

Hebrews

Dr. Charles "Buddy" Parrish
May 31, 2023



Hebrews 4:11-13

- We don't think of language and words as the ancients did, especially as the Jews did. Yet we *ought* to! In today's "Cancel Culture" environment, words which someone spoke 40 years ago can be brought back up to condemn them for breaking the world's current morality code. The ancient Jews better understood the longevity of words. To them, once a word was spoken, it took on a life of its own. Words had power and were never without effect.
- The preacher's point here is that God has spoken. The word of God has come to us and will not be ignored. Going back to his concerns that his generation not repeat the same mistakes as previous generations, we now have an advantage. Christ has come and both gave us God's Word and was its very living embodiment. Now we have both heard and seen the Word of God, which continues to be "living and active".
- The NY Times Bestseller List is a lie every time it is published, because at the top of the list of total book sales is the Bible, which is never listed. The Times says that the Bible is not included because it is in a "Special Category". Indeed it is. When has Caesar's "Commentaries on the Gallic Wars", or Plato's "Republic" ever cracked the Times Top 100? 2000-year-old books don't do that...except for one, the One that is "living and active".
- The Word of God is sharp and piercing and divides. Indeed, did not Jesus say so in Matthew 10:34-38? Here is the Truth. Either you accept that the Word became flesh and dwelt among us as the person of Jesus of Nazareth or you don't. Either you believe on Jesus as the Son of God whom God sent into the world that the world might be saved through Him or you don't. Either you follow Jesus and His Way to eternal life and live your life as He calls you to live it or you don't. So there are the Saved and the lost. There are the Living and the dead. The Word is sharp and cuts deep.

- “...piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit”. In our everyday language we tend to make soul and spirit into synonyms. To the 1st century Greeks the two were very different. “Soul” was *psuche*. This was life. Everything that had a physical life had psuche. Spirit was *pneuma*. Only people possessed pneuma. It is by pneuma that people think and reason and know that there is a God in Heaven. Any sociologist anywhere will admit that humans seems to hard wired to believe in God. There is not a tribe or a people on earth who do not have a concept of God. We are all created in His image and He breathed His pneuma, His breath and spirit, into us to give us life.

- The preacher here is saying that God’s Word comes to us so as to test both our day-to-day life and our spiritual life in communion with God. It cuts deep into our very life, into our “joints and marrow” and “is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart”. This is where Jesus is speaking is in the Sermon on the Mount when He says in Matthew 5:27-28 that when a man even looks at a woman with lust, his heart has shown its sinful intentions.

- Finally, the preacher makes the point that the Word of God is like a scalpel in the hands of The Great Physician. Nothing and no one escapes His sight. Literally, vs. 13 says we are naked before His eyes. We can hide nothing. We may wear our masks and our costumes to impress and fool other people, but when we stand before God all that is stripped away. We meet God the same way we came into the world.

- Further, the preachers says that it is here we meet the One “with whom we have to do”. That doesn’t read well because it is again one of those Greek words that doesn’t translate well. In Greek the word has three common meanings. One, it is the word used in wrestling where we are being held so that we cannot move. He has us and we cannot avoid what comes next. Two, it was the word used for dressing an animal. Everything on the outside is stripped off and the inside is opened up and exposed. Third, it was the word used to force a criminal in court to hold up his chin and look the judge in the eye. There is no escaping the Kingdom’s throne and face the eyes that can see every corner, even the darkest corners, of our life.