

The Words of God

Ephesians 6:17

Turn with me this morning to the book of Ephesians 6, we will be looking specifically at verse 17. We have come to the last two pieces of the armor of God – last week we looked at the Helmet of Salvation. We saw that the helmet of salvation is not our conversion but the hope we have in the future.

So often we become earthly and temporal minded that we forget why we are here, what our purpose is, the eternity that awaits us, and the eternal rewards we will receive based on how we have lived our life on this earth. We lose perspective and we can fall into a normal routine if we aren't careful – putting our life on cruise control without any sense of importance, urgency, or responsibility.

When it comes to the enemy of our soul, he is the master of distractions. He knows just how to get us to buy into a life that is empty and shallow. We need to remind ourselves that even though life isn't easy right now, even though I may not understand everything, even though I would like to try to satisfy my pain right here and now, I need to wait for the hope and reality of heaven. When I see God face to face and hear the words of my God say, "Well done" then I would have lived my life with purpose and my pain wasn't for nothing. Put on the helmet of salvation so that you can protect your mind from thoughts and ideas that would draw you away from the hope of eternity.

This morning I want to look at the last piece of God's armor and that is the sword of the Spirit. Read with me this morning **Ephesians 6:13-17**:

*13 Therefore, put on every piece of God's armor so you will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil. Then after the battle you will still be standing firm.
14 Stand your ground, putting on the belt of truth and the body armor of God's righteousness. 15 For shoes, put on the peace that comes from the Good News so that you will be fully prepared.* 16 In addition to all of these, hold up the shield of faith to stop the fiery arrows of the devil.* 17 Put on salvation as your helmet, and take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.*

First, let me say that just as we have discovered that **the armor of God is nothing more than Jesus Christ** (our truth, our righteousness, our peace), **and what we have in Christ** (faith, and future salvation) so is the sword of the Spirit something that we have simply because we are "in Christ." Jesus is our armor and what he has left us gives us enough to face any battle or even attack from our enemy.

Second, I want you to notice the word in verse 17 where it says to "take up". I bet we could walk into many homes here in our country where the written word of God is sitting on a coffee table or book shelf only to collect dust. I know that I have given away Bibles that are not in use. **It is not enough for us to just have the word of God in our homes or even in our hands as we walk in the door on a Sunday morning, but we need to**

pick it up, open it up, and use it in the battlefield of life. God's written word is like pearls or gems scattered throughout the world, only waiting for someone who is willing to open the pages and allow God to make it alive. Charles Spurgeon wrote about this and said:

“Let it never be said that God has recorded truths in His word that you have not read. Study the word and work out its meaning. God deep into the spirit of inspiration. He gets the most gold who digs the deepest in this mine. The deeper you go under the Spirit's guidance, the larger the reward for your toil.”

The written word of God is waiting for the eyes, minds and hearts of men, so that he can make it come alive. **Colossians 3:16** tells us:

16 Let the message about Christ, in all its richness, fill your lives. Teach and counsel each other with all the wisdom he gives. Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts.

You may have noticed that the title of my message this morning is “The words of God.” I am by no means saying that there are multiple written revelations of God given to his church. Our faith in Jesus Christ is dependent upon his written Word – the Bible. But as you read the New **Testament you find that the term “Word” has two different meanings** (two different words in the original text).

The first meaning comes from the **Greek word “Logos” which is the general revelation of God and what he said.** We find in the words of John in **John 1:1-5** the use of this word:

1 In the beginning the Word already existed. The Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He existed in the beginning with God. 3 God created everything through him, and nothing was created except through him. 4 The Word gave life to everything that was created, and his life brought light to everyone. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it.*

Jesus Christ is the revelation of God – he shows us what God is like. We understand something about God when we look at the life of Jesus Christ. **The second definition of the term word is found in the Greek word “Rhema” which defined as specific saying which has special application to an immediate circumstance. It is a Spirit-breathed word that takes the word (logos) written word of God and breathes life and application into it.** We find many examples of this “rhema” word of God throughout scripture. In **Matthew 26:75** it tells us:

75 Suddenly, Jesus' words (rhema) flashed through Peter's mind: “Before the rooster crows, you will deny three times that you even know me.” And he went away, weeping bitterly.

16 Peter said, “ Then I thought of the Lord’s words (rhema) when he said, ‘John baptized with* water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’” **Acts 11:16**

8 “The message (rhema) is very close at hand; it is on your lips and in your heart.” * And that message is the very message about faith that we preach.
Romans 10:8

23 For you have been born again, but not to a life that will quickly end. Your new life will last forever because it comes from the eternal, living word of God (rhema). **1 Peter 1:23**

The “rhema” word of God makes the written word of God come alive and become practical. It never contradicts the “logos” word of God because we know that he never changes and Scripture tells us to never add or take away from it. But **the “rhema” word of God confirms and makes Scripture come alive.**

We receive the “rhema” word of God when we read, study or meditate on the “logos” word of God. We receive understanding of scripture and we gain insight to how it applies to our life. We can receive the “rhema” word of God through the words of others, though our Sunday morning teaching, or through the words of a friend who counsels us using the principles of scripture. **Romans 10:17** tells us:

17 So faith comes from hearing, that is, hearing the (Rhema) Good News about Christ.

17 Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word (rhema) of Christ. (NIV)

Where do we find the words of Christ? In the Bible. Where do we find the revelation of God? In the Bible. People can read about God, about his Son Jesus Christ, but never know him. But when the breath of God breathes words of life into them, that is when people respond. That is why all of us can hear the same teaching, at the same time, at the same location, yet walk out with a different lesson learned. It is when the Holy Spirit makes it come alive for us that it becomes powerful. That is why it is called the sword of the Spirit.

