

Cliff Notes 2 – How to Find the Help Desk  
2 Timothy 3:14-17

- I. Today is the second in a series of sermons that we are calling “Cliff Notes”.
  - A. We’re looking at common questions that Christians and non-Christians often have about God, Jesus, the Bible and faith.
    - 1) Last week we talked about “Why God loves you.”
    - 2) Today we want to shift gears a bit and tackle a different question.
  - B. The question we want to explore is: “Can we really trust the Bible? How can it be true, how can it be so important to our faith? What’s the big deal about the Bible?”
    - 1) Let’s explore that in two ways: first, by talking about the uniqueness of the Bible (among all the books in the world).
    - 2) Second, let’s talk about the power of the Bible.
      - a) Where the Bible’s power comes from, and
      - b) Why that power matters.
  - C. To do that, we’ll start our journey in 2 Timothy 3:14-17.
    - 1) Paul is writing to Timothy, a young pastor whom he has mentored and trained.
    - 2) He is encouraging him in his first pastoral “appointment” with these words.
    - 3) {2 Timothy 3:14-17}
- II. The Bible is unique as a book.
  - A. In fact, it’s not a book at all, but a collection of 66 books.
    - 1) Written by about 40 people over a period of almost 3000 years.
    - 2) It is the world’s greatest anthology.
  - B. It also contains almost every kind of literature known to human beings.
    - 1) History, Poetry, Law, Prophecy, Letters, Apocalypse, Fiction, and I’m sure I’ve left something out.
    - 2) Despite the varieties of style, author, and time frame it displays a consistency no other book can lay claim to.
      - a) History and geography so detailed and trustworthy that significant archeological discoveries have been made based solely on its directions and descriptions.
      - b) Without fail it lifts up the same themes of humanity’s rebellion and God’s gracious and loving response over each of its books.
      - c) It doesn’t wander off course, contradict itself, or obscure its’ message.
  - C. If I gave you the freedom to choose any 66 works by any author from any era of written history you wouldn’t be able to assemble a group of books that even comes close to doing the same.
    - 1) This one book is called “holy” by three major world religions.
    - 2) It is by far the best selling book in history. Nothing else even comes close.
- III. But the Bible is unique for another reason. It is “god-breathed.” {2 Tim. 3:16
  - A. In several places in Scripture God breathes.
    - 1) In Genesis, God breathes life into the man and woman God has made.
    - 2) In John, Jesus breathes on the disciples after the resurrection.
    - 3) This breathing reminds us of the Holy Spirit that creates, animates, and is the power of God in us.

- B. So then to say that Scripture of “god-breathed” is to say that is “full of” the Holy Spirit.
  - 1) The implications are this: The Bible reveals God to us because the Holy Spirit is God. And the Holy Spirit is over, under, in and through the books and words and teachings of the Bible.
  - 2) And because the Bible is “god-breathed,” the character of God abides and is revealed in these pages.
- C. Sometimes we use the word inspired to talk about God’s Word.
  - 1) <sup>20</sup> Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet’s own interpretation. <sup>21</sup> For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. – 2 Peter 1:20-21.
  - 2)
- IV. Which brings us to another reason the Bible is unique. It is unique because it is God’s living Word.
  - A. In John 1, Jesus is described as being the Word. John 1 says that all things were created by God’s Word – Jesus. That nothing was made without Jesus.
    - 1) And the Gospels share the story of the birth of God’s word. The word of God became living.
    - 2) In Jesus, God’s word becomes “the living Word.”
  - B. When we talk about the Bible as the living word we mean something similar.
    - 1) These are more than words on a page; they are alive with God’s Word – Jesus.
    - 2) The Bible reveals Jesus to us from beginning to end. In small ways and large, in obvious ways and subtle, the Bible leads us to a hill outside of Jerusalem called Calvary and a cross upon which Jesus died.
  - C. Without this book Jesus remains a mystery to sinful human beings and Christianity loses its power and life.
    - 1) Perhaps John Wesley said it best when he said, “We are a people of one book.”
    - 2) No other piece of literature, no other book, can lay claim to inspiration in this way.
      - a) The Koran isn’t the Koran unless its in Arabic.
      - b) The Bible is the Bible in any language because it is alive. More than words on a page, it is more than any one language.
      - c) Because it is living and God-breathed it transcends the boundaries of our language and communicates in God’s most universal language.
- V. 2 Timothy 3 is a great scripture to help us focus on the power of the Bible. The second quality we want to consider this morning.
  - A. I want to suggest to you that the Bible has a very specific kind of power.
    - 1) Not strength, not political power, not any other kind of worldly power.
    - 2) The Bible has the power of truth.
  - B. That power can be seen in three evident ways. 2 Timothy 3:16
    - 1) It’s reliability.
    - 2) It’s instruction.
    - 3) It’s relevance.
- VI. First, the Bible is reliable.
  - A. When 2 Timothy talks about using the word for rebuking and correcting it reveals the Bible’s reliability and authority.

- 1) If I'm going to rebuke or correct my children its because I am holding their behavior and their demeanor up to a standard (an authority).
  - 2) If your going to discipline an employee you're going to do so by holding them accountable to their job responsibilities and their job description.
  - 3) It's impossible to do either if you don't have a frame of reference (an agreed upon standard and authority) to serve as a yardstick.
- B. In the same way, the Bible functions as a standard and an authority for Christian behavior.
- 1) It is reliable because it gives us an objective (not human made), and incorruptible standard to judge and refine character, actions, and thoughts.
  - 2) It's reliability has been tested on many levels and has held true.
    - a) Personal reliability.
    - b) Social reliability.
    - c) Historical reliability.
  - 3) The Bible has power because it is reliable.
- VII. The Bible is instructive.
- A. It's the help desk. It's reading the directions.
- B. The Bible is instructive because the God who created the universe has revealed to us how it works.
- 1) God has even been gracious enough to show us how things went wrong and how to fix them.
  - 2) All God asks is that we read the directions {they are not suggestions}, and allow them to teach and instruct us.
  - 3) If that teaching and instruction doesn't take root in our lives – the fault is not in the instructions but the instructed.
- VIII. The Bible is relevant.
- A. By relevant I mean that the Bible has answers to today's problems.
- 1) It has insight into today's struggles.
  - 2) It doesn't lose anything because its old, written in another language, or originates in another culture.
- B. The teachings, observations and critiques of human beings, our culture, and our nature are as real today as they were then and there.
- 1) What it reveals about God (and especially God in Jesus Christ) has as much import now as then.
  - 2) To dismiss the teachings and truths of the Bible because they "don't fit" is more an indictment of our culture, our times, and our pride than it is an indictment of God's Word.
- IX. The Bible is Unique and the Bible has Power.
- A. How serious a part of your faith (your relationship with Jesus) is it?
- 1) Do you approach it casually, occasionally, or diligently?
  - 2) Does it have an unmatched place in your life? Or does some other book or some other authority have a higher place?
  - 3) Can you speak to its power and impact in your life? Or only by association?
- B. Read the book. Don't wait for the movie.
- C. Join a Bible study. Read through the Bible this year. Come to Sunday school. Experience the uniqueness and power of God's word.