***The Full Armor of God - The Sword of the Spirit

The Suffering of Spiritual Combat, No. 10 - PH33-02

Advanced Bible Doctrine - Philippians 1:28-30***

We have been looking at the subject of the suffering which is entailed in spiritual combat, and we have been studying this suffering via Ephesians 6. We now come to Ephesians 6:17. All Christians are born again into a spiritual conflict with Satan and his demon angels. For this reason, the apostle Paul said to young Timothy, "Endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ," in 2 Timothy 2:3 because that's what the Christian life is all about--soldiering. From the very moment that you took your first breath as a newborn babe in Christ to the time when you stand in the Lord's presence completely transformed into his image, the name of the game is combat--spiritual combat.

So, in this conflict, it is necessary for you to realize that there are no furloughs; there are no retirements; and, there are no resignations accepted. It is a continuing and unrelenting warfare, and you move daily through a swirling mass of demonic angels under Satan's direction who, in one way or another, are determined to neutralize your effectiveness as a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. We don't hear enough emphasis on this today. We go to church, and we hear a lot of inspirational and challenging talk, but we do not realize how hazardous our situation is unless we take appropriate steps to protect ourselves.

Now that's what this series is all about. At the end of the first chapter of Philippians, the apostle Paul has told those Christians that they are engaged in the same conflict that he is engaged in. In Ephesians 6, he spells out the nature of that conflict and the protective armor which God has provided for us. In this spiritual warfare, there are also casualties; there are deserters; and, there is suffering. However, this is suffering which is undeserved. Sometimes, because of our negative volition, we experience suffering, but this is suffering which we have coming to us. The Christian life is best view, therefore, as a military experience, and consequently, requiring training, equipment, and tactics. It is not a quiet, tranquil, placid existence. If that's what you envision for the Christian life (and there is a lot of talk about the Christian life being a tranquil and placid existence), then you are mistaken concerning what the Bible teaches as to our relationship to the Lord and our movement through this earthly sphere. It is combat from start to finish.

The Christian soldier has been provided with battle gear which is necessary to meet this angelic warfare successfully. We have that in Ephesians 6:13-18. Briefly, let us review the points that we have already covered:

**The Full Armor of God**

1. **The Belt of Truth**

The first item of that soldier's equipment was the belt of truth. This is Bible doctrine stored in the human spirit against Satan's human viewpoint. The belt of truth is the first item that we must put on. Of course, the only way we can put this item on is through learning the Word of God. This is what God esteems, but men despise.

1. **The Breastplate of Righteousness**

A second element is the breastplate of righteousness. The breastplate of righteousness may be viewed as the spiritual maturity structure perfected in the soul which results in right conduct on the part of the believer. The spiritual maturity structure, when you develop it in your soul, gives you the ability to act right. This is the breastplate of righteousness. This is not the righteousness of Christ which you receive in salvation, but it is the righteousness of conduct.

1. **The Shoes of the Gospel of Peace**

The next item was the shoes of the gospel of peace. This is the motivation of reconciliation to move out into the Lord's service. The gospel brings us peace because we are reconciled with God. Consequently, we have the courage to move out into the Lord's service and to move into this combat.

1. **The Shield of Faith**

Then there was the shield of faith. This is the faith rest technique applied to Satan's pressures, his temptations, and his human viewpoint. If you have not developed the capacity to use the faith rest technique, Satan will be able to shoot one of his fiery darts (one of his fiery missiles) at you, and he will shoot you down. This is because you will react in a way that is in the flesh and in the carnal capacities of your old sin nature. You should put up the shield of faith and say, "Well, at this moment I don't know the answer to this problem. I don't know what to say on how I'm going to solve this conflict, but I'm going to trust that the Lord has an answer. If I've got half a brain to listen to Him, the answer is going to come through."

That's what it means to have the shield of faith, the most strategic element of the defensive factors in the soldier's equipment. This shield is strategic. You can put it up, and only this will stop the darts of Satan. However, it takes the faith rest technique in action to do it. Otherwise, Satan will win a victory over you, and you will tear up your life because you have not responded in quiet confidence in the Lord's solution which are there. Not often do you find Christians who really are able to trust God and to stop reacting in the arm of flesh.

