

Week 9: FORMED Series

Living Open Before God's Word

Hebrews 4:12-13

¹² For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. ¹³ Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

This week's sermon:

The Hebrew Bible's (Old Testament) understanding of the Word of God (or Word of the Lord) is: the speech of God, which is indistinguishable from his action in the world. What He says will come to pass. His Word is powerful, creative and effective in accomplishing His will.

The New Testament understanding incorporates the Hebrew Bible's definitions, but focusses in on it being the "message of God"- written as scripture or even proclaimed by believers.

Karl Barth was a 20th Century Swiss theologian who popularised a three-fold way of thinking of God's Word:

Revealed, written and proclaimed

While this is not exhaustive, it is helpful in explaining some of the breadth of the term. Simple put, God's word can be thought of as His divine self-disclosure to humanity.... God reveals Himself through His word. And the amazing truth is that he can and does speak to individuals through His word.

1. Live Expectantly Before God's Word

- a. Expect God to speak as you pray, read scripture and listen to sermons etc.

2. Live Honestly Before God's Word

- a. We cannot hide from God, so when His word confronts us, acknowledge where we have erred.

3. Live Responsively Before God's Word.

- a. God's word requires a response. We can either respond in faith and obedience or turn away and harden our hearts as the Israelites did previously (in context of this passage).

For Reflection:

1. Look back on your last week, and then your last year. How and where have you heard God's voice through His Word?
2. When you engage with God's word, whether reading the Bible, praying, or in through proclamation (sermon, worship etc) are you actually expecting Him to speak?
3. In his message, Brian shared how Leviticus 25 redirected his entire life. Can you recall a time when God's word confirmed, challenged or changed your thinking or life direction? What made you open to hearing it?
4. God's Word is consistent because He is consistent. Discernment is crucial as *The world, the flesh and the devil* are also influencing us. How do you discern whether something is true and from God vs. something not from God.
5. Hebrews asks: will you trust God or not? Is there an area of your life right now that requires a response of faith and perseverance, something God's word is calling you toward?
6. Is God's word currently shaping you? If it is, how? What would change if you truly allowed it to search you and lead you more and more?
7. Who in your life needs to hear that God's word is alive and active? How might sharing your own experience of God speaking invite them and encourage them to listen?

Prayer:

Jesus, open our ears to hear Your voice and make us expectant for You to speak. Open our hearts and reveal what we're or holding onto, help us to bring this before you and deal with it. May our lives be formed by Your Word, may we respond in faith and follow where You lead, trusting You more and more each day. Amen.