

Keep Your Finger on the Text

2 Timothy 3:14-4:4

When I was at NOBTS, the President gave me this “Torah Pointer.” It is used for the reading of the Torah, indicating the sacredness of the text. Dr. Kelley gave this to me, to illustrate this charge: “Keep your finger on the text when you teach and preach.”

That's exactly what we're talking about today. Keeping our heart and mind in the word, and our finger on the text. We must do this – as **readers**, as **teachers/preachers**, and as **listeners**. In every case, keep your finger on the text.

If you have been at IDC very long, you know that we are serious about the Scriptures. Perhaps, you have wondered, “why?” Well the Scriptures are important. You say, “Yes, but not that important.” Some have this opinion. They're sort of like the group of boys who wanted to play football. So they went out to the field play. As the game started one of them realized that they didn't have a ball. But One boy said, “Oh, we don't need a ball, let's get on with the game.” That's the way many worship services operate. “Oh, who needs a Bible, let's get on with the service.” But given the nature of the Bible, we believe that Scripture must be central in our lives and in our worship. Nothing is more important than us hearing from the Word of God. We aren't playing unless we have a ball.

Timothy found himself in a situation and in which we find ourselves. Lots of opinions, perspectives, misguided people, lots of false teachers. **He is urged to be different**. Notice "But as for you" (v 10, 4:5).

Now, let's get into it. I have three points...

#1: CONTINUE IN THE WORD PERSONALLY (3:14-17)

Paul tells his spiritual son to “**continue in what you have learned and firmly believed**” (3:14). Timothy had learned “the sacred Scriptures” from “**childhood**” (15). Both his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice taught him from his infancy (1:5). He also learned from the apostle Paul (eg., 1:13; 2:2). Now, he is charged to keep on learning God’s word, and living in God’s word.

Are you continuing to learn the Bible? Are you continuing to believe it?

Recently, I was talking with Jim Hamilton, one of my favorite biblical scholars. He was telling me about a panel discussion he was on with Peter Gentry and Duane Garrett. They were discussing the use of typology of the Old Testament, specifically the person of Joseph in Genesis. In response to a question, Gentry, whom Hamilton considers as one of the premier Bible scholars of our day (he served as editor of the Göttingen Septuagint Series for Ecclesiastes and Proverbs to give you an idea of his brilliance!) said, “**It may be that I need to do further study of the Old Testament. And I’m very certain of that.**” Hamilton expressed how challenging it was to hear a scholar of the first rank illustrate the simple but powerful truth: *we should never stop studying the Scriptures.*

Application: This means hearing it, reading it, studying it, memorizing it. How’s that going?

Maybe you’re here and this Bible thing is new. Maybe you know nothing about the Bible. I remember being in early Bible studies, myself, and someone saying “**turn to Amos.**” “Who’s that?” I

wondered. They would ask, “**what’s your favorite verse?**” “**I don’t know. I like the maps.**” But hang in there. Continue.

When I began to follow Jesus, I knew that the Bible was important but I’d never had the discipline of reading it daily. So, my experience has been sort of like my experience with **meatloaf**. I used to hate it – **my dad told me why I should like it!** – but after making myself eat it, I began to enjoy it. So much so that now that’s what I want when I go home. Now, that’s an imperfect illustration, since I don’t think a true believer ever dislikes the Bible, but I just share it as an example of discipline and delight. You could also think of **exercising**. Initially, it hurts, but over time you begin to love it. Begin the discipline, and then the delight will follow. Paul tells Timothy to “**train himself for godliness.**”

Notice something else in verse 14. Paul says, “continue in what you have firmly **believed**” (emphasis added). The “belief” mentioned here carries the idea of “**being convinced.**” Timothy had become convinced of the truth of God’s Word through these aforementioned messengers. **Now Paul urges Timothy to continue trusting in God’s powerful word.**

These verses show us the folly of overemphasizing what is novel. Paul in his dying days does not tell Timothy to be trendy. He tells him to keep his finger on the text.

Why Continue in the Scriptures? Why Bother with the Bible?

#1: Because It Leads us to Jesus (15)

When Paul says that Timothy has heard the “sacred Scriptures” from childhood, he is referring to what we call the “**Old Testament.**” Later in life, Timothy would come to understand Scriptures in a fuller sense, as he learned how Old Testament points

to Jesus. **Paul consistently used the Old Testament to preach and teach the gospel** (eg., Acts 17:2; 18:4-5; Acts 26:22b-23; also Acts 2:14-34; Acts 3:18-21; Acts 4:11, 25-27; Acts 7:52; Acts 8:32-35; Acts 10:42-43; Acts 13; Acts 20:24, 27; Acts 24:14; Acts 28:23-31).

