Scripture Alone

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[0:00] If you don't know me, my name is Niels. I'm part of the staff team. I'll be preaching today in a moment. But I thought I'd first give a little introduction because we're starting a new series today.

! If we all have a seat. Great. A lot of parents still coming back. We love children. So what are we doing in this new series?
Well, you may know that Watermark is 16 years old and that's great. And for some of you, 16 years feels like a long time.
But actually, in the wider scheme of things, it's not that long, right? Because the church is 2,000 years old ever since Jesus founded it. And lots of things have happened during those 2,000 years.
And one of the greatest events probably was in the 16th century was known as the Reformation. It's one of the times when people rediscovered the gospel that was obscured for centuries.
[1:00] Now today is, in many churches, today is Reformation Sunday. Because it's the Sunday closest to 31 October. And that day was significant because, as you may know, on 31 October 1517, a German monk called Martin Luther, a professor in moral theology at the University of Wittenberg, he nailed 95 theses to a church door.

And many people see that as kind of, yeah, that's like a symbolic start of the Reformation. Let me give some background. Back then, I mean, the church in Europe, Europe was like a Christian continent.
And so the church had a lot of power. And that attracted some of the wrong people. And basically, over the years, over the centuries, the gospel became less and less clear and became more and more obscured with church rituals, with the authority of the Pope and other things.
The gospel sometimes was preached here and there, but it was few and far between. But that came to a head in 1517. The Pope, he wanted to build St. Peter's in Rome, and he needed a lot of money for that.
And so he had a new scheme. He promoted the selling of indulgences. I don't know what you think an indulgence is. It's like a piece of paper that you buy and that forgives sins. Maybe your own sins, right?
[2:21] You can indulge in sin, that's why it's called an indulgence. Or maybe sins of your loved ones. Maybe your mom, she died. She's now in a place called Purgatory, being purged from her sins.

It's very painful. Well, if you buy this, she can go straight to heaven. Isn't that wonderful? Basically, so yeah, give us your money. And so, yeah, people went around selling that. And near Wittenberg, there was a monk called Johann Tetzel.
He was selling those. He had this great catchphrase, As soon as a coin in the coffer rings, the soul from Purgatory springs. And, well, lots of people bought that.
Well, in Wittenberg, there was this monk, Martin Luther. He had been studying the Bible. He had been wrestling with it, wrestling with the gospel. He was on a journey. And he saw the people going to buy that, and that this is not right.
This is wrong. And so, yeah, he wrote down those 95 theses, attacking indulgences. He nailed it to the church door. And he wasn't planning to start a revolution or something.
[3:23] It was just, you know, he's a professor. This is how you start a debate. You send it to the prince, and you nail it to the church door. Hey, let's talk about these things. The only thing is it kind of became a kind of revolution, because the printing press had just been invented.

His theses were translated into German. They were sent everywhere. They became very popular with the people and very unpopular with the church, as you can imagine, because it said that, you know, it kind of attacked the pope and the money schemes and those kind of things.

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And so there was more and more pressure on him to stop. It came to the head a few years later, 1521, in a place called Worms. There was a big meeting where he was called, and, you know, here are all your books, and you need to choose.
Either you renounce all these things, or we're going to kick you out of the church. We're going to brand you a heretic. What are you going to do? And he refused. I stand by this. I can't refuse this. And so they kicked him out. So that led to starting off new churches, Protestant churches, as you may know. The word Protestant comes from there. It's spread in Germany, in Switzerland, France, the Netherlands, all over Europe.
[4:33] There were now these new churches. And, you know, the gospel was kind of rediscovered. Those churches, they preached the gospel from the Bible. Many people were saved. It was an amazing time, in a way.

Very tumultuous time. Also war and bloodshed. There was a lot of politics in the mix, but it was an amazing time, in a way. And, yeah, that's the Reformation. And as people look back later on the Reformation, well, there were a few key emphases, key slogans that all the reformers emphasized. And they're known as the five solas. Now, sola means alone. Because, you know, the Catholic Church, they believed in faith, but also faith and works. And the reformers had faith alone.
They believed in grace plus human efforts. The reformers had now grace alone. And so basically the five alones. Yeah, you may have heard that phrase. And so because we have a month, we have five weeks, we thought, why don't we do a sermon series on this?
These key aspects of the gospel that are so important. So that's what we're going to do these five weeks. It's going to be a topical series. So normally we don't do this.
[5:44] Normally we preach through a book, passage by passage, as you know. We think that's the best way to preach. But sometimes it's good to do topics. So this is what we're going to do. And I hope it will, again, open our eyes as we look at some of the key aspects of the gospel.

