

The Ability of God's Word - Study 1

by Bob Hoekstra

The sermon emphasizes the ability of God's Word to transform our lives, and how it is living, powerful, and sharp, with the ability to pierce to the division of soul and spirit and divide joints and marrow.

Duration: 53:47

Scripture: Isaiah 40:31, Jeremiah 17:9, Ezekiel 36:26-27, Hebrews 4:12

Topics: "Gods Word", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

This sermon delves into the profound ability of God's Word, emphasizing its living, powerful, and sharp nature. It explores how the Word increases our vision, builds our faith, stirs our hearts for God's Word, and enlarges our capacity to minister to others. The sermon highlights Hebrews 4:12, which reveals the Word's ability to penetrate deep into the soul and spirit, discerning thoughts and intents of the heart, and dividing joints and marrow, illustrating the transformative work the Word can accomplish in our lives.

Transcript

Well, let's pray together, shall we, as we open up the Word of God. Lord, we thank you so much for the great, great blessing of being in Christ Jesus. We thank you for this great salvation.

We thank you for the Word of God. We thank you for the Holy Spirit. Lord, we are rich beyond measure, and we pray for your Spirit to work through your Word in our hearts this day.

Lord, you know what you have to say to us. You know what you want to do within us, and then you know what you want to do with us. So we pray for that full process of your good work in our lives now, in Jesus' name, amen.

We begin this study on the ability of God's Word. It's a two-part study, the ability of God's Word. And this first study is about God's living, powerful, sharp Word.

And we will be studying primarily out of Hebrews chapter 4. We are in one of the great themes of Scripture when we talk about the ability of God's Word. One of the great themes, one of the most strategic areas of revelation in the Scriptures. And it's so good to consider this matter of the ability of God's Word for many reasons.

When we study what God has to say about what His Word, His Word is able to do, it increases our vision of God's Word. Surely we would agree that the Word of God is greater than we yet think it is. The more we

study this theme, our vision of the greatness of the Word of God grows.

Also in studying this theme, our faith in God's Word is built. We find out more and more reason why we can put our trust in the Word of God. But also in studying this theme, there's a stirring of the heart with a spiritual appetite for God's Word.

I truly believe that when you study on the ability of God's Word, you just want to be nurtured and nourished in it more and more and more. It draws a person into the Word. Also in studying the ability of God's Word, this enlarges our personal capacity to minister the Word of God to others.

And the more we hear of the ability of God's Word, the more we want to minister the Word of God to other people. Now, the scripture we're going to look at is one of the great scriptures on this theme of the ability of God's Word, and that's Hebrews 4.12. For the Word of God is living and powerful and sharper than a two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. One verse, one sentence, what phenomenal revelation about the ability of God's Word.

And notice, the scripture breaks into two strategic parts. First, there is a word from God about the character of God's Word. You know, the character, just what it's like.

Then, flowing out of this teaching of the scripture on the character of God's Word, there are a number of statements about the ability of God's Word. In other words, since the Word is like this, it is able to do things like that. Under the character of God's Word, let's notice, first of all.

For the Word of God is living and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword. There's the statement about the character of God's Word. Well, anytime you come across a statement in scripture that begins like this, for the Word of God is, it's like, attention, eyes open, ears listening, heart's ready to receive.

This is tremendous, fundamental, core revelation from God when He tells us what His Word is like. And really, the only statement of more depth possible is portions of scripture that start out like this, the Lord is. And yet, there's a close kinship between statements like the Lord is and then His character is given, holy, pure, mighty, long-suffering and all that.

But there's a real kinship with statements like, for the Word of God is, because this is God's Word. And really, ultimately, you cannot separate God from His Word. We shouldn't, because the Word of God is God speaking to us.

And we're told in the Psalms that He magnifies His Word right up there according to His name. So, the Word of God has unique characteristics. And what God has to say to humanity and also to the church, it comes with unique characteristics.

