

The Word of God is Quick, Powerful and Sharp

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Summary

In this message, Pastor A.W. Tozer emphasizes the transformative power of God's Word in exposing and convicting individuals of their sinful nature, and the omniscience and omnipotence of God. Mr. Tozer shares personal experiences and biblical references to illustrate how God has protected and cared for him and his family, encouraging us to trust in God's sovereignty and believe that He is always working for their good. Throughout the sermon, Mr. Tozer emphasizes the significance of God's care and protection in our lives.

Message

Now, in the fourth chapter of Hebrews, verses twelve and thirteen: For the word of God is quick, that is, living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight, but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. It takes the Holy Ghost to pack powerful words into short sentences. Notice, quick, that is, living, powerful, sharp, piercing, dividing asunder discerner, naked and open unto God's eyes. These are the words of the text, and I want to talk a little bit about the Word.

Now one of the great realities, there aren't very many, but one of the great realities with Whom and with which we have to do is God's Word. I have been a great advocate of realities. I suppose I have kept myself back a little, in some ways before the eyes of men, by my stubborn refusal to fool with things that are not real, or to spend any time with them before a congregation. I have asked my congregations to confront reality. And I asked you this morning to confront one of the great realities, the living Word of God.

Now, the word of God is real. It doesn't seem to be. There are lots of things that seem real, but actually they are not real at all. And there are things that are relatively important. They are important all right, but they're not so important that if you lose them, the world will cave in on you. They're relatively important. But the Word of God is a thing that is, and when I say the word of God, of course I mean the Scriptures, but I mean that which is a little more than the Scriptures. I

mean the breath of God in the Scriptures. And when we read of the Word, we're reading not only a written text, we're reading of written texts, pulsating and vibrating with the life of God in them.

And here is a reality that we can't escape. Men run away from things that they should take care of; and they run away for a lifetime, but there's no escaping here, there's no evading here. There is no possibility of compromise and there's no bargaining, but God will reckon with this. The Word of God is. And we've got to reckon with this either now or later or at last.

Always, there are those three tenses for anyone who faces up to and confronts reality, or who is confronted by reality. They've got to reckon with it either now, not yesterday, that's impossible, you can't go back. They've got to reckon with it now or a little later, or at last. God in His patience allows us to insult Him and reckon later instead of now. But there will be a time when later will be last. And then we'll find that it's too late.

Now, the reality of which I speak, I repeat, is the Word of God plus the Living Word of God, the One who is called the Word in capital letters and that which is called the word in lowercase letters. Not a black book or a red book, not letters, not texts, not ink and paper, but the expression of the mind of God in revelation, the breath of God, the mighty breath of God, filling the world and taking shape in the sacred Scriptures, written by men who were moved by the Holy Ghost. Now, that's the sacred Scriptures, and it's God's living thoughts.

Jesus Christ is God's Living Word, but the Scriptures are God's living voice. John 6:63, Jesus said, the words I speak unto you they are Spirit, and they are life. And they are addressed to fallen man for a judgment or salvation, or judgment and salvation, I'd better say, because there can be no salvation until there has been judgment. We stand before the bar of God.

I tremble when I read books written by men who have brought the Word of God before them for judgment. They bring what they call historical, critical techniques to the Word of God. And thus, they sit on the Word of God as though the sacred scriptures were judged by them. No, they are judged by the sacred Scriptures. And God brings every man, all men, fallen men, before the Word for judgment and or for salvation.

There is in the old apocryphal books that some people never read but that I get a lot of blessing out of, it's called, the Wisdom of Solomon. When Solomon was there, or whoever wrote that book, I presume Solomon, was describing the children of Israel in Egypt and God Almighty leading them through, you come to these two verses. And I think they're so beautiful and so wonderful, that I want to read them to you, though I do not claim them to be inspired in the sense that the Scriptures are inspired. Here's what the old man said in telling another generation the story of Israel in Egypt. He said, while things were in quiet silence, and the night was in the midst of her swift course, thine almighty Word leaped down from heaven out of the royal throne as a fierce

man of war into the midst of the land of destruction. Thine almighty Word leaped down from heaven out of thy royal throne as a fierce man of war.

This is the power of the Word of God. The most powerful force in nature, without any doubt, is the Word of God. If you will look back through the Scriptures, the Old and the New Testament, you will see how God had but to speak and things came to pass. He spoke to nothing and there came something. For it's written in Hebrews 11 that the things that we are made, were brought out by the Word of God and were not made by the things which do appear. The things didn't come from themselves, but they came from a living Voice.

