Amen. And so we find, especially, for instance, in the Gospels, Jesus, sharing a beautiful message of hope, giving hope to those who are broken, giving healing to those who are wounded, bringing back to life, those who had fallen asleep. And so all of these, many of these stories were recorded. But in fact, if you look at the end of John, is everything recorded? Did they record everything that Jesus did? No, in fact, this is only a glimpse, one of my

questions to Jesus is, okay, so we only have a portion of what you did. So what else did you do? That was awesome. All right.

But the Bible is inspired by God, will he also go to II Peter, II Peter 1:20, through 21. And folks, I'm sorry, I vexed Bill this week by sending them too much stuff to try to put on the screen and on the papers. Just if you can't get it all today, don't worry, you can go on YouTube. And if you're here on YouTube already, just hit pause and you can write down, take notes, okay? Because there's just so much stuff that I want to share with you. We can't get it all done in 30 minutes, but the Bible is inspired by God. Okay. And in II Peter 1, verses 20 through 21. It says, above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophets own interpretation of things. For prophecy never had its origin in the human will. But prophets, though human, okay, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. So the Holy Spirit impressed upon the prophets and the writers of the Bible, what God wanted them to write down. And so they recorded it. And they recorded it in a time where they wrote it, where people would be able to understand it. And it's important for us to recognize because we live in 2022, not 400 BC. All right. They lived in a different time, they lived in a different culture, they saw things differently. And so it's important that when we as as followers of Jesus read, especially the Old Testament, or just anything in Scripture, we have to understand what was happening in the context of that time. Was there a war going on? Who's influencing this writing? Who's writing it? Is it the actual author? Because when you look in Paul's letters, he had I think, was a Tertius. I can't remember the name, but he would have somebody take notes of what he wanted to be written down, he would have somebody write his letters.

So the writers of the Bible were inspired by God. And as we read through the Bible, we have to have lenses okay. I call it the I stole this from my friend. But trifocal lenses, what is it? What did it mean to the original group? What is God's? What does God want for us to learn? And how does how can we take that how can we bridge from then to now to hermeneutics, how does it apply to us today? exegesis? I know these are big words exegesis and hermeneutics. Exegesis means what did it mean back then hermeneutics what does it mean in 2022? But we have to have these lenses on in order to be able to understand not just the Bible, because when you understand the actual under meaning that the foundation and get into the context. I can't tell you how many times where the Bible is already awesome. But you want to take it to level 1000, You have to understand the context. Because the Bible is so much richer than many of us don't quite know yet. So take time to do the deep study.

But the Bible is not just for us to learning and to grow. But the Bible is there to move us to spur us into action. We're called by God to go and to serve and to learn and know about God. And so as we read the Bible, okay, I'm not just gonna read in the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. And when he was with the beginning through Him, all things were made without him, nothing was made that has been made. When I read the Bible, and I hear in the beginning, was God. Just that statement alone? And guess what, when we talk about context, you've heard this before in the beginning, John is is inspired by another passage, you know, a passage that is Genesis one, one, right? And so sometimes the authors of the Bible, hey, they may get a little bit inspiration, and they may try to copy and say, Hey, I'm being intentional about what I'm writing, and I'm sharing with you. You're not just here to read, I have a purpose. When you read the Bible, every book, for instance, what are the themes? We've gone through the book of Acts, and Luke, we've talked about that salvation is for all that, that God is inclined to minister and to meet the needs of those who have not the holy, the Holy Spirit plays a huge theme in the book of Luke and Acts. [Bill, should I go to the other mic? I'll take it just in case.] And

so when you read the Bible, do you just read the Bible and the beginning was the Word was with God and the Word was God, it's like, no, in the beginning was the word or the fact of how many times did Jesus have to deal with the Pharisees? Quite a few interesting tales there, right? So the Bible should move us springs into action should stir something, [please don't let me fall] should move us into action. In fact, Hebrews 4:12, okay, Hebrews 4:12, sorry, we're going to be flipping along, and a couple of passages will actually stick to one passage, Hebrews 4:12. This is something that I want you to remember. For the word of God is what is alive and active, sharper than any double edged sword. It penetrates even to the dividing soul and spirit, joints, and marrow, it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. And so as we read scripture, you know, when we read scripture, sometimes I feel bad because it automatically points out the fact of, "Man, I'm not a perfect person. There's room for growth." But at the same time, it also shows that I have a wonderful loving Redeemer. Amen. That gives me confidence. We were talking about the fact that we can, in our Sabbath school today, we can approach the throne with confidence, because our God is a God full of grace.

