

Transcription of 17GS1023

Hebrews 2:1-4

"The Power Of The Word"

March 8, 2017

It is truly a joy to be with you tonight. And before we get started, I really do want to pray for Pastor Jack for a complete full recovery. I know, as a former athlete myself (now just effectively a good eater), Pastor Jack would like to be here himself, and so before we dig into the Word tonight, would you join me as we pray for him and pray for our time in the Word?

Father, we thank You for the incredible heritage and legacy that is here in this church, and we ask that You would continue that incredible work that You have already done, Lord, we believe by Your Spirit. You spared our brother, You spared Pastor Jack, and we pray that you would restore him to fullness of health, Lord, that there would be no lingering effects of that stroke and, God, that You would touch his body. You knit him together, Lord. Before the foundation of the world, You knew his days. And, Lord, You've chosen to leave him here, so we pray that he would be productive. Lord we also pray You would give him the strength to follow the doctor's instructions. Lord, we ask that You would give him wisdom, Lord, what he should do and what he should not do. And God, as we turn our attention, now, to Your majestic Word, Your beautiful Word, Lord, would You, from heaven, speak to us - Your children, Your family. We wait on You, Holy Spirit, to fill us. We ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

If you'd turn tonight in your Bibles to Hebrews 2. Now I love the book of Hebrews, and I'll tell you what's going to be really hard for me is staying right here. I like to move. So, I'm going to do my best. If I start to walk away and have to turn my head to get back to the microphone, you'll know what's going on. Hebrews 2, and I'd like to take the first four verses tonight. Would you do me the honor? Let's stand as we read the Word of the Lord together. And it begins there in verse 1 of Hebrews 2, "Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away. For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him, God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?" And God bless us, God keep us,

and God impart that truth to us tonight. Father, bless Your people with Your Word. In Jesus' name. Would you take your seats?

Tonight: "The Power Of The Word." The focus of this church really is the Word of God. The focus of Pastor Jack's life has been rightly dividing the Word of truth. And so tonight I have some questions for you. What would happen if we actually took God's Word at its full value? What would happen in your life? You see, when I pose this question to people, I get varying answers, and those answers go from, "Not much would change because I already believe God's Word, I live on it, I act on it, I walk in it, I believe its truth," and there are others, "Well, I don't really know." And I want to share with you tonight, as we think on this subject, that we live in a world that is radically set opposed to the truth of God's Word, and we are in a fight, as the church, to be able to stand in the truth of God's Word. And so I want to begin tonight, as we simply look at these four verses here in Hebrews and ask you a few questions.

Let's approach it from the negative standpoint. What happens? What happens if we neglect God's Word? What happens if we begin to drift away? What happens if all of our time, effort and energy is put into other things? What happens to you? What happens to me? What happens to us? What happens to this church if we drift away from that firm foundation of God's Word? What if it's no longer important to us? You see, many people who name the name of Christ are denying the plain teaching of God's Word. Many people who claim to be Christians are saying that they get their definition of what a Christian means from some book, and it's not the Bible. Many people who profess faith in Christ get their definition of who Christ is from something other than the Word of God. And so what happens if we drift away? What happens if you ignore the GPS, the God Positioning System? You see, the God Positioning System is set up in such a way that tonight, if you're sitting here with us, you can pull out the God Positioning System, and you can request waypoints from the Lord. You can plug in those places that you're journeying, and you can ask God, "What is it that I need to remember about that place? What is it that I should do when I'm transiting from there to somewhere else?" That's the power of God's Word as it's worked out in our lives. And I think the single greatest practical problem that we may face in our lives - in our generation - is that there's so much moral relativism, there's so much existential living, we just exist to try and get from day to day and from thought to thought (and those thoughts aren't necessarily from the Lord), that sometimes we confuse the will of the majority with the will of God. Sometimes we confuse the will of Fox

News to the will of God. Sometimes we confuse the conversation I had with a friend with the conversation I have with the Friend of friends, who is also the King of kings and Lord of lords. And I think we need to check our waypoints frequently and often because I meet a lot of Christians who are really drifting.

