

(A Solid Grip On The Christian Life) The Living Word of God

by Zac Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the importance of holding tightly to the Christian life by focusing on the word of God that proceeds from God's mouth. It highlights the example of the Bereans who diligently compared Paul's words with scripture, encouraging believers to be noble-minded and rooted in God's word to avoid deception. The sermon also stresses the need to listen to God's word daily, allowing it to transform and guide every aspect of life, leading to a deep relationship with God and the ability to speak His word with power and conviction.

Scripture: Acts 17:11, 1 Peter 1:23, Ephesians 6:17, Isaiah 49:2, Luke 10:42, 1 Peter 4:11, Hebrews 5:14, Acts 2:17, Psalms 119:105, Psalms 119:130

Topics: "Diligence in Scripture", "Transformation through God's Word"

Description

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Transcript

So we are thinking in these days of holding tightly the Christian life, not losing our grip on the Christian life. And I use the example of the hand, where when we hold something, the palm is what gives the support of the back and then five fingers. And we looked at the blood of Christ, first of all, and I want to speak today about the word of God.

And not the Bible has the word of God. But the word that proceeds from God's mouth, which is different. You can read the Bible every day for 50 years, and never hear the word that proceeds from God's mouth even once.

There are many people like that. So don't ever think what God means. I've got a Bible, I read the Bible in 10 different translations.

You can read it in any number of translations and never hear God speak to you even once. So we'll begin with the first spoken word of Jesus in his ministry. The very first word that Jesus spoke in his public ministry, it was in the temptation in Matthew chapter four, where the devil tempted him to turn the stones into bread, because he hadn't eaten for 40 days.

And Jesus reply was, Matthew four, verse four, it is written. So Jesus, whenever he was tempted, quoted scripture. Each time when he was tempted a second time, when the devil said, Oh, you're going to quote it as written, is it? Okay.

The devil says, jump off the temple, it is written, he says, just like you said just now, he will give his angels charge over you, concerning you, and they'll bear you up in their hands so that you don't strike your foot against a stone, verse six. And then Jesus replied, it is also written. See, that's the response of a person who's listening to God.

He's not blindly quoting a verse. And then when somebody confronts him, he's stuck. He doesn't know what to do.

Those are people who just memorize scripture, but don't listen to God. But Jesus was in touch with God. So when he quoted a verse and the devil confronted him with a verse, he said, it is also written.

That is a result of listening to the word that proceeds from God's mouth. And then the third time the devil tempted him again, he quoted scripture, it is written, but it was a word that he got from scripture, the appropriate word. And then throughout his ministry, you find because Jesus was listening all the time, in every situation, he had the appropriate word.

Was it a group of people? He had the appropriate word. An individual who came to him with a question, he had the appropriate word. And when he had to chase out the money changers from the temple, he had the appropriate word from the father.

A woman caught in adultery, he had the appropriate word. So this is what we need to remember. The first words of Jesus, Matthew 4, 4, man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds.

And like I've often said, it's not something that proceeded past tense. These are words that in the Bible that proceeded from the mouth of God 2,000 years ago, 3,000 years ago. But here it's not referring to that.

Many people read the word that proceeded from the mouth of God thousands of years ago, and it was just printed in a book. But here it says, man shall live by every word that proceeds. The word of God is always coming out of God's mouth every day.

And it'll be through his word, of course. But once you get very familiar with the word, God uses that and speaks to us. But then God spoke to Jesus many other things which are not written in Scripture.

For example, when the woman caught in adultery, Jesus did not say, it is written, man shall let the one who is without sin cast the first stone. That's not written anywhere. That was a word that proceeded from God's mouth into the heart of a man.

Jesus lived as a man who was always living by that word in every area of his life, always listening. When tempted to get angry, listening. When tempted to lust after a woman, listening.

When tempted to love money, listening. When tempted to react in anger or murmur about some situation, listening. And because he spent 30 years listening, the father said, this is my beloved son.

I'm well pleased with him. And to such a man, in situations where there is no written word, God gives a word to what to say. Shall we pay tax to Caesar? Render to Caesar what is Caesar's.

