

The Power of the Word

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 09 June 2019

Preacher: Don Rhymer

[0 : 00] Do you wonder what the Lord is saying to you? Do you struggle with the direction that He has for your life?

What is God's will? How do I know it? How do I know what the Lord's want me to do? Are you waiting to hear a special voice from the Lord?

I know we just sang a song that said, Word of God, speak. Do you have questions about our world? About society? About disasters and nature?

And where are we in eternity? And is this world coming to an end at times when we see wars and rumors of wars or hurricanes and tornadoes?

Do you struggle with the supposed evil that is everywhere? Are these truly questions that plague us? Or do we deep down know exactly what the Lord wants us to do?

[1 : 08] What exactly His Word says? And we just need to follow in obedience and faith. We have before us this summer an opportunity to study a most well-known book.

It's a privilege to be able to study this with you. Providentially, Bill and Delinda, of course, are on some much, much needed extended getaway. We are really, really thankful that they can have that time.

Pray for them. Pray that the kidney stone, and that was the ticking time bomb, by the way, that James was talking about, that stays at bay and he can be refreshed.

That it's not a thorn in his flesh that plagues him like Paul, but just that they can have recoupment and true refreshment.

I have also not had an opportunity to go through an expository series, so we're going through Jonah. As I mentioned, Jonah is very widely known, but I don't think it's deeply known.

[2 : 11] We know Jonah a lot from Sunday school flannel boards and fun pictures of whales. And we also might know it even more recently from things like VeggieTale movies and certain songs that accompany it as kids.

But there are many aspects of the book that I feel are overlooked, especially the ending and Jonah's own character himself, which is really, our book is a story of the character of our God and what he is doing, and the character of Jonah and what he is doing, and this back and forth.

It's just, it's incredibly dynamic. We also have buried in our book, not too buried because Jesus points it out, signs, signs that Christ specifically mentions.

One being the only sign that will be given is the sign of Jonah. So we have Christ in Jonah. We have eight Sundays together.

We will do four chapters in eight Sundays. That evenly breaks as two Sundays a chapter, but because chapter one is longer, and chapter two is a very concise, if you will, prayer from the bottom of the depths of the sea, we're going to do that one in one Sunday.

[3 : 39] We're going to take three Sundays in June to go through chapter one, because there's a lot here. We also need a Sunday to do some background, which is why today I'm doing just two verses to get us started with an extended background of Jonah.

We will find, I pray, that this book has much to tell us. It has much to tell us about obedience. It has much to tell us about bias in our own hearts.

It has much to tell us about genuine love versus hypocrisy. It tells us a lot about the word and the power of the word, which is what our subject is today.

And I think the sign that Jesus points out goes much, much deeper. I think there's layers to that sign. We see Jonah being called to preach to a Gentile nation and the judgment of Nineveh.

If they repented, what does that look like for the Jews in Jesus' time? There's so much that is in Jonah for us today. There are also things that we will not expect.

[4 : 44] There's drama. There's excitement. There's times when we think there would be rejoicing and relief, and there's not. And there's times that we would expect something to be watertight and tidy when the word of God comes to a man and he takes it to a people and it's all wrapped up nice and neat, and it's not.

And in some ways, that's refreshing for us when we see the word of God actually show us a lot of real life and real struggle. So I'm excited about doing this.

I hope it's always been a book. It's been a book, actually, that Don and I both have loved together over the course of our marriage and relationship. As we get into Jonah, I want to divide our time into two main points.

As I mentioned, we're going to do, we have a need for context and background. We're going to do that first, and we're going to exposit some of the verse as we do that background, because some of that is right before us in this introduction, these first two verses.

Who are the Ninevites? What is Israel at the time? Who is Jonah? Jonah. Secondly, we will look at really the main subject of our verse, our verses, and that is the word of the Lord, the power of the word of the Lord.

[6 : 03] So let's get into it. The background, the prophet, the times, the land, what do we have? We did a little bit of this already this morning with the inductive study, so hold on to your hats.