- **Many are surprised that they OT can lead a person to Jesus. But it's a book about salvation - not everything you want to know about dinosaurs/cooking/Adam had a belly button... But everything you need to know, like the resurrection! "The Bible does not how the heavens go, but how to go to heaven. (Galileo)**
- **I'm not saying don't study these things, I'm simply reminding you of the purpose of the Bible. It is a book of redemption, of which Jesus is the hero.**

The church was never without a Bible. The early church preached from it, and the church fathers quoted it.... Christ-centered.

The Bible is a "book with the answers in the back," or it is like a "two act play." Or perhaps, you could liken it to the movie *Sixth Sense*, or an *Agatha Christie* novel, where everything makes sense after you know the end of the story.

From Genesis to Revelation, the Bible is unashamedly Christian. God did not make a mistake giving us a whole Bible instead of just a pocket New Testament!

The Bible is not an inspired book of virtues. It is not like Aesop's Fables, merely teaching moral lessons. (Andy Griffith reruns do a fine job of teaching moral principles!). In one children's sermon, I heard of a teacher who after reading the story of Noah drew one moral principle: go love animals like Noah! Is that what we are to learn from this story of judgment and salvation? I do not think so. Further, the Old Testament is not a sanctified superhero book. Many want to turn Sampson, David and Gideon into our version of Marvel comic books. Other abuses of the Old Testament include using the Old Testament to justify all kinds of things, like mega church

buildings. We often here, “Solomon built an opulent temple, so should we!” Wrong. Jesus is our temple!

The Bible is a “Him Book.” The Old Testament anticipates Christ, and the New Testament explains Christ. He is promised in the beginning. He is there in the middle. He is there at the end – as the object of worship for all eternity.

Themes like Creation, fall, redemption and new creation unfold this redemptive drama. Yet many Christians know stories of the Bible but do not know the storyline of the Bible.

I believe the apostles viewed the Bible with a Christ-centered focus because Jesus’ own teaching. Christ showed them that the Scriptures were about Him (e.g., John 5:39, John 5:46; Luke 24:27, Luke 24:44).

Bruce Ware notes the nature and the message of the Bible saying, “For although the Spirit is primarily responsible for producing the Bible as the inspired Word of God, the Bible is not primarily about the Spirit but rather it is about the Son” (Bruce Ware, *Father, Son, and Holy Spirit*, 110). That is a good transition to the next belief. Timothy is to continue in the Christ-centered Scriptures, which are produced by the *Holy Spirit*.

#2: Because God Speaks to Us in It (16a)

This verse highlights the divine inspiration of Scripture. Paul states that the Scriptures are “breathed-out” (*theopneustos*) by God (16a). “Inspiration” in some translations **doesn’t mean “inspired like a painter or an athlete.”** Many unbelievers would say “**the Bible is inspiring.**” That’s not what we’re saying. **A better word than inspiration would be “expiration.”** God breathed out his holy word.

Who wrote the Bible? It has a dual authorship. God spoke his Word (Ps. 33:6). He “breathed it out.” How do you make

intelligible sounds (presuming that you do)? You breath them out. God breathed out his word. And **God used humans to pen it, keeping them from error, but without violating their personality.**

It wasn't mechanical, **like an automatic type writer.** God used prophets (and apostles), and they were as Peter says, "**carried along by the Spirit**" (see **2 Peter 1:20-21**)

- **It didn't originate with them.** They didn't wake up and come to breakfast and say, "**Today, I think I'll write the Bible.**" **It wasn't from their will. But God's.**
- **They were carried along.** In **Acts 27**, the same word is used in the story of Paul's shipwreck, as the boat is "**driven along**" by the wind (v. 15, 17).

Peter also affirmed this dual authorship in the selection of Matthias: "Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled that *the Holy Spirit through the mouth of David* spoke in advance about Judas" (**Acts 1:16**, emphasis added). So God spoke, but they kept their personality – there are differences with **Amos and Hosea** in style, for example.

We should not miss Jesus' emphasis on the divine nature of Scripture either. He quoted Scripture frequently as divine and authoritative. He said many powerful truths about Scripture, like: "**Man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of God**" (**Matt 4:4**); and "**Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will never pass away**" (**Matt 24:35**).