And in Genesis one and two, God spoke to this order, and order came into darkness and the light came. He said, let there be light and there was light. He said, let the waters be gathered into one place, and it was so, and the dry land appeared. He spoke to the barren earth and fields became fruitful. In Exodus 14, He spoke to the sea, and it opened. And He spoke in Joshua to the river, and it opened, and to dry bones in Ezekiel and they lived, and then to death and Lazarus came forth bound hand and foot.

God has but to speak the living Word. I wish that you might see that you never ought to pick the Bible up without realizing, that while it's only paper and ink, that God Almighty has breathed into the words there His own living breath. And those words can become like the release of atomic particles, tremendous either for destruction or for construction, either for judgment or salvation. And God has spoken and is speaking.

I could not, I couldn't bring myself mentally to think of the Bible as God's last letter to mankind; to think that God wrote the book and then died, or at least went away beyond into some far imperium, and now we have God's letter. God did write the Book. He did breathe into man, and they did write the book. And He did end the Canon. And He did say that nobody add anything to this Book. But what I mean is that God did not only speak in the Bible, He is speaking in the Bible. It is a now voice. It is a present voice. It is as real as the voice that you might hear over the radio that you are tuned in now.

God spoke and is speaking and He's speaking to human life. And when He speaks to human life, we know our mortality. We know that we've got to die. The living man knows he's got to die. The voice of God there speaks to him and speaks to human conscience, and the conscience starts awaking. And the blind, insensible death conscience that lay for half a lifetime, full of self-pride and confidence and assurance, now suddenly sees and hears and feels and knows, because the living voice of God has waked that conscience up. And the voice of God is speaking to human sin, and it knows itself and it is naked.

You only have to listen to people praying at an altar and you will know that they have not been reasoned into their sin, you know that. You know that a Word has been spoken, that they've been confronted by the mighty Word of God, and that the Living Word has stripped their conscience bare, and they know that they are sinners, and they know that they are personally, individually guilty before God.

Now, I want you to notice that God's Word in judgment brings not a charge; it brings a demonstration. The man is charged with a crime and taken up before a court that charge, that indictment they call it, is not synonymous with a guilty verdict. It's only a charge. You are charged with . . . How do you plead? So, a man stands charged, but the Word of God is not a charge; Paul said, we have before proved both Jew and Gentile to be under condemnation. The Word of the living God is not a charge, it's a verdict and a demonstration on lust and hate and lies and greed and pride and envy, and all other sins. And it distills like a living mist of vital essence wherever the Word of God is heard, wherever the human conscience confronts the Living Word. And the Living Word brings the human conscience before it as though suddenly there had come upon the man a living mist, a vital essence had descended, and the heart knows its own guilt.

Now, men may deny, because we're very smooth reasoners, and they may cover, and they may resist. They may resent that the Word of God has given the mortal wound. And until the end, there will never be any deliverance, completely. There might be a temporary healing over and hiding, but there will never be full deliverance until He who is the Living Word pulls out the sword. Because the Word of God is quick and powerful, piercing even to the dividing asunder. And when the heart has been pierced by the Word of God, not the cold steel mind you, but the Living Blade alive and terrible.

And I, for my part, don't want it any other way. I want the living Word of God to be just what it is. I want it to confront me, and I want to face up to it and I want it to do to me what has to be done. And I want to do what It has ordered me to do and believe what It charges me to believe in order that there may be no resistance and no struggle there but complete rest in God. The Word of God reveals, I say, it's a great revealer. It strips the life bare before the eyes of God, this wonderful, this terrible thought. Man always thinks he can hide.

There are those Bible teachers who believe that the words of God to Cain, thy brother's blood cries from the ground, indicated that Abel had been buried after he was murdered. At least the earth had been thrown over him hoping against hope this mad murderer Cain, this jealous man, that his guilt would not find him out. But God said that the blood of Abel cried out of the ground. And they found him and pinned it on him and marked him with a mark of the murderer.

So, the eyes of God see everything. You and I can hide from each other. We can do a lot of little tricks. Men who have only a little hair can let it grow long on one side and smooth it across. They

imagine that that tells people that they are not bald, but it doesn't. Everybody knows they're bald, but they've got to try to cover it up. And women have a way of covering up. Drugstores prosper on women's duplicity and man's pride. We try to cover up. But we're open before the eyes of God. God sees and there's no fooling at all. There's no secrecy. There's no dissembling and there's no distance that can make any difference for the man David said, if we should go to the uttermost parts of the sea, wherever that is, God would still see us there. And there isn't any deed that isn't known.

And that Word persists, persists. The words of God do not relax at death, but they are persistent out there where the dead live again and where heaven and hell waits. The words that I speak unto you, they shall judge you in the last day. We read in Revelation where the books are opened and the book of words and the book of deeds and the book of life, all these are open. And God's Living Word is there. But that is only the negative side of it, my friends, only the negative side.