And we get excited about it. And we want to be clear and bold in our day. And maybe you're here, you're not a Christian. And actually this is going to be very helpful for you, right? You wonder what the gospel is really about.
But if you look below the surface, what does it come down to? These are going to be some really helpful sermons for you. So, with that out of the way, I hope that kind of sets the context.
Okay, this is the series we're going to do. Why don't I pray? Our Father, we thank you that you're always at work.
You've always been at work in your church for 2,000 years. And as we think about what you did those years ago and what that means for the gospel, would you speak to us? Would things be clear? Would it not be a lecture?
[6:42] But would you speak to our hearts by your spirit? As we read your words, as we think about this together, would it be so encouraging and so precious and so beautiful what the truth of the gospel really is?

So, yeah, speak to us. We commit this time to you in Jesus' name. Amen. And Annabelle will come and read a passage from Scripture. Today's scripture reading is taken from Mark, chapter 7, verses 1 through 13.
Please follow along in your Bibles. If you don't have a Bible, please do get them from the front of the stage or at the back near the door. Our passage is taken from page 791, 791 of the church Bible.
Hear then God's word to us today. Now, when the Pharisees gathered to him with some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem, they saw that some of his disciples ate with hands that were defiled, that is, unwashed.
For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands properly, holding to the tradition of the elders. And when they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash.
[8:08] And there are many other traditions that they observe, such as the washing of cups and pots and copper vessels and dining couches. And the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, Why do your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?

And he said to them, Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites. As it is written, This people honors me with their lips, but their hearts is far from me.
In vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men. You leave the commandment of God and hold to the tradition of man.

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And he said to them, You have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God in order to establish your tradition. For Moses said, He said, Honour your father and your mother.
And whoever reviles father or mother must surely die. But you say, If a man tells his father or his mother, Whatever you would have gained from me is corbin, that is, given to God, Then you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or mother.
[9:31] Thus making void the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And many such things you do. Let us believe and respond to God's true and living word.

Great. Thank you Annabelle. Yeah, we'll come back to this passage at some point. We won't look at it in detail. Though if you have any questions, please ask me.
But, yeah, what is the first of these five? The one that always comes first. There isn't like a fixed order, But the one they always first mention is, Sola Scriptura.
Scripture alone. That is what we're going to talk about. And to just get to the importance of that. Well, I think we need a fortative truth.
What do I mean? Have you ever tried to make a decision and you got conflicting advice? Right? You need to make some life decision. And you ask your parents. And they say, well, maybe you should do this.
[10:32] And you ask your friends. And they say, well, you should do that. And you go to JetGPT, as people do these days. And, well, JetGPT says you do this. Which of the three are you supposed to do?

Or maybe a fourth one? That's the thing, right? How do you know? Maybe this is an important decision. The thing is, we are just small. We don't know the future.
We don't know all the details. We don't know people's hearts. We don't know the future consequences. There's so much we don't know. And so we need someone to tell us the truth. But, yeah, who can tell us the truth?
Who can tell us what is right? That's the problem we basically have, right? As human beings. Of course, the more significant decision, the more we feel that.
Maybe you've had to choose between two jobs. And, you know, you're so anxious to choose the right one. Well, how about eternity? How do you get to heaven? And you have a few different religions, and they all say, well, follow me.
[11:32] Who are you going to follow, right? Who should you trust? It's almost the same as we had in the Reformation, right? Imagine you're just a normal farmer in Germany. Who are you going to believe?

