

“Shaped By The Word”

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Sermon Preached: Sunday 19th October 2025

Preacher: Pastor Jason Sander

Location: St Peter's Lutheran Church, Loxton

Sermon Text: [2 Timothy 3:14 - 4:5](#)

Let us pray.

Lord God, Heavenly Father, as we gather here this morning around your word, we pray that your Holy Spirit would work in our lives to shape our hearts and minds, to shape them into the likeness of your son Jesus. Lord, may the words that I speak here be pleasing to you and for the benefit of your people gathered here. In the name of Jesus, amen.

Words are powerful things. They shape our lives more than we realise. Think about the first words that you perhaps learnt as a child, the songs or the stories and how they formed your imagination, your values and your faith.

If you grew up in a Christian home, one of the first songs you may have learnt was Jesus loves me. Yes, I know, for the Bible tells me so. Such simple words, childlike faith, but the words have been imprinted on many of our hearts and minds.

Jesus loves me. That's the gospel. For the Bible tells me so.

That's a confession that God's word is our authority. At men's breakfast on Friday after a hearty breakfast of some eggs and some homemade salsa, we reflected on how meaningful that little song still is, how it was sung by parents, grandparents and even today it's still sung in our Lutheran school with sign language added to it. It's a seed of faith that bridges generations.

When we come to today's reading from 2 Timothy, Paul says, continue in what you have learnt. Timothy's life had been shaped by the word, the gospel that was handed down to him from his grandmother and his mother. And Paul's encouragement is simple, let that word keep on shaping you.

Let the word keep on shaping you. And this continues our gospel shaped living series, because we've seen how the gospel shapes us to endure, to live with courage, to pray, to serve others and a couple of other things we've had. But today we see that the gospel shapes us through the word, the living God-breathed word that cannot be chained.

Can you recall someone who mentored you in the faith? Someone who planted that first seed or helped you take your first steps with Christ? Their faith is passed on by speaking the word to one another, by witnessing to the grace and love of God in ways that are caught and remembered. And see for Timothy, faith didn't appear out of nowhere, it was handed down, nurtured and lived out before him. The Holy Spirit worked through people in his life to shape his faith in Christ.

And so Paul reminds Timothy of his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice, two women who knew the scriptures and lived their faith in ways that formed his young heart. They didn't just tell him what to believe, they showed him also how to live. They didn't just tell him what to believe, they showed him how to live.

And Paul himself became a mentor for Timothy then, modeling endurance, courage and faithfulness under pressure. Timothy saw Paul suffer but also stand firm and he saw the word at work in Paul's life. So from childhood, Timothy was shaped through faithful relationships, godly mentors and the steady rhythm of hearing and believing the word.

That's how faith still grows today. Think again of Jesus loves me. You may not remember the day you learned it, but those words are still etched on your heart.

Brothers who maybe came to faith later in life, maybe it was through a friend or a pastor or someone who showed you Christ's love, maybe it was a song too or something. But in those moments, the Spirit is quietly shaping us, quietly shaping you, forming trust in a saviour who loves you, grounding that faith in God's word. That's exactly what Paul describes, the word shaping us through faithful people who pass it on.

So I ask you, who are your Lois and Eunice? Who has modelled a life shaped by the word to you? Who are you shaping in turn? Who are your Lois and Eunice who have passed down the faith to you? Who has modelled a life shaped by the word for you? And who are you shaping in turn? The Gospel Shaped Church is a mentoring community because we're passing the word from heart to heart, generation to generation. And this word, it brings life. It's the very breath of God, the Gospel, the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the very breath of God that brings life.

I was reflecting on this, I was thinking about, well, have you ever noticed in a good film, sometimes there's these scenes where someone opens up a letter or envelope and they get out a letter that's been written to them and they start reading it in their own voice and then there's like a fade out to the camera and then the person who actually wrote the letter, their voice dubs over as that person is sitting there reading it. And it can be done well, I think, like in *The Notebook* or *The Lake House*, some of those movies, which, yes, I have seen. And they, it begins with the reader's voice, quiet, reflective, but then the camera cuts away and suddenly you hear the voice of the one who wrote that letter.

And it's as if that writer comes alive in their moment, their words bridge distance and time, speaking directly into that moment where that person has those words before them. And maybe you've actually read old letters from someone you love, where you came across a bunch of old letters from your parents or grandparents that were stored away in an old suitcase. Maybe decades old or even older, but as you read, sometimes you can hear that voice, you can almost feel their presence, because that letter carries more than ink on paper, it carries breath, life, relationship.

And I think that's what Paul means when he says, all Scripture is God-breathed. When we're opening the Bible, we're not just reading ancient words, but we're hearing the living voice of the living God. The author himself is speaking.

There's Christ speaking his gospel through all of the Bible, and his breath fills these words with life and power. And just as those letters in a movie, they move the story forward, the Word of God moves us. It comforts us, it convicts, it corrects, and it gives us hope.

And that same Spirit who breathed these words, now breathes them, breathes through them, again, whenever we read or hear them. That's why Paul says Scripture is useful. Useful for teaching.

What's useful? It's forming our minds with God's truth, with the knowledge of God. But God's Word is also useful for rebuking. It exposes what's false in us.

It exposes our sin, our need for Jesus, for a Saviour. Scripture is useful for correcting. It helps us to get us back on the right path.

