

*I don't have enough* **FAITH**  
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with Dr. Frank Turek **PODCAST**

## **Progressive Christianity: Coming to A Church Near You**

(February 27, 2021)

What is the Bible? Is it God's Word or is it man's word about God? Well, according to a church in Nashville, Tennessee, it is the later. Alisa Childers here filling in for Frank Turek today. Welcome to, I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist. Today, we're going to talk about a church in Nashville, Tennessee that went from evangelical to, what they describe as progressive, over the course of several years. This was a slow and subtle shift in the beginning and then it gained momentum. And over the last few years, they have rebranded themselves and put up a new belief statement, new core values. We're going to take a look at all of those things because last week they made headlines when they shared a meme on social media that claimed that the Bible is not the word of God. We're going to take a look at that meme and discuss what we are all likely to see popping up more and more. And that is churches that identify both as Christian and as progressive.

I hope today's show will give you some insight into what you're likely going to start seeing coming to a church near you. We're going to talk about some danger signs to look for, some ideologies to be on the lookout for. So, right now there aren't a ton of churches that identify themselves as progressive Christian churches. In many cases, progressive Christians go to non-denominational churches or mainline denominations. In some cases, they join conservative churches in hopes of changing the beliefs and the core values of the communities that they're in.

So, according to an article published on the Christian post last week, this church in Nashville has drawn the ire of the internet by sharing a message on social media declaring the Bible, not only to be not the word of God, but also not inerrant and not infallible. So, they basically posted a meme on their Facebook page...it was two columns...so, on one side, it said "The Bible isn't", and on the other side of the column it said, "The Bible is". And so, here's the list of things that this progressive church in Nashville, Tennessee says the Bible isn't.

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They say the Bible isn't the Word of God. It isn't self-interpreting. It isn't a science book. It isn't an answer/rulebook. It isn't an errand or infallible. And on the other side, the meme says this: The Bible is a product of community, a library of text, multi-vocal, it is a human response to God, it is living and dynamic. So, as of Wednesday, the post had gotten over 1200 emoji reactions and 1800 comments. So, of the emojis that people were putting on this post, more than half were angry faces, just over 300 were the laughing emojis, and more than 100 were sad faces. So, of all of these reactions, only 157 reactions, just showed any kind of approval for the post.

And so, they asked the pastor to comment on these reactions and if he felt that it was a good conversation to have online. And so, the pastor wrote this...he said, you know, my intent really was, this is a conversation that we're having in our community. So yeah, I do think it's a good conversation. And I think it's a conversation that needs to happen within that, sort of, the broader Christian culture. He says, I think we definitely have a tendency to treat the Bible, almost as an idol, and in doing so we fail, I think, to see the real call, which is never for us to just read something, but always for us to read it, wrestle with it, and then embody the rest of it the way we live our lives in the world.

And so, here we go. Let's take this conversation to the broader Christian culture. Let's start with the pastor's comment that we have a tendency to treat the Bible almost as an idol. Now, this is a claim that I see pop up over and over and over again in my work interacting with this movement of progressive Christianity. In fact, in my book, *Another Gospel?: A Lifelong Christian Seeks Truth in Response to Progressive Christianity*, I comment on this very sentiment. You'll hear the phrase sometimes, Bibliolotry, or the Bible being referred to as the third member of the Trinity. And I just want to say, I think this is a bit of a straw man. Of course, in logic, a straw man is when you construct a much weaker version of your opponent's actual view, which is much easier to kick down. It's kind of like building a scarecrow in a cornfield. It's a lot easier to kick down a scarecrow than it is a 200 pound man that you might be trying to kick down. So, in logic, this is called a straw man.

I think this idle Bible idol thing is a bit of a straw man, I don't actually know any Christians in real life, who treat the Bible as an idol, who worship the Bible. You know, if we think about what the word idol means the word idol has to do with carved images that someone makes to make an

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image of the God that they're worshipping. And so, the charge coming from progressive Christians, that more conservative Christians might be treating the Bible like an idol, would be to imply that we somehow put the Bible on a higher level of authority than God, or than Jesus, or than the Holy Spirit. But this accusation falls apart, when we really think about who Jesus is, and what he had to say about the Bible. This is something we're going to talk about in some of the next segments. But let's take a look at this meme and talk through it.