Because these words, the words of scripture, these are the words of God speaking. These are not religious words of man. So, all of the being and all of the character of God is behind every word that He inspired by His Holy Spirit to be written and to be recorded.

And look what God Himself says about His Word. For the Word of God is living. That's part of the character of God's Word.

It's living, or the older translation, it's quick. It's alive. It's not dead religious literature.

There is life in the Word of God because it's from the living God. It's alive. John 6.63, you remember these great words? John 6.63, Jesus said in the middle of that verse, the words that I speak to you are spirit and they are life.

God's Word, they're spiritual words. And because they are spiritual words from God, they are life. They are alive and they're life-giving and they're life-developing.

Remember, Jesus, speaking in Matthew 4.4, said that man must live and can live only by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. These aren't words just to learn and memorize. These are words to live.

In fact, they're words that give a life to live, you know. These words, humbly, rightly taken in, these words become life in us from the true and living God. The Word of God is living.

So for spiritual growth and vitality, we want to be feeding on the living Word of God. We want to be talking about the living Word of God. We don't want to be like those in the world that are getting their perspective and their input from men like Charles Darwin or Carl Sagan or Sigmund Freud or Tony Robbins or, God forbid, Shirley MacLaine or other religious leaders of the false religions of the world.

We don't want to be getting our mindset, our perspective from these directions. These words are not living. These words are not life-giving.

But the Word of God is living. What a glorious characteristic of the Scriptures. But also, the Word of God is powerful.

It's powerful, could be translated active. It has a dynamic, energizing force from God within it. Praise the Lord that it's living.

But it's also a praiseworthy matter that it's powerful, it's active. You know, there are things that are living, but they aren't really powerful and active. For example, contrast a turtle with a lion.

Hey, come on, they're both alive, you know. Yeah, sure, but one is powerful, one is active, one causes things to happen. The turtle is just trudging along, barely demonstrating the fact that it is alive.

Well, the Word of God is more like a lion. It's alive. It's powerful in that aliveness, and it's active.

In other words, it is that which can be at work in people's lives. It's powerful. Man's words lack this life-giving, life-changing dynamic.

Do you remember that great statement to the church at Thessalonica about the Word of God? First Thessalonians 2.13. Boy, this is a great verse. For this reason, we also thank God without ceasing, because when you receive the Word of God, which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the Word of man, but as it is in truth the Word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe. There's that powerful aspect of the Word of God, that dynamic aspect of the Word of God.

Think about it. When people receive the message of the Word of God, they're in the Word, they're taking the Word into their lives, and they're trusting what they're hearing from the Lord. End of the verse.

The Word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe. Brings to my mind a common interaction I've had with the Word of God, many times through a pilgrimage of four decades plus now with the Lord. Sort of the thought of, oh, here's this phenomenal message of the Word of God.

It's high and holy and lofty. It's pure and it's righteous and all of that. It's inspired, it's inerrant, it's authoritative, and it reveals the heart and will of God.

And then you read it and you often think, wow, will I be able to live up to that? And I'm just going to have to work on that, and I'm going to have to work on the Word and all of that. Well, that's not invalid thinking, because we are drawn totally in a full engagement in life in Christ. Learning to love the Lord our God with all of our heart and soul and mind and strength.

I mean, it's a comprehensive engagement. But for some years as an early believer and a young pastor back in the 60s and 70s, I was thinking a lot about working on the Word. I was studying in the seminary and getting help from other men of God who'd been faithful in the Word and working on the Word.

And that is totally a valid perspective, but it's not the whole picture. Here's another issue to be added to that. Not just working on the Word and attending to what it says in our lives, but how about this issue? The Word working on us.

That's way bigger. In fact, all of our working on the Word should be to the end that we are opening up our hearts to God to go to work on us using the Word. And well, that's exactly what's being spoken of here in 1 Thessalonians 2.13. They received the Word of God.