You know, the interesting thing about that word here in the Hebrew, the equivalent Greek word that's used there, both of them are roughly the same. But when you look at it, it is absolutely unintentional. Drifting is not something that somebody sets out to do, no more than if you owned a boat, and you were out on the ocean not far from where we are there in South Bay. You can go down to Redondo Harbor, and there're all these wonderful boats down there, and you hop on one; I used to have one when I was in business, and we'd take off out of Oceanside Harbor, and we'd set sail and head up towards Catalina. And every once in a while, the weather would just be nice, and you put the sails down, and you just kind of bob along out there. And all of a sudden, you're someplace you never intended to go. You're drifting. The current is carrying you. The prevailing wind is taking you somewhere. You are doing nothing other than doing nothing. Not paying attention. It's not active. And so the writer of Hebrews here reminds us, "Be careful lest you drift away." And the focus here is the Word. It's the word that was first spoken through the angels. It's the word that's confirmed in our salvation, our experience. "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17). Amen? So all that we know, even about salvation, all that we know about God in a very practical sense, comes from God's Word. And so tonight, as we think on this thought, could it be that if we choose to ignore the currents, if we choose to ignore the prevailing winds, if we choose to do little or nothing, if we are not paying attention to God's Positioning System, His Word, would it not be a conclusion that we could come to that we will pretty much automatically drift? You see, I think we forget that. And instead of being cognizant of it and saying, "Look, I need to make some course corrections, I need to check and see where I'm at....."

I was sharing with our staff at devotions this morning. I come from a generation, many of you in here come from that same generation, that, when you went traveling, in the door pocket of your car, there were twenty or thirty maps. You remember those things? You fold them out, and we would mark the course that we're going to take, and we would be very careful about picking those routes which were going to get us to the journey's end in the shortest amount of time. You see, you would check those things every once in a while. Well now, here's what happens with the Millennials. They pull out their cell phone, and they look at this little

2"x4" screen. And in case you hadn't noticed, that map is really small. And so they cannot tell what's around them. So when their positioning system says you need to get off at a certain street, they have no reference point. You see, they don't have a God-view; they've got a little tiny window.

And I say to you tonight that that is very much the situation we have in our world today with God's Word. People want to take such a small screen shot, and they're not taking the big view of God's Word, and, consequently, they haven't got a clue what's coming. They really do not know where they're going. They're not looking at the whole map. They're looking at such a small slice that they do what's good for where they are right now, today. We call that situational thinking. We need to be careful because we can get sucked into that as the church. We're not getting God's perspective by His Word. We begin to believe the things that the world constantly thinks of. And so as we take earnest heed, it means simply to pay absolute careful attention, to look with intensity, to mark your spot on the horizon. If any of you in here are sailors, one of the things you do when you're near a coast is you mark your spot on the horizon. You say, "Look, there's a mountain. I can see that from out here on the ocean, and I can tell whether I'm going north or I'm going south. I can tell whether I'm getting closer to shore or getting further from shore by that place." Take earnest heed. Look at God's horizon in your life. What do you see out there? What's coming your way? It's important. Because otherwise you will find yourself drifting in the current. It's the very thing that 1 John 2 reminds us (begins in verse 15 there). And that drifting takes this form, "Do not love the world...." You see, when you're just in the world, and you kind of bob around, when you're just looking at the world for the world's sake, the world looks pretty good. Those things that you would gaze at on a regular basis, I don't know why that's so bad. But it says, "Do not love the world or the things of the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him." And here's the correlation - you see, you've got to check God's Positioning System to see whether what you're looking at is from Him or it's from the world. You've got to check the Word, the power of the Word, to give us direction in life, to straighten out our course. If you ever get an opportunity to be off the coast of California when the fog rolls in (or really any other place near when the fog rolls in), there's one thing you want to make sure you have: your GPS. It's not affected by fog. Your LORAN, your radar - not affected by fog. It sees right through the fog. But if you're fixated on the water, if you're fixated only on what you can see, if you don't have a bigger view, you're going to end up out there by Hawaii someplace. And the same is true in our lives, as believers. If we're not constantly checking course correction,

if we're just looking at the world, if we're just following "the things of our flesh, the lust of the eyes, the pride of life" (1 John 2:16), those things that are fleshly, those things that are worldly, if that's what we're looking at, then we're going to start drifting.