The Bible isn't the Word of God, according to this progressive Christian church. Well, my first question would be: How do you know that? By what standard? do you justify saying, the Bible definitely is not the word of God. But again, if you're unfamiliar with the movement of progressive Christianity, this is a very common theme. In fact, I would say one of the biggest differences between progressive Christianity and, what I call historic Christianity, is its view of the Bible. So, historically speaking, Christians have viewed the Bible as the Word of God, as we'll talk about in the next segments. This was the view of Jesus. This was the view of his disciples and apostles and the early church fathers. This is how Christians have settled arguments for 2000 years, by knowing that the Bible is our standard for truth. Yes, we may disagree about interpretations, we might have quibbles over what different words mean in relation to certain doctrines, but as Christians, historically, we have settled our arguments, believing that the Bible is God's word.

But along comes progressive Christianity, and according to progressive Christianity, the Bible isn't God's word. You might find God's word within it, you might be inspired by something you read in it, but in its entirety it's not inspired by God from start to finish. So, for example, when an Old Testament prophet, or even a New Testament prophet or biblical writer claims to be speaking for God, according to progressive Christianity, they aren't necessarily speaking for God, but they're just doing the best they can in their times and places to understand God. In many cases, in progressive materials, you'll read how ancient Israelites just simply looked out into the cultures around them. They copied the blood sacrifices they saw their neighbors doing. They assumed that their God, Yahweh, was this mean and angry deity that needed to be appeased by blood. And so, therefore, they recorded in the Bible that they would need to bring these sacrifices and they would need to slaughter a lamb or a bowl and pour its blood on the side of the altar.

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So, according to progressive Christianity, that wasn't God telling them to do that because, according to progressive Christianity, God would never do such things. God would never require the Israelites to wipe out the Canaanites. According to progressive Christianity, the Bible doesn't get God right. You cannot necessarily discover the true nature of God by reading the Bible. So, when we come back, in our next segment, we're going to talk about where progressive Christians look to find that standard for truth to decide who God is and who he isn't. We'll be right back.

Welcome back to, I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist. I'm Alisa Childers filling in for Frank Turek. Today we're talking about a self-described progressive Christian Church in Nashville that made headlines last week when they put out a meme that went viral about what the Bible is and what it isn't. So, the meme is separated into two columns. On the left side, it said "The Bible Isn't", and five statements follow that. And on the right, it said, "The Bible Is", and five statements follow that. Just before the break, we talked about the first statement that this progressive Christian church makes about the Bible, which is, the Bible isn't the Word of God. We're going to talk about that a bit more in the next segment. But I want to read through this meme, and then we're going to talk through some of these phrases.

So, according to this meme, the Bible isn't the Word of God. It isn't self-interpreting. It isn't a science book. It isn't an answer/rulebook. It isn't inerrant or infallible. On the other side of the meme, the claim is that the Bible is a product of community. It is a library of texts. It is multi-vocal. It is a human response to God. It is living and dynamic. So, before we dig into the meat of this meme, I want to talk to you about something that I have come across in my research into this movement of progressive Christianity.

I spent the better part of two years reading every progressive Christian book I could get my hands on, listening to their podcasts, and reading their blog posts, trying to get to the bottom of what they believe in. I Chronicle all of that in my book, *Another Gospel*, which you can get at [AlisaChilders.com/anothergospel](http://AlisaChilders.com/anothergospel). But one thing that really stood out to me in all of my research, is that very often, progressive Christians will use a lot of the same words and phrases that Christians have used historically, but they actually mean something very different when they use those phrases. And I'll give you an example. Take the phrase, divine inspiration. We're talking about the Bible here, so let's talk about divine inspiration. Many progressive Christians

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will tell you yes, the Bible is divinely inspired, but they mean that in a much different way than Christians have historically meant.

