

Heb 4 11-13 (part 2) The Essential Word of God

Last week we looked at the written word of God as being living, powerful, and judging. Today, We will do the same with the essential Word, who is Christ (which I believe is the author's intent.)

1. Living. Last week, we saw that the written Word we have in our hands is LIVING. Well, it lives because of the ONE who gives it life. We live because God lives. He is our source of life. We are created and He breathed "life" into us. But no one created God. He is life and He has always been life. This is why idolatry is so wrong. To worship that which is dead, and cannot see, cannot hear, cannot speak, has absolutely NO power to do anything but to be dead, is contrary to EVERYTHING God is as the living God. In this way, we can say, "*God is essential*" to everything that has life, including the written word we have in our hands. Without Him, there is NO LIFE! And what the Bible says about God concerning LIFE, it also says about the Son. And it isn't merely that God gives the Son this power as some created being, that he also may give life. NO! The SAME essential life that flows from the Father flows from the Son. We've seen this already in Heb. 1:3: "**He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power.**" In other words, Every bit of life that exists came into being and it upheld even now by the essential Word of God who is Christ.

For a few minutes let's consider some of the verses in the NT from Jesus himself. Look over at John 14:6-7: "**I am the way, the truth, and the . . . LIFE.**" And then He says: "**If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.**" Here, concerning life, He equates himself with the same life the Father possesses. This is why He says, "**Believe in God; believe also in me**" (John 14:1). And he says, "**Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me . . .**" (14:11). And in v. 19: "**Because I live, you also will live.**"

Look over at John 6. After the miracle of feeding the five thousand with 5 loaves of bread and 2 fish, he takes the opportunity to teach about himself. He says to the religious leaders in 48: "**I am the bread of life.**" And then he continues to explain what he means. In 49-51: "**Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.**" And then the leaders get upset that Jesus is equating belief in himself as the same as believing in God. And then in 56-57 He says: "**For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever feeds on me, he also will live because of me.**" At these words many left him. And he turns to his disciples and says, "*Do you want to go away as well?*" To which Peter replies, "*Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, and we have believed and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God.*" (66-69).

John 1:4: "**In him was life, and the life was the light of men.**" John also declares in 1 John 1:1-3: "**That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our**

eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life— the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us— that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.”

Application: Eternal life comes from the Son. It is clear that Jesus gives life to all that is living in this world since, in his divinity, the same life the Father has, so has the Son (and also the Holy Spirit). But the verses, I just read, speak of eternal life. Do you remember the Samaritan woman at the well? Jesus said to her, **“If you drink this water, you will thirst again, but the water I will give will be eternal life,”** or **“water that will do away with your thirst forever.”** Let me ask, **“Why did she need eternal life?”** This is a good question from the world, who says, **“All roads lead to heaven.”** **“All of us are God’s children.”** We need eternal life because **“the wages of sin is death”** (Rom. 6:23). When our physical father Adam disobeyed the command of God to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, He was cut off from his source of life. As God said, **“The day you eat of it, you will die”** (Gen. 2:17). He did not die physically at that time, but immediately he was cut off from his source of life. And if God does not do something to make that right, Adam and ALL OF US will also be separated from him forever. This is why God sent his Son . . . to give us LIFE. John 3:16: **“For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him will not perish but have everlasting LIFE.”** And if you think back to what we just read in John 6:51 Jesus says, **“I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is MY FLESH.”** Here, he speaks of the cross. As those lambs of the OT were physically laid on the altar and sacrificed, so the Jesus laid down his life on the cross. And God was satisfied with his sacrifice.

And this is a deep and beautiful truth! But, the union of deity and humanity in the person of Christ makes all the difference in the world between the effect of the blood of bulls and goats compared to the blood of the Son. Those sacrifices had no power to give life. Only the sacrifice of the Son is truly life giving. So today, consider these words from John 3:36: **“Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God’s wrath remains on them.”**

2. Powerful. Our text says the word of God is “living” and “POWERFUL.” It should be easy for us to get this truth without any explanation. For, if the essential WORD, who is Christ is “living” in the same way God the Father is described as “living,” then it simply follows that He is powerful. The word here is where we get our word “energy.” And the emphasis here is on “effective” energy. As we saw last week from Is. 55:11, the Word of God always accomplishes its purpose. We often lose power when there is a big storm that comes through. And there are no lights, eventually no hot water, etc. But it is never the case with the Son, who is the essential WORD. He is always powerful. Even when we consider the written word we have in our hands, it certainly is the WORD of God. But it’s power comes from its source, which is Christ. When you think of Jesus, EVERY word He ever spoke or ever will speak IS the Word of God. And the same power that God commands and gives, so does the Son.

