

5. A Trustworthy Word

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- [0 : 0 0] Well, now we're going to turn to these scriptures and to two places that we're going to read this evening. First of all, in Peter's second letter, 2 Peter chapter 1, and then in 1 Corinthians, Paul's first letter to the Corinthians.
- If you have one of our church visitors' Bibles, you'll find that, I think, on page 1018 and then page 953. 2 Peter, near the end of the New Testament after 1 Peter.
- And then 1 Corinthians, right after Paul's letter to the Romans. And we're going to read 2 Peter chapter 1 at verse 19, just a short section to, actually, we'll start at verse 16, I think, to the end of the chapter.
- Peter's writing, look at verse 15, in fact. He's writing about his departure, he means his death. He knows that he's an old man.
- And he, like all the apostles, are soon no longer to be there in person with the church. And so they have a great concern for the church through all the ages after the apostles.
- [1 : 1 0] The foundation and the originators of the New Testament church on the great cornerstone, Jesus Christ, after they have gone. I will make every effort so that after my departure, after my death, you may be able at any time to recall these things, these teachings.
- For we, the apostles, did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. But we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.
- We saw it all. For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was born to him by the majestic glory, this is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.
- We ourselves heard this very voice born from heaven. For we were with him on the holy mountain. Speaking there of the Mount of Transfiguration, when Christ was transfigured before them.
- We saw it all. And we have something more sure. The prophetic word. The scriptures of the Old Testament, he means.
- [2 : 1 7] To which you'll do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. Knowing this, first of all, that no prophecy of scripture comes from someone's own interpretation.
- For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man. But men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.
- Turn with me now back a little bit to 1 Corinthians. Paul's first letter to Corinthians. And chapter 2. And Paul, the apostle this time.
- St. Paul is speaking. Likewise about the words that they as apostles pass on from God to the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. So 1 Corinthians chapter 2 and verse 9.
- Paul says, as it is written. He's quoting the Old Testament. What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined. What God has prepared for those who love him.

[3 : 20] These things God has revealed to us. That is, to us apostles like Paul and Peter. Through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything.

Even the depths of God. For who knows a person's thoughts except the spirit of that person which is in him. So also, no one comprehends the thoughts of God except the spirit of God.

Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the spirit who is from God. That we might understand the things freely given us by God.

And we, again, he's talking about the apostolic band. And we impart this in words, not taught by human wisdom. But words taught by the spirit.

Interpreting spiritual truth to those who are spiritual. The natural person does not accept the things of the spirit of God. They're folly to him. He's not able to understand them because they're spiritually discerned.

[4 : 25] The spiritual person judges all things. But is himself to be judged by no one. For who's understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.

Amen. May God bless us. This is his word. And we'll be looking at these readings shortly. Well, I wonder if you'd turn up with me a third passage of scripture in Paul's second letter to Timothy.

Second Timothy chapter 3. I think that's page 996 if you have one of the church Bibles. We'll look at that briefly in a moment.

And then at these other two passages that we studied together this evening. We've been having a bit of a back to basics over the last few Sunday evenings.

Basic questions about the Bible. This year is the 400th anniversary of the translation of what's often known today as the King James Version of the Bible. The authorized version of the Bible of 1611.

[5 : 31] And so I suppose rather in celebration of it. There have been many, many celebrations throughout the nation in different kinds of ways. But we're not celebrating that particular translation.

Although it is a very fine translation. And there's much to commend it. And it's still used in many places today. But we're focusing not on the translation as such.

But on the substance. Why was it translated at all? What's so special about this text of scripture that we call the Bible? Whatever the translation might be.

Ours is called the ESV. The English Standard Version. You might have any number of different versions with you tonight. But what is the Bible? It's quite an important question, isn't it?

And for an answer, I'd want to suggest to you that what we've been doing is turning to the primary evidence itself. Not so much asking the question of the so-called experts.

[6 : 28] You know, the kind of people who are wheeled into the television or the radio studios to give their opinions about it. But we're asking a more important question. A more fundamental question. What does the Bible itself claim for itself?

Lots of people talk about the Bible. What they think about it. What their view is. But the really important thing is, what does the Bible claim for itself? And the secondary thing, obviously, then is, well, is it a credible claim?