So, the historic understanding of the word inspiration is that God literally breathed out his words through humans. So, these humans that God used to breathe out his word, we can see their personalities, their cultures, their writing styles. God used them as vehicles to put his words on the page, so it wasn't the writers themselves who were inspired but it was the words that they wrote down. In the Bible, of course, 2 Timothy 3:16-17 gives us a working definition. It says, "16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17 so that the servant of God[a] may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."

So, that phrase, breathed out by God, comes from one single Greek word that suggests that scripture is actually the very breath of God Himself. Dr. Michael Kruger, great Bible scholar, he wrote this. He says, "this suggests the absolute highest authority for scripture, the authority of the Divine voice." And so, when Christians talk about the Bible being divinely inspired, they're talking about the authority of the Divine voice of God. But often, when we see this phrase used in progressive Christianity, they mean something very different. Of course, as we've already seen, they don't believe that the Bible is the Word of God, and so, when they use the phrase inspired, very often that definition falls into the category of something you might read that you find very inspiring.

In fact, I know a progressive pastor who said, "yes, the Bible is divinely inspired on the same level as the works of CS Lewis, or AW Tozer, or something that you might really find inspiring in a sermon". And so, this is a phenomenon that Hillary Ferrer, of Mama Bear Apologetics, refers to in her book, as linguistic theft. And so, she defines linguistic theft as, someone who purposefully hijacks words, changes their definition, and uses those same words as tools of propaganda. Now, this is very interesting because I see this quite often in the progressive Christian movement, and as we get a little bit more into this meme, we're gonna have to talk more about linguistic theft, because we're going to see this happen again and again.

But very quickly before we get into that, I want to tell you five ways that Hillary identifies how linguistic theft can undermine real communication, because that's the point, right. We want to

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have a real conversation where we understand the person we're talking to, we represent their views accurately, and we interact with our agreements or our disagreements in a charitable way. But when someone's engaging in linguistic theft, this becomes really difficult. So, here are five ways Hillary says that this can actually really undermine meaningful conversation.

Number one, it can stop conversations in their tracks. So, we actually see this quite a bit on social media, don't we? So, if you accuse your ideological opponent of "hate speech" the discussion is over. Right? It's a way of ending conversations. Whereas just because someone disagrees with you, it's not necessarily hate speech. But that word hate, in the phrase hate speech, has gotten co-opted. It's been linguistically accepted very often.

The second thing that linguistic theft can do to undermine communication is, it causes people to jump into action before they think an issue all the way through. And again, social media is just a breeding ground for this. Every time something happens, you sort of feel this pressure, right. You don't have time you're not allowed to take time to wait for all the facts to come in. You're expected to jump on whatever virtue signaling bandwagon Twitter is on that day, what cause they've decided you need to advocate for, and you have, like, a small amount of time to jump on social media and do your virtue signal or you could get canceled. I mean, this is something, a pressure, all of us feel. Often this is caused by linguistic theft and it causes people to jump to action before thinking an issue all the way through.

The third thing it does is, it really blurs the details. If we think about this social media virtue signaling, you're not really expected to wait until the facts come in. In fact, that can even sometimes be called, you know, complicity or something, if you wait for the facts to come in. It blurs the details of things going on and it causes conversations to not be as clear.

The fourth thing that linguistic theft can do is, it can vilify the opposing viewpoint. And again, I keep going back to social media for this, but I can't tell you how many times on social media someone would disagree with someone else and then they would be called, literally, Hitler or something along those lines. So, linguistic theft can vilify the opposing viewpoint by turning it into a real negative. And that actually brings us to our fifth point.

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The fifth thing that linguistic theft can do is, it turns a negative into a positive, or vice versa. We really want to be on the lookout for this one as we work through this meme. So think, just as an example, think about the terms pro-choice and reproductive justice. These are positive terms. They sound nice. I mean, everybody wants to be pro-something. Everybody wants justice, right. Well, these are just positive phrases that are used to shield people from the horrifying reality of abortion. It turns a negative into a positive, so you feel better stating it or advocating for it.