1. **The Helmet of Salvation**

The last element we looked at was the helmet of salvation. This is regeneration with all the security that that implies in the face of Satan's accusations against us. This implies all the victorious living that is available to us. Obviously, it begins with believing the gospel, but this is more than that. This constitutes the implications of that position of eternal life that resides in us.

Now every breakdown in our relationships this week that we have experienced, with God or with people, I want to assure you is the result of this demon angel warfare against us. If you've had any defeats of any kind, it is because the demons were able to get to you. It is because, in some respect, you did not use these elements of the armor: Your belt of truth in some way was lacking such that there was no information that you needed on the subject for God the Holy Spirit to bring up for your use. The breastplate of righteousness was not in place, and therefore, your conduct was wrong. Your shoes of the gospel of peace were not firmly on your feet, and therefore, you were not motivated to walk according to God's plan for you at any particular moment. The shield of faith was not there, available for you to put up against Satan's attacks. And the helmet of salvation was missing, with all that that implies in security, and in light beginning within us, and then blossoming out into the fullness of what represents the character of Christ. The helmet of salvation was not securely on your head, and you were not functioning under it.

**The Sword of the Spirit**

The more spiritually mature a believer becomes, the more involved he becomes in real Christian service, and the more intense this attack will be upon you. So, a soldier has to defend himself, and God has given us the means to do this. However he is not only to defend himself in the angelic warfare, but he is also to go on the attack. We now come to the only weapon within the armor which is a weapon for attack. This is called the sword of the Spirit. So we read in Ephesians 6:17, "And the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God."

This sword is to be taken and the verb for "take" in the Greek is "dechomai". This simply means to apply this item of the equipment. This is an aorist middle imperative. It meant that at any point of combat (any point of specific contact) with the angelic enemy, you are now to take this sword in hand to attack. It is middle which means that you will be benefited by the use of this weapon, and it is imperative which means that you are commanded to use the weapon.

The weapon is called a "sword". The word "sword" that is used here in the Greek Bible is "machaira." This was a very specific kind of sword. It was a short weapon of only about 18 inches in length, and it did not taper. It was the same width from top to bottom. It was sharpened on both sides, as well as the point, and it had simply a handle at the end in some form where it was easily gripped. This happened to be a very fantastic and excellent weapon introduced into the equipment of the Roman soldier. The Roman soldier, with this particular piece of equipment, was able to do fantastic things in battle. This was a weapon which was designed for thrusting. It was to come at close quarters, and the idea was to jab it. It was not used for slashing or cutting. The idea was not to cut with the edges. It was a weapon strictly for holding your shield, and at a proper moment from behind the shield, to make a direct thrust at the enemy at the point where he has exposed himself.

This is in contrast to another kind of sword called the "hromphaia." The "hromphaia" was what was known as the "broad sword." It was a monster sword. It might have been something like maybe sometimes even six feet or more in length. It literally took two hands to deal with it. It took two hands to use this sword in combat. This sword was also sharpened on the edges because the edges of this sword were what were the crucial point of its use. The idea was to take it in a two-handed way, and to get a tremendous swing as you approached the enemy, and hit him with the edge of the blade. If you did hit the enemy with the edge of the blade with any force, because of the length of the weapon, and consequently, the leverage that you would produce, and the sharpness of the edges, you would literally chop the head off if you connected in the right place. Or if you hit a limb, you'd cut right through it. It was a very incapacitating weapon if you were struck with it.

However it had the serious disadvantage in the fact that this weapon, at some point in the process of its use, would put the soldier in a position where he was off balance, or where he was exposed. There came a time when, in the swing around, you had to have yourself where your arms were up and the body was exposed. The Romans discovered that all they had to do was to be careful to duck the "hromphaia" as it came swinging over their heads and zinging through the air, and then duck from behind the armor, and with the "machaira," make a short jab into the opponent. Sometimes, even if you were hit with the "hromphaia" sword, the armor would protect you somewhat, if you were hit in a not too direct way. But the "machaira" was a terribly deadly weapon because all you had to do was puncture a person for two inches, and if you do it in a vital place, it's almost always fatal. It only took a two-inch stab with the short 18-inch sword that the Roman soldier carried, and his enemy was done for. Consequently, the Roman army, with this weapon, became a conquering force that no one was able to meet. This was especially true for armies that came against them with the long awkward broadsword in an attempt to do hand-to-hand combat with such a long weapon.