Very often, as we think about our lives as we live them here on this earth, drifting, that bobbing, that to-and-fro action, that going up and down in the waves, is equated to the way that we actually are doers of what we actually know. The very thing that James said there in the first chapter of the book of James, I remember it says for us to be doers of the Word (verse 22). Amen? Not just hearers. A little secret thing about a GPS - it does you no good if the batteries are dead, does you no good if you own one and you leave it at home, does you no good if you drop it in the ocean, it does you no good if you don't check it every once in a while. And the same is true for God's Word. You see James, there, said, "Make sure that you don't treat God's Word like you do a mirror when you look in it, and you see your face, and you go, 'Man, I look good!' " Because at my age, I don't look good anymore. Matter of fact, I'm not sure I ever looked good. But I know when I look in the mirror, I'm getting a true reflection of me, and so I'm not supposed to forget that. We need to allow God's Word to be that basis of that reflection. We should be looking at everything through the lens of God's Word. What does it really look like from His perspective? In other words, obey what it says. You see, there's a systematic decline that happens in the book of Hebrews; because it starts in chapter 2 with just simply drifting, and by the time you get to chapter 12, you know what the result of drifting is? It's defying. Bobbing along over here, you end up denying over here. We need to take seriously the Word of God. Your Pastor teaches you faithfully the Word of God, but he can't make you use it. He can't make you own it. He's only responsible to teach it effectively, thoroughly, completely so that you have access. You have to actually use it. You need to be the doer. That's on you. That's on us. That's on me. Our pastors' class today, I was actually sharing with the guys, at the end of the day, it's not what you know up here (Pastor Jeff points to his head), it's what you know in here that ends up here. It needs to get from your head to your heart and then get to your hands. You have to use it, you have to test it. God doesn't sit idly by and let us just do whatever we want. He's constantly giving us little checks in our course. He's saying, "Look, Jeff. You're a little bit off there." Anybody in here ever get off? I know none of you would. I get off. Even as a pastor, I get off. You know, you get those areas in your life where you get a little bit of a blind spot, and it's like, "I already know where I am!" Now come on, guys. Let's confess right now. You turn

on the GPS function on your phone, and it tells you to turn right, what's the first thing that comes in your mind? "I ain't turnin' right!" (Laughing) "I already know what's down that street." Right? "I know where that goes. This time of day, I'm not goin' down there." You see, there are times that we treat God's Word like that. "I already know what it says. I don't really need to check. I got this nailed already."

And I'm here to share with you tonight that I think we need to pay careful attention to what we've heard; so careful should we be that it becomes part of who we are. Not what we know. Notice what I said. Who we are. That that Word is so deeply in you that you can check course like that. "Lord, how am I doing? Where am I going?" Having spent a long time in children's ministry (twenty years as a director at Calvary Chapel Christian Camp), I can tell you people get a lot of direction from a lot of places; especially your kids. And when they see you drifting, guess what they're prone to do? They're prone to drift. When they see you not paying attention to what God's Word says, guess what they do? They learn to not pay attention to what God's Word says. When they see compromise in our lives as parents, you know what our kids do? They say, "Well, my dad does that. My mom does that." It is ultimately important right now, in this stage of where our country's at and where we are as a nation, that we be people of God's Word, that we live it, that we take that earnest heed. Because God's not beyond giving us little course corrections that maybe we don't expect. Nobody ever sets out - if you've ever talked to people who have problems with substance abuse - I have personally yet to meet a single person, in thirty years of pastoral ministry, I have not met one person that told me they started out to be a heroin addict. I've not met a single person that told me that from very early in their life, they thought, "Man, I'm just going to destroy my life. I'm going to do some things I shouldn't do, and I'm just going to completely come unglued." I've not ever met a single person that will tell me that. But you know what I have had? "I gave my life to the Lord when I was 10. And I walked with the Lord for a while. Then I met this girl, I met this guy." A lot of times, "I went to college, and I just began to drift. I started going the wrong way." Imperceptible at the beginning, couldn't really tell. Kind of, sort of there but not really. We have to pay attention to the Word.