So does the Bible move you to action? If it hasn't yet, keep reading the Bible at times when I read certain passages in the Bible. It makes me happy, and yet sometimes I was reading about David, a year ago, and I was recounting some of the stories. And when he gets called out by I think, was it Nathan, thank you. I have never had such a low thing, visceral reaction to the story of like, do do not realize what you did. So scripture, it's not just a book. It moves us stirs within our hearts. It moves us forward. We also if we go to I Thessalonians 2:13, I Thessalonians 2:13, a couple of letters over we all there. Okay. And we also thank God continually. I love Paul's language the way he describes things He thanks God, I'm grateful for you guys. We think God continually because when you receive the Word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as what? Human word. It's inspired by the Holy Spirit. But as it actually is the word of God, which is indeed at work you and who, in who you believe. So, Paul is, it's also a source of encouragement, because Paul is encouraging and letting them know affirming them, Hey, guys, we shared with you what we believe of God, and look what it's doing in your lives, we can see the transformation in you. Okay, so scripture moves us forward.

Now, some of the things that we have to be reminded of is that should we base our life on what Scripture teaches us? Absolutely. So for instance, in Matthew 4, okay, it's the in the beginning of Matthew 4, Jesus is led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by who? The devil, okay? And how long is he out there for 40 days, 40 nights, and then the tempter came to him and said, If you are the Son of God, the tell these stones to become what? Bread right? And so Jesus responds, it is written, Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God, by any chance, is Jesus quoting scripture? Absolutely. He's quoting Deuteronomy. And the devil, he goes on, and he takes Jesus and, and they stand on the highest point of the temple. And he says, if you're the Son of God, throw yourself down. For it is written, He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift up your hands, lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against the stone. Is it possible the devil is going to take Scripture and twist its meaning to trick you? Because he's quoting Psalm 91, one of my favorite passages, but he's not quoting the whole passage. And so it's important that not only should we just read the Bible, but we need to know what the Bible actually says. And not just remember a few verses here and there, but to read the whole Bible to know the Bible. Now, I'm not saying.... okay, so some of you may be super smart, and can remember from Genesis to Revelation, I'm not that type of guy. I've been reading the Bible my whole life. But I can't remember every single little thing. But we can remember the big parts, and we can always just simply go back to it. Alright. But even

the devil will try to use scripture against you. And so what is Jesus respond, don't put the Lord God to what? To The Test. And finally, the devil takes him up on a very high mountain, you need to show them all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor, all of this, I will give you a fuel bow down and worship to me. But yet the reality is, yeah, he's living on Earth, but the whole world is in whose hands Jesus, Jesus finally says to him, Away from me, Satan, for it is written, Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only. So every time the devil would try to trick Jesus, Jesus always had a response from Scripture. Even when Jesus when Satan tried to misuse and misappropriate scripture. So after that, the devil left and then finally the angels came and attended to.

