

**“Scripture Saturated Saints”**  
Colossians 3:16

**Intro:**

There’s a lot that we could say that we believe about God’s Word. We believe that it is:

- Revelation from God,
- Inspired
- Inerrant
- Infallible
- Clear
- Authoritative
- Necessary
- Comprehensive
- Sufficient

But the question that we need to consider today is a bit more personal than what you believe objectively about the Bible. The question that we need to consider is if all that is true are you full of it?

Consider this poem by Maud Frazier Jackson:

*“What if I say the Bible is God's holy Word, complete, inspired without a flaw? But let its pages stay unread from day to day and fail to learn there from God's law. What if I go not there to seek the truth of which I glibly speak for guidance in this earthly way? Does it matter what I say?” (Maud Frazier Jackson quoted in 742 Heart Warming Poems, 45).*

Are you full of it?

Charles Spurgeon recognized this need:

*“Oh, that you and I might get into the very heart of the Word of God, and get that Word into ourselves! As I have seen the silkworm eat into the leaf, and consume it, so ought we to do with the Word of the Lord—not crawl over its surface, but eat right into it till we have taken it into our inmost parts. It is idle merely to let the eye glance over the words, or to recollect the poetical expressions, or the historic facts; but it is blessed to eat into the very soul of the Bible until, at last, you come to talk in Scriptural language, and your very style is fashioned upon Scripture models, and, what is better still, your spirit is flavored with the words of the Lord.”*

Consider John Bunyan - read anything of his, and you will see that it is almost like the reading the Bible itself. He had read it till his very soul was saturated with Scripture; and, though his writings are charmingly full of poetry, yet he cannot give us his Pilgrim’s Progress—that sweetest of all prose poems — without continually making us feel and say, *“Why, this man is a living Bible!”*

And then this famous line...

*“Prick him anywhere—his blood is Bibline, the very essence of the Bible flows from him. He cannot speak without quoting a text, for his very soul is full of the Word of God.”*

~C.H. Spurgeon

*“Oh, that you and I might get into the very heart of the Word of God, and get that Word into ourselves!”*

### Read Colossians 3: 1-16

That is what this text is driving us to - we are to be Scripture Saturated Saints.

- it should be our blood type as believers.
- and it was to be for the Colossian believers as well.

In this section of Colossians Paul has been talking about the character of the new man.

As those who have been

- raised up with Christ - verse 1
- have put on the new self - verse 10
- and have been chosen of God, holy and beloved - verse 12

There should be something radically different about us:

- our conduct should be different
- our speech should be different
- the way we treat one another should be different
- we forgive... we forbear... we love

And what should saturate our community is the Word of Christ. That word “dwell” means to be “at home”.

Five “P”s in this scripture:

1. **Permanent:** - it is clear that the “Word of Christ” is to be a permanent resident in your life.
  - in the Greek - prefix attached to the word dwell - literally read ‘Let it in-dwell in you.’
  - let the Word be in – in you.
  - it is to be deep and permanent - not easily dislodged.
2. **Permeate:** - the Word is also to permeate to fill every corner of our lives
  - the Word is to dwell richly or in full measure
  - it is to be abundant
  - the Word is to be given full access to every part of our lives

Matthew Henry said:

*“The word of Christ must dwell in us... not as a servant in a family, who is under another’s control, but as the master, who has the right to prescribe and direct all under his roof.. “*

Then he goes on to say...

*“Many have the word of Christ dwelling in them, but it dwells in them but poorly; it has no mighty force and influence upon them”* Matthew Henry, Zondervan NIV Matthew Henry Commentary, p. 687.

And not only is the word to be permanent and to permeate our lives it is also to dwell in us with great perception as well.

3. **Perception:** “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom”

- you can know Scripture without being wise in the Scripture
- **2 Timothy 2:15** - we must “rightly divide” or “accurately handle” the Word of Truth
- the sword should not be flailed around carelessly but used properly
- the Bible is a precision instrument and wields great power when used with skill

4. **Personally:** The Word is to dwell personally in you

- the “you” that he is referring to is the church body
- it is the responsibility of every believer to let the word of God fully dwell within them
- not just the leadership of the church
- not just the educated elite

Note: I know this may sound basic and it is, but this assumes that we can understand the Word of God.