The picture here of the power of Christ is said to be “*sharper than a two-edged sword.*” I think of Isaiah 49:2, looking forward to God’s servant, which says, “**He made my mouth like a sharpened sword . . .**” Or in Rev. 1:16: “**In his right hand he held seven stars, and coming out of his mouth was a sharp, double-edged sword.**” Have you ever tried to cut something with a dull knife? It’s not very effective. But, with the right knife (which is usually why we pay more for a good knife), cutting is easy. In the same way, the power of Jesus is always powerfully effective. We saw this last week with the written word, which he called the “**sword of the Spirit**” (Eph. 6:17). And this word is said to be on his thigh (Ps. 45:3). But it is always Christ who gives the power. And He has this power in himself. As He has LIFE in Himself, so He has POWER in Himself.

And notice the effect of his power in this verse. “*piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.*” Remember our context. After Israel rejected God’s Word of promise to enter Canaan, God judged and said, “*This generation will die in the desert.*” And then they realized what they had done and tried to go up on their own power. And what happened? The Amalekites and the Canaanites killed many of them by the sword. (Num. 14). Well, this text teaches us that the Jesus has much more power than merely to pierce the flesh with a two-edged sword. He is speaking of his power over things more important and vital than merely that which is physical. Here, he is speaking of his power over things which cannot be seen. We cannot see “*soul and spirit,*” “*joints and marrow,*” and the “*thoughts and intentions of the heart.*” Yet, He is described as the ONE who can “*pierce*” and “*divide.*” I believe he is speaking of the power of Christ to deal spiritually with the souls and consciences of men. And this goes all the way to the hidden and secret chambers of the heart! As v. 13 says, “**No creature is hidden from his sight . . .**”

Do you remember the woman at the well? Jesus spoke with this woman he had never met. And he says to her, “**Go, call you husband, and come here.**” And she says, “**I have no husband.**” And Jesus replies, “**You are right . . . for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband.**” And she said, “**you are right**” (John 4:1-30). Can you imagine the thoughts of her heart to know that such a ONE could know such things about her?

In John cp. 2, early on in Jesus’ ministry, He was in Jerusalem for the Passover and many believed in his name when they saw his miracles. But we read: “**But Jesus on his part did not entrust himself to them, because he knew all people and needed no one to bear witness about man, for he himself knew what was in man.**” (2:23-25).

Now, let me give two more examples of those who come face to face with Christ, first in the case of the non-Christian, and second for the Christian. In other words, let’s see how non-Christians and Christians respond to the living, cutting piercing, power of Christ before whom ALL THINGS are exposed. And in these two examples notice closely how each reacts. Let’s start with the non-Christian. I think of the time when Jesus passed over the Sea of Galilee and came into an area of mostly Gentiles. And there they found a man possessed by demons. He lived in the graveyard and everyone was afraid of him. He was always screaming and cutting himself with stones. He even broke his chains with great strength. And when he saw Jesus, he ran and fell down before him. And Jesus cast the demons out of the man and into a whole herd of pigs who then ran down the hill into the sea and were drowned. And everyone in the nearby city heard

about what happened. And what did they say to Jesus . . . **“They begged him to leave their region, and they had great fear”** (Luke 8:26-39). Brothers and sisters, non-Christians do not react positively when they come face to face with Jesus. They run away. They are fearful. In the case of the religious leaders of Jesus day, they felt threatened. They ridiculed and scorned him. Do you remember last week when we talked about the hardening effect of the written Word? Well, this essential power belongs to Christ. And the power of Christ works in two ways, to harden and to draw closer. To the non-Christian: If you find that the more you consider Christ and hear his Word, the more you are angry, the more you move away from him, the more you want Him to leave you alone, please beware! It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of an angry God. With this in mind, let’s consider the Christian, the one that follows Christ.

