

## Well-Spoken Words

by Patch Blakey, ACCS

The Apostle Paul wrote in his second letter to Timothy “all scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2 Timothy 2:16). That’s a pretty strong endorsement. To the church in Rome, Paul wrote, “Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good” (Romans 7:12). This is yet another strong, positive affirmation of the nature and quality of the words of Christ, Jesus being identified by the Apostle John as the living Word of God (John 1:1–14). All that we find written in the 66 books of the Bible we can attribute to the Triune God of Scripture and it is exactly what we need to live wise, godly and fruitful lives.

King David wrote the following praise of the very words of God:

The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.

The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes.

The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.

More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.

Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward. (Psalm 19:7-11)

The majesty of the Word of God is evident in its grace, style, and simplicity. It is effective in accomplishing its purpose, “For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it” (Isaiah 55:10–11). It is moving and convicting, “For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Hebrews 4:12). God’s Word provides us with examples of what not to do, “Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted” (1 Corinthians 10:6). And,

it was written for our benefit, “For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope” (Romans 15:4). I am barely scratching the surface.

We cannot improve upon the words of God. Indeed, we are warned neither to add to them nor subtract from them, “Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you” (Deuteronomy 4:2 and Revelation 22:18). The Scriptures provide an excellent example of rhetoric from our Creator to His creation. Perhaps we can learn from the example of the incarnate Word.

This issue of *Classis* has several helpful articles by those who instruct rhetoric at their schools, as well as some insights and observations by noted contemporary speakers and even examples of speeches that have inspired them. While our goal is always to glorify God in all that we do, our speech seems to have a special emphasis in accomplishing that, “. . . If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body,” (James 3:2).

**Patch Blakey** is the ACCS executive director.