

The Bible—the Word of God

Message 4

Knowing God through the Bible as the Written Word of God and Through Christ as the Living Word of God (2)

Monday

Psa. 119:15 – Footnote 15¹

2 Tim. 3:16 – Footnote 16²

I would like to point out a few phrases from hymn 804:

Thy Word is like a storehouse, Lord,
With full provision there

Thy Word is like a deep, deep mine,
And jewels rich and rare
Are hidden in its mighty depths
For every searcher there.

Thy Word is like an armory,
Where soldiers may repair,

Have you ever needed your Christian armour repaired? Have you ever been in a battle that even if you won the battle, there was damage done, and you needed something mended or repaired? Have you learned how to get your armour repaired in the Word in your personal time with the Lord? Or do you just have morning revival, or you just have morning watch? Did you explore the deep, deep mine? Or did you just pray-read a couple of verses?

Especially consider the phrase *Thy Word is like a deep, deep mine*. The writers of this hymn were one brother from the 18th century and another brother from the 19th century. I don't know if one wrote and then the other one perfected. Their lives only overlap 12 years, so it seems that one wrote and then the other one perfected it. But these brothers had a certain experience that the Word of God is like a mine. When you go in it doesn't mean that at the entrance of

the mine there are all these jewels. Oh great, there they are! and you pick away at them and there you go. Here it says “a deep, deep mine.” That means you have to go in, you have to go deeper, which takes time. Our personal time with the Lord in the Word is often like a Tim Hortons drive-thru. Sorry to say, sometimes our time with the Lord in the Word is like this: “Morning” “Morning, I’ll have coffee #3” which is coffee and muffin. “Thank you.” “Pay here. Thank you, have a great day!” “Ok, you too.” Sometimes we’re just whatever instead of replying, “You too.” We take something and we have our energy boost for the morning. Have you ever had a time with the Lord like that? You definitely get something. Don’t say you don’t get anything, and I do not in anyway intend to demean that. If you get nourishment, that’s wonderful; but I’d like to suggest that there is more.

Our daily portion in the Lord is greater than that. There is the idiom: “You may have left something on the table.” Forgive me if the source of this idiom is gambling, but we also use it when we talk about business negotiations. I’m an employee of a company and we negotiate because I want more money and you want to give me a little less money. When we negotiate we say, “You don’t want to leave anything on the table.” That means you want to maximize what you can get out of this deal. With the Lord every morning I just have a feeling we are leaving a lot on the table. It’s not that He’s trying to cheat us! It’s not that He’s trying to underpay! He is joyously handing it to us and we quickly say, “Thanks” and turn around. We take a little supply and we are satisfied. But I don’t know how much He is satisfied.

Tuesday

Col. 1:12 – Footnotes 12¹, 12², 12³

1 Pet. 1:4

“Thy Word is like a deep, deep mine!” Have you explored the mine? We have to admit many of us don’t take the time. We don’t have the time. Well, maybe you don’t, but if you would, I suggest that there is something there for us. There is a storehouse with a rich supply. There’s an armoury with equipment. There is also repair there; there is opportunity for mending.

We don’t want to just encourage you, “Read the Word more, get more into the Word.” We’ve all heard that. I’ve heard that since I was a child: “You should read the Bible.” “Amen, I should” and I do, and sometimes I get more than I get at other times. I found in my experience that for a period of time I enjoyed very little and I somewhat settled for that experience thinking that was normal. I was thinking, “Anyway, we are in a battle, what do you expect? At least I got something and that’s good.” At least you get something, but I just have a feeling that the portion the Lord has for us is more than this. We read books about the all-inclusive Christ. Then why are we still satisfied with just a little manna? It says we all are qualified for a share of the portion of the saints in the light; He qualified us, that is our portion. In another place it says this is our inheritance, but sometimes we settle for just a little supply. So I don’t want to just leave you with some kind of exhortation that you should read the Word more. In the conference and this kind of atmosphere everyone agrees, “Yes, I will read the Word more.” So Monday you read the Word more, and maybe Tuesday, but by next weekend it fades away, except that we have an overflow of this conference, so some of the things come back. It’s next week that it fades away. We don’t want that.