Now some of you are wondering, okay, well, Pastor, how do I begin to read my Bible? We've done a another sermon on this. Similarly, when I first got here, I think it was around July, and that would be 2019. Can you believe it's going to be three years in May that I'll be here. Time has flown by. And I think, man, what a ride it's been already. And I'm so grateful. I love you all. My wife and I truly thank you for bringing us in. She's not here, by the way. She's in Dallas at a work conference, but she sends her greetings. Okay. So how do I start reading my Bible, you can go back. That's another opportunity that I think it's July of 2019. You can find it on YouTube, where I helped outline the Bible more in depth, but just as a brief overview, and as a reminder, okay. When you read your Bible, please begin with prayer. Because we want to be in the right frame of mind. We want the Holy Spirit to be able to influence us as we read the scriptures. Find a translation that you're comfortable with. There are different kinds. For instance, you have the NASB, which is more academic. You have the NIV, which is a little more kind of tries, it's more traditional kind of meets everybody I think it's what is it an eighth or 10th grade reading level? Okay. And then you have the CEV or the NLT, which based more it was CEV especially was designed for children Then you have the Message Bible, which is actually a paraphrase, okay. But you know, when I even when I prepare a message, I especially for when I'm looking at stories, I don't just read one translation, I read several, to be able to look at the bigger perspective and see what is the scene. And then of course, I like to go to the Greek and Hebrew because I can be able to read that. And I try to understand what is originally what was said. Now, some of you may not be interested in reading the Greek, Hebrew or taking the time to read all of that, but you can go to Biblehub.com, and they do it for you. So you can actually look at what the Greek they translated to the very root of what it is. Okay? So remember that Biblehub.com? Pick A Book. If you're reading the Bible, for the first time, I want to encourage you go to one of the Gospels, whether it's Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John, I prefer to start with the book of John because it was written to people, the second generation, we can identify with them a lot, because they never got to meet Jesus. Have we ever have you ever shook Jesus hand yet? No, but a lot of our faith, we can we can relate to them. Okay. And then continue reading maybe some of Paul's books, and and then maybe go to the very beginning, go to Genesis after that. Or go to Proverbs. If you want to learn something to gain more wisdom, pick a book, read it by passage, don't just open the book. [opens Bible, randomly points at a verse] Well, it's actually a good book, The Lord will have compassion on Jacob once again, he will choose Israel and settle with them their own land. When we read our Bible, we want to be intentional about what we're trying to learn. So whether that's reading a passage, maybe reading 1, 3, 5 verses where we sometimes in scholarly language, call a perkabye, or a chapter and take notes, what are some of the things that's repeating what are some of the themes that you can find in this letter, or in this book, for instance, when we did our, our series on Matthew, last year, we intentionally we didn't read every single thing about Matthew, but we went through some of the themes. Some of the themes that we talked about were what? Jesus is the Messiah. The message of Matthew is not just for the Jews, but it's for everybody. Because Matthew is

primarily written to the Jewish community, the Jewish Christians. So look for some of those themes, okay. But pick a book and go through the whole book, read the whole chapter, and especially the book so you understand the whole context. Because if we only read one, one verse, you're only getting a portion of what the what the overall aim is for that book, and what God is trying to tell you understand it in its bigger context.

The other thing is ask yourself, What's happening? Who's Who's in this passage? When is it taking place? Does that have an impact? Why did somebody say that? How was this being portrayed? And then write down reflect, think about what is it you're learning and trying to grasp your from this passage, okay. So you can either write that down or hit pause, take a screenshot, whatever. And very, and then, after all of that close with prayer, and ask God, how can you incorporate this? These thoughts that you've learned into your life? Simple, fair enough. Yeah. All right. Some of your like, Pastor have been doing that for years. That's okay. Maybe some of you here for the first time are joining us or online have never had the opportunity to do this. So there's always a first for everybody.

So I know my time is running short. But let's actually practice this real quick. Okay, let's go to Matt.... Sorry, not Matthew. Let's go to John 12. John 12. We're going to practice this really quickly. What I would also suggest, don't just read the passage once. Maybe listen to it. If you have a Bible app, like the Bible app on your iPhone or Android YouVersion, whatever, there are opportunities for you to be able to listen to Scripture. Listen to it, like the early believers did, because the Bible, this was not around. You had to share passages. Okay, John 12. Now this is after Jesus has raised Lazarus, and there's a plot to kill Jesus. And here in chapter 12, it says, six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus lived among with whom Jesus had raised from the dead. Here a dinner was given in Jesus honor, Martha served While Lazarus was among those reclining at the table with him, so everybody's feeling good. It's a good moment. And then Mary took a pint of pure nard, and expensive perfume, and she poured it on Jesus feet and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. But one of the disciples, Judas Iscariot, who was later to betray him objected, why hasn't it wasn't this perfume sold in the money given to the poor, it's worth a year's wages. He didn't say this, because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief. As keep as keeper of the money back, he used to help himself to what was put into it. Jesus responds, leave her alone, it was intended that she saved this perfume for the day of my burial. You will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me. Okay? So, maybe listen to it. Maybe also, before you even try to think about it, try to recount what you've just read. Now, we know who's in this passage. Jesus, Lazarus, Martha, Mary. Judas. Okay, that's the who? What's happening? They're having dinner. Where they were in Bethany. Okay. When did it take place? Six days before the Passover. Why was this so important? Okay, so I think there's a lesson here that we can take. And it actually helps to show a little bit about what's happening. John is already letting the people who are hearing this for the first time, a little bit of a heads up that Judas number one, he's a little bit of a scoundrel, okay, he's, he's keeping tabs on the money. Can you imagine this? The one who actually betrays Jesus is also the money holder, the Treasurer of the group, I had to think about that for a second. I was like, Man, that's a bold move Jesus. Excuse me. But we also see Mary profess in some, in some, in one way, shares her love for Jesus. And not it's not in an in an appropriate way. But she had saved this money up and she pours perfume. And is what what is she really doing? She's actually in a way anointing Jesus. Because he's about to die later. How is this all important? Number one, why is this important? How is this important? When I look at this, I think about the different perspectives, OK, Lazarus has just been raised from the dead, Martha's doing Martha

things, making sure everything is set and the meal because you know, another point she complained to Jesus, Jesus, Mary is not doing anything and I'm doing all the work, right. But Judas has also been true to his character, he's going to betray Jesus. But Jesus takes a moment and reveals the character of God and that is of love. He defends, Mary says, Hey, she's doing a wonderful thing. And he also gives them a clue as well, as a heads up. I'm not gonna be here forever. Think about that now. So what are the disciples thinking? What are they wondering, what does Jesus mean, he's not going to be around. I wonder how Mary felt, being picked on and pointed out, and then wondering what it must have felt like for Jesus, to stand up for her. Our God is not just a powerful God, our God stands up for those who have been maligned stands up for the outcasts. Now, as followers of Jesus, what does this all mean?

There's a couple lessons that we can take from this. Stand up for what's right. Love well. And always look at the bigger picture in the narrative of what Jesus or God is trying to point out, that you can learn and you can apply to your lives. Write these thoughts down. And how can I share more apply this in my life in a practical manner? Simple enough. Amen.

How about this, let's pray. God together we have opened up we've we've done a very, Lord very brief overview of of how the Bible can impact us but God ultimately Lord, it's your love letter to us to be able to be shared by others. Lord, You are good, and your mercy endures forever. Help us, Lord, to take these lessons to stand up as you did for Mary, to Lord, I pray that you will help us to be faithful to love like you did, to stand up for those who need to be protected. And also God. We ask that the many lessons that are in the Bible that are contained from Genesis to Revelation, Lord, may it apply to our lives forever. Amen.

So, reflection, have you ever struggled reading the Bible? And asked why why God? I'm definitely, definitely in that category. of follow up question to that was, how has the Bible been a source of hope and confidence in your life? Think about that this week. Maybe when you get together with your family, maybe you have family worship later this week or with your spouse or friends, ask if you're comfortable, and share with these questions and answers. And the last thing, action step this week, what we just did, I want you to pick a passage of the Bible and follow the guidelines that we've shared, and record some of the lessons of what you have learned who was in it. What's happening, where does it take place? When is it taken in place? Why? And how can we apply these lessons to our lives?

By the grace of God, and the love of Jesus be with you. Amen. Amen. Grace and Peace.