There was another sword called the "xiphos" that the Persians had popularized, and it was a long sword. It was designed for thrusting, but it was narrow. It was more like what we often think of in terms of a saber. But again, the problem was that what is long is difficult to use without being awkward. As a matter of fact, it was for this reason that, at the beginning of World War II, the bayonet was shortened to where it was something like eight to ten inches long. It looked rather startling, after the World War I long bayonet, to see at the end of your rifle simply a little sword dagger. But, the reason for that was that they discovered that in actual combat with the use of that weapon, to have a rifle that was already several feet long, and then to put a two-foot bayonet at the end of it, put you in the position of having a "xiphos" sword to use in battle. It was an awkward thing. Whereas, the rifle, with a short bayonet, could be grasped at the top, and if you found yourself in the desperate condition of close-in combat, it was the easiest thing in the world to take a rifle and to make a quick upward jab to an enemy who had exposed himself at some point, and you were there. Whereas to stand at a distance and try to do that took a lot more aiming and a lot more balance, and was far more easily deflected.

So, the apostle Paul looks at the Roman soldier; he sees his equipment; and, he thinks, "Now what shall I compare the sword which he carries to?" The sword is such a very dramatic and important item, so he compares it to the Word of God, and to the Word of God in a thrusting fashion. It is not without reason that it was compared to the "machaira" because the Word of God is just that kind of a sword. It is not a sometime thing. It is not a weapon that Satan can ever deflect when it's properly used. It is not a weapon which, when it is used in the problems of our lives, that those problems can stand. If the Word of God is properly used as the sword of the Spirit, it will always bring you victory. The very nature of this analogy emphasizes to us that this is a sword that is flexible. It's easy to use. You can use it gracefully, and you can use it with deadly accuracy.

This sword is described as the sword of the Spirit. The Greek word is "pneuma." Grammatically, this is called a genitive of source, so that we say this is the sword "from" the Spirit. The Spirit here refers to God the Holy Spirit. Then the words "which is" introduces the explanation of what the sword of the Spirit is. He tells us that the sword of the Spirit is the Word of God. A common word in the Greek language for "word" is the Greek word "logos." This is not the word which is used here. The word "logos" speaks about the Bible as a whole. It simply speaks about the Word of God as being the revelation of God as a whole. Instead, here it uses a very specific Greek word "hrema." "Hrema" means "a saying." It means what is uttered in speech or writing. Or we would best describe it as individual propositions of Bible doctrine truth. It is divine viewpoint in propositional statements. It is not the Bible as a whole, but it is this doctrine, this doctrine, and this doctrine. It is the "hrema" of the Word of God. It is the saying. It is the Word of God as specific declarations of truth. Therefore, the sword of the Spirit is Bible doctrine; it was previously stored in the human spirit; it is brought to mind by the Holy Spirit; and, it is applied to a certain situation in battle.

If the Christian does not know the propositions of divine viewpoint, and if the Christian does not know categories of doctrine, he has no sword for the Holy Spirit to guide him in using in battle. You have nothing to bring up with which to deflect the assault of the enemy. This sword is described as being the Word of God. It uses the Greek word "theos." Again, it is genitive of source. It means the Word from God. It is the Word which God has given us for our spiritual warfare with the demon angels in attack and defense. Bible doctrine is not human viewpoint expressed in literature.

