

Q3 L07 - **Sharing the Word** - 2020-08-15

Jean Ross: Good morning, friends. Welcome again to "Sabbath School Study Hour," coming to you here from the Amazing Facts offices in Granite Bay, California. I'd like to welcome our regular Sabbath School members that tune in every week. We know you tune in because we do get your letters and emails. And we appreciate our faithful Sabbath School members not only from our local Granite Bay church, but also those who are joining us online as well as friends who are watching us on the various television networks. We are so glad that you've taken the time to spend some time in God's Word with us as we study a very important lesson.

Now, this entire quarter we're focusing on the work of evangelism. Our lesson quarterly is entitled "Making Friends for God," and today we're getting to the very heart of evangelism. And that's lesson number seven entitled "Sharing the Word." There is power in the Word of God. So lesson number seven, "Sharing the Word."

Well, before we get to our study, we'd like to tell you about a free offer that we have, one of Amazing Facts' sharing books. It's entitled "Alone in the Crowd," and we'll be happy to send this to anyone in North America. If you'd like to receive this in your mail, just give us a call. The number is 866-788-3966 and ask for the free offer number 714. That number again is 866-788-3966. Ask for offer number 714 and you'll receive that in the mail in a few days.

If you'd like to receive this free offer right now, you can text the code SH004 to the number 40544 for a digital download of the book. Again, text the code SH004 to the number 40544. And you'll get a link where you'll be able to download and read the book, "Alone in the Crowd." And I think you'll receive a rich blessing as you see what the Bible says about us as Christians needing to stand upon the Word of God irrespective of what might be happening in our culture around us.

But before we get to our study, as we always do, let's begin with a word of prayer. Dear Father in heaven, we thank You once again that we're able to gather together. I know that we are gathering together in various homes and scattered across the country, some by themselves to study the Word. And, Lord, we are grateful that Your Holy Spirit is not limited by place or time, but You are everywhere speaking to our hearts. We recognize that the Bible is Your book. And so we ask the Holy Spirit to guide us, show us how we can share the Word with our friends, our neighbors, family members to draw them into a closer relationship with You. So bless our time today. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Our lesson this morning is going to be brought to us by Pastor Doug.

Doug Batchelor: Thank you, Pastor Ross. I was sitting there thinking that maybe somebody was going to-- we're going to roll in some special music or something. And since that didn't happen, I'll just sing right now. I did that to scare the studio. Actually, I'm not going to sing. I'll leave you all in anxious expectation for another day. But sometimes we roll in some music, and we like to try and do that when we can. We're continuing with our lesson that's dealing with the subject of making friends for God. And as Pastor Ross mentioned, today we're talking about the lesson that deals with sharing the Word. And we have a memory verse, and the memory verse is from Isaiah 55, verse 11; Isaiah 55, verse 11, which reads, "So shall My Word be that goes forth from My mouth."

Now, if you're watching, you're supposed to be saying this along with me. So let's try it again. Isaiah 55, verse 11, "So shall My Word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it will accomplish that which I please and it will prosper in the thing for which I sent it." I almost wish they'd also included the first part of that verse because it's describing that as the rains and the snow come down from heaven, it always greens up the earth. It produces fruit. It makes the change, and that's how it is with the Word of God. Whenever the Word of God is spoken or proclaimed or shared or studied, there's something that transforms. It's got power in it. And so we're going to be talking about a number of different aspects of sharing the Word.

First part of the lesson we're sort of talking about some of the symbols and what it means to share the Word, and then later on we'll talk a little more specifically about sharing the Word. But in our first section, we're looking at what are some of the symbols for the Word of God in the Word of God, and there's quite a few of them. I don't even think we're covering the whole list of them, but one that's very obvious. It tells us in Psalm 119, verse 105. Now, do you know what that is if I wasn't to share that verse with you? Light. You can read that there. Psalm 119, verse 105, "Your Word is like a lamp to my feet and like a light to my path." You know, when you're in darkness and you don't know where you're going, a little bit of light can make a big difference, and we are living in a dark world.

You know, the Bible tells us that--quite literally the world is darker now than it used to be, but spiritually it's dark. The Bible tells us in Isaiah gross darkness covers the land and covers the people, but in the darkness a light has shone, speaking of even in Galilee, and just a little light makes a big difference. I think I read in heaven--Isaiah also says that the moon in heaven will be seven times brighter than it is now, or the moon will be as bright as the sun and the sun will be seven times brighter.

So everything's going to be brighter in that world. And when you hear the testimony of those who have been caught off into vision and they come back to this world, they say it seems so dark compared to the glories of heaven. And so in this dark world, the lamp is the Word of God that illuminates us. Now, you'll notice that when we're talking about some of the different symbols or metaphors that you use for the Bible, many of them are synonymous with Jesus. The Bible is called the light, Jesus is called the light. In a moment we'll talk about the Bible is the Word or the bread; Jesus is the bread. The Bible is the Word, Jesus is the Word that became flesh. And so a lot of these symbols for the Word of God are also symbols for Christ because he was the embodiment of the Word of God.