I remember the first time I ever took my boys down to the beach. Most of you, if you're parents, in here, you know the first time you take your children to the ocean, if they're small, you're completely freaked out over the whole possibility of them being in the surf, and you watch intently every move they make. But after a

while, you figure out, "Ah, they're not gonna die," and so you give them a little leeway, right? Can I say that Father God does the same thing to us? He gives us a little leeway. And it's up to us, when we're out there in that surf, to check and see, "You know what, that's not our umbrella! That is not mom and dad's speech chair. That is not our cooler. Those are not our beach blankets. Where did they go?" You see because in that surf, you end up getting pushed down the beach, and you're a couple hundred yards down the shore. I had this happen one time, and I heard this screaming. And we all know the screams of our kids. Amen? There could be a thousand kids on the beach, and your kid screams. "That's my son." (Laughing) And I go flying down the beach! I'm thinking, "Oh, dear God, no. I let them go out there, and they drowned." No. They're on the beach. They couldn't see where we were. That's because they drifted. Do not drift. Check your GPS.

I'm going to give you some things now that would be the result of constantly trusting God's Word to lead, to guide and direct. What would that course look like?

First thing, the first result. Anybody in here want victory in your life? The way you have victory in your life - and it doesn't matter what you're having victory over, maybe it's a habit, maybe it's a thought, maybe it's you've got an attitude that just needs to go, maybe you've got something that's hindered you your entire life, maybe you have even what we would call a poor self-image, maybe your esteem of how God views you isn't where it needs to be - if you want that victory; you see, the enemy of your soul doesn't want you to have that victory, so he keeps you beat down. If you trusted God's Word, and it's very clear, because the very first temptation that we find in God's Word was a temptation to not trust God. If you trust God, you can have victory over temptation. If you won't trust God, if you won't trust His Word, then you will not have victory over temptation. You have to trust God.

A second thing tonight. Anybody in here need to grow? Turn to John 1, first five verses there. Do you view God's Word, do you view the power of God's Word, as an eternal, priceless treasure? Or do you view it as that book that you need to drag to church when you come on Wednesdays or Sundays? There're a lot of Christians that kind of view their Bible like furniture. It's a priceless, eternal treasure for, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines

in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it." If you want to grow spiritually, if you want light in your life, if you want to have that priceless, eternal treasure powerfully visible in your life, then you've got to trust God's Word. Christ has been the Word since the beginning. Amen? Your Bible's been true since Genesis 1:1, which is "In the beginning," which alludes to the fact there was, at some point in time, a beginning. So it's eternal. You see, for us tonight, I want to grow. As a pastor, I want to grow. As a teacher, I want to grow. I want to grow in the things of God. The only way I can do that is by being in the Word, clinging to Jesus, listening to what He has to say, picking up my Bible and saying, "God, speak to me because I want to grow. I want to be what you've called me to be." For thousands of years, God's protected this Book from extinction; because man's been trying to wipe this out since day one. Amen? Tried to kill all the apostles before they ever authored it; attempted to destroy Him before He ever got an opportunity to even speak these things into existence by the power of the Holy Spirit. Evil regimes, false religions, every single thing that exalts itself against God's Word has attempted. But your Bible's timeless. It's still here. It's still with us. It still speaks to us. It still gives us that position that we ought to have in life. And I want to encourage you - check it frequently and often. If you want to grow, if you want to go, if you want to grow and if you want to go, if you want to do greater things, remember the great commission is not, "Go make people saved," amen? That's only the first step. It says, "Go and make disciples" (Matthew 28:19). That means to teach, to follow somebody else. That means to grow. And we need God's Word to do that, and we need the power of it.