**The Doctrine of Inspiration**

"The Word of God" indicates to us some kind of a delivery system to convey the Word of God accurately to us. That system, for us to be able to get this sword, is called the doctrine of inspiration. So, now for a moment, I direct your attention to how God has made possible for us to have this sword of the spirit of the declarations of divine truth. I'm trying to give you a definition of the doctrine of inspiration. We might try this: It is the superintendence of God the Holy Spirit over the writers of the Scriptures so that the Bible is free of all errors in words and thoughts, and thus possesses divine authority and trustworthiness. It is important to note in this definition that it is God the Holy Spirit who controls human writers, so that when they have finished a book of the Bible, that book is free of every error. It is free of using the wrong words, and free of conveying the wrong concepts. Because it is protected in this way from any error, it is complete in divine authority, and it is absolutely trustworthy in spiritual things. The doctrine of inspiration is the superintendence of God the Holy Spirit over the human writers of the Scriptures so that the Bible is free of all error in words and thoughts, and thus possesses divine authority and trustworthiness.

**2 Timothy 3:16-17**

There are two key passages that teach the inspiration of Scripture, or two key passages that tell us how the sword of the Spirit has been made available to us. The first one is 2 Timothy 3:16-17 which say, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." "All Scripture" here refers to the Holy Scriptures which are spoken of in 2 Timothy 3:15 where Paul has said to Timothy, "And from a child, you have known the Holy Scriptures which are able to make you wise into salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." The Scriptures which Timothy learned as a child were what we call the Old Testament. However, the New Testament is equated in the Bible as being completely equal in authority with the Old Testament. We have this in 2 Peter 3:15-16, 1 Timothy 5:18, and 2 Peter 3:2. All of these verses indicate that the New Testament is as much Scripture as the Old Testament. It has the same authority.

The word "inspiration" that we read here in 2 Timothy 3:16 is the Greek word "theopneustos." The grammarians (the people who study languages) call this a "hapax legomenon," which means that it only occurs once in the Bible. This is the only time this word is used in the Bible. It is the keyword because it is the word for inspiration. It is made up, of course, from two words. The first part "theo" stand for "theos" which is God, and "pneustos" is related to "pneuma" which means "spirit" or "breathing." So, the word means "God-breathed." It is important to understand that that's the meaning: God-breathed. So, what this verse says is that all Scripture is God-breathed. The Bible claims to be the product of that which is breathed out by God, originating with the Holy Spirit. The Bible is not merely an expression of the highest ideals and the hopes of good but fallible men into which the Holy Spirit then breathes something divine.

The English word "inspiration" comes from the Latin. It means "to breathe something in." It is not exactly the best translation really of "theopneustos." A better word for translating "theopneustos" would be "expiration." This is because it is God breathing *out* the Bible. Whereas the English word inspiration sounds like man breathing something in, and for God to confirm. This is the supernatural origin of the Bible in its content; its words; and, its written form. Consequently, 2 Timothy 3:17 says, "It's profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." It results in making a believer who is on positive response perfect, meaning capable and fully equipped for spiritual combat in order to produce divine good.

**2 Peter 1:21**

What this verse is telling us is where the Bible came from. There is another key passage that tells us how we got it. 2 Peter 1:21 says, "For the prophecy came not at any time by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." The prophetic parts of the Bible (and this may include the exhortation or the instructional parts of the Bible--that also is a type of prophecy) did not originate with mere human conjectures, human viewpoint investigations, and human reasonings. Men had been set aside by God the Holy Spirit, specifically selected by Him, so that they could write the bible. These men then spoke in their own words and their own style, but the Holy Spirit carried them along into the truth as they wrote it down. That's what "moved" means. It is the word "phero" which means "wind in a sail." These men were simply borne along by the Spirit of God so that when they took up their pens to start putting the Scriptures (which had been revealed to them) on parchment, God the Holy Spirit prevented them from using the wrong word or from saying it in such a way that the wrong ideas were conveyed. In this way, you and I have secured an errant sword of the Spirit forged for our spiritual warfare. 2 Timothy 3:16 tells the origin of the Bible contents. 2 Peter 1:21 tells how it was recorded in a perfect accurate manner in the original manuscripts.

Another thing about inspiration is that the production of the Bible involves an inhale and an exhale on the part of the author. First of all, the author has to come into contact with God. God gives him a revelation, and it goes into the perceptive mind. This man goes on positive volition to what he has heard, and it is stored in the human spirit. Then it is cycled up to the directive mind where it now creates a frame of reference out of which he is ready to take the next step in the production of Scripture which is to exhale that information that God has given him into a written form. That's the process. Man had nothing to do with it. Man was God's instrument in the course of giving us the Bible.