I remember a few years ago--I've actually done this twice, where I went into a cavern. And I remember on one occasion I was doing a camp meeting back on the East Coast and they had signs everywhere that said, "Endless Caverns, Endless Caverns." And I thought--well, the signs were everywhere. I just--it piqued my curiosity and I thought, "Well, I'm going to see if I can go." But I happen to get there as the last tourists were coming out and they said, "You know, it closes in 20 minutes. There's really not time for a full tour." And I seemed so disappointed. I said, "Look, I'm from California." "Oh, come back tomorrow." I said, "I'm flying home." And they said, "Well, you can't come all this way and not see Endless Caverns."

So one of the students there who was volunteering as a tour guide said, "I'll take you on a quick tour." So she took me down into the caverns and was showing me different things, and it was very impressive. By the way, it's not endless, but it sounds good for advertising. So she took me to this one big chamber that was just gorgeous and she said, "You want to do something fun?" I said, "Yeah." She said, "I'm going to turn off all the lights. You got to stand still because some people get freaked out and they start trying to run and they trip and fall into one of the little pools or something." I said, "No problem." So she turned off lights, and it is what you would call perfect darkness.

You know, if you get deep enough in space, they say they have absolute zero. Well, this was absolute darkness. And, you know, you could not tell when your eyes were opened or you closed your eyes. You just couldn't tell the difference because it was all absolutely dark. And I remember Karen and I were going through Hezekiah's Tunnel in Israel a few years ago with couple of other friends and we turned off our lights, our phones and, wow, that's what you call pitch black and--but then I did a little experiment. I've got one of these. I always use Casio watches. I buy the cheap ones not because I'm humbled, but because I'm rough and I'm breaking them all the time. And so--but it's got a little light in it, and I thought, "I wonder," And I turned on the light from my little watch. It lit up the whole room. My eyes had become so accustomed to the darkness that this little light of a watch was enough to actually help you find your way out.

A little light makes a big difference in the darkness, and the Word of God is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. You know the story of Gideon. How did 300 soldiers with Gideon overcome the Amalekites and the Midianites and the people of the East? There were multiplied, hundreds of thousands of them. Well, it says they had pitchers and in the pitchers were lamps, and then they broke the pitchers and the light shone out. And then they blew their trumpets, another symbol for the Word of God, and they said the sword of the Lord in Gideon--the sword is a number--another symbol for the Word of God we'll get to in a moment. And through these broken pitchers, the light was shining and it terrified the enemy, thought they were surrounded, but--that little bit of light of those 300 men, it sent the enemy running. "This little light of mine, I'm going to let it shine." The Bible is a lamp, it's a light.

You know, in the Bible, it tells the story. Jesus has the parable of a woman that has ten pieces of silver and she loses one. These are precious silver coins that maybe she received as a wedding dowry. So they've also got some emotional value. And she gets a broom and she lights a lamp and searches the house. That lamp is the Word of God. Proverbs 6:23. I'm looking forward to when we can be meeting again with our class and I can be giving out Scriptures that people can read with us. Proverbs 6:23, "The commandment is a lamp, and the law is a light." And you can read in 2 Peter 1, verse 19, "And so we have the prophetic Word confirmed, which you do well to take heed to as a light that shines in a dark place until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your heart."

Many times in the Bible, the Word of God is compared to light so people can find their way to heaven, and you are supposed to be a light. It's like I read about Gideon. You know, we are broken pitchers. We come to Christ and we fall on the rock, and we are broken and the light shines out at that point. And then--and Jesus in the temple, they had three pieces of furniture in the first compartment. They had the bread, the altar of incense, and then they had the light. Not only is Jesus the light of the world, but he says you are the light of the world.

All right, another symbol for the Word of God that we find, another metaphor is fire. You can read one verse that bears this out here in Jeremiah 23, verse 29. "'Is not My Word like fire,' says the Lord, 'and like a hammer that breaks the rocks in pieces?'" Well, maybe we'll get to the hammer part later, but He says, "My Word is like fire." Why is the Word of God sometimes compared to fire? Well, fire is--for one thing, fire is also light, you know. Many times fire produces light, and LED lights really made quite a wave because almost all light produces heat. I guess all light does produce heat, but some light produces more heat than others. LED light produces actually very little heat and a lot of light, and that's why it was such an amazing invention. But fire is also light.

But fire also has a purging influence. If you want to refine gold, it takes fire to do that. Fire is something that is used to purify, and farmers would also use fire--often use it to burn up the stubble, get their fields ready for planting. If you want to get rid of garbage--one of the things Karen and I do up in the hills that we enjoy is we burn brush. You get a big pile of slash or brush and you want to clear your land, boy, nothing works quite like fire. Now, we wait until the wintertime and all the ground around it is wet, but you can clear up a lot of garbage by starting a fire, and it just seems to have a purifying influence. And so this is something that the Word of God does in us. It's a purging, a purifying influence. You can also read in Jeremiah chapter 5, verse 14, "Therefore thus says the Lord God of hosts, 'Because you speak this Word, behold I will make My words in your mouth fire and the people the wood, and it will devour them.'"