- **A remarkable example of the power of Scripture is in Luke 16**, where the rich man is told if people will not believe because of the Scripture, neither would they if they saw a miracle.

The prophets and apostles wrote it as they were carried along by the Spirit.

- **The Church has no right to re-write the Bible.**
- Many want to do this with regard to things such as women's roles, and sexuality, or removing "Son of God".... They want to say we have **evolved, or we need to contextualization.** They say, "Well, that was then." To be sure, the Bible was written in a context, but you need to understand that **in the Bible:**

God was and still IS speaking to us.

- **If you want to hear God speak, open the Book.**
- **When you open the Word of God, you open the mouth of God.**
- **Of all the people you could hear speak, there are none like this. The Psalmist said,**
"my heart stands in awe of your words" (Ps. 119:161).

Bart Ehrman example - Wouldn't you want to read it?

#3: Because It Changes Us from the Inside Out (16b-17)

If one believes that the Bible is God's inspired word, then they should naturally see it as "**profitable.**" Paul has already told us that the Bible **is profitable for making us wise for salvation.** Now, he goes a step further to talk about how that works. **Salvation encompasses sanctification,** as well as justification, and that's what's in view here.

All of it is profitable, he says. Last week the most valuable baseball card collection ever discovered was made. It was an estimated three million. It reminded me of my dad, burning his cards! Well, I can live without those little pieces of paper, but I can't live without the Bible. Nothing is more profitable.

"Therefore, I love your commandments above gold, above fine gold." (Ps. 119:127)

For they change you from the inside out. Notice how it works: “for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness” (16b). The Bible shapes our beliefs as well as our lifestyle. It relates to both doctrine and conduct. It is totally sufficient to shape us into the image of Christ by the power of the Spirit.

We have many today who say they believe in the inspiration of Scripture, but deny their belief by their practice. Do not just *believe* Scripture. *Use it!*

- It gives us **doctrinal truth**. “for teaching.” It is sufficient to teach us about subjects, such as heaven (it is more authoritative than anyone’s experience).
- It **rebukes us for ungodliness or false beliefs**. “for reproof”
- It **corrects us when we stray**. “for correction.” This is why we say we do church discipline every week. The Bible corrects us.
- It **trains us in righteous living**. “for training in righteousness”

Nothing else does this.

There's a difference in "good stuff" (**human observation**) and "God's stuff" (**revelation**)

Paul adds to his point on the sufficiency of Scripture saying, “so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work” (17).

- Scripture is also profitable for **equipping us**. XHughes says, “Though we cannot see it in English, Paul here uses two forms of the Greek word for *equip* (an adjective and a participle) to make his point. The man of God is **super-equipped** by the Word of God” (Hughes, 239). I love that idea: “super-equipped” by the

Scriptures! Stott says, "Scripture is the chief means which God employs to bring 'the man of God' to **maturity**" (Stott, 103).

Peter echoes this saying that the Scriptures Are the means by which we grow into salvation. Peter says "crave it." (1 Pet 2:1-3)

As we mature, we are grown up into Christ-likeness, equipped to do the ministry of Jesus: care for poor, justice, evangelism, etc.

Continue learning, trusting and believing the Christ-centered, God-breathed, totally sufficient Scriptures.

#2: PROCLAIM THE WORD PASTORALLY (4:1-2)

If the chapter division were not here in our Bibles, we would see the logical progression with even more clarity. A high view of the Bible (3:14-17) should lead to a high view of biblical preaching (4:1-4). Unfortunately, some hold to the inspiration of Scripture but their actual preaching is not rooted in the Scriptures.

A good Shepherd will feed the flock of God.

How?

#1: Proclaim it Faithfully (4:1-2a)

The proper motive of preachers is a desire for **faithfulness to God, not worldly fame**. This **God-centered** motive is noted here in verse 1, as Paul sets up his exhortation with this **stunning introduction**. Nowhere else (that I am aware of) does Paul give this type of preface to a charge, found in verse 1.

Timothy is to remember that he preaches *in the sight of God*. No preacher/teacher ultimately goes unnoticed. **Unnoticed by people? Sure. Overlooked for big speaking engagements? Yes. But he is never out of the eyes of God**. This should give all of us who preach a correct perspective on our task. **Our audience first and foremost is God himself. God is both the speaker (when his word is rightly proclaimed), and God is the audience as well.**

I've wondered is John Piper going to be in attendance at T4A... How this shows the misguided nature of my heart. Who cares who is in attendance... God the judge is!

Because of God is present, the unpopular, “unknown” pastor **should not be discouraged or grow lazy by his lack of fame and recognition.** He should remember that his **ultimate call is faithfulness to God**, and that his ministry is eternally important even if his church is small. (**John Broadus example - 1 blind student**).

The popular “famous” pastor **should not be arrogant. His ultimate evaluation is not from people, but from God.**

The questions that should concern every preacher-teacher are questions like these: Is God pleased with my treatment of his Word? Is he pleased with my motive? Is he pleased with my attitude and care for the flock? In a day filled with those who preach for the applause of man, we need faithful preachers who preach for the pleasure of God. God told Jeremiah, “Let the prophet who has a dream tell the dream, but let him who has my word speak my word faithfully” (Jer. 23:28, ESV).

He also reminds Timothy of *the kingdom of Christ and the judgment*. All three ideas “appearing,” “judgment” and “kingdom” **have to do with the coming of Christ. In 4:8, he speaks of “all who have loved his appearing”** (emphasis added).

We must live and preach in light of this holy accountability. James jolts us by reminding us, “Not many should become teachers, my brothers, knowing that we will receive a stricter judgment” (**James 3:1**). The author of Hebrews also puts our task in proper perspective, “Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls **as those who will give an account**, so that they can do this with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you” (**13:17**, emphasis added).

In verse 2, Paul says, “**preach the word**” (ESV). To “**preach**” means “**to herald**” or “**to proclaim publicly**” (cf., 1:11). As preachers, we herald the news, or as Paul says here “the word.” For us today, this means the entire written word of God. Throughout this section Paul uses various phrases to talk about the truth of God’s Word, such as “Sacred Scriptures” (3:15), “Scripture” (3:16), “sound doctrine” (4:3), and “the truth” (4:4).

“Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching” (1 Tim. 4:13, ESV).

When the word of God is truly preached, the voice of God is truly heard. (Second Helvetic Confession... Church is the "mouth house of God")

- **Acts 20:20, 25** – publicly, and house to house

Today, it’s popular for guys to go on these thirty-minute rants about all kinds of things – manhood, politics, dress, church planting, and more. But remember, “**ranting is preaching.**” True preaching is “**saying what God has said and declaring what God has done in Christ.**”

When one is ranting, the voice of a man is heard (though mistaken as the voice of God).

You may get on Youtube with a rant, and gain a large following, but it’s not preaching.

Apply the text? Yes. Go on a thirty-minute rant using the Bible as your diving board to go into your agenda. Absolutely not.

This is the same method that false teachers use but these guys get away with it because they are orthodox theologically.

Ranting is dangerous for these reasons:

- It is dangerous because you lose authority when you leave Scripture.

- It is dangerous because you are feeding the flesh of people. Every generation has people who want to find teachers to “suit their own passions.”
- It is dangerous because it feeds the cult of personality movement in our culture. People come wandering, “what will he say this week?” instead of preparing to hear a faithful exposition of Holy Scripture.
- It is dangerous because it disregards our holy mandate as preachers and teachers. We will be held accountable for how we’ve handled the word (James 3:1, Heb. 13:7,17).
- It is dangerous because we don’t want people putting their faith in man’s wisdom but in God’s Word.

So, keep your finger on the text, as you teach and preach.

#2: Proclaim it Consistently (4:2b)

Next, Timothy is told to “**persist in it whether convenient or not**” or “**be ready in season and out of season**” (2b, ESV). This speaks of urgency and readiness.

**Let your ministry be known for readiness not of laziness!
You will not always feel like proclaiming it, if you're a pastor, but you open it and bring it.**

The word “be ready” was used in a military sense – to always be on duty.

But what if you don’t feel like it? The power of your sermon isn’t dependent upon how you're feelings. It’s dependent upon how the Spirit uses his word.

One of Martin Luther's more colorful sayings regarding the Bible was this: “In short, I will preach it [the Word of God], teach it, write it, but I will constrain no man by force, for faith must

come freely without compulsion. Take myself as an example. **I opposed indulgences and all the papists, but never with force. I simply taught, preached, and wrote God's Word; otherwise I did nothing. And while I slept or drank Wittenberg beer with my friends Philip and Amsdorf, the Word so greatly weakened the papacy that no prince or emperor ever inflicted such losses upon it. I did nothing; the Word did everything.** Had I desired to foment trouble, I could have brought great bloodshed upon Germany; indeed, I could have started such a game that even the emperor would not have been safe. But what would it have been? **Mere fool's play. I did nothing; I let the Word do its work.**"Proclaim it consistently; for the word changes lives.

