

U.H.P.C. WORSHIP

SERMON TOPIC: "The Effect of The Word Within"

PRAYER:

If we were to cook the most scrumptious and delicious meal and then rub it all over our bodies from head to toe, would it nourish us? NO! If we never eat any of it and digest it internally, would it strengthen us? NO! The same is true for our spiritual health and well-being. Without internalizing the strong meat of the Word, meditating on it, digesting it; --without the spiritual food of Holy Communion, worship, praise, the exercise of prayer with faith, we cannot grow, develop, become stable, strong, and produce good and abundant fruit in the Kingdom of God. This why King David wrote:

***"Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path." (Psalm 119: 105) He asked: "How can a young man cleanse his ways? And answered: ...By taking heed according to Your Word." (Psalm 119: 9) ---"The entrance of Your Word gives light and grants understanding to the simple."*** All these and more are true. But **if the Word is not inscribed in our hearts and minds, how can it have a right effect in our daily living?**

Someone asked me recently how do I keep going on trying to do ministry, serving God, and trying to lead the church at so many different levels and against so much resistance from so many areas? My short answer was that it is not that I don't feel the stabs and the jabs of the principalities and powers, and rulers of the darkness of the world. As a human being, it is impossible not to feel pain, disappointment, and hurt. However, one has to develop a spiritual discipline for every day, especially if you are called to a leadership role in the church of God where the needs, the cultures, and the personalities of people can be so different and diverse. I told this person about my daily spiritual preparation, how much time I need to spend in the Word-- (especially the Psalms and Proverbs) I spend a decent amount of time in the study/reading of Scripture in both the Hebrew and Greek original languages as well as in English, a little time in music, praise, and worship; and of course there are those weekly days of fasting. I keep a daily journal of events, issues, activities, acts of the Holy Spirit, testimonies of victories won, or of failures and discouragements. There are some Scriptures that I have managed to memorize over time. These are just some of the ways I have been taught by the Holy Spirit to keep the Word of God within my heart and mind that it might rise up to help me in my time of need. It helps to build a buffer zone that the satanic elements are unable to penetrate to the point where I might not be able to or get back up easily.

In other words, it is prudent to build a spiritual routine that feeds the spirit and the soul just as we are careful to develop a physical diet and exercise routine to keep our physical selves reasonably healthy

and strong. If we build up a strong body and immune system, then when sickness comes, we can bounce back more quickly and more thoroughly. In some cases, we may not even succumb to viruses that are in the air. In the same way, we need to attend to the feeding of and caring for our spiritual selves. THIS IS ACHIEVED BY READING, MEDITATING, AND APPLYING THE WORD OF GOD TO OUR LIVES. **Even the smallest portion can be very helpful.** *(Share about the tiny little boy whose parents began to teach him from the time he began to talk: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. And I can become anything I want."* On his way to school with his little back pack on his back, that's all he keeps saying. He was on T.V. already. We can never tell what he will be because of the power of the Word of God that is ingrained inside of his mind. THE WORD OF GOD HAS TO BECOME INTERNAL so it can be activated by the Holy Spirit when needed.

We hear Jeremiah in Chapter 31: 27-34, telling us about a new promise made by Jehovah God, by which the LORD would cut a NEW COVENANT WITH HIS PEOPLE. It would be unlike the Law of Moses carved on stone which they broke constantly. But **the New Covenant** God was about to release would be one that would be imprinted in their hearts and minds. This could not be broken. It would not be only ETERNAL, but it would be INTERNAL. It would be written on the heart. The LORD said the Law would be inscribed in their inner parts. Then He, Jehovah would be their God and they would be His people. They would not need anyone to tell them to know God, because from the youngest to the oldest will know God. The LORD-Jehovah God would forgive their sins and remember their iniquity no more! THIS WILL BE THE EFFECT OF GOD'S WORD WITHIN."

Some of us may say that in today's world when there are so many distractions with social media and Television etc., it is a challenge to do this with small children. But every generation has its own excuse and its own solutions if we seek them out. We hear Paul in 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 3:14 through 4: 5, reminding Timothy about how **the Scripture was planted in him from the time he was a baby**. Paul was reminding young Timothy that this is what made him WISE to Salvation through belief in Christ Jesus. Paul wanted Timothy to understand and to know that: **Every Scripture is GOD-BREATHED and PROFITABLE for teaching, for reproof, and for correction; for instruction in righteousness, so that the person of God may be FULLY FURNISHED for every good work**. Then Paul went on to say to Timothy: PREACH THE WORD, BE URGENT IN AND OUT OF SEASON, CONVICT, WARN, ENCOURAGE, WITH PATIENCE...for there will come a time when people will reject sound doctrine and will turn aside to myths. BUT YOU, CHILD OF GOD, be CLEAR-MINDED, SOBER, ENDURE HARDSHIP, AND FULLY CARRY OUT THE WORK OF THE

MINISTRY AND EVANGELISM. This word and charge to Timothy was not just for him alone, but it is for the whole church.

