

The Word That Works

by Jim Cymbala

Jim Cymbala's sermon highlights the transformative power of embracing the Word of God as truth and the necessity of biblical literacy in the life of a believer.

Duration: 27:53

Scripture: Deuteronomy 6:6, Psalm 119:11, Philippians 4:19, Colossians 3:16

Topics: "Christian Life"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of prioritizing the Word of God over worldly distractions. He highlights the spiritual battle between the flesh and the spirit, and how the enemy tries to keep people away from the life and power found in the Bible. The preacher shares a personal testimony of someone who recognized the value of the Word of God and how it transformed their life. He emphasizes the need to align with God's truth rather than societal norms, and explains that sin is the violation of God's law. The sermon concludes with a prayer for deeper relationship with God and blessings for mothers.

Transcript

I have a life-changing thought for you today, absolutely life-changing if we can receive it. And I have seen it afresh just yesterday in a new way. You know, the things of God you think you know and then God gives you revelation and you get more insight into it and you go, oh wow, I never saw that before.

How many ever read a verse that you've read many times and suddenly the verse speaks to you in a new way? Just lift your hand. That's the Holy Spirit giving us more light. We're doing a study from First Thessalonians and Paul is writing to a church that he founded, that he started.

He's concerned about the church. He's heard a good report from someone he sent named Timothy to check on the church and he's been gone probably about a year from the church. So a lot's happened.

He wants to know how they're doing and now in verse 13 and it says this, and we also thank God continuously because when you receive the Word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as a human word but as it actually is the Word of God which is indeed at work in you who believe. Paul is now changing the mood of his letter and he's now going to talk to them not about defending himself against the accusations of these people who followed him and who were trying to make trouble for him, but what he's doing now is he's just fondly remembering what transacted when he was there and he's saying, I really thank God that when I came these things occurred. And in that little one verse we have a

lot of meat for ourselves to chew on and a really important truth to treasure in our hearts.

Paul is saying, I remember when we came that when we preached the Word of God to you, you received it from us even though it came through our mouths. You didn't receive it as a human word. You didn't say, oh that's interesting, that's his opinion.

No, you received it as the Word of God. Everybody say, Word of God. You received it as the Word of God, not a human word.

Which that word then he says, which is at work in you who believe. So let's just take that thought, Word of God. At first you might think he's talking about the Bible and although it's true we're going to get to the Word of God as the Bible, to be honest with you, there was no New Testament Bible when Paul was in the city of Thessalonica.

So the way the Word of God, the message of God came was only verbally. It was the message that Paul spoke. Paul never stopped like I can and said, let's turn to Matthew, let's turn to Luke, let's turn to Romans 8. He couldn't do that.

Those things weren't written yet and he wrote, he would go on to write most of it. So what he's saying is, when I was with you and I preached the message, the Word of God, what does Word of God mean there? It means the message of the gospel. Paul went around preaching the gospel.

Jesus said, go into all the world to his disciples and share the gospel. What does gospel mean? Good news. The good news about who? The good news about Jesus.

So Paul says, when I gave you the good news about Jesus, oh do I thank God, you did not receive it like, let me hear him out and then I'll hear someone else out. But you received my message, even though it came from a human, you received it as the Word of God. Now later on, as the years went by and the letters of Paul and Peter and others were collected and the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, they were compiled into what we call the Canon, C-A-N-O-N, the Canon of Scripture.

And they comprise what we call the New Testament, starting the way we have it in our English Bibles, Matthew ending in Revelation. You put that together with the Old Testament, starting in Genesis, ending in Malachi, you put it all together, you get 66 books and it's called the Bible. And it is the Word of God.

But Paul now is referring to the gospel which is in here and the other truths associated with the coming of Jesus Christ, which are all part of the good news. He's saying, when I gave you the Word of God, you received it as the Word of God, not coming from a man. The Word of God.

This God who created the world has spoken. He's put his thoughts down through people inspired by the Holy Spirit. And what God thinks and feels and what God says is true because he is truth is in this book called the Bible.

And you and I can never separate God from his Word. You can't know God separate from his Word. To think that you know God or love God but don't know his Word and don't love his Word, that is the ultimate spiritual delusion.

Oh, I love God. What God? Oh, the God I have in my mind. The God I think about.

That's what you hear people say on TV. I'm not into like authority so much and Bible. I just, I'm very spiritual.

Have you ever heard people say that? Well, what's that mean? It means I make up my own religion, but it's spiritual. Well, that's against everything Jesus taught us. Jesus said, heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

Anyone who says, I love this lady. I want to go out and, but don't talk while we're out. I only want to talk to you.

