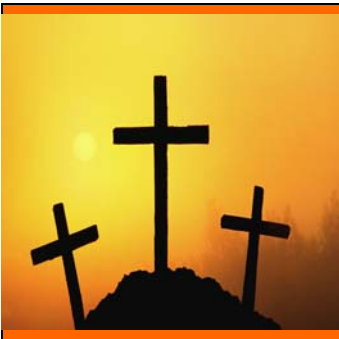


RADICAL DISCIPLESHIP

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Heb. 4:12-*For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword ...*



THE WORD OF GOD

The word of God is powerful. All Christians know that but all Christians don't really believe it. Just how powerful is the word of God? Let's find out.

For the word of God is living and active. God's word is alive. It is not dormant. **It has not been relegated to a place within the pages of the Bible.** It is as alive as you and I. And, it is active. The word of God is like a sprinter in the starting blocks waiting for the gun to go off, designating the start of the race. **God's word has a deep desire to do its work in and through us. But it is left to us to allow it to do so.**

Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit. There is nothing that can withstand the word of God. It is sharper than anything else that has been made. It has the ability to cut through anything, man-made or demonic. And when it cuts into the Christian, it separates the soul from the spirit.

What does that mean? It means this: the soul, which includes the mind, the emotions and the will are moved to one place; the

spirit, our liaison between God and ourselves, is moved to another place within us. Why is this important? **It is important because our soul constantly interferes with our spirit being able to operate the way God wants it to operate within us.** The soul is controlled by the self. The self sits on the throne of our lives. The self is in cahoots with the devil. The self does not like God and does not want God interfering with it. The self would love to keep us from God.

So, what does God do? He sends the word of God which separates the soul and the spirit. Now, He can minister to us, through the spirit, without the self interfering.

The word of God is on a mission. It wants to bring life to our spirit. It wants to bring death to our self. And it wants to bring healing to our bodies.

<It penetrates even to dividing> the joints and marrow. **The word of God is on a search and destroy mission.** It goes through our physical body looking for anything that is out of kilter. The word of God is a healing power and desires to bring healing to our physical

bodies. Why, then, does it happen so seldom? It is because we don't believe the word of God. We don't understand all that God is saying to us. We want to believe it, but we do not. Why? It is because we serve God on our own terms. But He wants us to serve Him on His terms. The only way to do that is to die – daily. When we die to self, more of the Lord becomes available to us. We become conformed to the likeness of God's Son (Rom. 8:29).

We then begin to have a better understanding of God's word. And, by His grace, we begin to experience the truth of His word in our lives. **And healing becomes available to us. Not that it wasn't available before, but rather that we didn't avail ourselves of it before.**

It judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. The word of God is our judge. Jesus made that very clear. When God's word cuts into our very being, it sees us as we are, not as we would like to be seen. It sees through the plastic façade; it moves all the little white lies out of the way; all those things that we thought were hidden are in plain view to the word of God. And when God sees

what we are truly made of, He judges those things that are not pleasing to Him.

Whoa, you say! I don't know if I want God to do that or not. Well, if you are a pseudo-Christian, you probably don't. But if you are a radical disciple, you want God to see all of those things. **You want Him to judge your thoughts. Because when He judges them, they can then be healed.**

He also cuts through to the attitudes of the heart. He sees the anger, the jealousy, and the envy. He is aware of the pettiness, the gossip, and the judgments. Our unrighteous indignation is not hidden from Him. The way we look at others is known to Him. And He judges those attitudes just like He judges our thoughts.

But again, it is a necessary operation if our desire is to become more like Jesus. We want God to judge us. We want Him to heal us. And so, we say to the word of God, "Come and do your work in me. I need it and I am willing to pay the price."

Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. What a statement! God is not just speaking of those things that comprise our being. He's not just speaking of this earthsuit that we wear, or this goat on which we ride. He's saying that nothing in all creation is hidden from His sight. Nothing! The word of God knows all things. There is nothing for us to fear. If

God sees cancer in us, we should be comforted. God knows. What, then, is there to be afraid of? If God sees besetting sin in us, He knows. And He wants to heal us far more than we want to be healed. **We need only to yield to Him and He will conform us to the likeness of His dear Son, Jesus.**

Before the earth was created, God knew every trick the devil would use, every plan he would devise. And He has an answer for each one.

Nothing in all creation is hidden from His sight. If the devil has laid a vile plan against us, God knows. If the enemy has planned an ambush against us, God knows. He knows about every terrorist attack, every pending war, every tsunami, hurricane and tornado. There is nothing hidden from His sight.

Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account. Every evil thing is known to God; and every evil thing will be brought before Him; **and those who are responsible will be sentenced according to God's perfect judgment.**

Every hidden sin is, in fact, not hidden at all. God knows. But let's get personal. **Everything that comprises who we are, the good and the bad, is uncovered and laid bare before the Lord.**

Everything! There is nothing that He does not know. And who is this God? He is the One to whom we must, some day, give account. We will, without question, be held accountable for every act, every word, every thought.