Is it something I can accept? I can believe? Now, we've already had a number of studies. And we've seen for ourselves a number of things. First, that the Bible itself tells us that above everything else, it is a covenant word.

That is, it's a word of personal revelation of God. Of God to us. He reveals himself so that through that personal revelation of himself, he can draw people into a personal relationship with himself.

That's above all what the word of God in Scripture is there for. Then we saw that it's a clear word. That is, it's a word of accessible revelation to us all.

[7 : 36] That means we can understand it. It is not as people like Dan Brown like to think and write novels about. It's not all about secret codes and mystery and all sorts of strange things like that.

So that you have to be an extraordinary academic or something to understand it. No, no. It's a clear word. It's an accessible word to all of us.

Then it's a coherent word. That is, it's a comprehensive revelation that makes sense of the world in every aspect and is relevant to every aspect of the world and of our lives.

And then furthermore, we saw it's a commanding word. That is, Scripture claims to be an authoritative word. It's a word, therefore, that rules over every aspect of our lives.

The Bible is the full and the final and the clear authority. As Terry reminded us last week, I keep saying, and we'll keep saying, it's a commanding word.

[8 : 42] Well, fifth tonight, I want to think about another important attribute of the Bible. And this time it doesn't begin with C. The Bible is a trustworthy word.

Rupert did come up with at least two C's that would have done, but I didn't think they were quite as good. And I'm not going to be absolutely enslaved to alliteration. I think trustworthy is the very best word possible.

Because it describes why it is we can be so sure about this word. It is trustworthy because it is a divinely authored revelation.

In other words, what I'm talking about this evening, really, is what theologians call the doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture. It is divinely inspired.

It is divinely authored. Which is perhaps even a better way of putting it. Now, we've already made the point, and if you've been here and listened to these previous studies, you'll have heard me say that the Bible is a fully human book.

[9 : 44] That is, it's a book that is written in our language. In our medium. So that we can understand it. It's clear. It's written coherently. It's comprehensively written.

And that means, obviously, that we must study it with all our faculties. That's why we gather our students and young workers on a Thursday evening to release the word. That's why we run the Corn Hill training course and the pastor's training course.

That's why we run expository conferences for Bible teachers and ministers. Because we need to give our very best efforts of our human minds. To train ourselves in handling and in teaching the Scriptures.

And that's why the Bible teacher, according to the Scriptures, yes, does need to be a gifted person. Gifted by God for the task of teaching God's word. But also, he must, humanly speaking, be equipped for that task.

And Paul tells Timothy, in 1 Timothy 4, Likewise, Paul says to Timothy that he is to entrust the apostolic truth that he's learned from Paul.

[10 : 57] He's to entrust it to faithful men. To godly men who also will be able to teach others. In other words, he's saying that as a Christian leader, Timothy has the responsibility to equip others for that task of ministry.

That is one of the chief tasks of every Christian leader, every Christian pastor. Where that task is neglected by the Christian leaders of our church. Where it's left to others who don't know how to do that.

Who are merely academics and have no understanding or knowledge of what the people of God truly need. Well, then the church will die. Why? That's one of the reasons the church, the older denominations, is dying in so much of the Western world today.

Because the task of training and equipping the teachers of the future has not been taken by those who lead churches. It's been farmed out to the academics. You have no knowledge at all of what the church needs.

Or even of what the Bible really means. So, Paul is very clear. If you look here in 2 Timothy 3, verse 17, open in front of you. He says the man of God must be competent.

[12 : 04] He must be equipped for every good work. Well, what is it that will equip the man of God for every good work? Well, the answer is there in verse 16.

Do you see? It is the words that God himself breathes out. Well, where do we find these very words that God himself breathes out?

Well, in all scripture, says Paul there. In all the sacred writings that he refers to in verse 15. The prophetic witness of the Old Testament scriptures to the Christ.

The apostolic witness in the New Testament scriptures. These are not simply man's words about God. They're not even simply man's words from God.

But they are also, says Paul, God's own words. God breathes these words out, he says. So, here's a question. How can we say that man's words, which the scriptures clearly are, they're written in our language, clearly, coherently, and so on.