There's no door that is closed. All doors stand ajar before the Word of God. All hearts are wide open before the Word of God and there isn't a closed book anywhere. But all books are open, all before the eyes of God. And not a thought, not a thought that wears a garment, but all our thoughts are naked, naked and open before the eyes of Him with Whom we have to do. When men invented clothing he invented secrecy. And it's right and proper up to a measure that he should, but he's carried that secrecy to his thoughts, to his heart, to his mind, to his plans, to his intentions, to his guilt. The Scripture says no human thought wears a garment. Nobody can cloth his thoughts so God can't see them.

There's another side and I want briefly now to mention that and that is the Saving Word. I say that the sacred Scriptures, God's living Voice are addressed to fallen men for judgment or for salvation, for judgment and for salvation. They must judge you first before they can save you. God never saved a man nor pronounced him innocent who came with a not guilty plea before the bar of the Scriptures. It's only when we bring our, guilty, Your Honor, before the great God and throw ourselves on the mercy of the court for Jesus' sake, that the Advocate above, the Savior by the throne of love rises and speaks for us and says, Jesus paid it all, all the debt I owe. Sin had left a guilty stain, but He washed it white as snow.

Here's the saving Word, Psalm 71 says, thou has given commandment to save me. I'm glad that I get in trouble. That is, my heart gets in trouble. I am never really very much trouble. God knew that I being a sensitive person, am inclined to be more vulnerable than the average person. But I could get my troubles mainly from the inside. So, he didn't send me all the miseries that he sent some people on the outside. Some fellows are always in trouble for getting kicked out of one place and into another. But I have never had that experience up to now.

But the Lord knew I didn't need it from the outside, because I was so sensitive and vulnerable that He could trust me to get in lots of trouble inside my own heart and I have. And some of the times that I've been in trouble, God said to me, or I found these words, thou has given commandment to save me. And I like to think that the mighty Living Word of God has gone forth.

And the Christian man, the born man, the man who's born of the Living Word, for it's written that the Word of God is the seed out of which men are born. And that Word can never die, that it's jot or tittle can never pass away, that the living man, the living woman who's been born out of the life of God and is called a Christian, that person has been marked out by God. Just as God sent His fear into all the land of Canaan, and His fear went ahead and He marked out these strange people of another tongue coming out of Egypt, the Israelites, and the fear fell on them wherever they went. Some allowed the fear to make them arm and fight Israel and some surrendered. And some let them respectfully pass. But God said these are my peculiar, special people. Everybody that's been born of the Living Word of the Spirit is a special object of God's care.

And God tells all of His world, I'm saving this man. You keep your hands off of him. Do my prophet no harm. Lay not your hand on my child. Don't imagine you can harm any child of mine. Old Job back there in the Old Testament, he didn't know it, but he'd been living behind an iron curtain. God Almighty's curtain had been all the way around him. A hedge is a better word, for that's the word the Bible used. He was hedged in, and God Almighty had that hedge electrified and the devil couldn't pass over until God allowed him, for a little while, to bless and benefit his man, Job. Then he sent him away again. Thou has given commandment to save me.

I haven't a doubt in all the world but that there isn't an atom of matter in this world, but what has been charged by great God Almighty to look after me and you and all of his children. We lay them away. We bury them out of our sight with grief and tears. But the Earth can no more hold them than the earth could hold the body of Jesus or of Lazarus. Thou has given commandment to save me. If you knew all that disease germs around you. And if you knew all the demons that were set to destroy you. But they can't get to you. Because God has given commandment to save me. And He's charged everything. He has charged the stars in their courses.

That's why I smile at the Space Age and laugh at their Sputniks and their Explorers. Long before man invented the thrust that would cause a missile to escape the gravitational pull and fall into free space, long centuries before that, God Almighty had spoken to every star that shines and every planet that revolves, every angel before the throne, save these people. These are my people. My people marked by the blood of My Son, saved by my life, redeemed by the death of My Son. Save these people.

Physically I don't like floating around in space. I flew out to Vancouver and down to Portland and back to Chicago, and you can have it. You can have it. I don't like it. I never did like it. I thought

maybe if it took that long, roundabout flight, I'd get to liking it. And I liked it less when I landed here in the airport than I did when I started. I don't like it, but I do know this, that all space and all creation and the stars in their courses and the moon in its phases and the sun in its strength and the lovely earth and all the rivers and seas our mine. Thou has given commandment to save me. God's Word, like a mighty armed man leaped out from the royal throne and commanded, no man can pluck you out of My hand.

I grieve that men have turned this doctrine into a hard-case, hardened shell of doctrine that divides the church. Do you believe in eternal security? Do you not believe in eternal security? All that believe, get over here and all that don't believe get over there and glare at each other. I grieve at this because it's making a doctrine out of what is a wonderful truth and not a doctrine at all. But God has spoken for His children, all of His children, my children, and they are dear to Him. They're dear to Him because they belong to His Son because His Son gave His life.

