**These Are the Scriptures That Testify about Me**

**The Word**

Read together John 5:36-47

**The Big Idea**

As we read Scripture, our ultimate goal is not so much information and application but rather to encounter God through his Scriptures. So, we want to read the Bible relationally, seeking God through his Word and being changed by His Spirit as we read his Word.

**Questions for Discussion**

1. As you read the passage together, what idea or issue stuck out to you most and why?

2. On Sunday we discussed incomplete ways to approach Scripture: intellectually and pragmatically. Did you relate to either of those approaches? How do you approach your own reading of Scripture?

3. Walk through the process of reading the Bible relationally that was discussed at the end of Sunday’s message. What further questions or comments do you have about that process?

4. Do you have a plan to read Scripture this week as we were challenged on Sunday? If so, what is your plan, and how have you experienced that time in God’s word so far this week?

**Digging Deeper: Sermon Outline**

I. The Scribes and Pharisees

A. Context: They were upset with Jesus for healing on the Sabbath and then claiming to be God’s Son. Jesus offers three credible witnesses to his ministry: John the Baptist, the works the Father sent him to do, and the Father himself (speaking through the Scriptures)

B. The issue: they diligently searched the Scriptures but failed to come to Jesus (v. 39)

1. They had a perspective issue: the Bible as an end in itself. In their diligent study of the book, they failed to encounter the Person of the book

2. They had a heart issue: they loved human praise, and much of their bible meditation was done in order to impress people and receive their approval (v. 44). For all their study of Scripture the love of God was not in them (v. 42). So, even though they knew the words on the paper, God’s life giving Word did not dwell in them (v. 38).

C. We need to remember: The Bible itself doesn’t transform people; God transforms people, and His Spirit uses the Bible by speaking in and through it to change hearts and minds.

II. Incomplete approaches to Scripture today

 A. The Intellectualist

1. Views the Bible as an intellectual puzzle to figure out and goes to it for information and knowledge.

2. The danger is that we turn the Bible into an object of our study while not submitting our heart and lives to it so that we actually live it out. Our intellectual analysis can actually become a defense mechanism protecting us from having to obey the Word.

B. The Pragmatist

1. Views the Bible as God’s instruction manual that contains the principles for living well. Just follow the instructions and apply the principles. The pragmatist is always asking the question: “What’s the takeaway? How do I apply that to my life today?”

2. The problem with this is many portions of Scripture do not have an obvious practical application, and even more importantly, the truth is we are often not the kinds of people who can apply God’s Word rightly. We can’t just hear the principle and apply it because God’s Spirit has to do a deep work in our heart to change us into the kind of person who could apply his Word.

III. Reading the Bible relationally

A. We should read realizing that the Bible is not an end in itself but rather a means to an end (a window into our relationship with God).

B. The book exists to draw us to the Person. We read in order to know him more and experience and follow him.

IV. How to read the Bible relationally

A. Prayer of Presentation

Present yourself to God, offer your heart and mind to him, ask his Spirit to speak through His Word. *Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. (Psalm 139:23-24)*

B. Read God’s Word

* Lord, what do you want me to learn about who you are today?
* Lord, what do you want me to learn about who we are as humans today?
* Lord, what is the good news you want me to receive today?
* Lord, how are you asking me to follow you today? (A command to obey, a sin to avoid, an example to follow, a promise to embrace, a prayer to offer, a challenge to face, etc.)

C. Closing Prayer (thanks, dedication, intercession)

Get real concrete

Handout

This will feel very basic for some of you, but it’s amazing how easily we can forget the basics

Passage of Scripture (like John 5:31-47): that’s a good bite

Picture yourself opening Bible on at home on your own

1. Prayer of Presentation

How you start is so key! The posture of my heart. Engage God.

Present yourself to God, offer your heart and mind to him, ask his Spirit to speak through His Word. *Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. (Psalm 139:23-24)*

2. Read God’s Word (chunk like today: about 20 verses)

-“Lord”: these are not questions I’m asking myself. They are questions I’m asking with God. This is a conversation with him. Relationship

* Lord, what do you want me to learn about who you are today?

Focus on God, not ourselves

Most often, something you already know: you need reminding

Turn that into worship

 Father

-v. 36-37a: A Father who sent his Son to do great works (what are those works?)

 -v. 40: to give life

 -v. also just (v. 45)

Son

 v. 36: obedience to father

v. 41: glory from human beings

* Lord, what do you want me to learn about who we are as humans today?

1) our lameness sin and finiteness 2) our worth to God

 v. 39: We can be very religious and miss life

 v. 42: you do not have love of God in your hearts

 v. 44: seek glory from one another

* Lord, what is the good news you want me to receive today?

Older I get, more I’m thinking this is the most important question.

We need to be reminded of the gospel every single day. Daily bread. Water we drink.

Overflow Image: KEYNOTE

George Mueller KEYNOTE

 What’s the good news in this passage? It’s almost always there.

 This is a fairly negative passage, confronting.

 v. 36: the works the father has given me to finish

 v. 44: the glory that comes from the only God

Pragmatist and intellectualist so often miss this question

Problem is you will never become the kind of person who can do that without the first 3

* Lord, how are you asking me to follow you today? (A command to obey, a sin to avoid, an example to follow, a promise to embrace, a prayer to offer, a challenge to face, etc.)

 -Confession: Do I need to assess how I read the Bible?

-Confession: I care so much what people think and that keeps me from caring what you think. I want to seek your glory

3. Closing Prayer (thanks, dedication, intercession)

Reality: not going to go through all of that every time

 But might be one of those questions that really hits you

 Go down that route with God

Walk away from that time: NOT great Bible study

 BUT great time with God: encounter

That’s how we are transformed. As we encounter God and his Spirit

KEYNOTE TREE

Homework (for those not on a plan)

-Ps **27**, **90**, **103**

-Jesus’ upper room discourse: John 13:1-7, 15:1-17, 17:1-26

My benediction: 12:30 start in sanctuary.