Here's the Catholic Church. And they say, no, you need to have faith, but also you really need good works to be forgot. And here's Luther, and he says, no, you need to trust in Jesus alone. And if you trust in your good works, you will not be saved.
They're kind of contradictory. Who are you going to believe? How do you know the truth? That's the thing, right? We need to know the truth. But where can we find it?
And all these arguments about the gospel, where do we find the gospel? As Christians, we need truth. Human beings need truth. And where do we find it? Well, the performers, they said, we find it in the Bible, in the scriptures, right?
Scripture and in scripture alone. Now, the Catholic Church, they believe in scripture, of course. It's God's word. It's inspired. It's inherent. But it's not the only source of truth. There's also our traditions. And there's the Pope.
[12:37] And they also tell us truth. And so we have these free sources of truth. The only thing is, like I said, what happens if they conflict? What do you do if the Pope and the Bible say something else?

Right? You need to... Who is going to be the ultimate authority? Who wins? Now, of course, in Catholic theology, it's very clear who wins. It's the Pope who wins. That's not because the Bible is wrong.
No, that's because, you know, normal people can't understand the Bible. If the Pope says A and the Bible says B, well, Catholics would say, well, look, there's only... It looks like it says B, but actually it says A, if you really understood it like the Pope does.
So don't worry. Just trust the Pope. It is A. That's kind of their theology. But that is not, I think, what the reformers said, right? They said, no, no, actually, scripture wins.

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Scripture should win. Tradition doesn't win. The Pope doesn't win. The Bible ultimately is, yeah, our final authority. I mentioned Luther was on trial.
[13:39] Hey, renounce these things or you get kicked out. This is what he said. Unless I am convinced by the testimony of the scriptures or by clear reason, I'm bound to the scriptures I've quoted, and my conscience is captive to the word of God.

Right? I have to follow the Bible. Over against tradition, over against the Pope, I need to follow the Bible. I guess most of us, we are not really tempted by traditions or the Pope, but I don't know. How about your own thinking, your own reason? Right? If you think something and the Bible says something else, who's going to win? Ah, the Bible probably got it. I've got it right. Or is the Bible right?
And maybe my thinking is wrong. Who gets the final say? I guess it's a big question for us, right? And it's a massive claim that, yeah, the Bible is that source.
The Bible is the ultimate authority. And that's what we're going to talk about. Why? And, well, that is the case, and why it's the case, and what it means for our lives. So I guess first of all, I mean, I think most of us would say, certainly in the Bible, Scripture is in the Bible the ultimate authority.
[14:48] I mean, traditionally, everyone respects the Bible, right? I mean, even apart from the Bible. Have you ever met a church where the Bible is not important? Every church believes in the Bible.

So the Catholics, they still think the Bible is inspired. The Orthodox say that. You know, Mormons. Have you ever met Mormons? Yeah? Of course, they go to the Book of Mormon.
But they say the Mormons, the Bible is really the Word of God. Jehovah's Witnesses, they say the Bible is the Word of God. They change it, but, right? Every Christian group, every tradition, they all, you know, because you can't get away from the Bible.
Everyone knows throughout history the Bible is so important. But the Bible itself says it, right? If you've been in CG, my guess is you looked at a study this week, there were some passages about that.
In the Bible, always scripture wins. So we just had a passage. The Pharisees was a religious group in Jesus' day, and they had their traditions. And, hey, Jesus, what you're doing is not according to tradition.
[15:52] And what does Jesus say? Well, yeah, he doesn't think very highly of the traditions, right? You leave the commandment of God and hold to the tradition of men. You have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God in order to establish your tradition.

You're making void the Word of God by your tradition that you've handed down. And it's not a good thing. You should have sticking with what God says and not what your tradition says. Tradition? No, it comes below scripture. There's other passages, right? Matthew 22, again, the Sadducees come to Jesus. The Sadducees was another religious group, and they didn't believe in the resurrection from the dead because for them that was just a silly idea.
And they came to Jesus, Hey, Jesus, look at this silly example, right? So there's a woman, and she's married, and her husband dies, and she remarries. And, you know, and he dies, and she remarries.
And so she's married seven times, and then they get all risen from the dead. And now she has seven husbands. What a ridiculous idea, right? Come on, there's no resurrection. Well, how does Jesus answer them?
[16:56] Hmm, good point. No, right? But Jesus answered them, You are wrong because you know neither the scriptures nor the power of God. And he said, Have you not read what was said to you by God?