Render to God what is God's. It's a wonderful thing to develop the habit, not just reading the Scriptures, but listening to God. That's why I've often said, read the Scriptures slowly.

Have times when you read large sections. I used to sometimes read, say, a whole book at one sitting. But in addition to that, have time for reading slowly.

And if you have time only for one, then read slowly. That's more important. And meditate, Psalm 1. Blessed is the man who meditates on the law of the Lord.

It's an amazing promise. If you listen and think about what God is saying, turn to Psalm 1, the power of the word of God. Psalm 1, blessed is the man who delights in the law of the Lord, verse 2. And in his law, he meditates day and night.

He's not reading it just once. He's meditating on it 24 hours or whenever he's awake. Even if he wakes up in the middle of the night, he's meditating on it.

And such a man, see the life of such a man, first of all, he'll be firmly planted. He won't be shaken. Have you seen these trees? Some trees are uprooted in a hurricane and some trees remain.

That's because some trees have got solid roots and some trees don't have solid roots. And the other thing is, he will always bear fruit in the right season. There will always be fruit in a person's life in the right season.

And his leaf will not wither means he will never be dry. You know, you see leaves that are dried up. Do you know that it is God's will that you should never be dry? You should never be the type of person who is discouraged or gloomy or be in a bad mood.

To be a dry leaf is to be in a bad mood. The leaf that is green means always in a good mood. His leaf will never wither.

What a wonderful thing it is. You know, when I read in the scripture that we must walk as Jesus walked, I thought, was Jesus ever in a bad mood at any time, no matter what happened at home or in his ministry? Never, never, never. To walk as Jesus walked means never to be in a bad mood.

Now, if you don't achieve that, you will not achieve that in one day, but you'll never achieve it if you don't make it your goal. If you make it your goal, you can achieve it over a period of time here on this earth, not when you go to heaven. I mean, if your faith is only that it'll happen when I go to heaven, then it'll happen only then.

But if you think God's word is written for us, that when you go to heaven, your leaf will not wither. No, here on earth, your leaf will not wither. If you have faith for that, I have faith for that.

I said, Lord, I'm not going to overcome discouragement when I go to heaven. No, I'm going to overcome discouragement here on earth. I'm not going to overcome bad moods when I go to heaven.

I'm going to overcome here on earth. Most believers don't have faith for it. They don't get it.

According to your faith, be it unto you. You think you'll overcome bad moods only when you go to heaven? Okay. According to your faith, be it unto you, it'll happen to you only when you go to heaven.

I hope you get there. But those who have faith that if God commands something, it can happen here on this earth. According to your faith, be it unto you, it'll happen to you on this earth.

And you'll be a world of difference between you and the other average believer who roams around. That's how it should be. His leaf will not wither, and He'll be firmly planted.

The streams of water, the Holy Spirit, and the other wonderful promise, whatever He does, He prospers. Prospers doesn't mean money. Some people whose mind is only on money, they read that and they think they'll make a lot of money.

No. Jesus prospered more than billionaires, not with money. He prospered in the sense that He completed His Father's will before He left this earth.

That is my understanding of prosperity, that God has planned something for my life and I must finish it before I leave this earth. Whatever size of house I live in, whatever my bank account may be, whatever hardship I may go through, I prosper if I have completed the will of God on earth and can say like Paul, I finished my course, like say like Jesus, Father, I finished the work You gave me to do. Do you know, my brothers and sisters, that before you were born, God knew that you would be born again, those who are born again here.

And if you are one of those who's really born again, chosen by God before the foundation of the world, then God has made a specific, detailed plan for every day of your life. From that day, you read that in Psalm 139 all the way till the end of your life. And you cannot fulfill that if you don't hear the word that proceeds from God's mouth.

If that's not the passion for your life, you will go around doing whatever appeals to you, whatever you think is right. And like it says in Proverbs 14, there is a way that seems right to a man, but the end thereof is death. That's repeated in Proverbs 14 and in Proverbs 16.

Why? Because just in case you missed it in chapter 14, the Lord says you better hear it again. There is a way that seems right to a man, but end is death. That's why we need to listen to the word of God all the time.

