

October 16, 2022  
Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost  
St. Timothy Lutheran Church – Huber Heights, OH  
Pastor Joel Sutton

2 Timothy 3:14 – 4:5

ALL SCRIPTURE IS BREATHED OUT BY GOD.

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.  
Amen.

Our text for meditation today comes from the Gospel according to St Paul's Second Letter to St Timothy, the 3rd and 4th chapters, which you heard read earlier.

After Jesus ascended into the heaven and the Gospel began to spread to all nations, God's Word and Christianity changed the world. Biblical teaching challenged pagan practices concerning the status of women and the importance of the family, (cf: Ephesians 5:22-6:4) the sanctity of all human life as made in God's image, (cf: Genesis 1:26) the sinfulness of sexual immorality, homosexuality, and a whole laundry list of human inclinations that are offensive to God and lead to eternal damnation. (cf: Romans 1:21-32; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10)

But today, some are suggesting we are now living in a post-Christian world. Not that Christianity has disappeared, but that God's biblical truths are no longer the foundation for ethics, morals, and human behavior. Christianity is no longer the default moral guidance system for our society. We should not be surprised. Almost 2,000 years ago, St Paul warned St Timothy and all Christendom that the day would come when God's people and His Word of salvation would come under attack. Writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit Paul tells us:

***"<sup>3</sup> For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, <sup>4</sup> and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths."*** (2 Timothy 4:3-4)

Dear baptized believer in Christ Jesus, what is happening in our world should not come as a surprise. God has given you this prophesy in His Word so that you guard yourself against wandering off into myths and prepare to be attacked for your confession of God's inspired, authoritative, and inerrant Word.

As St Paul writes his letter to Timothy, he is bound in chains awaiting execution. He writes to encourage Timothy in his Office of the Holy Ministry, but he also writes to you and Christians of all times and places as members of the priesthood of all believers. (cf: 1 Peter 2:9) Concerning chapters 3 and 4 of Paul's letter, Martin Luther writes that Paul:

***"... propheties especially... concerning the perilous time at the end of the world. It is then that a false spiritual life will lead all the world astray, with an***

***outward show, under which every sort of wickedness and wrong will have its fling.***” (LW 35, 389)

So, let’s look at Paul’s God inspired prophesy to see if we are living in the end times. Just prior to our text, he writes:

***”<sup>12</sup> Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.”***  
(2 Timothy 3:12)

That it sounds spot on. Christians today are being persecuted for proclaiming God Word. The doubters and haters say: *“There is no God.” Keep your Christian morals off by body. Keep your Bible out of my life.*”

Paul goes on to say:

***“... evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.”*** (2 Timothy 3:12–13)

Look around at the false prophets and pretend pastors and preachers that twist God’s Word to deceive His people just like the devil has first deceived them. And as we already heard in our text, the truth of God’s Word is going to be ignored. (cf: 2 Timothy 4:3-4) The sinful man does not want the one and only true God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. They prefer to create their own gods, heaping up for themselves all kinds of false teachings and man-made myths that suit their perverted passions and pleasures, hungering for unspiritual food that is deadly to the soul.

First temptation in this world was – and remains – the temptation to doubt God’s Word. It is a tale as old as time. Wherever God builds a church, the devil builds a chapel next door. (cf: LW 23. 285) God’s first church was built to perfection. It was the Garden of Eden where He formed man out of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature. (cf: Genesis 2:7) God created man in his own image, male and female he created them. (cf: Genesis 1:27) He placed them in the Garden as its stewards and told them they could eat from any tree in the garden except for one. If they ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they would surely die. (cf: Genesis 2:16–17)

Soon after, the crafty serpent slithered into the Garden, with his hammer and nails and quickly built his chapel of deception and lies, saying:

***“Did God actually say...”*** (Genesis 3:1)

... prompting the woman to doubt God’s Word. Once the devil’s foundation of doubt was built, he quickly made an outright denial and rejection of God’s Word, implying that God did not want them to eat the fruit of the forbidden tree because He knew that by doing so, they would become like Him. (cf: Genesis 3:1–7) [sarcasm on →] And who does not want to be like God?! [← sarcasm off] The serpent told the woman exactly what she suited her own passions. Becoming like God sounded a whole lot better than death. So she turned from listening to the truth of God’s Word and ate. And when she did not fall over dead, the man decided it must be – so, he too, wandered from the truth, and ate. Sin entered the world, poisoning all mankind with sin and condemning us to death.