#3: Proclaim it Comprehensively (4:2c)

The pastor-teacher should apply the word to the lives of his flock in a variety of ways. Paul gives us three ways of doing it, **"reprove, rebuke, and exhort"** (4:2c).

- Sometimes God's people need **"reproved"** – that is a point proved with solid evidence, leading one to conviction and confession.
- Closely related, is **"rebuke/corrected"** Sometimes people need to be rebuked for their wrong beliefs or ungodly lifestyles. Paul illustrates this skill with his letters to the **Corinthians** (rebuked for their immorality) and the **Galatians** (rebuked for their failure to continue in the gospel of grace). **The Corinthians are living like dogs, and the Galatians like cats! A lot of people don't like rebuke. What happens when people aren't rebuked? They live like untamed dogs and cats. Ever been on a jog and meet a dog that has never had a rebuke!? You'll change your view on the need for rebuke.**
 - **What parent would not rebuke their child for walking into traffic? Rebuke is a form of love. And it should be given with an attitude of love.**

- **Other times, they need to be “exhorted/encouraged.”**

Sometimes pastors need to “encourage” the flock when they are **facing fear, anxiety, or great burdens. Pastors should apply the truths of the text to edify and build up suffering saints.**

Of course, one may do all of these in one sermon. **Because the scope of the Bible is amazing, we can address all kinds of people in all kinds of ways.** By studying the whole Bible, one ends up experience all of these – **different genres have different emphases.**

Of course, our rebuke, correction and encouragement should be “Christ-centered” through and through. Show them their need and the Christ-centered solution.

With this in mind, we do counseling each week.

#4: Proclaim it Patiently (2d)

I overlooked this part of Paul’s challenge for several years, “with great patience” (2d). **That is, until I became a pastor! Then it became my favorite part of the verse!**

Sanctification (a Christian’s growth in Christ-likeness) is a slow process. Really slow! Sometimes pastors grow discouraged because they do not see immediate results from their sermons.

Remember that there is a cumulative effect to your preaching/teaching. **Over time, there will be fruit. There is a cumulative effect. It may take a long time, but with patient biblical teaching, you will see some progress.**

Charles Simeon practiced patience as well as anyone in church history. **When he first came to Holy Trinity Church in Cambridge, no one wanted him to be the minister. For example, they locked their church pews in protest for seven years, and would not allow him to preach the evening sermon for 12 years! Yet, Simeon – single his whole life – remained at this church for 54 years, and eventually won the favor of many of his people (See**

Piper, *The Roots of Endurance*,). You can still read his faithful expositions in *Horae Homileticae*. How did Simeon endure? A friend said of him, “Simeon invariably rose every morning, though it was winter season, at four o’clock; and after lighting his fire, he devoted the first four hours of the day to private prayer and the devotional study of the Scriptures.... Here was the secret of his great grace and spiritual strength” (Moule, *Charles Simeon*, 66).

How can we grow in patience as pastor-teachers? **Since patience is a fruit of the Spirit, then the simple answer is to walk by the Spirit. Commune with God. Abide in Jesus. As you spend time in God’s presence, in unhindered and unhurried prayer and worship, meditate on God’s patience.** “The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love” (Ps. 145:8, ESV). Work the gospel deeply into your heart daily. **Remember what patience God has had on you!** Then by his grace, display his fatherly patience to his people.

#5: Proclaim It Theologically (4:2e)

Paul adds “**with teaching**” (2e). Interestingly, the most famous verse in the Bible about “preaching” also calls for “teaching.”

We should see how these two pastoral activities work together. **Preaching is heralding the facts, while teaching is explaining the facts.** Preaching calls for a response; it’s a summons. And it is founded upon certain truths that we believe.

Preaching is not less than teaching; it’s more than teaching. It involves heralding, and that heralding is founded upon certain truths. **It is not preaching when you begin yelling!** Preaching is heraldic.

Sometimes people ask me if I’m more of a teacher or a preacher. That’s quite an American question. I say, “I’m a teaching preacher, and a preaching teacher.” You can’t really do

preaching without teaching, because you have to explain that which you are heralding.

We desperately need a generation of preachers who preach the word theologically. The spirit of our day is like Timothy's. Paul says in the next two verses, "For the time will come when they will not tolerate sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, will multiply teachers for themselves because they have an itch to hear something new. They will turn away from hearing the truth and will turn aside to myths" (3-4).