And there's a wonderful chapter, Psalm 119, which is talking about the word of God. And I don't know whether you've read Psalm 119, but there's one thing about Psalm 119. There are 176 verses in it, and every single verse refers to the word of God.

Every verse refers to the word of God. It's called your testimonies, your statutes, your commandments, your judgments, and different, different phrases, but all referring to the word of God, 176 verses. And here are a few wonderful things in it.

In Psalm 119, it says here, verse 9, how can a young man keep his mind pure? By keeping it his way according to your word. Verse 11, your word I have treasured not in my mind, in my heart, then I will not sin against you. Now David who wrote that, I think that was his ambition, but he couldn't achieve it

because he didn't have the Holy Spirit dwelling within.

That's why he sinned. But for us who have the Holy Spirit dwelling within, we say your word, the word that proceeds from God's mouth, I treasure. That means I value it so immensely in my heart, and the result is I don't sin against you.

Here's another verse, verse 18. Open my eyes, O Lord, that I may behold wonderful things from your law. It's a very good prayer to pray when you read the Bible, or even that spirit of it, even if you don't actually pray it every time.

Open my eyes that I may behold the things that are hidden from the clever and the intelligent, but that you reveal to the humble in your word. And many things hidden in God's word, which you cannot understand if you don't see God for light. Turn now to Psalm 119 and verse 105.

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. Or today we'd say a flashlight that shows me the immediate future and a light to my whole path, like the lights along the road that shows me the entire way of where my destiny lies. God's word shows me the immediate step I have to take and the distant future as well.

And here's another wonderful verse, Psalm 119, verse 130. The unfolding or the revelation, we would say today, of your word gives light and it gives understanding to a simple-minded person. The revelation on your word, that's what you need to seek for, the unfolding of your word.

The word is sort of closed up. It says that in 2 Corinthians 3 that there is a, if you come to the word of God and according to the letter, there's a veil over it. It's like putting a handkerchief over the Bible and you can't read it.

But when you turn to the Holy Spirit, it says that handkerchief was taken away, the veil is taken away and suddenly I see, hey, I didn't realize this verse meant this. I've had many such aha moments and you must have such aha moments in scripture. You know what that means? Oh, I discovered something here.

I never saw that before. We must have that frequently. I have such moments, not every day, but many times in a year.

And Psalm 119 verse 165, those who love you have great peace. And the King James Version says, nothing will offend them. Isn't it wonderful to live a life on earth where you're never offended by anything anybody does or doesn't do.

You're never disturbed, never offended. I'm just giving you a few things in scripture that come through listening to the word of God that proceeds from God's mouth. And we already heard in the memory verse, someone quoted Luke 10 and verse 42.

That's a word the Lord, one of the first words the Lord spoke to my heart, which I can say proceeds from God's mouth. I had the habit of reading scripture as soon as I was born again at the age of 19 and a half. And as I read scripture, I learned many things, but one day God spoke to my heart.

And that was Luke 10 42. One thing is needful. What Mary did to sit at his feet and listen, verse 39, sit at his feet and listen to the word that proceeds from God's mouth.

And I'm very thankful that early in my Christian life, soon after I was born again, God told me that the most important thing you need in your life is to always be listening to my word. And I've tried my best to do that. I have slipped and failed many times, but God's been merciful.

But that word has helped me to overcome Satan. He's delivered me from fear of the devil. You come to the point, I remember the Lord saying to me for many years that you were afraid of the devil.

From now on, the devil will be afraid of you. What a word, the devil being afraid of me. Well, you say, are you arrogant, brother Zach? No, I'm just believing scripture in a way that perhaps you don't.

Turn with me to 1 John chapter 4. I just believe scripture, it proceeds from God's mouth. And you know, I read it many times, but one day it proceeded from God's mouth to my heart. 1 John and chapter 4 and verse 17, the last part.

As Jesus is, so also are we in this world. I'm sure all of you have read it. But to many of you, it has not proceeded from God's mouth like it did to me one day.