I had a phone call last week. I was sitting, studying, and it was some research group that wanted to figure out what was going on at Calvary Chapel South Bay and how the church was doing. And they were asking me a series of questions, and I finally just said, "Can we cut this a little shorter? I didn't plan on doing a survey while I'm talking to you on the phone. You just called me to find out if I was in," and unfortunately I said, "Yes." But he's asking, "Well, what's your model for church growth?" I said, "Teach the Word." He said, "Well, what's your structure?" I said, "Teach the Word. Rely on the Holy Spirit." And he actually said to me, "Well that's not really a plan!" And I thought to myself, "Well, what were you expecting?!" If you want to grow in the things of the Lord, you have to use the things that God's given us for growth! That's His Word. It's the power of the Holy Spirit. We would grow.



A third thing - we would know truth. There in John 8:31, Jesus speaking to those Jews who believe, said, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Right? You see, we know truth. Man, we live in a world where truth is a tough thing to come by. Amen? You can't get it in the White House, you can't get it in the state house, you're not going to get it in the city capitols. The only place you can find that kind of truth is God's Word, family. Now we need to seek God for truth. We need to understand what God wants out of us. We live in a time of utter confusion. It's staggering to me how many people are like.....you would think that Chicken Little won the presidential election. "The sky is falling.....!!!!" Running around like we're all going to die next week or something. You know what? The same God that was on the throne before the election is still on the throne. Amen? The same Word that became flesh and dwelt among us is still our Savior. Amen? You know how we know that? God's Word. God's Word. We stand on His Word. We actually have truth that will stand the test of time. That relativism that we live in, the intellectual hypocrisy.....anybody else kind of.....sometimes I turn on the TV - I told my wife to buy me a box of those foam bricks (Laughing) so I can just hock 'em at the TV anytime I want to. I get so tired of listening to the abject nonsense that's being purported to be truth. We have truth. We have the truth of God's Word, and we need to cling to it. The Bible's not just a little Book with letters on the page. It's a contract that's in force between us and God, and it stands today just as powerfully as the day it was first authored. It's truth. We need to treat it that way! And we treat it as truth when everybody else is wandering around going, "I don't know what to do!" I know what to do. I'm taking it to God. My hope is not in the stock market. My hope is in the King of kings and the Lord of lords. My hope is not in our new president. It's in Yahweh, Lord of hosts. It's in great I AM. He's still able. Amen?

A fourth thing - we'd know how to live. So many questions we get. Any of you that are in pastoral ministry that are in here, you would say "Yes" and "Amen" to this. I get questions constantly, "How do I handle this? How do I live?" The power of God's Word gives us the answers to those questions. Somebody asked me one time, "Well, you know, you're kind of pointed on this whole Bible thing." I said, "Yeah. Do you want truth, or do you want my opinion? If you want truth, I'll give you what God says. If you want my opinion, I'll give you what I think." You really want to know how to live, then take the truth - time-tested, God-authored truth - on how you're to live your life.

We're getting ready to embark on a journey in the fourth chapter of the first letter written to the church at Thessalonica on Sunday, which begins with this incredible passage on sanctification. Man, we live in an unholy world. Amen? The things that kids are struggling with today stagger the mind. I grew up in a day and time where literally you could go to the principal's office for chewing gum. "You're chewing gum!" If you stuck it on the desk, that was like the unholy of holies. (Laughing) "You stuck the gum on the.....it's the holy desk! It's off to the principal's office." And, by the way, they still beat you back then. Paddle comes off the wall. "Okay, bend over." You'd know how to live. People aren't even concerned about those kinds of things because their kids are sitting there with a cell phone watching digital cocaine. They're ruining their minds, destroying their lives. And can I tell you there are churches, "Well, it's just the way youth are today." I actually got into it with a pastor at South Bay over this issue two weeks ago. He watched a message that I had done on Romans 1, sent in an email on it and said, "Well, you were a little strong on that." You know what? I'm going to be strong because God's Word is strong. It's truth. Tells us how we're to live in many areas of life. If you want to know how to raise your kids, you need God's Word. You want to know how to live your life, you want to know how to hold your vessel in sanctification, you need God's Word for that. It's the only answer to the crazy things that are going on. It's why Ephesians 5:1 says we're supposed to "be imitators of God as dear children." Amen? How do we know that? God's Word. It's how we know it. The Author of your Bible is the Creator of heaven and earth. The One who wrote the words that we read is the One who put the universe spinning - at His Word. He spoke it into existence. You treat God's Word that way? You know, no matter how much time you spend reading self-help books, they're not going to be much help. God's Word has the answers if we choose to look. You want to know how to live, trust God's Word. It's the ultimate expert on everything. Amen? When you want to know something, you really don't want to necessarily just watch YouTube videos. Amen? You kind of want to find somebody who actually knows what's going on. We have a truck, and I was trying to figure out how to change this heat sensor out. I watched not one, not two, not three - over a dozen YouTube videos, and every one of them said something different. Every one of them! And they all purported to be experts. That's kind of the way the world is with most things. Trust God's Word.