Don't say anything because I'm not really interested in what you feel or think. You know, that person's off. That's very disrespectful and you really don't care for that person if you don't care to hear what their thoughts are and what they feel and what they like and so on and so forth.

So Paul says, when I told you about the Word of God, you received it as it really is the Word of God. Just think, God is talking in this Bible. This is God's Word.

Men wrote it, but it was inspired by God. If you really know God and love Him, you will love His Word. All down through 2,000 years history, everyone who has loved God the most and been used by God, they love this book.

They read it. They stay in it. Why? It's the heart of God.

God is telling us everything about life, how He views it and what pleases Him and what displeases Him. This Word here, if you ignore it, you ignore God. No, no, no, pastor, I don't have time to read the Word, but God knows I believe in Him.

No, if you ignore this Bible, every day you ignore God. Every day that I don't have time for this, I don't have time for God. To not hear God talk to me when He has, I don't have time to hear what the Creator of the universe has to say.

It will only help me, but I don't have time. That really is a trap that we can fall into even as ministers. What ministers fall into is, I don't want to hear what God says, I just need sermon material.

Let me read because I need to preach on, well, now it's Sunday, I know what to preach, but how about this Tuesday? What should I share in the prayer meeting? Let me look and find. Now I'm using the Word of God for sermon material. I'm not hearing what God has to say to me.

How about me? Now, this Word of God is different than any other word. You can't read this like the New York Times or a textbook in college. No, no.

In fact, you got to pray that the Holy Spirit will teach you what it means because He wrote it. He inspired the people who put it down, and you have to pray. You don't need to do that when you read the New York Times or a textbook or War and Peace or Jane Eyre or whatever else literature you're into.

No, when you read this, you have to ask God for understanding because this is a spiritual word. Jesus said to certain people, the words I give you are spirit and life. This is a spiritual book.

That's why the flesh in us every day does not want to stop and read this book. It would rather text or Twitter or tweet or watch television or call someone, but to stop and let your soul listen to the Word of God.

Everything in the flesh because the flesh fights against the spirit in us and the spirit against the flesh, and we're held back from doing certain things, Galatians tells us, this Word of God.

The enemy wants to keep us from the Word of God because there's life in here. Look, there's life in this book. There's power in this book.

When Brother Richie, our deacon, came to Christ and his then friend invited him and then he came, she knew something was up. She was serving the Lord because he said, man, I got my Bible. There's life in this book.

There's answers in this book. That's a sure sign God is working. If you have no appetite for this Word, if you have no interest in this Bible, you really got to check yourself to see whether you're in the faith because everyone who loves God has to love what he says.

Amen? This Word is the Word of truth. What does truth mean? Truth means correspondence to reality. Something that's true corresponds to reality.

Someone can say two and two is nine. You could get the whole choir to say two and two is nine. Two and two is not nine.

If you take two balls and add two other balls, you end up with four balls. One, two, three, four. Two and two is nine does not correspond to reality.

It's not true. If you say tomorrow is Wednesday, it doesn't matter how many people you get to say tomorrow is Wednesday. That doesn't change the fact that tomorrow is Monday.

Truth is that which corresponds to reality. If you say that water freezes at 50 degrees Fahrenheit, that's not true. No, no, but everyone in my family says it.

It wouldn't matter if everyone in the state of New York says it. You can prove that it freezes at 32 degree Fahrenheit, not 50 degrees. Now, this book specializes in truth about spiritual and eternal matters.

This Bible, this book is the book of God's truth because God is true. So when someone says something is wrong or right, it doesn't matter what they say. Only God gives us the truth about what's wrong and what's right.

Well, that's a struggle for some of you. It doesn't matter what society says is permissible. If God says it's wrong, it's wrong.

If God says it's right, it's right. You don't vote about this. You don't go with the flow.

If you go with the flow, you're going to end up in a very bad place where the flow ends up. You have to go by God's word, but how will you know what's right and wrong unless you open this word and receive it into your heart? So the message that Paul brought was God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son. That's true.

He gave his son to die on a cross. Why? That whoever believes in him would not perish. Why would they perish? Because of their sins.

What's sin? What is sin? Sin is a violation against God's law, against God's truth. When you hate, when you have prejudice, when you lie, when you live in immorality, when you cheat on your income tax, when you do whatever, that's wrong because God says it's wrong. Well, someone says, I don't see it that way.

Well, that's the whole purpose of the Bible. We don't go by what people think. Because if I go to say, well, wait a minute, God says that.

