

December 8, 2019,
Bible Sunday
2nd in Advent
Rev. Silvan Chandrakumar A.

Word of God: Double Edged Sword
(Birth of John the Baptist)

OT Jer. 36: 1-10 Psalm 118: 89-96 Epistle Heb. 4: 11-13 Gospel Luke 1:5-17 Evening Jer.23:23-32 / 2 Tim.3:10-17

Key Verse: The word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, penetrating the soul, soul, and joints until it separates (Hebrews 4:12).

1. Transforming power of God's Word (Jer. 36: 1-10)

Jeremiah has probably been prophesying for at least 23 years by this time. *What is the purpose God desires for His Word to accomplish?* That upon hearing it, men would put it into practice so as to acknowledge and repent of their sins, returning to God sincerely from the heart. It's the New Testament equivalent to be a '*doer*' rather than just a '*listener*' of the Word. *But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. Jam 1:22.*

Read verses 4-8: these aren't merely Jeremiah's own, personal words instead of God's. Holy men spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. God did not by-pass their personalities and make them 'zombies'—characteristics of their individual personality are included. But what they wrote of the Word of God is complete, authoritative, and final. **Occasions are important:** people should have been the most inclined to not just receiving God's Word, but acting on it appropriately.

Is there a lesson for us in Jeremiah's use of Baruch? We are to disciple and send others equipped in God's Word and not according to their talents or abilities. God's Word is the primary thing to be preached from generation to generation. It is our spiritual legacy.

2. Discerning God's Word (Heb 4: 11-13)

The imagery used here in Hebrews is popular, but easily misunderstood by a modern reader. The Greek word translated 'sword' is *machairan*, often used generically for a 'sword' or 'dagger' in the New Testament. However, the same word is also used to describe the blade wielded by Peter in Gethsemane (John 18:10). To modern eyes, Peter's weapon was less of a soldier's sword and more of a large fisherman's knife. In fact, a fisherman's *machairan* was primarily meant for cutting flesh-unlike true

military ‘swords’ which were tougher but less razor-sharp.

Whether military ‘sword’ or meat-cutter's ‘knife,’ this perspective makes the metaphor of this verse all the more vivid. The ‘sword’ is said to separate the ‘joints and marrow,’ probably a reference to tendons, ligaments, and other meaty parts. These are from the Greek words *harmōn* and *myelōn*. These tissues are hidden away, hard to reach, and seemingly indistinguishable. A sharp blade, such as a *machairan*, can uncover and separate these things.

In the same way, the Word of God can even separate spiritual things which seem completely intertwined, such as the soul and spirit. This is not meant to be literal, as the Bible often uses these terms interchangeably. **Rather, this is a graphic explanation of how completely God’s Word can distinguish between the godly and ungodly.** To man, the soul and spirit seem indistinguishable, but the Word of God can-metaphorically-even discern between these. This incredible ‘cutting’ power of Scripture is therefore a tool to separate our very thoughts into good and evil. The razor-sharp truth of the Word of God will separate what is truly spiritual from what is faithless.

3. The Word Heals: It makes a difference (Luke 1: 5-17)

God's Word is healing (Ps. 107: 20). Zechariah and Elizabeth were old. Elizabeth could not bear children (Luke 1: 7). But the word of God came upon them (Lk. 1:13). Their son was John the Baptist. The Word of God is fulfilled. God had a wonderful plan for the life of John the Baptist. Seven hundred years before John the Baptist's birth, the prophet Isaiah announced the plan that God had for John the Baptist's life. **God does His plan in His timing and in His way through HIs word - the inerrant, unchanging Word of God.**

Let us remember, the word of God has the power to heal and transform. As we prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus and for the coming of Jesus let us celebrate His promises that are said and being fulfilled.

ADVENT WEEK 2: THE CANDLE OF PEACE

The angels proclaimed 'Peace on Earth' when the Baby Jesus was born. Today, is peace possible? We all need two kinds of peace in our lives. We need inner peace, but we also need peace with others. God addresses both. He tells us what to do to find that peace in and through His Word.

HAVE A WONDERFUL AND A PEACEFUL SUNDAY !!