A fifth thing - we'd know how blessed we are. You realize how blessed we are? You realize how wonderful it actually is to be a child of God? The 103<sup>rd</sup> psalm says (the first two verses), "Bless the LORD, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless

His holy name! Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits." Amen? You see, if we really took God's Word at face value, we could bless the Lord. You know there're over 700 promises in your Bible for the believer? There're over 700! That's one a day for basically two years. That's a lot of promises! I'm blessed! But sometimes I don't take a look at the list of blessings that I have. I forget where those blessings are. I started a little thing - I actually try and find a blessing every day in God's Word. I just jot 'em down. It is staggering how blessed we are as the children of God. And I want to share something with you. You know, the promises in God's Word are not reserved for super-saints. They're not reserved for pastors. They're not reserved for really good Christians. The blessings of God are for God's people. Period. As messed up as we are sometimes, God blesses those who bless Him. Amen? He blesses those who bless Israel as well. The promises of God are yours. The question is - do you know them? Are you walking in them? Do you believe God for what they say? Find them, mark them, claim them, lay hold of them.

How about having power in your life? A sixth thing. If we trusted God, if we trusted His Word and took it at face value, you'd have power in your life. Hebrews 4:12 reminds us, "The word of God is powerful." Amen? "And sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" of man. I need more power in my life. I run out of gas every day. I've gotten older. I mean, most of the time when I get home, we have a laughing festival about who's going to be watching TV with their eyes closed first. We sit down to watch TV - you ever do that? "Oh, this is great!" I like *Aerial America* on National Geographic channel. I'm like, "This is awesome!" Two seconds after it starts, I'm like.....gone. I run out of human power. But God's Word never runs out of power. Ever.

A seventh thing - we'd think correctly. Have you ever thought about the Scriptures being food for thought? Have you ever thought about the Scriptures being food for thought? So we could think correctly. I think a vast majority of our world, and even many Christians, suffer from what I call "stinking thinking." It's like we think wrong. It's just messed up! It's because we have the wrong perspective. The way to correct that is God's Word. That's what happens. You see, my thought processes have to be brought into alignment with God's thought processes. And He did that by giving us His Word. My thinking gets corrected when I stay in God's Word, I honor God's Word, I believe God's Word for what it says. I think everyone in here knows that positive thinking is better than negative

thinking. Now imagine how your thinking would be transformed if your thinking was always towards truth and not the lies of the enemy. If you want your thinking right, think about God's Word.

An eighth thing - we'd actually get to know Jesus. You see, knowing the Word is knowing the Lord. It's really the best way to get to do it. "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Amen? Romans 10:17. You see, that's what happens, and when we know the Word, we actually know the One who brought us the Word, which is our Savior. We'd know Jesus. We're supposed to be like Him. Amen? Imitators. Your name "Christian," my name as a "Christian," means "little Christ." I'm supposed to know Jesus. And yet so many people look at the Word of God, and it's kind of like a book of stories to them. No. It's His majesty revealed. It's the way He would desire for us to know Him as we dwell in it, as we walk in it. You know, when Peter really got an understanding of who Jesus was, he could walk on water. Amen? When he did not understand who Jesus was, he sunk. It's a pretty simple process. It was a matter of knowing Christ. Look, I can trust Him. He's the Master of the wind and the waves. I know that because of His Word. You want to walk on water, you need to know Jesus well.