5. **Perspicuity:**

- The Reformers, who affirmed the need for educated teachers in the Church, also affirmed what is known as the “perspicuity” (or clarity) of the Scriptures. By this, they did not mean that there are not things hard to understand. Even Peter said that Paul wrote things hard to understand (**2 Peter 3:16**). Rather, the doctrine of perspicuity teaches that the basic message of the Bible is clear and simple enough for any literate person to understand.

The Westminster Confession of Faith states it well:

*“All things in Scripture are not alike plain in themselves, nor alike clear unto all: yet those things which are necessary to be known, believed and observed for salvation, are so clearly propounded and opened in some place of Scripture or other, that not only the learned but the unlearned, in a due use of the ordinary means may attain unto a sufficient understanding of them”*

And there have been all kinds of attacks on the clarity of the Scriptures. For example -

A. Don’t read your Bible!

Last night I read an article by a Visiting professor of Theology at a popular college, who spent 14 pages arguing against the practice of Bible reading. Listen to what he says...

*“The oft repeated phrase ‘The Bible Says’ characterizes the history of evangelical convictions about the Bible- that to read the Bible modestly would yield the confident assurance that the word read was God’s for us. But the attendant piety of the phrase and its implicit Biblicist justification are embarrassing for some evangelicals, and Biblicism itself is a subject of disdain”*

*“There are vestiges of a Bible reading apologetic in this century’s emphasis upon Bible Study. The commitment to Bible reading among evangelicals sustained a series of commitments based on the conviction that the “Bible could ...be taken as read” This author says...“Christian faith seems to be healthier without biblicism”(Theology Today- Vol 53, No. 4 – January 1997- “The Bible Says”)*

So basically his position is that you would be better off leaving Bible Study to the professionals

- very similar to the Roman Catholic Church that determined in the council of Trent that it was the prerogative of "Holy Mother Church" to judge the true sense and interpretation of Scripture.

#### B. Do Read Your Bible!

Then there are others who say no we want you to read your Bibles, but for goodness sake don’t be certain about what you read. That would be arrogant! The Bible is full of mystery and we’re all on this journey together but we’re tired of people saying they know what it means by what it says.

- this is known as post-conservatism and is expressed in what’s known as the emergent movement.

John MacArthur gives this description in his book *The Truth War...*

*“uncertainty is the new truth. Doubt and skepticism have been canonized as a form of humility. Right and wrong have been redefined in terms of subjective feelings and personal perspectives.”<sup>1</sup>*

Kristen Bell wife of emergent church pastor Rob says *“I grew up thinking that we’ve figured out the Bible, that we knew what it means. Now I have no idea what most of it means. And yet I feel like life is big again.”<sup>2</sup>*

John MacArthur observes that *“the idea that the Christian message should be kept pliable and ambiguous seems especially attractive to young people who are in tune with the culture and in love with the spirit of the age and can’t stand to have authoritative biblical truth applied with precision as a corrective to worldly lifestyles, unholy minds, and ungodly behavior.”<sup>3</sup>*

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Andy Crouch, “The Emergent Mystique,” *Christianity Today*, November 2004, 38.

<sup>3</sup> John MacArthur, *The Truth War: Fighting for Certainty in an Age of Deception*, Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2007. xi.

And that only makes sense because... if the Bible isn't clear it can't be ...authoritative!

- How do I know don't commit adultery means don't commit adultery?
- That's your opinion...and so forth...

But we are not to leave Scripture to professionals and we shouldn't leave it to them.

**Colossians 3:16** - According to our verse the Word of God is to be a **permanent** and **permeating** influence in your life and you are to grow in your **perception** of its truth and you are to do that **personally** because God has left us a clear Word **perspicuous**.

We are to be:

- Word- driven
- Bibline-dripping
- Scripture-saturated saints

But how do you know that you're really Scripture-saturated?

