

## The Word of God – 2022 Church Theme

A sermon by Pastor Byron Chesney 01-02-2022

**Hebrews 4:12** For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

One of the traditions that I have always held to is having a Church theme every year. You may not remember but this time last year we announced the 2021 Theme of “Pressing Toward the Mark,” and from Philippians 3:13-14. This year our theme is going to simply by “The Word of God.” Our verse is from Hebrews 4:12.

When you think about it, the Word of God is the single most important thing in our lives. It is our connection between heaven and earth, and between the physical and the Spiritual. The Bible is the field guide for our lives.

The latest Barna Research on the State of the Bible has found that because of the Pandemic, the number of American adults who regularly read the Bible has increased. They say that one in Six U.S. Adults Reads the Bible Most Days During the Week. However, research shows that only 11% of Americans say they have read the Bible through in its entirety.

At the previous Church I pastored I introduced a yearly Bible reading plan that if you followed it, you would have read the Bible completely through in one year’s time. I was shocked to find that there were only a few people in the Church that had ever read the entire Bible. One lady who was in her 70’s told me she had never read it all but wanted to try to. The truth is we have become a Biblically illiterate society.

Let me ask you this: If you fell in love with someone and then you discovered there was a book written about them that gave every little detail of their life and everything about them, wouldn’t you read it from cover to cover? Sure, you would. You would do everything in your power to find out about the one that you love. So why should the Bible be any different?

This morning with the help of the Lord, I want us to look at some truths about the Word of God and why it is so important in our lives. Let’s read our opening text again: **Hebrews 4:12** For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

The first part of the verse says: “***the word of God is quick.***” That word ***quick*** as used in our King James Bible means: “***to live or be lively.***” In other words, God’s Word is alive! It’s a living book. It is God breathed. -- **Psalm 33:6** *By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.* The same breath that spoke the heavens and earth into existence and breathed life into man, is the same breath that makes up the Word of God.

God is the Author of the Bible. Although God used human-penman to write down the words, it was not men who inspired it. Listen to what the Bible says in **2 Peter 1:20-21** *Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. 21 For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*

For the Word of God to be quick – alive, it must be God breathed.

You can read other books written by man and you may be inspired, and you may get excited, and you may enjoy them, but none of the world’s books are alive and none of them can give you life. Only the Bible can give you life because it is a living book from a living God. -- **Psalm 84:2** *My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the LORD: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.* -- Yes friends, the Bible is an alive Book from an alive God.

Next our text says that the word of God is “***powerful.***” That means “***active, energetic, and effective.***” – **Isaiah 55:11** *So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.*

You may have noticed that before I preach, I usually say: “***if you have your copy of God’s Word.***” I don’t say this as a filler but because I want us to recognize and realize that this book we are reading is God’s Word. It’s not just any book. We aren’t reading from the Readers Digest, or Dr. Suess, but from God’s Word. It’s an active and effective book. It’s powerful and God says it shall accomplish that which He pleases.

The Bible is powerful enough to change men and women and even countries. The worse sinner in existence can read the Bible be completely changed. That once abusive husband can become a meek and gentle man. That once dead-beat mother or father can be transformed into a loving and caring parent. The drunk can become sober, the drug addict can become clean, the atheist can become righteous.

**2 Corinthians 5:17:** *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*

Yes, the Bible is the most powerful book on the face of the earth.

Next, our text says “***sharper than any twoedged sword***”

**Isaiah 49:2** *And he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand hath he hid me, and made me a polished shaft; in his quiver hath he hid me;*

A two-edged sword cuts both ways. You cannot escape it’s cutting path. If it is missing you in one direction it will get you in the next. It is sharper than any Guinzo Knives that’s ever been created. It has cut down the mightiest of men. It is designed to cut down in both directions. **Ephesians 6:17** *And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:*

**piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow** I notice that this sword also pierces, meaning it has a sharp point. The Bible has the ability to penetrate even the toughest of men's hearts. **1 Peter 1:23** *Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.*

Many people believe that the soul and the spirit are the same thing. But reading God's Word tells us they are two separate things. Our text says, "piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit."

We can see this division in **1 Thessalonians 5:23** *And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

If we believe the Bible then we must realize that we are made up of the body, soul, and spirit. I want you to get this picture in your mind of a round circle. Inside the circle are two other circles. The outer circle is our body, the next layer is our soul, and the middle layer is our spirit.

Our text gives us two different descriptions of how the Word of God can pierce and divide. First the soul from the spirit, and second the joints from the marrow. We all know that the marrow is inside of the joints. You must first get through a layer of bone to get to the marrow. The same with the spirit. You must get through the soul to reach the spirit. That is why it often seems that the soul and the spirit are the same thing but clearly God's Word teaches that they are two different things and can be divided.

Our soul is often burdened with problems, bad thoughts, and intentions. It often keeps us from being the Christian we need to be. That is why it is important that we maintain our soul and keep it healthy. It says in **3 John 1:2** *Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.* But the Soul is not the Spirit.

The Bible teaches that the Lord is with our spirit. **2 Timothy 4:22** *The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit. Grace be with you. Amen.* For us to get past the problems that our soul gives us we must pierce through and separate soul from spirit and let God do His work. Our text tells us that the Word of God does this.

What have we seen about the Word of God so far? **it is quick, powerful, sharper than any twoedged sword, it separates the soul and spirit** But then our text says: **and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.** -- This word "discerner" means **to judge or make a decision.** The Word of God has the power to judge a man's thoughts and intents of his heart.

So many times, in the Bible we are told that our thoughts proceed from our heart. **Matthew 15:19** *For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies:*

Oh, my friend, we can say lots of things, make wide boastful comments, flatter men with our lips but those are just lip service. A man's true thoughts proceed from his heart and are soon revealed. **Matthew 15:8** *This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me.*

**The number one problem that most people have when it comes to the Word of God, is they do not read it.**

The Bible says in **Proverbs 14:12:** *There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.* Men and women today seem to feel they have no need for the Bible. That they should be able to do whatever, whenever they want. The problem with that is it is unbiblical. People today don't base their thoughts and ideas on the Bible. Pastor Sexton during my years in Seminary, had a saying that made a profound effect on me and that is that **our philosophy needs to be based on our theology and our theology must come from the Word of God.** There are a lot of great men that have done great things and they may be called philosophers, but their philosophy was built on something other than the Word of God. As Christians, we MUST base our ideas and thoughts on God's Word.

Not everyone can understand the Bible. If you are not saved, you do not have the Holy Spirit living in you, the Bible will not speak to you as it does a Christian. Oh sure, men can study the Bible and learn its history and glean some things from reading it but unless they are saved, they do not have the Holy Spirit to illuminate the Scriptures to them and it will never work in their life.

Paul writes in **1 Corinthians 2:9-16**

**9** But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

**10** But God hath revealed *them* unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

**11** For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.

**12** Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

**13** Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

**14** But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.

**15** But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.

**16** For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.

The truth is, the average Christian only reads their Bible when they are at Church when the preacher is reading. And that is the extent of their Bible reading. Bible study is hard work. It is something that you must put forth effort to do. It's odd to me that people will read all kinds of books about the Bible yet not even crack open the real thing. They want to get caught up in the latest rage of the best-selling books by Beth Moore, Max Lucado, or T.D. Jakes, or even the Guidepost. There are many good Christian books but none of them is a substitute for the Bible.

Some people have said to me, "*I wish I had an understanding of the Bible that you do.*" The truth is, despite all the year of studying I have done and the multiple degrees I have earned, I still feel that I know very little of the Bible.

To know the Bible, you must read it and study it.

#### **God expects us to read and study our Bibles:**

Paul writing to his dear son in the faith, Timothy, says in **2 Timothy 2:15:** *Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.* -- It's not enough just to read the words and then come up with what you think it means in your mind. It doesn't work like that. You must compare Scripture with Scripture and rightly divide the Word of Truth.

There are some people that actually think that a preacher should not study or use notes or prepare a sermon ahead of time. That's all completely unbiblical. You will not find that teaching anywhere in the Bible. Some make claim with **Matthew 10:19** and state that it teaches preachers aren't supposed to prepare a sermon but are supposed to wait around until right before preaching to come up with something. **Matthew 10:19** *But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak.* -- Well that sounds real spiritual and all but the truth is this is not even talking about preachers, it is talking about martyrs. People that are going up before a council to be tried for their faith and it has nothing at all to do with preparing a sermon or even for preachers.

Real preachers study and prepare, that is why the Apostle Paul while in prison wrote his 2<sup>nd</sup> letter to Timothy and was expecting Timoth to come visit him and he gave special instructions on what to bring to him, listen to what he said: **2 Timothy 4:13** *The cloke that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments.* If all Paul needed to do was wait around just before preaching and not prepare a message, why on earth would it be so important to him for Timothy to bring him books and especially the parchments? The parchments would have been Old Testament writings on parchment paper. The Word of God was more important to Paul than even his cloke to keep him warm!

Too many preachers base their messages on ideas or thoughts that they have and only read a passage of Scripture to be reading something or they come up with a topic and try to make a piece of Scripture fit the topic, or Lord forbid and Alliterated Outline...

I don't believe that is how God intends us to preach. That's why Paul told Timothy in **1 Timothy 4:13:** *Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.*

#### **Lastly, proper study of God's Word requires prayer and meditation.**

Some people sadly mistake Bible reading as a chore they must get through. Something they are trying to do just to get through it. My first assignment in Seminary was to read the Bible completely through and I had to do it within 3 months. It was a grueling thing. I retained very little of what I read. I was not meditating upon the Word I was using it to complete an assignment.

For the Scripture to really sink in and be revealed to you, you need to pray and meditate upon it.

**Deuteronomy 6:6-9** *And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: 7 And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. 8 And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. 9 And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.*

Do you see what the Lord is trying to make us realize? If we will incorporate Scripture into our daily lives and make it part of everything we do then it will be in our hearts. Read it over and over. Don't think things such as "**Oh, I've read this verse a thousand times, I don't need to read it anymore.**" I'm always amazed at the times that I read a passage of Scripture that I've read, studied, and even preached on and the Lord will illuminate it for me in a different way and I will see things that I never saw before. Simply by meditating upon the Scripture.

As we end this first message of 2022, I want to remind you what Paul wrote to Timothy in **2 Timothy 3:14-17** *But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; 15 And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. 16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*