[13 : 23] How can these words, which are man's words, also be at the same time God's words? That's a puzzle, isn't it? Well, the answer that the Bible itself gives is that the words of scripture are both fully the words of man and fully the words of God.

It teaches both those things. The Bible tells us clearly two distinct things. And these are the two things I want us to think about tonight. First, it tells us that the writers of scripture are fully inspired by God.

That is, God breathes in, as it were, to their writing. But secondly, the New Testament tells us that the words themselves that they write are fully inspired by God.

That is, the very words themselves are God's words that he breathes out. So, let's think about the first of those. And here I want you to turn back to the reading that we read in 2 Peter, chapter 1.

Because what Peter is telling us here is that the Bible writers are fully inspired by God. Let's just read again from verse 19. We have something more sure, says Peter, the prophetic word, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, that is, when the kingdom fully comes and the Lord Jesus comes again.

[14 : 55] Knowing this, first of all, that no prophecy of scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. No prophecy was ever produced by the will of man. But men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

Men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. That word carried along could be better translated driven along. It's a language used of a ship fully under sail that is being driven along before a strong wind.

The whole speed of the boat, the direction, the force, all of it is under the control of this prevailing wind in the sails. And that's what Peter says of the inspiring of God.

He drove along these prophets and writers of old to write these words of scripture. Now, Peter is speaking here primarily in this context about the words of the Old Testament.

Hebrews chapter 1 begins like this. It's long ago at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets. That's what Peter is speaking about here.

[16 : 08] God spoke. It was his initiative. None of it was the inspiration of man. None of it was his own idea. Men spoke from God. And so also they wrote down the words that they spoke from God.

And then, of course, as Hebrews 1 goes on to say, in these latter days, though, God has spoken to us in his Son. What he's saying is that the Old Testament of the scriptures, the Bible and the New Testament, are a unified witness of God speaking.

The Old Testament, if you like, is God the Father's witness to God the Son, as he has promised and foreshadowed in the prophetic writings, spoken by the Spirit.

And then the New Testament, if you like, you could sum it up by saying that we have God the Son's witness to God the Father, as at last the promised Son comes and he speaks himself words that are spirit and life.

Notice, by the way, the Father, the Son and the Spirit add one in revealing God to humankind. Jesus revealed the Father's glory.

[17 : 16] I have manifested your name, said Jesus, for I have given them the words that you gave me, and they have received them. And it was not only through Jesus' own spoken words that made the Father known, but also through the words that Jesus himself handed on, passed on to his apostles.

Jesus prayed to the Father, I have made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, he said in John 17, in the upper room. How?

How could that be? Because, Jesus said, people will believe through their words also. And Jesus said to his disciples, his closest disciples, the apostles, the Holy Spirit will come upon you after I ascend to the glory, after the cross and the resurrection, and the Holy Spirit will teach you, the apostles, all things.

He'll bring to your remembrance, he said to them, everything that I have spoken to you. The Spirit will come, and he will take from what is mine, said Jesus, and he will declare it to you.

He's speaking there to his apostles, his chosen twelve. And he says, and you will bear witness, because you have been with me from the beginning. So there it is.

[18 : 39] It's very clear, isn't it? In Peter's words, and also in the words of the Lord Jesus himself, both the Old Testament writers, and the New Testament writers, that's Jesus and his apostles, they are fully inspired by God.

The Spirit of God himself drove them along. He took what is God's, and he gave it to these men, so that they might speak and write from God himself.

Not of their own imaginings, not of their own inspiration, but by the inspiration of God alone. That's what the New Testament claims of the Bible.

Now, somebody might object, and they might say, well, look, that's fine. I can accept that these men were, in a sense, inspired by God. That's all right. But that's very different from saying that their words are actually God's words, that they're inspired words, that they're infallible words, far less inerrant words.

It doesn't mean that these words themselves that we find in the Bible can't contain any errors or inaccuracies or any mistakes or anything misleading. That's a different thing. That's what some people would say.

[19 : 58] Other people might say, well, that's all right. I can accept it in a sense that the content of Scripture, the thoughts that are transmitted in the Bible, that they're somehow inspired.

