

Friday, May 15, 2020

## **The Word of God**

**- Pastor Hank French**

*Then Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, "If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free" (John 8:31-32).*

One of Martin Luther's most well-known and best loved hymns begins with the words: "Lord, keep us steadfast in your Word." Luther wrote this lyric because he understood that unless one is steadfast in God's Word, unless one continues in God's Word, it is practically impossible to be truly Christian.

Without the Word of God there would be no faith, no trust, and no knowledge of God. Without the Word of God there would be no knowledge of forgiveness and mercy, no receiving of salvation, and no entering into a relationship of mutual love with God.

Without the Word of God there is no gospel, no good news for the downhearted, the brokenhearted, the dispirited; no good news for the sinful, for those bowed down by guilt or shame; no good news for the poor, the oppressed, the marginalized, the excluded; no good news for the wounded, and in one way or another, we are all wounded.

Without the Word of God we could not know, we could not experience or trust the heart of God. Without the Word of God we would not know that the heart of God is the heart of love and justice, and we certainly would not be able to follow the heart of God.

But what is the Word of God? Most people would answer that the Word of God is the Bible, but it would be more accurate to say that the Bible holds the Word of God.

The opening of the Gospel of John tells us that: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.... And the Word became flesh and lived among us" (John 1:1, 14). Which is to say that *Jesus is the Word of God*, the one in whom God can be known because he is the self-disclosure of God. Jesus speaks what God wants to say to us.

The Bible is the word of God (small w) to the degree that it agrees with what Jesus did and taught. When it doesn't, it's not. If you read something in the Bible that contradicts what Jesus did and taught, stay with Jesus and you can't go wrong.

A sermon is the word of God (small w) to the degree that it agrees with what Jesus did and taught. When it doesn't, it's not. A Bible study leader or a Sunday School teacher or just Christians talking together speak the word of God (small w) to the degree that what they say agrees with what Jesus did and said.

There is only one Word of God with a capital W—Jesus.

Prayer: Lord, keep us steadfast in your Word that we might be truly Christian, that we might know you and trust you and follow you. Lord, keep us steadfast in your Word, a lamp unfailing. Amen.