They welcomed it, not as the Word of man. They knew this wasn't just religious chatter, but as it is in truth, the Word of God. Words right from the heart and mind of God.

The Word of God, which also effectively works in you. There's a picture right there of the Word of God working on people. And who enjoys that process? Who benefits from that process? Who actually enters into that process? Those who believe in the Word they're reading.

The Word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe. So the Word of God is living. Thank the Lord for that.

But the Word of God is also powerful. Thank the Lord for that. Here's another declaration in Hebrews 4.12 concerning the Word of God.

Character of it? It's sharp. It's sharper than a two-edged sword. Look at Acts 2.37. Remember this? The preaching of the gospel on the day of Pentecost.

And here is the response of the people to the anointed Word of God. Acts 2.37. Now, when they heard this, they heard the proclamation of the risen Christ. And they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, men and brethren, what shall we do? And of course, the call was to come be identified, take a public stand with the Messiah in repentance of your former direction and your sins and be baptized, publicly identified with the risen Lord Jesus Christ, bringing forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit dwelling in their lives.

This was the Word of God doing this. Not just stirring up religious debate, but cutting right in as deep as to the heart. The Word of God.

It's like a sword, a spiritual sword, a two-edged sword, sharper than a two-edged sword. Two-edged sword was very important and very effective in first century human warfare. How much more so in the spiritual battle we're called to is the living, powerful, sharp Word of God.

God's Word is far more than able to pierce down into hearts, cutting into, penetrating into, as deeply as dividing soul and spirit. Now we're talking not so much about the character of the Word of God, but the ability of the Word of God, it being living, it being powerful, it being sharp. What is it able to do? Well, it's able to pierce or cut or penetrate as deeply as dividing soul and spirit.

The division of soul and spirit, that's a huge issue. Now sometimes, sometimes we think that soul and spirit do not need to be divided. They're just two different ways to say the same thing, but not so.

There is a similarity in soul and spirit. That is, they both describe the immaterial part of man. And in that sense, when you're just talking about the immaterial part of man versus the physical perhaps or whatever, you might find them used in scripture in tandem or interchangeably.

But the greatest clue in all the Bible, that they're not identical, is where? Kind of a trick question. It's right here where we're studying, Hebrews 4. This is one of the strongest revelations in all the scripture, that soul and spirit are not identical, they're just two aspects of immaterial man. And the reason we know there's a difference here is because the scriptures are held forth as able to divide soul and spirit, able to make a separation between soul and spirit.

There would be no need to separate and divide them if they were absolutely identical. For the Word of God is living and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division, you know, cutting, separating. Here's soul, here's spirit.

Let's think about each. They're related, but they're not identical. The separating work of the Word of God to distinguish between soul and spirit.

Spirit would be the true inner man. The spirit would be where God's spirit dwells and works in people's lives. You could describe it perhaps somewhat synonymous with the term heart.

You know, the very core of our being. Soul, what is that? Well, I think you could use the synonymous biblical word there, flesh. It just has to do with natural mind, natural emotions, natural will, and natural personality.

The flesh of man. So really, this is a distinguishing between a fleshly life and a spiritual life. Let's go back to that intriguing verse we've already touched on, John chapter 6. Verse 63, we looked at the second half of the verse, which applied to our earlier issues.

Let's look at the first part of John 6, 63. Jesus taught, it is the spirit who gives life, the flesh profits nothing. Okay, the Holy Spirit gives life.

The Holy Spirit dwelling in the spirit of man gives life. Both from new birth to ongoing growth. It's the work of the Holy Spirit giving that life.

You must be born again. You must be born of the spirit, Jesus said. It is the spirit who gives life.

The Holy Spirit gives life initially and continually. That's why we not only must take seriously this injunction to be born of the spirit, but just as seriously, the call of scripture, once you're born of the spirit, to walk according to the spirit, because it is the spirit who gives life. And then the additional remark is made, the flesh profits nothing.