Here we go. Who is Jonah? We know most about Jonah from this book. In many ways, we only have four chapters for Jonah.

We have 66 chapters in Isaiah, the longest prophetic book, which not only is, I'm glad that by providence, Rick chose that this morning before the prayer.

He's the prophet of the southern kingdom at the same time. Jonah is the prophet to the northern kingdom. So it's really interesting. But we actually know more about Jonah in four chapters than we do about Isaiah in 66, about the person, the man, you might say.

So he is a prophet. He is a prophet to the northern kingdom of Israel. He is from the Galilean city of Gath-Hefer. How do we know that?

[7 : 08] Well, we know that because this Jonah, son of Amittai, is the exact same phrase that we find in a sister passage, you might say, that chronicles our events, or at least the time period, in 2 Kings 14, verses 23 to 27.

You can turn there, but it's also in your handout. I left that there because that gives us a lot of information, as we study this morning before the service, that frames for us this time period.

2 Kings 14, 23 to 27. In the 15th year of Amaziah, son of Joash, king of Judah, Jeroboam, the son of Joash, king of Israel, began to reign in Samaria.

He reigned 41 years, and he did what was evil in the sight of the Lord. He did not depart from all the sins of Jeroboam, son of Nebat, which he made Israel to sin.

He restored the border of Israel from Lebe-Homath, as far as the Sea of Ereba, according to the word of the Lord, the God of Israel, which he spoke by his servant, Jonah, the son of Amittai, the prophet, who was from Gath-Hefer.

[8 : 30] For the Lord saw that the affliction of Israel was very bitter. There was none left, bond or free. There was none to help Israel. But the Lord had not said that he would blot out the name of Israel from under heaven.

So he saved them by the hand of Jeroboam, son of Joash. Verse 25 gives us Jonah's job, heritage, and home.

His job is clear. He is a prophet. We know from this 2 Kings passage and the call that our text here, that this is the same Jonah.

And we will unpack a little bit more of the role of a prophet here soon. But that was his job. He was the Lord's herald to that day and age in Israel.

His heritage is sparse but consistent. He is the son of Amittai, spoken of here in our text and in 2 Kings, confirming it is the same man. But we know nothing of Amittai.

[9 : 38] All we can speculate is from his home, which is the third part, which is Gath-Hefer, which is in Samaria in the north, in the region of Galilee. Specifically, we know that that's in the region of Zebulun.

If you remember, we have 12 tribes total, sons of Jacob. And 10 tribes are in the north. That is the divided kingdom, Israel, and that's where we are at the time.

Zebulun was one of those tribes. We know that from Naphtali and Zebulun, we have the coming of Christ from that region in Galilee. So we know where Gath-Hefer is.

We know it's the region of Samaria and Israel, the northern kingdom. And so we would know Amittai then would probably be the heritage from possibly Zebulun.

That's it. That's all we know. But that's really all we need to know. The other thing I want to point out about Jonah, before we get into his character and as he goes forth as we study the book, is we believe that he is the natural author.

[10 : 44] Most believe he's the natural author because he is the only one that would have known all of the details of this from beginning to end, especially the end of the book.

The sailors that were with him possibly could have helped him through the first part of the book, helped narrate and then, you know, write the book. But we do not believe that that's what happened.

We believe that Jonah wrote this book. That's important. We'll get into that as we study it. Okay, so we have Jonah. Let's get into Israel. Our second king's account gives us the time and political situation, primarily the king to whom the Lord sent Jonah.

It's Jeroboam II. As I mentioned, we are in the time of a divided kingdom. In our inductive study, I have a handout of we have the unified kingdom under Saul, David, and Solomon, and then boom.

We have Jeroboam I in the north, and we have Rehoboam in the south in Judah. And we have a divided kingdom with different kings and different prophets, each of which we have books of, most of those prophets that make up the balance of our Old Testament.

[11 : 57] So that's where we are. We have Jeroboam I in 930 BC becomes the first king of the north, the king of Samaria or Israel.

About 875, the seventh king in that line was Ahab. We know a lot about Ahab from Elijah and kings, the books of kings. Queen Jezebel, we know a lot that happened in that time.

You skip down, 841 BC, we have Elijah again, and he's asked to lay hands on another one, which is Elisha.

So we have a few of those prophets in the north, and this becomes the next set. Jonah and Amos are actually considered contemporaries. Both were prophets in the time of Jeroboam II.

So 793 BC is when we believe Jeroboam II becomes king. He's the 12th king in the northern region. We don't have a prophet for every king, and we don't have a story everywhere, but we do have a lot here.

[13 : 03] As I mentioned, Isaiah is considered, was believed to be the prophet at the same time in the south, in Judah.

Our king's passage makes it clear that politically Israel's border and security are relatively stable at the time of Jonah.

While he, Jeroboam I, did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, and then as a result Israel had sin needing to repent of, it turns out we have a border of Israel that is secure.

Our passage tells us that. Now, interestingly enough, our next, our last group that we need to have some background on is the Ninevites or the Assyrians. If Israel's border, which borders on the north the Assyrians, and Israel's border is secure, then we look at Assyria and say that their border was considered not secure.

Because Israel would have restored the border of the original, probably, boundary set apart in Joshua for the tribes. So, it's a paradox, isn't it?

[14 : 21] Where we see there's sin in the king, there's sin in the land of Israel, but their border is secure. And our book, our book is focused on the Gentile nation to the north and preaching to that nation.

So, keep that in the background, in your context. Nineveh. Nineveh. What about Nineveh? Well, Nineveh is known to have been, as even from our own passage, we know two things about Nineveh, right from our passage.

One, it was a great city. Great can be considered both important and large in size. Both of those, the Hebrew can be interpreted in those ways.

It's used great a lot. Great city is used quite a bit. We also know that it's characterized by evil. So, let's talk a little bit about Assyria in the day and what we know from both biblical as well as archaeological history.

Nineveh would have been considered a capital city. They didn't have capitals like we would have it, like Washington, D.C. is the capital of our country in that type of designation.

[15 : 41] But, there would have been cities that the kings would have resided in that were the greatest cities, that had the largest fortifications, that would have been considered the center of commerce, trade, politics, where the palaces were.

So, it was one of those, at a minimum. We also know that it was leading or important. Not only was it important from the standpoint of where the king was, but it would have been considered a city that everybody would know that that is a city that represents Assyria.

We find out later in our text in chapter 3, verse 3, that it took three days from Jonah to walk from one side of a wall within a border to the other border of the city.

So, it was great in size as well. In fact, we know archaeologically, it was at least seven and a half miles around. It sits under the modern-day Mosul of Iraq.

And we know that there were towers that were hundreds of feet high. They had thousands of these towers around the border. And the wall was at least 100 feet high and could have three chariots run side by side across the top of this wall.

[16 : 58] So, that gives you an idea of what this city was. Now, how was it evil? We know in 722 B.C., so 30 to 40 years possibly after the writing of Jonah, that Assyria sacked and took captive the northern kingdom.

There were border skirmishes throughout the history of Israel and Assyria on that northern border. They would have known the character of Nineveh and the Assyrians.

And what is known is that they were brutal. They tortured their enemies. They did many things with bodies. And it's not important to paint all the pictures for this audience today.

But just know that it was a brutal nation. And they did not spare any brutality to women and children, not just the enemies, the warriors themselves.

We also know a lot about Nineveh at this time. We know because our universe is one giant clock that there was an eclipse that happened in Assyria about the middle 8th century, middle 700s B.C.

[18 : 30] that would have gone right over a total solar eclipse. There also is writings that said there were earthquakes and there was a famine. Evil, the Hebrew word for evil, can also be translated distress and calamity.

I bring that up not because, you know, it's not often translated that in our text. I think the evil was great and the evil and the wickedness that we know of that God was against is clear and characterizes Assyria.

However, it is important to note that it could have been believed that if Israel's borders are secure, it meant Assyria's borders were not. They had famine, they had eclipses, and they had an earthquake.