Do you remember Peter’s conversation with our Lord after He had risen from the dead. Peter told Jesus **“I will never leave you,”** but when persecution started he ran away and then he denied the Lord 3 times (John 18). And then after his resurrection Peter and some of disciples were fishing. And just before daybreak someone from the shore cried out, **“How many you caught?”** And they said, **“None.”** And he said, **“How about throwing the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some.”** So they did. And what happened? They couldn’t bring the net out of the water because there so many fish. And immediately, John knew what was going on. He said, **“It is the Lord!”** And what did Peter do? He jumped into the sea and started swimming for the land. And they all had bread and cooked fish prepared by Jesus.

And then Jesus asked Peter, **“Do you love me?”** He asks him 3 times and on the 3rd time after saying **“Yes,”** he finally says, **“You know everything. You know that I love you.”** Peter’s heart was laid bare before Christ. And because his heart was known by the Lord, Peter does not take the boat away or avoid the Lord Jesus, but instead He swims with all his might to get near him, and even allow the Lord to correct him and instruct him. For those of you who belong to Christ, you know what this is like! When you look at your life and all your sin and all your shame, and yet all you can do is still run to Christ, who knows you. This is his great power over you by the Spirit, the ONE through Whom, when you don’t even know what to pray, you cry out with yearnings and with the words “Abba Father.”

3. Judging. I get this from v. 13: **“And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.”** Of course we will give an account to God for everything. But, if I am right in my understanding of the word “logos” in both 12 and 13 as being the “essential” Word, the primary point of the author is that Christ is our judge. (And even if I am wrong in this understanding, this is still the case taught in other places.) Because Christ knows ALL, and everyone and everything is laid bare before Him, He always makes right judgments.

As we’ve seen already, his mouth is like a sharpened sword. And in the Book of Revelation, we also read again that **“out of his mouth was a sharp, double-edged sword.”** In Is. 11:4, **“He shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked . . .”** Now, as I consider this truth, there are MANY things I could say. But I think of the judgments of Christ NOW, and of the final judgment to come. I’ll come back to those in a second. But let me say that for the Christian, there are and will be judgments of Christ upon us. But, ultimate judgment, which is eternal judgment has taken place already on the cross. Though

He was sinless and he did NOT deserve judgment, He willingly laid down his life as a sacrifice for judgment in our place. And for those who believe in Him, eternal judgment has already happened. If the Son has set you free, you are free indeed (John 8:36).

However, when we look at the 7 Churches of Revelation, Jesus speaks and judges their works. And to 5 of the 7 churches, He says, ***“I know your works”*** and if you do not change your ways and repent, ***“I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place.”*** Or, ***“I will war against them with the sword of my mouth.”*** Or, ***“I will come like a thief when do not expect.”*** Or, ***“I will spit you out of my mouth.”*** To one church it was losing their first love. To another it was tolerating false teaching. To another they allowed sin in their midst. To another church they were “dead” as he warned them to “wake up.” To another they were “lukewarm.” Brothers and sisters, these words of warning come from the living, powerful, judge off all things. What would Jesus say to us? Brothers and sisters, individual churches come and go as the Churches in Revelation. And if they REALLY stand for a long time, it will be because they obey the words of Jesus.

But, one day, we will also stand before the Lord Jesus as judge. John 5:22 says, ***“For the Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son.”*** 2 Cor. 5:10 says, ***“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.”*** Matt. 16:27: ***“For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay each person according to what he has done.”*** Today, none of us, man, woman, young, old, angel or any living creature will escape his judgment of the living and powerful WORD, who is Christ.

Application: Today, the greatest living, powerful, judging example of Christ is his resurrection from the dead. Death could not hold him. He is risen. And the same power that rose Jesus from the dead will also raise us one day.

Application: Apart from Christ we can do nothing (John 15). As the branch cannot grow apart from the vine, so we cannot do anything apart from the power of Christ. (This is also called the “power of the gospel.” To say we need the gospel every day is to say we need Christ every day.)

Application: Knowing that all is laid bare before him, shouldn't the preaching of these truths cause us to have much more fear and awe. And, since these things are true, shouldn't we walk with great care and diligence to do what is pleasing to Him in EVERYTHING we do!

At the end of the day, EVERYONE is exposed before Christ. And no one who hears about Him and considers the great gospel of Christ we preach . . . is ever left in the same condition. They must be saved by his grace, or perish under his wrath. With those who are saved, his words are LIFE. We hear the voice of the Son of God and we live. It is sharper than two edged sword and it pierces to the heart. And we say, “YES, Lord, you have the words of eternal life.” But to those who are perishing, the Word of Christ has the opposite effect. Those who hear it repel it and beg the Lord to go away.