

“A genuine miracle.” 2 Tim 3:14-4:5

“But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.”

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ!

Do you know how big the Universe is? Can you imagine how vast our Solar system is? Can you even picture how huge the Earth is? Can you comprehend the incredible complexity of life; even the simplest forms of life? What about the diversity of life?

It is estimated that there are hundreds of billions of galaxies. Not stars, not solar systems, but galaxies! Wow! Your unique identity is established by more than 3 billion letters of your DNA.

The simplest living cells are more complex than the most sophisticated space ships, and your body contains tens and tens of trillions of such living cells. It's you! Besides, we are not the only living creatures out there. Today scientists estimate that there are far more than million different species of living creatures on this planet.

Now, imagine! The evidence suggests that someone envisioned and brought all of this into existence. More, that someone enables this breath-taking creation to go on every second of every minute. I mean everything, from the tiniest particles in the remotest star in the farthest galaxy till every cell of all of almost 8 billion human creatures.

What kind of super-Being, what kind of super-Intelligence could possibly do that? What kind of incomprehensible wisdom and infinite power does that Being possess? Wouldn't that be wonderful to know more about this Being? Isn't this longing engraved deep on our hearts? To discover this greatest of mysteries...

Wouldn't that be the most desirable knowledge of all? The most precious experience? Wouldn't that be something worth dying for – just to be able to find these answers, or may be even to experience the presence of this Being? Wouldn't that be – wow?!

But... we are what we are. Tiny specks inhabiting one small planet, our lives are 70 or maybe 90 years. What we learned yesterday, we have mostly forgotten today. We are so limited. Sure, as humanity, we have accumulated quite a bit of knowledge, but even that is so limited, and even then, there is no way any of us can have access to all of it.

How can we possibly dream about knowing anything about this all-powerful, eternal and all-knowing Being? Wouldn't that be the peak of arrogance to claim that we could somehow on our own to figure out who this Being is and what He is like?

Unless something miraculous happens... But what? Unless this Supreme Being decides to reveal Himself to us. To come to us and to introduce Himself. But how could that happen? How could we communicate with someone so different from us?

Think about how do we generally get to know others? It is quite simple. We talk. We converse, and when we converse, we learn what the other person is like. And this is exactly what this Supreme-Being, the Creator of the Universe, the Designer of all living things, your Maker, has done.

He has decided to reveal Himself by conversing with us. It is true. He has spoken to us, to His little human creatures. He has revealed who He is and what kind of being He is. He wants you to know Him. Personally. He has revealed what happened in the beginning and He has revealed what will happen at the very end of time.

He has revealed to us who we are and for what kind of life He created us. He has revealed what is wrong with us and what He has already done about it. It sounds almost impossible, doesn't it?

What would you give to be able to encounter this Supreme Being, to listen to Him, to hear from the Creator Himself about the mysteries of this world and the world to come? Wouldn't that be the most wonderful opportunity, if only we could...

The truth is, you can. Anyone can. God the Creator has chosen to speak with us in human language, He has commanded His chosen messengers not only to proclaim His message, but also to write it down, and He Himself has confirmed that this is His message by mighty signs and miracles.

Think about what happened at the mount Sinai! The whole nation of Israel heard God Yahweh speaking to them in thunder and lighting and thick cloud of smoke and fire and very loud trumpet blast and earthquake...

That was the most terrifying life and death experience, and because they all had witnessed it, they firmly trusted that what God's servant Moses wrote down, was a message from the Holy God Himself. Similarly, the true God continued to speak to us through His chosen messengers, confirming His message with mighty signs.

Then He did something that completely defies human reason – He came to meet us as one of us, as an ordinary man, Jesus from Nazareth. He spoke to us in human language, conversing with us face-to-face. Those men, who saw Him, touched Him, who ate with Him, who witnessed everything He did, they wrote it down, led by God's own Spirit.

And today we have this message, the message from the Almighty God available to us. In one book. In this one Book which has been printed in more than 6 billion copies. Parts of this Book have been translated in almost 3000 different languages.

Almost every living person has access to this Book, the Bible, or at least to the message of this most sacred Book. For this is what the Author of the Book commanded, – bring this message to all nations, to every human being!

We have this Book. It's been brought to us. Every family, every person in Australia has access to this Book and to its message. We can have it on our computers and on our phones. We can read the message from the Triune God anywhere at any time; we can listen to Him and learn His wisdom. We can... Everyone in Australia can...

