

# EFFICACY OF THE WORD

## Growing unto Maturity through the word

Thank the leaders.

I want us to make a deeper connection with the word of God so our time today will be highly interactive so be ready to participate and contribute when you're called upon.

Ask those who read Matt 6:19-34 and 1 Timothy 6 on their own after last Sunday's service to raise their hands

Ask 3 or 4 congregants to come forward to read out their notes from last Sunday and share insights on how the discussions in their groups have impacted their understanding and application of the theme.

Follow-up on the 14-day prayer outline. Request that congregants mention one specific day from the prayer outline that particularly resonated with them and why, and testify about any victories or changes they've noticed in their lives as a result of the prayer outline.

*Talk about the child born into a glass cage and kept there for 15 years*

Imagine a child born into silence, his world devoid of words, guidance, or social interaction. He is birthed into a glass cage. His caretakers provide for his physical needs—food, shelter, and safety—but they do not speak to him, nor do they allow him to engage with society. For fifteen years, his life is a quiet routine, his mind a blank slate untouched by human language or relationships.

When this child, now a teenager, is introduced to the world, he finds himself adrift in a sea of sounds and movements he cannot comprehend. Language, which is what connects human beings to one another, is foreign to him. He cannot express his thoughts or understand others. His nature has been nurtured in isolation, and thus, his ability to interact, to learn, and to belong remains dormant.

This story highlights the ultimate valuelessness of worldly achievements. Most of what we pride ourselves in are things we receive from nature and nurture. All the skills and possessions that we take pride in—language, knowledge, wealth—are all cultivated acts. They are acquired and shaped through our interaction with society. The value we derive in this world and the achievements we pride ourselves in things we receive. But worldly achievement without the foundation of God's Word is emptiness. The world values and rates itself by material success but these things are transient or temporary. Can I say this, beloved brothers and sisters: the things we want to have are the primary mechanism that distracts us from the pursuit of spiritual growth?

This is what we learnt last week when Jesus warned us in Matthew 6:19-20 against storing up treasures on earth. Who can tell us why Jesus gave us this warning? {Where our treasure is, that is where our heart will be} Everything on earth decays and is subject to theft. There is nothing that cannot be stolen. Nothing we have on earth is ours. We should use them but we cannot own them. [Speak of what the rich man told me about *teru*].

Our minds have been shaped and corrupted by worldly influences. God's intention is for us to adopt His way of thinking and living, which stands in stark contrast to the world's values. The Word of God is the tool to recondition our minds. It is the word of God that resets our brain. 1 Corinthians 3:19 states, "For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness." Romans 12:2 says we should be transformed by the renewing of our minds, as

stated in so that we may discern the will of God. This transformation is the same as learning a new language—the language of the Spirit—which enables us to interact with the world in a way that reflects God’s love and righteousness. Beloved brothers and sisters, you and I would not be different from unbelievers if we do not take up the word of God for ourselves as individuals.

*Talk about someone whose body can survive in outer space and how that ‘world’ is utterly different from the earth*

Imagine a person uniquely adapted to live in the vastness of outer space. This individual, floating among the stars, experiences a reality where earthly measures of time and environment are irrelevant. There are no days or nights, no changing seasons, no weather patterns. There is no rain, no snow. Birthdays, anniversaries, and all the milestones that mark the passage of time on Earth hold no meaning in this timeless expanse.

In this celestial realm, the things that define human life—wealth, fame, and power—are valueless. The currencies of the Earth, dollar, euro, pound, cannot purchase anything in the vacuum of space. Money in the bank means nothing. Clothes, earthly possessions, and the accolades and achievements of society are unheard of and unseen. Your existence is stripped down to the bare essence of being. You will be unencumbered by the trappings of worldly life.

This is a powerful picture of the Christian journey and the eternal perspective we are called to embrace. It is through the Bible that we begin to see the insignificance of earthly things compared to the eternal. I have no doubt in my mind that it is the ‘earthly things’ you are holding onto that is hindering your spiritual growth. Once you go after material success, your soul goes with it. No man can serve God and mammon. Why do I say this? The measures of success here on earth are wealth or status but these are not the measures of success in the kingdom of God. In the kingdom of God, success is measured by faith, hope, and love.

Mt 5:19 Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall **do and teach them**, the same shall be called **great** in the kingdom of heaven.

When we talk of GROWING UNTO MATURITY THROUGH THE WORD OF GOD, we need to examine why our generation is disinterested in the bible. The bible gives us several reasons but let me list 3 or 4. First, the bible says in Mt 24:12 that “because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.” Because of the rampancy of sin, the love of a vast majority of believers has grown cold. By love, we’re talking about our love for God and our love for one another. 2 Thessalonians 2:3 talks of the “falling away” in the last days, that is, before Jesus comes there will be a massive wave of compromise and backsliding that would envelop the church of God. In both cases, it is our job to ensure that our love for God does not wax cold. We must also do our utmost to keep the faith come what may. There is also the problem of deception. Jesus said, that except the days are cut short, it is possible that the elect would be deceived. In other words, there would be a sudden and gigantic influx of false prophets, false apostles, false teachers, false pastors and false brethren who would work in tandem to corrupt and deceive the flock of God. Jude spoke about men creeping in unawares to infiltrate the church but that was 2,000 years ago. False apostles are no longer creeping in, they are marching in majestically and many of us are subscribed to them on social media. I can boldly say that the majority of visible church today is under the control of cultists and the occult and there is a conspiracy of the prophets and the priest to deceive the gullible and the undiscerning.

But there is a much bigger problem than all this. Let me show it to you in our first main text, 1 Peter 2:2.

