



SERMON RECAP

AUGUST 31, 2025

The Bible: the story of God's love

Series: Finding Faith for the Skeptic.

Scripture: Psalm 119:105, 2 Timothy 3:15-17

The study of Scripture is an important part of faith. The Bible, according to our United Methodist Articles of Religion, "containeth all things necessary for salvation." Trying to follow Jesus without the Bible is like traveling cross country without a map or GPS. At the same time, there are many atheists who were devout Christians until they started reading the Bible closer.

The ironic thing is, most atheists and fundamentalists use the Bible in the same way. They simply came to different conclusions about it. Both the skeptic and the fundamentalist treat the Bible as if it were supposed to be dictated from God, infallible and inerrant.

Fundamentalists will defend that position, even when presented logical discrepancies, scientific falsehoods, dubious history, or even troubling theology. Many atheists have found all of those things about the Bible and decided that the whole thing should be discarded.

There is another way. It is possible to understand there is deep value in wrestling with the Bible. It is possible to find deep theological truth, profound insight into the human spirit, and incredible wisdom in it without doing the mental gymnastics necessary to claim it as objective historical and scientific fact.

Paul (probably not Paul, but that's a different topic) writes in 2 Timothy "All Scripture is inspired." What does this mean? First of all, what was Scripture when this was written? It seems strange to think that Paul could have possibly been referring to his own letters. In fact, none of the New Testament was canonized at this point. Even if you concede that "all Scripture" meant both testaments, then we have to deal with this idea of inspired, or literally "God Breathed"

When jazz is played by a virtuoso performer, it is not difficult to say that a piece is inspired. It is easy to be moved spiritually and emotionally by music. I have even had physical responses to the inspiration of music. Jazz played well is inspired. Is jazz inerrant? The question doesn't even make sense. The Bible is art. It is inspired and inspiring. It is a passionate work of art that was

Articles of Religion

Article V — Of the Sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures for Salvation

The Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation; so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that it should be believed as an article of faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation. In the name of the Holy Scripture we do understand those canonical books of the Old and New Testament of whose authority was never any doubt in the church.

Pastor Robb's Bible Recommendation: The CEB Study Bible (ISBN 9781609262167)

The Common English Bible is my favorite translation of the Bible. It is a great blend of readability and scholarly work. It is the version we use in worship and always my first read. By the way, the King James Version is an obsolete translation - although I value its beauty at times, especially in the Psalms. It is not a good study translation.

The CEB Study Bible is an excellent resource. The study notes, articles, and maps are full of insight without heavy-handed theology. Learn more at:

commonenglishbible.com/TheCEBStudyBible

inspired when it was written and it is inspired as we read it. It can move the reader in powerful and profound ways. It is the story of God's love for the people God loves, but it is no more inerrant than a great jazz trill.

When a trumpet makes a sound, we could study the sound waves. We could examine the vibration of the player's lips and study the length of the brass tube and the way it is amplified by the bell. We can examine it with scientific certitude, but can we explain why it raises the goose bumps on my arm or moves me to tears?

I apply similar rigor to the Bible. I study its cultural and historical context, the archeological evidence that surrounds it, the authorship is evidenced within the text, and the linguistic nuance. All of this is worthy of study, and provides a more profound picture of Scriptural truth, but it does not explain how the Spirit can use a story to transform, encourage, or inspire.

Use the Bible to learn, to draw inspiration, to find wisdom, but respect it enough to not reduce it to the objective details. It is art to be examined, interpreted, studied, discussed. It is a story of love that save lives. It is a story that we need to keep telling, not because it is inerrant, but because it is a story that contains what we need for salvation.