As Jesus is, so are you in this world. Then I asked myself the question, was the devil scared of Jesus? He certainly was. As Jesus is, so am I in this world, the devil's going to be scared of me.

The world is full of people who are afraid of witchcraft, afraid of the devil, afraid of his agents, afraid of this and afraid of that. Jesus was afraid of nothing. And here is a word that proceeds out of God's mouth to my heart, as Jesus is, so am I in this world.

I say, yes, it's true. And I've had many opportunities through the years to prove not only the negative statement, I am not scared of the devil, which is a very good thing, but more than that, Satan is scared of me. It's by the word of God that we overcome.

Was John the Apostle perfect when he said that? No, but I believe I'm clothed in the righteousness of Christ. Christ is my righteousness. I live with a clear conscience, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

That I can say. I live with a clear conscience, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, because as soon as I'm aware of some prick in my conscience, a thorn in my foot, I do not delay in taking it out. I do not delay in apologizing to God.

I do not delay in apologizing to the person, no matter how humiliating it is or whatever it is. I don't, there's no such, there's nothing that can humiliate me. Impossible.

My savior was humbled, but he couldn't humiliate him. No. And I read in Revelation in chapter 12, a word that proceeds from God's mouth.

It says here that Satan accuses us before God day and night. And the more wholehearted you are, and the more radical you are in following Jesus, and the more useful you are in God's kingdom, the more Satan is going to attack you. Satan is going to attack the frontline soldiers in God's army.

I mean, if you're a backslider and half-hearted, probably not even converted, the devil will leave you alone. It's the greatest insult you can face when the devil says to his demons, leave that fellow alone. He's useless.

He's useless. I don't want the devil to say that about me to anyone. But I believe the devil says that about a lot of Christians.

He's not going to disturb my kingdom at all. He's so useless. He just sits in church, sings the songs and listens to the message and goes home.

He is absolutely useless because his heart is in money. His heart is in advancement in the world. He goes to church to ease his conscience.

You demons, leave him alone. Don't waste your time with him. He is useless.

He will never in his life accomplish anything for God. And probably the devil says he'll finally end up with us in hell. I don't want to be like that.

But he accuses those who are wholehearted to God day and night. And what do these people who are being accused do? They don't get condemned. No, it says they overcame him, verse 11.

They overcame Satan. Have you read that? Satan, the most powerful created being. There is no created being more powerful than Satan, not even one.

He had powers, abilities given to him by God, which God didn't take away when he fell away. But he's misused them. Like a lot of preachers who are anointed by God, definitely anointed by Christ and got a gift and then used it for themselves and God didn't take away that anointing.

They still preach powerfully, but they'll go to hell. One day as we read in Matthew 7, 22 and 23. So, they overcame the most powerful created being.

Think of that, that you can overcome the most powerful created being on earth. And how do you do it? Not by saying, I lived a perfect life. No, by the blood of the Lamb.

That's why we started with the blood last Sunday. When you're accused, the subject is accusation, verse 10. When you're accused and accused and accused and accused by Satan and by Satan's agents.

I want to say to you, whenever you accuse a believer, you are holding hands with Satan and Satan says, great, thank you for holding hands with me. Let's accuse that person together. And you say, yes, let's talk about him.

And you go around accusing people to different people. And you haven't realized in all these years that you were a co-worker of Satan holding hands with him. And Satan tells his demons, hey, we've got a co-worker in that church working on our side.

He's our spy there in the enemy's camp. Because he's going around accusing some of the others in his church, speaking evil of them. It's exactly what the devil does.

But here's another group of people in the church who overcome that. And they overcome them by the blood of the Lamb. And when they're accused by Satan, we all slip up.

Till the end of our life, we'll slip up. But I don't overcome Satan by saying, well, I'm not going to do that again. No.

I overcome Satan by saying the blood of Jesus has cleansed me because I've repented and I've come into the light and I've said it right. I've confessed my sin to God and to man. The blood of Jesus cleansed me.

And not only that, the blood of Jesus Christ has made me righteous. Christ is my righteousness now. And it says here about the word of their testimony, verse 11.

