

Sep. 20, 2020

# God's Word: Treasure of the Heart

Psalm 119:11 & Proverbs 22:17

The most powerful weapon for defeating sin and enlarging faith is the word of God treasured in the heart.

LTS: Psalm 19:7-11

Last Sunday I announced the launch of our church-wide Scripture Memory plan. We encouraged all of you to download the Fighter Verses App and let that be our guide for weekly Scripture memory. There are perhaps many good reasons for establishing a Scripture memory strategy, but the one that stands out in my mind is the spiritual reality that for Christians, life is war.

## I. Sin is our Enemy:

Followers of Christ like to consider themselves people of peace.

- We pursue peace with one another.
- We want to promote peace in our country.
- And we strive to bring people into a saving peace with God.

Even so, every Christian knows that while we are seeking to bring peace to others, the follower of Jesus understands that he is Always at war. Sin is our enemy and we must battle it every day. As children of God we have been rescued from the kingdom of darkness and delivered into the kingdom of God's beloved Son. We have been liberated from the prison camps of evil and delivered into true freedom in Christ. Sin is no longer our master. We are no longer obligated to bow down to its demands.

Nevertheless, as long as we live this side of heaven, sin lurks about in the shadows, looking for opportunity to do us harm. As followers of Jesus who pursue righteousness and holiness, we must daily declare war upon sin and fight the good fight of faith. A failure to engage in spiritual warfare opens us to the prospect of spiritual ruin. We simply must win the battle against temptation and sin.

But "How?"

- How do we wage war against a deadly enemy whom we cannot see?

- How do we overcome the temptations that seem to hijack our minds and affections and use them to commit acts of evil?

That's a good question, and the O.T. hero, David, provides the instruction we need in Psalm 119.

### **Read Psalm 119:9-16**

<sup>9</sup> How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word. <sup>10</sup> With my whole heart I seek you; let me not wander from your commandments! <sup>11</sup> I have stored up [Treasured] your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you. <sup>12</sup> Blessed are you, O LORD; teach me your statutes! <sup>13</sup> With my lips I declare all the rules of your mouth. <sup>14</sup> In the way of your testimonies I delight as much as in all riches. <sup>15</sup> I will meditate on your precepts and fix my eyes on your ways. <sup>16</sup> I will delight in your statutes; I will NOT forget your word.

From the start we can already see that if sin is our enemy, Scripture is our Weapon of War

## II. Scripture is our Weapon of War:

1. Verse 1 asks our question. "How can a young person keep his way pure?" Or "How can we (old or young) protect ourselves against this most formidable spiritual enemy?" David says, "By keeping (or protecting) your life according to God's word."
2. Now, what does it mean to keep your way pure according to God's word? That question is answered for us in verse 11. "Your word have I hid in my heart, That I might not sin against you."
3. The highest goal of the Christian life is to live completely for the glory of God. this presupposes that we will be diligent to NOT sin against God. The question is, "how do we pursue that goal?"
4. Let's take a few minutes to dig into this important verse. The question is, how do I protect myself from sin.
5. There are 3 phrases in this verse.
  - A. "I have hidden [stored up, or treasured]
  - B. "Your word",
  - C. "In my heart"

6. Let's take them one at a time. (different trans.)

A. "Your word." What does David mean when he says, "Your word?" Well, He's NOT speaking of some kind of personal and subjective impression from God. That is not the kind of "word" he is has in mind.

B. Rather, he is speaking of the objective, revealed, written word of God. We know that by looking at the context. This is important because, as you know, "Context is King."

- (10) "Do not let me wander from Your commandments."
- (12) "Teach me Your statutes."
- (13) "With my lips I have told of all the rules..."
- (14) "In the way of your Testimonies I delight..."
- (15) "I will meditate on your precepts
- (16) "I shall delight in Your statutes; I shall not forget Your word.

C. Clearly, David is referring to the written word of God. So, when he says, "Your word," he means the Scriptures."

7. Now, let's look at the next phrase. David says: "In my heart." What does that mean?

A. I think David intends the words "in my heart" to communicate the internalization of the external Word. That is, God's written word committed to memory in the heart where it is always at the ready.

B. Understand here, that the "heart" in O.T. thinking is responsible for both thought and emotion. For example, the psalmist says elsewhere, "As a man thinks in his heart, so is he." So, to get the word of God off of the page and into the heart is to get it to hidden away in a place where you can think about it , ponder it, and feel it. It means getting it on the inside where we can meditate on it, delight in it, ponder it, feel guilt over it when necessary, experience joy from it, and worship intelligently by it.