Well, fire is not only something that's nice that warms you. We were just camping up in Alaska and it was very cold outside, and it was so nice to get by a warm fire. It was very soothing, but you don't want to fall in the fire because fire can burn. And he says, "My Word in this sense would be like a fire, fire in My mouth, and the people wood, and it will devour them." Now, when the Lord comes, the Bible says He'll send forth the breath of His mouth. It will consume the wicked; but for the righteous, they're able to endure that.

You read the story about how the soldiers that threw Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego; Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, threw them in the fiery furnace. It killed the soldiers, but it did not hurt the three Hebrew worthies. And in the same way, when Jesus comes, that fire that purges the world, it's not going to hurt the people of God or the city of God. But fire is a--when the Lord brought the children of Israel out of Egypt, He led them with a pillar of fire. And that fire was threatening to the Egyptians that were attacking them, but it was illuminating for the Israelites.

God's Word is illumination. It is also warmth and comfort. It is like a fire. It is also convicting. The Bible tells us that on the day of Pentecost the Word of God came on the apostles in special power as tongues of--what is it? Fire. And so you can also read in Malachi chapter 3:3, "He will sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver, and He will purify the sons of Levi and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer to the Lord an offering in righteousness." And then Peter says, "Do not be amazed at the fiery trials that try you as though some strange thing has happened to you, but know that this trying of your faith is more--makes it more precious than gold."

So, friends, sometimes the Word of God, you read something, it convicts us. It's like a fire that will--we'll read it and we'll go, "Ouch." And it--but it has a purging influence to it. Some other symbols for the Word of God. I won't spend all my time on this part, but it is my favorite part because I like looking at some of the Bible analogies. The Bible is compared to seed and bread. Luke 8--in the parable of the man who is sowing the seed in Luke 8, verse 11. You also find it in Matthew. "Now the parable is this: The seed is the Word of God."

You know, all through the time of the Bible, God has been spreading the seeds of His Word, and that goes all the way back to Adam and Eve. And God, He's been sowing the seed and the seed has been sprouting; not all of it sprouts. You know the parable of the sower. Sometimes a seed falls on bad ground, sometimes it's on the path and the ravens snatch it away, sometimes it falls amongst the thorns and they grow up and they choke it, but sometimes the seed falls on good ground and it's the right nutrients and it flourishes and it's--produces a lot.

So why is the seed also a symbol for the Word? Well, that seed grows and it feeds. That's why you also have it being a symbol for bread. Now, bread could be made from different kinds of seed. You know, corn bread. You can have wheat bread, you could have rye bread. Principally, in the Bible they grew a type of primitive wheat. Wheat's been highly processed, even our corn today, from what they had back then, and barley was a bread that was sort of the poor people's bread. They often gave that to the animals in their grain, but it was life-sustaining. Jesus said, "Man doesn't live by bread alone, but by every Word."

So that bread is the Word of God, and I think it's interesting that Jesus was the bread of life. He said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven." We don't know what Jesus looked like, but we know what He said. It's His word that is nourishing. And in the same way that you should eat food every day, you eat the bread of life every day. And I'm getting ahead in my analogies here.

Also, Jesus was the bread of life and He was born in what? Bethlehem. What does Bethlehem mean? House of bread. And after Jesus, the bread of life, was born in the house of bread, Mary wrapped Him up in swaddling clothes and placed Him in a manger. What's a manger? Manger is a trough for bread. So here you have the bread of life, born in the house of bread, placed in a bread trough where they held the grain.

You read in Matthew chapter 24, it talks about signs of Christ coming. Says two women grinding at the mill. What are they grinding? Well, they're grinding out the seed and making bread. And what does a woman represent? A church. You got two kinds of churches in the world, the true and the false. That's all there is. If it's not true, it's false. But they're working with the bread. A lot of churches claim the Bible, but they misapplied or they twist it. So bread of life is a very important analogy. And Bible says, "I have esteemed the words of His mouth more than my necessary food." That's the book of Job. I think Jeremiah says, "I found His words and I did eat them." And so we need to eat the bread of life.

And then another analogy for the Word of God is a sword. Now, when you go through the armor of God that you find in Ephesians chapter 6, you'll notice that most of the implements of armor are there for defense. You've got the breastplate of righteousness. You don't really run up and hit anybody with your breastplate. It's to defend your vital organs. And you've got the gospel shoes so you can have traction. You've got the helmet of salvation so you don't get clunked on the head with a sword or a rock. It doesn't take you out. And you've got the shield of faith. Again, largely it's a defensive piece of armor. But then it says you've got the sword of God's Spirit, and you read about this in Ephesians 6:17. "And the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God." Because the Word of God is not just offensive. You could use a sword to defend, but the Word of God is offensive. We go forth conquering and to conquer.

In Revelation chapter 1, Jesus appears and he's got a double-edged sword coming from his mouth. Do we really think that in heaven Jesus is going to walk around with a big metal sword sticking out of his mouth? I would think that'd be difficult to speak like that. Obviously, it's a symbol for the Word of God was in his mouth. You can read in Hebrews chapter 4, "The Word of God is quick and powerful." This is Hebrews 4, verse 12. "It is living and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword."

