

Sermon to the Saints which are at Topeka, Kansas -- Sunday, April 26, 2015.

Good afternoon, beloved friends. We have heard some really good sermons the past few weeks, and in every one of them, we did a proverbial drive-by on the subject about which I will spend today's sermon examining; the word. We will begin the examination from the following Scriptural text:

"The Lord gave the word: great was the company of those that published it." (Psalm 68:11)

That word translated "***published***" is a primitive root word – not a derivative word that opens itself up to contextual interpretations. You just gotta love primitive root words, cuz they take you to the simplest form and intent of the language. It means, simply, "*to bear news, bear tidings, publish, preach, show forth*".

As in: "Hello you miserable, unrepentant, God-rejecting, self-and-filthy-sin-worshipping monster. We got something to show you and tell you. Good news! Good tidings! God hates idolaters! God hates adulterers! God hates murderers and abortion! God hates fags! God hates fag marriage! Ergo, God hates you and all your filthy institutions! Did you miss that? Read my sign again! Have a nice day." We're in that company referred to there – and **THAT** fact ought to make you very, very happy. By the time I'm finished here this afternoon, Lord willing, you will be that and a great deal more.

By some numbers, this word the Lord has given, we observe: Out of more than three quarters of a million words in the King James bible, 12,143 distinct English words are used. The word "word" is used 675 times. The phrase "word of the Lord" is found 255 times. The phrase "word of God" is only found 48 times. "Lord" and "spake" are joined in a verse 249 times, while "Lord" and "spoken" only 136 times. "God" and "spake" 61 times, while "God" and "spoken" 57.

The giving of His word has occurred differently in time, as Paul indicates in initiating his book to his Jewish brethren:

"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;" (Hebrews 1:1-2)

Use of the phraseology "by whom" in that context forces a brief look at these passages from the apostle Peter and from John the Beloved for a helpful morsel:

"For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. " (2 Peter 3:5-7)

and

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made."

(John 1:1-3)

So there is no doubt that, by whatever grammatical wizardry we would articulate it, Christ is the Word of which we speak in this sermon, properly understood. When we speak of this word in all its splendid form and import, we speak of our Captain, our Goel, our Friend, our Saviour, our All. So intimately associated is Christ with His word, that Christ is His word, as certainly as Christ is God and as John states it, ***"the Word was God."*** (John 1:1)

So the revealing of this blessed Word to the prophets of old, and to each of his elect precious in the earth, is none other than the revealing of Himself. The use of this blessed Word by the patriarchs, prophets, priests, kings, and apostles of old was none other than their use of God ... breathed. The proper grasping of this truth, time and again articulated in the written word, makes the weightier this subject matter to those who have gone before and to us.

Having been shown in the spirit what things should come to pass, prophets of ***"the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity"*** (Isaiah 57:15) these prophets of old thundered forth to those extant souls who opposed themselves by their daily assaults upon the Word and commandments, running to that error in their nature ***"whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."*** (2 Corinthians 4:4) And those prophets could do nothing less -- as we can do nothing less, for:

"The lion hath roared, who will not fear? the Lord GOD hath spoken, who can but prophesy?" (Amos 3:8)

More soberly, we who have evidence in our spirits that we are the children of God in this dispensation are given a different and more certain articulation of God's Word, as Peter has written:

"We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: " (2 Peter 1:19)

Further, so that we might have some understanding of how easily even those whom the King has sent forth to deliver His communiqués -- those titled ***"ambassadors of peace"*** (Isaiah 33:7) and ***"ambassadors for Christ"*** (2 Corinthians 5:20) -- might be inclined to alter the contents of their diplomatic pouches, we are given many examples where such a halting or resisting has occurred, and the response received by the King. Some few include:

Jonah, having had ***"the word of the LORD came unto"*** him (Jonah 1:1) rose up and fled ***"from the presence of the LORD,"*** (Jonah 1:3), and received an all expenses paid stay for three nights in the belly of a whale. Then, having capitulated and gone in to do that work for the King, he afterward again mixed in his personal views ... when the destruction he had promised, as God's ambassador to the Ninevites, was not realized, to wit:

" But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry. And he prayed unto the LORD, and said, I pray thee, O LORD, was not this my saying, when I was yet in my country? Therefore I fled before unto Tarshish: for I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest

thee of the evil. Therefore now, O LORD, take, I beseech thee, my life from me; for it is better for me to die than to live. Then said the LORD, Doest thou well to be angry?" (Jonah 4:1-4)

Elijah, having done many amazing works in the name of God, before Ahab and Jezebel, and having received the sentence of death from that wicked witch of the North, was fled (after a brief stay by the brook Cherith) into a cave of Mount Horeb. Twice, our God and King asks this tired, frightened man whose tenacity was renowned: ***"What doest thou here, Elijah?" (1 Kings 19:9, 13)*** Twice also, this friend of ours being pressed beyond measure utters words that were simply unrighteous:

"And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away." (1 Kings 19:10, 14)

These words, though quite understandable from a human perspective, in light of the battles this courageous prophet had undertaken, left out that the prerogative -- to determine who will have salvation and who will not; who will speak for the King of Glory and who will not -- is God's alone! We know what Christ said:

"And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out." (Luke 19:40)

and

"[F]or I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham." (Matthew 3:9)

While we have a non-delegable duty to ***"return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not" (Malachi 3:18)***, is a dangerous bit of work to offer up our *bona fides* and declare ourselves the sole people in the earth who can ***"have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." (2 Corinthians 4:7)***

Jeremiah, our sweet friend from Anathoth, was squeezed through the oppression of the rulers in Judah and came to an hour when he became exasperated. In that state, he quarreled with God for the providential state he found himself:

"Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts. I sat not in the assembly of the mockers, nor rejoiced; I sat alone because of thy hand: for thou hast filled me with indignation. Why is my pain perpetual, and my wound incurable, which refuseth to be healed? wilt thou be altogether unto me as a liar, and as waters that fail?" (Jeremiah 15:16-18)

You told me that I was going to be protected from all this! You told me that if I spoke things to these nasty, rebellious monsters that stuff would happen and I would not have to feel like such an idiot! Look at these people mocking me and rejoicing that I'm suffering like this -- all because I told them what you told me to tell them! You said ***"great was the company of those that published" (Psalm 68:11)***, but I'm standing around here looking for all the world like a man with dementia ... or worse, a liar!

In His response, our gracious God provides us all with two clear messages regarding how we handle this precious Word -- Himself -- that He has given: (1) keep your human corruption out of it, and (2) there is no compromising with the enemies of the cross:

"Therefore thus saith the LORD, If thou return [i.e., repent of your fit-throwing], then will I bring thee again, and thou shalt stand before me: and if thou take forth the precious [i.e., God's pure word] from the vile [i.e., mankind's corrupt nature], thou shalt be as my mouth: let them return unto thee; but return not thou unto them. " (Jeremiah 15:19)

These beloved forerunners in this faith -- as with all those heroes identified in Hebrews 11 -- were held accountable for how they handled this precious word. It was not acceptable, just because they received the blessing in their mother tongues so that there would be no need of confusion, that they relegate the word of God to just some more chatter among men, as Paul wrote to our friend Timothy:

"If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself." (1 Timothy 6:3-5)

Further, having come through this dispensation we now occupy and having gone into that dispensation regarding which John the Revelator and others were given visions, we find the whole of the canon being closed with the most certain warning about how we deal with this blessed Word of God:

"For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." (Revelation 22:18-19)

Sobering. We have received God, our Elector. We have received Christ, our Redeemer. We have received that about which the beloved Psalmist wrote:

"I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name." (Psalms 138:2)

Having examined this blessed Word in its sanctified glory as being the very expression of God, Christ, and the Spirit, I want to consider it more fully in the application of it as the single offensive weapon of our warfare. Charles covered the armor of God, the donning of which is directed in the epistle to the Ephesians:

"Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:" (Ephesians 6:14-17)

Now, this passage demonstrates that the same word, about which we speak, serves for defensive armor as well. **"Truth"** is only identified in His Word, and the **"gospel of peace"** is another name for the blessed doctrines contained in His word. Our discussion, however, will focus on the use of this word as a weapon.