But the words themselves, that's a different thing. How can you say that they're inspired or trustworthy? I don't believe that. Well, if you think about it for a minute, it's quite difficult to understand, isn't it, how thoughts that are inspired and ideas that are truly inspired can be communicated in words that aren't also similarly inspired.

You can't really separate, can you, thoughts and meaning from the words that will convey those things and express them. You can't do that in the real world, anyway.

Maybe in the ivory towers of academia and post-modern academics writing incomprehensible books can separate this idea of what words mean from what thoughts are and all of these things.

Some of you studying English literature and language and so on may come across that. But here in the real world of planet Earth, we express our thoughts in our words. If our words are a jumble of nonsense, it's a fair guide that our thoughts are a jumble of nonsense.

[21 : 15] So think about this. It's like taking a poem, isn't it, and saying, this is a beautiful poem. It's inspired. It's wonderful. It's beautiful. It's just enchanting.

I just love to hear it. It's just the words that are uninspired and ugly and boring and dull. I mean, that can't be, can it? Because it's the words that express the poetry.

Or you, one of your students, you try talking to one of your lecturers when you've written an essay and you've been marked down quite heavily. Try this on them. Say, look, it's just the words that are a jumble of mistakes and incoherence, but listen, the content behind it is just sheer brilliance.

Well, you try it and see. I don't think you'll get any more marks, will you? Or if you're a student studying at the conservatoire, if you're studying music, try it with a piece of music.

Oh, it's a wonderful piece of music. It's truly inspired. It's just full of breathtaking beauty. It's just the notes that are full of discord and monotone and disharmony.

[22 : 16] But it's wonderful music. See, it just doesn't work, does it? That's just absurd. And so it is. With words, uninspired notes don't make inspired music.

Neither do uninspired words convey inspired thoughts and concepts. You can't divorce the words of the Bible from the content and from the thoughts of the Bible.

Without words that are adequate and trustworthy, no real thought can be adequately expressed in a way that's trustworthy.

And nor can you divorce, this is another thing that sometimes people want to do, neither can you divorce the words of witness to the Lord Jesus Christ from the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Many people make a great show of that, many theologians. They'll say things like this, but Jesus is the living word of God. Jesus is the infallible one.

[23 : 22] There are no words about him that are infallible, but Jesus himself is the infallible one. But that again is just as facile, isn't it? It was Jesus himself, after all, who said of his own words, these words that I speak to you are spirit and they are life.

They're a word he gives to his apostles, in other words, that will give life to others, he says. As they believe these words, as they trust these words, that is the way to eternal life, said Jesus.

You can't separate Jesus' words of life from the life that is in him. You can't separate a person from their words. It's a person's words that conveys everything about them to somebody else and continues to do so, in fact, long after they're gone.

If you're a historian, you rely, don't you, on the words of the person that you're studying. You're a biographer. You rely on the words, whether it's Shakespeare or Plato or Winston Churchill, whoever it is that your life's work might be involved in studying.

You know them expertly. You know them intimately and thoroughly through their words. If that is, they are true words and not false words.

[24 : 42] If they're trustworthy words, words that are without error, words that don't lead astray, words that do truly reveal that person, their words reveal that person to you.

So you see, all these kind of objections about words themselves being incapable of being really inspired by God in that way, even if their speakers and writers were somehow inspired at the beginning, they just don't work, as far as I can see.

It just doesn't seem to be a coherent argument to say that. It's unpersuasive, I think. But more importantly still, the Bible itself flatly contradicts all of these notions that I've mentioned.

All these clever ideas that some theologians and philosophers come up with to deny that the Bible claims for itself what I'm saying it claims in its own words.

We've got to be clear. This is the second thing, you see. Not only does the Bible teach that the Bible writers themselves were inspired by God, it's equally clear and plain that the Bible words are expired by God himself.

[25 : 56] We read that in 2 Timothy 3, verse 16. All scripture is expired, breathed out by God. God breathed. It's not so much that God breathes in to inspire the writers that he's speaking about there, but God actually breathes out the very words themselves.

Various Bible translations translate that word a little differently, but really the ESV is as close as I think you can get literally to what it says. God breathed. Scripture is breathed from the mouth of God, just as these words I'm speaking are breathed from my mouth at this moment.