They were a polytheistic pagan nation. If you are a polytheistic pagan nation and you are going through natural disasters or acts of God, you are in distress.

You pair that with the border situation and we have a people that would have known we're in trouble. We, I believe, have an open nerve of the people of Nineveh and the Assyrians that says, I have to cry out to something that I have never cried out to before.

[19 : 56] Now, we do not know that the Ninevites would have prayed to this God for sure. But the frame is there for that picture to walk into.

Keep that in mind as we go through our journey of the Ninevites. Finally, to close the background, I want to highlight what kind of text we have.

We have in the Old Testament many types of texts. We have the Pentateuch is a very legal. It's to give the law. It's to give accounts, but it's to give a law.

We have poetic texts like Psalms. We have wisdom texts, Ecclesiastes and Proverbs. And then there are the prophetic books.

The tall, like Daniel is an incredible prophetic book. There is a historical narrative there, but there's prophecy, right? We have a didactic, prophetic, historical narrative.

[20 : 57] Historical narrative means we're talking about events that happened. It was long believed, as we discussed this morning, that this was a didactic allegory, but not necessarily a historical narrative.

Why? Because it's hard to find a water-bound creature that could swallow a man whole. That's why. The whale shark is discussed as being the largest, it is the largest actual fish, but their throat is about as big as this, right, at the back of their mouth.

They eat small water creatures, right? So for a long time, many thought it was just an allegorical kind of parable to teach us a lesson, but not necessarily a historical narrative.

Well, with what we know of Nineveh, with what we know of the day and time, and with what we know of our God, in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Well, that doesn't happen by anything we can point to naturally either.

The sea being parted isn't anything that can happen. We have a God that does great things, and so we can see that he will do a great thing with a fish if he wants to, and he can open up a throat that maybe wasn't there.

[22 : 23] Either way, we consider it, most consider it a historical narrative. Didactic is just a word that means it's to teach us something. There is so much to teach us in Jonah.

It is also a beautifully written, very elegant parallels. The word of the Lord came to Jonah, chapter 1, verse 1.

Chapter 3, verse 1. The word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time. It's a beautiful book. With all this as our backdrop, let's focus on that word of the Lord.

That is the subject of our discussion today. I want us to look at the eternal power and primacy of the word of God.

As we do this, I want to break the balance of our time now into three main topics. How the word comes, why the word comes, and how we are to use or see the word.

[23 : 37] Our text begins with Jonah 1.1. Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah, son of Amittai, saying...

This phrase, the word of the Lord came to, appears 112 times in the Old Testament. It is the primary way the patriarchs, the prophets, received the word that they were to use and take forth.

Our patriarchs of Genesis... You know, this starts all the way back with Adam. Be fruitful and multiply.

Genesis 1.28. Or, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat. Genesis 2.17. Noah's first words to him were, I have determined to make an end of all flesh.

Genesis 6.13. Abraham, go from your country. These are hard commands. Genesis 12.1.

[24 : 44] Jacob actually had a dream. Joseph, his son, had dreams. That's how the Lord spoke to them.

It is interesting that these patriarchs, the word came to them for them primarily to do something or not do something. To go or to speak or to do.

But the speaking was very minimal. There was very little that even Abraham, who had a run-in with Sodom and Gomorrah.

But he wasn't called to preach to Sodom and Gomorrah. He actually just pleaded for Sodom and Gomorrah. It's not until we get to Moses and the judges, but primarily Moses, and then you skip to the time of the kings, where the word of the Lord came to a man to speak to people.

And it was to speak to a king or a people through a king to call them back to a God that they had wandered from. That is the primary purpose of what the word of the Lord came to these men for.

[25 : 55] Moses, do not come near. Take off your sandals or your feet. It started with Moses with just, I'm holy and you're not. And you need to get that message first.

Samuel was the prophet to Saul and David. And Samuel was the one that had to tell Saul, what are you doing? You are not a priest. Your kingdom has been taken from you.

Nathan was the one that called out to David and said, you are that man stealing the one sheep, having an entire kingdom of a flock with the sin of Uriah and Bathsheba.