People drift from the healthy teaching to suit their own passions. They wander away into myths. Jeremiah said, "**The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests rule by their own authority. My people love it like this**" (Jer. 5:31).

I love how Paul says keep preaching the word with careful teaching – *because people don't want it (verses 3-4).*

There is no sense that he is to capitulate to the culture. He does the opposite of what many do, "oh, this is what they want." No. Paul says there's even more reason for you to teach sound doctrine – people don't want it.

A good parent doesn't feed their kids what they want – they would love on gummies, chips, and ice cream. And there is a culture that doesn't want truth, and rejects authority, and that's why the word must be taught.

Proclaim the word faithfully, consistently, comprehensively, patiently, and theologically.

Now, notice, this final point briefly....

#3: LISTEN TO THE WORD EAGERLY (3-4)

Look how Paul speaks about listeners. Some will not endure sound teaching, but will “**turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths**” (4).

Why? Because of their **passions**. They want people to feed their flesh. They have itching ears. They don't have attentive ears.

What is the opposite of this? How should we listen? Just put these phrases the other way around:

1. **Enjoy sound doctrine**. Paul says some “will not endure sound doctrine.” **Don't come to evaluate a performance**. Come as an **active participant**, who says like Samuel, “**Speak, for your servant listens**.” Come ready to learn sound doctrine because that's what makes you healthy (“sound”).
2. **Hear hard truth humbly**. Don't go looking for teachers who will scratch your “itching ears” – that which makes you feel good.
3. **Be eager to hear the gospel, which alone can satisfy**. Don't come to feed your sinful “passions.” The prosperity gospel preys on sinful passions.
4. **Repent when you hear the truth**. Don't “turn away from the truth.” Rather, repent and believe.
5. **Keep learning the essentials**. Don't go “wandering” off looking for something “mystical” or “more deep” than the gospel.

Be careful how you hear.

Piper writes:

- Skillful listening is a non-negotiable skill for everyone who enters a church building on Sunday or plays a sermon through headphones during the week. Scripture calls us not only to consider carefully what sermons we listen to, but also how we listen to those sermons.
- It is very easy to slip into what Scripture calls “dullness of hearing,” to hear the weekly sermons without faith, and to see little or no moral fruit in our lives as a result. **As Jesus makes clear, ultimately it is how we hear that reveals who we are** (John 8:43, 47, 10:4, 27)

Conclusion

- **Continue in the Word Personally**
- **Proclaim the Word Pastorally**
- **Listen to the Word Eagerly**

Kent Hughes tells the following story that brings these truths home:

Dr. William Evans, who pastored College Church from 1906-1909, was an unusually accomplished man. He had the entire *King James Version* of **the Bible memorized as well** as the New Testament of the *American Standard Version*. Dr. Evans also authored over fifty books. His son, Louis, became one of the best-known preachers in America and for many years pastored the eminent First Presbyterian Church of Hollywood. When Dr. William Evans retired, he moved to Hollywood to be near his son, and when Louis was away he would substitute for him.

One unforgettable Sunday Dr. William, as he was affectionately called, spoke on the virgin birth. **All were amazed when he raised his Bible and tore out the pages that narrate the birth of the Lord. As the tattered scraps floated down toward the congregation, he shouted, “If we can’t believe in the virgin birth, let’s tear it out of the Bible!”** And then as he drove home his point, he **tore out the resurrection chapters**, then the **miracle narratives**, then anything conveying the supernatural. The floor was littered with mutilated pages.

Finally, with immense drama he held up the only remaining portion and said, **“And this is all we have left—the Sermon on**

the Mount. And that has no authority for me if a divine Christ didn't preach it." After a few more words, he asked his listeners to bow for the benediction. But before he could pray, a man in that vast and sedate congregation stood and cried, "No, no! Go on! We want more!" Several others joined in. So Dr. Evans preached for another fifty minutes. (In Baldwin and Benson, *Henrietta Mears and How She Did It!*, 149).

This guy immersed himself in the Word personally, memorizing it, he proclaimed it boldly, and others were eager to listen to it. May we do the same.

Let's not rip out the text, let's keep our finger on the text, and our hearts and minds in it.

For indeed, the Bible testifies to these glorious truths about our Savior. It makes us wise for salvation. It shows us that: He lived the life we couldn't live; died the death we should have died, rose on our behalf, and now calls all of us to come to him in repentance and faith and receive this great salvation. Come to this divine Christ.

Now that we have preached the word **audibly, we will preach the word **visibly** – through the Lord's Supper.**