- it's not as easy graduating from AWANA or a Scripture memory program
- that helps but that's not all there is to it
- it's not just what comes in - it's what comes out

There are 3 specific ways in this text that we can check ourselves to see if we are Scripture-saturated:

*It's been said that "the surest sign that you are carrying a full bucket is wet feet'... And when our lives are full, they will overflow." R. Kent Hughes, Colossians and Philemon: The Supremacy of Christ, p. 109.*

And the 3 signs of a saturated life are

- 1) Teaching
- 2) Admonishing
- 3) Singing

These are the wet feet of a full and overflowing life.

### 1) Teaching

We've already seen teaching mentioned in Colossians as the responsibility of the Spiritual leader

**Colossians 1:28** – *“And we proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, that we may present every man complete in Christ.”*

The apostles, as Spiritual leaders, were given the spiritual responsibility to teach. Within the church there are those that have been “made ministers” according to **Colossians 1:25** and have been gifted by God and given to the church

**Ephesians 4:11-12** - *“And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ;”*

**1 Corinthians 12:29** - All are not official teachers

- but that does not take that responsibility away from the rest of the church
- as you mature you are to become teachers yourselves
- and that is listed here as an evidence of be saturated with the Scriptures  
*“with all wisdom teaching and admonishing **one another**”*
- this is a responsibility that the church body has to one another - not just the pastors

**Hebrews 5:12** - *“For though by this time you ought to be teachers,”*

- Did that mean that everyone he was addressing should have been a formal teacher in the church? No, but it did mean that they should have known enough to start instructing someone else.

**Titus 2:3** - *“Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips, nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good,”*

- Were the women to be the formal teachers of the church? No, not according to **1 Timothy 2:12**. But they were to be involved in teaching informally in the church.

Everyone should not have a pulpit in the church.

- In fact **James 3:1** warns against that -

*“Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we shall incur a stricter judgment.”*

- But you don’t need to have a pulpit and a microphone to teach.
- I should have all kinds of help in here with teaching.
- Everybody can share what they are learning with somebody else.

Unfortunately people come into a church. They look at the Pastor and say “well, that job’s taken.” And then they go to a Sunday school and say “well, that job’s taken” and they go to a care group or small group and say “well, that job’s taken”. And then what do they say next “There’s no place for me to serve”. What do you mean by that? Find somebody who knows less than you do and teach them. Do you know what that’s called? Discipleship!!

**Matthew 28 :19-20** - *"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."*

- share what God is teaching you
- talk about what scripture you have read
- discuss a sermon you have heard

If you are full of Scripture it's going to spill out. You are going to want to share with somebody what the Lord is teaching you. Are you full of it? (Rich Devotions)

We should long to have spiritual conversations when we are with each other.

David Brainerd (missionary to the Native Americans during colonial America) *said "It is sweet to hear nothing but spiritual discourse from God's children"* (Brainerd, 133). And he lamented the fact that he could scarcely find Christians that wanted to talk about spiritual things.

We can talk about the weather, sports and politics with anybody. When we are with believers let's talk about the book!

The second sign of a Scripture-saturated Christian:

## 2) Admonishing

Again admonishment is part of the minister's responsibility given in **Colossians 1:28**.

- it's the word (**noutheteo**) that literally means "to put in the mind"
- it can be translated exhort, instruct, admonish or warn
- this is teaching with bit of a bite to it
- it's not just the pastor's job to do this

**Romans 15:14** - *"And concerning you, my brethren, I myself also am convinced that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, and able also to admonish one another."*

To the church at Thessalonica Paul wrote:

**1 Thessalonians 5:14** - *"And we urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with all men."*

The church as a body was encouraged to help counsel, comfort, and if needed, bring about some conviction in the lives of those that needed it.

Listen:

- it may not be your job to discipline somebody but it is your duty to warn them
- don't let people walk into sin without walking over you

Too often we look at someone who is going the wrong way and we shrug our shoulders and say "hey, it's not my problem." What do you mean it's not your problem? Am, I my brother's keeper? Yes, you are. For the love of Christ and for the love of His church get involved in somebody's life.

- that takes some spiritual nerve
- if you are saturated with Scripture that's what will spill out when you do talk

The third sign of a Scripture-saturated Christian:

### 3) Singing

Now there some debate here and it has to do with punctuation.

Should we read this verse:

*"Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another **with** psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God."*

Or should we read it...

