

DAY 1 (Week - Monday 3 December)**Read:** *Proverbs 12:12-18*

It has been estimated that a talkative person may speak 30,000 words a day. Based on this it would be wise to ask our self an important question, "How do my words, be they many or few, affect others?"

Words can be a powerful force to bring about evil or to bring about good. Words can hurt and injure, or words can soothe and heal. Words can mislead, or words can guide. Each of us is responsible for the words, the type of words, coming out of our mouth.

But in the context of ADVENT.....THE WORD is Jesus. He is the ultimate WORD and His WORD is final, just as it was when creation was taking place.

Proverb 12:25 teaches that good words uplifts a burden. *"Anxiety in the heart of a man weighs it down, but a good word makes it glad."* Jesus THE WORD came to heal the broken hearted (Lk. 4:18) and we assist in His ministry through words of encouragement and hope.

We are known as a people who were doomed without hope. God knew this but didn't leave the situation like that. God sent THE WORD to bring Hope to a lost people.

Proverb 12:18 also points out that our speech can injure. And many a person has been broken abused and hurt because of words but Jesus THE WORD, brings healing. A case in point would be that of Jesus healing the Roman officer's servant. Jesus gave a Word and the servant was healed.

The Gospels are full of stories where Jesus uttered a WORD and people were healed.

Meditation: *Do I need hope and or healing words right now?*

DAY 2**Read:** *Isaiah 55:8-11*

There is a suggestion from this passage that Israel thought that they could shape and place God into their way of life. In reality, God's desire was that they conform to God's pattern. God knew that would keep them safe.

We too must strive to fit into the plans of God for our lives. But we can only know the plans of God by studying THE WORD.

Through the prophet Isaiah, God is saying that His word can be likened to 'snow and rain' that water the earth for its crops to grow. So too His Word will always be there to sustain, encourage and grow us into His likeness. Isaiah was speaking to a people who were spending all their energies on things that did not satisfy their real yearnings.

Do you ever wonder why your friends and family who don't know Jesus cannot understand the change that has taken place in you or the things of God that you try to explain to them? It is because they haven't experienced what God has done in your life through THE WORD.

We are mistaken if we think that the Bible is just a book. It is so much more. It is the Word of God that has been sent for a reason.

What is more, just as it is natural and inevitable that water will nourish plants, God's word will do what He sent it to do. And so what is the purpose of God's word? To give life. We are the living people of God. From His 'higher thoughts', He sends His words. And He sends them with a purpose to give us life.

Prayer: *Lord I pray that I may know your commandments and live by them. AMEN*

DAY 3**Read:** *Hebrews 4:12-13*

What have we done with the word of God? Have we really read the Word so that it is in our hearts?

The story is told of a preacher who stood on a corner one-day preaching. A dirty and dishevelled hobo came up to him. 'Can I tell you about Jesus' the preacher asked? 'No' said the chap. 'Can I pray for you then?' 'No' he said. So the preacher asked 'if you don't want me to tell you about Jesus or pray for you, how can I help you?' 'Give me your bible' the hobo said. 'What are you going to with it if you don't wish to hear about Jesus asked' the preacher? 'Well' said the guy 'the pages are thin and it would be good to roll a joint in'. The quick thinking preacher said 'on one condition that before you roll a page for a joint you will read it'. 'Ok' promised the hobo.

A few months later the preacher was on the corner again and a chap approached him well dressed and very handsome. 'You don't know me do you' asked the man. 'No' said the preacher 'where would I know you from'. 'But you do' insisted the man, 'you gave me your bible for my joints'. 'What happened' asked the preacher? 'Well' said the man 'I smoked Matthew, and then I smoked Mark, and then I smoked Luke and then John smoked me'.

THE WORD of God is alive and powerful and THE WORD touches lives. You see the Bible does not merely contain the Words of God, it is THE WORD of God.

The children of Israel wilfully disobeyed the Word of God and the word from God. And because of that they never entered the Promised Land.