Since this blessed body of the word is identified as **"word of God" (Hebrews 6:5)**, **"the words of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Timothy 6:3)**, and **"sword of the Spirit" (Ephesians 6:17)**, it is clear that the Trinity agrees in this form, and is most intimately engaged in the use of this weapon. Further, as there is a synergy among these three, there is likewise between the Trinity and the elect of God.

"There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." (Ephesians 4:4-6)

So close is this relationship, that when Jeremiah speaks of the conflict that the LORD has with Babylon, he in one place says:

"The LORD hath opened his armoury, and hath brought forth the weapons of his indignation:" (Jeremiah 50:25)

and a chapter later, discussing this same subject, God declares through him:

"Thou art my battle axe and weapons of war: for with thee will I break in pieces the nations, and with thee will I destroy kingdoms;" (51:20)

This is indeed the posture of the servants of God. Here Jeremiah is not describing the use by God's servants of battle axes and weapons of war -- though we know that we have been commanded to **"take ... the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:"** (Ephesians 6:17). Here we are characterized as the very weapon itself, intimating the closeness with which we hold this weapon of our warfare, like is said of Eleazar -- one of David's mighty men:

"He arose, and smote the Philistines until his hand was weary, and his hand clave unto the sword: and the LORD wrought a great victory that day;" (2 Samuel 23:10)

Many years ago, I spent some bit of time considering the words of Solomon, in his Song. There I examined and provided some exposition about these words:

"Behold his bed, which is Solomon's; threescore valiant men are about it, of the valiant of Israel. They all hold swords, being expert in war: every man hath his sword upon his thigh because of fear in the night." (Song of Solomon 4:7-8)

In this place where Christ has peaceful repose with his Bride, the picture of the valiant men -- you find those who live in this world who are filled with the zeal of God, and according to knowledge -- each holding this **"the sword of the Spirit"** in his hand ready to deal with those who would drag us into darkness and death. It is clear by these, and many other, passages that we have an active military engagement required of us. As a number of our elders have exhorted in the past few weeks -- it will not do for us to maintain a purely defensive posture. We are at war, and we know we have a world of enemies energized by a seething-mad rebel whose only intent

is to ratchet up this conflict, engage more foot soldiers (both demonic and human), and force the tender, peace-loving servants of God to the edge of exhaustion and fear. The conflict I discussed at some length in considering the posture of the church and Satan as described in Revelation chapter 12.

We know also that the scriptures plainly teach us two additional realities related to this conflict and -- I think -- will be helpful in the more clarifying of this weapon that we have; and are.

"For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;" (2 Corinthians 10:3-5)

and

"For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. " (Hebrews 4:12)

I do not believe there is any legitimate basis for any servant of God in this dispensation to conclude it is appropriate to engage in any ***"war after the flesh"***. That is, making use of carnal weaponry or physical aggression in our engagement in this spiritual warfare. We have good Bible that instructs us otherwise:

"Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." (Matthew 26:52)

and

"He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints." (Revelation 13:10)

While we are in this warfare, which we know will reach an intensity that ***"except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved"*** (Mark 13:20), we are instructed to possess our souls in patience (Luke 21:19). There is no time coming, from a scriptural perspective, when the little peace-loving souls of God in the earth will get to make use of carnal weaponry as part of this very real conflict that will contain physical violence toward us!

