

The Word of God  
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## The Word of God

### What is the Word?

I've spent some time trying to decide what to share at this conference. And I couldn't really make my mind up between two subjects, so I decided to share on one tonight, and something slightly different on Sunday. Of course, in Christ all spiritual realities are united and are not separate. But we'll be looking at two views of Christ and our relationship with Him. Tonight I want to share some things about the Word. Sunday I plan on sharing a few things about walking in the Light or the Day that is Christ.

I have shared some things about the Word of God in the past. But in the past several months, the reality of God's Word has come alive to me in a stronger way. As I have been studying, and trying to speak Spanish recently, I have been reminded again and again, even when we're dealing with natural words, that words are very tricky things. Sometimes I even consider them dangerous. I'll explain that in a moment.

The tricky thing about words is that they they have no inherent meaning. We might have dictionary definitions for words, but when it comes down to it, the meaning behind a word is supplied by the listener, and not by the word itself. Do you understand what I mean? I mean, the exact same word can mean a million different things to a million different people. Because even though we have Webster's definition of a word, still our own understanding, experience, intelligence, and imagination are what really control the impact that a word has on us.

The same word can make one person laugh and make another person feel extremely insecure. The same word can be comforting or frightening. And that is because WE supply the meaning of words while we are listening to them or reading them. The word might have a general meaning, but the reality comes from somewhere inside of us.

Well, in a very natural sense, that can be frustrating when you are learning a language. I can know the textbook definition of thousands of Spanish words, and you'd think that I could then speak Spanish. But you find out very quickly when you're not in a classroom setting, that though there are definitions of words...the words do not contain or control the definitions. The definitions are held and controlled by the user and listener.

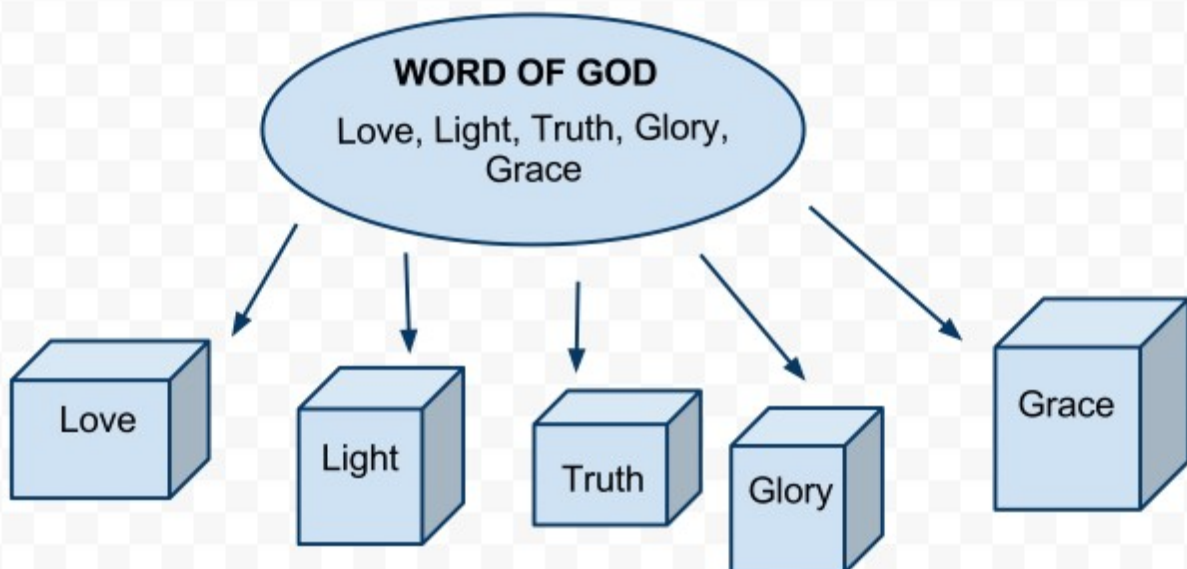
Well, why am I talking about this? Because God has a Word. And this Word cannot be contained in language or speech. It is bigger than language. It is greater than speech. God has a Word that is understood by what He sees and knows and experiences. Words cannot describe or define this Word. This Word gives definition to all words. Can you see what I mean?