I believe that there will be more of the presence of God and more of God's blessings abiding where people desire the Word and hunger and thirst after it. When many understand the same thing and practice the same truth, there can be only good success strength, and unity for God's Word is powerful, sharp, and quick; able to sever marrow from bone and spirit from flesh.

I urge us all to consider the words of David in Psalm 119: 97-104 where he said: "I love Your Law and meditate on it all day long, for **it makes me wiser than my enemies. It gives me more wisdom than my teachers, and greater understanding than the aged. It helps to keep my feet from the evil way. ... Your Words are sweet to my palet and like honey to my mouth. ...Therefore, I am kept by Your precepts from every false way.** I don't know where each person here is in their knowledge of the Word of God, or where they are getting their teaching. Maybe some of us already have the Word inscribed in our hearts and minds and believe we no longer need anyone to translate, exegete, or explain it to us. But any (chain) church is only as strong as its weakest link. I know we all have jobs and some of us have young children. But I can still say that somewhere, somehow, things are likely to flow more smoothly, and our days will be more manageable if we **CARVE OUT A PLACE FOR THE LORD** at the beginning and **FIND A PLACE TO GIVE THANKS** at the end. Of course, we have that **MID-DAY** pause to say and to reflect on "The Lord's Prayer" followed by the Doxology. I **HOPE** we never become lax and slip back from these seemingly minor efforts to keep connected and linked up with one another and with the Almighty God.

Remember the parable Jesus taught about the all- powerful unjust judge who was made to yield to a poor widow woman, because **she had an inner fortitude of persistence in prayer and faith.** She seemed to have had **THE WORD INTERNALLY ROOTED**, that kept her pressing until she was vindicated. **THIS WOMAN WAS NOT ONLY ASKING FOR RIGHTEOUS JUSTICE, BUT SHE APPLIED WHAT SHE KNEW ABOUT GOD'S JUSTICE FOR THE OPPRESSED.** So, she kept on persevering until her breakthrough came. She knew her God and she knew her cause was a right and just one. While the text doesn't explicitly say so, it is clear to me that this widow knew her God and she knew she had a just cause.

So, in closing I want to encourage us all to get as much of God's Word of truth, rightly divided, not being ashamed of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Seek it, for from it flows **LIVING WATER, AND THROUGH IT COMES THE BREAD FROM HEAVEN.** Remember that Jesus Christ is the New Covenant that Jeremiah prophesied hundreds of years before His birth. Jesus is the One who established the New Covenant in

His Blood and the sacrifice of His flesh for our Salvation. This is what we celebrate on Communion Sundays. It is through Him that we are forgiven and have our sins and iniquities washed away, never to be remembered anymore. He is the WORD INCARNATE WHO WAS IN THE BEGINNING AND BECAME FLESH. When by faith we come through Him, we have the Living Word abiding in us. HOWEVER, IT REMAINS THAT WE NEED TO STAY CONNECTED AND BE FED THE DAILY BREAD, TAKE UP OUR CROSS DAILY AND FOLLOW HIM. If we do not abide in Him as a branch to a Vine, after a while we dry up like a twig only to be burned as brush fire. The way to God the Father is through the Son. The way to the Son is to CONFESS, REPENT, BE BAPTIZED, BE TAUGHT, LEARN OF HIM, BE TRANSFORMED INTO HIS LIKENESS, AND NOT REMAIN CONFORMED TO THE WORLD'S STANDARDS AND PRINCIPLES. This is a life-long life-style that keeps growing and getting better day by day. We will understand it better by and by—as the song says.

So, if we are going to grow stronger, develop wisdom, and gain understanding, then I encourage us to build up a spiritual discipline and practice for our daily lives and see how the Holy Spirit will guide our steps, and order our decisions, communicate with us, and show us the way of life. You/we will see a new and stronger relationship between ourselves and with Christ Jesus. As some of us are doing now, let us continue with our noon-day prayer. And in the morning when we rise, try to “touch bases” with Jesus. Lay hands on the children or hold hands with them and say a Bible verse over them before going out the door. If you can't say anything, then just say: “JESUS!”- It could make all the difference. ALL THE WORD IS ABOUT HIM. AND HE IS THE LIVING WORD IN WHOM WE LIVE AND MOVE AND HAVE OUR BEING. We ask the help of the Holy Spirit to keep us fed and our thirst quenched by the BREAD OF HEAVEN AND THE WATER OF LIFE so that we never hunger or thirst anymore. May our souls and our entire beings be kept secure in God so that nothing separates us from the love of God through Christ Jesus.

AMEN.

Rev. Brenda R. Berry—Pastor/Moderator

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