The flesh profits nothing. The flesh is natural existence. God's called us to supernatural spiritual life, not natural, earthy, Adamic existence.

So this is why it's so important to have a way to divide or separate, to distinguish between the soul and the spirit. And can you imagine the consequences for people who don't learn from the Word of God and let the Word of God do that separating, dividing, distinguishing work? It leaves them in a confusion over spiritual life in every form. They can't get born again.

They're confused on it. They think, well, you just do the best you can, try the hardest you can. Maybe you'll make it into heaven.

They're confused. No, you have to agree that Christ dealt with that carnal Adamic life, that natural existence that is separated from God in sin and guilt, and that there's a whole new life that the Holy Spirit can give us in birth from above. And then you get into Christian living.

Apply this to Christian living. It's the spirit who gives life. That's why we want to walk in the spirit.

If you don't know the difference between soul and spirit or flesh and spirit, let's say, which I think is a valid synonym, you might think the whole Christian life just depends on you doing the best you can, you know, trying to improve yourself, trying to look at what Jesus said and did in the Word and try to copy Him every way you possibly can. Well, that's religious mimicking. That's not what we're called to.

We're called to really get to know the Lord and then Christ in us and living through us. That's our glorious hope of a valid Christian life before God. So how do people learn the difference between the soul and spirit? How do they get soul and spirit distinguished and divided and separated for consideration so they'll know to reject one and embrace the other? How do they do it? The Word of God.

Get in the Word. Get the Word in us. See, this is not something you have to conjure up.

This is something God has explained in the Scriptures. Oh, the teaching in the Scriptures on the bankruptcy of the flesh and the richness of the Holy Spirit dwelling in the spirit of man. It's an enormous field in the Scriptures.

And we just looked at one place, really, really looking at what Jesus had to say about it in John chapter 6. Okay, the Word. It's unique in character. It's living.

It's powerful. It's sharp. It's so sharp it can even penetrate down to the dividing of soul and spirit.

But also, the Word has the ability to divide joints and marrow. Joints and marrow. What an amazing ability that is and what an intriguing issue.

Again, on the personal human level, it's so important to know the difference between the joints and marrow. You'd sure want to go to a doctor who knew the difference between joints and marrow, you know. Joints, the outworking of life.

Marrow, way down inside the bone, the supply of blood being developed there. And the life is in the blood. I mean, these are critical issues.

And this is the very language used. Look at 1 Corinthians 12, 12. For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body being many are one body, so also is Christ.

The point for our consideration here is the word here used for body. And it's the word used for a physical body. And you can actually look elsewhere in Colossians 2 and elsewhere, where terms like joints and ligaments are used.

Not to talk about physical anatomy, but to talk about the spiritual body of Christ. And so it is here in 1 Corinthians 12. The subject here is not the human body, but the analogy of the body of Christ is the human body.

And the very same words or term is used to describe the spiritual body and spiritual life. So the physical body of people, the human body that God has created, it's one thing God does within his word. He uses it to illustrate issues of the spiritual kingdom and spiritual walk with the Lord.

So what's in view in 1 Corinthians 12 and what's in view in Hebrews 4.12 is spiritual realities that are like the physical body. Obviously, when it's talking about the word of God dividing joints and marrow, it's not making a physical separation between physical joints and marrow. It's taking those words which have understanding and applying it to spiritual life in the body of Christ.

The word of God is able to make a division of joints and marrow. Again, joints in a physical body. What are they about? Well, you could say in one way, they're about the outworking of life.

Joints depend upon a life and a life supply physically, and then joints work out that life. You know, whether you're literally having a workout or you're walking or you're eating or you're throwing or you're sawing, you know, joints have to do with the outworking of life. Very different from marrow.

Marrow is not the outworking of life, life in action. Marrow in a physical body is sort of where new blood cells are formed and ongoing continuity of physical life is sustained because the life is in the blood. But remember, this is making a spiritual point, and the point all hinges on the ability of the word of God.

