



## **Week/Sermon #2**

**Title:** Bible Engagement...The Power of an Unchanging Message in an Uncertain World!

**Key Texts:** 2 Timothy 3; Psalm 119; Matthew 4 & Luke 4

**Overview:** The Bible is the Holy Spirit–breathed truth of heaven. Jesus is the living Word of God, and while He walked this earth, He loved the written Word. He knew it, quoted it, and let the Scriptures speak to Him and through Him. As His followers, we need to know the Scriptures, love them, and follow what they teach. As we do this, the world will see an unchanging message of truth in a world of radical uncertainty. God’s Word will send us out on Jesus’ mission and teach us how to live in the world so that Jesus’ light shines brightly.

## **Sermon Outline:**

### **Introduction to the Next Seven Weeks**

(Lay out the strategy of learning for each of the seven sermons that focus on the “Markers of Spiritual Growth.” Walk through the three movements of each message to let people know our starting point will always be the Bible and life of Jesus. Then, we will look at our journey of growth in each area. Finally, we will focus on how our growth always leads us out with Jesus into the world He loves and came to save)

- Understanding the flow of discipleship and evangelism (and how we will look at this in the coming seven weeks):
  1. Our starting point is always, **what can we learn from the example of Jesus** and how He lived. That is why we study and reflect on the life of Jesus as our perfect example. If being a disciple is about becoming more like Jesus in character and living more like Him in our actions, our starting point should be looking closely at His life in the four Gospels.
  2. Next, each week we will look very practically at **how we can follow the example of Jesus and walk in His footsteps**. As we learn how Jesus engaged with the Bible, prayed with passion, served in humility, and lived each of the seven markers of maturity, we will discover ways we can grow to be more like our Savior.
  3. Third and finally, we will connect the dots between discipleship and evangelism and share the Gospel with the people around us. Each of the markers of maturity leads us closer to the heart of Jesus. As we grow in wholehearted worship, become more consistent in community, increase in our joyful generosity (live each of the seven markers), we will take the hand of our Lord and walk with Him. This is the journey of discipleship...following Jesus. Our Savior and Leader is always going to the lost, broken, forgotten, and wandering sheep of this world.

Our spiritual growth and close walk with Jesus takes us to the world He loves and died to save! Each week we will learn how our personal spiritual growth equips, inspires, and moves us to scatter the seeds of the Gospel and partner with Jesus in His mission to save lost people in our world and invite them into His family.

- Explain to the congregation that each sermon in the coming weeks will walk through these three powerful movements: 1) How Jesus modeled each spiritual marker, 2) how we can live more like Jesus in that area of our spiritual life, and 3) how this leads us into the world with the love, truth, and message of Jesus!

## **Movement 1- Learning from Jesus...**The Living Word of God Loved the Written Word of God



- **Image:** If you are going to use the seven icons for the seven markers of spiritual growth, show the image for “Bible Engagement” and let people know that this picture will show up in sermons, on your website, in youth and children’s materials, and other times when you are focusing on the marker of Bible Engagement. Consider having the Icon on the sermon title if you project notes or on the cover of your bulletin if you have one. You might want to have the icon in one of the corners of every slide you project in this sermon. ([Here is the link to the Bible Engagement badge](#))

**Illustration-** The top seller! The Bible is the best seller in human history but is also the best seller month after month and year after year. You might want to do some of your own research on how many copies of the Bible are printed and distributed annually. It is staggering!

- Jesus **Loved** the **Spirit-Breathed Words** of the Father!
  - If you like to have an outline for people to follow in your bulletin, on a handout, or in your church app, there are three main points in each of the coming messages that are set up with potential fill-in-the-blanks. In these notes they will have words that are bold, red, and underlined. These can become fill-in-the-blanks if this fits your church culture. You can then decide what other notes you would have in your sermon outline to share with the congregation. If this is not how you preach, just change the words in red to black.