One of the strange things that happens to us in our world is people are obsessing over the future. How about this? When you know the Word, you actually know the future. Amen? Am I crazy? I actually know what's ahead. More than that, I know who is going to win in the end. I know what's going to happen. This Sunday, our middle service, we have the Consulate General for the nation of Israel who is going to come share with us, and I'm kind of excited to talk to him about some of the prophetic things in the Word. So when he gets there, I'm going to ask him some of those things. You know, we know where we're going. My Bible tells me that. God's Word tells me that. The power of God's Word gives me a glimpse into what lies ahead. You know something I know about me? One day I'm gonna croak. I'm gonna die! The Bible says so. So I don't worry about it. God's already told me it's going to happen. I don't go looking for it. I don't try and help God out by putting myself in danger. But I know one day I'm going to take my last breath. "For it is appointed unto man one time to die and then the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27). You see, I know what the future holds, and what's even better is I know who holds it. He's got me in His hand. That's why the words of Jesus remind us. He says (John 14:1-2), "Let not your heart be troubled;" Amen? "For I go to prepare a place for you. If it were not so, I would have told you. For in My Father's house are many mansions." Look, I know where I'm going! So I treat today with certainty. Because

if the same God that's got my future in view has left me here for today, He must have a plan for today. That's why Jesus said, "Don't worry about tomorrow, today's got enough of its own stuff" (Matthew 6:34). Amen? Paraphrasing. You'd know that your future is good.

And a tenth thing - the Creator of the universe, the One that created you, the One who knit you together in your mother's womb, the One who's numbered your days, who has the hairs of your head numbered (for some of us in this room, it's not hard to count to eight, but He knows all eight of them) - you'd know the Creator of the universe. God's Word does that for us. Quickened to life-giving thought, the Word of God being so vital that you look at it, and you go, "Man, I actually know the God that created this planet. Personally." You get that from His Word. That's the power of His Word. It's the standard of standards. It's life. As the church, it's life. Brothers and sisters, as the church, the Bible is life to us! I don't know how Christians, Bible-believing Christians, people who name the name of the Lord Jesus Christ as both Lord and Savior, I don't know how they get along without the Word. But I know some try because I bump into them, and they have problems in every one of these ten areas. They don't have any idea of what's going to happen in the future. They're very often lacking victory in their life. They have been infantile believers since the day they got saved. They've got a "binky" in their mouth, and they've been saved for thirty years. They're wandering around, going, "I don't know why I'm not growin'." You look at their Bible, and you open it up. Do you know somebody who has a marked-up Bible, but the Bible itself has never marked them? Do you know somebody like that? I do. They wander around in search of truth. I did a visit to a guy's house about three-four weeks ago. He was having some health problems; just wanted somebody to come pray with him. It was amazing. He had a shrine to Buddha. He had a Hindu prayer book. He had a Koran. It was like, "I'm going to cover all my bases. I'm just going to pray to all of 'em." He had no idea that God loved him; had tons of religion but not an ounce of relationship. He didn't even know that God's Word actually declared that God loved him. I said, "Have you ever watched a football game?" He goes, "Yeah." "You ever seen that guy in the end zone? It says 'John 3:16.' You ever look that up? You know what it says? 'For God so loved the world.....' " And he goes, "Oh!!!!!!" That's the power of God's Word. Those questions that you get asked - how to really live, what's life about - are answered in there. How blessed we are.