Right? He goes to the Bible. Look what the Bible says. And, you know, you may think it's ridiculous. The Bible says it's true. And, of course, there's reasons for that. Last week we looked at prophecy. Right? Prophecy. God gives you a message. Wow. But Paul says, Well, do not quench the spirit. Do not despise prophecies, but test everything.
Prophecies need to be tested. Which kind of suggests that they're not ultimate, right? If they need to be tested. Other passages. Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they're from God.
Right? Prophecies need to be tested. And that kind of implies, well, here is another reformer, Melanchthon. He worked with Luther. Well, I ask you how we shall test the spirits unless they are

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measured against a definite standard.
[17:57] And you need a higher standard if you want to test something. And surely that must be scripture. You need a higher, there must be a higher standard. Preachers. So in Acts, Paul comes to some town.

What do people do? They test it against scripture. And when Paul and Silas arrived, they went into the Jewish synagogue. Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica. They received the word with all eagerness, examining the scriptures daily to see if these things were so. These guys were good guys. Why? Because they checked everything against the Bible. They didn't just swallow everything that this new preacher says. Now, does it fit with scripture?
Even an angel or something. Right? Galatians, a bunch of churches, they've gone astray after false teachers with a false gospel. Paul says, even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed.
There's a standard. Right? The gospel that we've, the apostolic gospel. And if an angel comes to your house, I mean, you'd be pretty impressed. Right? If that angel says something different from scripture, then, well, let him be cursed.
[19:06] I don't know if you would do that. But that's what Paul says. An angel can show up and he is not as high as scripture. All through the Bible, you can look everywhere.

Scripture never needs testing. Never needs correcting. It's always, yeah, it judges everything else. Now, why is that? Why is scripture number one?
And I guess we all knew this was coming, but because it is God's inspired and inerrant words. What makes the word different from anything else, the Bible different, is that it is, it's 100% inspired by God.
And we know some of those famous verses, right? To Timothy 3. All scripture is breathed out by God. And profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness.
It's breathed out by God. Breath is the same word as spirit. So it's spirited by God. That's where inspired comes from. It is all scripture. Every single scripture, it's, well, it's from the spirit.
[20:11] Peter says the same thing. It's not just Paul. To Peter 1. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but man spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

This is talking about Old Testament prophecy. It talks about the Old Testament. It wasn't produced by people. It was produced by the Holy Spirit as people spoke from God. Carried along. It's like a sailing boat.
A sailing boat, it never moves by itself, right? How does a sailing boat move? It's the spirit pushing it. And so the wind. And the wind, spirit, same word. That's the idea.
All of the Bible, it's from the spirit. It's God's speech. It is God's word. Every sentence, it's written by people, but behind it, it is all from the Holy Spirit.
And if it's God's speech, well, it reflects God's nature, right? If you listen to my speech, you get an idea of who I am, right? And if you listen, you know, if what God is like, that's what his speech is like, right?
[21:11] And of course, God never lies. God doesn't change. God always tells the truth. And so, Bullinger, a Swiss performer, well, God of himself naturally speaks truth.

He is just, good, pure, immortal, eternal. Therefore, it follows that the word of God also, which comes out of the mouth of God, is true, just, without deceit and guile, without error or evil affection, holy, pure, good, immortal, and everlasting.
Right? It makes sense. If this is God's speech, it reflects God's nature. And so, yeah, the Bible speaks so highly of God's word. Psalm 19, the law of the Lord is perfect.
The testimony of the Lord is sure. The precepts of the Lord are right. The commandment of the Lord is pure. The rules of the Lord are true and righteous all together, right? All these adjectives that just talk about 100% pure, 100% perfect, 100% true.
That's the idea. Jesus said, your word is truth. Not just it has some truth, it is truth. He said, scripture cannot be broken. There's no error. No, nothing false.
[22:24] So, we have a book that is 100% from God, and so it's 100% true, without errors. Of course, that means it's going to be authoritative, right?

If this is God's speech, then, well, we should accept it as God's word. I mean, we saw Thessalonians, the past few weeks we've been working through that book. What did they do that was so good? Well, they accepted what Paul said, not as the word of man, but as what it really is,

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the word of God.
Right? If God wrote something, you accept it as coming from him. I mean, if you send me an email, I should treat it as if it really comes from you. Right?
If I hit delete, that's not just your email. I'm treating you very badly, right? If, and so this is, if this is really from God, I should accept it. If it's 100% from God, I should accept 100%.
Yeah? It comes with God's authority, and how you treat the word is how you treat God. That's basically, yeah, the Christian position. That's how we should see God's word.
[23:26] This is inspired, inerrant, affordative. We have 100% true truth from God. By the way, maybe you're here, you're not a Christian, and I'm not trying to prove to you that the Bible is true right now.

Because I know what you will say, this is a circular argument, right? The Bible is true, well, because the Bible says it's true. It's a circular argument. I fully admit that. The only thing I would say, ultimate authority is always a circular argument.
I mean, you probably think, well, what's true is that I can, well, what my reason accepts, right? If I think it's true, if my reason, if it makes sense to me, then it's true.
Why do you believe that? Why would you say that your reason is the best judge of things? Well, presumably because that makes sense to you. Right? Right? It makes sense to me. Everything should make sense to me because that makes sense to me.
It's just as circular. Right? The final authority is always circular. So, have a think about that. Maybe come and talk to me later. I'm not now giving a talk on the reliability of the Bible.
[24:32] Although, if you're interested, I'd say look at Jesus. Right? Jesus is a historical person. If you think this person was the son of God, then maybe we should listen to what he says. And he says, well, scripture is the word of God.

That's maybe a way into the circle. But, okay, we have a book that is 100% true from God. And the thing is, no other authority is inerrant, right?
Nothing else is, I think, inerrant. I mean, we saw from those passages we looked at. Tradition can go wrong. Leaders can go wrong. Right? Counsels can go wrong.
Reason can go wrong. Right? Feelings can go wrong. Angels can go wrong. Right? Everything is below scripture. Right? You know, if these things can be from God, you know, people who say, well, the traditions are inspired by God.
Well, how would we know? Of course, they say it. But, you know, one thing we do know is from God, these other things. Why does God never say, oh, by the way, you should also trust the Pope?
[25:34] It would be helpful if he said that in the Bible, but he doesn't. And the thing is, you know, for the reformers certainly, you know, traditions and popes, they don't have a very good track record.

Right? That's a good thing to check. Do they contradict themselves? And they do, right? So Luther, when he made his stand, I left some part out. I've put it back in.
Unless I'm convinced by the testimony of the scriptures or by clear reason, for I do not trust either in the Pope or in councils alone, since it's well known that they have often erred and contradict themselves.
And so I'm bound to the scriptures. Right? You look at church history. You look at how things have changed over the years. How can it be from God if it's been changing? God's word hasn't changed. Traditions have changed. What the Pope has said has changed. How can it be unchanging truth? How can it be the same as the apostles, as if it's different?
[26:31] So, again, Buhlinger. Compare the things which these fellows set to sail under the color of the apostles' traditions, told by word of mouth and not by writing, with the manifest writing of the apostles.

So, okay, hey, you say these traditions are from Paul. Well, here we have a letter from Paul. Well, let's compare the two. They're both from Paul, you say. Well, if in any place you shall perceive those traditions to disagree with the scriptures, then gather by and by that it is the forged invention of men, not the apostles' tradition.
Tradition, right? Tradition and the scriptures should say the same if they're both from God, if they're both from the apostles. They're not. And so they can't both be from God, right?
And we know the Bible's from God. Well, the other one can't be from God, basically. Right? So that's why the reformers were so clear. Well, no, it's scripture alone. We know scripture is inherent.

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We have no reason to believe anything else is inherent. Right? And so, yeah, scripture alone. Now, when I say this, of course, you may have some other questions, right?
[27:38] I want to make a few caveats. What do we do with, you know, what do we do with our statement of faith as a church? Right? We have a statement of faith, and if you want to be a member, you need to sign up for that.

