

“What We Believe”

Scriptural Reference: 2 TIMOTHY 3:16,17

Sermon Submitted by Rev. Kenneth T. Ricks,
Pastor, New Harvest Community Baptist Church, Romulus, MI

When I was a kid, growing up in the 70's there was a saying that was extremely popular with the youth of that day. The expression was "Don't trust anybody over 30!" I remember that because in my Archie's comic book one of the characters showed his pin to the guy who owned the malt shop in town, "Don't trust anybody over 30! But the owner showed him one better and pointed to a sign that hung prominently over the cash register. And it said "absolutely no credit"! Which prompted the owner to boast proudly, I don't trust anybody over or under 30! And while my 6 or 7 year old mind thought that was funny, it's sad to say but that is the feeling of most people nowadays about everything. Not only is mistrust among people at an all-time high, but many people are questioning and skeptical about everything that used to be held sacred to the previous generation. The family unit is brought in to question? Do we really need a mother and a father to raise a family? Should we abandon our bread and butter middle class making manufacturing base and push forward to an all white-collar economic society? What is acceptable behavior in a social setting, now? Is cursing now an acceptable form of language expression? Is marriage relevant? Is fidelity possible? Why should we help our neighbor? What's in it for me? And finally is there really a God? And does He only use the bible to talk to us? My friends, these are the kind of things they are saying and much more, every day in our barbershops, hair salons, dentist offices, assembly lines and church parking lots. People are losing their grip on what God has destined for their lives because they have lost the wisdom to keep His blueprint in their hearts. Beloved don't fool yourself, there is a God! And He is a magnificent God. Full of Wonders, Amazements and Right Now Miracles! Do I have a witness? And He is available to His people 24/7! You don't have to make an appt. You don't have to go through somebody to get to Him. It won't cost you a dime! In fact when you want

to talk to Jesus, the songwriter said, just very simply do it for He knows just what you need. But this great God has also left something to help you know and get closer to Him, even now. And that something is the Word of God. The Logos, the thoughts of God written by men but Authored by God. There the blueprint for your destiny and desires are kept. There the comfort for your disappointments and the answers for your dilemmas are stored. There the cure for your depression and the rest for your down sitting awaits. It's all contained in the Word of God. And quiet as kept one of the main reasons for our stumbling and bumbling along this life journey is we have not sought the light of His Word to maneuver around in this world of darkness. How do you know how to live as a Christian if you don't know what we believe. Mistakes are made by saved folks over and over again not because we like making them or sometimes not even because we don't recognize the familiar mistake. It's because we have not studied God's battle plan to thwart the evil darts of the enemy. Thus making us susceptible to the same old fights, same old battles with the same old results. This is a clue, if you start to realize not that you are just losing the same old battles but that you are still having the same old battles you know then it's time to change your strategy. Because I can tell you, the Devil is going to stick to the strategy that works. He's not going to change it. His motto is if it's not broke and it gets your mind off your maker, don't fix it! But we're fighting back today! We are taking back what the enemy has stolen from us! We are making him change his game plan and we're going to prepare for that too because we are going to be a group of believers that are about the business of sealing God's Word in our hearts. Do I have a witness! David said thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path. We are going to recognize not only is God's word good for my present condition but it's also good for what's coming my way that I can't see! Amen!

The old preachers used to say that the purpose of a sermon should be able to be summed up in one sentence. So if that is the case, I would say the purpose of this sermon would be to illustrate and proclaim the vital importance of the Bible in the life and for the life of the believer.

The Apostle Paul is writing to his Son in the Faith Timothy in this second letter to encourage him to hold on to the teachings that he had received. He felt a need to do that because there were already folks who had started to turn away from true doctrine. And don't fool yourself, if he thought that then, what would he say now. You have all kinds of foolishness in the church now! Some churches taking bits and pieces out of the bible that is offensive to their current sensibilities. Trying to be politically correct in their doctrine. Some have even tried to take Jesus Christ out as the only way for man to be saved. But friend you better still listen to Paul, and know without a doubt that God's way is the best way. And His word will last forever. That's why the bible says the flower fades and the grass withers but the Word of God will last forever! I like CNN one day it will fade. I enjoy MSNBC but it will go soon go off the air. Bill Maher is sometimes funny but one day his ratings will go down and he will grow unpopular, be cancelled, wither and die, and will have to stand before the One, who made him, but the Word will last forever!

Paul said in that 17th verse, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God. Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, 1st and 2nd Kings, Zachariah & Malachi, 1st and 2nd Timothy, all scriptures is good. I was watching a program on TV the other night and the Rabbi was talking about the reason He didn't follow all of the Bible is because some of it just reflected the wisdom of those times. But oh no God was the author of this Book. Did He become smarter over the years and now is granting men better wisdom? Did He grow and mature? NO He is the same God today, yesterday and forever! He is the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End, the Alpha and Omega! With Him there is no shadow of turning! He does not change! What He set down in the Holy Scriptures is still good for us today. Why, well I'll quickly give you a few reasons.

