

The Text

Preaching Notes

Hebrews 4:12 King James Version (KJV)

12 For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged 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.

Hebrews 4:12 New International Version (NIV)

12 For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

Hebrews 4:12 Amplified Bible (AMP)

12 For the word of God is living and active and full of power [making it operative, energizing, and effective]. It is sharper than any two-edged [a]sword, penetrating as far as the division of the [b]soul and spirit [the completeness of a person], and of both joints and marrow [the deepest parts of our nature], exposing and judging the very thoughts and intentions of the heart.

1. Introduction

- There is now a growing body of literature that is floating around that is said to be Christian and even quotes scriptures in a number of cases.
- This literature covers every thing from how to raise your children, how to make things work in your marriage, business or social life. There is, it would seem, a programme and step plan for any aspect of life and all these it would appear are premised on the Word of God or are there.
- You would see something like the bible teachers us to drink tea;

Put water on the kettle to boil.....Jeremiah 1:13

Then take the cup and drink.....Matthew 26:27

- You will also find article or material that put across a historical fact, an idea or interpretation, which it sells as a biblical truth. Late last year I was preparing a sermon and I found an article that was looking at Romans 13, which suggested that the author (Paul) was being ironic in the use of language and the author of said article based his case on what he described as popular style of writing that existed at the time.
- So the inspiration for this message came a few weeks ago when I saw an article on self care (a noble concept) which the author suggested was based on scriptural teachings. I shared it with the Crossroads 2015 group and we agreed that it was not consistent with the word of God. I was convinced and very clear in my description of the article in question, I referred to it as heresy; a description that was also shared by Thando. Mike exercised restraint in his choice of adjectives because the group also has ladies.
- I accept that this maybe to harsh and I am not sure whether we ought to be starting the Zimbabwean inquisition over it.
- Basically speaking heresy, according to *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, is "adherence to a religious opinion contrary to church dogma." A second definition is "dissent or deviation from a dominant theory, opinion, or practice."
- This definition I suspect are influenced by the inquisitions led by the Catholic Church between the 12th and the 15th century. These definitions however identify two key elements: a dominant position and a contrary

We once watched a documentary once that suggested that Christ wasn't actually a carpenter but worked the quarries.

The term heresy is from Greek *αἵρεσις* originally meant "choice" or "thing chosen", but it came to mean the "party or school of a man's choice" and also referred to that process whereby a young person would examine various philosophies to determine

given, and dividing the body He has created. Both of these are dangerous, destructive actions that are soundly rebuked by Scripture.²

- I found this quotation interesting

“In our day there is the belief in “progressive revelation” that originates from outside the Word. What right does anyone have to teach what is not in Scripture as if it is Scripture? False teachers do not want to submit to its original intent, so they do not seek what Scripture actually (exegesis) means, instead, they conform it to what they want it to mean (isogesis). They will look to another source as their authority because they are not under God’s authority. This is why Paul admonishes us in 1 Corinthians 4:6: “not to think beyond what is written” (exceed or go past).”³

- How then do we avoid being sold on false teachings or falling for false prophesy. Paul gives us an answer in two different places:-

Can someone read [Colossians 2:2-4](#)

- (a) To spot the counterfeit one must know the original.⁴ We must seek to have a complete understanding of Christ in whom all the treasures and mysteries of God are hidden. Paul write to the Colossians:

[Colossians 2:2-4](#)

2 My goal is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, 3 in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. 4 I tell you this so that no one may deceive you by fine-sounding arguments.⁵

Can someone read [1 Corinthians 4:6](#)

- (b) Evaluate each teaching against the word of God. Anything that seeks to add or progressively build on what is said in the bible cannot be

² Ibid

³ <http://www.letusreason.org/Biblexp117.htm>

⁴ 2 Corinthians 11:14-15

⁵ Colossians 2:2-4 <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Colossians%202&version=NIV>

correct.

1 Corinthians 4:6

6 Now, brothers and sisters, I have applied these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit, so that you may learn from us the meaning of the saying, “Do not go beyond what is written.” Then you will not be puffed up in being a follower of one of us over against the other.

The Bible gives us the measuring stick by which we can distinguish truth from error. It tells us what God is like. The Bible tells us how one truly gets to heaven, and it is not by being good or by being baptized or by anything else we do (John 14:6; Ephesians 2:1-10; Isaiah 53:6; Romans 3:10-18, 5:8, 6:23, 10:9-13). Along this line, God's Word shows us just how much God loves us (Romans 5:6-8; John 3:16). And it is in learning this that we are drawn to love Him in return (1 John 4:19).

(c) Be careful what you read

2. What is the Bible

Literally

- The Bible contains 66 books, divided among the Old and New Testaments.
- There are 39 books in the Old Testament and 27 books in the New Testament. Testament means “covenant” or “contract.”
- There are 1,189 chapters and 31,102 verses. Reading a verse a day it would take you just over 85 years.
- The Bible was written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit by over 40 different authors from all walks of life: shepherds, farmers, tent-makers, physicians, fishermen, priests, philosophers and kings. Despite these differences in occupation and the span of years it took to write it, the Bible is an extremely cohesive and unified book.
- Which single author contributed the most books to the Old Testament? Moses. He wrote the first five books of the Bible, referred to as the Pentateuch; the foundation of the Bible.