Isn't that going beyond the Bible? Well, you know, this doesn't mean you can't have lesser authorities. It doesn't mean you can't have a statement of faith. I mean, if we just say, hey, you have to believe the Bible, but the Bible is such a big book, right?
It's just helpful to make a summary. Okay, this is what Christians have always agreed the Bible says. Do you agree with that? That's a helpful thing. It's not inherent. If you come to us and say, hey, I've looked at your statement of faith, and I've compared it with the Bible, and, yeah, I think it's wrong because of this and this and this, please show us.
It's not inherent, but, you know, if this is something that a lot of Christians have believed over time, you should take it seriously. It's important. It's important. We need to distinguish the Bible with our interpretation.
Your interpretation, the Bible is 100% true. Your understanding of the Bible is maybe not 100% true, right? Because, hey, I know myself. I'm limited. I'm sinful.
[28:49] I know I'm not all knowing. I may have it wrong. I may have it wrong. And especially the more unusual and the more rare what I think is, the more I'm likely to be wrong.

Right? If I think, oh, this passage says X, and for 2,000 years Christians have said it's not X, I'm very likely to be wrong. I mean, Luther, he felt that.
I mean, people said it about him, right? The emperor, what did he say about Luther? Well, a single friar who goes against the faith of all Christendom for 1,000 years must be wrong. Right?
How can this guy be right? It's just one guy against 1,000 years of tradition. And it has some weight. And Luther really struggled with that. He agonized. You know, I'm going against so many people. I'm going against so much tradition by saying this. But in the end, he was convinced, no, this is what the Bible says. And, yeah, this is right. And so I have to take a stand.
[29:47] Yeah? So, yeah, it can happen, though it's not very likely. I mean, there's other examples, right? Galileo. The church always thought that the sun goes around the earth.

Actually, the earth goes around the sun. And there's just a misunderstanding of the Bible. They thought, et cetera, in poetry, the Lord has set the earth on its foundations. Oh, therefore the earth is fixed.
No, that's not what it means. It's just poetry. People misunderstand the Bible. So, yeah, so don't confuse the Bible with your interpretation. But if you're a good reader, then the main things of the Bible, hopefully they are clear.
And that kind of also explains maybe people have this question. How about different denominations? Because, you know, we believe in the Bible, and then you go to St. Andrews, and they also believe in the Bible.
But they baptize babies and we don't. How can that be? Surely we both read the Bible. Well, it's a complicated topic. There's so much that goes into that.
[30:49] It's just not easy to really know the truth. And so we think we're right, but we may be wrong. And they think they are right, but they think, well, maybe we're wrong. And so, you know, we kind of, okay, we do our own thing.

But we, yeah, we leave it. We still work together because we recognize humbly that we may be wrong about this. All right, there may be other things, and you can't be wrong about that.
The Bible is so clear that, you know, Jesus rose from the dead. You can't deny that. But something like infant baptism, to be baptized babies, that just is more vague. It's less clear. I hope that kind of gives a few caveats that people always have when I talk about this.
But let's go back to the main point, right? We have the Bible, and it's 100% truth from God. And it should be, yeah, the final authority in our lives.
Now, what does that mean for us? How do we apply that? Well, I think the first thing, and treasure that we have the truth. Treasure that we have the truth, right?
[31:54] God has revealed himself, right? He could have just left us in the dark, not given us anything, and we just have to make it up for our own, which we can't. He has given us a book with 100% truth that we can read.

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Isn't that such a wonderful gift, right? We don't have to be anxious about how do we know God, and what is he like, and what is right and wrong, and how do we get to heaven. We have a book that tells us, that tells us without any error, 100% true, clearly.
Isn't that wonderful? It's so wonderful to have the truth. I don't know if you ever think about that. Again, think about you're trying to make a decision. Isn't it nice to have someone who tells you exactly the truth?
He may not tell you exactly what to do, but it gives you all the important things 100% true. That's a wonderful thing, right? And if we're not the Bible, where would we be? If we didn't have the truth, then we're just lost, and we have to figure it out on our own, and I know I can't figure things out on my own.
Even if you think, well, the Bible is 90% true. Okay, which 90%? Well, which 10% should we reject? We don't know, and so impractically then, we've lost the Bible, and again, we're lost at sea, and we don't know the truth.
[33:08] Actually, if the Bible is, I want this to be true, right? 100% truth given to us, such a wonderful thing. Which means that if we believe that, well, second, of course, well, let the Bible be your final authority, right?