Wednesday

2 Cor. 2:11 – Footnotes 11¹, 11²

Before I go to the outline I would like to talk about the disturbances or the frustrations to our spending personal time with the Lord in the Word with a view toward increasing the quality of our time with the Lord. I would like if we could look at a few verses. 2 Corinthians 2:11: “That we may not be taken advantage of by Satan, for we are not ignorant of his schemes.” Saints, I would like to ask you. Have you ever been taken advantage of by Satan? Another question—are you tired of being taken advantage of by Satan? The Word is like an armoury, the Word can equip us so that we no longer are taken advantage of by Satan, for it says, “we are not ignorant of his schemes.” There’s a little note to this word *schemes* in the Recovery Version of the New Testament. This word *schemes* also means *plans, plots, devices, designs, wiles, intentions, and purposes*. The root of this word *schemes* is very similar to the word *thoughts*.

We can loosely translate this verse, “That we may not be taken advantage of by Satan for we are not ignorant of his thoughts.” What are his schemes? They are his plans, what is in his mind, the plot that he has to sabotage our morning time with the Lord. Do you realize that God’s eternal economy is to dispense Himself into us and through that dispensing to grow in us, build us together and make us His corporate expression? God’s economy depends on dispensing! And where does this dispensing start? Actually it starts when you wake up! It doesn’t even start at your morning time. Right from when you wake up, right from when your eyes open and see “uhh”. Do you sometimes think, “uhh” it’s time to get up? How do you wake up? With an alarm, a buzzer, a radio, a phone? How do you wake up? Sometimes we wake up and we say, “Oh no.” It would be much better if it would be “Oh Lord”, then the dispensing starts right away. “Oh Lord, oh Lord, oh Lord.” Then we spend time with Him. Of course, with some of us it’s a victory if we actually go to sit and spend time with the Lord. We determine that we want to spend time every day with the Lord, but we don’t always make it. Now I’m talking about the times that we make it. Do we sit, do we kneel, do you pace, do you do for a walk outside, there are different ways. We each have to find a way that works for me. Sometimes I do different things just to change it up. It also depends on where I am. If I’m at Camp Penuel,

a camp in upstate New York, I might go for a walk in the morning, or if there are places I can go without disturbances, no outward distractions. It's important to find a place to have fellowship with the Lord in which there are no outward distractions.

Thursday

Eph. 6:16 – Footnotes 16¹, 16², 16³

We had a training for our university students on having fellowship with the Lord, personal fellowship with the Lord. We did this at the church meeting hall. Of course, in the meeting hall is not where you usually have your prayer time. We sent the saints to all different rooms in the hall to have private fellowship with the Lord for one hour. Then they came back and we asked each one, “Please describe your time with the Lord this morning.” They would say, “I started praying and then I heard someone praying in another room. They started singing too loud and then I started getting upset with them. I had to calm myself down.” They were really describing their distractions. Quite a number, because we were spread out and some were in the room of the children’s meeting, so one sister started praying pacing across the room, “Oh Lord I love you...” and there was a map of the Old Testament times showing where all the tribes were and she stopped and looked at the map: “Oh, I didn’t know Dan was up there”, for about 5 minutes. Then she was back to praying, “Oh Lord Jesus”, and then “Oh I didn’t know that Abigail was in this class.”

