

Medicine for all your flesh – Sunday 10th May, 2015

“My son, give attention to my words;

Incline your ear to my sayings.

²¹ Do not let them depart from your sight;

Keep them in the midst of your heart.

²² For they are life to those who find them

And health to all their body.” Proverbs 4:20-22

Beloved in The Lord,

A couple of hours before I wrote this sermon, I read the text that I just read to you. I then went to my local vitamin shop to buy some vitamins. As I stood in the shop and scanned the shelves I was overwhelmed by the variety. There were so many different bottles of this and that, addressing all types of issues. I thought to myself wouldn't it be good if there was one capsule for everything. As I drove home I remembered the Word that I had read earlier:

“My son, give attention to my words;

Incline your ear to my sayings.

²¹ Do not let them depart from your sight;

Keep them in the midst of your heart.

²² For they are life to those who find them

And health to all their body.” Proverbs 4:20-22

This passage tells us so clearly that God's Word is life to those that find it and health to all their body or as the older translations said: “Health to all their flesh.”

Usually when we think about the benefits of God's Word, we think about the spiritual benefits. The benefit to our soul and spirit. But here we are told that there are physical benefits as well. God's Word brings life and health to all our flesh.

Please understand that I am in no way saying that we should not take our medicines or use vitamins. It is of utmost importance that we take medication prescribed to us by our Doctors. God has given us Doctors and Health professionals and we should be thankful for them and also for modern medicine. What we are considering today is that God's Word is also a vital part of our general health.

The Living Word of God empowers not only our soul and spirit, but also gives life to our physical body and is a medicine that heals. It is a widely accepted fact that a person who is spiritually and emotionally balanced, generally experiences better health. This makes perfect sense. A person who is constantly stressed out and in a state all the time, weakens their system and problems arise. Stress is one of the main killers in the modern world.

The best antidote or medicine to relieve stress is not found in a bottle or capsule but in the Bible. I find the Psalms particularly helpful for calming the nerves. But do not limit yourself

to Psalms., All Scripture is truth and it is powerful because the Holy Spirit inspired it and He wrote it and He works through it.

Solomon gives us very good advice, which we would all do well to heed:

My son, give attention to my words;

Incline your ear to my sayings.

²¹ Do not let them depart from your sight;

Keep them in the midst of your heart.

²² For they are life to those who find them

And health to all their body.

Clearly he tells us four things:

1. Give attention to God's Word
2. Incline your ear to His sayings
3. Keep God's Word in your sight
4. Keep God's Word in the midst of your heart.

If we follow this advice then we will find that God's Word does indeed give life to us and provide health to our body. Let us now unpack these sayings a little:

1. Give attention to God's Word.

Give attention, means pay careful attention, not just skim over it with your mind elsewhere. To pay attention is to actively listen and to act upon what is heard. If you simply listen and it goes in one ear and out the other, then there will be little or no benefit at all. If a Doctor writes you out a script, and tells you to take the tablets three times daily, but you ignore his instructions and take them from time to time, it will be of little, or detrimental benefit to you. It is important to pay careful attention and then to act accordingly. James puts it like this:

"This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger; ²⁰ for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God.

²¹ Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls. ²² But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. ²³ For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; ²⁴ for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. ²⁵ But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does." (James 1:19-25)

James clearly tells us that it is important to do as well as listen. He encourages us to receive the Word in humility. Why humility? Because the prideful person rejects God and says I don't need Him or His Word, I can figure it out for myself thank you very much!

So we need to humble ourselves and receive God's Word and make a commitment to obey. to act upon what it tells us. This will always bring blessing. We find this principle all throughout Scripture.

2. Incline your ear to His sayings.

This means to tune into God all the time. God has a lot to say to us at any given time, but often we miss it, because our ear is not tuned into Him. The air is full of radio waves. This building is full of radio waves. In order to discern them we need to have a receiver that is tuned to the right frequency. If our radio is not tuned to a frequency that is broadcasting, then all we hear is a lot of static. The world is full of static, the world is full of voices, but there is only one that always speaks the Truth and that we should always hear and obey, and that is the voice of Almighty God. It is important that we are tuned into Him at all times.

How do we tune into God? As you begin the day you should pray something like: "Father, as I wake up, I tune into You. I incline my ear to hear your voice as You speak. Lead me today. I offer myself to You as a living sacrifice and I commit myself to obey You fully today." We should begin each day this way. Then we should actively listen. We need to be in His Word every day. God speaks through the Bible. The Holy Spirit enlightens God's Word. As you read ask for understanding and enlightenment. Oh, how God is pleased with such an attitude. God loves it when we are tuned in to Him.

3. Keep God's Word in your sight.

This means read it every day. The Bible on your bookshelf, or bedside table gathering dust will not be of benefit to you. You need to read, read, read. The more the better. You cannot overdose on God's medicine!

Keep it in your sight. It will illuminate your way. We read in Psalm 119:105:

***"Your word is a lamp to my feet
And a light to my path."***

The Bible is our map, our compass, our guide, our light, that guides us along the path of life. If we stick with God's Word, if we follow it, then we will not stray off the path. It is vital to have it in our sights at all times. There are many side roads, there are hidden mines and dangers. There are many obstacles that we cannot see along the way. If we walk in the light of God's Word, we will save ourselves a lot of harm and misery. We will also steer clear of much sin.

4. Keep God's Word in the midst of your heart.

It is so very important to keep God's Word in your heart. The day could come when you will no longer be able to read. If you have God's Word in the midst of your heart, it will be there. Not only that, if you have God's Word in the midst of your heart, it is always there when you need it.

I remember that early in my child hood I learnt the 23rd Psalm off by heart. I cannot relate to you the number of times this Psalm has helped me in times of great distress, fear, heartache, or fiery temptations. I would simply begin to recite this Psalm : "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want...." It always gives me strength and helps me to refocus upon God. It has kept me and will keep me in the future on God's path.

God has given us His Word, to make our life complete. God has given us so very much.
I will end our thoughts today with David's invitation:

***The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear Him,
And rescues them.***

⁸ O taste and see that the Lord is good;

How blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him!

⁹ O fear the Lord, you His saints;

For to those who fear Him there is no want." (Psalm 34:7-9).

Amen.

Pastor Colvin MacPherson Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sydney.
All Bible quotations taken from New American Standard Bible.