It shows us the godly way of living, the way that Jesus would want us to live. It also trains us in righteousness. It's forming our character to live like Christ.

There we go. And the result, as Paul says here, is that we become thoroughly equipped for every good work. The Word just doesn't fill our heads, it forms our lives.

So we let the Word breathe life into us. Let the Word breathe life into you. Don't just read it.

Let it read you. Let it sink deep into your heart and your being. Dwell in the Word and hear the voice of Christ speaking to you.

Let it shape your thoughts, your values, your prayers. That's how God grows us, to be shaped by the Gospel. When Scripture becomes the shaping voice in our lives.

When the Word shapes our lives, it doesn't stop there. It sends us out. Because as we're transformed by Christ and His Word, and equipped by His Word, our hearts grow for His mission.

To see others growing. To see others learning. To see others coming to faith.

Paul says to Timothy, It's like Paul's passing the baton on to Timothy. He's mentored him, he's grown up in the faith, and now it's time for him to step up. The Word that shaped him, now must be shared through him.

When I preach the Word, it doesn't mean just standing up here at the front like I am today. It also means letting the Gospel be that shaping authority and centre of all we say and do. How we speak it, how we live it.

And we do that in season and out of season. When it's convenient, when it's not. When people welcome it and when they resist it.

And as many of you would know, we live in a time when the message of Jesus isn't always popular. And the temptation is to reshape the Gospel to suit our culture. To make it more appealing or less confronting.

But through every era, throughout the generations of the Church and all the debates, all the changes, one truth remains. And that's Jesus Christ. True God and true man.

Who died for our sins, who rose again, who reigns with all power, and who will return to judge the living and the dead. Everything centres on Christ, on him. And that we are saved by grace through faith in Christ.

And so we live daily in repentance and faith. We return again and again to him. We say yes to Jesus each and every day.

We return to the font where our identity was shaped and given to us. And Paul knows that this Gospel-shaped living takes great patience and careful instruction because the Gospel of grace is counter-cultural. And like Timothy, we live amid competing voices.

Even within our own Christian faith community. Not here, but wider. And that's what Paul and Timothy were dealing with too.

Voices that were saying it's Jesus plus something else to be loved and accepted by him. Those old testament voices that were saying you needed to do this, this and this to be part of God's family. But Paul said no, it's just about Jesus.

It's trusting in him and returning to him each and every day in repentance and faith. Because there are people who would distort the truth. And teach Jesus plus something else.

So that you are loved by him. You know social media, that's a fantastic place to soothe these itching ears. Have you ever had an itchy ear and it's right inside and you just can't get to it and it keeps on annoying you? And it's just like argh! You want to get rid of it and you do whatever you can? That's what Paul's saying here.

We want to soothe itching ears. We want easy comfort. A place to justify what we want to be true.

And these become echo chambers. You find people who will satisfy our itch. Others.

And often it's these people, it's Jesus plus something else. Who don't use the word of God as Paul teaches Timothy. You know we're all guilty of that at times but it's coming back to what Paul says to Timothy.

And discerning these competing voices in the world. And so we ask that first one, it's useful for teaching. Do these competing voices, do they form our minds with God's truth? Because true teaching always points to Jesus who said, I am the truth.

Do they expose what is false in us and our need for Christ? Because the gospel, the word of God, it convicts us of our sin and reminds us of the salvation is God's work not ours. It shows us our need, shows us our sin and shows us our need for a saviour. Do those voices do that for us? Thirdly, do they set us back on the right track, on the right path when we lose our way for correction? The word leads to forgiveness.

The word always points us to Christ and his forgiveness, his grace and his love. Not to revenge, not to legalism, not to division. We see there's so much in the wider world in those messages.

The gospel always leads to forgiveness, grace and love. Maybe challenges on the way to get there, but that's always the goal. Those voices aren't saying that.

They're on the wrong track. And fourthly, training in faithfulness. Do they form our character to live like Christ? These voices we're hearing, are they actually growing us to be like Christ? To have fruit that's in line with the fruit of the Spirit.

Of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. That's the true mark of the gospel at work. If you think of all these things that Paul is talking about here, it covers a broad range.

And we could probably do a sermon series on all just these four points. Do they form our minds with God's truth? Do they expose what's false? Like, that we do sin, that we do need forgiveness. But it's not a free-for-all.

Do they set us back on the right path when we lose our way? Is it a signpost that's saying, this is the way. This is the way that God wants you to live. Forgiveness, grace and love.

And do they form our character to live like Christ, to be like Him? And that's what the word's for. It forms our minds, convicts our hearts and shapes our lives, among other things too. So Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so.

It's a little song that may be simple, but it contains a lifetime of truth. It reminds us that God's word not only teaches us about Jesus, it leads us to Him. And once we've met Him, that word continues to shape us.

Guiding, equipping and sending us out. So my brothers and sisters, be people shaped by the word. Let it dwell in you richly.

Read it, trust it, live it, proclaim it. When it's in season and when it's out of season. When it's easy and when it does cost you something.

Because this word, the gospel, still breathes. Breathes the living Christ. It still saves and it still sends.

So may it shape our lives, our church and our witness. Until the day Christ's voice calls us home. And so may the peace of God which passes our understanding might guard your hearts and minds.

In Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

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