That's why the Bible stands today. It's not obsolete. It's absolutely up to date. It has never been proven in error on any point on any subject upon which it touches. It has constantly been demonstrated to be everything it claims to be. Its prophetic portions, beyond a shadow of a doubt of any mind who is capable of being honest in what it reads, have conclusively shown that the Bible could not have been written by man. Prophecies made hundreds of years in the future were fulfilled hundreds of years later in exact detail. This is indeed the Word of God, and it has come to us through this method of God the Holy Spirit breathing out; men chosen for this inhaling; and, then exhaling in a written form. Now we have the sword of the Spirit in a permanent written form. The emotions of these men varied as they wrote, but they in no way interfered with what they were recording. The Bible, for this reason, is the mind of Christ, so it is the absolute and final authority in spiritual things. It is the ultimate weapon against Satan (1 Corinthians 2:16, Psalm 138:2).

**Red-Letter Bibles**

Sometimes people buy Bibles in which all the sayings of Christ are in red letters. This is to suggest that what Jesus Christ said was more important than what you read in the rest of the Bible. Consequently, there are some people who buy red-letter Bibles, and they always made sure that they read some of the red letters every day in order to maintain a high level of spirituality. I don't want to disappoint you since you just spent $25 for a red-letter Bible. (You can now even get a Scofield Bible, of all things, with red letters.) It's necessary for me to remind you that what is written in the rest of the Bible is what the Lord Jesus Christ told God the Holy Spirit to reveal (to exhale, or to expirate) to the men who had been selected to write the Scriptures, so all that you have in the epistles should also be in red because it also constitutes the words of Christ. The whole Bible, from one end to the other, in other words, are the words of Christ.

So, if you're going to be consistent, you need to have the whole Bible printed in red because what is given by the Holy Spirit is always the words of Christ. The mind of Christ existed in eternity past before there was anything recorded in writing. Part of it is now given to us in the actual presentation of the Lord Jesus Christ. Part of that mind from eternity past is given in the words of the Holy Spirit to these writers. He gave them the revelation before these things were written. He, the Holy Spirit, received it from the Son.

Another point to observe is that while the unregenerate mind rejects the Bible's propositions of truth as God sword, Satan does not. Satan fully recognizes that the Bible is indeed the sword of the Spirit. Satan fully recognizes that he cannot stand up against this sword. The spiritual darkness of the unbeliever's mind changes God's truth into a lie, and that is the thing that defeats him. So it's not possible by logic and by argument alone to convince the unbeliever of the authority of the Bible. That's the problem. When the Word of God comes to an unbeliever's mind, his natural darkness causes the Word of God to be transformed into something other than the authoritative word of the Spirit.

The extent of inspiration is to the very words of the original Scriptures. It is called "verbal inspiration." This applies to the original manuscripts, as well as to the thoughts, so it's called "verbal plenary inspiration." The sword of the Spirit constitute the very words of God. The Bible stresses that the written words of the Bible are the words of God. In Romans 9:17, we have Exodus 9:16 quoted as Scripture, and Exodus 9:16 attributes itself as the words which God himself has spoken. So, the very things that we have recorded in the Bible are the words of God.

There many types of materials which this sword of the Spirit covered. It covered the unknown past such as you have in Genesis 1-11. It covers ancient history and the background of Scripture. It covers dictation like the Mosaic Law. It covers the seven letters to the churches of Revelation. It covers devotional literature from Job to Ecclesiastes, revealing God's grace when people are under pressure and emotions and trials. It reveals divine revelations: directly in spoken words; in dreams; in visions; or, delivered by angels. It reveals falsehoods and human viewpoint as they were expressed, such as Satan's lies. They are accurately reported. It presents prophecy--God's future plans. It records divine inscriptions such as Belshazzar's inscription on the wall. All of these are presented in Scripture, and every one of these is absolutely accurate. The Bible may record somebody's lie, but it records it in the way the liar said it.