8. Now, let's look at the third phrase (wherever it is placed in your translation). "I have treasured" of Hidden" What does it mean to "treasure"?

A. First, let's establish what this phrase does NOT mean. It does not mean that we "treasure" it in the sense that we feel sentimental about it = like heirlooms passed on from people who left this world before

we were ever born (e.g. antique salt & pepper shakers).

B. Rather, the Hebrew word for “treasure” or always means to “store” or to “hide”. In David’s day there weren’t any banks to put your money in. So, if you had some treasure you would be wise to hide it somewhere to keep it safe. Or, it is like a soldier fitting his ammunition belt with bullets so as to be ready to fight when the enemy strikes.

9. So, one way we can keep ourselves safe from our enemy, sin, is to take the written, external word and internalize it – hiding it in our hearts. It’s not good enough to have warm sentimental feelings about the Bible! When temptation hijacks your mind and you are tempted on the job to lie or at school to cheat, or in private to lust, or in secrete to gossip and slander about someone else, your most powerful weapon is always available. You need but to reach into the treasury of Scripture hidden in your heart where you find all the powerful promises, warnings, instructions, prayers, examples, and commands you need to defeat your enemy.

A. The Word of God, according to Paul (Eph. 6), is the believer’s sword for battle. When you find yourself attacked by temptation, you need the sword to cut yourself free!

B. So, storing up, or memorizing, the word of God in order to get it into our hearts is very, very important.

C. Jesus is our example here. When Satan tempted Him in the wilderness, how did He respond? Matthew tells us (Mat. 4:4; 7; 10) that for each temptation he drew out of his heart a verse from the O.T. book of Deuteronomy. We can infer from this that Jesus memorized (and meditated upon) Scripture. And if Jesus hid God’s word in his heart, how much more should we?

10. What I’m trying to do here is persuade and inspire you to practice the spiritual discipline of **Scripture memory**. This is important for the health and vitality of our souls. If the words of Scripture are God’s weapon of war for combatting sin, then they should be a precious treasure. And if the word of God is our treasure, we should store it in our hearts. And since it is God’s most powerful weapon against temptation, hiding it in our hearts will keep us equipped and ready to fight whenever sin entices our souls.

- So, our enemy is sin
- The Scripture is our Weapon of War. Third...

### III. The Church is our Training Ground:

1. Whether you are an elder or deacon in your church, a mom or dad, a single adult or child, God has provided this weapon of the Word for your warfare. More than that, he has provided a **training ground** to prepare you to use His word for personal ministry.

2, In Eph. 4:11ff, we read that Christ gifted the church with the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, <sup>13</sup> until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,

3. This is why we are called Calvary BIBLE Church. The focus of our ministry is preaching, teaching and ministering the Bible. Why? Because the Scriptures are NOT just truth! They are **truth for life!** Roy Zuck is right when he says:

The Bible is given to us for more than satisfying our curiosity about what God is like and what he has done, [ect]... Its intended impact on lives is seen in that the Bible convicts (Heb. 4) regenerates (2 Tim. 3), nurtures (2 Tim. 2), cleanses (Psa. 119:9), counsels and guides (Psa. 119:24), prevents sin (Psa. 119:11), renews the mind (119:50), strengthens, sustains, gives wisdom, and delivers.<sup>1</sup>

God speaks of the Scriptures as a fire to consume false teaching, a hammer that shatters people's hard hearts, food to sustain one's soul, a light to guide our path, and a sword to battle the enemy of your soul.<sup>2</sup>

4. Paul describes **the church** as the venue or community in which you can be **trained and equipped** to use the word of God to protect NOT only your own souls,

---

<sup>1</sup> Roy Zuck, *Basic Bible Interpretation*, (Colorado Springs, David C. Cook, 1991), 280

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, adapted from Zuck, 1991

but the souls of others who may be weak, or idol, or unruly

- A. Let me ask you a question. Would you say your faith is strong or is it weak? I have never known a strong, mature Christian who did not have many, many Scriptures hidden away in their heart. There is a reason for that.
- B. God has designed faith (which is the Christian's strength) to feed on the word of God. If you are not feeding regularly on the word of God, I can tell you right now, your faith and your ability to stand against the assaults of sin is **weak**.
- C. The food of faith is Scripture. If you do not feed your faith, it atrophies – becomes weak, grows smaller. You may ask,
- Why am I such a weak Christian?
  - Why don't I have the joy of Christ that other Christians have?
  - Why don't I have courage to share my faith with unbelievers?
  - Why am I so often defeated in the face of temptation?
  - Let me suggest to you that perhaps it is because your faith is starving and your spiritual treasury contains little help in the hour of trial.
- D. Finish this statement for me. "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by... the word of Christ" (Rom. 10:17). The bedrock of faith is the word of God.
- E. If you choose against Bible Memory and bible meditation, you choose against faith! You don't have to use any special program. But you need a plan to systematically take in and treasuring up, the word of God.