Why two edges? Two in the Bible is a symbol for the dual nature of the Word of God. Ten Commandments were written on two tables of stone. The Bible tells us last chapter in the Old Testament, "Remember the law of Moses my servant. Behold, I send you Elijah the prophet." Sometimes it's a summary for the law and the prophets is the Word of God. When Jesus rose from the dead, he taught the disciples the law and the prophets that showed that he was the Messiah. So Hebrews it tells us there in 4:12, "Quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword." Two edges. Old Testament, New Testament; Ten Commandments, two stones; the two witnesses of Revelation, Moses and Elijah, the law and the prophets. It's the dual nature of the Word of God. And one reason you have two edges is because you could use the sword that way and--on the backward and the forward thrust. It was nice having a two-edged sword because you didn't just get to hack in one direction. It worked both ways.

The Word of God both is offensive and it is also convicting when we apply it to ourselves. We may use it to defend us from the temptations of the devil just like Jesus did in Revelation 19. Not only in Revelation 1, in Revelation 19, Jesus is coming. On his thigh it says that the Word of God, but in his mouth again it is pictured a sword coming out of his mouth. So the Word of God is a sword. And one of the most important implements--if you are a soldier and you had to lose all the other parts of the armor, you'd probably want to hang on to your sword. And so it's crucial that we know this.

Now, not only many pastors but many members, if they don't have their swords, it's hard to resist temptation. So you need to become well acquainted. A sword really only does you good if you are familiar with it, if you understand what its point of balance is, if your arm is strong enough to swing it because you practiced with it. And so with any tool, it goes a long way through practice. You need to be familiar with it. You need to keep it sharp. Solomon says that if the axe is sharpened, it requires less labor. I think that's Ecclesiastes and I'm doing a paraphrase there, but how do we keep it sharp? Well, sharpened through use, Paul says in Hebrews. And so we continue to use it and we stay sharp. All right.

And then one more analogy, and there's several more I could give, but the Word of God is compared to a rock. In Matthew chapter--and I know some of these are not in your lesson, but I got carried away. Matthew chapter 7, verse 24, "Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine and does them, I liken him to a wise man who builds his house on," what? The rock, a solid rock. You know, if you're building a house and you're on sandy ground but you know that there's good bedrock down there, don't build on the sand. Go down until you hit the rock.

I remember when we were doing the Net 99 program over 20 years ago in New York City, that right across the street from the Manhattan Center the whole time we did this series they were doing construction across the street and dynamite was going off in downtown Manhattan. You think they wouldn't allow that. But the only way that they could get deep enough into the bedrock of Manhattan to build this other skyscraper, they had to go down where it looked like they were going eight stories down into the ground. They were blasting with dynamite. They'd put all the dynamite there and then they'd

put this metal grate over it so when the dynamite went over--off, it would not blow rocks out onto the street and--but we'd be working along and I would hear kaboom and all the windows would shake, but the only way they could build in New York.

And the reason they're able to build so high in New York City is New York City is not a swamp like New Orleans. New York City is a rock. And so they get down to the bedrock and they can build up to great heights there because it's got that good foundation. In Luke, Jesus said, "The wise man not only builds on the rock," it says, "He digs deep and then he builds on the rock."

Well, the rock is God's Word. It is the foundation for all that we believe. Ten Commandments are written on stone because they are unchanging in nature. They are dependable. When David brought down Goliath, he used a rock. It's interesting he actually picked five stones because the five books of the law, the Torah, is often identified as five. And Peter says Jesus is called the cornerstone. And in 1 Peter chapter 2, verse 8 it says, "We are coming to a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense for the world, but for us he is the cornerstone." Matthew 21, verse 44, "Whoever falls on this stone will be broken, but on whomsoever it falls it will grind him to powder."

We read the Word and we're convicted, we repent of our sins, we are falling on the rock of Jesus and we are brokenhearted, we're converted. But if we do not, in the judgment it falls on us. Says so do--and so keep as those who will be judged by the law of liberty. And if we obey it, it's salvation. If we don't obey it, we will be judged by every word. And so the Word of God is compared to a rock. All right, well, I spent plenty of time on that. We're going to move on to the next section, the creative power of God's Word.

The Word of God brings things into existence. In the beginning, God said, "Let there be light. Let there be a firmament. Let there be," God's said it, and by His Word these things came into existence. "Let there be vegetation. Let there be birds in the air and fish in the sea. Let there be animals on the land." And ultimately, He made man in His own image. Now, God didn't speak man into existence. God formed man, but He spoke all the other things in the environment and the other animals into existence.

And, you know, there's scientists that struggle with that. How can that happen? How can you speak something into existence? Well, you know what some of these same evolutionary scientists are coming up with now? They believe in something called string theory. There may be some truth to this string theory, is that basically all matter in the universe is actually made up of super microscopic strings of vibrating energy. There--it is sound. Now think about that. All life comes from vibrating matter-producing sound. Well, God said and it was. I mean, that's--they are ending up back where the Bible starts. String theory. All life comes through sound.

And so you read in first--I'm sorry, John chapter 1, verse 1 through 3, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him." All things were made through the Word. Now, the Word is Christ, but Christ spoke and it was done. "And without Him, nothing that was made was made."