Would we prefer to be judged now, when we can be healed, or would we prefer to be judged then?

WHAT CAN WE DO?

In light of these things, what can we do? How do we deal with truth such as this? The answer is that we turn to God; we yield completely to Him. Not only does He know everything, but He is merciful, gracious, forgiving, and loving; and He desires greatly to heal us and to change us.

This is why the word of God is such a powerful tool in the hands of the radical disciple. You already are sold out to the Lord. You want what He wants. You want to be conformed to the likeness of Jesus. You want to serve God on His terms, not your own terms. You want to serve God in perfect obedience, and you are willing to pay the price to do so. **You want all that God is, recognizing that the only way you can have all of Him is if He first has all of you.**

Now, you see that God's word is the operative ingredient to bring about God's purpose in your life. You yield to Him and you

study the word of God. You ask the Holy Spirit to illuminate the deep truths of the word to your spirit. You trust and believe God to do the work in you that needs to be done. And you relish in the fact that the word of God will cut right to the truth and it will judge that truth and it will heal you where you need to be healed.

Paul goes on to say that we have a magnificent High Priest who understands all that we are going through. He's been there, albeit without sin. He understands. And so, *Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need (Heb. 4:16).*

The word of God changes the way we pray. We have confidence. Why? It is because we understand a little better who God is, what He is about, why He is about it, and what our role is in His perfect will. God wants us to be like Jesus. If we, too, want the same thing, we must yield. We must allow God to do with us what He desires. And we must be willing to pay the price. What is the price? Everything. God wants it all. If we want to save our lives, we will surely lose them. Only if we are willing to lose our lives, for His sake, will we ultimately save them. You see, God knew. God has always known.

And now we know, too. So we approach the throne of

grace with confidence. We trust God. He wants what we want. And He will do the work in us that needs to be done. **We will receive the requisite mercy and we will receive sufficient grace.** Undoubtedly. God is faithful. Our time of need was laid bare before the word of God. God knew. God always knows.

And when we reach the point where we know that God always knows, we will be able to approach the throne of grace with the confidence of which Paul speaks in these verses. God wants us to pray that way. God wants us to know His will for us. **God wants us to pray with confidence, knowing that He will answer.**

SO WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

We are radical disciples. We are walking the narrow road to holiness spoken of by Isaiah (35:8). We are, by the grace of God, becoming more like Jesus. And we are learning how to live, how to believe, how to trust, how to understand and how to know God – on His terms.

We welcome the word of God into our lives. We need it – desperately. And we know that the word will do its work. It will separate the self so that our spirit can be ministered to. It will bring the necessary spiritual and

physical healing. But we must understand and we must believe. It will judge our thoughts and attitudes and, by the grace of God, it will change us. We become less. God becomes more. We decrease; He increases. We become nothing. God becomes everything in us.

And, we graciously lay everything bare before He to whom we must give account. We don't want to hide anything any longer. Life with the Lord is too important. Let's do it right. There's too much at stake.

We allow God to continue judging us, healing us, changing us and transforming and conforming us. That is God's will and has always been God's will.

OUR ULTIMATE GOAL

God doesn't need our help running the world and He doesn't need our help running the Church. He needs our availability. He needs this old goat on which we ride. God has all that He needs to perfect the world. But He is looking for men and women through whom He can operate.

He doesn't want us to do things for Him. He doesn't want us to do our own things, asking His blessing on them. **He wants us to become nothing so that all that He is can operate through us.** That's what Jesus meant

when He said: I only do the things that my Father tells me to do and I only say the things that my Father tells me to say.

Our ultimate goal is to become like Jesus. Jesus said, *I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.*

Is that a carte blanche from Jesus for us to use His power? NO!! It is the result of our becoming nothing so that He can operate through us. If we are to be like Jesus, then we, too, must be able to say: I only do the things He tells me to do and I only say the things He tells me to say.

And the only way to get to that point is to die. Jesus died to self. We must die to self, too. But, in our case, the work has already been done. Our self was crucified with Jesus. Why, then, does it continue to rear its ugly head? It is because we don't believe that it was crucified with Jesus. And we don't act like it has been crucified with Jesus.

Friends, God's word is not an ideal to which we should aspire. It is the factual word of God. It is the factual truth of Heaven. And God's will is to bring Heaven to earth.

Every one of us can be like Moses. Every one of us can be like Abraham, King David, Isaiah, Daniel. What set them apart? They died to self. They believed God. And they saw that God was everything. He was not someone important in their life. He was everything. **He wasn't their first priority. He was their only priority.**

God mattered. And when God was all that mattered, everything else fell into place the way it was supposed to. It is no different with us. All that God is, is available to us if we are willing to pay the price.

Are we?

Please join us at the Radical Discipleship meetings every other Monday at New Life Foursquare Church, 5913 Jefferson Pike, Frederick. We meet next on Monday, May 5th at 7:00 PM.

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