That's what we are thinking of today. The word that proceeds from God's mouth. What testimony is this? This is one thing to give your testimony in the church.

Like these little children gave a testimony. That's good. But this is the word of a testimony to Satan.

They overcame Satan and gave the word of their testimony to him. Have you given your testimony to Satan? No, I'm not talking about testimony then saying I was converted on so-and-so date. No.

Your testimony about what? The blood of the Lamb has done for you. That's the meaning here in this context. They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, which they gave to Satan as the word of their testimony.

And they did not love their lives unto death. It's a wonderful way to live. Man shall live by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God and the devil will not be able to shut that man's mouth from speaking God's word.

It is very, very important. And see what it says in 1 Peter in chapter 1. It speaks here about being born again through the living word of God in 1 Peter 1.23. Do you know that our new birth came through a living word of God that came to our heart, which brought faith? If that has not happened, you are not born again. You believe in your mind.

I believed in my mind for 19 and a half years. I had no false doctrine. I believed with all my heart from the time I came to consciousness because I had God-fearing parents.

They sent me to a good evangelical Sunday school. And I knew from early childhood Christ died for my sins. I was a sinner.

I needed to repent. And numerous times I asked Jesus to come into my heart. I was never sure whether He came or not.

But one day when I was 19 and a half, a word from God came into my heart and I was born. It was a living word. And I was born of God.

It's not that I didn't make mistakes after that. A child makes so many mistakes after it is born. He hasn't learned to walk.

He doesn't learn to talk. That takes time. But I was born.

And I was sure I was born. You don't tell a child who slips and falls when he's six months old, hey, you haven't been born. No, I was born.

I hadn't learned to walk. I hadn't learned to talk. But I was born.

I had that assurance. And I'll tell you something. When God's word comes to you as a, like it says you're born through the living word of God, when God has spoken something to your heart, when God spoke this

word to my heart from John 6, 37, him that cometh to me I'll never cast out.

I probably read that many times. But one day in July 1959, it came as a living word to my heart. Him that cometh to me, I will not cast out.

It's like dropping an anchor, to use a naval term. My ship has not drifted in 60 years. All these 60 years, despite ups and downs in my life, I've never for a single moment doubted that I was a child of God.

Do you have that experience my brother, sister? Or does the devil constantly torment you with doubts? Are you sure? Are you sure? Are you sure? God has accepted you. Do you really believe God is your father? Are you fooling yourself and all that? I was born again. Seek for a living word to come from God's mouth through the scripture.

It was through the scripture that it came to me, through the scriptures, I got a living word. Born again through the living and enduring, endured for 60 years now, word of God. And then once we are born again through the word of God, It says in chapter 2, now that you're a newborn baby, chapter 2 verse 2, you must long for this pure milk of the word.

Like a baby cries out for milk, milk, milk. Now that you're born, you must cry out for the milk of the word of God every day. A healthy baby cries for milk every day, not just once, many times.

And if you've got a healthy new birth as a child of God, you don't need somebody to urge you, come on, read the Bible. Have you read the Bible today? Did you read the Bible? You will not say, well, I was too busy today. Well, I doubt whether you're born again, brother.

If you have no time, I don't mean just reading the Bible, as I said earlier, for 14 centuries after Christ, they never had a Bible, where could they read the Bible? I'm talking about that word that proceeds from God's mouth. You know how the word for 14 centuries before there were printed Bibles, how did people receive the word of God? How did Jesus know the word of God when he was 12 years old, when there was no printed Bible in his house? It was by what he heard in the synagogue on the Sabbath day, or what these Christians in the early days heard in the meetings through some scripture quoted by some elder who had knowledge of scripture. They would hear it and they keep it in their mind, and that would come to their mind.

That was the word of God for them. And you know, all that Paul wrote in the scriptures, he would go around preaching and they heard it and that was the word of God for them. And they would meditate on that every day.

It's so much easier for us when we have it written down, so much easier. And that milk is what we have to cry out for all the time. And it's not something you have to be taught.

I mean, if you have to force a baby, come on, drink, take this, put this milk bottle into your mouth, there's something wrong with that baby. It's probably not healthy, it's dying. And whenever I see a believer whom you have to force, come on, read the word of God every day, that's a dying believer.

