

The Word of God

by John McGregor

John McGregor emphasizes the transformative power of the Word of God and the necessity of consistent engagement with it in our daily lives.

Duration: 33:13

Scripture: Hosea 4:6, Matthew 6:33, Hebrews 4:12, James 1:19-21

Topics: "Word Of God"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of turning life around and addresses the challenges that come along in life. The message highlights the need for a personal passion for the Word of God and a plan to allow it to transform individuals. The speaker emphasizes the significance of reading and studying the Bible, rather than just reading books about it. Additionally, the sermon emphasizes the need for a consistent and intentional place to meet God in His Word, where individuals can look intently at the perfect law and abide by it.

Transcript

Thank you, Shirley, for the offertory. And thank you to all three couples for sharing their hearts. And it's a great encouragement to me and I know to all of us as we walk together.

That's the thing about the family of God. We have interesting seasons, but we walk together. I'll set my watch over there and you know what that means.

Absolutely nothing. I want to just mention to you, the Alliance Magazine is back there on the back table. If you would like to read a little of our history, 125 years of history and some other good things, and you'll find Glencurran Alliance Church as mentioned right in the center of the magazine.

So you may wanna grab that. Second thing I want to do before we go to James chapter one is to mention that many of you said, Pastor John, when you got us together to pray for those 30 minutes a couple of Tuesdays ago, that was a great time. Can we do it again? And the answer is yes.

At the end of May through to the end of August, that's 12 weeks, June, July, and August. On Wednesday nights, instead of a formal time of Bible study and so on, we're going to open the church for those 30 minute prayer times to come and go and pray as the Lord would lead. Some may want to prayer walk and walk in the area and ask God's touch upon our neighbors and our community.

And you're certainly welcome to do that too, but we'll keep you posted on that as things go along. And I also wanna just mention, I happen by default to be the chairman of a Christian organization called Expanding Youth Ministries because I'm such a youth. And we're going to do a dessert night here in the church in the basement on Thursday night.

Expanding Youth Ministries is a ministry that provides help and equipping through DVDs to learn about creation and to be able to speak intelligently about it. And you're more than welcome to come and have dessert and join with us that evening. Couple of fellows from Saskatoon will come and talk about the organization and the resources that are available.

And as you think about families, it's great to equip our young folk so they know about the one who created it all. End of advertisement and beginning of the message. And so since it's springtime, I even put it on PowerPoint and I knew our time might be a little tight this morning.

So we'll just walk through some thoughts. The message is entitled Turning Life Around. And there was no collusion between myself and the three couples who shared, but I think you might find the Holy Spirit has built a connection there.

The whole sense of how do we address the things that come along in life that knock us down and have you noticed that trouble very seldom comes alone. There's always seems to be two or three things that hit us all at the same time and sometimes even more than that. And in our world, it's pretty easy to become overwhelmed and feel just overcome by circumstances and so on.

But as Brad read for us, James chapter one, verses 19 through 27, we're going to walk through that and perhaps some other scriptures. And I do want to give honorable mention to Bruce Nickel this morning, because a few weeks ago, we had a vision casting time. And during that time, Bruce quoted for us from Hosea chapter four and verse six.

And McGregor paraphrase of that verse says, my people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. And the priests love to have it so. Because you have abandoned my law, I also will forget your children.

And that's God speaking to his people. And that what a message he is giving. So as we think about turning life around, what is it that can address these pressures and things? You know, you listen to the statistics that Marlene shared with us this morning, and that's appalling to think about the brokenness and the pain and so on.

And as individuals, we want to think about how can we turn life around? And so I want to give you a great big, long 15 minute sermon this morning before we come to celebrate the Lord's table together. I want to give to you three things that you need to turn life around. Just three, my Baptist friends would be happy with me this morning.

I just have three points, and we'll try not to linger on any of them, okay? The first thing that you need if you're going to turn your life around is you need a book. You need this book, The Word of the Living God. And as you think about this book, the Bible, sometimes, you know, we get caught up in reading books about the Bible, and we forget to really get into this book itself.