Now, I've got to pause right here and say something to our friends that struggle with the idea that Jesus is eternal. You know, some people deny the Trinity and they deny the eternal existence of the Son. They think the Son at some point was brought into existence. They say, "Well, He was begotten." Well, if He wasn't, then He was. He was created. But in order for all things to be made by the Son, He had to always exist. If the Father created the Son, then He didn't create all things. So Jesus is not a creature; He is a Creator. Big difference. And so it says that He spoke and it was done, the creative power of God's Word.

And by the way, God's Word still creates today. I love that story in the Bible where it tells us that a leper came to Christ, and the leper said, he was full of leprosy, "Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean." And Jesus reached out and touched him, and he said, "I am willing, be clean." And the very power when God said, "Be clean," he became clean.

It's like when that widow--that woman reached out. She had an issue of blood for 12 years. He said, "Be cleansed of your infirmity." God spoke it and it happened. And so there's creative power in the Word of

God. Hebrews 1, verse 1 through 3, "In the beginning was the Word--" No, I'm sorry. "God who had various times," This is the Hebrew chapter 1, verse 1. "God who had various times and in various ways spoken time passed to the fathers by the prophets, He has in these last days spoken to us by His Son whom He's appointed heir of all things and," notice, "through whom also He made the worlds."

That's also interesting because He didn't just make the world, He made worlds. Plural. The unfallen worlds. "Who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, a perfect reflection of the Father, and upholding all things by the word of His power. When he had by himself purged our sins, he sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high." Again, it tells us He made the worlds, that through His Word of His power these things were brought into existence.

You read in Psalm 33, verse 6, "By the word of the heavens--by the Word of the Lord, the heavens were made, and all the hosts of them by the breath of His mouth." So we were made by the breath. God breathed into Adam the breath of life, but He spoke the other things into existence. Go to Psalm 33, verse 9. Same chapter. "For He spoke and it was done. He commanded and it stood fast." God speaks and things happen.

Now, I want to pause before I read any more on this subject just to tell you how this is applicable to our lives today. Is there still creative power in the Word of God? So if you are sharing the Word with others, friends, I can't explain how it happens. But as you're preaching and proclaiming and reading the Word of God and listening to the Word of God with others, creative things happen. Just like when the rain comes down, it does not return void. Things are brought into existence by the Word of God. And one of the few things that I enjoy--there are a few things I enjoy more than giving a Bible study to somebody and watching the light come on for the first time and you see that glint of inspiration, they're going, "Aha, wow." And you just see the Word is creating new life in them. So the Word has that creative power, and don't ever underestimate.

You know, I sometimes get a little exasperated. I listen to different preachers all the time sometimes on radio or television and sometimes in our church and other churches, and I'll hear a pastor and he'll share one little verse. Now, there's creative power in one verse, but then he kind of dedicates the rest of his time in the pulpit to sort of personal pontification on what's happening with politics or his own, you know, anecdotes and stories and--you know, you start getting away from the power. I think we'd be better off if preachers would get up and read a chapter of the Bible and sit down than just read an itty-bitty verse--not that there's no power in that verse, but then just to ramble on.

Now, I don't mind if you've got a Spurgeon preacher. He'll read a verse and then he'll do expository preaching on that verse. He'll take that verse and he'll break it down, but he's all in the Word at that point. He's not sharing his opinions. But really all preaching and Bible study needs to be Word-centered because that's where the creative power happens, people come to life by listening to the Word. I like listening to Family Radio. I don't always like all of the preaching and the music, but they have part of the program every day where they just read the Bible. And I get a blessing just by listening to the Word of God being read, and the Lord speaks to me. And sometimes it's comforting and sometimes it's convicting.

Sometimes it's a light, sometimes it's a hammer. Sometimes it's a fire, but there's--it's creative power. Things change through the proclamation of the Word. Often you'll see the Holy Spirit fall while Peter was preaching. The Holy Spirit works together with the Word in that way. We talked about that during an earlier lesson. Okay, Hebrews 11:3. I already read Hebrews 1, look at Hebrews 11. "By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God. So the things that are seen are not made from things that are visible." God speaks and He brings into existence. From nothing He can create.

I think it was Martin Luther that said that before God can remake you, you must become nothing. God makes from nothing. So until you become nothing, He can do nothing with you. 2 Peter chapter 3, verse

5, "For of this they are willfully ignorant or they forget that by the Word of God the heavens were of old and the earth standing out of water and in the water." The Word of God brings life, and the Word of God brings new life. That's where the new birth comes from. It's when Jesus, the Word of God, was preaching the Word of God to Nicodemus, he began to experience that new birth. And unless you're born of the water and the Spirit, you cannot enter the kingdom of heaven. That birth happens in the crucible of the proclamation of the Word of God.

All right, I got a quote here. It's in your lesson from the book, "Education." This is written by E.G. White. Page 126, "The creative energy that called the worlds into existence is in the Word of God. This Word imparts power. It begets life. Every command is a promise accepted by the will and received into the soul. It brings with it the life of the infinite one. It transforms the nature. It recreates the soul in the image of God." Wow. The Word of God as you're listening is vitality and power to it, it's creative.