All scriptures are given by inspiration of God. Men wrote it but God authored it. No man could have come up with the successes of this book. It's the oldest book known to man still in circulation. It is the largest seller of published books ever

known to man without comparison. It is still considered relevant and extremely useful to believers even though it was deemed by scholars written from a 1500 year span from at least 1400 B.C. to 100 A.D. Over 40 generations, over 40 writers, all from numerous walks of life from Kings to fisherman, poets to peasants, in different places, times, were used to put it together. It has been translated in 1200 languages, today. This is a book like no other, with a reputation from churning the coldest heart into a heart of love and warmth that spreads rapidly and without containment to every soul it meets. This is a book like no other.

What is it good for?

Doctrine, instruction teaching the child of God how the Father wants us to act in Him. Son of man, when you are saved, you are not free to do what you want to do but you have been bought with a price. You have been paid for with the blood of the Lamb and you are expected to do His will in your life. You are now free to worship and serve Him in your life but you have to know how to do it! It's all in the Word of God! I am so sick of hearing former Baptists tell folks that they left the Baptist church because they weren't getting good teaching. Because if most of those folks were truthful, they would probably tell you they never went to Bible study. They never went to Sunday School. They never read their bible regular when they were going there. You can sit a car next to a gas pump all day long, but if you don't pump any gas in it, it's not going anywhere. Amen? But you got to have your spiritual gas to make it through this world full of sin during the week. What else is it good for? It's good for reproof, elegechos, conviction, not only conviction but an acknowledgement from the accused of the truth of the accusation. Let me tell you something, this word ought to make you feel bad sometimes. Because if your saved, sometimes the Word will hit you in that spot that is most corrupted and sore. You know what I'm talking about, when the Word says Man ought not to bear false witness and you know you been lying all the week. It's going to hurt. When the word says treat your neighbor as you would want to be treated but you were geeked this week because you thought you got

over on your friend. It's going to hurt. When the Word says just by thinking and dwelling on somebody in a certain lustful way,... well ya'll know what I'm talking about. Sometimes, the Word of God ought to hurt you. But that's good sometimes. You know that tell me when a person has a bone out of place or a broken bone, the doctor will often have to set it right. This I'm told is quite painful at the time but necessary to set the bone right and to allow proper growth. And you see because of the fact that we were born in sin and in iniquity were we made, we have some spiritual bones out of place and we need the Word of God to set us straight, to reprove us, to chasten us, to instruct us and train us in the righteousness of God. Not in the righteousness of our way of thinking about things. That will mess you up, but the Righteousness of God. You know the more I know about God, the more I realize how little I know about anything. Paul summed up the reason for God's gift of His Word for us that believe. That the man of God, that the anthropos de Theos may be perfect, complete, doing what he or she is supposed to be doing, thoroughly furnished, fitted completely for the task God gave him unto all good works. That is the reason, that you be prepared and able in good fashion to run this race of faith. But without your trainer, without proper coaching, without wise instruction you will stumble and fall. But we believe that God's Word can keep you even in a time like this. We believe His Word can hold you and encourage you to keep the faith even when all hope is gone!

This is why we believe that the Bible is written by men divinely inspired. This is why we believe it is a perfect treasure of heavenly instruction. This is why we believe that it has God for its author, salvation for its end and reveals principles by which we believe. It's the center of our Christian union. It is the Supreme Standard of human conduct. Proverbs 30 declares "every Word of God is pure". David said "thy word have I hidden in my heart that I might not sin against thee". It's what defines our hope! It's what declares our liberty! It's what strengthens our courage and buffers our pride at the same time! It's what we eat! How we live! The Song that we sing! The blood that was shed! The Light in our Darkness! The Guide in our Chaos! The Bridge over our Troubled Waters! The Anchor that

holds! The Word that trumpets He on Whom We Believe! The Herald of Christ Jesus, the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords! The Sustaining Picture of the Horror of the Cross, the Hopelessness of the Tomb and the Deliverance and Joy from the Grave! It's who we are! Who we aspire to be! And what shall ever be! God's Word! The Holy Writ! The Holy Scriptures! The Holy Bible! It's What We Believe! What We Believe! What We Believe!!

Biographical Sketch



Pastor Kenneth T. Ricks

With Christ Jesus as the founder and the Holy Spirit as his guide, Pastor Ricks was led to organize the New Harvest Community Baptist Church (www.newharvestbc.com) of Romulus, Michigan in October of 2008. The church motto is "Winning Souls and Making Disciples for the Cause of Christ" gleaned from Luke 10:2. Pastor Ricks shared in a variety of

ministries at His home church of 14 years. He was blessed to serve as a Deacon, Sunday School teacher and Superintendent, Male Chorus Director, Brotherhood member, Men of Peace Officer, Christian Youth United Counselor and Angelic Choir Member.

Rev. Ricks loves the study of God's Word! He and his wife, Diane, are very active in the Congress of the local Metropolitan Detroit District, where she is an officer with the Minister Wives Auxiliary. They also have attended and participated frequently with both Congresses of the Wolverine State and the National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc.. Pastor Ricks has matriculated at the Ecumenical Theological Seminary in Detroit, Michigan and Michigan State University in East Lansing, Michigan, where he studied urban ministry and political science, respectively. He is a Desert Storm veteran of the United States Air Force and is currently employed by the Ford Motor Company. He and his wife, Diane are the proud parents of three daughters, Acacia, Kaila, Brittani and one son, Terrence. Psalm 27 is his favorite scripture, "One thing have I desired of the Lord, and that I will seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord, all the days of my life"! Hallelujah!

Contact Pastor Ricks by email at: kricks09@yahoo.com