

God's Powerful Sword

Heb 4:12-13

Hebrews 4:12-13 - For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.

Introduction:

- A. In Heb 4:11, we see summary of all that has been said in Heb 3:7 - 4:10. We need to be diligent to enter our heavenly rest. Or we may fall short of our rest, just as many Israelites fell short of their Canaan rest.
- B. To stress the need for diligence, we are reminded regarding the Word of God (Heb 4:12-13). That Word provided the example of the Israelites' disobedience. That Word is now warning us not to emulate the Israelites' example
- C. In this passage, the Word of God is described in amazing terms; It is "living", It is "powerful", It is "sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit", It is "a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."
- D. At a time in which God's Word is so often neglected, even by some Christians, it never hurts to contemplate the wonder of God's Word. And so we take this opportunity to reflect upon what is said in this passage. With a desire to renew and increase our appreciation of the power of God's Word!

I. The Word Of God Is "Living" And "Powerful"

A. God's word is not some "dead letter"

1. Not only in this passage, but elsewhere we read of the abiding nature of God's Word

a. Notice Peter's description of it - 1 Pet 1:23-25

1 Peter 1:23-25 - for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God. For, "ALL FLESH IS LIKE GRASS, AND ALL ITS GLORY LIKE THE FLOWER OF GRASS. THE GRASS WITHERS, AND THE FLOWER FALLS OFF, 25 BUT THE WORD OF THE LORD ENDURES FOREVER." And this is the word which was preached to you.

b. Isaiah 40:8 - The grass withers, the flower fades, But the word of our God stands forever.

c. Matthew 24:35 - "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away."

2. The "life" of God's Word is due to the nature of God Himself!

a. God is eternal; He is "the living God" - Heb 3:12; Jer 10:10

Hebrews 3:12 - Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God.

Jeremiah 10:10 - But the LORD is the true God; He is the living God and the everlasting King. At His wrath the earth quakes, And the nations cannot endure His indignation.

b. He cannot lie, so what He says will come to pass - Heb 6:18

Hebrews 6:18 - so that by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have taken refuge would have strong encouragement to take hold of the hope set before us.

c. Thus His Word will never perish!

3. As Jesus said - Jn 6:63

John 6:63 - "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.

B. That God's Word is alive is seen in its power

1. It has the power to accomplish its intended purpose - Isa 55:10-11

Isaiah 55:10-11 - "For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, And do not return there without watering the earth And making it bear and sprout, And furnishing seed to the sower and bread to the eater; So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; It will not return to Me empty, Without accomplishing what I desire, And without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it.

2. The gospel in particular has the power to save - Rom 1:16-17; Jas 1:21

Romans 1:16-17 - For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "BUT THE RIGHTEOUS man SHALL LIVE BY FAITH."

James 1:21 - Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls.

3. Through God's word we can be born again - 1 Pet 1:22-23; Jas 1:18

1 Peter 1:22-23 - Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart, for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God.

James 1:18 - In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth, so that we would be a kind of first fruits among His creatures.

4. It works effectively in those who believe - 1 Thess 2:13

1 Thessalonians 2:13 - For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe.

a. Notice the opposite effect - Heb 4:2

Hebrews 4:2 - For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as they also; but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard.

5. It can build us up, and give us the inheritance that is ours - Acts 20:32

Acts 20:32 - "And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

6. It can make the man of God complete for all good works - 2 Tim 3:16-17

2 Timothy 3:16-17 - All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

C. How could anything with such power be a "dead letter"?

D. With such a "living" and "powerful" word at our disposal, we would be foolish to neglect the blessings it offers, or the warnings it gives!

II. *The Word Of God Is "Sharp" And "A Discerner"*

A. Sharper than any two-edged sword

1. The Word of God is often likened to powerful objects - Eph 6:17; Jer 23:29

Ephesians 6:17 - And take THE HELMET OF SALVATION, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Jeremiah 23:29 - "Is not My word like fire?" declares the LORD, "and like a hammer which shatters a rock?"