I mean you cannot take the words righteousness, love, light, glory....read those words, look up their definition, and then think you know something about the Word who is Christ. **You can't do that because words don't define Him. He defines the words.** If we could just get ahold of this one thing tonight it would benefit us for the rest of our lives. The Word who is God is not understood through our understanding of His words. The Word who is God IS the understanding of all spiritual words.

Long before there were any words or languages that described Jesus Christ, there was the substance and reality of God the Word. Christ was the reality of everything that God thinks and knows and understands and desires to communicate. Do you see? The Word of God, the Son of God, was God's definition of all spiritual things.

If somehow you could be with God, hidden in the Trinity, before the beginning of the world...and you were to ask God about righteousness, God would not waste his time describing righteousness to you with words. God would simply point to His Son. Because the Son is the defining reality of righteousness. If you had a question about truth, God would not give you lessons or words or parables....when He could just show you His Son. If you were curious about love, glory, light, whatever....why would God talk to you if He could show you His understanding of all of these things which is Christ.

Let me illustrate this in a diagram:



The top circle here represents Christ the Word. He is the substance and reality of all of God's words. He is the living definition of all that God knows. He is the true meaning of all spiritual words. The boxes below are the words that God used to describe the substance, the reality, the experience.

And in the Old Covenant, the covenant of types and shadows, the covenant where the substance and glory was veiled in natural pictures and demonstrations....in the Old Covenant God employed words to describe his Word. He used things like laws and prophecies and descriptions of things to communicate various aspects of Christ the Word.

But see, at no point in the Old Covenant could a person ever hear God's words, learn God's words, or even KEEP God's words, and think that they knew the truth. The words don't contain the truth. The words only describe it. Do you hear me? The words aren't the truth, even though they are true words. They are just words. The words point us back to the Word. But only by EXPERIENCING, seeing, knowing the Word who is these things, can we understand the words.

And mankind has always had this order reversed.

We think we know the truth through our familiarity with true words. But Jesus said to all of them, all of the Jews, that "no one knows the Father except the Son, and nobody knows the Son except the Father and the one to whom He is revealed." Jesus said that only those "who ABIDE in His Word would know the truth and the truth would make them free."

But we generally don't understand these things. And that is because, as I said earlier, we don't understand that words don't **contain** the reality of what is being communicated. They only describe it or point to it. Love is not a word, it is an aspect of Christ. Light is not a word it is an aspect of Christ. Righteousness is not a word, it is something that belongs to Christ. A person can read the Bible and make an application to their life, or listen to a sermon about righteousness, and because of that stop saying bad words, or stop going to bad movies, or start helping their neighbor. And then we can have the incredibly backwards idea that because we made an application of words to our life then we are therefore righteous. But think about that for a minute: how did Righteousness stop being the Person of Jesus Christ and start being your behavior? What what moment did love stop belonging exclusively to Christ and start belonging to you?

Can you see how silly this really is? We are trying to take the substance of love and righteousness away from Christ and claim it for ourselves. Rather than allowing Him to define the Word, we are defining it ourselves. We are bringing our meaning to that box, filling it with ourselves, filling it with our understanding, our imagination, and then saying we know God. We are trying to approach God through our understanding of a word, rather than let God approach our souls as the Word that defines all things.

Let me say something to you in the strongest way that I know how. **Knowing the truth, knowing God, is when the Word that was from the beginning (pointing to top circle) confronts your soul with Himself, cuts away all that is contrary to His Word, and defines your soul by Himself.**

And thank the Lord, you and I live in a covenant, a relationship, where God is dealing with us according to words. Those days have come to an end. And in fact, they were never what God desired. Jacob accepted Leah, but he always loved Rachel. Do you know what I'm talking about. The first and the second. The first covenant and the second covenant. Leah is the firstborn, Rachel is the second. Jacob's heart was always for the second. Leah was not desirable, and she could not see. She had bad eyes. He accepted her in order to get what He truly desired.