Meditation: *Will I see the promised land that God promised in the Word of God?*

DAY 4

Read: *John 1:1-5; 14*

When John starts the gospel with *“In the beginning,”* (John 1:1) he takes us back to a point before the creation of the heavens and the earth. The New English Bible goes some way towards capturing this dynamic with the expression: *“When all things began, the Word already was.”* “In the beginning God” also implies that God existed before the beginning of time. So John is saying that THE WORD was with, or “face to face with” God. In another sense the THE WORD was with God from before time.

However taking this further, the same WORD who was in the beginning with God (John 1:2) became flesh (John 1:14), and is now known to us as Jesus, the Christ.

Now in the context of ADVENT (which in Latin means ‘coming’) we need to remember Jesus is coming. And as much as Advent is intended to be a season of preparation for His arrival, it is the arrival of JESUS, THE WORD for which we prepare. This joyous season is also intended to be a period of preparation, much like Lent. Prayer, penance and fasting are appropriate during this season.

When we await family or friends coming to our homes, generally we go to great lengths preparing for their arrival. And when they come there is usually a sense of joy.

During the lighting of candles during Advent the colour of the third Sunday of Advent is rose. This colour symbolizes joy and represents the happiness we will experience when Jesus comes again. And so our joy is of anticipatory celebration.

Meditation: *How am I preparing for the second coming of Jesus?*

DAY 5

Read: *Psalm 119:97-105*

The title ‘THE WORD’ can mean so many things. In a Christian context it could refer to the Bible but if we read through the Bible we soon realise that the Word was with God since the beginning, so not just the Bible. Psalm 119 is the longest chapter in Bible; it constantly talks about God’s Word. It is made up of 176 verses divided in 22 sections of 8 verses in each section. And in almost every verse, the God Word is mentioned through words such as precepts, statutes, laws commandments, etc.

Now it is true that through words we learn. Jean Baptiste Girard once said *“By words we learn thoughts, and by thoughts we learn life.”*

As we read this Psalm we soon realise that it is the writers desire to be shaped by THE WORD. He knew that being shaped by the statutes, precepts etc of God would stand him in good stead with God. He would also come to a full understanding of how to live his life in accordance with God’s will.

It is also true that our bodies need exercise to remain in good shape, and so do our minds. And what better way than to shape it the way the psalmist desires. We do that by regularly placing ourselves under the instruction of God’s Word.

“If words are to enter men’s minds and bear fruit, they must be the right words shaped cunningly to pass men’s defenses and explode silently and effectually within their minds.” J. B. Phillips

Taken as a whole, the Bible is a record of God’s loving pursuit of a people to love him in return. And through the Word we learn how to do it best.

Meditation: *Is my life shaped by THE WORD OF GOD? Do I love God the way THE WORD says we should?*

DAY 6

Read: *John 1:1-5; 14*

Today let us dwell on the words *“The Word Became Flesh.”* But also keep in mind that it is the season of Advent, meaning we prepare. Let us also remember that Jesus came as the incarnate Son of God. He came as a baby and experienced everything we experienced but, unlike us, Jesus never succumbed to temptation.

However we must also remember that becoming fully human does not mean that Jesus, THE WORD, did not cease to be God when he became a man. He was fully God and fully man.

Someone once suggested that we meditate on the thought that “the love of God now beat in a human heart when THE WORD became flesh.” The reality of a thought such as this is that the wisdom of God now spoke from human lips. God’s word came from human lips.

Jesus Christ; THE WORD; clothed Himself in the same kind of body we have. This means that He experienced hunger the same way we do. But our hunger should not be for food that satisfies the carnal man. Instead we should hunger for THE WORD. Jesus on occasion quoted Deut. 8:3 saying *“Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God”* [Mt. 4:4]

In His human form Jesus knew what it felt like to be rejected. In John 1:11 we read *“He came unto his own, and his own received him not.”*

And so in this Advent season how will you be preparing? Are you joyful, hungry? Remember He is THE WORD of healing and love and so much more for those rejected and hungry.

Prayer: *Father help my hunger for the Word be real. Amen*