

**“Fresh Air” – Pr Jim Sprengle – Pentecost 19
October 16, 2022**

- I. **2 Timothy 3:16-17** – ¹⁶ All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.
- II. **Breathing is something many of us take for granted.**
 - a. If you have a disease or condition that makes breathing difficult, you are much more likely to think about the blessings of a full breath of air.
 - b. Another thing that changed how much we think about our breathing is Covid... especially as we wore masks regularly... while some of us just couldn't because it didn't give us enough air.
 - c. Now that I have you all huffing and puffing thinking about your air intake... take note of how hard your lungs are working!
 - i. An article I read says, “Inside the breath you just took, there are more molecules of air than there are grains of sand on all the world’s beaches. We each inhale and exhale some 30 pounds of these molecules every day—far more than we eat or drink.”¹
 - d. So, when you think about how much we breathe, it seems that breathing fresh air is critical for our long-term health.
 - i. The world is full of pollution, smoke and other contaminants that are unhealthy if we are constantly exposed to them.
 - e. It’s interesting, but our sinful world is contaminated and unhealthy for our spiritual lives as well.
 - i. We have a constant barrage of sin that is coming from all directions, and, spiritually speaking, we get sicker and sicker without fresh air.
 - ii. Or, sometimes sin and brokenness comes at us packing a huge punch and simply takes our breath away... and we are left gasping for air... but either way...
 - f. The fact is that God breathes life into us when we are engaged by His Word – His Word is pure, spiritual, fresh air.
- III. **What’s so special about the “God-breathed” Scriptures?**
 - a. First of all, the Bible is inspired by the Holy Spirit... inspired is related to the word, respire – which means to breathe.
 - i. The authors of the Bible had their own experiences and lives, but the Holy Spirit inspired them to write what we read today – so the words came from human beings and God at the same time.
 - b. Secondly, the Scriptures are truth... because they came from God!
 - i. We know that God cannot lie (Titus 1:2; Hebrews 6:18) and therefore the Bible is reliable and trustworthy.
 - ii. Some might think that these are words thought up by people, but they come from the mind of God Himself.

- c. Finally, the Scriptures are our foundation for the rest of faith and life.
 - i. As Christ followers, the words found in our Bibles are able to teach, correct, admonish, train in righteousness – to equip us for good work. (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
- d. The Word of God is from God, it is therefore true, and is our foundation for faith and life.

IV. **The Scriptures are God-breathed, which breathes life into us.**

- a. As I mentioned before, sometimes sin gets to our spiritual breathing is a long-term contamination... we slowly get more and more spiritually unhealthy as trials and struggles wear us down.
- b. However, have you ever had the wind knocked out of you?
 - i. I can remember the first time it happened to me, and I was pretty sure I was going to die... it's scary – it's paralyzing – it's a helpless feeling.
- c. Sin can make us feel like this sometimes too...
 - i. Perhaps it's a visit to the doctor's office, and we find out about a serious health problem... it takes our breath away... scares us... makes us feel helpless.
 - ii. How many times do we get sideswiped with some terrible news about a death, or an accident, or some crisis in our families or friends?
 - 1. We see those in the extended family of our church suffering from dementia and memory loss... with diseases and death... with operations and failing health... and all this sin and trouble can take our breath away.
 - iii. Yes, the broken world and sin can feel like a punch to the gut... leaving us gasping for air.

V. **Yet, when I think of "God-breathed"**, I think of God's work of bringing life.

- a. Of course God created Adam with His breath of life. (Genesis 2:7)
- b. God told Ezekiel to prophesy to dry bones, He would breathe life into them. (Ezekiel 37:5)
- c. Job, who faced all kinds of trials and tribulations said, "The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life." (Job 33:4)
- d. And the disciples, who were locked in a room and hiding after Jesus' death and burial, came face-to-face with the resurrected Lord, who said, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent Me, even so I am sending you.' And when He had said this, He breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.'" (John 20:21-22)
- e. Each time God comes into our lives, He breathes new life into us as well.
 - i. The Scriptures are one way that God comes into our lives on a regular basis – especially as we come to this place in worship.
 - 1. If you walk away from here forlorn and without hope, I haven't done a very good job of articulating God's love for you and the blessings He has for you right now.

2. In this place you are comforted in the struggle and the suffering that can cause fear and feelings of helplessness by those who are standing right by your side as the body of Christ.
 3. In this place you hear the triumph and victory over sin... and over death... and over the devil himself.
- f. Victory is ours... not because we are strong... but because Jesus walked out of that tomb in glory.
- i. No sin could stop Him...No death and grave could hold Him... and satan lost the battle as he tried to stop the salvation of all people.
 - ii. Jesus Christ our Lord wins... He wins and hands the victory to us...
 1. As we believe in Him... the victory is ours.
 - iii. We are just like Paul who wrote about our clay jars (our bodies) breaking down as we long for glory in eternity “So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison.”
(2 Corinthians 4:16-17)
- g. Friends, I’m here to tell you that sin, death and satan do not have the final word – because you have the breath of life in you... and nothing can separate you from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord”! (Rom. 8:39)

VI. **So, the Scriptures are life giving... and life equipping.**

- a. In the examples I gave you about God breathing life into people – each one served and loved God in response – from Adam to Job, and the dry bones of Ezekiel (which represent us) to Jesus’ disciples...
- b. God’s Word is that breath of fresh air that gives us the power and willingness to bless others.
- c. By the way, that is what our church is attempting to do as a group – bless others by witnessing Christ – showing His love and how much He has done for us to the world around us.
 - i. We have a Human Care Board that is looking to meet the needs of people in our congregation and in our community...
 - ii. We have an Outreach Board that wants to share the love of Christ and the power of His Word (take another Gospel bracelet and hand them out!)
 - iii. We have a Stewardship Board that wants to help us learn how to use our gifts for God.
 - iv. We have a Mission Board and the Lutheran Women in Mission that are supporting us in getting out and beyond the walls of our church to share the Good News.
 - v. I cannot mention all the other people and boards that are actively caring for others and sharing the love of Jesus... or I might be here all day.

- d. All of this is based on what? The power of God's Word!
 - i. God's Word is totally reliable, totally true... and our foundation... and even more than that – it helps us to live for Him in a tough world.
 - ii. God's breath of life is in us – the fresh air that we need to live... and love for Him.

¹ Adapted from Dane Ortlund, *Deeper*, (Crossway, 2021), p. 156; James Nestor, "The Healing Power of Proper Breathing," *The Wall Street Journal* (5-21-20).