And I believe that the foundation upon which the church is built and the Christian life is built is simply The Word of the Living God. So be sure to get that book. Consider what it addresses in verses 19 through 21 here.

This you know, my beloved brethren, but everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger, for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God. Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness in humility, receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls. So we need the book, and look at what it addresses.

You ever struggle with anger? Isn't that often an issue in relationships? Somebody hurt me, so I'll lash out at them or whatever. You see what it says about the implanted word of God. It enables us to be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger.

Putting aside all of those things, that implanted word brings salvation to us. And you know, we think sometimes of salvation as the time when we repented of our sins and came and said, Lord Jesus, would you forgive me? Would you come into my heart and save me? But salvation is a daily process as well, isn't it? If we have trusted Christ, have been saved in the past, we are being saved today in this moment, and we will continue to be saved on, out, into the future and eternity. The planted word grows and transforms life.

Turning life around has more to do with what we plant of the word of God than it does of any other single thing. We need a few Pentecostals in here this morning. You see, our life and our attitude changes in obedience to the word of God.

And Sunday is not enough. Now, this is gonna sound like a self-defense from an old pastor, but bear with me for a second. The educational experts tell us that we retain how much of what we hear.

Pastor Brad, how much do we retain of what we hear according to the expert? A percentage point, please. 20%, any advance on 20%? 5%, 15%, 10%. Well, the experts I listened to said 10%.

So, you're all sort of in the ballpark. So, now, in the message, normally I preach 30 to 40 minutes, right? And so, that's good, I enjoy doing that. Now, tell me, how much of that do you get to keep? Four minutes.

Yeah, if I go 40 minutes, you get to keep four minutes. So, there is an answer. If I preached for 60 minutes, you could increase that by one third more, amen? Oh, no, no, no, no, no, wait, wait, wait, wait up, no.

No, that might not be the answer. Because as Marlene reminded us, it isn't always about what the pastor preaches on Sunday. It's about what we get from the word of God in our own walk and way with Him.

Sunday is not enough. You know, several years ago, when CBC, Canadian Bible College, was here in Regina, Bill McAlpine, and by the way, Bill McAlpine, Archie Wong, and a whole bunch of those people from the school said to say hello to all of you. So, I'm just doing due diligence, having been there last weekend.

Hi from them all. Bill McAlpine said, John, would you come? It's almost the end of the academic year. Would you come and just share your story? And I agreed to do it.

I had a sleepless night before because he asked me just to share my testimony with the students, and all the way through that night, the Spirit of God was just poking at me. Speak about the word of God. Speak about the word of God.

Now, I didn't wanna disobey Bill McAlpine. Have you ever seen him all dressed up in his doctoral robes and everything? I mean, these people know a lot more than I will ever know, and I am so grateful for every one of them. I took the chapel that morning in fear and trembling, and I did my best to tell a little of my story.

But when I talked to the students that day, I said to them, in just a week and a half, some of you are gonna walk across this stage with a diploma, or a degree, or a certificate, or some recognition of your studies and the things that you have done. But I want to tell you that 30 years from now, that piece of paper on the wall will not keep you going. It was actually Pastor Tom here who asked me one day, John, you've been going for a long time.

What is it that keeps you going? And so that morning, I talked about, if you don't have a love, a personal love, for the word of the living God, it doesn't matter how many pieces of paper you get. It doesn't matter how smart or whatever we think we become. It's the word of the living God that transforms lives.

So if you want to see life turned around, come to the word of God. I spent those four years as a terrorist carrying a gun, and it was not an individual nor a preacher that turned me around. It was a man who forced me to read the Bible.

And the scripture is what turns life around. So you need a book. The second thing that you need is you need a nook.

We're gonna make it all rhyme this morning, and we'll be done close to on time. You need a nook, a place to consistently meet God in his word, a place to intently look into the word. Look at verse 25 here in James 1. But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer, but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does.