And that's not to deny the human component of the scriptures, not at all. That's no more than to say that when the Bible teaches that Jesus is fully divine, it's not also teaching that he was fully human.

Undoubtedly, there's a mystery in saying that Jesus Christ was fully divine and fully human at the same time, but how could it be anything other than a mystery that transcends our full understanding if God really is the infinite God and he's to become one with finite humanity.

That is a mystery. And if it doesn't transcend our puny human brains, we would be suspicious that it didn't concern something greater than us, God.

[27 : 20] But undeniably, that is the Bible's consistent teaching that the word of God made flesh had two distinct natures. He was fully human and fully divine. That's the heart of the Christian faith.

But so it is exactly with the two natures of the written word of God. The written word of God is both fully human and fully divine. I turn then to 1 Corinthians chapter 2 and that second passage that we read together and I want us to see just how clearly Paul lays this out for us here.

Look again at 1 Corinthians 2 verse 9. What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him, these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit.

The secrets, Paul says, of God's plan and purpose has been revealed to the apostles through God's Spirit. In order to that, look down to verse 12.

so that he says, we, the apostles, might understand the things freely given us by God.

[28 : 34] That's very clear, isn't it? That's exactly what Jesus promised in the upper room. That the Holy Spirit would come and lead these men, the apostles, into all truth. That's exactly what Paul is saying here.

But now read on to verse 13. Very important. What do the apostles do through their words, spoken and written to the church? Verse 13.

We impart this, says Paul, the things that have been given to them by God, we impart this in words. Their own words?

No. He says words not taught by human wisdom, but taught by the Spirit. That's so clear, isn't it?

Not just thoughts inspired by the Spirit, not just ideas of things to write given by the Spirit, not just general content given by the Spirit that are imparted in mere human words by the apostles.

[29 : 36] No. We impart this God-given truth in words not taught by human wisdom, but taught by the Spirit. Not their own words, but God's very words taught explicitly to them.

Now that could not be clear, could it? What the Bible is claiming. It's worth just reading down to verse 14. The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God for their folly to him and he's not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.

The spiritual person judges all things but is judged by none. See, Paul is alluding there to what the great reformer Martin Luther called the external clarity and the internal clarity of the words of Scripture.

There is external clarity, that is, there is objective clarity in the words of Scripture. They are words taught by God and passed on to us by his prophets and apostles.

And it's the doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture when we properly understand it. They are God's words passed on to us. But there is also what we might call the internal clarity that we need if these words are to be understood, if they're to be received, so as to give light and life to us as human beings.

[31 : 01] That means that God's Spirit must also not only inspire the words of Scripture but that God's Spirit must illuminate and light up our hearts so that we can see the clarity of these words.

Because by nature, Paul says here that our hearts are darkened. Spiritual things are spiritually discerned but we have our spiritual sight blurred and darkened.

Why is that? Well, it's because of our sin. It's the deepest truth about what we mean when we talk about human sin. We suppress the truth about God so that we do not see what he reveals to us clearly or properly.

Paul in his second letter of the Corinthians puts it very chillingly. He says, the God of this world, by which he means the evil one, the devil, the God of this world, has blinded the eyes of unbelievers.

So you see, eyes and the eyes of our hearts must be opened so that there is internal clarity, so that we can discern spiritually things which can only be seen through spiritual eyes.

[32 : 14] If we stop suppressing the truth. The external clarity of God's word is always there. There's no fault in his words. The fault is in our sight and our blindness.

It's not as though the Bible somehow becomes God's word when the Holy Spirit works through it, through his inspiration when it's heard or taught or preached.

Not that. There are some theologians who have tried to describe it like that, but that absolutely contradicts what Paul says here so very plainly. Paul is clear, they are God's words all the time taught by the Spirit.

But what happens, thank God, when God's word is proclaimed from the Scripture is that God's Spirit illumines people's hearts.

He opens our hearts so that we can hear God's voice, so that we can discern that these words in Scripture are indeed the words of God, that they are living, that they are real, and they are living and real for us today.

[33 : 21] We cannot separate the living word of Christ from the written word that contains it. And we must never try to do that. My father used to explain this to me using the illustration of a gramophone record.

