

BIBLE LIFE MESSAGES

The Source of Holiness - God's Word

I Peter 1:22-2:3

¹ The source of holiness for our lives is God's Word.

When a teenager named Poh Fang learned about Jesus' love for her and received Him as her Savior, her parents weren't sure about the merits of Christianity. So they sent her older sister with her to church to keep an eye on her. But something happened that they didn't expect. The Word of God penetrated the heart of the older sister, and she accepted Lord Jesus as her Savior. ¹

There is power within the Word of God. It has power in and of itself. ² Romans, Chapter 1, verse 16 says, **I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes . . .**

I. What is the Nature of God's Word? - v23b-25

What is the nature of God's Word? ³ First Peter, Chapter 1, verses 22-25 answer that question, **Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth**

¹ "A Powerful Word", Anne Cretas, Our Daily Bread, Jan 24, 2010.

so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart. For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. For, “All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of the Lord stands forever.” And this is the word that was preached to you. ⁴

The first thing this passage tells us about the Word of God is that it is imperishable. ² ⁵ Imperishable ³ means not subject to decay, incorruptible. It is, thus, immortal, it will last forever. This is seen in verses 24 and 25, “All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of the Lord stands forever.” ⁶

This is found as we look at the history of God’s revealed Word. ⁷ In the beginning, God’s Word was verbally handed down from generation to generation. ⁸

² v23 - . . . not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.

³ ἄφθαρτος

Then Moses wrote it down. This was the Law of Moses, the first five books of the Old Testament. ⁹ Then, the prophets spoke and wrote, which gave us pretty much the rest of the Old Testament. ¹⁰ Then, the apostles, and those closely associated with them, wrote the New Testament. ¹¹

Now, what makes it imperishable is that all the sixty-six books we have in the Bible were inspired by the Holy Spirit. Second Timothy, Chapter 3, verses 16 and 17, All Scripture is God-breathed (inspired) and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. ¹²

The next thing this passage tells us about the Word of God is that it is living. ⁴ ¹³ Living ⁵ means to be animated, to affect behavior. ¹⁴ But the Word of God is made alive only when it is read. Only when it is read does it become alive in you! ¹⁵

⁴ v23 - . . . not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.

⁵ ζάω

The third thing this passage has to say about the Word of God is it is enduring. ⁶ ¹⁶ Endure ⁷ means to stay and remain; so, to dwell and continue to exist. Mark, Chapter 13, verse 31 emphasizes this, **Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.** ¹⁷

When does this happen? When the Word of God gets into your heart, then it becomes enduring! Colossians, Chapter 3, verse 16, Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. ¹⁸

Verse 25 tells us that this Word of God is the preached Word. ⁸ ¹⁹

What other Word was there? Lord Jesus, Himself, was the actual revealed Word of God! He was called “The Word” in John, Chapter 1, verses 1 and 2, **In the**

⁶ v23 - . . . not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.

⁷ μένω

⁸ v25 - And this is the word that was preached to you.

beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. ²⁰ Then, in verse 14, The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. ²¹ The Word of God in this passage is the gospel message of salvation which we have written in the Bible and was preached! ²²

This gospel message is defined in First Corinthians, Chapter 15, verses 1 through 4 as the story of the Lord's death, burial and resurrection. ⁹

Now that we know what God's Word is, the next question is . . . ²³

⁹ I Corinthians 15:1-4 - Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures...

II. What Does God's Word Do for You? - v22-

23a

. . . What does God's Word do for you? ²⁴ Verse 22 tells us that it purifies you. Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart. ²⁵

How does it purify you? When you obey the truth, God's Word! ²⁶

This comes from faith. Notice Acts, Chapter 15, verse 9, He made no distinction between us and them, for he purified their hearts by faith. ²⁷ Again we see this in Romans, Chapter 1, verse 5, . . . we received grace and apostleship to call people from among all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith. ²⁸

This obedience is expressed, primarily, by genuine love for other Christians. ²⁹

Verse 23 tells us the Word of God is involved in your new birth. It says, For you have been born again, not

of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. ³⁰

The Lord explained it this way, I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. ¹⁰ ³¹ The Word takes on the role of the father in spiritual birth. The Word conceives you spiritually. James, Chapter 1, verse 18, He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of first fruits of all he created. ³² Christian baptism takes on the role of the mother in the new birth process. Titus, Chapter 3, verse 5, He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit . . . ³³ Again, in Acts, Chapter 2, verse 38, Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins . . . ³⁴

Finally, the Word penetrates your life and judges it. Hebrews, Chapter 4, verse 12, says, For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and

¹⁰ John 3:5.

spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

Now that we know what God's Word is and what it does for you, the final question is . . . ³⁵

III. How Do You Receive God's Word? - 2:1-3

. . . How do you receive God's Word? This scripture shows us two ways. ³⁶

The first is through repentance. Verse 1, **Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind.** ³⁷ The Book of James adds to this, **Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.** ^{11 38}

How is repentance activated in your life? ³⁹ Dr. Bill Bright used the analogy called "Spiritual Breathing". ⁴⁰ Confess your sins to the Lord. First John, Chapter 1, verse 9, says, **If we confess our sins, he is faithful and**

¹¹ James 1:21.

just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. Confession cleanses you. That is spiritual exhaling. ⁴¹ Then, inhale spiritually by asking the Father to fill you with His Holy Spirit. The Lord said, If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him! ¹² ⁴²

The second way, mentioned here, is through craving it. Like newborn babies, verses 2 and 3 say, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.

Let me share with you a couple of good examples of craving the Word of God. ⁴³

“I have for many years made it a practice to read through the Bible once a year. My custom is to read four or five chapters every morning immediately after

¹² Luke 11:13.

rising from my bed. It employs about an hour of my time and seems to me the most suitable manner of beginning the day. In what light soever we regard the Bible, whether with reference to revelation, to history, or to morality, it is an invaluable and in-exhaustible mine of knowledge and virtue”. - John Quincy Adams

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“I search the Bible as a whole like shaking the whole tree. Then I shake every limb — study book after book. Then I shake every branch, giving attention to the chapters when they do not break the sense. Then I shake every twig, or a careful study of the paragraphs and sentences and words and their meanings”. - Martin Luther

When we were first married, Linda and I were adopted by a cat. We became very fond of that cat. Early one morning I let her in for breakfast. Instead of going to her food dish she ran into our bedroom, jumped up onto our bed, between us, and proceeded to have a litter of kittens as we petted her.

Shortly after their birth and initial cleaning by mommy cat, these kittens began frantically searching for food. As each found their nipple on mommy's breast, we were impressed with how eager they ate! They were really craving momma cat's warm milk!

God wants you to crave Him with the same desperation! Crave a relationship with God the same way newborn babies crave their mother's milk.

That's the source of holiness!

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