But we get to the prophets and the prophets, the historical, what we consider the prophets are major and minor prophets. That is the way the word of the Lord came to the people.

So as we look at how the word of the Lord comes, the prophets became the vessel, the mouthpiece to get the word of the Lord to a king and or people to bring them back to the Lord.

[26 : 58] They had strayed and you need to come back. We have the scriptures. As the time marched through the Old Testament, we started to get scrolls.

By the end of the Old Testament, we have many scrolls that Jesus himself used and the rabbis were even using in the synagogues. But there were not many of them. It wasn't until 250 AD that we had what we consider a closed canon.

Canon meaning rule, that this is our rule. This is our standard. It is complete. It is closed. And this is our revelation. That is our word.

This is the word that you might say takes the prophets and all that was spoken to the prophets and brings their stories plus so much more. And it is our word that we have in our laps.

And it is because of the Tyndales and the Wycliffs. The Luthers that said it shouldn't just be in the Vulgate that only you, the priest, can understand.

[28 : 05] Or Latin. It needs to be in the hands of the people. Translated. That everybody can have. And people died making sure that that occurred.

That the word of the Lord was brought to the people. Finally, we have Christ. John 1.1.

Well known. In the beginning was the word. And the word was with God. And the word was God. Verse 14. It continues.

And the word became flesh and dwelt among us. You put these two verses together. Verses 1 and 14. And here's what you have.

You have a doctrine that says Christ is eternal. The eternal and existing before creation message for people.

[29 : 03] For all people. He is the centerpiece of all scripture. He is, as Hebrews tells us, long ago, at many times, in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets.

But in these last days, he has spoken to us by his son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the world. That is how he has spoken to us.

All scripture has to be viewed in light of Christ. All scripture has to be viewed in light of his message. His being sent to us as the final, the embodiment of the revelation.

1 Peter 1, 8-12. Though you have seen him not, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him.

And rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory. Obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

[30 : 14] This is a New Testament preacher here. Concerning this salvation, watch this. The prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours, searched and inquired carefully.

Inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them, in them in the Old Testament, the prophets, was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories.

It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves, but you, me, us. In the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit, sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look.

Saints and angels sing is what we sung today. They marvel. They marvel that we have a God that sent his Son, condescended, transcended time through his Spirit to reveal to the prophets who were bringing the word to the people, being recorded to say, this was going to be the final word.

They knew and they were praying for us. That's an amazing, that's a unifying section of Scripture in 1 Peter 1. So, we have how the word comes.

[31 : 47] It has come in prophets. It has come to be written down. It has come embodied in the Son. But why? What's the purpose? What is the reason that the Lord would condescend to speak to this fallen, miserable creation?

What is he doing that for? Jonah 1, 1 through 2. Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah, son of Amittai, saying, Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it, for their evil has come up before me.

The why of our text is answered at the end of this verse. The evil has come up before me. As I mentioned, the primary purpose of a prophet is to bring God's word to a people that had wandered away from that God.

In our case, it is to a people that maybe never even knew that God, but have heard about it, and may be experiencing a calamity, distress, and realizing they're also evil to the core.

It could be all of that wrapped up in one. We know why Scripture is given in the New Testament. 2 Timothy 3.16 gives us four primary reasons.

[33 : 15] All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and training in righteousness. Teaching, yes.

How did the world come into being? In the beginning. That's teaching. What duty has God required of man? Micah.

Right? He has shown thee, O man, what is good and what is required of thee, that you are to do justly, have mercy, and walk humbly with thy God.

We are taught by the word of God. We are taught truths of how Nineveh was what it was, and what their situation was.

What is the remedy that God has for man? What is the nature of the fall? All of these are answered by our word. It is to teach us. It is to bring us the truth. This is the God of Isaac.

[34 : 15] This is the God of Abraham. This is the God of Jacob. This is the God of so-and-so. It's to teach you who this God is. The fourth one is training in righteousness.

But that comes after reproof and correction. So here's the two-fold reproof and correction. You might say reproof and correction are the legs on which repentance stands on.