Well, we live in the covenant of Rachel, the second, a true relationship with God. We live in a covenant where God does not want to deal with us with words, but wants to reveal His Word in us. Now for those of you who do not know know me well, I am not challenging the absolute importance and infallibility of the Bible for us today. I am simply saying that in our covenant the words point us to a living participation in the Word of God. We have died and our life is hidden with Christ in God. And in order for God to show you love and truth and glory...he doesn't tell you to open up Websters dictionary. He shows you His Son. He reveals His Son in you.

***Heb. 1:1** In many parts and in many ways of old, God spoke to the fathers in the prophets; **2** in these last days (in the end of these days) He spoke to us in the Son, whom He appointed heir of all; through whom He indeed made the ages;*

## **Hearing the Word**

So when we're talking about hearing the word of God, we're talking about something extremely different than what we often imagine. There is nothing familiar about hearing God's word. Let me tell you something - if God's *words* in the Bible are familiar to you, look out! When God's

words become familiar to us, it is a good sign that we are not hearing the Word (at least not in that verse or passage). Let me say it again...there is nothing familiar about the Word of God. It is perfectly foreign to any thing that you are, and any thought that you have ever had. It never compliments or affirms anything that you are. Oh no...not this Word. This word is always new. Perfectly and perpetually new. New and foreign like an unexplored world.

So hearing the word of God is a great and terrible thing. And it has an incredible effect. The Psalmist says "the voice of the Lord splits the cedars, it breaks the mighty cedars of Lebanon" And for the rest of our time together, I would like to share some of the effects of hearing the word. I have four of them listed here, and with each of them we'll focus on a particular Scripture or two.

### **1) The Word of God literally lives in you.**

I know that this probably sounds so obvious to us. But again, I caution you about familiarity with spiritual concepts and ideas. I am the one trying to share a few things about this with you and I am entirely certain that I have very little idea what I'm talking about. I have very little understanding of this great reality, this great gift.

But this much I know...not everybody can hear God's word. Yes, everybody can listen to God's words. Everybody can read the Bible. But not everybody can hear God's word. Jesus tells us time and again, "let those who have ears hear". Or, "you have ears, but you cannot hear". Or let the one who has ears hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches." Obviously, this is figurative language because I would wager that all of the people listening to him had physical ears. So what is he saying here?

I think we can look to Jesus' own words to answer this question. If you have your Bibles, turn to John 8:43. It says this: "why are you not understanding my speech? It is because you cannot hear my word". You've probably read that verse many times. But have you ever stopped to put yourself in the position of one of those Jews and thought about how strange of a statement that would have been to hear? A man looks at you and says - "None of you understands what I am saying because you cannot hear my word".

And the reason why is just a few verses earlier. Look now at verse 37. "I know that you are Abraham's seed, but you seek to kill me **because my Word has no place in you**". What kind of word is He talking about? What a strange statement. A word that you cannot hear unless it finds a place IN you. This word is not a concept that people are rejecting. This word is an inhabitant, a living being, that is seeking a place to live.

These are not the boxes (in diagram) that we reject. We don't mind accepting the boxes that say glory, life, truth, grace on them. We will receive any box so long as we can define the contents. We love to collect these spiritual words, study them, arrange them, define them...and thereby control them so that learning Christ, like learning math, feels systematic, predictable, and therefore safe. In this way we get to decide what we believe, what it means, and how it applies, or doesn't apply, to our lives. We decide which Christian books are of interest to us, which denomination best fits our personality, which theological camp best corresponds to our views.....best corresponds to how we have arranged our boxes.

So no...it is not the words that we reject. It wasn't the word Messiah that they were rejecting when Jesus walked as a man. It was the substance of that word, the reality of that word. It wasn't the word salvation that they were rejecting, it was the appearing of the Savior! All of the Jews loved the word kingdom, but still they killed their king, and refused to let him reign in their soul.