However, there is an understanding to be had of this weapon we are given -- that we are instructed is an integral part of the tactical equipment we are to make expert use of -- that is very physical and, I submit, very deadly to our enemies. That is to say, when we examine the use of this weapon in historical and eschatological scripture, we see it for the power that it has in the physical realm -- among the inhabitants of the earth.

And, our mortal and eternal enemy knows the power of this sword. Consider the import of this passage:

"Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place. For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, ... in them that perish: To the one we are the savour of death unto death; ... And who is sufficient for these things? For we are not as

many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ." (2 Corinthians 2:14-17)

In this passage we have the sincere preaching of Christ, without corrupting it with any human notions, and the effects of it are to cause the reprobate to smell their own rotting carcasses, as though they are already dead! Even while these who are damned know that we are peaceful persons, when we preach they are pierced deep to the center of all their thoughts and intents, and instantly know they are dead men! So certainly do they feel and smell death, they just as instantly ***"are for war."*** (Psalms 120:7)

But, you say, that is still only on a spiritual level they feel that death ... though they certainly are for war on a physical level. So, while I've shown how powerful this sword we carry is on the hearts and spirits of men, where is there any evidence of it bringing carnal, physical death and destruction?

It appears from scripture that there have been times -- cataclysmic times perhaps -- when the servants of God were sent forth to preach and prophecy to their generation, and when they spoke it brought forth the power of God's Word in the physical death of His enemies -- without the use of any physical weaponry. Here are some examples:

"Then the king sent unto him a captain of fifty with his fifty. And he went up to him: and, behold, he sat on the top of an hill. And he spake unto him, Thou man of God, the king hath said, Come down. And Elijah answered and said to the captain of fifty, If I be a man of God, then let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty. And there came down fire from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty. "(2 Kings 1:9-10)

Clearly, it was not with any human weaponry or carnal warfare this sweet servant of God wrought this work, but with only the power of God's Word -- in this instance with fire. When this prophet was taken up in the whirlwind, his successor was met with a particularly intense event of the wicked children of his generation mocking his ministry -- and necessarily God's prerogatives, and we know what happened.

"And he turned back, and looked on them, and cursed them in the name of the LORD. And there came forth two she bears out of the wood, and tare forty and two children of them." (2 Kings 2:24)

This capacity to use the Word of God -- this sword we are given the happy duty to wield -- to interfere with the natural, carnal world around God's servants in the earth was likewise given to the apostles who ushered in the dispensation of the Gentile church. We see the words of Christ to them, when they were in danger of losing focus on where the real cause of rejoicing resided:

"And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name. And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven." (Luke 10:17-20)

And, that power included what was displayed in the instantaneous deaths of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-10). All these things were done through the Word of God, which is this same sword we are to wield.

But I'm not finished. Three additional considerations need to be put forth in support of the proposition that while we are not physically militant -- that is we do not seek or use the weaponry of this generation to bring anything to pass, and in fact loathe to do so -- the weaponry we have supernaturally been equipped with does and will unmistakably influence great matters of life and death in the earth, as it relates to the movements of providence to the day when Christ will return and take His kingdom.

First, let me remind the good hearts here of Ezekiel's vision on the banks of the river Chebar. After introducing the four living creatures -- whose descriptions can only be those of Revelation who represent the servants of God engaged in the wars of the Lord -- he then describes another phenomenon:

"Now as I beheld the living creatures, behold one wheel upon the earth by the living creatures, with his four faces. The appearance of the wheels and their work was like unto the color of a beryl: and they four had one likeness: and their appearance and their work was as it were a wheel in the middle of a wheel. When they went, they went upon their four sides: and they turned not when they went. As for their rings, they were so high that they were dreadful; and their rings were full of eyes round about them four. And when the living creatures went, the wheels went by them: and when the living creatures were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up. Whithersoever the spirit was to go, they went, thither was their spirit to go; and the wheels were lifted up over against them: for the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels." (Ezekiel 1:15-20)