We read it with the intention, intentionality, that it is going to bring change to our lives. And obedience is what brings the application of blessing. You see what the end of that verse says? This man will be blessed in what he does.

He is no longer just a hearer of the word of God, but one who has learned to apply it and to walk in obedience to it, and there is blessing. You can check it out in the Old Testament in Psalm 1. Blessed is the man who does not sit in the counsel of the ungodly, nor walk in the way of sinners, nor sit in the way of the wicked. You see? There is blessing in his word.

You need a nook. When I went church planting in Alberta some years ago, the denomination that I was in at the time said, I guess he could go there, he might not do too much damage. I asked to be ordained, and they said, don't think so.

I asked, if God grows a church here, do you want it? And they said, yes. And I'm not saying that to knock the denomination. Every day, I would get into this little room in the basement of the house that we rented, and it was carpeted, so it didn't matter if I bumped off the walls.

And every day, God would give me what I needed to keep going in his word. That's the anchor. That's the nook.

That's the quiet place. And if you were to ask me, why is Christianity not as strong as it used to be in this country or in the Western world at all, or in marriages or in individual lives, I would say it's because we

avoid doing this discipline, and it is basic to growth. Think about that verse that Bruce gave us in the leadership.

If we avoid his law, he forgets our children. How to turn it around? You need a book, you need a nook. Number three, you need a look.

I said I'd make it rhyme, and to be quite blatantly honest with you, I borrowed those three things from Woodrow Krull, so there isn't very much original, sorry, except the content in between the titles. You need a look. Need to look, and people look at the Scriptures in several wrong ways.

Some people look at it casually. Huh, I don't get time to meet with the Lord. Well, oh yeah, I'll go with you wherever you go, great.

Some people look at it as Bible trivia. King Hezekiah begot, oh, I didn't know that. That could be a question in Bible trivia.

I better remember that. Little bit more information, and folks, in the Western world, we're in information overload. We've got all the information we ever need and no application of it whatsoever.

Some people look at it critically and say, well, that's fine, there's things we can criticize here about the Word of God, but we need to have a continuous look at it, as verse 25 says, and as Romans chapter 10 and verse 17 says, faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God, yeah. Get into that Word continuously and allow it to get continuously into your mind and into your heart. This is the thing where we find the promises of God, and Logan, you can just flip over the next one if you would.

As we continuously look in the Scriptures, we discover God's promises, and we see that we can look for salvation, and we see that we can look for deliverance, and we can look for help, and we can look for encouragement and hope, and we can look for forgiveness and restoration, and we can look for a relationship and fulfillment, and we can look for guidance and for truth, and you know, I could go on and on with that list. But you know, the simple truth is, we need to measure ourselves against Scripture, not against one another, not I'm doing better than he is or she is, but against the Scriptures, and it begins to transform our lives. As we observe Scripture, we begin to interpret it and understand it, and it leads us to the application of it.

Hebrews 4 and verse 12 says, the Word is living and active, and it judges even to the deep things, the bone and marrow of our lives. Keep going, buddy, there's a couple more there. John 15 three says, Jesus said, now you are clean through the Word, which I have spoken to you.

It is that Word that cleanses. You find that your mind gets polluted with all the stuff that's going on, and you start to feel resentful, and bitterness swings over, and all those kind of things move in, or depression comes along and says, you'll never overcome this, you'll never amount to anything. What is it that cleanses all that rubbish out of there? Jesus said it.

You are clean through the Word, through the Word that I have spoken to you. Yes, His blood cleanses us, but He says in John 15 three, it is through the Word that He has spoken to us. In Acts nine and verse four, Paul, Saul heard a word, the Word of God, and it caused him to turn his life around.

Are you looking for a turnaround in life? You know, sometimes we just grow content with, I'm okay where I am, don't need any more, don't want any rumblings. Well, Paul was given a complete new direction at the

Word of God. So many scriptures teach us that.