So, that's just a little summary of linguistic theft. Now, we're going to see this happen right here with the second phrase that we're going to look at in this meme. So, we talked about the claim, the Bible isn't the Word of God. Let's talk about the next claim. According to this progressive Christian meme, the Bible is not self-interpreting. Now, when Christians use the phrase, self-interpreting, we're coming to the text with the assumption that the primary author of the Bible is God. Right? We talked about the historic definition of divine inspiration. We believe that this is God's word breathed out through these people. So, if God is the divine author, then we know that God is not confused, God does not make mistakes, God does not lie. So therefore, His Word is not confused, His Word does not lie, His word does not make mistakes.

And so, when we say it's self-interpreting, we know that if there's a verse that's maybe a bit unclear about something, we interpret that verse in light of other verses that are more clear about that topic, because we know that the Bible speaks from one voice. It's internally coherent. It's telling the same story from Genesis to Revelation. But in the progressive paradigm, we've already learned they don't believe the Bible is the Word of God. And so, if they view the Bible as being written by lots of different people without one unifying divine voice, well, you can see why they wouldn't think that it's self-interpreting, because all of these people could be in disagreement with one another, they could be contradicting with each other. And so, in progressive Christianity, it's perfectly fine to think that there are contradictions and inconsistencies within the Bible. That's not a problem for progressive Christians because they really don't believe that God is the primary author.

The next statement this meme makes about the Bible is that the Bible isn't a science book. Now this is an interesting claim because I would generally agree with this, the Bible is not primarily a science book, however, when we think about co-opted language, in my dealings with progressive Christianity in reading their materials and listening to their podcasts, I've heard

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many times over the claim that the Bible actually makes mistakes about science, it gets scientific facts wrong. In fact, in her book about the inspiration of Scripture, progressive author Rachel Held Evans claims that the Bible presupposes a flat and stationary Earth, it just simply got these facts wrong. So, while we as Christians would agree that the Bible is not a science book, we would say that what it communicates in regard to something that might intersect with science is not going to be incorrect. Now part of the doctrine of inerrancy tells us that the Bible always is literally true, but it doesn't always communicate truths in a literal way. We recognize figures of speech, metaphor, poetic language, but the truth that's being communicated will be true.

The next thing this meme claims is that the Bible is not an answer or rulebook. Again, I agree. It's not primarily an answer book, it's not primarily a rulebook, but it contains lots of answers and it does contain a lot of rules. It gives us the answers to the deepest questions of life: Who are we? How did we get here? Who is God? What's wrong with the world? How is that going to get fixed? It answers the deepest questions of life. It's not a rulebook. It's not a dictionary you open to go down and find out what you're supposed to do today. But it does contain rules, because we know God is holy, and he's going to have something to say about what is called sin, what is evil. There will be rules about what we should and what we shouldn't do as humans living this life. So, primarily, it's not an answer book, not a rulebook, but it does contain answers and rules. When we come back we'll continue working our way through this meme. We'll be right back.

Welcome back to, I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist. I'm Alisa Childers. It has been so great to be with you today. Have you heard of CrossExamined instructor Academy, or as we fondly refer to it, CIA? So, I went to my first CrossExamined Instructor Academy in 2016. I had spent several years studying apologetics, trying to learn all the information I could, and I had just started to teach apologetics classes at my church. And so, I wanted to learn how to get better at presenting the material that I had been studying. I wanted to learn how I could get better at putting this information out into the world through the internet, maybe starting a blog. Of course, I didn't think I was gonna start a blog, or a podcast, or any of that before I went to CIA. I was inspired to do all of that once I was there.

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And honestly, CrossExamined Instructor Academy changed my life. I got personal training from people like Greg Koukl and J. Warner Wallace, Frank Turek, Brett Kunkle. It was just an amazing experience that really launched my apologetics ministry that I didn't dream would end up with me working alongside Frank Turek, and others, as an instructor at the next CIA. So listen, if you love apologetics, if you want to learn how to get better at presenting that information, you have got to come and be with us for three days of training at CIA. Okay? 2021 is going to be at Chino Hills, California, August 12th-14th. So, all of the people I mentioned will be there along with myself, Richard Howe, Sean McDowell, Jorge Gil. Oh, and my girl, Natasha Crain, she's coming back. It is going to be a blast.