In the war, the boys say, at least one of my boys told me, the hardest thing they had to do in the Navy Air Wing where he was for three years, a flyer. He said, the hardest thing we have to do is to come back home after when one of the boys have been killed and gather up his things and send them to his widow or to his mother. He said, they die, they die all around us, but it isn't so bad until you have to gather up their things, an old wristwatch and a picture and extra clothing and an old watch chain, maybe that belonged to his dad and an old penknife with one blade broken. The few things that he couldn't take with him out there but headed back and go get that and wrap it all up. Send it and then write a letter. He said, that's hard. Don't you think that when that package arrived. Thank God, this church, though we had during the Second World War about 75 of our boys in uniform, not one of them was killed, not one.

We had, my wife and I, five, and not one of them was killed. So, we never had to do, but don't you think that when that package came back, that that would have been laid aside and cherished as long as memory kept verdant. I sometimes look up on, my wife has pictures everywhere, she doesn't have flowers. And here, pictures all around there and I sometimes look at the picture of our boy Bud who was a Marine. All but lost his life. He's still hobbling around, but he is able to make it alright. In the picture, a good-looking young fellow in his early 20s, grinning with that uniform, that marine uniform. And I said, if he died over there instead of coming home, wouldn't this be a sacred thing? A sacred thing, for the sake of another, for the love of another, some things become infinitely precious.

And God looked down and saw the children that God had given to Jesus, saw that for the Christ's blood had run, Christ had died. Christ had cried, Father, forgive them. Christ had said, why hast Thou forsaken me? And God said, whatever He sends Me. Whatever He sends Me will be dearer to Me than the apple of mine eye, dearer than the jewels that are on my throne, dearer than the unredeemed seraphim and cherubim, the burners that cry, holy, holy, holy before the Majesty on

High. You are a blood-bought treasure, bought by the blood of Jesus Christ, and the Father loved His Son in death and loved Him in life. And for His sake, He loves you beyond all the Scripture.

Nobody knows how intensely, how deeply, how persistently, how perpetually, how everlastingly, God loves you. He loves you with an angry love. A love that's angry with anything that would hurt you. He loves you with a tender love, if you belong to Him. The Living Word leaps down, leaped out of the throne of God like a man armed for a war, and God says, I will be with you, and I will go before you and I will keep you, and fear thou not, I am with thee. And no man can pluck thee out of my hand, and the foundation of God standeth sure. Ye are My sheep and know my voice. Goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

The Word of God is quick and powerful, quick for judgment and salvation, judgment first, salvation second. Judgment for all those whose conscience start awaking before the Living Voice and who cry, my God, my God, I have sinned. Have mercy upon me. And for salvation for all such, the Voice goes forth. Save these people. They're My people, precious to Me more precious than the apple of my eye.

Ah, yes, the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sin. The Son of Man has power on earth to bestow life. The Son of Man has power on earth to raise the dead. The dead shall hear the voice of the Son of Man, and they that hear shall come forth.

Well, I want you to hear the Word. I want you to go to this Book reverently. Open its pages and read it and remember that while you're not a bibliolater and you're not worshipping a text, you recognize here, not the last words of a dead man, but the living voice of the Living God; the persistent, vibrant sounding Voice that's still alive. And everything that God says, He is still saying.

You know, when you go anyplace to speak, they come and want your autograph. Now, not because it's me, but just because it's anybody. No matter who you are if you're the speaker, they think that they'd like to have your autograph. So, I don't know how many I signed while I was at Canby Camp, and I, just to save myself I think a little bit of mental exercise as much as anything else, I signed one Scripture verse on practically all of them I hope they didn't compare notes. The same Scripture verse nearly on all I signed, a few I have varied to Galatians 2:20. But most all of them I signed, Jeremiah 29:11, God's speaking. And God says, I know the thoughts that I think toward you says the Lord. Thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you an end and an expectation. I know the thoughts I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace.

God's peaceful thoughts are coming down to us, peaceful thoughts. Not occultism, not spiritism, not Pealeism, but God speaking in the Word and in His Son, speaking thoughts of kindness and peace and good intention. And God is pleased when you are pleased, if you're pleased with what He's pleased with. Why can't we be better Christians? Why must we drag on and drag on in an old

bumpy wagon when God Almighty has the angels and spirits at our disposal and the Holy Ghost within us and the Word of God before our eyes.

Yes, the Word is quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword. Let us believe it. Let us love it. Let us read it. Let us trust it. Let us live by it and let us die by it and all will be well.
Amen.