

Message #13 in our Precept Summer Series “Get Some Rest- Read THE Good Book!

Hebrews 4: 12- Precept: The Word of God is unique!

Introduction: IL- “Taking Back the Good Book” by Woodrow Kroll (Show book)

“Our failure to understand the Bible is aiding and abetting our enemy to weaken our witness, rob us of answers to life’s questions, and to keep us from enjoying the relationship with God that He made possible by revealing Himself through His Word.” As a pastor and a fellow believer with many of you, I want us to know and love the Bible. I long to see all of us walking in sweet communion with our Lord and with each other because we have been in the Good Book consistently! I desire to see our lives impacted by our quality time each day in our Bibles. For that to become a reality, we need to see three things happen in each of our lives...

If I want to see my life impacted by the Word of God I need to:

Realize how unique and special the Bible is- to fully understand how special the Bible is we need to see this verse, Hebrews 4: 12, in its proper context of rest for the people of God- rest from trying to work to earn our salvation and rest in the marvelous grace of our loving Lord! If we have the right connection to the Bible and its precepts, its truths, we will understand spiritual rest as a gift from God through what Jesus accomplished at Calvary for each of us! The Bible will become a book we just can’t put down or leave on a shelf to be pulled out when Sunday morning rolls around! Why does it become so special? Because...

It is divine-in this context, extending through both chapters 3 and 4 of Hebrews we learn that the Bible, as to its character, is a package deal- it is divine (the Word of GOD), living (alive) and active (powerful). As to its divine character it is, word for word, God’s divine message to mankind- to you and me- to be revered and read consistently to know the Author better as well as the rest He offers! 1 Peter 1: 23 says- “Since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable through the living and abiding word of God!” If we properly approach the Bible we know it is divine- it is HIS word on every page, for everyone to pay attention to!

It is living- it is alive and it offers life to those who read it and then run to the Savior, placing our trust confidently in Him. Because it is living it remains to this day as God’s Good Book to man- a gift in itself that reveals the gift of eternal life for sinful man. **IL-** Thomas Brooks- “The Word of the Lord is a light to guide you, a counselor to counsel you, a comforter to comfort you, a staff to support you, a sword to defend you, a physician to cure you, a mine to enrich you, a robe to clothe you and a crown to crown you!” And there is much more!

It is active- the King James version uses the word “powerful” and the Bible is most definitely a powerful book or collection of 66 books, each with a message from God to us! The Bible is active in the realm of intellect and morality, knowledge and content. Being the Living God His words are also His “rhemas” or specific words for specific situations. Because it is alive and powerful it deserves to and needs to be read, studied, written about, preached on and most importantly obeyed! Then and only then will we understand this pointed reminder of the

character of the Word. In today's spiritually needy world it is wonderful to know that the Word penetrates hearts and minds, permeates the REAL you and me and transforms those who long to bask in His grace and operate from the position of quiet, confident rest! Jeremiah 17: 10 makes this truth abundantly clear- "I, the Lord, search the heart and test the mind!" But for that divine work to occur in your life and mine we need to read it...

Read it to understand how sharp it is- When we read it as God's Holy Bible we find out how it works on us to lay bare the real ME- my true nature- and then I have to respond to God's work in my life to make me what He wants me to be to His glory! I discover that no part of my human nature is left untouched. God's Word, like a sharp sword,...

Pierces- Like a fine piece of work, metal forged in the fire and a blade hammered out on the anvil of truth, God begins the process of change in me. He doesn't take a metal sword and cut me or you open, leaving us to bleed to death! His intention is to refine us and re-shape us into the person He plans for us to be when we're living in obedience to His Word.

Divides- He works on my joints and my marrow to correct crooked bones and to empower our blood supply- our marrow, to build up life-giving flow inside those hard, lifeless bones. He penetrates the soul and the spirit- the human side of me and the spiritual side of me. In the process His Word accurately reveals my motives and intentions. My motives will not go unattended. This is corrective in nature and not merely exploratory so that His Word can give us the truth about the real us on the inside. John 6: 63 reads- "It is the Spirit who gives life- the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you, they are spirit and life!" God analyzes who we really are and He is never wrong in His divine analysis, while we may be very wrong about our true self on the inside! We can't escape God's notice and, even though other people do not know what I am thinking, God does and He wants to set us on the right track! So, God's assessment of our thoughts and ponderings, our intentions, our plans for the future is perfect and He will reveal it all to us on the very pages of His Book!

Reveals- It is sad but true that many people, even very brilliant people, get truth so wrong and then give out advice like it was gold. That is especially true when we compare or contrast man's words with God's. **IL-** Aristotle centuries ago wrote this: "Knowing yourself is the beginning of wisdom." The Bible says differently in Proverbs 9: 10- "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom!" Conversely, godly men and women who know their Bibles well can give great counsel to fellow believers in their physical family or church family. Take for instance, the quote from D. L. Moody- **IL-** "The Scriptures were not given to increase our knowledge but to change our lives!" And so it will, IF I respond in kind to what God is telling me in the Word!

Respond to it as it-

Purifies my thoughts and motives- The word 'heart' in our Bibles is a word intended to zero in on the personal, moral life of an unbeliever or a child of God. God is able to judge us righteously because He can look right into the mind of each of us. Humanly there is nothing more inaccessible than our thoughts or motives, but time spent in the Word can help us see

ourselves as we actually are! Reading our Bibles enables us to see God for who He truly is and for Him to reveal our true nature and conduct to us individually. Often in our devotions we discover inconsistencies in our lives, especially between what we SAY and what we DO. But we certainly cannot hide the intentions of our hearts from God. His divine stethoscope is continuously picking up the steady or fluctuating beats of our hearts and minds

Gives me reason to share its truths- if we truly love God and revere His Word we will also love people, including those who may not know Jesus as Savior and may not be readers of the Good Book. Our hearts go out to them and we would love to share something with them from the inspired Bible we know and love! **IL-** Charles Spurgeon once said in a sermon that God's Word is powerful for conviction and conversion. So, we can use our increasing knowledge of the Bible to share in a conversation so that they can be convicted by the Word and be converted to Biblical Christianity! Acts 20: 32 speaks to the Bible as "the word of His grace" which alone can bring new life, trusting in Jesus for eternal salvation. We will hear three testimonies today at the baptism of God's amazing grace to change a life from sin and self to the Savior, and the start of a growing relationship with the written Word of God- the Bible. The Bible tells us of both the bad news of sin and the good news of salvation and it both tears down and discards the old self and builds up the new person in Christ! The Bible alone can do that- like what we read in Acts 2: 36, 37 where, after Peter's sermon that focused on Christ's finished work on the Cross and His resurrection, the crowds were "cut to the heart" and they asked Peter, "What can we do?"

Changes me inside and out- God can and will do something for everyone in this room this morning. For the unbeliever the message is, "Don't reject the truth but receive it and you'll find rest now and for all eternity! In Matthew 11: 28 Jesus said, "Come unto Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you REST!" For the believers here this morning I say that God may need to rebuke you through His Word for your inattentiveness to the Bible and your lack of study and obedience to it. He longs to refine you and reward you with rich blessings when you DAILY spend time with Him in His Word and prayer. Pray, like the Psalmist, "Search me, O God, and know my heart today!" May we develop a genuine passion for times in His Word- yes, read THE Good Book and may we rest in His grace the rest of our lives. May we never forget His amazing grace and the sense of freedom and rest when the chains of sin came off for good!

Have there been changes in your life through the living, powerful Word of God?