2. To illustrate its sharpness as a "sword", the Word of God is said to pierce...
 - a. "...even to the dividing of soul and spirit"
 - b. "...and of both joints and marrow"
 - c. That is, the divine word is able to cut through everything that is in man

B. A discerner of the "thoughts and intents of the heart"

1. With its sharpness, it is capable of sifting through and revealing the heart of man
2. It's effect on man reveals his true heart...
 - a. In some cases, that one's heart is sincere and open to change - Acts 2:36-37

Acts 2:36-37 - "Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ--this Jesus whom you crucified." Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?"

- b. Other times, that one's heart has no desire to change - Acts 5:33; 7:54

Acts 5:33 - But when they heard this, they were cut to the quick and intended to kill them.

Acts 7:54 - Now when they heard this, they were cut to the quick, and they began gnashing their teeth at him.

C. One cannot hear or read the Word of God without being affected!

D. As stated earlier, the "life" of God's Word is due to the nature of God Himself. Thus?

III. *The Power Of God's Word Is Due To His Omniscience*

A. God is Omniscient

1. The word "omniscient" means "all-knowing"
2. David extolled the omniscience of God - Psa 139:1-12

Psalms 139:1-12 - O LORD, You have searched me and known me. You know when I sit down and when I rise up; You understand my thought from afar. You scrutinize my path and my lying down, And are intimately acquainted with all my ways. Even before there is a word on my tongue, Behold, O LORD, You know it all. You have enclosed me behind and before, And laid Your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; It is too high, I cannot attain to it. Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend to heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, You are there. If I take the wings of the dawn, If I dwell in the remotest part of the sea, 10 Even there Your hand will lead me, And Your right hand will lay hold of me. If I say, "Surely the darkness will overwhelm me, And the light around me will be night," Even the darkness is not dark to You, And the night is as bright as the day. Darkness and light are alike to You.

3. Solomon also wrote of God's omniscience - Prov 15:3

Proverbs 15:3 - The eyes of the LORD are in every place, Watching the evil and the good.

- a. That is why "there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open" to His eyes

B. Therefore no one can hide from the Judge

1. As David counseled his son Solomon - 1 Chron 28:9

1 Chronicles 28:9 - "As for you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father, and serve Him with a whole heart and a willing mind; for the LORD searches all hearts, and understands every intent of the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will let you find Him; but if you forsake Him, He will reject you forever.

2. It is before this Omniscient Judge that we must one day give an account
 - a. There is a judgment day coming, in which God will judge the world through His Son, Jesus Christ! - Acts 17:30-31; Rom 2:16; 2 Cor 5:10

Acts 17:30-31 - "Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent, because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead."

Romans 2:16 - on the day when, according to my gospel, God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus.

2 Corinthians 5:10 - For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

- b. We read of that Judgment Day in the last book of Bible - Rev 20:11-15

Revelation 20:11-14 - Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.

3. The standard by which we will be judged are the words spoken through His Son - Jn 12:48; Heb 2:1-3

John 12:48 - "He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day.

Hebrews 2:1-3 - For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away from it. For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience received a just penalty, how will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? After it was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard,

Conclusion:

- A. Yes, the power of God's Word is derived from God Himself. God is omniscient, able to see into the hearts of men; therefore His Word is able to cut to the hearts of men and reveal their true nature. God is living, eternal, who will one day judge the world; therefore His Word that abides forever will be the standard by which we will be judged.
- B. In view of the power of God Himself and His powerful Word, how dare we neglect the warnings given in it, such as those found in Hebrews 4:1, 11, or to even read about the warnings (as many do by not reading the Bible)?

- C. And remember, how we react to the Word of God reveals our true character. Some are so “dull of heart”, that they react with indifference and say “so what?” Some are “cut to the heart”, angrily resist the Word, and blame the messenger (Acts 7:54). Some are “cut to the heart”, and cry out “what shall I do?” (Acts 2:37).
- D. What kind of heart do you have?