

Theme: God's Word is living and active, and it penetrates to our deepest recesses to expose and judge and to point us to Christ, our Great High Priest.

## I. Intro - Taking A Polygraph

- A. I had to take several polygraphs - a daunting experience
- B. It measures all your responses to "see" what is happening inside you
- C. Not sure how accurate; but it was daunting!
- D. God's Word is like that - but it is always accurate!
- E. Today: a look at some attributes and actions of God's Word

## II. Naked and Exposed Before God

- A. God sees everything as it really is  
And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account. Hebrews 4:13
  - 1. NOTHING is hidden from God.
  - 2. EVERYTHING is naked, exposed before Him.
  - 3. God is omniscient, immediately knowing all things.
  - 4. This is the breadth of God's knowledge - He knows everyone and everything
- B. Naked and exposed  
And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are **naked** and **exposed** to the eyes of him to whom we must give account. Hebrews 4:13
  - 1. Naked - gumna - unclothed, no covering

- a. Used of wrestlers in Greece who wrestled naked
  - b. Used in LXX in Genesis 2:25 and 3:8 (3:7 LXX) to speak of Adam and Eve being naked (and then ashamed of this and trying to hide it)
- 2. Exposed - rare word meaning to twist the neck
    - a. Used of wrestlers exposing opponents neck
    - b. Used of sacrificial animals having necks exposed to be sliced
    - c. Used of patients having neck exposed, ready for surgeons knife
  - 3. The idea in these two terms is that of vulnerability. Everything is naked and exposed before God's penetrating gaze.
  - 4. This speaks of the penetrating depth of God's knowledge. He not only sees and knows every one of us, but He sees and knows everything about us.
  - 5. This speaks of the deep reality that God knows each of us fully and completely. Try as we might, nothing can be hidden from His penetrating gaze. We may fool others, we may even fool ourselves, but we will never fool God.

## III. God's Penetrating Word

- A. The Word of God - the Scripture  
For **the word of God** is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. Hebrews 4:12
  - 1. The Word of God - Jesus or the Scripture
  - 2. Arguments for Jesus

- a. Hebrews is about the supremacy of Jesus
- b. Hebrews begins by showing Jesus as God's greatest revelation (Hebrews 1:1-3)

### 3. Arguments for Scripture

- a. The preceding section is not about Jesus
- b. The preceding context is about God speaking through Scripture (see Hebrews 3:7-4:11)
- c. This is the conclusion of a long section of hearing and receiving God's Word of judgment in Scripture
- d. Only other time the phrase is used is in Hebrews 13:7, where it clearly refers to people who teach the Scripture

- 4. The Word of God in view here is the Scripture, God's living, inspired, inerrant written revelation to humanity.

### B. The Word of God - living and active

For the word of God is **living** and **active**, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. Hebrews 4:12

#### 1. The Word of God is living

- a. This is given emphasis - the first word in sentence in the Greek
- b. Peter speaks of Scripture the same way  
since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through **the living and abiding word of God**; 1 Peter 1:23
- c. Hebrews speaks of Scripture as alive and current  
Therefore, **as the Holy Spirit says**, "Today, if you hear his voice,<sup>8</sup> do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, on the day of testing in the wilderness... Hebrews 3:7-8 (quoting Psalm 95)

- d. Scripture is not a dead book of old writings, but the living, current voice of God in the world today.

#### 2. The Word of God is active and effective

- a. The Word is not static but active and working
- b. The Word is effective to bring about the will of God  
so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it. Isaiah 55:11

### C. The Word of God - penetrating to our core

For the word of God is living and active, **sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.** Hebrews 4:12

#### 1. Sharper than any two-edged sword/knife

- a. μάχαίραν - can refer to sword or dagger/knife
- b. The key point is it is so sharp it can cut through

#### 2. Soul, spirit, joints, marrow - not different parts of humanity, but rather it can cut to the very core of our being

#### 3. Penetrating to discern/judge our thoughts & intents

- a. God knows the deepest thoughts and intents of our heart - they are naked and exposed to Him
- b. But I can so often cover my own thoughts and intents that they can become hidden to me
- c. But God's Word is living and active, and it is sharp enough to penetrate to the depths of my being, slice away my false coverings and reveal and judge my true thoughts and intents.

## IV. Applying the Word

### A. Do I receive God's penetrating Word?

1. God is speaking - am I listening?
2. Am I receiving God's Written Word daily?

Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says, "Today, if you hear his voice, <sup>8</sup> do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, on the day of testing in the wilderness, Hebrews 3:7-8

- a. This is speaking of hearing God's Written Word - quoting Psalm 95
  - b. The Spirit is currently speaking to us through the written Word
  - c. The Spirit is speaking "today" - we must be receiving this daily, not just one time
  - d. Do I have a steady diet of the penetrating written Word of God?
  - e. If yes - that is awesome, keep it up!
  - f. If no - start this week! Perhaps Hebrews
  - g. Read a few verses or paragraphs, pray and ask the Spirit to speak to you as you read
  - h. Don't just rush through - let the Spirit speak to you today
3. Am I receiving God's Word as it is preached when we gather?  
Remember your leaders, those **who spoke to you the word of God**. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith. Hebrews 13:7
    - a. This is the only other time "the word of God" is used in Hebrews

- b. Here it clearly talks about the Word as it is preached in the gathering of the church
- c. God also speaks as the Word is accurately proclaimed by those He has called and anointed
- d. God powerfully works in us through the Word preached  
since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the **living** and abiding **word of God**; <sup>24</sup> for "All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, <sup>25</sup> but the word of the Lord remains forever." And **this word is the good news that was preached to you**. 1 Peter 1:23-25
  1. Very similar terms - living, Word of God
  2. Quotes Isaiah - but points to the Word preached!
  3. The preached Word had a powerful effect!
- e. We must always check the Word preached against the Word written  
Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so. Acts 17:11
  1. They received the preached Word eagerly!
  2. They personally examined the Written Word to make sure the preached Word lined up with the written Word.
  3. This is a model for us!
- f. Do I gather with the church weekly to receive the preached Word?
- g. Do I come eager to hear and receive God's Word, knowing it has the power to convict, encourage, equip, and change me?

4. This is critical and should be of prime importance in my life and walk

## B. Looking to Christ our Great High Priest

1. This is daunting because the Word exposes us!
2. This is daunting because it reminds us we will give an account  
And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him **to whom we must give account.** Hebrews 4:13

- a. Wordplay - “account” is logos (word)
- b. The Word has come to us, and we will give a word of account on the final day for our response!
- c. If we are honest, this is terrifying!

3. The Word points us to Christ our Great High Priest!  
Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. <sup>15</sup> For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. <sup>16</sup> Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. Hebrews 4:14–16

  - a. The writer turns immediately to our High Priest, Who understands and has made atonement for us
  - b. Our High Priest Jesus has responded to Word and obeyed in our place, and has opened the way to the throne for us!
  - c. In Christ, we come, not to a throne of judgment but to a throne of grace!
  - d. The is why the Word always points us to Christ, and why the law must always lead to the Gospel!

4. God’s final Word to His people is Christ, the Eternal Word of God, our Great High Priest, Who has borne judgment that we might receive grace!

## C. Come to the Table of Grace

### God’s Penetrating Word

Hebrews 4:12-13

June 16, 2019

Communion

Acts 20:32

Teaching keywords: Word of God; correction; law and gospel

Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. Acts 20:32

For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. <sup>13</sup> And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account. Hebrews 4:12–13 (ESV)