Now, if you haven't traveled, and I don't know how many of you have traveled, I was looking at all these missions trips (on the screen with church events) and going,

"Amen!" in Jesus' name, you need to go on a missions trip. Ask God, seek God, pray, and ask God to send you out of this incredible country someplace where you can experience exactly how good we have it here. Next week I'll be in El Salvador. I think Pat's going the week after that. We are blessed. We're blessed just to have clean water. Our homes may be not what we'd like them to be, but they're better than almost anybody else in the planet earth even if you've got a yucky one. We are blessed. We are blessed to be able to be here tonight. Amen? We are blessed to be able to be here tonight. Do you ever think of that? When you came tonight, did you bless God for having a place to come worship the Lord? Did you bless His holy name that you have a pastor who rightly divides the Word of truth? Did you bless God for the worship team that led you in worship? Do you bless God that you actually have parking spaces out there? At South Bay, we don't have parking spaces. We have to import parking spaces from other places. You see, when you start looking at God's Word that way, you start blessing God for a lot of things you wouldn't normally think of. God, you gave me breath of life. When I got up this morning, I didn't have to go check and see if it's time to start breathing. God's given me breath of life. The power that we have in our lives. The ability to think correctly. The ability to know Jesus.

Have you ever put yourself at the foot of the cross? Have you ever read the gospel accounts, the crucifixion of our Lord Jesus, and put yourself at the foot of the cross and imagined Him looking down at you and saying, "Father, forgive Jeff" (insert your name here) "for he knows not what he does"? You know Christ because of God's Word. You know where you're going. Sometimes we, as pastors, get together, and we do a lot of funerals. But can I tell you there's a huge difference between the funeral of someone who knows the Lord and the funeral of someone who doesn't know the Lord? I've actually been ashamed sometimes at how much fun I'm having at funerals of people who know the Lord. You're sitting there, just going, "I don't think we should be laughing right now! I mean, Sam died!" No. He moved. My Bible says he moved. His earthly tent got packed up. Amen?

Looking around this room, most everybody in here can kind of remember those old, yucky canvas tents that were coated with wax from the 50's and 60's. Yeah? You all can shake your heads. You all had one, right? And you had the Ford Fairlane station wagon to go with that? You packed that in there with the kids and the little window air conditioner that sat outside. Now, we were grateful for those tents ..... until they started leaking. And then about the tenth year, they kind of smelled like something you don't want to actually sleep in.

You know what the future holds. Someday your earthly tent's going to get packed up and put away because it isn't going to be any good anymore, and you're going to a mansion in glory. See, I know what the future holds. I look at life very differently when I understand where I'm going. "This world is not my home. I am just passing through. And my treasures are laid up somewhere beyond the blue." And to think I get to get up every morning and have a talk with my Savior, have a talk with the Creator, actually speak to the One who fashioned me, knows all my family dynamics, knows my genetics. Has anybody done any of those genetics things? I'm tempted to try and find out, but I'm going to find out that I'm part of every country in the world. Because that's most of us. But you know what? You know whose DNA I actually have? I have the DNA of the Creator of heaven and earth because He put it in me by the Holy Spirit. I know that because of the Word. Glorious things! Believe God. Take Him at His Word. Trust in Him. Amen?

Would you pray with me? Let's stand. Father, thank You for this time in Your Word. And we pray, Lord, that You would help us with all these areas of life. Lord, we want to know You more. We are grateful, God, for Your work in our life. And when we think of the things that we are because of You, and we know what we know about You because of Your Word, Lord, it makes us hunger and thirst for that righteousness that's found only in Your Word. We pray that You'd keep us searching Your Word for that power to overcome, that power to know You, that power to know what the future holds, Lord, that power to understand the blessings wherein you have blessed us. And, Lord, as your people tonight, we thank You, Lord, as You first loved us. So much so that while we were yet sinners, You, Jesus, the Christ, died for the ungodly. And, Lord, we bless You for that. And I pray if there's anyone here tonight that does not know You, they have never met the Author of the Word, You're not Savior, You're not Lord to them, I want to pray tonight if there's anyone here, tonight would be that night, that day of salvation. To confess You as Lord is to believe on You as Savior, and so we pray that the name above every name would be made real, would be made known to those who are seeking. God, thank You for this congregation, thank You for this church. I pray your blessing upon it. Lord, empower my brother, and Pastor, Jack. God, just bring him back soon; please, Lord, in power and in strength. Let him finish the race that he's begun well. Bless Your name. And we thank You in Jesus' name. And God's people said....Amen. God bless you.

Submitted by Maureen Dickson  
March 13, 2017