I don't know how long he'll last. It's like a baby, you know, the doctor says, the prognosis is bad, ma'am, your child is going to die. Because it doesn't seem to have any interest in drinking milk.

You have to sort of force the bottle into its mouth and then never cries for it. A lot of babies like that, a lot of people sitting in churches and possibly here in NCCF. I don't know whether you'll make it to the kingdom of God, I'll tell you that.

Nothing I say will shake your faith, don't think I'll shake your faith. If you're rooted and grounded in God's word, the greatest man of God can come and tell you you may not make it into God's kingdom. It won't touch you because you know you're sure, because you've got a word that came from God into your heart.

I mean, if somebody comes and tells me, Brother Zak, you're not alive, I'm not going to shake my faith that I am alive. It doesn't change me. You don't love Jesus.

I mean, it's like someone comes and tells me, Brother Zak, you don't love your wife. They can tell me that every day, it doesn't make the slightest difference. Your faith will not be shaken.

If you have developed the habit of listening to the word of God that comes from his mouth as you read the scripture, listen to the word and long for it like the pure milk a baby longs for, and one day as a baby grows up, you'll be able to eat the meat of the word of God. There's the milk of the word of God and the meat of the word of God you read in Hebrews chapter 2 and that's described in, sorry, Hebrews chapter 5 is described like this. The milk of the word of God is described in chapter 6 and verse 1 of Hebrews, repentance, faith, baptism, laying on of hands, one day we'll be resurrected and eternal judgment, verse 1 and 2. That's the milk of God's word.

But then there's the meat, solid food, verse chapter 5, verse 14. Solid food or the meat of the word of God. That is for those who have trained their senses to discern good and evil.

And it is called in verse 13, the meat is called the word of righteousness. An infant is not accustomed, it says in verse 13, to the word of righteousness. He's born again.

He's an infant. It says he drinks milk, verse 13. He drinks milk.

He's sure, he's saved. But his only interest in life is to go to heaven when he dies. He's in the kindergarten for 30 years.

He doesn't want to go beyond the kindergarten. He has no interest in education spiritually. Think of someone who's 30 years old and has got the opportunity to study, but he wants to be in the kindergarten.

A lot of Christians like that. Or to use the other illustration, just drinking milk. He's 30 years old and he can't digest solid food, still drinking milk.

I tell you the picture I get in my mind of many, many Christians sitting in these mega churches with 2000 people, 2000 babies sitting there with the milk bottle in their mouth. That's the picture I get in my mind. Whole lot of them who cannot stand on their own feet, who cannot hear the word of God, who have no interest in what is called the word of righteousness.

When you speak to them about overcoming sin, the word of righteousness, when you speak to them that if you really come under grace, sin will not rule over you, they're not interested in that. Oh, I'm saved. I got baptized on so and so date 30 years ago.

I'm on my way to heaven. My pastor told me that. Okay.

He's got no interest in the word of righteousness. And I tell you that is the condition of the vast majority of believers. They don't live.

They survive. They're barely surviving. They remind me of, most believers remind, I can't say they're dead.

Some of them are really born again. But they remind me of a man lying in a hospital with tubes in his nose and into his veins and lying like that. Is he dead? No, he's alive.

We come back after three years and ask doctor, how is he now? He's still alive. And you compare that with that guy who's playing soccer out in the field. That's the wholehearted Christian.

Both are alive, right? But there's a world of difference between this alive and that alive. Which type of alive are you? It depends on how much you receive God's word, the living word of God, the word of righteousness that helps you to overcome Satan. And if you keep receiving this word, what will happen is over a period of time, like we read, that your leaf will not wither and there'll be fruit from your life as a result of receiving this word.

And gradually, you will come to the place in 1, it says in 1 Peter, in chapter 4, it's an amazing word. 1 Peter 4, verse 11 says, anyone who speaks for the Lord, like all of you testified here today, whoever speaks must do so as one who is speaking the very utterances of God. It's an amazing word.

