

The Life Giving Word

Developing A Conversational Relationship With God

Where Have We Been?

- The voice of God is unremarkable, inconspicuous, unassuming
- God speaks to us by the Holy Spirit interacting with our mind, revealing God's character and thoughts to us
- The Bible is a finite, written record of the saving truth spoken by the infinite, living God, and it reliably fixes the boundaries of everything He will ever say to humankind.
- Its power is referred to in John 15:7 "if you abide in me and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish and it will be done for you.
- How do we allow God's word to Abide in us that we may bear fruit? Dallas Willard gives a great illustration.

How Does The Word Of God Change Us?

- It is through the action of the word of God upon us, throughout us and with us that we come to have the mind of Christ and thus to live fully in the kingdom of God.
- To understand how that happens, we must understand what it means to be "Alive to God"
- What do a Plant, a Puppy and a Person all have in common?
- What is life? In all its various levels and types, life is power to act and respond in specific kinds of relationships.
- A plant has certain powers of action and response and a corresponding level of life.
- The plant will not respond to a ball, where a puppy will

How Does The Word Of God Change Us?

- While plant is dead to the realm of play, because of the kind of life it is in, it is alive to another, that of sun, soil, rain
- Similarly, a puppy playing with a ball can make no response to numbers or poetry, and in that sense the puppy is dead to the realms of arithmetic and literature.
- Human beings were once alive to God. They were created to be responsive to and interactive with Him. Adam and Eve lived in a conversational relationship with their Creator, daily renewed.
- When they mistrusted God and disobeyed him, that cut them off from the realm of the Spirit. Thus they became dead in relation to the realm of the Spirit—much as a puppy is dead to arithmetic

How Does The Word Of God Change Us?

- Biologically we continued to live, but we ceased to be responsive and interactive in relation to God's cosmic rule in His kingdom.
- It would be necessary for God to confer an additional level of life on humans through "being born from above" (Jn 3: 3). This would enable them once again to be alive to God, to be able to respond toward Him and to act within the realm of the Spirit.
- Human beings "born of water" (Jn 3: 5)—that is, through natural birth—are alive in the flesh, in the biological and psychological realm of nature. But in relation to God they remain "dead through the trespasses and sins" (Eph 2: 1).

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- Therefore we inhabit a world “without hope and without God” (Eph 2: 12 NIV). We can be born a second time, “born from above” (Jn 3: 3). This is not merely to be born again in the sense of repeating something or to make a new start from the same place. Instead, it is a matter of an additional kind of birth, whereby we become aware of and enter into the spiritual kingdom of God.
- It is the equivalent of a puppy suddenly appreciating and composing poetry. That image gives you an idea of the huge transition involved in this new birth.
- It is brought about by God’s word and Spirit, and it is spiritual in its effects. “What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit” (Jn 3: 6).

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- As the word of God in creation brought forth light and matter and life, so the gospel of Christ comes to us while we are biologically alive but dead to God.
- The gospel both empowers and calls forth a response by its own power, enabling us to see and enter the kingdom of God as participants. It opens the door of the mind and enters the heart. From there it is able to progressively transform the whole personality.
- “The sower sows the word” (Mk.4:14) of the kingdom. When this takes root in the heart and mind, a new life enters our personality and increasingly becomes our life as we learn to “be guided by the Spirit” (Gal.5:25) and “sow to the Spirit” (Gal.6:8).

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- Redemption in this respect is simply a further aspect of creation—a new creation. This new creation is the only thing that matters in our relation to God, as Paul says Gal 6: 15
 - Without it we have no relation to God, in the sense of something in which we live, and from it arise all further developments of God's rule in our individual souls.
 - To help us try to grasp this, James uses the image of planting to portray the additional life in the Spirit
 - He encourages us to “welcome with meekness the implanted word that has the power to save your souls” Ja 1: 21
- What condition was the garden in?

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- A description of the function of the word of God in our redemption is seen in Ephesians 5: 25-27. Here, Paul says that Christ “gave himself up for her, in order to make her holy by cleansing her with the washing of water by the word, so as to present the church to himself in splendor, without a spot or wrinkle or anything of the kind—yes, so that she may be holy and without blemish.”
- Christ is pictured as washing away the impurities and clutter that have permeated our person during our life away from God. These impurities do not automatically disappear at the additional birth.

How Does The Word Of God Change Us?

- These impurities and distractions limit and attack both individual spiritual growth and the role intended for Christ's followers as the light of the world.
- When we come to God, our minds and hearts are like a dirty shirt, cluttered with false beliefs and attitudes, deadly feelings, past deeds and misguided plans, hopes and fears.
- As we open our life to this new power and as the word moves into every part of our personality, just like the water and soap move through the shirt's fibers. God's word pushes out and replaces all that is false and opposed to God's purposes in creating us and putting us in our unique place on earth.

How Does The Word Of God Change Us?

- The literal truth is that Christ through his word removes the old routines in the heart and mind of thought, feeling, action, imagination, conceptualization, belief, inference and in their place he puts something else: his thoughts, his attitudes, his beliefs, his ways of seeing and interpreting things, his words.
- It is a process of weeding the garden of your mind!
- Deut.6:4-9 is the process of washing your mind with His Word
- In the progress of God's redemptive work communication advances into communion, and communion into union.

Where Are You In This Process Of Change?

- Mark 4 is the parable of the sower.
- 3-9 is the parable, 10-20, Jesus explains the parable.
- 11-13 Jesus tells us that Parables are spiritually discerned
- 14-20 Jesus gives the reasons why people are not experiencing joy and peace and bearing much fruit
 1. There is a spiritual battle. Satan comes and takes the seed
 2. Some give an emotional or superficial response 16-17
 3. Some respond to the Word, it takes root and begins to grow, but the garden was not weeded and was choked 19
 4. Some, Hear it, Accept it and bear fruit!
- Which one are you?