But ... do we? Do we listen to Him, do we even want to listen to Him? Whatever sad it may be, but even many of those who claim to be Christians don't care much about what God says to us. This is why we all will benefit from hearing the exhortation that Paul the apostle wrote to his beloved Timothy, for it is relevant for us as well.

“Continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it ... you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

To make you wise for salvation... Hear this! The Bible is like no other books. It is living and active, it kills and makes alive, it brings forth a new creation in us. God Himself speaks to us as we read or listen to His message; the Triune God converses with you.

And He tells us loudly and clearly that He is coming to judge His creation, and that we can't stand before His throne of judgment on our own, for He searches the heart of our hearts, all the secret thoughts, and not only the visible parts of our life.

But the Book that we have received, the sacred writings, it is able to make you wise for salvation. If you listen to God who speaks to you in the Bible, if you study His Word, wrestle with it, meditate upon what our God speaks to you, if you discuss it with others, God's own Spirit comes to you, He creates a new heart which trusts in Jesus.

Meaning, God not only makes you wise for salvation, He Himself brings to you salvation, as He embraces you with His Spirit, as He takes home with you, as He creates faith in Jesus, as He welcomes you in the divine fellowship with Himself.

That is God's gift to you. Undeserved, unmerited, infinitely precious gift. Gift which makes us from strangers and enemies of God into His children and co-heirs of God's eternal Kingdom, this gift brings you to everlasting feast served to all God's people.

The Word of God does it all... as we listen to Him.

So, one thing the Word of God grants us is salvation, and that's priceless, but that's not all. We are still here, in this age and in this world, and there is a lot to be done. Listen how Paul the apostle continues.

"All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work." Equipped for every good work...

You see, the Bible is the source not only for our salvation, but it is also the source of God's wisdom for our lives here. Speaking to us our Creator reveals what His design for our lives is. How to live wisely in all our relationships and responsibilities.

How to be a child, how to be a parent, how to be a spouse, how to be an employee, and how to be an employer, how to live in relationships with neighbours, and how to live in relationships with our God, what to do with God's gifts entrusted to us, etc.

Basically, God's Word reveals us God's will and wisdom for all facets of our lives. Your God wants to bless you and He wants you to be a blessing for others, this is why He Himself instructs us how to lead our lives, He equips us for every good work. What an amazing privilege to be taught by our Maker Himself!

And again, how many even among Christians want to listen? How many want to make up our own mind, to be a bit like gods ourselves? When the Holy Spirit used Paul the apostle to write this message, He knew well what sinful human beings are like.

This is why Paul wrote these words: **"For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths."**

It sounds like our days, doesn't it? When many who call themselves Christians complain when pastors preach what the Word of God says and not something that would suit to their own passions.

We live in times when many consider the world to be smarter than its Creator. We live in times when cultural trends, too often contrary to God's wisdom, tend to gain more authority than the Word of God... even among Christians.

We live in times when those who want to remain faithful to the Lord Jesus are often ridiculed, rejected, called names. Just as Jesus Himself foretold. We live in times when those with itching ears demand to do things their way, or else. We live in times when familiar structures in society and also in the Church disintegrate before our eyes.

But, fear not, you little flock, this is exactly what the Holy Spirit through the apostle foretold. **“But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant [...] unappeasable [...] lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God ... [pretending to be Christians], but denying God’s Word and its power.”** (2 Tim 3:1-5)

So, what can we do in times like these? “I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.”

Lift up your eyes and rejoice! Rejoice for our gracious God still converses with us, He hasn't given up on us, and He never will, we still can listen to His voice, marvel about His goodness and patience, we are not yet persecuted for doing it, we can daily grow in God wisdom and rejoice in His salvation and proclaim it to others.

Even more, we have not only received God's message, we have the Triune God Himself gathering us so that He could be with us and bless us. Right here, in the midst of His congregation! All of this is a miracle, a genuine miracle! Our God with us...

Blessed you are, brothers and sisters, for you have heard the voice of God and you have kept listening to Him, our Father has called you and you have responded with your “yes!”, God has offer you salvation and you haven't rejected it. Blessed you are!

I pray that by God's grace we are able to hold fast to our Lord Jesus and to His Word, even in this age of indifference and complacency, even if we are scorned by the world and by false disciples.

And the peace of God that surpasses all human understanding will keep your hearts and minds in Jesus Christ. That is His promise to you.

Amen.