All right, some of the other benefits of studying the Word of God, let's go into that department for a moment. Romans chapter 10, verse 17. Now, let me just set the table for this verse. Without faith it is impossible to please God. You cannot be saved without faith. How do you get faith? Romans 10:17, "So faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God."

You know, one of the first things a good evangelist might do is when you do an evangelistic meeting you preach on prophecy. Why do evangelists preach on prophecy? Because when people hear Daniel 2, for example, how God foretold thousands of years in advance the history of the kingdoms of the world and everything happened right on schedule--while you're hearing that, something transforms. Your faith grows. Faith comes by hearing. And the more that we see that the Word of God is true, the more our faith in the Word grows, more that our faith in God grows. And so as you listen to the Word, you get more faith.

People say, "I need more faith. I just don't have any faith." Well, go to the Bible. Read the Bible, and faith comes from that. 1 Peter chapter 1, verse 22, "Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart; having been born again not of corruptible seed, but incorruptible through the Word of God."

How are you born again? Through the Word of God. So what's one of the benefits of reading the Word, sharing the Word? People experience the new birth. I've seen it happen so many times. Somewhere--you never know when it's going to happen, but somewhere along the way in studying the Word with people, a transformation begins to take place. And like the birth of a baby, it may not happen in a moment. It might take 9 months, but they're being reformed. Peter says that they're, "Having been born again through the Word of God that lives and abides forever." It is a living Word inside them.

Now go to 2 Peter 1, verse 4. He says, "By which have been given to us exceeding great and precious promises that through these you might become partakers of--having become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." Through the promises of God, he gives us power that we might escape the corruption that is in the world through lust. Through the Word of God, that Jesus resisted every temptation. I'm talking about that in my sermon following this presentation. You look in Ephesians chapter 5, verse 26, "That He might sanctify and cleanse her," speaking of His people, His church, "with the washing of water by the Word."

There is a sanctifying cleansing influence of the Word. As you read the Word, it transforms, it cleanses us, it convicts us, which has a cleansing influence. It can have us turn away. We're just guided by the Word of God. "That He might present to Himself a church that is holy and without blemish." James 1:21, "There aside--therefore, lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted Word which is able to save your souls."

So, you know, friends, I think if people understood how important the Word of God was in the life of a Christian, the Word of God can save your soul. It is through--Jesus spoke to the thief dying on the cross. He believed the promise of Christ. It saved his soul. It was through the Word of Christ his soul was saved. We need to be reading and studying the Word of Christ; and not only because we want to be saved, but

we want God to save others through us and that happens through the Word. 2 Corinthians 3:18, "But we all with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord are being transformed," notice, "into the same image from glory to glory just as by the Spirit of the Lord." As we're looking at the face of Christ reflected through His Word, it has a transformational influence on us. By beholding, we become changed.

So if I said, do you want to be like Jesus, behold Jesus, which direction do you look to behold Jesus? Well, you could see Him somewhat in the things of nature, you might see Him reflected in the life of another believer, but the best place you're going to see is in the Word of God. The Word is called a mirror, but here is a mirror where we look in and we see a reflection of Christ in His Word. It's kind of like taking a mirror and aiming it up at the heavens and you see Jesus reflected in His Word, and you are transformed by beholding Him into the same image.

Acts 20, verse 32, "So now, brethren, I commend you--I commend you to God into the word of His grace that is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among those who are sanctified." I love this one. The word sanctifies, the word edifies--that's what build up means. An edifice is a building because it's something built up. If you say it in Spanish, it's edificio. It means the Word of God builds us up, and it gives you an inheritance. So it saves, it builds up, it sanctifies. All comes through the Word of His grace, meaning the Word of God and the gospel that you read.

Look in John 17:14. This is a great verse from the Lord Himself. John 17:14, and I'll read through verse 19. "I've given them your Word, and as--in the world has hated them because they're not of the world just as I'm not of the world. I do not pray that you should take them out of the world, but that you should keep them from the evil one." How does that happen? "They are not of the world just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them by your truth. Your Word is truth."

You ever wondered if the Bible is true? Well, you got to decide, do you believe in Jesus? Jesus says the Bible is true, and we can believe that it is all true because Christ said so. "Your Word is truth, and it also has a sanctifying influence on us. As you sent me into the world, I've also sent them into the world. For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they may also be sanctified by the truth." Continuing to read and walk in the Word of God, we are transformed, we are purified. That's how you become a saint, through the Word.

The Bible speaks of the redeemed as saints. Well, believe in the promises of God, we accept them by faith, we are sanctified. 2 Timothy 3:15, "And that from childhood--" You all know this verse. "And from childhood you have known the holy Scriptures that are able to make you wise for salvation through faith, which is in Christ Jesus. 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 might be complete and thoroughly equipped for every good work."

Wow, there's a lot there. We're talking about what some of the benefits of the Word of God are. Well, it says it's there to benefit us and corrects us. It instructs us. It inspires us. It is profitable for doctrine. It makes us wise for salvation. I can stop right here and do a whole sermon just on this one verse. And so look at how much we're missing. Makes me want to read my Bible more even as I read these things.

