

Classics

Not By Bread Alone: How Jesus Used The Scriptures

If even Jesus submitted Himself to the Word of God, how much more so must we?

By Andrew Murray



Photography courtesy of Billy Graham Center Museum

What the Lord Jesus accomplished here on earth as a man He owed greatly to His use of the Scriptures. He found in them the way marked in which He had to walk, the food and the strength on which He could work, the weapon by which He could overcome the Enemy. The Scriptures were indeed indispensable to Him through all His life and passion: from beginning to end His life was the fulfillment of what had been written of Him in the volume of the Book (Hebrews 10:7).

In the temptation in the wilderness it was by His “It is written” that He conquered Satan. In His conflicts with the Pharisees He continually appealed to the Word: “What saith the Scripture?” “Have ye not read?” “Is it not written?” In His intercourse with His disciples it was always from the Scriptures that He proved the certainty and necessity of His sufferings and resurrection: “How otherwise can the Scriptures be fulfilled?” And in His intercourse with His Father in His last sufferings it is in the words of Scripture that He pours out the complaint of being forsaken, and then again commends His spirit into the Father’s hands.

He was Himself the living Word. He had the Spirit without measure. If ever anyone, He could have done without the written Word. And yet we see that it is everything to Him. More than anyone else He thus shows us that *the life of God in human flesh and the Word of God in human speech* are inseparably connected. Jesus would not have been what He was, could not have done what He did, had He not yielded Himself step by step to be led and sustained by the Word of God.

Dependent on the Word

When the Lord Jesus was made man, He became entirely dependent on the Word of God; He submitted Himself wholly to it. His mother taught it [to] Him. The teachers of Nazareth instructed Him in it. In meditation and prayer, in the exercise of obedience and faith, He was led, during His silent years of preparation, to understand and appropriate it.

The Word of the Father was to the Son the life of His soul. What He said in the wilderness

was spoken from His inmost personal experience: “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4, KJV).

He felt He could not live but as the Word brought Him the life of the Father. His whole life was a life of faith, depending on the Word of the Father. The Word was to Him the vehicle for the living fellowship with the living God. And He had His whole mind and heart so filled with it that the Holy Spirit could at each moment find within Him, all ready for use, the right word to suggest just as He needed it.

Child of God, would you become a man [or woman] of God, strong in faith, full of blessing, rich in fruit to the glory of God? Be full of the Word of God, then; like Christ, make the Word your bread. Let it dwell richly in you. Have your heart full of it. Feed on it. Believe it. Obey it. It is only by believing and obeying that the Word can enter into our inward parts, into our very being.

Take it day by day as the Word that proceedeth—not has proceeded, but proceedeth, is proceeding—out of the mouth of God, as the Word of the living God, who in it holds living fellowship with His children, and speaks to them in living power. Take your thoughts of God’s will, and God’s work, and God’s purpose with you and the world, not from the Church, not from Christians around you, but from the Word taught you by the Father; and, like Christ, you will be able to fulfill all that is written in the Scriptures concerning you.

We Find Our Image in Him

In Christ’s use of Scripture the most remarkable thing is this: *He found Himself there; He saw there His own image and likeness.* And He gave Himself to the fulfillment of what He found written there. It was this that encouraged Him under the bitterest sufferings, and strengthened Him for the most difficult work. He had but one thought: to be what the Father had said He should be.

Disciple of Jesus, in the Scriptures *thy likeness, too, is to be found*, a picture of what the Father means thee to be. Seek to have a deep and clear impression of what the Father says in His Word that thou shouldst be. If this is once fully understood, it is inconceivable what courage it will give to conquer every difficulty. To know: It is ordained of God. This thought inspires the soul with a faith that conquers the world.

The Lord Jesus found His own image in the believers of the Old Testament. Moses and Aaron, Joshua, David, and the prophets, were types. And so He is Himself again the image of believers in the New Testament. It is especially *in Him and His example* that we must find our own image in Scripture. To be “changed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord” (2 Cor. 3:18, *KJV*), we must in the Scripture-glass gaze on that image as our own. Blessed the Christian who has truly done this, who not only has found Jesus in the Scriptures, but also in His image the promise and example of what he is to become.

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ANDREW MURRAY (1828–1917) was a South African pastor of the Dutch Reformed church and an international evangelist. He wrote about 250 books and pamphlets, including *Like Christ*, from which this excerpt has been adapted.