

11/18/2018

“Thankful for God’s Word”

Scripture: 1 Peter 1:22-25

Bible Sunday

Series: Thankfulness

We give thanks for God's word, which brought forth all creation, was revealed by divine (angels) and human (prophets) messengers, who became flesh and dwelt among us, and brings good news for all who would receive it and follow it.

1 Peter 1:22-25 (NIV)

*Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for each other, love one another deeply, from the heart. For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. For, “All people are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, but **the word of the Lord endures forever.**” And **this is the word that was preached to you.***

Today, we continue our month-long series of Thankfulness. Our theme for today is being thankful for God’s word.

This Sunday before Thanksgiving, which we celebrate here in our country, is also Bible Sunday, which recognizes the work of The American Bible Society, in sharing the good news of God’s word found in the Holy Bible, with others here in our country, and also around the world.

When you think of God’s word, what comes to your mind? What does God’s word mean to you?

When I think of God’s word, for which I give much thanks, three things stand out most to me.

† **Brought forth all creation**

As you may have heard me say before, the Bible tells that all of creation began from the word of God, as recorded in the Book of Genesis.

And, John the evangelist began his gospel account of Jesus Christ, not with the story of the baby Jesus as Matthew and Luke did or with the beginning of Christ’s earthly ministry, as shared by Mark. Rather, John starts with a mystical understanding of Christ.

He says, “*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.* (John 1:1-3 NIV)

So, when we give thanks for creation, and the harvest of the food we eat, we are being thankful for God's word.

† Was revealed by divine (angels) and human (prophets) messengers and others

The Bible tells us that God spoke most often through prophets like Moses, Isaiah, Elijah, and others, through heavenly messengers called angles, like Gabriel, and even through faithful men and women like David, Esther, and many more; not perfect in every sense, yet, faithful to the call and life God intended for them. I'm sure you've heard some of their words or stories.

So, what is your favorite Bible verse, passage or story? Why?

Could it be because as the Psalmist says of God, "*Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path.*" (Psalm 119:105) Indeed, all 176 verses of Psalm 119 are a devotional on the word of God.

And, as John the evangelist said of Jesus, "*In him was life, and that life was the light of all humankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.*" (John 1:4-5 NIV)

Let God's word light your way, so that you won't walk or stumble in darkness through life. Remember that no matter how dark the world around seems to be, the light of Jesus can shine brightly through it! And, Jesus tells us, as he did his first followers, that we also are the light of the world. So, don't hide it. Let it shine brightly through you! Make someone else's day or life a little brighter too!

With God, there is hope for all of us. All have made mistakes. All have sinned. All have experienced times of sadness or despair. Just remember that God's word is one of mercy and grace. With God there is forgiveness. God can lift us up from despair. Consider the words of Psalm 130:1-5 . . .

"Out of the depths I cry to you, LORD; Lord, hear my voice. Let your ears be attentive to my cry for mercy. If you, LORD, kept a record of sins, Lord, who could stand? But with you there is forgiveness, so that we can, with reverence, serve you. I wait for the LORD, my whole being waits, and in his word I put my hope."

We too can be thankful and put our hope in God's word.

† Became flesh and dwelt among us, and brings good news for all who would receive it and follow it.

Most wonderfully, we can be thankful that God came to us in flesh and blood, to not only teach us, but to show us the way to live.

John said . . .

"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth." (John 1:14 NIV)

I am thankful for God's love, light and life given in and by Jesus. I am thankful for his word that endures forever. I am thankful for that good news that was shared with me so many years ago, by personal witness and the gift of a bible which I could read, study and meditate upon. For it gives wisdom, guidance, hope, strength, peace, and so much more.

With God's word, we can build a solid and stronger relationship with God, relying upon the Holy Spirit to open our eyes to new insights and understanding.

Sometimes, though, we can get so caught up in taking care of things, even helping others, that we forget to spend time with God. Even then, we can learn from God's word in the bible.

Leopoldina Joao Pedro, of Luanda Angola, shared in The Upper Room (11/31/18):

“A few years ago, I was so busy taking care of the house, attending church meetings, helping people in need, and doing other tasks that I ended up leaving aside the most important thing: nurturing my relationship with God. This didn't happen because I had forgotten God. On the contrary, I could not get through the day without God. I prayed unceasingly for several people and for my relationship with God out of habit. But I was so distracted by the many tasks I had to do that I did not spend enough time alone with God to feel connected and renewed.

“In today's reading (Luke 10:38-42), Martha had no time to be with the Lord, for she was “worried and distracted by many things,” forgetting “the better part” [Jesus said] (CEB). I felt upset at the thought that I was acting like Martha.

“At any given time, we can be busy with many things that we believe will please God. However, in reality, we may be neglecting what is essential to keeping us closer to God and doing God's will. It is important that as we are seeking to serve the Lord, we also devote our lives to prayer and Bible study to help us to know God better and to discern the best role for us in God's kingdom.”

Let us pray: Merciful God, we thank you for your word of truth and life. Help us to choose the better part which you have prepared in order to nourish our relationship with you. And, help us to share that good news with others in our journey through this life. We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

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Questions for Reflection/Discussion:

- > What does God's word mean to you?
- > What is your favorite Bible verse or passage? Why?
- > How do you use the Bible and the Good News for yourself?
- > How do you share it with others?