*"Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another, (how?...) with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God."*

In other words are psalms, hymns and spiritual songs the way we teach and admonish one another or are psalms, hymns and spiritual songs the way we sing with thankfulness to the Lord?

- My position is that it makes more sense to say that psalms hymns and spiritual songs are the way we sing with thankfulness to the Lord.
- But that is not to say that songs do not teach and admonish us.

One commentator says...

*"It is no exaggeration to say that songs have taught more theology to new converts than textbooks."* The Wycliffe Bible Commentary, p. 1344.

- a. One of the reasons that have been true historically is because many ancient people could not read. One illustration of that can be found in the ministry of John Newton. Newton ministered in Olney, a poor parish in rural Buckinghamshire for 16 years.

From Todd Murray's book *Beyond Amazing Grace*:

*"Many of the people in Olney were illiterate lace-makers who practiced their intricate trade in lowly cottages. In order to pass the time while they worked, lace-makers often recited or chanted to one another rhyming stories, or poems, called 'tells'.*

*It was hearing these 'tells' as he passed the windows of homes in and around Olney that gave Newton the idea of writing new, spiritual, 'tells' for the people of his church. If they could not read, they certainly possessed a great capacity for memorizing, and he was determined to give them something worth chanting. It was these poems that would eventually become Newton's great hymns."* (Murray, 17).

- b. Another reason that songs have taught more theology than books is because songs are just more memorable. If I were to ask you without looking at your notes what my main points were from two weeks ago I doubt you could tell me. But if I were to ask what is the first verse of Amazing Grace, that would be a different story. I believe in the power of preaching. If I didn't I wouldn't give my life to it but it would seem that the benefit of preaching is more about the moment while the benefit of music seems to be much more lasting.
  - That's one of the reasons I warn people about what they listen to because it's hard to get it out once it lodges in there. East Coast Hip Hop from the mid 80's to mid 90's dominated my thinking. I don't even have to try to think of the words to certain songs they just come without any effort at all.
  - Songs have a way of sticking to us don't they? That's why if we're going to be full of Scripture the songs we listen to should be full of Scriptural truth.
  - Singing in **Colossians 3:16** is tied back into the initial command to *"let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly."* The music of the church should be biblical music.

Warren Wiersbe says...

*"A singer has no more right to sing a lie than a preacher has to preach a lie"* Warren Wiersbe, *Be Complete: How to become the Whole Person God Intends You to Be*, p. 118.

- If we are going to take this verse seriously our singing must be biblical and if we are Scripture-saturated that's what's going to spill out. Deep Scriptural teaching and shallow music don't mix. If you're full of Scripture you want something that expresses what's on the inside of you and shallow music doesn't cut it.

And it's not about the style as much as it is about the content. I won't go so far as to say style doesn't matter at all. But the emphasis here is whether or not it's biblical.

Paul mentions at least three different styles of music here:

1. Psalms
2. Hymns
3. Spiritual songs

**1. Psalms:** (psalmos) - most likely referred to the Psalms of David as it does elsewhere in the Scripture.

- It's interesting to note that the verb form of this word (psallo) means to "pluck" or to "twang" a stringed instrument. So just in case you were worried about the guitar there is justification for twanging in the NT.
- The early reformed churches excluded musical instruments from their worship partly because they could not find the use of instruments in the New Testament but here in the word itself it allows for it.
- And for my percussionist friends we at least have the cymbals in **Psalm 150:5** and it says they were loud.

But Psalms likely refers to Psalms of David. And we put many of the psalms to music to praise our God.

**James 5:13** – *"Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praises (psalms)."*

**2. Hymns:** - most likely referring to the early theological praises to Christ as God. Pliny the Younger who the was an ancient Roman politician and author wrote to Emperor Trajan (A.D. 111-112) to tell him of this strange sect. Listen to what he said.

*"Christians in Bithynia met on a fixed day before dawn and "recited an antiphonal hymn to Christ as God"* – Pliny epistles 10.96 quoted in F.F. Bruce

Some even believe **Colossians 1:15-20** could have been used as one of these hymns

<sup>15</sup>He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. <sup>16</sup>For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him. <sup>17</sup>He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. <sup>18</sup>He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything. <sup>19</sup>For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him, <sup>20</sup>and

*through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven.*

- 3. Spiritual Songs:** - referred to songs of praise which were more of a response to God's truth that came from the heart.