Very, very quickly, how do you know when you're maturing in the Word, when you're seeding, and growing, and using that that God has given? Well, I'll ask Logan to go over to the next couple of slides fairly quickly. What are the marks of maturity in the Word? In Colossians one, nine and 10. And friends, let's take a minute and just go over there.

Colossians one, nine and 10. For this reason also, the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will, in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God. You know that you're maturing in it as you begin to discern the will of God.

That's what we read as we read verse nine and 10 here. Knowledge and wisdom that lead to understanding and knowing what to do. Living a life that is pleasing to him, pleasing God.

Involved in doing good works, not to gain points with God, but to demonstrate Christ's love in us. Always deepening in the knowledge of God. Growing stronger as our slide there says, and displaying steadfastness and endurance with joy.

Did you notice this morning, as our worship team got up there and led us, they all had joy. Isn't it so much easier to smile when somebody smiles at you? If I stand up here and look at you like this, I can see the return already. There's something about the joy of Jesus that comes from time in the word and walking with him.

Logan, for time's sake, if you would just flip over to the very last slide, our conclusion, and sorry I didn't make it in 15 minutes, but I tried. May I ask, as we close, do you have a passion, a personal passion for the word of God? Do I have a plan to allow the word of God to transform me? Do I have a consistent, quiet place to meet him? Do I intentionally ask, hi, how did the word change me this week, today? If I miss this basic step, then I'm still my own master, and I need to see that I'll be led by my emotions and not his word. Lord, help us.

Help me to be diligent in your word. Father, we want to thank you for the fact that you have given us the word, and you have sustained that word throughout all the centuries. We thank you that it is because of your word that we can come to your table and know what to do and how to meet you in the bread and in the juice.

We want to pray, Father, that you would help us, each one, just to come back to that basic thing of growing strong in the Lord and in the power of his might through the word and prayer. Now, Father, would you bless and lead us as we move to meet around your table? Would you bring forgiveness and cleansing? Would you bring, once again, the touch of your love and the refreshment of that renewed relationship? In Jesus' name we pray, amen. Let me invite our elders to come and to join me, Pastor Brad.

Could I recommend something to you as you think about this thing of the word of God? Why not talk to somebody before you leave today and become accountable and say, I'll phone you next Saturday and you phone me next Saturday, and let's share with each other what God said in his word to each of us through the week. That's a great way to become accountable and to work that through. These are our elders.

I dearly love each and every one of them, and I'm thankful and grateful for them. In a few minutes after we have celebrated this meal together, this moment, this love table, they will be available to pray with you and for you. We believe in healing and at every communion service, if you have a physical, emotional, or spiritual need, please come, and the men will be here to pray with you.

You might say I'm not a regular attender here. I'm not sure I should be participating in this. If you know Jesus as your Savior, this is the Lord's table, and it is his invitation to join in with us as a family together.

I've asked Al if he would lead us in prayer for the brand, and so we'll ask him to take us to that place of prayer just now. It teaches us, Heavenly Father, appreciate the great sacrifice, Lord Jesus, that you gave us, and I pray, Heavenly Father, that we take a few moments to really think about what the communion table means, what your sacrifice means. We'll ask our man to distribute the elements, and please hold them, and we'll partake together.

Just as you do the wine, and take a few moments. Lord Jesus, the night that he instituted this Lord's table, Scripture says he took bread just like this, and when he had broken it, he said, take and eat. This is my body, which is given for you.

As we participate together, let's remember that his sacrifice brings us life, forgiveness, hope, and truth. Let's participate together. Once again, I'll ask our brothers to distribute the juice, symbolic of his blood, and if you would hold it together, Michael will lead us in a prayer when he returns.

We thank you so much that you gave us this very graphic symbol, and you gave it to us. And we, your people this morning, are very grateful. We thank you now for giving your life, and as we partake of this, the fruit of the vine, Lord, we are reminded of the price that is paid, as we partake because of this wonderful offer that you have made to us.

We partake this grateful heart, we partake this spirit that confesses our unworthiness, and we ask that this reminder of your blood will remind us also of it.

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