

The theme for our morning's meditation is that God's Word demands a response from its hearers. The Word of God has been given as an instruction manual for our lives and we are to follow it. We make sure that we use the instruction manual for all the gadgets we buy because we want to make sure that we get the best results. The manual was compiled by the manufacturer so that those who purchase their product will know how to use it and get best results. In a similar manner God is our creator, he has formed and fashioned us in his image and likeness and therefore we need to listen to his instructions in order to get the best out of our lives.

In the NT reading from Paul's letter to young Timothy we see Paul exhorting him to continue in what he has learned and become convinced of because he was instructed by his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice who had a sincere faith and now had transmitted that faith to Timothy as well (2Tim 1:5). Paul is confident that the foundations laid from infancy by his mother and grandmother would hold him up. It was through the scriptures that Timothy also came to know that there was salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. So scripture becomes the means through which we can understand what God's plan for our lives is so that we can indeed live a purpose driven life.

Scripture has been given to us by God for practical purposes. It reveals truths which are beyond the scope of science, in particular God's way of salvation through Christ. It is because scripture instructs for salvation that it instructs us about Christ, by faith in whom salvation is received. Secondly, scripture is God-breathed. This indicated that scripture is the Word of God, spoken by God, breathed out of the mouth of God. However, divine inspiration does not dispense with human co-operation. There is a double authorship. God did not just dictate and ask men to record, rather it was God using ordinary human vessels and breathing his Spirit and his Word into them and then overseeing that it was written down. Thirdly, we see that scripture is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.

First and foremost scripture is used to teach. What does it teach? Scripture teaches us about what God expects of us. It teaches us that we are human beings made in the image and likeness of God and therefore we are also morally accountable to him. It teaches us about God's overarching plan of salvation for the whole world. It teaches us about the truth of God. When people are in earnest in their pursuit of the truth of God's Word, they are not dependent on their own intellectual capacity alone, but are helped by the indwelling Holy Spirit. Christ said, 'When he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth' (John 16:13). Therefore, when we read and study the Bible's teaching, the Holy Spirit enlightens our minds and understanding, and directs its truth to our hearts. In this way, we are able to discern between truth and falsehood.

The Bible not only teaches the truth of God, but it also teaches the truth about ourselves, and gives many warnings and rebukes about our conduct and discipleship. It is a very honest book, and it never whitewashes any of God's servants who appear in its pages. Their faults and failings are all clearly set forth so that we may learn from them.

Timothy is to make good use of the Bible as a teaching tool to rebuke others when they fall prey to false teaching, or, by their conduct, bring the church of God into disrepute. Later, when giving a charge to Timothy to preach the gospel, Paul tells him plainly that he is to rebuke his people when they fall into sin (2 Tim. 4:2). But whenever the Bible has to be used in this way, that is, to warn and reprove a fellow Christian, it should be done in a spirit of love.

God's word not only teaches and rebukes but it also corrects us. It corrects our wrong thinking, and trains or instructs us in the way of righteousness, the right path we are to follow if we want to grow in godliness and holiness of life. As the psalmist says, 'Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path' (Ps. 119:105). This illumination upon our path through life comes from the many directives we have in the Scriptures concerning different aspects of life—our use of time, family life, the use of money, the rearing of children, marriage, sexual relations and many more. In all these things, broad principles and guidelines are laid down which help to train us in the life of righteousness. It equips us for every good work.

As the people of God who hear God's word regularly may we not just be hearers of God's word but may we truly respond to it in obedience.

Shalom

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