

Sunday, 9/8/2024 am

## COMMUNICATING WITH GOD (32)

### Bible Study (3)

#### The Power of God's word

Today, we continue our study of communicating with God. We have begun to consider how God communicates with us. The answer is through His word. Our focus in this study is to help us as we study our Bibles. Our first few lessons are designed to demonstrate WHY we should study the Bible. Thus far we have established 1) Some reasons why we should view the Bible as from God, and 2) Some reasons WHY we should study the Bible. In this lesson we want to talk about the power of God's word.

#### I. The Power of God's Word

- a. Appreciating the power of God when He speaks.
  - i. Power – the word for power most often in the Greek NT is δύναμις (dynamis) (80x), is the origin of our English word, dynamite. It means the ability to do something by virtue of strength, resources or authorization. Of course, God is all powerful (omnipotent) – Mark 10:27
  - ii. Genesis 1:1, “And God said...”. We have observed this recently in 2 Peter 3:5-7. Our very existence is a manifestation of God's power. Hebrews 1:1-3 declares that He is upholding all things by the word of His power.
  - iii. Isaiah 55:10-11, “*For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, And do not return there, But water the earth, And make it bring forth and bud, That it may give seed to the sower And bread to the eater, So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.*”
  - iv. If the Bible is the word of God (and we have established that), then it is a product of His power and can produce what He desires.
- b. Romans 1:16, *For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the **power of God to salvation** for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.*
- c. Hebrews 4:12, *For **the word of God is living and powerful**, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.* The Greek word here is ἐνεργής (energēs) the word from which we get our word “energy” – effective, energetic, active, etc.
- d. 1 Corinthians 1:18-24 - the message of the cross is foolishness to the lost, but to the saved it is “the power of God.”
- e. Jeremiah 23:29, as YHWH challenged the false prophets of Judah. Speaking of His own word He said, “*Is not My word like a fire?*” says the Lord, “*And like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?*”
- f. 1 Thessalonians 1:5-6, 2:13 – the gospel came to them not only in word, but also in power and the Holy Spirit & much assurance (it was verified). It effectively works in you who believe,...
- g. The point of such passages is to understand that when God speaks, His words are effective and accomplish that which He intends.

#### II. What God's Word Can Do

- a. **Save us** – as you read through God’s word you find that you are in need of salvation. God’s word saves us. There are many concepts that emphasize this in scripture.
- i. **James 1:21** – when received with meekness, the “implanted word” is able to save your souls. Romans 1:16 – the gospel is the power of God unto salvation. Cf. Acts 11:14 – Peter would tell Cornelius words leading to salvation.
  - ii. **Convict** – Acts 2:37 – as Peter finished preaching on that Pentecost, many were “cut to the heart” or convicted. They realized what they had done and what they needed. They asked, “What shall we do?” John 16:8 as Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit He noted that He would convict the world of sin, righteousness and judgment. This would be done through their preaching the message He gave them. Titus 1:9, elders as they hold fast to the faithful word, by sound doctrine, are able to “exhort and convict those who contradict.” God’s word has the power to convict us of sin and prompt us to seek resolution (cf. Romand 3:20 which notes that by the law is the knowledge of sin).
  - iii. **Convert** – the word convert means to turn back (or return or turn around). AFTER we are convicted by His word, we need to be converted. When we think of conversion, we think of something has been changed. That is what the gospel can do for us. Acts 3:19, cf. Matthew 18:3 – Jesus declared, “Unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.” Psalm 19:7 says, “*The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple;...*” The word for “converting” is the same as the other verses in the LXX. 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 Paul describes some who will not enter heaven and notes, “and such were some of you...” While not using the word, you find a clear change in one’s life because they have been saved.
  - iv. **Cleanse us** – when we are converted, we obey the gospel. As a matter of fact, obeying the gospel is part of our conversion – Acts 2:38 (cf. Ac 3:19). When we obey the gospel, we are cleansed of our sins (Acts 22:16). 1 Peter 1:22-23, *Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever.* Ephesians 5:26, speaking of the church notes that Christ loved and gave Himself for her, “*that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word.*” We see in such texts that God’s word can cleanse us.
  - v. **Make us free** – John 8:32. Jesus notes that the truth will make us free. We will address truth in our next lesson, but for now we simply note that it (revealed in His word), can free us. From what? Sin! James 1:25 describes His word as, “the perfect law of liberty.” Liberty means freedom. Romans 6:16-18 calls for us to make a choice whom we will serve. He also notes that when we obey from the heart “that form of doctrine” (likely a reference to the baptism taught in vs. 3-6), we are delivered (from our sins). But notice how he puts it in terms of doctrine which means teaching. It is in this sense that His word frees us.
  - vi. **Reconcile us to God** – the word means to reestablish a close relationship. Because of sin, we become estranged from God and in need of reconciliation. Ephesians 2:14-18 notes that Jesus, through the cross, has reconciled us to God putting to death the enmity. 2 Corinthians 5:19-20 speaks of how Christ was reconciling the world to Himself and “*has committed to us the word of reconciliation...*”