Again history helps us out here. Tertullin in his apology describes an early Christian gathering.

*"Each is invited to sing to God in the presence of the others from what he knows of the holy scriptures or from his own heart" (Tertullian, Apology 39:18).*

Even this brief introduction lets us know that the style varied. What was most important was the content of the lyrics. Was it full of Scripture? Was it biblical? A Scripture-saturated Christian wants it no other way.

It's no wonder that...

*"The record of Christian Awakenings during the last 2,000 years shows that whenever the Word of God is recovered it is received with great joy which is inevitably expressed in song." (R. Kent Hughes, 112).*

If you are full of Scripture this will be the sign of it.

And what's interesting to note is that if you are full of the Spirit the signs are identical.

Turn to **Ephesians 5:18-20**

*18 And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit,  
19 speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord;  
20 always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father;*

Now back to **Colossians 3:16**

*16 Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.*

Sometimes you may read that we are to be full of the Spirit and that may be hard to get your arms around. How do I become full of the Spirit? It is to be yielded or surrendered to the Spirit's control. But you don't have to make that some mystical experience. If you are surrendered and yielded to the Word of God you are also yielded to the Spirit who wrote it. There is no difference.

One of my favorite characters in scripture is the first martyr of the church, Stephen. The first thing that we learn about Stephen is he was a man of good reputation and full of the Spirit (**Acts 6:3**).

- How did they know that he was full of the Spirit? If you read through **Acts 7** you'll see a sermon full of Scripture - 51 verses - without notes.
- if you pricked Stephen anywhere—his blood is Bibline.

Scripture-filled saints are Spirit-filled saints. And our songs are a demonstration of the thankfulness in our hearts to God. As we fill our minds with truth we can't help but respond in thanksgiving to our God for all that's been revealed to us.

And you can be thankful that all of those ministries are going on right here. The teaching God's Word, the Admonishment of God's Word and the Singing of God's Word? Are all present right here in this place.

Do you appreciate it? And are you taking full advantage of it?

William Carey is considered the father of the modern missionary movement. He left for India in June of 1793 and didn't see an Indian convert for 6 years. He said:

*"I would not abandon the Mission for all the fellowships and the finest spheres in England. My greatest calamity would be separation from this service. May I be useful in laying the foundations of Christ's Church in India; I desire no greater reward, nor can conceive higher honour" (Carey, 169)*

*"If like David, I am only to gather materials, and another to build the house, my joy shall not be less" (Carey, 169)*

God was pleased not only to use him to lay a foundation but also to build upon it. And the greatest means of building was through his translation of the Scriptures into Bengali as well as several other Indian languages. In February of 1801, more than 7 years after Carey arrived in India the New Testament was printed, the first book for the common people ever printed. It was a historic event. He and his small team prayed, thanked God and William Carey chose **Colossians 3:16** as his text for preaching. *"Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly"*.

Marshman, a fellow missionary composed this hymn for the occasion:

*Hail, precious Book divine!  
Illumined by thy rays,  
We rise from death and sin,  
And tune the Savior's praise:  
The shades of error, dark as night,  
Vanish before thy radiant light!*

Now shall the Hindus learn  
 The glories of our King:  
 Nor to blind gurus turn,  
 Nor idol praises sing;  
 Diffusing heavenly light around,  
 This book their Shastras shall confound.  
 Deign, gracious Saviour, deign, (stoop or condescend)  
 To smile upon Thy Word;  
 Let millions now obtain  
 Salvation from the Lord (Carey, 198).

Conclusion: **Colossians 3: 16-17**

16 Let the word of Christ richly dwell  
 within you,  
 with all wisdom

**teaching**  
 and **admonishing** one another

with psalms  
 and hymns  
 and spiritual songs,

**singing**  
 with thankfulness  
 in your hearts to God.

17 And whatever you do  
 in word  
 or deed,  
 do all in the name of the Lord Jesus,  
**giving** thanks  
 through Him  
 to God the Father.