Scripture tells us that this sword of the Spirit (life breathed words of God) are useful for defense and attacks (to defend or protect). **Hebrews 4:12-13** tells us:

12 For the word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires. 13 Nothing in all creation is hidden from God. Everything is naked and exposed before his eyes, and he is the one to whom we are accountable.

The more we open up the scriptures, the more the Holy Spirit can use this great resource and revelation of God, as a sword or attack and defense in our lives. The follower of Jesus Christ who neglects the reading of God's words ties the hands of God, and limits what God can show them, and how He wants them to live. **John 5:29** Jesus said:

39 "You search the Scriptures because you think they give you eternal life. But the Scriptures point to me!

It is one thing to have the written word of God, yet without the leading, speaking, teaching of the Holy Spirit who lives within each of us, it remains nothing but words on a page. The purpose of God's written word is to lead us to an encounter with a living God. The Spirit of God wants to lead us and wants to give his word to us for a purpose. In **Jeremiah 20:9** we read of how God's word needs to be more than words on a page. It tells us:

9 But if I say I'll never mention the Lord or speak in his name, his word burns in my heart like a fire. It's like a fire in my bones! I am worn out trying to hold it in! I can't do it!

I don't just want the words on a page, I want a living powerful revelation from the Holy Spirit who makes the words come alive and active. I want God to speak to me through his Word in such a way that he is speaking to me and my circumstances, in my time of need and not just in a broad "shotgun" way where he hits everything at one time. I want his words to lead me to a life of true living and direction. I want his "rhema" word as well as his "logos" word in my life.

When it comes to battling in life and against our enemy, we need the leading and living words of God that are more specific and rooted in scripture.

An Example in Jesus Christ

We find a great example of using the word of God as a sword against the enemy in the life of Jesus in **Matthew 4:1-11**. After Jesus was baptized in water, the scripture tells us that he was led out to the wilderness to be tested (interesting). It tells us:

1 Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted there by the devil. 2 For forty days and forty nights he fasted and became very hungry. 3 During that time the devil came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become loaves of bread." 4 But Jesus told him, "No! The Scriptures say, 'People do not live by bread alone, but by every word (rhema) that comes from the mouth of God.'*" 5 Then the devil took him to the holy city, Jerusalem, to the highest point of the Temple, 6 and said, "If you are the Son of God, jump off! For the Scriptures say, 'He will order his angels to protect you. And they will hold you up with their hands so you won't even hurt your foot on a stone.'*" 7 Jesus responded, "The Scriptures also say, 'You must not test the Lord your God.'*" 8 Next the devil took him to the peak of a very high mountain*

and showed him the kingdoms of the world and all their glory. 9 “I will give it all to you,” he said, “if you will kneel down and worship me.” 10 “Get out of here, Satan,” Jesus told him. “For the Scriptures say, ‘You must worship the Lord your God and serve only him.’” 11 Then the devil went away, and angels came and took care of Jesus.*

Jesus is tested with three things here and each time how does he respond? “The Scripture says...” How many of us have spent enough time in scripture so that when a scenario comes up, we know what God says about it? We can spend a lifetime of reading a learning and God will always be teaching us something new.

In verse 4 here in this text, **(1) the enemy speaks to Jesus physical need and desire just as he speaks to our physical wants and desires.** But God wants us to rely upon his living, breathing, revelation and follow his voice thus turning our wants and desires into his wants and desires (we take on God’s desires).

In verse 7, **(2) the enemy speaks to Jesus to prove himself just as the enemy speaks to us to question God and our faith.** Yet, God has already proven himself and therefore we need to read and understand that just as God was there for his followers before, he is still there for his followers today.

In verse 10, **(3) the enemy speaks about Jesus power and authority just as the enemy speaks to our need for power and pride.** Yet, God has shown us that the only power we need is found in him.

Each time Jesus knew what was written in the scriptures, and each time Jesus knew how to apply it at a point of need. We, as believers in Jesus don’t only need the Logos word of God, but we also need the “rhema” word of God. We need to hear the voice of God.

When the battles of life become overwhelming, we need the voice of God. When pain and suffering become too much to bear, we need the voice of God. When things are going smooth and life just seems to cruise by, we need the voice of God.

No matter where we find ourselves this morning we need to read and hear the voice of God so that we can be encouraged, we can find hope once again, we can find purpose, we can find answers, we can sense his nudge in a certain direction, we can let him lead us into the future, and speak life to those who are still spiritually dead. Let’s Pray!

Discussion Questions:

How has God spoken to you in the past about something from His Word (Logos)?
What is the best method of utilizing God’s written word so that his written word can be made alive into living words (rhema)?