5. Now some of you doubt that you have the ability to do memorize. You will say, "Children can do it easily enough, but I can't hardly remember my phone number!" Well, let me give you a little test. Suppose I said, "I will give you \$1,000 for every verse you memorize this week." Now think about that for a moment. You could buy a lot of things for \$1000. You could get new computer. You could get your car repaired! You could take a vacation or do something else that will bless your wife and children.

6. If you memorized ten verses, you could buy something even better. What if I promised to give you \$1,000 for every verse you memorized this week? I bet you

would be absolutely astounded at how many verses you could commit to memory – PERFECTLY!

7. What's the point? Simply this, that the issue for us is not ability but motivation. The question is, where is your heart? David said the word of God is "more precious than gold, even much fine gold!" The real question is, "Do you believe that?" Or is 1,000 crisp clean dollars the greater object of our affections? You can memorize! You can! And your church is here to inspire and help you do it.

8. If you haven't gotten on board yet with Fighter Verses, I hope you will commit to doing so today.

- Sin is your enemy
- Scripture is Your Weapon of War
- The church is your training ground. Finally...

#### IV. The World is your Battlefield:

1. Now, let me try to wrap this up by doing what might be the most motivating thing to help you see the value hiding God's word in your heart. I want to tell you a few stories from my own life of how the memorized word of God was there for me to help me do battle with temptation and encourage me in faith.

A. High School: When I was in high school, my family was going through a tremendous transition. We moved to another town, to a new church. For me that meant a new school, and a new home. And there were a lot of things happening in our family relationships that were unpleasant, to say the least. And I can remember feeling so displaced, insecure, and downright fearful.

One day someone in my church came to me and gave me the idea that I needed a passage of Scripture to hang my life upon... Joshua 1:8-9 "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth..."

I can't tell you how many times through college and seminary and even through these years of ministry that I have fallen back on the bed-rock truth of that passage to undergird me against the temptations of discouragement and despair.

B. Ministry: When I entered the ministry in 1991, I was shocked to find that leading a local church was a lot more complicated that I thought it

would be.

Colossians 1:25-29 “Of this church I was made a minister according to the stewardship from God bestowed on me for your benefit, that I might fully carry out the preaching of the word of God, that is, the mystery which has been hidden from past ages and generations, but now has been manifest to His saints, to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. And we proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ. For this purpose, also I labor, striving according to his power which mightily works within me.

C. Andy’s Surgery: Psalm 56:3-4 “When I am afraid I put my trust in You. In God, whose word I praise. In God I trust, I will not be afraid. What can mortal man do to me?”

D. Chris’ Accident: Thursday morning, July 19, 2001, 10:55 A.M. I was sitting in my office studying when I was interrupted by the beep of our office telephone intercom. Dana’s voice came on and said, “Dan, the fire department is on the phone. It’s something about your wife. What do you do? How do you reign in your frantic, fearful thoughts? IN that moment my mind went to Psalm 23...

“Lord Jesus, no matter what I discover at the accident site, or the outcome, help me remember that this is the right path.”

2. You see, we need to have the word of God hidden in our hearts to guard us from all of life’s temptations.

3. David wrote (Psa. 1): “Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers. But his delight is the law of the Lord. And in His law, he meditates day and night. And he will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water. His leaf will not wither and whatever he does will prosper” (Psalm 1)

4. Oh, that we would men and women skilled in speaking God’s truth to our souls! Oh, that the word of Christ would ever be found on our lips whenever we are squeezed by the pressure of various trials. And may God’s word, treasured in our hearts, be our most powerful weapon against temptation to sin.



5. Proverbs 22:17 “Incline your ear, and hear the words of the wise, and apply your heart to my knowledge, <sup>18</sup> for it will be pleasant if you keep them within you, if all of them are ready on your lips.”

*The most powerful weapon for defeating sin and enlarging faith is the word of God treasured in the heart.*