That means just like God speaks, it should be the same way when you speak God's word. When you preach God's word, whether it's for two minutes or two hours, depending on the grace God gives you, it should be as the utterance of God and not the utterance of a man. This is what can happen to you, my brother, if you're filled with the Holy Spirit.

You may not have the gift of teaching God has given me. You don't need that. You may be able to speak just for two minutes in talking to someone, but it'll be the utterance of God that'll go straight to his heart.

Brothers and sisters, it's a promise in scripture. I will pour out my spirit, Acts chapter 2, verse 17, on all flesh and your sons and your daughters will speak forth my word. That is prophecy.

Your sons and your daughters will prophesy. That is the purpose of God, pouring out his spirit and filling man's heart so that we speak forth the word of God. Covet this.

Jesus said, if you thirst for this, come to me. If you don't thirst for it, if you're satisfied with your half-hearted, defeated life, stay where you are. But if you thirst for this type of life, Jesus says, come to me, out of your innermost being will flow rivers of living water.

I remember I had this hunger when I was 22 years old. I'd just been baptized a year ago. And I said, Lord, I want to speak your word.

I want to be filled with the Holy Spirit. And I would pray and fast and go to meetings and mostly time disappointed with the meetings I went to. And I said, okay, I'm going to see God on my own.

You don't need to go to a meeting to be filled with the Holy Spirit. I've been filled in spirit a couple of times, but not in a meeting, usually alone at home. In a meeting, it's very difficult because there are so many people listening and watching.

You're very self-conscious and the tendency to just imitate what everybody else is doing. But if you're alone, the best times to meet with God are when you're alone, all by yourself. Sometimes in the middle of the night, you kneel down by your bed and say, oh, God, meet with me.

I want to be filled with the Holy Spirit. I want my words when I speak to be like the utterance of God. And as I said, this is not just for preachers and teachers.

When we speak to one another, everyone, I pour out my spirit on all flesh, and you shall prophesy, sons and daughters, commit this, commit this, that just like the word proceeds from God's mouth, it'll proceed through your mouth, just like the prophets of old. Do you know that every believer, when it says a believer can prophesy, it's putting him in the same place as a prophet. The only difference being that the Old Testament prophets prophesied about the future a lot.

Not everybody, John the Baptist was the greatest prophet, and he never prophesied anything about the future, but he spoke the word of God. His word was so powerful that people came from long distance to listen to him. I'll tell you, where God puts his word into a man's mouth, people, those who are hungry will come from many places to hear.

That's how a church should be. A church should have a reputation of having the word of God coming forth from that church every Sunday. And God will draw those who have a hunger to such a church.

That's why it's so important to hear the one thing that's needful. Man shall live by every word that proceeds from God's mouth. And if we value this, we will never be deceived.

See, for example, the example of the Bereans, and you probably heard of the Bereans in Acts chapter, Acts of the Apostles, and we read in chapter 17 that Paul went from Thessalonica where there was some persecution to Berea. And see what's written here in Acts 17, verse 11, that the people in Berea, they were not Christians, they were Jewish people in the synagogue, there was no church there. Paul went to the synagogue and preached, and they were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica.

When the Holy Spirit says about you that you're more noble-minded than those other guys who heard the word of God, there must be a reason. What is it that made you more noble-minded than those people over there? Because the people in Berea received the word with great eagerness. They were attentive.

They didn't allow their mind to wander here and there when Paul was speaking. They received it with great eagerness. And not only that, they compared Paul's words with scripture, examined the scriptures every day to see whether what Paul was speaking is right.

Isn't that amazing that this great apostle Paul comes anointed by the Holy Spirit doing miracles and all that, and when he speaks the word of God, the people in the synagogue come up to Paul and say, Paul, it was good to hear you. I'll tell you next Saturday when we meet again whether I believe you or not. And they spent the next six days going to the synagogue, checking up.

This is what Paul said. Let me check it with this. What did Isaiah say here? This is what Paul said.

Let me say, is this what Ezekiel said? They compared every day. They examined the scripture. They didn't just read it, examined the scriptures daily to see whether what Paul said was right.