Repentance is a military word. It means about face. The way you're going isn't right. That's reproof. And correction is you need to go the other way.

That's correction. The nature of true repentance is understanding you're wrong and knowing where to go to fix it and knowing the way to go.

Training in righteousness is, you might say, our ongoing professional development. Right? We need to become image bearers. We are image bearers of Christ, and we need to become citizens of heaven, and this is how it looks.

[35 : 17] And this is what, even as a fallen people, what we need to know to keep going and keep after it. We live in an interesting situation. We have been given judicial justification that says we are redeemed, we are adopted, we are family of God, we are saved, we are all of that.

But you don't experience it in full yet. And you need something to keep you paced on that path to where you can see your heavenly Father in heaven saying, behold, you are my God.

I see you face to face. My flesh can fall away now. I can die. I have died. That training in righteousness happens through the word of God.

But the correction and reproof, the reproof and correction, is needed to restrain evil in our lives. The word of the Lord came to Nineveh because of the evil of Nineveh.

The only solution for evil, the only true solution for evil and wickedness that is in our own hearts still remaining, by the way, is the word of the Lord.

[36 : 34] That is the only antidote that will work. It is not self-help. It is not be yourself. It is not identify with whatever you think you are and find that source and just be that.

That is not going to solve your ills. We are fallen. We have remaining flesh. We have sin. It is not, you know, your king is a red king and you just need a blue king and everything is going to be just fine.

You just need to make sure you demand that blue king or vice versa. That is not what Jonah was called to go tell Nineveh to do. It wasn't for political reasons. It wasn't for social reasons.

It wasn't for, the purpose was to restrain evil, to correct evil, to identify the evil and turn their hearts to a God.

Jonah knew that. We're going to get into Jonah's response to that next week. That's the running from the Lord that we'll get to. But the purpose was clear. The commission was clear.

[37 : 42] Jonah knew the commission. Jonah knew the power of the Lord. Jonah knew that under his time, as he was the prophet to Jeroboam, that the borders were expanded and secured.

Israel was in a better place. Our text in Kings says, the sun did not go down on Israel and the Lord did not want to see them destroyed.

He wanted to see them saved. So Jonah was the prophet that brought the word of the Lord. And that's what prophets were primarily called to do. Go to the people of Israel and that land of the king and help them be restored to the Lord.

Curb their evil and their sin. We have a call. Jonah has a call here to a different land, to curb their evil.

And he knew it. He knew the power of the word of God because he's seen it, he has spoken it, and he has seen it done. We know by the end of Jonah in chapter 4, he tells the Lord that.

[38 : 48] I knew you would save them. I knew what the power of your word would do. I know what evil is. Evil melts if the Lord wants it to under the preaching of the word of God.

Okay. How must we use it? Practically. What is it for us? The word has come.

We have the word. We have our text before us. The word of the Lord came to Jonah. We know it's to curb evil. What does it do for us? And how can we appropriate it? So what I'm going to do is I'm going to give five ways the word is used and should be used in our lives.

And three views that we should have of the word. Perspectives. Okay. Five ways. Three views. Eight.

A list of eight with the scriptural references. Let's just go through these. Okay. One. We're to hear the word. Romans 10.17. We are to be under the preached word.

[39 : 56] I'll start in verse 13 of Romans 10. For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed?

And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent?

As it is written, how beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news, but they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, the Lord, the Lord who has believed what he has heard from us.

So faith comes by hearing and hearing through the word of Christ. We must be under the preached word. We must hear the word. Two.

The second way we must read the word. Revelation 133. Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy.

[40 : 55] We know that the word is now in written form. As I mentioned, in God's providence, he did not send those missionaries and martyrs for naught. He did not have the Gutenberg press invented for naught.

His providence is amazing. We are to read the word. We are not just to read the word, but way three is study the word. Acts 17, 11.

You know Acts 17. It's the Berean church. And you know this passage. Now these Jews, verse 11, were more noble than those in Thessalonica. They received the word with all eagerness, examining the scriptures daily to see if these things were so.