God did not start over and He did not simply walk away from His Church. He breathed new life into it with the promise a Savior who would crush the serpent’s head on the cross, (cf: Genesis

3:15) reconciling the world to the Father, winning forgiveness, life, and salvation for all mankind. And while the serpent has been defeated, in God's rich wisdom, it has pleased Him to allow the devil to continue to build chapels, preaching not "*What God Has Said,*" but preaching "*What You Would Rather Hear.*"

Today it has become fashionable and trendy for common people to say that there is no God. They say it with no apology or hesitation. Colleges that were founded by Christians for the purpose of educating Christian men and women today dismiss of any notion of an Almighty Creator who sent His Son into the world to save sinners. There are countless preachers and teachers who claim they are grounded in God's Word, but they deny that Jesus is the only Name under heaven that saves. (cf: Acts 4:12) They deny that a person is saved by grace alone by faith. (cf: Ephesians 2:8) Many Christians have comingled a hodge-podge of different non-Christian belief systems into the truth, creating a deadly poison that could lead to unbelief and eternal damnation. I buy all my books online, but I am told that in brick-and-mortar bookstores the floor space devoted to New Age Religions and paganism dwarfs the space allotted for Christian literature.

Christianity might have once changed the world, but it seems like the devil is making a comeback. People are advocating for abortion right up to the moment of natural birth. They want to give hormone therapy and sex reassignment surgery to little boys and girls who still believe in any number of mythological creatures and people. Sexual immorality of every stripe imaginable and a whole laundry list of human proclivities that are offensive to God are not only openly approved of, they encourage others to participate.

What is a Christian to do? First, repent of your own sin:

***"<sup>23</sup> for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."*** (Romans 3:23)

Pull that big old log of sin out of your own eye before you attempt to take the speck out of your brothers. (cf: Matthew 7:3–5) Repent and remember your Baptism, clinging to God's promises made you in Baptismal waters. Daily drown your old Adam and die to sin and your evil desires. Arise to live before God in righteousness and purity forever. It is where God planted faith in you and granted you the Holy Spirit. As Paul writes to encourage Timothy, he is exhorting you to:

***"... continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed... and how... you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus."*** (2 Timothy 3:14–15)

Continually abide and meditate on the sacred writings of Holy Scripture where the Holy Spirit enlightens you with His gifts and sanctifies and keeps you in the true faith in Christ Jesus. The Holy Bible does not just contain some of God's Word. It is God's inspired, authoritative, and inerrant Word. Inspired by the Holy Spirit Paul writes that:

***"<sup>16</sup> All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, <sup>17</sup> that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work."*** (2 Timothy 3:16–17)

You come to this place because this is where God continually breathes new life into sinners. When Paul reminds us that the Scriptures are God-breathed and profitable, he's teaching us that God works through His Word. The breath of God is the spirit of God. Jesus says His words are

***spirit and life***, (cf: John 6:63) and as He breathes His last on the cross He breathes out the breath of life once, for all. You and I were dead and without breath in our trespasses and sins, but God has made you alive with Christ through the Gospel. (cf: Ephesians 2:1–5)

When you read or hear the Scriptures and meditate on them, the Holy Spirit breathes the breath of life back into you. You are resurrected and resuscitated, given new life, equipping you to serve God and one another in love. Paul says that the God-breathed Scriptures equip you for these four things:

1. Teaching: Showing you what good and God-pleasing works really are.
2. Reproof: Calling you and me and others to repentance over the sin that remains in our lives.
3. Correction: Showing you where you have gone astray, pointing you back to living a God pleasing life in thought, word, and deed.
4. Training in righteousness: Shaping you to serve God and one another in love.

Now that you are resurrected and resuscitated, given new life, and equipped to serve God and one another in love, speak the truth in love. In chapter 4 verse 1, Paul charges Timothy and all pastors with the duties of the Office of the Holy Ministry by which they will be held to account on the Last Day saying:

***"preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching."*** (2 Timothy 4:2)

It is a simple summary of every pastoral duty and responsibility—administering the Sacraments, admonishing the erring, and comforting those in need with the Gospel. But as a member of the priesthood of all believers, he is also encouraging you and all who believe to share the truth of God's Spirit breathed Word. Share it in season and out of season. (cf: 2 Timothy 4:2)

***"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."*** (Romans 12:2)

Speak God's truth against all the entire whole laundry list of sinful human inclinations that are celebrated by the world but are offensive to God. Tell those who have been deceived of the love that Jesus has for them and that died on the cross to save them of their sins too. Invite them to church. They need to hear Law and Gospel preaching so they can repent of their sin and receive the absolution, just like you and me. Our God desires that no one eternally perish but all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. (cf: 1 Timothy 2:4) And where is that knowledge of the truth breathed out? Right here in Word and Sacrament. The Gospel is God's power of salvation for all who believe. (cf: Romans 1:16)

Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understand, guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus,  
Amen.