One other thing about inspiration and the sword of the Spirit is that God has preserved it. You have today exactly what God considers that you need in the way of divine revelation. He did not permit some book in the Bible to get lost. He did not permit some part of the sword of the Spirit to get chipped off so that it wasn't there for you to use in combat. All of the sword is there. None of it is missing. He has preserved it to this very day.

**The Temptations of Christ - Matthew 4:1-11**

One of the most fantastic places to see the sword in action is in the gospel of Matthew where the Lord Jesus Christ takes the sword and puts it into action. In Matthew 4:1-11, we discover that the God man was able to send Satan to defeat. He was able to cause Satan to flee from him by the simple procedure of answering the devil with the sword of the Lord. What happened when Satan wanted Jesus Christ to deny his humanity and turn the stones into bread? The Lord Jesus Christ was both God and man. He had to operate as we operate, in humanity guided by the Spirit of God. He could not come and meet his human need through his deity. That was not God's plan. A person is to live by walking by means of the Holy Spirit.

The devil came along and said, "You're God." That "if clause" is a first class condition: "Since you are God, you have the power of deity. You can turn this stone into bread. You've been hungering for 40 days. Why don't you do it?" This was a very clever ruse. The Lord Jesus Christ could have turned (with his deity) those stones into bread, and thereby have sinned because He was functioning under divine powers that He had rather than as a human being and dependence upon God the Holy Spirit. All of the responses of Jesus Christ came from Deuteronomy. Jesus Christ quoted the passage from Deuteronomy 8:3: "Man shall not live by bread alone, by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God."

So, Satan decided that what he would do is that he would talk to the Lord on the basis of Scripture. So, the second temptation dealt with the Lord's relationship to the Word of God. Satan takes Jesus up to a high tentacle on the temple. 600 feet below is the Kidron Valley. Then Satan proceeds to quote Scripture to the Lord. He quotes Him Psalm 91:11-12 which talks about how God protects His own, and He will not even let their feet be dashed against a stone. And Satan says, "Now, Jesus, since you are God, jump off; and, all the world will see how good the Bible is, and how true the sword of the Spirit is." But this was a misuse of the Word of God. You could do the same thing by going downtown and jumping off the top of the Southland Life building, and you could read Psalm 91 all the way down, about how the Lord will not permit your feet to be dashed against the stones. Good luck. And, farewell. Don't try it. It's a misuse of Scripture. So the Lord immediately recognized that. So, Jesus Christ responded with another verse from Deuteronomy, the book for living of the Old Testament Jewish people. He quoted Deuteronomy 6:16 which says that, "Man will not tempt the Lord his God.

So, then Satan came up with his big blast. The third one was to take the Lord to a place where in a moment of time he saw the kingdoms of the world as they exist under Satan's control. He offered to Jesus Christ that He could have this kingdom (which is what he came for, to rule this world as king). Satan said, "You can have this without having to go to the cross. All you have to do is bow down and worship me." Again the Lord responded with a thrust from the "machaira" of the Word of God. He thrust him this time with Deuteronomy 6:13 that said, "You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only shall you worship." With this, we're told that Satan fled from him. The sword of the Word of God works every time. There was no way Satan was able to stand up against Jesus Christ who (again I remind you) did not meet the devil as God, but He met him as a human being, just as you will meet Satan. His defense was the short stabbing thrust of the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God.

Well, the angels came; they supplied Him with the food; and, they administered to Him. Because Jesus Christ did not make the details of life (a piece of bread) the biggest thing in his life, He was able to enjoy this meal. He had the detail of bread and the food that He needed, then the big thing in His life, had He refused to obey the admonition of seeking first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and believing that all these other things would be added unto Him, He would have now been a sinner, and he would not have been able to enjoy the bread that would have been brought to Him.

**Hebrews 4:12**

Just to tie this up, I want to call your attention to Hebrews 4:12: "The Word of God is living and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and as a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." There are five characteristics that are the sword of the Spirit. You may get the audio recordings of the techniques of the Christian life that go into this in more detail. I'm just briefly going to touch upon it to call your attention to the fact that the sword of the Spirit is, first of all, living. It is a revelation which is delivered under inspiration. It is not words chosen by the human author. There is life inherent in the Word of God. This includes the translations. The translation that you have in your hand is in fact the Words of God.