- o Disciples are becoming more and more like Jesus...He loved the Word! We will be looking at how Jesus loved and embraced the Scriptures in the rest of this section of the message.
- **Question:** What comes out of you when you are squeezed by life?
  - o For many of us, in tough times, what comes out is...rage and anger...fear and desperation...hopelessness and discouragement.
  - o For Jesus, in the toughest times, when He was pressed and crushed, what came out of Him was Scripture.
- When Jesus was on the cross, bearing our sins, in utter abandonment, what came out of Him? It was Scripture!
- Read: Psalm 22:1-3
 

<sup>1</sup> *My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?  
Why are you so far from saving me,  
so far from my cries of anguish?*

<sup>2</sup> *My God, I cry out by day, but you do not answer,  
by night, but I find no rest.*

<sup>3</sup> *Yet you are enthroned as the Holy One;  
you are the one Israel praises. (NIV)*

  - o The Jewish people in Jesus' day would have known this Psalm. When Jesus cried out in spiritual and physical agony, quoting Psalm 22, they would have recognized it!
  - o You might want to linger here and reflect on more of this Psalm and what images would have come to the minds of the Jewish listeners around the cross when Jesus quoted these words.
  - o You might want to look at some of the messianic and prophetic words that are in this Psalm.
- Read: one of the wilderness temptation accounts recorded in Matthew 4 and Luke 4
  - o Three times the enemy came to Jesus and tempted Him.
  - o Remember that being tempted is not a sin, giving into temptation is.
  - o Each time the enemy tried to tempt our Lord, Jesus responded by quoting Scripture. Each quotation came from the book of Deuteronomy.
  - o This is our example when we face temptation!
- Jesus was the embodiment of Scripture as He fulfilled prophecy and made reference to the Old Testament over and over!
  - o You might want to give two or three examples of how Jesus' birth, life, and sacrificial death were all prophesied in the Old Testament.

- o You can use examples from the *Organic Disciples* book or examples from your own studies.
- Jesus taught the Scriptures!
  - o If you study the Gospels, you find Jesus saying, “You have heard it said,” “It was written,” and other statements that alert us to the fact that Jesus often taught from and quoted the Old Testament Scriptures.
  - o You can use examples from the *Organic Disciples* book or examples from your own studies.
- Celebrate the truth that Jesus loved and lived the Scriptures and that His disciples (followers) will do the same.

## Movement 2- The Journey of Organic Discipleship... Steps to Deeper Bible Engagement

- Do I **Love** the **Scriptures** Like Jesus Did?
  - o As His followers (disciples) we should love and cherish His Word!
  - o Do I see reading the Bible as a chore or as a privilege?
  - o Are there times I have been hungry for the teaching of the Bible and joyfully read the Word of God? How can I recapture this desire and spirit?
  - o Pause to pray...you might want to say a brief prayer asking the Spirit of God to place a deep love and hunger for the written Word of God to grow in our hearts!
- Three steps to Bible Engagement: **1) Love the Bible**

*“Oh, how I love your law! I meditate on it all day long.” (Psalm 119:97, NIV)*

  - o We don’t worship the Bible...we only worship God!
  - o But we should love the truth God has revealed in the Scriptures.
- Three steps to Bible Engagement: **2) Know the Bible**
  - o Get to know the whole story. Encourage people to read the whole Bible and learn the storyline of the Scriptures.
  - o Talk about how the Bible is organized by genre and not chronologically. This can make it challenging to know the whole storyline.
  - o Point out that there are tools available for learning the storyline of the Bible: Chronological Bible reading programs, *The Story*... a chronological collection of Bible passages with literary bridges to tie it together like a novel, and other tools for learning the whole biblical story.
  - o Encourage daily reading of Scriptures and point out if you provide a reading guide that follows your weekly sermons (see examples on the Shoreline Church [website](#))