Do you know what I mean? Do you know what that is? That is being taken advantage of by Satan and being ignorant of his thoughts. These are not your thoughts; these are his thoughts; he injects thoughts. Actually, you don’t need outward distractions. Have you never had a time with the Lord where you are pray reading this verse: “Amen, not taken advantage of by Satan, amen, oh Lord Jesus. Oh no, I forgot to call brother Ron.” It is just a thought, “What time is it? Should I send him a text? He’s probably up.” You don’t think you are going to interrupt his time with the Lord: “Oh, I can’t believe I forgot to give him that information, I gotta get that information to him. Amen, oh Lord Jesus.” And just like that two minutes have slipped by and then, “Amen, oh Lord Jesus, I wonder where I am going to stay tonight? I’m leaving tonight for Toronto and I do not know where I am staying. The saints told me where I am staying, but I’ve never been there. What is it like, I wonder if I’ll have my own room, I wonder if it has a bathroom?” This example is not theory. This was my morning time with the Lord this morning. Do you understand? Oh Lord Jesus. “That’s a long drive after. I wonder how much sleep I’m

going to get?” Four minutes are gone and then “Amen.”

I prayed for thirty seconds then two minutes, then I prayed for one minute then four minutes. Now if you are only spending ten minutes with the Lord, it is very possible that you spent two and a half minutes really trying to pray, and seven and a half minutes in the mind in three different locations. How many of us ever have a morning time like this? This is very encouraging to me because once upon a time I thought that I was the only one who experienced this. I found out nearly everyone's the same and this matter of thoughts is the number one distraction. Sometimes it's nice thoughts, beautiful thoughts. Satan uses even my newest granddaughter, Penelope, to take advantage of me. She's three months old, I love her: “Oh Lord Jesus, I'm going to see Pene today.” Just the thought, “Oh I'm flying today.” Days when you travel they are the worse, right brother Terry. Travel days are the worse: “Oh Lord Jesus, did I pack my toothbrush?”

When do you switch from the spirit to the mind? It's almost instantaneous; it's like teleporting; you don't realize how you get there. Saints when this happens, you just have to return; just return, don't be discouraged, don't fight it, just return. Even I would say, “Don't repent” because these are not your thoughts. It says that we may not be taken advantage of by his thoughts, that's Satan's injecting. In Ephesians it says that he sends the fiery darts. The phrase *the fiery darts* in Ephesians chapter 6 is in the context of a warfare. In ancient times the number one defence of a city would be a wall. When people were attacking they would take spears or arrows, they'd take a cloth and douse it in oil and light it on fire and shoot it over the wall. It doesn't have to be exact. If you shoot enough of them, something will be flammable. The enemy is like this, nothing precise, just a bombardment of thoughts. When is this most intensified? In my experience when I am trying to pray. When I'm trying to spend time with the Lord. At other times when I'm watching the basketball game, the football game, the soccer game, I don't get bombarded with thoughts. I don't even think of Penelope when I'm watching the television, but when I'm spending time with the Lord, oh the thoughts come.

Friday

2 Cor. 3:14, 16 – Footnotes 14², 16¹

Second Corinthians 3:14 and 16 say, “But their thoughts were hardened; for until the present day the same veil remains at the reading of the old covenant, it not being unveiled to them that the veil is being done away with in Christ.... But whenever their heart turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.” What’s the veil. In Verse 14 it talks about their hearts were hardened. This is talking strictly about the Old Testament saints, the Jews reading the law. Have you read this verse before? Then I would like to ask you this, what is a hardened thought? What does it mean to have a thought that is hardened? Have you ever had a hard thought? Remember the parable of the sower that we began on Friday night? The sower goes to sow. What’s the first type of soil? The wayside. What’s the characteristic of the wayside? Impenetrable, the seed cannot get in. So I would suggest that any thought that prevents the Word of God from getting into your heart, that’s a hardened thought.