What do you feel about it, Brother John? What do you feel about it? John says, I'm not sure. All right, then I got to go to her. Then I got to go to him.

Then I got to go to everyone in New York City and say, what do you think? Is that the way we're going to decide what's right or wrong? Well, wait a minute. Back in Jamaica where I was, I don't care about Jamaica. I don't care about Trinidad.

I don't care about how I was raised in Brooklyn. That is totally irrelevant to what God says. Look, ladies and gentlemen, this is God's word.

And they received it and were blessed because they received it not as a word of man, but as the word of God. Now, working in the churches today and in our society is an attack against the authority of the word of God. Ministers are preaching as life coaches, follow your dream, your destiny, and all these other code words they're using.

But that's not what the role of a minister of a gospel is. We're supposed to teach the word of God. Heaven and earth are going to pass away.

If you get convinced by your friends that something's right, even though it's wrong, are you going to wait till you die to find out that they were wrong and that God was right? Think about what we're talking about here. I'm going to base my life on a lie because a lot of the people like it and my flesh finds it comfortable? No, no. I got to know what God says.

How many are with me? Put your hands together. Let's say amen by clapping. I got to know what God says.

You would think that Christians would be pouring through this book every day to be finding out what God says. Wouldn't you think that? This is what God says. This is what God says.

You know, they're reading People magazine to find out what a movie star said. Just think of that. Oh, did you hear what she said? How about what God said? It's what God said.

It's a word not only of truth. Finally, it's a word of power. There's power in the word of God.

This is unlike any other word. First of all, everyone else's word might not be true, but God's word is true. Let everyone be a liar, but God's word is true.

Oh, brothers and sisters, anybody sitting here today, hear it from me. Don't go by how you feel or what you think or what you heard in the way you were raised or what your friends at the office say. That's what you're going to base eternal destiny on.

What they say when God says something different. But this is a word of power also because once, look, you get it in your heart by itself, it has a power that begins to work and change you unlike anything else in

the world. God's word is powerful.

It has life in it. And when you get it into your heart, not your heart, not just your head. Once you get it in your heart, listen to what Paul says.

You received it as the word of God, which is at work in you. What's at work in you? The word is at work in you. In the Greek sentence there, it's not referring to God.

It's the word of God that's at work in you. This is unlike anything else in the world. Listen to me, when you get this word in you, you don't have to try anything.

Just get it in you. It has its own power. It has its own energy.

Listen, has its own power and energy. That's why Paul says it's working in you. This word has power.

It changes the way you think. It changes the way you live. It gives you power over sin that has been beating you down.

It gives you power over it. By what? By the power that's in it. Not your power.

Not your making promises. Not me making promises to change. God's word has power.

That word, he said, is working in you. Notice, it not only didn't just save you past tense, it's at work in you. It's at work in you now.

That's why there is no new cutting edge church. There's no new age church, new generation, new school, old school. There's only this school, the word and prayer, spending time with God and feeding on his word along with fellowship with other Christians.

They're the three main ways that God keeps us close to him, and the devil knows it. So he will fight you coming to the prayer meeting. I know you're busy.

You got to watch something, whatever. He does not want you to come and open your heart to God. When you say, boy, Pastor Symbol brought out a good verse, and I got to get in my Bible, he will fight you tooth and nail.

He will fight you tooth and nail. And some of you know the truth of what I'm saying already. Does he not fight us tooth and nail to find time for the word? Why? Because he knows his goose is cooked when we get into this word.

This word is so powerful that when Jesus was tempted, he didn't say to Satan, Satan, don't you know who I am? I'm the son of God. No. He says, Satan, it is written.

It is written. Satan, it is written. Come on, let's say amen to that.

Now the thought is, how do we read it? How do we receive it? In that Greek verse there, and we also thank God continually because when you receive the word of God, see the word received, okay, which you heard from us, same word as received. They just translated a different, same Greek word. You accepted it.

That's a different word. Not as a human word, but it actually is the word of God, which is indeed at work in you who believe. So it's like, James, stand up for a second.

So it's like you receive someone, just step forward. Let's say, we'll shake hands. See, you can shake hands with the word and just hear it.

Or he's saying, no, you just didn't shake hands with it. You embraced it. That's my son.

I can hug him anytime I want. You just didn't hear it. You received it.

See, so you can read the Bible with your head and you'll miss the power of it. You'll never experience the power of it. You're reading only with your head.

You have to read it and embrace it and take it by meditation and by prayer into your heart. We're going to do one verse before we leave. You'll see just in a second.

This is why the Bible says things like that in Deuteronomy. These commandments that I give you, Moses said, are to be on or in your hearts. Deuteronomy again, the next one.

Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. That's by the way, that verse is the source of why a lot of the Hasidim wear things hanging on their heads or have tassels on their garments as a substitute for the word or little verses that they keep there.

Thirdly, in Psalm 119, I have hidden your word in my heart that what? Notice the power that the psalmist knows is in the word. Let's say that one together. Ready? One, two, three.

I have hidden your word that I might not sin against you. You can't have God's word working in your heart and be living crazy. You can't.

You can't. For us to let go and let the flesh take over means the word of God has to be not dominant in our life. That's why a verse just comes to me.

Colossians 3, I think it's maybe 10. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.

You want to know the reason that most Christians don't grow like they should? That most ministers don't preach more effectively because we're not in love enough with the word of God. We have somehow separated this book from God. We create our own image of God rather than saying, God, show me your ways.

Oh God, teach me your ways. Did you know I've had nights, I treasure them. I had a couple in the last two days where I've awoken at night and something, I've been hungry, but it wasn't for food.

I didn't want to go to the refrigerator. I slipped away into another room just to open this because my soul needed some food. Just like your body can't go on and be strong without physical food, your soul can't go on without spiritual food.

There's no food like this. There's no food like this. It is the word of truth.

You won't be deceived in the end. You'll be able to find tricksters and con artists ministers because if you know the truth, you'll know, wait a minute, that's not in keeping with scripture. That's not the spirit of Jesus.

You're acting like a buffoon. You're showing off. You're drawing attention to yourself.

Jesus would never do that. I've been reading about him. You can't represent Jesus, right? But if you don't know the scripture, you'll be sending the same guy a check for a thousand.

You won't even know. Biblical literacy is just a major problem in the body of Christ. But I want to tell you today, this is the word of God.

It's a word of truth. It's a word of power. And now we're going to put one in your heart today.

I promise God, I'm going to get this one word in your heart. I asked God, God, I want to give them one word that we all can now start to digest and let it work in us. This word is going to work in us, okay? I prayed and this is the verse I felt led to put up for you, okay? Let's look at it.

And my God will meet all of your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus. Let's say it together. Ready? And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ.

My God, almighty God, the God who sent his son into the world to die for you and me, that God who loves us so much that he gave his own son who has begun a good work in us, now gives his almighty word. He says, I will meet all of your needs. I will meet every one of your needs according to the riches that I have in glory in Christ Jesus.

If you're worried about anything, spiritually, financially, emotionally, loneliness, whatever, remember this. If you need something today, God has sworn, I will meet all of your needs. Look at me, how many are happier for that? God has said, can we put our hands together? God has said, I will meet all of your needs.

If you're bitter about life, if you don't know what to do next, if you're betwixt in between, what am I going to do in my situation? How can I go on? What do I do going to the right or the left? Should I take this turn or that turn? What's God's plan? I'm confused. I don't know right now. You can just stop right now and say, Satan, don't try to buffet me with nervous energy or fear.

I am not going to be afraid because God is going to meet all of my needs. Come on, everybody, lift your hands up right now. Come on, lift your hands up.

Lift your hands up and repeat after me. Close your eyes. Repeat after me.

My God will meet all of my needs. My God loves me. He will meet all of my needs all of the time.

He will never change. He is not a man that he should lie. I receive that promise and I believe it and I praise him for it.

Let's put our hands together and just thank God. Close your eyes. Join hands with the person next to you.

Father, we pray that we will have a new love relationship with your word, that you'll stop us from being so busy that we're too busy for you. I ask that you would feed all of us every day, not just our heads, but that this word would get in our heart. It would take away anger.

It would take away negativity. Discouragement. Lust.

It would quench temptation. For it is not written that your word is the sword of the spirit. We ask that it would work in us in a new way.

We love you and we love your word. We love your word today. Jesus, we love your word.

Know this today. We love your word. You didn't give it to us for nothing.

You gave it to us for something so important. We embrace it today. We receive it.

You know the adjustments, God, that has to be made in all of our lives, that have to be made in all of our lives. Make those adjustments. Give us wisdom.

Give us self-control. Don't let us live shallow, just a quarter of an inch deep in our relationship with you, but let us go deeper and deeper, Lord, putting our roots down deep into your love for us, which is always expressed so perfectly in your word. Let your face shine upon us, Lord, and let all the mothers especially be blessed.

In Jesus' name, and everyone said, let's clap our hands one more time. Thank you. Stand up and embrace one another.

Hug somebody. God bless you.

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