The word of God is not looking for people who believe ideas and doctrines. The word of God is not

looking for zealots that will run to the ends of the world with the gospel. The word of God is not looking for discipline of the flesh or a perfect understanding of theology. The word of God is looking for a place to live, a place to reign, a dwelling place. And he finds a closed door unless we are a people who "tremble at this Word".

**Isa. 66:1** *Thus saith the LORD, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is **the house** that you will build for me? and where is **the place of my rest?** **2** For all those things my hands have made, and all those things have been, saith the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, **and trembles at my word.***

The first effect of this word is that He literally lives in you when he is given room.

## **2. And when it finds room in your soul, it immediately seeks to DIVIDE.**

And this division is such a real thing. It is such a wonderful and terrible thing. The word does not simply come to live. He comes to divide.

Can you see how we so often externalize these things. It's like the word of God is something external to us that we can believe in or not. It is something outside of us. And the closest it really gets to us is when we choose to read about it in the Bible. And again, that way it we think we can control it, control how deeply it touches us, how strongly we believe it, how real we allow it to be.

But the Word is not like that. It is not some inanimate object outside of us that we look at and study. It is alive. It is alive and it is busy, it is active. In other words, it is DOING SOMETHING. It is dividing.

**Heb 12** *For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing apart of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

If you give this Word even a little bit of attention...I mean, if you turn your heart to see this indwelling word even in the smallest way, you are going to be cut by it. Nobody touches this Word without getting cut. It is going to cut between Adam and Christ, between the old and the new. It is going to divide so clearly and cleanly between the dead and the living, the first and the second, light and darkness, soul and spirit.

Prior to this cutting, all of these divisions are just your ideas. They are merely your thoughts about what is spirit and what is flesh. What is good and what is evil. But when this word begins to be living and active in you, it attacks your ideas. It attacks your judgment with its sword. Do you remember the image in the book of Revelation of the man bringing judgment to the earth with a sword coming out of His mouth? What was the name of that man? His name was the Word of God. You cannot hear this word without it cutting you.

There is an enormous portion of your Old Testament that shows us this exact thing through types and shadows. There are stories in Joshua and Judges and first and second Samuel that give us God's view of this. The invasion of the Word of God in Israel, the sword of judgment.

Just as soon as God slays the lamb in Exodus 12, that land belongs to His Seed alone. He bought that land for His own glory. Yes, it was full of uncircumcision, idols, unrighteousness, and false Gods, but God had given this land to His Seed, and He swore by His own name that this land would be filled with his own glory.

So what does He do? He brings His sword into that land. He brings his judgment to the land and

begins to divide. If Israel simply walks by faith, simply abides in His Word, the Word of His covenant, then He destroys every uncircumcised thing. He fights their battles, he removes all uncircumcised flesh from the land. David carried this sword more faithfully than anyone else. And the judgment was severe. The judgment was this: only one Seed lives here. Only one kingdom rules here. The land cannot be shared.

David was a man after God's own heart. He clung to this word, and so he carried the sword. Not even Goliath could stand before Him. David spread the division throughout all of Israel until the glory of God covered the land like the waters cover the sea. Remember the mighty men of David? One man defeating 300? 10 destroying 1000? What was that about? That was about the judgment of the word judging the land according to God's view. That is about God cutting down everything that is not defined by His Word.

Recently I was thinking about one particular story of David. Do you remember when David sinned against the Lord by numbering Israel. Israel's number was ONE - Israel is my Son, even my Firstborn. But David tried to number Israel according to the flesh (incidentally, we do the same thing in the church today). But God gave him three choices of punishment, 3 years of famine, three months of attack from enemies, or three days of the sword of the Lord. And David chose the three days of the sword of the Lord. Do you remember that story?