What would be the analogy, the comparison between physical marrow and physical joints in the realm of the spiritual life we have in the body of Christ? Well, marrow is about life being developed. The life-giving aspect of a physical body. Joints, the outworking of life.

That is so analogous to the Christian life. We need to know the difference in Christian living between spiritual joints and spiritual marrow. It's critical to have the understanding.

If you don't have the understanding that there are two different entities, they're related, but they're distinct, they need to be divided and thought about, think what's missing. You know what happens generally, if people don't know the difference spiritually between spiritual joints and marrow? They think, they naturally, it seems, tend to early on as a Christian default to the thinking that the Christian life is just about staying active, you know, just doing things and being busy, you know, and work, work, work and do more and try harder and all of that sort of thing. And you end up with kind of a do-it-yourself works righteousness.

You know, you end up striving, really, according to the flesh is what so typically happens. Hebrews 4.12, For the word of God is living and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit. And you could add, to keep the same sense, piercing even to the division of joints and marrow.

Sometimes folks err in not knowing the difference between joints and marrow spiritually. It's the opposite of that work-striving mentality. It's all about the joints, just be active, do a lot, you know, go to so many

meetings, memorize so many verses, pray so many hours, you know, and a lot of, in Christendom, a lot of groups concentrate on that, you know.

You got to say 12 kinds of this prayer and 50 kinds of that prayer and do two dozen of these activities of penance and all of that. It's a confusion, really, on joints and marrow. And where is the attention generally lacking on the marrow? Where you get the life? How you sustain the life? Active joints have to be supplied with that activity by life.

If you have marrow in your physical body that is not producing blood cells for the sustaining of human life, it won't be long till your joints will be worthless. They'll be useless. You can't carry on the activity without the life.

So where in the scripture are joints and marrow distinguished, divided, sorted out for comparing and contrasting? Well, once you see it in the scriptures, it's intermittently introduced everywhere. Let's take a couple of examples. Isaiah 40, 31.

Isaiah 40, 31. Looking at spiritual joints and spiritual marrow. Put it another way, the spiritual realities that supply life and then the spiritual realities that talk about engaging and using and walking in that life.

Okay, Isaiah 40, 31. But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings like eagles.

They shall run and not be weary. They shall walk and not faint. Now, which words in that verse have to do with spiritual joints? That is activity, the activity of one that is alive, here spiritually alive.

Do you see it? That's it. Run, walk, mount up with wings like eagles. All of those would have to do with what you'd call spiritual joints, you know, action, progress, doing it.

And that's a big part of the Christian life. But what does that hinge on? Acting, action, doing, getting it done. That's the spiritual joints aspect of the Christian life.

But what does it hinge on? You got to have, you got to know where the spiritual marrow is. You got to know where to go to get the life. Without the life, you can't run, you can't walk, you can't mount up with wings like eagles.

So what part of the verse is about the spiritual marrow, the life-giving source of it all? Where is it? Those who wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. Waiting upon the Lord, that's language that matches physical marrow in the physical body. That's the access to life right there.

Waiting upon the Lord. And remember, this term is not just describing letting time pass. People can wait without at all waiting upon the Lord.

Waiting is just letting time pass. Waiting upon the Lord is putting our hope in the Lord as time passes. In fact, in many places in the scripture, this word translated here, wait on, is translated hope in.

That's exactly what it's about. Those who wait upon the Lord, oh, their strength is getting renewed. Their spiritual vitality is getting replenished.

Those are the people who mount up with wings like eagles, who are lifted up above circumstance and gain a spiritual perspective. And they're lifted up above trials and defeat and all of that. And they run.

The amazing thing is they don't get weary. Well, that's because they know where the spiritual marrow is. They know where to turn for the life-giving resource to be replenished.

Boy, people talk about burnout in Christian life and service. Well, he had to back out of ministry. He burned out.

Well, you know what that is saying to us? We were drawing on the wrong life source. You can't burn out an infinite supply. You can burn out if you're running on the flesh because haven't we found, hey, there's not much there.