All right, last section here--oh, I got two more sections, and I got 6 more minutes. Applying the Word of God. Romans 8, verse 32, "He who did not spare His own Son but delivered him up for us all, how shall He not with him also freely give us all things?" Through the promises that are in the Word of God, we know that God is going to give us everything that we need to be saved.

The Bible promises, why would God go through all that He went through to send His son if He wasn't going to give us everything we need to be saved? The whole desire of the plan of salvation is to save us. So God has supplied everything we need for salvation. Most of that comes through the message which you find in the Bible. Matthew 13:58, and it says in this passage, "He did not--" Jesus, "Did not many works there," this is in Nazareth, "because of their unbelief." And so we must not only read the Bible, but it doesn't come alive unless we believe the promises. You need to stand on those promises. Ephesians 3,

verse 20, "Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Jesus Christ to all generations forever and ever."

I love this promise. He's able to do exceedingly abundantly above all, but we must ask. He's able to do that for us. What a wonderful promise. 1 John 1, verse 7, "But if we walk in the light as He is in the light," so it's not just the light of God's Word. You need to read it and then walk in it. A lot of people look at the light; they don't walk in the light. "We have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

So one of the things we learn from this is how to apply the Word. Don't just read it, walk in it. You know, if you just look at the sun, you'll burn your eyes. The sun is not for looking at, the light of the sun is for walking in. It's great if you're walking in the light. Just staring at the light doesn't do you any good. It'll actually hurt you.

And then the last section is sharing the Word. Acts 4, verse 20, "For we cannot but speak the things that we have seen and heard." I remember reading in the Book of Job, and I should have looked this up. It just came to me now, and I don't remember the reference. But after the three friends of Job get done talking, all of a sudden a fourth character appears. He had evidently kind of crept up and been listening to the discourse between Job and his three friends, and I think his name is Eliphaz. And he finally says, "Look, I've listened. You're older than me and so I held my peace, but I'm like carbonated wine that's ready to burst the skins. I've just got to speak. How can I keep it inside? I just can't keep the truth."

It's like Paul said, "Woe to me if I preach not Christ." They could never bottle him up. Paul just--he was constantly ready to erupt with truth. And if you've been saved and you've got the good news in your heart, you can't keep it to yourself. You just always desiring and burning and you feel bursting with the desire to share with others. He says, "We cannot but speak the things that we've seen and heard. Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks." And if you've got the gospel in your heart, the mouth is going to speak it. If you're always talking about football, then you got football in your heart. If you spend all your time talking about airplanes or automobiles, you've got cars and planes in your heart. But if you can't help yourself but from talking about the gospel, you've got Jesus in your heart.

In Romans 1, verse 14, Paul says, "I am a debtor both to the Greeks and the barbarians, the wise and the unwise. So as much as in me, I am ready to preach the gospel to you who are in Rome also, for I'm not ashamed to preach the gospel--I'm not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation." In preaching the Word of God, power happens, things are transformed. "It's the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek."

Because the Jews had all that historic background, they would be the first to comprehend it. And then of course the Great Commission. It tells us Jesus says, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, teaching them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit--baptizing them," I should say, "in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, teaching them," teaching them what? "To do all the things I've commanded you." Teaching the commands of God you're going to find in the Word of God. So we'd be sharing it.

This is the parting message of Jesus. "Go teach the Word of God, baptize." Isaiah 50, verse 4, "The Lord God has given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a Word in season to him who is weary. He awakens me in the morning by morning, he awakens me to hear as the ear of the learned." God is--wants us to speak to those who are willing to listen.

So it's not just to have the Word and to study the Word, we need to be sharing the Word by our example, but don't be afraid to do it physically or to verbally do it.

You know, and in closing, I'd like to read to you from--a quote from--and this is page 259 by "The Life of Jesus." "Tell it to others the blessed choose of His Word, and obeying the words of Christ continue in His love. Tell them how He urges us by love to bear to Him to keep His commandments. He does this not to urge us to do impossible things, but because He knows what it means to keep His Father's commandments. He wants every soul that hears His invitation to say the same to others, to receive His richest gifts for He knows that in keeping the commandments of God we are not brought into servile bondage, but we are made free through the blood of Jesus Christ." We don't share the gospel to make life difficult for others; we do it because we want to share the life that God has given with us.

Want to remind you in closing, friends, we've got a special offer that's free. It's called "Alone in the Crowd," an encouraging book by Joe Crews. Talks about also the power of God's Word. If you'd like a copy of this, you can call, if you're in North America, 866-788-3966. That's 866-STUDY-MORE, or you can text. You can download it right now. Text "SH004" to 40544. And I think you can even download this right now from the Amazing Facts' website under our free library. God bless you, friends. We've got more exciting studies in this quarter's study guide. Look forward to sharing that with you again next week.

Announcer: Don't forget to request today's life-changing free resource. Not only can you receive this free gift in the mail, you can download a digital copy straight to your computer or mobile device. To get your digital copy of today's free gift, simply text the keyword on your screen to 40544, or visit the web address shown on your screen and be sure to select the digital download option on the request page. It's now easier than ever for you to study God's Word with Amazing Facts wherever and whenever you want and, most important, to share it with others.