- vii. All of these qualities are tied to our salvation. How does His word save us? It reveals what we need to know, how all these things will happen and gives us the direction we have talked about previously.
- b. **Direct us** – His word can give us direction.
- i. **Sanctify us** – the word “sanctify” means to set apart. The root word in Greek is related to the words “holy” and “saint”. Scripture teaches us that when we are saved and in a right relationship with God, He sets us apart for His good use. John 17:17, as Jesus prayed to the Father, “Sanctify them by Your truth, Your word is truth.” It is through His word that we learn HOW to live sanctified lives devoted to Him.
  - ii. **Give us light** – Psalm 119:105, *Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.* Light helps to direct us where we need to go. God’s word gives us His direction. 2 Corinthians 4:4 speaks of the darkness of this age because “the god of this age has blinded” unbelievers. He seeks to prevent, “*the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.*”
  - iii. **Give us understanding** – Psalm 119:130, *The entrance of Your words gives light; It gives understanding to the simple.* In a previous lesson, we addressed how if the Bible is from God, we would expect it to be understandable. And the fundamentals are clear, if we take the time to study.
  - iv. **Reprove and rebuke** – 2 Timothy 4:2-3 – Paul gives Timothy instructions to preach the word (the whole counsel of God). In his preaching he would reprove and rebuke. The word “reprove” is the word previously mentioned for convict (or convince – NKJV). The idea is to identify and prove that something is wrong. Rebuke is about admonishing and making application to the one being addressed, (e.g., “You are the man” – 2 Samuel 12:7). God’s word is a source of comfort as we do the right thing, but it also exposes our sinfulness with guilt. How much better would this world be if everyone followed the standards outlined in scripture. The worldly take issue with some of God’s prohibitions, but deep down, time reveals that His ways ARE BEST! Just think about how much better the world would be if only all would follow “the golden rule” (Matthew 7:12).
  - v. **Corrects** – 2 Timothy 3:16-17 – gives us a process to consider when His word reproves and rebukes us. It also gives us direction as to how to correct our sins. All the exposure and rebuke in the world is meaningless, if we do not correct ourselves. This is the light God has provided for us.
- c. **Equip us**
- i. **Produce faith** – Romans 10:17 – faith comes by hearing (it produces our faith); John 20:30-31 explains what God’s word is written so that we may believe. Why do we consider living for God in Christ Jesus? Because of what we have learned in His word, and because we have been convinced that it IS His word (through proofs of various sorts). We have to have faith (Hebrews 11:6), and His word gives us reason to have faith. John 17:20-21, as Jesus prayed, He prayed for “all who will believe in Me through their word...” Jesus was speaking of the gospel message the apostles would take to the world.
  - ii. **Furnish everything we need** - 2 Timothy 3:16-17. In a text where Paul describes what God’s word can do for us, he notes that with it we have EVERYTHING we need to be complete in Him. 2 Peter 1:3 notes that God has given us “all things that pertain to life

and godliness through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue...” (where do we get that knowledge?).

- iii. **Arm us** - Ephesians 6:17 – Paul described “the sword of the Spirit” as the word of God. It is part of our armor that we use to protect ourselves from the enemy (Ephesians 6:10-18). Hebrews 4:12 describes the word of God as being quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword. We God’s word we are prepared to face our spiritual enemy.

**III. Because of its power, let us resolve:**

- a. **To respect it** – if it is God’s word, it must be treated with due respect. We have outlined many reasons why we ought to do this. If we do not properly fear God and His word, we are destined fail.
- b. **To thoroughly learn it** – this is what reading and study is about. 2 Timothy 2:15.
- c. **To share it with others** – the gospel is not intended to be kept to oneself. God wants us to share it with the world – cf. Matthew 28:19-20, Mark 16:15-16. 2 Timothy 2:2 speaks of committing what you have learned with others who will pass it on. Sharing His word is the ONLY way God has provided for it to be proclaimed.
- d. **To NEVER be ashamed of it** – Romans 1:16. If the Bible is God’s word, even though men will scoff at you when you follow it, you MUST stand with God (Matthew 10:32-33). Consider Paul’s admonition to Timothy (2 Tim. 1:8), *Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God,...*

And thus, we can see (some of) what God’s word can accomplish. And in that we can see the power it can have in our lives, IF we let it. And that is why, if we are serious about our eternity, we will devote time to the study of His word. What about you? How much time do you spend listening to Him? Think about it!