And even what's there doesn't bear true spiritual fruit. But we can burn up, we can blaze up, let's say. Not burn up or out, but blaze up, you know.

As it says in Romans 12, we're to be fervent in spirit. Well, you need to know where the fire is, where the life is, where the vitality is. It's in the Lord.

When you find terms in Scripture, wait on the Lord, hope in the Lord and such. It's speaking of spiritual marrow. And that's what leads to running and not being weary, walking and not fainting.

So that's just one place where the Scriptures divide joints and marrow. Here's another one. Hebrews 12.

Hebrews 12. Hebrews 12, 1 and 2. Therefore, we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher or perfecter of our faith. Now, verse 1, kind of renouncing those things that are destructive and disruptive in life, every weight and the sin which so easily ensnares us.

Here's the call. Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith. And in the heart of those verses there, what are the words that have to do with the spiritual joints in the Christian life? Run.

Let us run with endurance. Christian life is likened to a race. And it's a lifelong race.

It's a marathon race. And we are to run in it. And it's long and it's challenging and it's hard.

So it demands endurance. And we can sense getting depleted and worn out and weary. Well, what do we do? Run harder? No, you've got to turn to what the word would teach about the, you could say, the terms of spiritual marrow where the life is given.

Where's the spiritual marrow terminology in these verses? Looking unto Jesus. Looking unto Jesus. Fixing our eyes on Jesus.

Focusing on Him. Considering Him, as it's put in verse three, for consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls. Looking unto Jesus.

Focusing on Him. That's how we run the race. That's where the life is.

Jesus is the life. He is the life giver. So if we're going to run this race with endurance, you know, get renewed stamina all along the way, we need the spiritual marrow available.

We need to know where to go to get the life replenished. And it's to the Lord Jesus Christ. We look to Him because the race has to be run by faith.

And He's the author and perfecter of faith. He authored faith in us through the gospel. You know, the gospel was proclaimed to us through many means perhaps.

And we saw in that gospel, heard in that gospel of one who was able to save. And one who is actually the living risen God, the eternal Son Himself. And we had reason to believe.

We had someone who was believable. We had someone we believe could provide salvation. And we called upon the name of the Lord and found salvation.

And in that great transaction of the gospel, He authored faith in us by revealing Himself to us. But He's also the perfecter of faith. The whole Christian life is to be about faith.

And we keep our eyes on Jesus, not looking to get saved again through the gospel, but the rest of the good news. All He has done for us, all He provides to us, all that comes as you see that He is able to save to the uttermost. You know, and you just see more and more reason to trust in the Lord Jesus Christ.

That's terminology of spiritual marrow. That's going where the life is supplied and replenished. And see, the Word of God does this.

You don't have to imagine some philosophical religious arrangement where this might work. You just get in the Word. The Word starts to work on us and sort these things out in our mind.

And you see the cause and effect relationship. Okay, the spiritual marrow, that's the cause, that's the life supply. The effect is godly growth and service and all that.

The Word does it. If you're in the Word and humbly receiving it, the Word is doing that, is doing that. It's not some special thing we have to accomplish.

It's something that is directly tied into what? The ability of the Word of God. Another one comes to mind, you might add there. John 15.

Abide in me, you'll bear much fruit. Which part of that language is sort of like the joints, the consequence of life developing right before your eyes? Bear much fruit, it would be. In fact, many a Christian has tried to go out and be very, very fruitful just by trying harder and harder and getting more serious and more dedicated.

I'm not going to mess around this time, you know. And often that can lead to a neglect of what? The spiritual marrow in the Word of God, the spiritual marrow in the Christian life. In other words, the place to go to get the life.

And what is the language in John 15 that is all about spiritual marrow? Abide, abide. Trusting in the Lord day by day, knowing we're connected with the Lord, looking to the Lord to be our life supply through the branch of our life. That spiritual fruit that is like the life that's flowing in us, that is the vine, the Lord Jesus, that life by His Spirit flowing through our life.