- Which single author contributed the most books to the New Testament? The Apostle Paul, who wrote 14 books (over half) of the New Testament.
- It was written over a period of some 1,500 years, from around 1450 B.C. (the time of Moses) to about 100 A.D. (following the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ).
- The Bible was written in three languages: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Koine Greek.
- The entire New Testament as we know it today, was canonized before the year 375 A.D. The Old Testament had previously been canonized long before the advent of Christ. What does “canon” mean? “Canon” is derived from the Greek word “Kanon,” signifying a measuring rod. Thus, to have the Bible “canonized” meant that it had been measured by the standard or test of divine inspiration and authority. It became the collection of books or writings accepted by the apostles and leadership of the early Christian church as a basis for Christian belief. It is the standard by which all Christians throughout the ages live and worship.
- The first translation of the Bible into English was in 1382 A.D. by John Wycliffe.
- The longest book in the Bible? The book of Psalms.
The shortest book in the Bible? 2 John.
The longest chapter in the Bible? Psalm 119
The shortest chapter in the Bible? Psalm 117
The longest verse in the Bible? Esther 8:9
The shortest verse in the Bible? John 11:35
- The Holy Bible has been translated into 2,018 languages, with countless more partial translations, and audio translations (for unwritten languages). (This is an enormous amount of translations. In comparison, Shakespeare, considered by many to be the master writer of the English language, has only been translated into 50 languages.)
- The Bible still the best-selling book in the world and apparently the most shop lifted

Why should you read the word?

- We have already established that we should read the bible because there is so much false teaching.
- We get part of the answer from [2 Timothy 3:16-17](#)

16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17 so that the servant of God[a] may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

i) All Scriptures are God breathed and other translations would say inspired. It God's very word to us.

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12 For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

- The word of God is alive and active
- Sharper than any double-edged sword. We see in Ephesians that the Word of God is our spiritual sword. Jesus Christ when tempted by the devil in the wilderness (account in Matthew 4:1-11) use scriptures from Deut. 8:3; Psalm 91:11,12; Deut. 6:16 and Deut. 6:13.

Ephesians 6 13-17

13 Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. 14 Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, 15 and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. 16 In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. 17 Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Tell Joke about boy who understands meaning of BIBLE
B- Basic
L- Instructions
B- Before
L- Leaving
E- Earth

- It penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow
- it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart

ii) It is useful teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness

We should read and study the Bible because God does not change and because mankind's nature does not change; it is as relevant for us as it was when it was written. While technology changes, mankind's nature and desires do not change. We find, as we read the pages of biblical history, that whether we are talking about one-on-one relationships or societies, "there is nothing new under the sun" ([Ecclesiastes 1:9](#)). And while mankind as a whole continues to seek love and satisfaction in all of the wrong places, God—our good and gracious Creator—tells us what will bring us lasting joy. His revealed Word, the Bible, is so important that Jesus said of it, "Man does not live on bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God" ([Matthew 4:4](#)). In other words, if we want to live life to the fullest, as God intended, we must listen to and heed God's written Word.

iii) It will equip you for good works.

It is God's very words to us. There are so many questions that philosophers have asked that God answers for us in Scripture.

What is the purpose to life?

Where did I come from?

Is there life after death?

How do I get to heaven?

Why is the world full of evil?

Why do I struggle to do good?

In addition to these "big" questions, the Bible gives much practical advice in areas such as:

What do I look for in a mate?

How can I have a successful marriage?

How can I be a good friend?

How can I be a good parent?

What is success and how do I achieve it?

How can I change?

What really matters in life?

How can I live so that I do not look back with regret?

How can I handle the unfair circumstances and bad events of life victoriously?

- Still relevant (Malachi 3:1) see even with a 400 year break it still remained true as if nothing happened.

- The Bible equips us to serve God (2 Timothy 3:17; Ephesians 6:17; Hebrews 4:12). It helps us know how to be saved from our sin and its ultimate consequence (2 Timothy 3:15). Meditating on God's Word and obeying its teachings will bring success in life (Joshua 1:8; James 1:25). God's Word helps us see sin in our lives and helps us get rid of it (Psalm 119:9, 11). It gives us guidance in life, making us wiser than our teachers (Psalm 32:8, 119:99; Proverbs 1:6). The Bible keeps us from wasting years of our lives on that which does not matter and will not last (Matthew 7:24-27).

Other reasons

1. It Makes You Much Wiser
2. It Helps Us Overcome Sin and Temptations
3. Reading Your Bible Gives You Peace
4. The Bible Gives You Direction
5. It Builds Your Relationship with God
7. Learn a Little Bit of History
8. We Can Understand Jesus a Little More

- 9. It Can Change Your Life
- 10. It Brings You Back to Faith, Rather than Religion
- 11. Reading the Bible Brings a New Perspective

How do you read

Psalm 119:97-105

97 Oh, how I love your law! I meditate on it all day long.

- With affection with affection, we need to grow to love the word.
- We should meditate on it all day long. Our thoughts inform our actions and what we occupy our minds with will eventually define who we are. The Psalmist also speaks of the benefits of meditating on the word. He says

Psalm 1:1-3

Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers, but whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on his law day and night. That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither whatever they do prospers.

98 Your commands are always with me and make me wiser than my enemies.

99 I have more insight than all my teachers, for I meditate on your statutes.

100 I have more understanding than the elders, for I obey your precepts.

- There are so many questions that philosophers have asked that God answers for us in Scripture. What is the purpose to life? Where did I come from? Is there life after death? How do I get to heaven? Why is the world full of evil? Why do I struggle to do good?

101 I have kept my feet from every evil path so that I might obey your word.

102 I have not departed from your laws, for you yourself have taught me.

103 How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!

104 I gain understanding from your precepts; therefore I hate every wrong path.

105 Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path.

- When we read the word we should allow it to guide our steps. Reading the

bible should bring understanding, The Bible commends us in the Book of James to:-

James 1: 22-25

Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do.

Bible Plans

- <http://www.biblestudytools.com/bible-reading-plan/>