Go to [CrossExamined.org](https://www.crossexamined.org) to apply and to find out more about this wonderful training opportunity called CrossExamined Instructor Academy on the website there, there's an event tab you can click on, it'll give you all the information, it will take you to the application. I would sure love to see you there.

So, today we've been talking about a self-described progressive Christian church in Nashville that made headlines last week with a meme claiming that the Bible is not the word of God. So, we've been talking through the claims that this church has been making about what the Bible isn't, and then we're going to get into what the Bible is, according to this church. So, what we've talked about so far is this claim that the Bible isn't the Word of God. it isn't self-interpreting, it isn't a science book, it isn't an answer/rulebook. And the final two statements that this church claims the Bible isn't, is inerrant or infallible.

Well, I suppose if you don't believe that the Bible is inspired by God, if you don't believe that it's his word, you wouldn't have any reason to think that it's inerrant or infallible. But as we'll see in a moment, I want to give us a charge today. If you call yourself a Christian, if you identify yourself as a Jesus follower, isn't it reasonable that your view of the Bible should be what Jesus view of the Bible is? I think that's reasonable. If I'm gonna say, I'm a Jesus follower, I'm a Christian, and then I disagree with Jesus, I really shouldn't call myself a Christian, I shouldn't call myself a Jesus follower. Of course, everyone has the right to come to a different conclusion, to disagree with Jesus, to say, look, I think Jesus got it wrong, but I would argue that I don't think we should call ourselves Christians if we're going to disagree with Jesus.

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So, in a moment, we're going to talk about what Jesus did teach about the Bible. But before that, let's go over to this other column. The right side of the meme is a column that makes five claims about what the Bible is. So, according to this self-described progressive church in Nashville, the Bible is a product of community. Now, remember, in the last segment, we talked about what Hillary Ferrer calls, linguistic theft. This is when people take words, redefine them, and then use them as tools of propaganda, knowing that you don't define those words in the same way. Keep that in mind, as we read through the claims of what this church says the Bible is, well, the Bible is a product of community. Well, we would all agree with that it is a product of community. God breathed out his word through lots of different human authors that came from different cultures, had different grammar styles, spoke different languages.

But what we have to understand in the progressive Christian mindset, when they say it's a product of community, remember, they don't believe that this is the word of God. They don't believe that God is the primary author of Scripture. So, when they say it's a product of community, they're talking about communities of people throughout history that have been trying to understand God writing a book about their best understandings of God, and they build upon each other's work, but there's no meaningful sense of divine inspiration, at least, how that phrase is historically understood.

Next, they claim that the Bible is a library of texts. Well, we can agree with this. The Bible isn't just one book, it's a collection of a lot of books that have different genres, like I said, written in different languages. We have Hebrew in the Old Testament, some Aramaic, we have Greek in the New Testament. People were multilingual, they spoke different languages. So, this is a library of texts that have different genres; there's poetry, there's history, there's epistles, there's letters, there's prophecy, there's all kinds of different types of literary styles that make up the Bible, so we can agree with that one.

The next claim is that the Bible is multi-vocal. And again, think about that co-opted language. If you're coming to the Bible with the understanding that God is the primary author, understanding it as being multi-vocal could be humans and God working together, God breathing his word out through people. But if you come from the progressive Christian paradigm, multi-vocal simply means multi-human vocal.

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In fact, we see this proven out with the next statement that is made. According to this meme, the Bible is a human response to God. Now in all of my research into the movement of progressive Christianity, I think that this phrase sums up the progressive view the best. Primarily speaking, progressive Christians believe that the Bible is a human response to God. In his book, *A New Kind of Christianity*, early emergent leader and influential progressive Christian, Brian McLaren, compared the scriptures to fossils in layers of sediment. In essence, we need to dig out those fossils, dust them off, we need to analyze and understand what our spiritual ancestors believed about God in their times and places. But then, according to Brian McLaren, we've now come to a higher and wiser view of God. So, we can look back and decide if they got that part about God right or wrong. So, this is the progressive view, that the Bible is a human response to God. But as we'll find out in just a moment, this is not what Jesus believed about the Bible.