1Pe 2:2 As newborn babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:

Here, it has reduced the challenge of our lack of growth. But what would make you grow? **DESIRE!** Your lack of desire is the reason you're not growing. If the truth must be told, we live in a generation that is disinterested in the word of God, talk less of wanting to grow. **We are too busy, too distracted to be interested in the word.** Making ends meet is much more important to us than feeding our spirits. For most of us, the Bible is boring. We feel that the Bible doesn't directly address the complexities of contemporary life and that it is not relevant or practical for modern challenges. The majority of us cannot focus on reading our bibles for ourselves. Not only this, we are relentlessly bombarded with the distractions of smartphones, social media, and streaming services. It is as if satan is no longer a serpent in some garden but technology itself!

But do you know that lack of desire for the word of God is evidence of spiritual sickness? If you have no appetite for the word of God but you're busy with activities like daily online prayer meetings, praise nights, running special programs, even preaching up and down, you'll have no stamina for even those activities. Your lack of spiritual food will take a toll on you. You'll be lifeless but noisy. Without the word of God in you, you cannot serve God acceptably.

But 1 Peter 2:2 is not the entire story. We have a mandate. I want us to read the context from 1 Peter 1:18 to 2 Peter 2:3.

From this passage, why is it that we are not desiring the word of God? **It is because we have lost our identity.** We have forgotten who we are and what Christ did for us. The blood that Jesus shed He shed it before the foundation of the world. What have we been redeemed from? Our vain manner of life. The tradition of the fathers. Let's read verse 18 in different translations.

[CJB] You should be aware that the ransom paid to free you **from the worthless way of life which your fathers passed on to you** did not consist of anything perishable like silver or gold

[CEB] Live in this way, knowing that you were not liberated by perishable things like silver or gold **from the empty lifestyle you inherited from your ancestors.**

[EASY] **Your ancestors lived in a way that did not make them really happy.** *That is the way that you learned to live as well.* But now God has saved you from that way of life. You know that he has bought you for himself. He did not buy you with things that do not continue for ever, like silver or gold.

[TLB] God paid a ransom to save you **from the impossible road to heaven which your fathers tried to take,** and the ransom he paid was not mere gold or silver as you very well know.

Jesus died so that our faith and hope would not be in your family heritage. Jesus died so that our faith and hope would not be in government policies. Jesus died so that our faith and hope would not be in yourself but in God.

Our souls have been purified. In other words, our minds have been purged of the values and shady ideas of this corrupt world. We have no continuing city here. We are born again not with corruptible seed but with the incorruptible seed of the word of God. The word of God is what gave birth to us. It is also what will sustain us. Without the word of God, you will be dry and empty. The dryness you feel is actually a sign of God's unhappiness that you are far from Him. He wants you to feel that you're missing from your space in His bedroom.

Let's read 1 Peter 2:1. "Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings..." From this verse, why are not growing? There are certain attitudes and sins

that will frustrate your desire for the word of God. Can we look at each of these in the dictionary or Google?

Let's read 1 Pe 2:2 again, "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby". But what does verse 3 say? "**IF SO BE YE** have tasted that the Lord is gracious." IF. What is "if"? Peradventure. Perhaps. If you have tasted that the Lord is gracious, what will happen to you? You will DESIRE the word of God. If you are not desiring the word of God, could it be that you are yet to taste that the Lord is gracious? Do you know that if you are NOT desiring the word of God, you may not be one of us? Do you know that without the word of God, you are not alive and you cannot live? You may be in church and not be alive as far as God is concerned.

Can somebody read this passage for us in Message Bible?

1 Peter 1:18-2:3

The Message

18-21 Your life is a journey you must travel with a deep consciousness of God. It cost God plenty to get you out of that dead-end, empty-headed life you grew up in. He paid with Christ's sacred blood, you know. He died like an unblemished, sacrificial lamb. And this was no afterthought. Even though it has only lately—at the end of the ages—become public knowledge, God always knew he was going to do this for you. It's because of this sacrificed Messiah, whom God then raised from the dead and glorified, that you trust God, that you know you have a future in God.

22-25 Now that you've cleaned up your lives by following the truth, love one another as if your lives depended on it. Your new life is not like your old life. Your old birth came from mortal sperm; your new birth comes from God's living Word. Just think: a life conceived by God himself! That's why the prophet said,

The old life is a grass life,  
its beauty as short-lived as wildflowers;  
Grass dries up, flowers wilt,  
God's Word goes on and on forever.

This is the Word that conceived the new life in you.

2 1-3 So clean house! Make a clean sweep of malice and pretence, envy and hurtful talk. You've had a taste of God. Now, like infants at the breast, drink deep of God's pure kindness. Then you'll grow up mature and whole in God.

Let's close our discussion today with the story of the [Ethiopian eunuch](#) in Acts 8:26-39:

26 And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is **desert**.

27 And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, **an eunuch of great authority** under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, **who had the charge of all her treasure**, and had come to Jerusalem **for to worship**,

28 Was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet.

29 Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this **chariot**.

30 **And Philip ran thither to him**, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, **Understandest thou what thou readest?**

31 And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? **And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him.**

32 The place of the scripture which he read was this, **He was led as a sheep to the slaughter**; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth:

33 In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth.

34 And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man?

35 Then Philip opened his mouth, **and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.**

36 And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; **what doth hinder me to be baptized?**

37 And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, **I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.**

38 **And he commanded the chariot to stand still**: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.

39 And when they were come up out of the water, **the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip**, that the eunuch saw him no more: **and he went on his way rejoicing.**