The wheels are providence -- the perpetual motion of human events the world over, day in and day out. The living creatures are watching them (i.e., ***"full of eyes round about them four"***), and all of the workings of that providence are driven from the ***"the spirit of the living creature"***. There is no great mystery here, my friends. When the church of the Lord Jesus Christ speaks to the events in providence -- those things happening in the earth, and particularly in the days about which Ezekiel was having this vision -- those things spoken are binding. So, when God Almighty vindicates His promises through providence -- that is our sword being put into use. We pray that God's will be done in earth, and we mean that will that includes His right of possession and disposition of all the creation! We mean His fulfillment of His promise to avenge our blood on those who inhabit the earth! We warn the living that all of these things will come -- and then as though we had written the script, our ***"sword of the spirit"*** moves through providence and executes that judgment. We did not have to personally move the tectonic plates in Nepal for that newest world horror to be every bit the work of our spiritual warfare!

Second, as we clearly see written about the days just leading up to the return of Christ in Revelation:

"And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth. And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed. These have power to shut heaven,

that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will." (Revelation 11:3-6)

This power to slaughter "***any man [who] will hurt them***" is operationally the same as what occurred with the two captains and their fifties in the days of Elijah ... that is, these two witnesses will by speaking the Word of God, bring instantaneous death by fire. The words are spoken out of their mouths, and the execution is instantaneous. This is physical death, just as it was physical death to the captains and their fifties. But, the words will be in the execution of God's power ... not carnal revenge or with carnal weaponry. "***The sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God***" has this power both spiritually and physically, when the circumstances call for it, even if while we are still maintaining the current dispensation we will not observe the instantaneous execution of the physical power.

Finally, consider that day when the seen and unseen worlds begin to interact and the demonic powers that have been exercising influence among the race of mankind in working the pernicious will of that great Satan -- the Adversary of Christ and those who name His name -- have espied that day referenced in the colloquy at the tombs of the Gergesenes, to wit:

"And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?" (Matthew 8:29)

I say, when that time has come and the ferocity of spiritual warfare bleeds into the physical plane, we see also a transition in the language about the use and power of this weapon we hold in our warring hands.

"For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:" (2 Thessalonians 2:7-8)

Even brother Gill, who struggles to see beyond the Roman Catholic monster in all things eschatological, sees the significant point of this passage for today's subject matter. Look at what he offers in examination of the clause "***with the spirit of his mouth***":

Gill: "[B]y his spirit is meant his Gospel; the Scriptures in general are the breath of God, being divinely inspired by him, and are the sword of the Spirit, the twoedged sword of law and Gospel, which proceeds out of Christ's mouth; the Gospel contains the words of Christ, which are spirit and life; these come out of his mouth, and are sharper than any twoedged sword; and as hereby sinners are cut to the heart, hewn and slain, convicted and converted, so by this likewise antichrist will be consumed".

This use of the word of God is not metaphoric. It's not purely spiritual. It's destructive and physical, relegating the Antichrist to an eternity in hell fire, as is written:

"And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone." (Revelation 19:20)

So great a weapon we have. When maintained with purity in form (2 Timothy 1:13), fidelity in publication (2 Timothy 4:2), and with great boldness and confidence (Ephesians 3:12) we wreak death and havoc on the

kingdom of darkness, and upon the children of disobedience. We take this power of the Trinity and with skill and discernment -- rightly dividing where, when, and how to strike a blow -- we prepare the way for the return of Christ:

"Go through, go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people; cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones; lift up a standard for the people. Behold, the LORD hath proclaimed unto the end of the world, Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh; behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him. And they shall call them, The holy people, The redeemed of the LORD: and thou shalt be called, Sought out, A city not forsaken." (Isaiah 62:10-12)

Thank you again for this opportunity to feed you, and I love you all most dearly.

Amen.