To get those cause and effect relationships. It is astounding how many times the Bible unleashes this ability to divide between joints and marrow. You can just find it all kinds of places.

It's almost like the Lord thinks maybe we might need this on a regular basis. Sure we do. We sure do.

Well, let's look at one more arena of the ability of the Word of God here in Hebrews 4, 12. And that is its ability to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart. The thoughts and intents of the heart.

In our lives and the lives of those we minister to, God's Word is intended to cut deep down into hearts, evaluating and dealing with unseen thinking and invisible motivations. And really, it's going to reveal the heart of a fallen Adamic man, or it's going to reveal the new heart that God gives to people. Let's look at Jeremiah 17, 9. Jeremiah 17, 9 and 10.

The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. Who can know it? Okay, this is natural man. This is the heart of man.

This is the declaration of the need for God. Verse 10. Who can know the heart? I, the Lord, search the heart.

I test the mind, even to give every man according to his ways and according to the fruit of his doings. Christian life, it's very much a heart issue. Oh, the Pharisees missed that, didn't they? The scribes missed that generally, didn't they? They thought it was all about external issues.

They just wanted to look good, you know. Boy, is that the way of fallen man? That's the way of Adam's race. But you know what? That's also in our flesh.

That's the way we naturally think if we're not letting the Lord do His work day by day in us and thinking from His perspective. We're just like this, operating like natural man does. Natural man, his heart is deceitful and desperately wicked.

But God knows the heart. And God can deal with the heart. And obviously, the statement here that we are elaborating on out of Hebrews 4.12 is that the Word of God is able to cut as deep as down into the heart, discerning the thoughts and intents of the heart.

That's what the Word can do. And here's what God wants to put there at the core of our being. Ezekiel 36, Ezekiel 36.26. God is speaking and He says, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you.

I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. Not a carnal heart, but a soft, pliable heart contrasted with the stony heart. Verse 27, I will put my spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes and you will keep my judgments and do them.

See, this is the work God wants to do at the core of our being. He wants to give us a new heart. He doesn't want us operating on that old natural Adamic heart that every unsaved person is running on, and really, that every Christian who's walking according to the flesh is actually drawing upon.

He wants people to have from Him a new heart, a new spirit. They're kind of synonymous. God wants to take that hard, desperately wicked heart out of people and put in there a soft, responsive heart where the Holy Spirit dwells and is able to transform and lead and guide and shape.

Well, how does this take place? How can this happen? Well, it's by the work of the Word, the Word of God. It's so able. The Word of God, think on it here.

What is its character? It's living, it's powerful, it's sharp. In light of that unique character, what is it able to do? It's able to divide soul and spirit. That's critical in everyone's life.

It's able to divide joints and marrow. Oh, that's so vital. It's able to cut down into the core of a person and discern the thoughts and intents of the heart and let them know what kind of heart they're running on.

The Jeremiah 17 9 heart that came with the fall in the garden and sin and death, or the new heart indwelt by the Holy Spirit of God, transformed day by day by the work of the Holy Spirit of God. Wow. Does the Word have a lot to say on this subject? Yeah, this is just one verse with illustrations correlated.

The ability of God's Word. Today we've seen God's living, powerful, sharp Word. May we let the character of the Word and the ability of the Word draw us into the Word, and may we humbly receive it and let God do the inner transforming work, just as he did when he saved our souls.

Let's be asking him to do the same work as he transforms and equips our soul. Let's pray together. Lord, we thank you for your Word.

It's unique. There's nothing like it. And we thank you for the ability therein.

There's nothing to compare to it. And Lord, have your way, work on us, work in us by the power and activity of your Word through the work of the Holy Spirit. We pray that individually, each one of us, Lord, in Jesus' name.

Amen.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/5GeyAxk155A.mp4>

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