The hardened thought for us grandparents could even be a thought about our grandchildren. One of my grandchildren, Penelope’s cousin, was in the ICU for three months last year. There were a number of times when I was praying in the morning and it was just like a cloud coming over—a thought about him and also my daughter who is suffering. He actually was not suffering, he was quite happy and okay, he was going through something but not in pain; the suffering really was for my daughter. In my morning time it was just a cloud and I had to put that aside. That could be a hardened thought. I could pray for her later; there’s nothing I can do to help her at this moment. In twenty minutes I can spend an hour to pray for her but not now. Right now the thought for my family is a hardened thought. I may be praying and you just start to think, “Oh what a day, I have a project due this afternoon.” You have meetings with your supervisor and all of a sudden all these thoughts come. It’s a bombardment just at that time. You have to realize those are his thoughts. You have to say, “Lord, I just come back to You! Thank You, Lord!” Just say, “Thank you Lord!” You might say, “Ok Lord, where were we before I got distracted.” You know like when you are talking with somebody and you get interrupted and your attention goes back to the conversation you say, “Where were we?” Just keep going; please

don't think that the Lord is disappointed with you; please don't think that the Lord is angry with you; just continue.

Saturday

2 Cor. 4:4 – Footnote 4¹

2 Cor 10:3-5 – Footnotes 5¹, 5²

2 Cor. 11:2-3 – Footnote 3²

Second Corinthians 4:4 says, “In whom the god of this age has blinded the thoughts of the unbelievers that the illumination of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, might not shine on them.” Here we have blinded thoughts that don’t allow you to see Christ, to see the splendid glory in the face of Jesus Christ. The verses just before this at the end of chapter 3 talk about beholding and reflecting with an unveiled face. Saints, that’s our portion in the morning with the Lord. Not just the morning, but at any time when we open the Word our portion is to see Christ. But what happens? There is a blinding factor in our thoughts. But here it is a little more specific; what is the source of the blinding thoughts? It’s the god of this age. We could be contacting the Lord or trying to contact the Lord and just thoughts come concerning vacation, concerning that car I want, something, a promotion, and for each one of us it’s something different. I have found how we wake in the morning is affected by how we go to bed at night. If you want to take ground away from the enemy, maybe say a little prayer before you go to sleep. It might even be good to consider to confess our sins before you go to sleep. Lord cover me because even sometimes when we are with the Lord in the morning, have you ever remembered a dream? You are spending time with the Lord and the dream comes back to you. And depending whether the dream was a nice dream or a yucky dream, a thought comes and inwardly you sink, your inner being sinks. The enemy comes from every direction, that could be the issue of the god of this age.

Second Corinthians 10, verses 3 to 5 say, “For though we walk in flesh, we do not war according to flesh; For the weapons of our warfare are not fleshly but powerful before God for the overthrowing of strongholds, As we overthrow reasonings and every high thing rising up against the knowledge of God, and take captive every thought unto the obedience of Christ.” This puts our thoughts in the context of warfare. Saints, do you realize when we are just trying to spend five or ten minutes with the Lord we are actually in a warfare,

because this sweet intimate dispensing we can get in a few minutes is what can defeat Satan because the Lord wants to gain something deeper in us. No wonder he wants to bombard us with distracting thoughts. In this verse is *take captive every thought*. Even with these few verses may we all be a little more aware and when we spend the time we will realize, “Oh I am distracted” so it will be a shorter time away and you can say, “No stop, stop.” Tell yourself “stop.” Sometimes I speak it out loud: “Stop! Not today! You got me with that thought yesterday, not today! Lord I love you!” and then you just continue. This is the companion verse to Romans 8:6. A brother mentioned this in his sharing yesterday. “The mind set on the flesh is death, the mind set on the spirit is life and peace.” We need to set our mind on our spirit. Our problem is that when we do set our mind on the spirit it becomes unset to easily. Just like a naughty puppy, you say sit and he sits but as soon as you turn around he stops listening. No, no, sit! You have to tell your mind to stop! Focus! We train ourselves.

Second Corinthians 11, verses 2 and 3 say, “For I am jealous over you with a jealousy of God; for I betrothed you to one husband to present you as a pure virgin to Christ. But I fear lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your thoughts would be corrupted from the simplicity and the purity toward Christ.” Do you see? Satan’s strategy has not changed. From his temptation of Eve and Adam, how did Satan get to where he caused the fall, he came through her thoughts. We need our thoughts to be recovered to the simplicity and purity toward Christ. This is by returning; we just return. Don’t repent for what Satan did, just return.