And finally, this progressive Church says the Bible is living and dynamic. Now we can agree with this, to a certain extent. The book of Hebrews tells us that, the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two edged sword. But again, think about that linguistic theft, that co-opted language. It's living and dynamic. Often in progressive circles, this is taken to mean that the interpretations will change, the meanings of the words will change and apply completely differently in modern context than it would have in the ancient context.

Now, certainly, application is going to be a bit different. We're facing different things in our culture, we're facing different obstacles, different spirit of the age that we have to face, but the truths that are communicated in the Bible are eternal; they do not change, God does not change, His word does not change. And so, this living and dynamic idea of progressive Christianity is often used as a cover to, basically say, we think that the meaning of the text can change. We can make it mean something different in our time and place now. So, that is the progressive meme that drew the ire of the internet with over 1000 negative responses, only 157 positive reactions approving of the post.

But as we think about all the statements that have been made today, you know what I care about? I care about what Jesus believed about scripture. I want to know what he thought the Bible was. Because ultimately, as Jesus followers, we want our view of the Bible to line up with Jesus' view. The first claim this progressive Christian mean makes is that the Bible isn't the

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Word of God. Well, is that what Jesus taught? Well, if there's one thing Jesus affirmed over and over and over again, it's that the Old Testament scriptures were, "the Word of God". He says this in Matthew 15:4, he references several commands from Exodus, Leviticus and Deuteronomy. And then he says this, for God said, and then he quotes that book.

In Mark 7:8-13, he criticizes the Pharisees for leaving, "the commandment of God". Notice, Jesus doesn't say he's criticizing them for leaving what their ancient scribes wrote, or he's criticizing them for moving away from what their ancestors thought about God in their times and places. No, he says he criticizes them for leaving the commandment of God. And they were adding their own traditions to Scripture. He told them plainly that they void the Word of God with their traditions. In Matthew 22, just before quoting Exodus 36, he says point blank, have you not read what God said to you?

So, Jesus clearly believed that the Bible is the Word of God, that it's not just a human response to God. Although, certainly, we see human responses to God recorded in the Bible. The Book of Psalms, we see beautiful prayers and songs recorded. But that's not Jesus' view that the Bible is not the word of God. It's not the view of Jesus that it's primarily a human response to God. We also know Jesus believed that the Bible was inspired by God.

So, there was this one situation where Jesus was arguing with the Pharisees who were gathered in the temple courts and what does he do? He appeals to the inspiration of Scripture to help them understand that the Messiah was just more than a descendant of David. He said this to the Pharisees. He says, "how is it then that David, speaking by the Spirit, called him"...and he's talking about the Messiah..."Lord"? So, it's here we get our very definition of what divine inspiration is, right here from Jesus Himself.

Now, of course, the authority and inspiration of Scripture are closely connected, because if you believe the Bible is the Word of God, if you believe it's inspired by God, then you're going to naturally believe that it's authoritative for your life, which in progressive Christianity, generally, they don't believe the Bible is authoritative. So, whenever Jesus appeals by saying, it is written, he was also appealing to inspiration. We know this from Bible scholar, John Wenham, who wrote, "it's clear that Jesus understood, it is written, to be equivalent to, God says. In fact, Jesus and His apostles quote the Old Testament by using the phrase, it is written, or its equivalent,

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dozens of times in the New Testament." So, it's so clear to me that Jesus didn't see scripture as simply a human product. And if I'm going to call myself a Jesus follower, my view of the Bible should line up with Jesus. We'll be right back.