A paraphrase of the Bible is never the Word of God. A paraphrase is always dead because it is man's word in the form of commentary on what God has said. Again I must caution you not to be carried away by the current Billy Graham adulation which he has inspired of Ken Taylor's paraphrase called The living Bible. It is misnamed. It is in truth the dead Bible. No paraphrase is ever the Word of God. This is the greatest travesty of our times. It's one of the worst things that has ever happened to us. You have to recognize that no paraphrase is the Word of God.

It is high time that some preachers started saying publicly what they say privately. You should hear what they say privately. You should hear what seminary professors have to say about this, maybe as far as their classroom. But they don't put it in the articles, and they don't come out publicly for the fact that one of the worst things in our day is The Living Bible. You can't accuse the Tyndale publishers of being men of modesty. I'll tell you that. They have a movie out called From Tyndale to Taylor. If that isn't something! Tyndale was that magnificent man of God who gave us the first translation of the Bible into English, and he paid for it with his life. He didn't die as a wealthy man as Ken Taylor will die as a wealthy man from having published the dead Bible. It is now being translated into foreign languages all around the world.

If you think I'm coming down too heavily on this, you don't understand the difference between the Word of God as being alive, and the Word of God as Satan coming up and chipping all the edges off your sword so that you have nothing left. No paraphrase will ever bring you into communication and fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ. A paraphrase will be Satan's instrument if it is used in anything more than a study tool as a confirmation as an examination of another man's commentary. That's okay. If it is more than that, if you read it for your personal devotional Bible study time, you are doing yourself a great disservice. It is time that the Christian public was alerted to this. This is not the Word of God. This Word of God is living because it is the mind of Christ conveyed in the words of the Holy Spirit.

We're told in this passage that it is also powerful. This means it has operating power that can be turned on in your soul. The Word of God is capable of straightening out every problem and every conflict you have. Don't yawn in my face when I tell you that. Don't shrug it off as something, "Yeah, that's nice." I'm telling you that for every hellish moment you spent this week, the Word of God would have smoothed the way and would have given you peace within the battle. It is powerful enough to straighten out human problems if you become tender enough and responsive enough to start using it and start saying, "Okay, Lord, You're right. I'll do it your way."

Furthermore, we're told that it is sharper than any two-edged sword (a sword with two mouths). Bible doctrine in the soul will cut the spiritual deception out that is so often practiced. We have so many clowns going around who are expositors of the Word of God. One of the favorite stunts of Christian education professors is to get a group of businessmen together so they can share their insights on the Word of God. Then these clowns can walk around as so-called elders in their churches because they happen to have a few bucks, and that makes them authorities on the Word of God. It's time somebody blew the whistle on Christian businessmen and their being dignified in the eyes of the general public.

A real Christian businessman who really has some divine insights is the kind of a man who will never go to an early morning breakfast where they're going to sit around and give their exposition of the Bible to themselves out of their mutual ignorance. You give me the plumbers; you give me the carpenters; and, you give me the guys who don't put on any airs, and you've got the princes of the church there. Men who should know better, who want to build churches, and who want to build citizens of reputation to themselves are refusing to face up to the fact of where the Christian businessman has gone in taking over the lifeblood of the local church, and making a travesty of the expression of Christian fellowship. This is because not very many preachers are willing to stand up against them.

This word also has a piercing effect. The Word of God has a penetrating power which exposes sin for us. It exposes the frauds that we are, and it divides the issues relative to our souls and spirit into the true light, so that we have a chance to come through with God's blessing upon us. It is also a discerner. The word means "critic" or "judge." It evaluates us for what we are apart from the fronts that we put on for people. It exposes the true nature of our thoughts and the true nature of our purposes. Our mental viewpoint and our motivations are exposed by the discernment of the Word of God.

This is the sword of the Spirit. May God help you to grab hold of the handle of it and never let it go. May God help you to learn how to use it to thrust it with the sharp short jabs at every attack of a demonic angel against you, and in every assault of Satan against you. You will come off just as victoriously as did the Lord Jesus Christ. He met him as a man with the sword of the Spirit. You can do the same.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1973

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