

Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Sermon Road Map

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Hebrews 4:12,13

October 14 & 15, 2017

Only God's Word can daily rescue us from unbelief and disobedience.

The best computer forensics experts - able to uncover erased and hidden secrets

- Glad when done to criminals, but not to my computer - laid bare
- Children - seek to hide secrets. Adolescents - very self-conscious, privacy

¹³ *Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.*

- ♦ **Who can stand?!** - Luther wasn't obsessed. He lived this reality.
- ♦ Where's the hope of forgiveness, undeserved love, God's rescue?

❖ Context is critical! God's Word and our response to it...

- *In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets ... in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, ... sustaining all things by his powerful word.* 1:1-3
- *We must pay the most careful attention, ...to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away. ...how shall we escape if we ignore so great a salvation? ...first announced by the Lord,... God also testified to it...* 2:1-4
- *See to it, brothers and sisters, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God.* 3:12
- *Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it. ² For we also have had the good news proclaimed to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because they did not share the faith of those who obeyed.* 4:1-2
- **Point:** watch out for **unbelief** and **disobedience** lest you lose everything!

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Don't see fear and terror! See the love that seeks to **save us** from eternal terror. *Everything laid bare ⇒ will awake: ...to shame and everlasting contempt.* Dan. 12:2

❖ *For the word of God is alive and active.*

- *Alive* - emphatic in the Greek. It's not a helpless word needing us.
 - ♦ We who are spiritually dead need a living word to make us alive.
 - ♦ Luther: *I did nothing; the Word did it all.* By its own living power.
- *Active/effective* - Greek: not an aimless activity - it works God's intent
 - ♦ *...my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.* Isa. 55:11

❖ *...it penetrates ...it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.*

- Able to carefully discern each person's ideas and intents
- The sharp sword of the word meticulously separates like nothing else can!
- The Law exposes just how dark and evil sin is. Sin is dwelling-in-death.
- The Gospel gives light and life, God's goodness and grace, creates faith

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❖ Unbelief & disobedience - 2 sides of the coin of rejecting God as my God

- Faith says, **Yes** to God and his Word - **relies** on it and **acts** on it - Lk 11:28
- Unbelief says, **No**, *I don't trust that as right or good. I'm doing it my way.*
- God's living effective word exposes the folly: *I'll believe what I want...*
 - ♦ God's hope: judged and convicted **now** - not after death. Rescue strays!
 - ♦ *There is a judge for the one who rejects me and does not accept my words; the very words I have spoken will condemn them at the last day.* John 12:48
- Honest Christians know: we daily struggle with unbelief & disobedience.
 - ♦ Stubbornly holding to doubt and worry vs. resting on God's promises
 - ♦ In face of troubles - use prayer, pastor, and the word as a last resort
 - ♦ What is the absence of time with the word but unbelief in its power?
 - ♦ Dismissing hard teachings of God's Word as *not all that important*
 - Things God calls wrong - we don't see it that way
 - Things we don't want our parents or our pastor to know about, because they'll point out it is against God's Word.
 - ♦ We excuse and justify our disobedience while condemning others
 - ♦ *Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.* Romans 7:20
 - *Not want to do* - reveals faith in God's Word and that God is good
 - *sin living in me* - our sinful nature (rejects the word & disobedient)
 - ♦ Mission of God's word: to rescue from this web of deadly rebellion
 - To turn us away from sin - to love, trust, obey God - Sweet!
- But what about when we **must give account** before Judge Jesus?
 - ♦ God's sharp sword will meticulously cut away Old - reveal: all New!
 - Justified in Christ, through the faith he created - made holy!
 - Rid of doubt, unbelief, foolish notions, evil longings, our inner rebel
 - True liberation - Life to the full!
 - ♦ Seeing how good it is - let the Word have its way with you daily.

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