- o Encourage Bible memory (for grown-ups). We often think of Bible memory as a Sunday School exercise but not something for adults. Challenge church members to commit verses, sections, and even chapters of the Bible to memory.
- o If you have a passage you have memorized, consider sharing the passage and talk about how God has brought it to your heart at just the right time in the flow of a normal day.
- Three steps to Bible Engagement: **3) Follow the Bible**  
*“Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says”*  
 (James 1:22, NIV).
  - o Talk about the balance of information and transformation. We need to know what the Bible says, but also do what the Word of God teaches.
  - o Exegesis and Eisegesis: Teach about how we can be tempted to impose our likes, ideas, and preferences on the Bible (eisegesis) but this is never God’s design. Instead, we are to let God’s truth come out of the text (exegesis) and then we follow what God teaches.
  - o We do not shape the Bible to fit our lifestyle and thinking. Instead, we invite the Word of God and the Spirit to shape our lives, actions, and thinking to line up with God’s truth revealed in the Bible.
  - o You might want to look at some examples of ways people (even Christians) are tempted to make the Bible follow their wants and desires and not submit to the teaching of the Bible.

### **Movement 3- How Bible Engagement Leads Us to the World... The World Needs Good News, Let’s Share It**

- How going **deeper** into the **Bible** should take us **deeper** into the **world**!
- The world is longing for good news! And the Bible brings the best news in history!
  - o The Bible teaches...(Share some of the Good News revealed in the Bible)
    - You are loved
    - God is near
    - You have purpose and meaning
    - God is Savior
    - You are part of a family
    - God wants to lead your life
    - You can have joy and goodness in this life
    - God is preparing a place for you forever
  - You might want to choose three of the ideas listed above (or ones you want to focus on) and give a biblical example of how God teaches this truth and how people in our world are actually longing for exactly what the Bible teaches that God wants to offer us.

- The Old Testament and New Testament both bring a message of hope and life!
  - Clarify that both the Old and New Testament are filled with hope, blessing, and the truth of God.
  - You might speak to the confusion some people have that the Old Testament presents a vengeful and angry God but the New Testament reveals a tender and loving God. The truth is, both Testaments show that God is perfectly holy, that He judges, but that He is patient, gracious, and loving. The Bible is consistent from start to finish.
- The Bible gives us a mission (and it is God's mission).
  - Talk about the mission God gives those who follow Him and look at how the human heart longs to have a mission, meaning, and purpose.
- Read: Mark 10:45

*"For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (NIV)*

- The Scriptures reveal the heat and love of God!
- Read: 2 Peter 3:9

*The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance (NIV)*

- Following the teaching of the Bible will make us shine like a light in a dark world!
  - Serving in the name of Jesus...
  - Forgiving those who have wronged us...
  - Overflowing with joy (even in hard times)...
  - Expressing peace in the turmoil of life...
  - Wisdom from above draws people below...

Look at how knowing, believing, and following these truths revealed in the Bible will lead us into the world with the love of Jesus and draw lost people toward the heart and truth of Jesus.

- What is my next step in Bible Engagement?
  - Make Bibles available to those who don't have one (or don't have one in modern English). At our church we budget for Bibles in English and Spanish and give them away often and joyfully!
  - Invite people to join in Bible studies in your church or small groups that focus on the Scriptures.
  - Challenge people to read the Bible daily and share about Bible reading programs (if you have one for your church, talk about it). Present Bible apps that offer free reading programs. You might want to point people to "The Story" that was mentioned earlier.

- o Encourage people to begin a Bible memory program. In 2019, our church did a Bible memory group for adults who met to share Scriptures they were memorizing and what they meant to them. It was powerful!
- o Challenge people to listen to the Bible when they drive, walk, run, or are cleaning around the house. Bible listening is powerful!

## **The Great Reversal...How Does Organic Outreach Drive Us Deeper into the Scriptures?**

- You might want to take a few minutes and reflect on how sharing your faith with non-believers can actually drive you deeper into the Scriptures. When we talk about our faith and the teaching of the Bible, people ask questions. When this happens, we need to study our Bible as we seek to understand our own faith so we can articulate it well. As we talk about Jesus and what we believe, we are driven to the Word of God and our faith grows. In other words, digging deep into the Word of God and growing in our faith moves us out with Jesus to the world He came to save. And, when we are living a life on mission with Jesus, we are moved deeper into Bible engagement. It works both ways!
- **Closing Prayer:** Close your message in prayer thanking God for His Spirit-breathed Word and asking for every person in your congregation to grow so deep in the Scriptures that they are moved out into the world with the love, message, and grace of Jesus!