Let the Bible be the thing that always wins. I guess many of us, we don't follow the Pope or traditions or those kind of things. I don't know, some of us maybe watch the wrong preachers on the internet.
Check them against scripture before you do what they say. That might be helpful. But maybe other things, how about, well, your reason? You read something in the Bible, nah, this can't be true. Nah, that doesn't make sense to me. Well, who wins? Okay, maybe you've misunderstood the Bible. Maybe it doesn't say exactly what you think it says.
But still, ultimately, the Bible should win, right? And I need to change my thinking about what is true about human beings, about those kind of things. How about your feelings?
[34:11] Often we put our feelings, right? In this world where your feelings must be true. I fall in love with someone. And the Bible says it's an inappropriate relationship. Well, this is real love.

I know it's true. Well, then you're putting your feelings above the Bible, right? The Bible should come first. Or the Christian who visits a mosque and, oh, I really felt the presence of God there. I met these people. They're so nice. Even though they don't know Jesus, they must have a relationship with God. Well, that's your feelings. What is the truth?
The Bible has the truth, right? Again, the Bible is inerrant. The Bible is 100% true. Are your feelings 100% true? Is your thinking 100% true? I don't want to say that of myself.
I think it's pretty arrogant to say that, okay, I'm more correct than the Bible. But that's basically what we need to watch out for, right? Let the Bible be your final authority.
[35:10] Actually, again, I think this is such a positive thing, right? I don't have to work it out myself. I can just trust God. God's given me the truth. I don't need to work it out for myself.

I can just follow this. That's a wonderful gift. It's liberating. I don't need to be anxious. Is this right or wrong? Well, what does God say? I've got the answer. Wonderful. And so, yeah, of course, then the last thing we need to do, well, get to know and understand it, right?
If this is wonderful truth from God, let's get to know it, right? I mean, I haven't even talked about the power of God's word and how it's living and active and how you encounter God and how you meet Jesus and all that stuff.
You can listen to other talks I've given. I've just treated this as a source of true information. But even if it's just information, right? Don't you want to know it so you can live by it, so you can test things by it, right?
You want to know this. And so, yeah, read the word personally. Learn to read it properly so that you have more confidence that, you know, you really hear what God is saying. Read it as a CG, right?
[36:20] I hope your CG, you're looking at the Bible together. I know some CGs, they love to listen to each other. And, of course, it's good to hear from each other. But, you know, your group members are not inspired. They're not 100% true. Paul is 100% true.

So let's listen to Paul, first of all, right? Read it as a family. You know, make sure your children get to know the Bible. Make sure you live by the word and your children see that, all those things, right? After all, how did the Reformation happen? Just think back about that. How did Luther discover the Gospel? Was he having a shower and it just happened? No, right?

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He was reading the Bible. He was studying the Bible. He was wrestling with the Bible, trying to understand it. And that's when it came to him that, you know, he had the righteousness of God through Jesus.
Right? It was through the Bible. How did this idea spread so powerfully? Well, that's because of the printing press. And Bibles didn't need to be copied by hand anymore.
[37:18] You could just print them. And so German Bibles went everywhere. And that's how so many people saw the truth and believed, right? They did the Gospel spread. But how did the Gospel spread?

Through the Bible. Because it's in the Bible that we find the Gospel. And so we'd love the Gospel to have a huge impact today. How is it going to have a huge impact today? Well, through the Bible, right?
As we read the Word. As we study the Word. As we live by the Word. As we spread the Word. And then maybe God will do an amazing thing in our time as well. So, yeah. I hope that makes sense. I'm sure you have a lot of questions. Please come and talk to me. But I hope we will, yeah, love the wonderful 100% truth of God's Word. Why don't we pray?
Why don't we pray? Why don't we pray? Why don't we pray? Why don't we pray? Father, thank you for this wonderful gift that is true and pure and perfect and righteous altogether.
[38:18] Thank you that you didn't leave us in the dark. I mean, you could have left us in the dark because we're sinners who turned away from you. You've given your grace. You've provided salvation in Jesus and then you told us about it in your Word.

Thank you that we have that. Thank you we can rely on it. Thank you we can build our lives on it. Please would we do that, Lord? Would the Word be precious to us? Would we read it, study it, spread it, live by it?
And, yeah, would you do a great work in our days, Lord? We thank you what you did back then. Would you again do amazing things as the Gospel is preached through your Word. And we ask this in Jesus' name.
Amen.

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