Welcome back to, I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist. We are talking about Jesus' view of Scripture. We talked about how Jesus believes the Bible is the Word of God, that it's inspired by God, and how that contradicts a recent meme that made headlines from a church in Nashville that claims to be a progressive church. This meme states that the Bible is not the word of God, that it's not inerrant and not infallible. But does that view line up with Jesus? If we're going to call ourselves Jesus followers shouldn't our view of the Bible be what his view of the Bible is? I think everybody has a right to say, hey, I disagree with Jesus. That's fine. You don't have to accept what he says. But if you're going to call yourself a Christian, your views on the Bible should line up with his, or maybe we should call ourselves something else if they don't line up.

What else did Jesus think about the scriptures? Well, Jesus believed that the scriptures were authoritative for our lives. Now, this basically means that the Bible is something that we, as Jesus followers, are compelled to obey. We take it at its word. So, the authority of the Word of God has been in question all throughout human history. You can trace this back to the Garden of Eden when the serpent said those fateful words to Eve, he said: Did God really say? And it seems he's been asking that question ever since. So, that same serpent came to tempt Jesus in the wilderness. He tried to tempt him to sin three times. And how did Jesus fight temptation? Well, all three times, Jesus fought temptation with three words, it is written, and then he quoted scripture.

In his book, *Unbreakable*, Bible scholar, Andrew Wilson, noted this. He said, "consider the way Jesus fights. He has the resources of heaven available, yet he fights by using the authority of the Scriptures. His position is unequivocal. You're trying to tempt me, but the scriptures have spoken. That's the end of the conversation." So, it's very clear that Jesus didn't think the Bible was a list of suggestions, or some kind of mysterious document that you can just explore the mystery of who God is. Jesus believed that the Bible was authoritative. He appealed to the authority of Scripture to fight temptation three times.

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Another thing Jesus believed about the Scripture, I think a great case can be made, that Jesus believed that the Bible is inerrant or without error. Now, the doctrine of inerrancy didn't, you know, come about...wasn't hammered out till later, but it was reflecting something that Jesus taught and believed. So, considering what we've already talked about, regarding Jesus' opinion of Scripture, just imagine somebody coming up to Jesus and suggesting that the Bible has contradictions, or that it's not internally coherent, or that it disagrees with itself, or that there's mistakes or errors in it. I think Jesus would be utterly astonished by that suggestion.

And this is kind of illustrated in Matthew 22. So, the Sadducees are trying to trap Jesus and they asked him a question about the resurrection, but he answers them very plainly. He says, you are in error because you do not know the scriptures or the power of God. And so, the implication here is that, if they had known the scriptures, they wouldn't be in error. Well, this implies that the scriptures are without error, because you wouldn't compare someone's error with another error. That wouldn't make any sense. So, Jesus used the scripture as the truth standard by which to judge that the Sadducees were in error.

He also believed and taught that the Bible is infallible. So, if we view infallibility, basically, as that scripture cannot fail. In John 10, Jesus was about to be stoned for claiming to be God and he appealed to the infallibility of Scripture. He says this. He says, "the scripture cannot be broken". When Jesus prayed for his disciples in John 17, he asked the father, he said, "sanctify them by the truth". And then he says something really important here. He says, "your word is truth". Now notice when Jesus is praying for the sanctification for his disciples, He could have said, put your truth in their hearts, quicken their spirits to understand your truth, make their consciences and intuitions line up with your truth. No Jesus didn't say that. He said, your word is truth.

And Jesus also taught that the scriptures will never pass away. This is a common theme we see across both Old and New Testaments. In Matthew 5:17-18, Jesus says, "17 'Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. 18 For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished.'" In Matthew 24:35, Jesus said something really interesting that has implications

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for the perishability of the New Testament, of course, which hadn't been written yet. And he said this, 35 Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away".

Now let's take everything we just learned about what Jesus viewed scripture to be and compare that with this meme that came out of this progressive church. This meme says, the Bible isn't the Word of God, self-interpreting, a science book, an answer/rulebook, inerrant or infallible. Rather, it is a product of community, a library of texts, multi-vocal, a human response to God, living and dynamic. Now there are some true statements in here when taken at face value. But don't the best lies contain the most truth? As followers of Jesus, our view of the Word of God should line up with His view. and that it is the word of God, that it is infallible, and without error. It's not just a human response to God.

Now, I told you in the beginning, we were going to look at the core beliefs of this progressive church in Nashville, because I truly believe that we're going to start to see more and more of these churches pop up in our communities. We can look at the history of this church, going from evangelical, making a slow and subtle shift toward progressivism, until they self-identified as a progressive Christian church. And this is their doctrinal statement, this is what they believe.

Number one, God is a mystery to be explored, not a doctrine to be espoused. So, typically speaking, progressive Christians are not creedal. They're not united by doctrinal beliefs. It's more about what you do than it is about what you believe. And so, this phrase here, this very vague phrase, God is a mystery to be explored, it's vague on purpose, because what it allows the person to do is call God sort of this mysterious being that you can't really get to the bottom of, you can't pin down, you can't make dogmatic statements about. We can't really know exactly what his nature and his character is, obviously, the Bible got that wrong. So, we're just going to view him as a mystery that we're going to explore. Well, what that gives them permission to do is, create a God in their own image, whatever their own thoughts and feelings and preferences are. They can say, this is something God has put in my heart, this is who God is. But what that will give you is a God created in your own image, and that is not a God who can save you.

The second belief is that life is a gift to be enjoyed. Well, I agree. But there's a fundamental disagreement between historic Christians and progressive Christians about what those words

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actually mean. Because we know that we are sinners and we are separated from a holy and perfect and just God and our truest enjoyment, our truest happiness, our truest joy will only be known and found when we put saving faith in the name of Jesus Christ and the work he accomplished on the cross. Then we will be reconciled to God, living in our purpose, which is to love God, to know Him, to worship Him and be with Him forever. But that cannot happen if we deny who God is, if we deny His word, and inform our beliefs about him based on our own thoughts, feelings and preferences.

The third doctrinal belief from this progressive church...you need to be on the lookout for these beliefs coming to a church near you...the third one is, love is a responsibility to be shared. Now I agree, except remember, we talked about linguistic theft, where people will redefine words and then use them as tools of propaganda. In progressive Christianity, love does not mean what it means biblically. In progressive Christianity, love is a catch-all term to mean everything that you would affirm of someone; affirming and celebrating what everybody believes and wants to do what they think is good and true, and what they should and shouldn't do. Love means accepting and celebrating all of those things together. And so, when we read it way, we would say, well no, that's not a responsibility to be shared, because the Bible tells us that, yes, love is patient and kind, but love cannot rejoice in wrongdoing. It rejoices in the truth. So, when there's something that goes against God's truth, real biblical love can't rejoice in that. And so, this is a term that gets co-opted.

The fourth belief is that the good news is that you are inherently united with God. This is the progressive gospel. In fact, they've written good news in capital letters, implying this is our gospel, is that you are inherently united with God. In progressive Christianity, they typically don't believe in original sin. Original sin is replaced with a phrase, original blessing or original goodness. They do not believe that people are fallen or separated from God, according to progressive Christianity. If you feel separated from God, it's self-imposed. It's just your own shame getting in the way and making you think that you are not already accepted, beloved, and united with God. So, all you have to do, the gospel of progressive Christianity is that all you have to do is simply realize that you are already inherently united with God, that all humanity shares this inner spark of divinity. Friends, this is a new age idea that has wormed its way into the church. It has become the gospel of progressive Christianity.

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I really hope today has been helpful to you. I hope that you will take some of these beliefs we talked about, the beliefs about the Bible from the meme, the views of Jesus and how it contradicts those things, and I hope this helps you to be on the lookout to spot some of the dangerous signs of progressive Christianity coming into a church near you. Because very often, progressive Christians do infiltrate more conservative churches to try to bring those doctrines in. Some of the most highly platformed Christian authors are progressive Christians. It's absolutely everywhere. So, we need to do our due diligence to be aware of these ideas. I've written all about this in my book, *Another Gospel? A Lifelong Christian Seeks Truth in Response to Progressive Christianity*. You can find that, as well as my podcast and my blog, my YouTube channel; it's all linked at [AlisaChilders.com](http://AlisaChilders.com). It's been great to be with you this week. We'll see you next time.

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