Announcer: Amazing Facts, Changed Lives.

Kip Johnston: I was raised very spoiled, very lucky, very blessed. I was raised in the church, actually. As a child, God was presented to me as vindictive, so it didn't interest me very much. When I got much older, I was told by a friend of mine that I wasn't even a Christian. I said, "I'm a good person, I don't steal, I don't cheat, I don't kill." And it was told to me that, "No. In order to be a Christian, you must be born again." The next day I went and appropriated a Bible. I read the New Testament. I just set the Bible down and said, "God, if you're real, deal me in."

I went to a Christian college to study theology and about God. But when I left college, I took a job selling Christian literature and Bibles door to door and I went flat broke. I stopped in to play poker in a place in LA. I was an instant success. My life became poker, and I got books and I read poker books. I had my Bible in one hand and poker book on the other. I was a Christian poker player. I thought the Lord was blessing me. The amount of money that I made playing poker was so big it would scare you. I was very self-indulgent. I did not deny myself anything that I thought would make me happy, but I was still empty.

I'd went to all the Christian churches, give them all a fair shot, some of them 3 months, some of them 2 years. Unimpressed, Saturday morning I happened to be traveling from one poker place to another. I just happened to have a little TV in my truck, and Doug Batchelor came up on there and I was like, "This guy makes sense."

I knew Doug Batchelor was in Sacramento. So I came to meet him. I told him, I said, "I am a Christian doing God's work, and I make a living playing poker and I am giving away Great Controversies to players. I go to church and help the community, and don't tell me I'm not doing much right." And he said, "No, you got to get out of that casino, period." I said, "I'm making good money." And he says, "I know that you know what I'm telling you is right," and I did.

I recognized through it all I wasn't happy. I said, "Lord, my life is a disaster. I'm selfish, I'm empty. I've tried to do what You wanted me to do so many times and I've always failed. Why do I always fail? Why do I always lose my way?" And the Lord spoke to me, says, "You got to be involved. You got to be involved in My work." And that's when I said I need to dedicate my life fully to God's work.

I, by the grace of God, and my wife, we went to India. Until the Lord tells me otherwise, we're going to

build orphanages in India so that children can grow up and hear about Jesus and they can go tell the 1.3 billion people in their country. God had a plan for me, and now I just want to be fully dedicated to the Lord's cause. I am Kip Johnston, and God used Amazing Facts to change my life.

Doug: Friends, are you afraid of heights? If so, you might want to look away right now. One of the most famous attractions in the San Francisco Bay Area is the iconic Golden Gate Bridge. While this world-famous bridge was named as one of the seven wonders of the modern world, few people know the story of the brave men who were involved in its construction and also known as the Half Way to Hell Club.

Designed by a group of visionary engineers at 4,200 feet from end to end, the Golden Gate Bridge was at one time the longest suspension bridge in the world. During its construction from 1933 to 1937, the Golden Gate Bridge had one of the best safety construction records of any project during that time. Keep in mind, they would factor in and calculate that one man would die for every million dollars that was spent. So with a budget of \$35 million, they knew that loss of life would be unacceptable.

This is why the chief engineer, Joseph B. Strauss, was absolutely adamant about using the most rigorous safety precautions that had ever been used in bridge building. He had a local manufacturer of safety equipment design special headgear that he insisted be worn on every job. This became the prototype for the modern hard hat worn for the first time ever, but the safety precautions went even farther. Strauss provided a special hand and face cream to protect the skin from the cold, biting wind and glare-free goggles to protect their eyes. In addition, they also ate a special diet to help ward off dizziness when they were working at those epic heights.

But the most conspicuous safety precaution was a gigantic net that was suspended from end to end under the entire construction area of the Golden Gate Bridge. In fact, during construction, this net saved the lives of 19 men who later became known as the Half Way to Hell Club.

Now, you need to keep in mind these were some of the most dangerous construction conditions you can imagine. The wind was constantly blowing. They were walking around on iron that sometimes had ice from the freezing fog. In places, they were over 700 feet above the icy waters. Yet the men coming from all walks of life were willing to take these risks because it was during the Great Depression and they would get paid up to \$11 a day, which was a fortune back then.

One of the other benefits of the net was they discovered that the men were much more courageous even though they're walking high on those slippery surfaces because they knew there was a mechanism to protect them if they should fall. This gave them the confidence and the courage to press on and get the bridge built in record time.

You know, friends, as Christians, we have a great work to do. The Bible tells us that we get to participate with Jesus in building a bridge that connects heaven and earth, and there are dangers along the way. The devil would like to paralyze us with fear that we might fall or make a mistake, but we know that Jesus has provided a safety net for us and we don't have to be afraid. We can press on with confidence because it promises in the Book of Jude, verse 24 He is able to keep us from falling. But sometimes we make mistakes.

Still, don't be discouraged, friends. If you read in 1 John chapter 2, verse 1, the Bible says if we fall, if we sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ. So let's press on together and build that bridge with Christ.