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THE WRITTEN WORD

Bethany Bible Church, Adult Sunday School Class, December 20, 2009

Share The Word in Language and Life

The greatest thing we can share with this world is not our mind, but rather the mind of the Lord. And the greatest thing we can speak to this world's problems is not what we have to say about them, but rather what God has already said.

With all that we've studied thus far, it should be clear that we--as believers--have something wonderful to share with this world. God has spoken! He has written His word down; and provided its translation into a language that we and the people around us know. It is that which is able to make a woman or man "wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy 3: 15); and it has been entrusted to us to share with those who need to hear it.

There is, then, no greater blessing we can give to this world than to declare to it the word of God! In this final lesson, let's focus on some closing thoughts on communicating the Scriptures to the people around us.

I. WE SHOULD EXEMPLIFY A GREAT RESPECT FOR GOD'S WORD AS SOMETHING IMMEASURABLY PRECIOUS.

- A. One of the ways that we bear witness of God's word to this world is by how we ourselves treat it. "But on this one will I look," God says; "On him who is of a poor and contrite spirit, and who trembles at My word" (Isaiah 66:2b). "It pleased the LORD," Isaiah tells us, "for the sake of his righteousness to make his law great and glorious" (Isaiah 42:21, NIV). King David went so far as to pray, "I will worship toward Your holy temple, and praise Your name for Your lovingkindness and Your truth; for You have magnified Your word above all Your name" (Psalm 138:2).
- B. This means that when say we believe the Scriptures to be a revelation from God, unbelieving people will look at our lives to see if we behave as if we really do! We should bear a good witness, then; and never treat the Bible carelessly or thoughtlessly:
1. We should not leave it sitting on the floor; or sit on it; or place things on it as if it were a common thing. (And *never* use it to swat flies! That's what your local newspaper is for!) A good rule of thumb might be to think of how we treat the American flag. Shouldn't we treat the word of God with even greater respect?
 2. We should never use the content of God's word as a means of making jokes. (Sadly, preachers are often very guilty of this!) We should never put a funny 'twist' on the meaning of a passage of Scripture; or use a verse in such a way that people remember the "joke" the next time they read it instead of thinking about what God is saying through it. To do so 'defiles' God's holy word.
 3. We should be very careful about using our Bible as a handy place to store paperwork and other materials. And if you write in the margins or blank sheets of your Bible, make sure that what you write is for clarity of understanding Scripture and not for something else.

II. WE SHARE GOD'S WORD BEST WITH THIS WORLD WHEN WE MAKE SURE IT'S A PART OF OUR DAILY LIFE.

- A. One old preacher said, "My mother preached from the best translation of the Bible I've ever known. She translated it into action." In fact, the practical application of God's word in our lives may be the only "Scripture" some hard-hearted sinners will ever read (1 Peter 3:1-2).

- B. Moses gives us a picture of this when he told the people of Israel to declare God's word to the next generation through the everyday details of life (Deuteronomy 6:6-9). So, live-out what you say about the Bible! Quote it in daily life--at home, on the walls and "doorposts" of your house, and in your dinner-time conversations. Seek the council of God's word in making life-decisions. Read it regularly; and obey it as authoritative in your life.

III. WE SHOULD SHARE GOD'S WORD WITH A PROPER MIXTURE OF RESPECTFULNESS AND BOLDNESS.

- A. We share it respectfully in that we do not force it upon people who do not want to hear it. Our warfare is not with flesh and blood but with spiritual forces of the enemy (Ephesians 6:12). God permits people to choose His way; and when we treat people's freedom to reject the word of God with loving respect, we leave the door open for another hearing later. (And don't forget what Jesus warned us in Matthew 7:6 about dogs and hogs!)
- B. But neither should we sacrifice the authority of God's word upon the altar of 'political correctness' or 'the fear of man'. We should always remember that the weapons of our warfare are not "carnal" (that is, fleshly), but "mighty in God for pulling down strongholds" (2 Corinthians 10:4-5). Therefore, when the word of God is mocked, or when the sinful ideas of men demand to be given absolute authority, dare to speak--lovingly, but clealy--what God has said, "in season and out of season" (2 Timothy 4:2).

IV. WE MUST BE SURE THAT WE SHARE GOD'S WORD ACCURATELY AND COMPLETELY.

- A. One of the ways that we can fail to communicate God's word to the people around us--and end up showing disrespect to God's word--is by failing to quote it accurately, or in its proper context; or by adding the text of what God has said. We all fail in this at times; but we should nevertheless grow increasingly diligent to present ourselves as "a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15). (Don't be afraid to bring an open Bible with you into the conversations of life--so you *can* cite it accurately.)
- B. Along with this, we must be sure that we not leave anything out of what God has said. It's tempting to think that we must present God's word in "the best light" to this world; and edit-out those things the world might find offensive. But As Jesus taught us, we must teach people to observe "all things" that He commanded us (Matthew 28:20); and follow Paul's example of proclaiming "the whole counsel of God" (Acts 20:27).

V. WE CAN SHARE IT TO THIS WORLD WITH ABSOLUTE CONFIDENCE IN GOD'S POWER TO ACCOMPLISH HIS WILL THROUGH IT.

- A. In the end, it's not our skill of presentation that makes God's word effective. God Himself has promised to stand behind everything He has said. He doesn't permit one word He has spoken to fail (Joshua 23:14); nor does He allow the Scripture to be broken (John 10:35). He has even promised that His word will outlast heaven and earth (Matthew 24:35).
- B. Therefore, you and I can share it with confidence that God will accomplish His will through it in the lives of others. You don't need to argue for the power of a lion. All you need to do is let him out of the cage--and he'll prove his own power without your help. Similarly, you don't need to argue for the authority of God's word. All you have to do is faithfully declare what He has said--and He'll see to it Himself that its authority is proven.