You know the result? They are called noble-minded. I want to ask you, my dear brothers and sisters, will the Holy Spirit call you noble-minded? Because you base your faith not on what Brother Zach said, but you check in the scriptures, is what Brother Zach said true or not? Is it true? Let me compare it with scripture, and your faith is finally established not on Brother Zach's word, but on the word of God, the word that proceeds out of God's mouth to you. That's the way to be established in scripture.

I know a lot of people depend on my word. Maybe they are protected from a lot of harm, but they'll never come to the light. They'll be like those babies who are in the, who had to be constantly taken care of, fed by somebody, because they were never crying for milk.

And they had to be constantly taken care of, because they're not developing properly. But if you're like the Bereans, that's why you find in the, have you seen Paul's letter to the Bereans in the Bible? No. Why? He had to correct the Thessalonians, the Galatians, the Corinthians, for so many mistakes and errors in that understanding.

Why not the Bereans? Because they didn't have to be corrected about anything, because whichever preacher came into that mess, they say, hey, hang on, we'll tell you next week after checking scripture whether we believe you or not. They never got into a wrong doctrine. Isn't it wonderful to be like that, a believer who cannot be deceived, because you check even the greatest preacher comes along, say, brother, I'll check God's word and then tell you whether I believe it or not.

Noble minded. Wonderful to be a Christian like that, who not only hears the word of God, but checks it up with scripture. Is it right? Is it according to scripture? And the result will be that you will one day, when you speak, your words will be like the utterance of God.

This is what I've done through all my life. This is what has protected me from deception all around, all types of deception. Nobody taught me when I left the Navy that I should never ask people for money or send a report of my work in a prayer letter.

Every Christian around me was doing it. Christian worker, I mean. Every Christian organization.

You know why I didn't do it? I said, let me see. Is that according to scripture? I said, Jesus and Paul never sent prayer letters about their work, no reports about their work to anybody. They never asked anybody for money even once.

Uh-huh. Okay. I want to be noble minded like the Berrians and go according to scripture, not by according to what 99.9% of Christians are doing around me.

So let them do that if they want. So there are many, many things where we can be protected from deception like the Berrians if we listen to every word that proceeds from God's mouth. Make this your habit, my brothers.

Time is short. The Lord is coming soon. And if you're wasted your life until now, at least start today and hear the word of Jesus in Luke 10 42.

One thing is needful in your life and it's not earning your salary. One thing is needful is to sit at Jesus' feet and listen to his word. All the other things will God will take care of.

It's a wonderful promise. And one last thing, God's word when we hear it becomes like a sword. I told you, you know, it's called in Ephesians 6, the sword of the spirit.

We saw that in Revelation also with which we overcome Satan. We use it against Satan. And one thing I want to say there in connection is Ephesians 6 12, we do not struggle against flesh and blood.

We do not use this sword to fight against human beings. I don't use God's word to hit somebody on the head. Don't do that.

There are preachers who do that. They stand up there or they sit up there and they want to hit somebody sitting over there with some word of scripture or somebody they don't like or somebody over there, they want to hit someone. I've heard of preachers who don't have the courage to tell their wife something they preach against their wives in the meeting.

So the wife will hear it. That's not the place. I'm not supposed to use God's word against a man.

Remember this. I'm going to use God's word as a sword against Satan. And if I preach God's word, it must be like a sword in my mouth.

And that sword will divide people's hearts and convict them. But I'm not here going to preach that. When the Lord called me many years ago, it was more than 50 years ago, I remember His speaking to me with one word of scripture.

I remember that day, 6th of May, 1964, and the Lord spoke to me saying in Isaiah 49 verse 2, I will make your mouth like a sharp sword, remain concealed under the shadow of my hand. I said, okay, Lord, all my life I want to be concealed under the shadow of your hand. Make my mouth like a sharp sword.

And I've seen that through the years, only God can do that. And He will do it if you develop the habit of listening to God's word every day. God needs many, many people, not to be preachers and teachers, but ordinary brothers and sisters who prophesy, who speak words to encourage and challenge and build up.

So I hope you will make the word of God a very important part of your daily life. Amen.

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