Remember how...at the end of the story, David was standing with the elders and he saw the Angel of the Lord standing between heaven and earth with a sword drawn, and David was terrified and fell on his face. And when I recently read that story, I couldn't help but think that the fear had to do with the fact that **David knew that sword**. He had used that same sword to cut and divide Israel. He had carried that sword against all that was contrary to God. He knew that that sword destroys flesh, and he had stepped out in the flesh. Now he was on the wrong side of the division. Now that same sword was coming after him.

I said all of that because, when the living Word of God begins to work in our soul, it will not make covenants with the uncircumcised flesh in our hearts. It will not allow a single Philistine to live. It will begin to divide the land of your heart. It will cut down strongholds, and tear down high places, and divide between the living and the dead. If you will abide in this Word, and allow this Word to abide in you, it will make you free of every enemy of God in your soul. And you realize that the enemies of God were always in Israel. They were always in His land where they had no right to be.

The second effect of the word is that it cuts what is not the word. And I know that many of you in this room have experienced that cutting, that dividing. It is a severe thing. It is a wonderful thing as well. It is the greatest thing in the world to have a heart divided and conquered by Christ. But it is real. And, for me, one true sign of growth in a Christian's life is when there are obvious signs of a this division taking place. A deep and real cut that takes place in your heart between religion and life, between Adam and Christ, between flesh and Spirit.

### **3. The third effect is that, in addition to dividing, the Word of God always seeks increase.**

Lets look for a minute at Matthew 13, the parable of the sower. Probably everyone is quite familiar with this parable. The sower sows the same seed on four different kinds of hearts. Some hearts do not receive it at all. Others receive it, but fail to allow growth. And others receive the seed and experience the increase of the Seed. Look now at verse 19, and you will notice that when Jesus is explaining this parable to his disciples, he defines the seed as the "word of the kingdom".

That does not mean that the seed is words about the kingdom. No, this is the word of the kingdom. This is the Word Himself, who is a king who seeks a kingdom. Again, we have more

than a reception of true ideas going on. We have a "receiving with meekness the implanted word". We will talk more about that verse in James shortly. But this word needs to enter into our soil. And when it does we can understand why Jesus calls it the word of the kingdom, because a kingdom is precisely what He sets up when we permit His increase.

So we have said that the Word literally lives in us, and that upon entry it seeks to cut and divide. But here we are specifically talking about increase 30, 60, 100 fold what was sown. This has always been part of God's eternal purpose in Christ. There are so many types and shadows of this both in natural creation and in Old Covenant Israel. In the natural world we can see, quite obviously, that everything that is alive grows. Everything that has life multiplies and increases according to its kind. It is the same with the word of God.

The Old Covenant is filled with demonstrations of this in Israel. The increase of the seed of Abraham like the sand on the seashore, their harvest in Israel, the increase of land, of their kingdom. Jesus' parables are also filled with language that shows us the necessity for the increase of what God gives us. One in particular is particularly strong. Remember the parable of the talents in Matt 25? A man gave three servants a number of talents...in other words, a specific amount or weight of money. The one who had been given 5 talents brought forth 5 more. The one who had been given 2 talents brought forth 2 more. And the one who had been given only one talent tried to return to the master exactly what he had been given.

This last servant had not squandered what he had been given. He had lost it or spent it. One could even argue that he was careful to hold on to it. He buried it, and then tried to give it back. But the issue was precisely that he had no INCREASE to return to the master. And he says this to the master.

***Matt 25:24 ... Lord, I knew that you were a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter. 25 And I was afraid and went and hid your talent in the earth. Lo, you have yours. 26 His lord answered and said to him, Evil and slothful servant! You knew that I reaped where I did not sow, and gathered where I did not scatter, 27 then you should have put my money to the exchangers, and coming I would have received my own with interest.***

What an interesting and sobering picture of Jesus - one who reaps more than He sows. One who expects an increase of what He has given, at the very least the interest of his investment.

I'm not trying to paint a picture here of a harsh or exacting God. I don't think that was Jesus' point in this parable. I think it merely paints a picture of his expectation. God is sowing the word of His kingdom into souls. And just like all living things, the expectation is for life to grow. The expectation is that the soil is conducive to increase. And this increase is God's inheritance in the saints.