Not only were they reading and hearing, but they were studying. So what they heard to keep people like me accountable, to make sure, is this right? Is he preaching the canon of scripture right?

It wasn't just to listen to the priest and just take from him whatever he said, and you didn't have the word there to study and make sure it was right. It's why the congregational aspect of our church is critical, and all churches is critical.

[42 : 07] They were Berean Christians. We must study the word. That's the third way. Fourth is we should memorize the word. Psalm 119. Some of you have been studying this with Bill.

Verse 11. I have stored up your word in my heart that I may not sin against you. The only way to store it up in your heart is to memorize it.

You read it aloud. You read it aloud. You read it aloud. You read it aloud without reading it, and all of a sudden you're memorizing it. The cadence, when you do it aloud, by the way, it happens. Your mind remembers the cadence and the pattern of the words.

Do it. Fifth, the fifth way is to meditate on the word, and this can be done after all of the previous four or during the previous four. Psalm 1, 1 to 2.

Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers, but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night.

[43 : 13] So, how do you meditate? Well, my final three sub points are the views that we're to have. I think these views help us as we meditate.

The first view is this. We understand that the abiding word is a test of discipleship by Christ himself. John 8, 31 says, Jesus said to his Jews who had believed in him, if you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples.

They might have had a mental assent, but did they stay fixed on his word? We have to have the view that the word of Christ is one of the tests to say, do you love the Lord?

If you do, you love his word, and you abide in it. The second view, know that the Christian has great joy in the word of God. That same passage in Psalm 1 says, he delights in the law of the Lord.

Many of you have been studying, as I mentioned, this longest chapter in the Bible, chapter 119 of Psalms.

[44 : 27] And every verse calls to the glory of the word of the Lord, and what a refuge it is for the psalmist. The third view is we see the word of God as living and active in your life.

Hebrews 4, 12. Let us therefore strive to enter that rest. I'm starting in verse 11. So that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience. For the word of the Lord is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

That's powerful. If you meditate with those three perspectives, as you are reading and studying and hearing, I think we'll find that as the spirit accompanies that word, we know what we have to do.

The word is active and cutting into our soul and showing us what we have to do. We don't need a further revelation. We don't need something else to come.

We have the spirit that points the word right where it needs to in our own hearts. MacArthur says God's word is the only tool adequate for radical surgery on the human soul.

[45 : 51] He also says, I'm not trying to say the spirit doesn't give us specific guidance, but we don't need anything else than what we already have.

The word of the Lord was clear to Jonah and it was to restrain evil. We have evil remaining in our souls, in our heart, or in our flesh, I should say. Our souls have been redeemed.

And we are fighting and struggling against that flesh. The word of the Lord is our bastion. It is our refuge. It is our lifeline in the midst of a weary and evil, wicked generation that is constantly pushing us from the left to the right.

Are you a lost people? Do you see the tumultuous, unstable world? As Isaiah said, What shall I cry?

All flesh is grass. All beauty is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades when the breath of the Lord blows on it. Surely the people are grass.

[47 : 19] The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever. It doesn't go away. When we get to heaven, it is still the word of the Lord.

It is still our training for righteousness. Trust the word. Obey the word. Have faith that the word is working in your life.

And we'll next week see what it looks like when we might not want to respond the right way. Let's pray. Gracious Heavenly Father, thank you for our time together.

Father, Lord, your word is beautiful. Your word cuts to the quick. Your word helps us see truths.

Even in a verse we've read thousands of times, you show us something new. Your mercies are new every morning. But Lord, it is by grace that you have given us your word.

[48 : 21] It is your love. It is to redeem. It is to help. Lord, it is an amazing grace that we have your word for us today.

We pray that we would listen. We would read. We would hear. We would memorize. We would study and meditate. Help us to have the perspective of your word that we should.

Lord, help us. Forgive us our sins. Lord, we know that you long to forgive. We know that the word can help us, Lord. Restrain the evil that remains in our flesh.

It can teach us how to be citizens of heaven. Would you do that for us today? In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Thank you.