Some of you are old enough to hear to remember what a gramophone record actually was. If you're too young for that, then just think of a compact disc player. They're almost passé these days, aren't they? But whether it's a compact disc or an old vinyl disc, that disc contains within it the voice, doesn't it, of what's recorded on it.

If I went to the back there and got a CD of last week's sermon, it would have Terry McCutcheon's voice on it. You can't separate his voice from that disc.

Once it's recorded, it's there permanently. And as long as that disc is in existence, that voice is there. And every part of that disc contains the voice. You can't just chop off a corner here or a bit there and say, well, that'll remove the voice.

It's inscribed in every part of that disc. Now, it won't be heard if it just sits there on the shelf. It'll only be heard if it's put into the machine and the pickup is put on and the thing is turned and played.

[34 : 39] But it's there all the time, whether it's being played or not. And so it is with the Bible. We cannot separate the written word of God from the living word.

Every single verse of scripture contains the living voice of God, the author, the one who wrote it. It's not that God's voice is in here somewhere and we go searching because the word of God is contained somewhere in here.

No, everywhere we open it, everywhere we put the pickup on the disc, God's voice is going to be heard. And if we apply the pickup of faith, of humbly listening, then we will hear the voice of God.

Now, just like with a record, of course, sometimes the equipment that plays the disc can be faulty or damaged. Sometimes the volume can be down so low that you can hardly hear a thing distinctively.

That's not the fault of the disc, it's the fault of the receiver. It doesn't mean that it hasn't become a true recording just because it hasn't been played or hasn't been played properly.

[35 : 47] I've got a disc at home, a compact disc, a vast Christmas oratory. It's one of my favorite pieces of music, certainly my favorite piece of Christmas music. And I always begin at the beginning of December by starting to play that.

And I take it off the shelf and I put it in the CD player. And what it is and has been and always will be is Bach's Christmas Oratorio.

It's got that music, whether it's sitting on the shelf or in my CD player. And I can trust that when I open it and put it in and press the button and turn up the volume, I will hear the wonderful music of Bach.

I can trust it. And friends, that is exactly the way it is with this book in front of us, the Bible. It's God's trustworthy word. It's his divinely authored revelation so that we can be sure, sure that every time the Bible is opened and read and taught, properly of course, with the right equipment, as it were, with the right pickup equipment, where it's taught properly and understood, where it's heard and where it's heeded, obeyed, with the pickup of obedient faith, then the voice of God and the very words of God will be heard and received with power.

The words that are spirit and life. The Bible writers, as Paul says here, impart the things given by God in words taught by the Spirit, imparting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual.

[37 : 26] The Bible is God's trustworthy word to us today. That's a great encouragement, isn't it, for those of us who are Christian believers, that we can trust that when we open this book and when we read it and mark it and learn it and inwardly digest it, we will hear the very words of God, the words which are spirit and life.

If you're not a Christian believer, let me encourage you, this book is trustworthy. It will give you, if you are seeking it, it will give you a revelation of God.

It will give you that which can make you wise for salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. Christ. And you can suppress it by refusing to listen or by jacking up the noise of other things or putting your fingers in your ears, by keeping the disc on the shelf as it were and ignoring it and pretending it's not there.

Then it will remain folly to you. It will remain darkness. It will be just like an unplayed CD and you'll never hear the beauty of the music that it contains. But that's not what it's for.

If you trust it, even enough to explore it and listen, you will find the trustworthy words of God himself. And I promise you, I promise you, that you will be glad that you did.

[38 : 56] Because these are the words that give life in all its fullness, that give life eternal. So I commend this trustworthy word to you.

Let's pray. God, our Father, how we thank you that you are not a silent God, not a God who never spoke, but who from the beginning desired to speak and that we might know you and respond and love you.

How we thank you that even though we suppress the truth and rebel against you, still you do not give up speaking. from the beginning in many and diverse ways you spoke to our fathers by the prophets.

And above all, in these last days you spoke to us in your Son, the radiance of your own glory. And so we have a trustworthy word, a word of grace, a word of comfort, a word of love, a word of command, and a word that calls us, calls us to follow you and trust you and put our faith in Jesus Christ, your Son.

So, Lord, speak to us, we pray. And may we trust your words and in following you find life. We ask it in Jesus' name.

[40 : 21] Amen. Amen.