And in you and I this means a continued turning of the heart to the cross. The inward work of the cross is how the roots of this plant find more room in us. The cutting makes room for the increase. The roots of this seed demand more room in our soil. They push and displace all that was previously there. So the measure of His increase becomes the measure of our decrease.

#### **4. The Word transforms you into a doer of the Word**

This is the last one, and for this I would like you to turn to James chapter one. As a side note, it is my opinion that James is one of the most easily misunderstood books of the New Testament. But there are some foundational things that James says in the beginning of this letter that set the tone for the entire thing. If we do not understand what He is seeing about the indwelling Word, and becoming a doer of the word, and the transformation that takes place by staring into the mirror, and the law of liberty....then we are bound to misunderstand. We are not going to look at

all of these. But I want to look at this section having to do with the Word.

Lets start in verse 18 where James says - "of His own will he brought us forth (which is the word beget in Greek) by the Word of truth". So we come to life by this Word. Continuing in verse 19....it is "therefore that we are putting aside all filthiness and the overflow of wickedness, we receive with meekness the implanted word which is able to save our souls."

Unfortunately, I think that when we usually think about the saving of the soul, we think exclusively about new birth. But I don't think that is what James has in mind here. Remember, just two verses above he told us that we were begotten by the Word of Truth. Now we are receiving or accepting or permitting with meekness that implanted Word. And the effect of this implanted word is the saving or deliverance of the soul. Deliverance may be the best translation here to convey what I believe James is talking about.

You see, you are certainly saved from separation from God at new birth. But this is just the beginning of our journey. This is a finished work in the mind of God, but it a progressive experience for us to the measure that we walk in the mind of God. Look at Israel. Israel was saved from Egypt in a day. But for 40 years they carried that slavery in their hearts. An entire generation came out of Egypt. Indeed they were delivered. But they did not begin to experience their salvation, until the deliverance began to work in them by faith. And only then could they cross the Jordan, circumcise their sons, and have the reproach of Egypt rolled away from them.

What's my point? My point is that there is work to be done in us by the Word of God. And this work has to do with the deliverance, or transformation of the soul. At first to us the Word is a Word of life. Jesus says "the Words I speak to you are spirit and they are life". We receive His Word as the indwelling life of our soul. But as the word divides and conquers, the Word becomes the deliverer of our soul. It saves our soul from the idols and rebellion and uncircumcision in the Land.

The Word confronts you with the truth of what God has done. It puts God's mirror up before your eyes. Not a mirror that shows your personal reflection. But a mirror in which you can see God's perspective. It's the same mirror that Paul speaks of in 2 Corinthians chapter 3. The mirror into which we look and see the glory of God and we are changed into the same image from glory to glory. The same mirror and the same transformation.

In James we are admonished not to look in the mirror and forget what God has done. But rather to remain there, staring at the Word, staring into the perfect law of liberty, the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. And what is the result? The result is that we become doers of the Word. Doers, or you could say, expressions of that implanted Word.

This verse has nothing to do with you doing things because you read some words. Often times this verse is used to motivate Christians into action based on beliefs. "If you believe it, than DO IT, and don't just listen to it!" The rest of James is used in this way too, when James talks about faith and words. But that is simply not what we're dealing with here. We are not dealing with your actions in response to your beliefs. We're talking about your soul becoming an expression of true faith. Your soul being transformed into the image of the indwelling Word.

We are not living in a covenant that seeks outward conformity to a written belief system. We are living in a covenant where our souls literally become aligned with the indwelling Word of God. God is working in us through the Word of God to cast down imaginations, demolish strongholds of the mind, and bring every thought into the obedience of Christ. He is bringing the redeemed souls into a state of deliverance. A experiential freedom from sin. A liberty in the Spirit. We experience the law of liberty through the deliverance of our soul.

All of this and more is the effect of the Word of God. And I will stop with that.