

## Sunday, October 3, 2021 | It Is Written

Week 1 | Hebrews 4:12-13 | "A Living Two-Edged Scalpel."

### Announcements:

- Welcome, Ms. Rose Kiltich, to Grace Pointe.
  - Trunk or Treat, October 23, 5-7PM, sign up in the hall.
  - Teen Activity, Saturday, Oct. 30, 7:30-9:30, Beachmont Corn Maze. Cost \$25.
  - Last Sunday, we held communion, approved our budget for the 2021-2022 fiscal year, and voted in our seventh trustee, Christine Sebo. What's more, we also went over a proposal to create an associate pastor position with the hope that Bob Libby would serve in this capacity. If you would like a copy of the job description, please email me at [BHynre@GracePointeLife.com](mailto:BHynre@GracePointeLife.com). We'll be voting on whether or not to approve this position on Sunday night, October 17. We'll do communion that evening first, and then we'll move to the voting portion. You must be a member of Grace Pointe to participate in the vote. *Please note, since many of you had an opportunity to voice your questions—either last Sunday or to me in person— and in an effort to keep this meeting from going too long, there will be very little time for questions that evening.* So, should you have a question, you **must** reach out to the leadership or me for clarity before Oct. 17<sup>th</sup>. I would like for our leadership to hear each and every member of Grace Pointe and for our leadership to be given enough time to answer each question satisfactorily.
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Today, we'll be starting a new study centered on the temptation of Jesus as told in Matthew 4 called, "It Is Written." Throughout this four-week series, we'll learn about how minor temptations can lead to major problems if they're not dealt with immediately. And even though they can vary, the solution to every devilish trick is the same: quote Scripture. Because if Jesus used only God's Word to combat Satan himself, then the Bible should be sufficient to deliver us too. Victory over temptation is secured when the Christian is armed with a book, chapter, and verse.

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Before we dive into Matthew 4, I thought it appropriate to talk about the **nature** of God's Word first. After all, the point of this series is to highlight how potent God's word is. And if you don't understand how powerful the Scriptures are, you will not understand how Jesus was able to resist the Devil himself. One would think that with Jesus being God, He would have any number of weapons at His disposal to combat the forces of darkness. He healed the sick. He walked on

water. He calmed stormy seas. Indeed, if Jesus had the power to do all of that, He must've used some special divine demon gun that could dispatch His satanic adversaries, right? Shockingly, no. We find no such thing when we look at the Gospels. Instead, we see Jesus wielding only one weapon as he goes toe-to-toe with the Prince of Darkness, and that is God's Word.

**READ:** Hebrews 4:12-13 (ESV)

<sup>12</sup> For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. <sup>13</sup> And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

The writer of Hebrews wanted us to understand two things about the nature of Scripture:

**i. The Word of God is dynamic.**

The first two words that the writer of Hebrews uses to describe God's word are "living" (dzah'-o) and "active" (en-er-gace'). Interestingly, in Greek, the sentence actually begins with the word "living" to emphasize that God's word is alive.<sup>1</sup> Rather than the Scriptures being some dusty old book, the Bible is alive. It is dynamic. It interacts with our world in significant ways. There are many examples, but I'll give you two, and with each one, I'll need some audience participation.

**EXAMPLE 1:** God's word is so dynamic...audience: "How dynamic is it?" ...it was used to create the world.

**READ:** Genesis 1:3 (ESV)

And God said, "Let there be light,"

**READ:** Hebrews 11:3 (ESV)

By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.

**EXAMPLE 2:** God's word is so dynamic...audience: "How dynamic is it?" ...it is used to maintain order in the universe:

**READ:** Hebrews 1:1-3 (ESV)

<sup>1</sup> Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, <sup>2</sup> but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son [Jesus], whom

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<sup>1</sup> Cockerill, Gareth Lee, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament, (Grand Rapids; Eerdmans Publishing, 2012), p. 215.

he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.<sup>3</sup> He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power.

Unlike our word, which dissipates and disappears almost immediately, God's Word permeates and persists in our world.<sup>2</sup> It is the thing that will remain. In fact, Jesus says in Matthew 5:18 that "heaven and earth" will pass away long before even a "jot" or "tittle" will be lost from God's word. Meaning, the two things we think of as permeant—the sky and earth—can not be compared to the permeance of Scripture. Gen. 1:1 will remain unchanged long after the Mount Everest is laid low, the Atlantic Ocean is dried up, and creation itself is made anew.

**ii. The Word of God is discerning.**

Moving away from explaining the liveliness of God's word, the writer of Hebrews then uses a mixed metaphor to describe the discerning power of God's word.

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<sup>12</sup> For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

So, what did I mean by saying that the writer used a "mixed metaphor"? The writer clearly likens Scripture to a "two-edged sword" that can pierce, that enough is clear. And it seems like, in doing so, he's referring to any standard sword. **<INSERT PICTURE>** But the writer then moves to describe how this same sword not only pierces but it divides "soul" from "spirit" and "joints" from "marrow." Dividing between these things seems nearly impossible for a tool as imprecise as a sword. After all, blades are meant for one thing: killing. Meaning, it sounds like the writer of Hebrews isn't only referring to a weapon used on the battlefield but a utensil used in the operating room. **<INSERT PICTURE>** It seems our writer has taken the sword and scalpel and put them together.

But, regardless of what tool was in his mind, the writer of Hebrews' point is that God's word is a dividing—i.e., discerning—instrument. It can separate the soul from the spirit, joints from marrow, and even thoughts from intentions. To put it into modern terminology, the Word of God can split atoms and distinguish between each one. It is so sharp and so precise that it can

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<sup>2</sup> Hughes, Phillip Edgcumber, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, (Grand Rapids; Eerdmans Publishing, 1977), p. 164.

“divide the indivisible.”<sup>3</sup> This is why, right after talking about the propping power of God’s word, the writer of Hebrews makes a crucial point: God sees all and knows all.

**READ: Hebrews 4:13 (ESV)**

<sup>13</sup> And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

The word "naked," means exactly what you think it means: naked. However, the Greek word translated "exposed" is a wrestling term that means seizing someone by the throat and putting a person into submission.<sup>4</sup> This is vivid imagery which probably makes you feel uncomfortable. And, if so, that is precisely what you're supposed to be feeling. He—who is the Creator of all things—knows His creation better than even the creature knows itself. No one can stand before the “securitizing gaze” of a God who knows not only our thoughts but our intentions.<sup>5</sup>

**So, what’s the takeaway?**

When confronted with **temptation**, every Christian ought to be **armed** with **book, chapter, and verse**.

**READ: 2 Timothy 3:16-17 (ESV)**

<sup>16</sup> All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, <sup>17</sup> that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

If God’s word is truly as powerful and as potent as the writer of Hebrews says, then surely it is sufficient to deliver us from temptation.

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<sup>3</sup> Cockerill (2012), p. 216.

<sup>4</sup> Lane, William L., *Hebrews 1-8*, The Word Biblical Commentary, Volume 47A, (Grand Rapids; Zondervan 1991), p. 94; Hughes (1977), p. 167.

<sup>5</sup> Lane (1991), p. 102

## Video Description

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And if God's word is truly as powerful and as potent as the writer of Hebrews says, then surely it is sufficient to deliver us from temptation. Thus, **every Christian should be armed with book, chapter, and verse when confronted with temptation.**

Pastor's manuscript can be found here: