

IT SHALL NOT RETURN EMPTY

The Word of God

Banska Bystrica, 21st February 2016

Is 55:10-11

כִּי כַאֲשֶׁר יֵרֵד הַגֶּשֶׁם וְהַשֶּׁלֶג מִן־הַשָּׁמַיִם וְשָׁמָּה לֹא יָשׁוּב
 כִּי אִם־תִּרְוֶה אֶת־הָאָרֶץ וְהוֹלִידָהּ
 וְהִצְמִיחָהּ וְנָתַן זֶרַע לַזֹּרֵעַ וְלֶחֶם לְאֹכֵל
¹¹ כִּן יִהְיֶה דְבָרִי אֲשֶׁר יֵצֵא מִפִּי לֹא־יָשׁוּב אֵלַי רִיקִים
 כִּי אִם־עֲשֶׂה אֶת־אֲשֶׁר חָפְצָתִי וְהַצְלִיחַ אֲשֶׁר שְׁלַחְתִּיו

Is 55:10-11 "For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, ¹¹ so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.

Ζῶν γὰρ ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἐνεργῆς καὶ τομώτερος ὑπὲρ πᾶσαν μάχαιραν δίστομον καὶ διϊκνούμενος ἄχρι μερισμοῦ ψυχῆς καὶ πνεύματος, ἄρμων τε καὶ μυελῶν, καὶ κριτικὸς ἐνθυμήσεων καὶ ἐννοιῶν καρδίας·

Heb 4:12 For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

2Ki 22:3 King Josiah, the king sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah, son of Meshullam, the secretary, to the house of the LORD... **2Ki 22:6** ...to repair the house

2Ki 22:11 When the king heard the words of the Book of the Law, he tore his clothes...

2Ki 23:24 ...establish the words of the law that were written in the book

2Ki 23:29 In his days Pharaoh Neco king of Egypt went up to the king of Assyria to the river Euphrates. King Josiah went to meet him, and Pharaoh Neco killed him at Megiddo, as soon as he saw him.

2 Chronicles 35:21-23 "What have we to do with each other, king of Judah? I am not coming against you this day, but against the house with which I am at war. And God has commanded me to hurry. Cease opposing God, who is with me, lest he destroy you." ²² Nevertheless, Josiah did not turn away from him, but disguised himself in order to fight with him. He did not listen to the words of **Neco from the mouth of God**, but came to fight in the plain of Megiddo. ²³ And the archers shot King Josiah.

OUTLINE

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1. THE WORD AND OUR SEARCHING

- 1.1. THE LOST SHEEP
- 1.2. THE PRECIOUS PEARL

2. THE WORD AND OUR RECEPTIVITY

- 2.1. TO THE ONE WHO HAS, MORE WILL BE GIVEN,
- 2.2. THE IMPORTANCE OF RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

3. THE WORD AND OUR WALK IN THE WORD

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4. TO REMEMBER

0. INTRODUCTION: POWER OF THE WORD

Neco (610-595 B.C.), king of Egypt during the twenty-sixth (Saite) dynasty (ca. 664—525 B.C.) ...As a former Assyrian vassal with expansionist ideas and concerned to limit Babylonia (Chaldea) as a possible successor to Assyrian dominance, Egypt sent a major sea and land expedition to north Syria in 609 B.C. to aid Assyria against the Babylonian forces. ...the Egyptian forces were not successful in the attempt to install the Assyrian remnant in Haran.¹

- the problem of “objective” power of the Word, i.e. independent of my response
- **Acts 1:8** you will **receive power** when the Holy Spirit has come upon you
- **Acts 8:19** Give me this **power** also...
- **1Cor 4:19-20** But I will come to you soon, if the Lord wills, and I will find out not the talk of these arrogant people but their power. **20** For the kingdom of God does not consist in talk but in power.

0.1. THE “OBJECTIVE” WORD OF GOD

- like gravitation... **Heb 1:3** ...he upholds the universe by the word of his power
- **Mt 16:1** And the Pharisees and Sadducees came, and to test him they asked him to show them a **sign from heaven**.
- → no decision required... detached *observation* → “theatre”

0.2. THE “SUBJECTIVE” WORD OF GOD

- **Mark 6:5-6** And he could do no mighty work there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and healed them. ⁶ And he marveled because of their unbelief.
- KIERKEGAARD → *Fear and Trembling* (Abraham sacrificing Isaac)
- → your response is vital...

[KIERKEGAARD] ...when the madness is absence of inwardness, what is comic is that, although the something which the blissful individual knows is indeed the truth, the truth that concerns the entire human race, it does not concern the much-respected rattler in the least.²

0.3. THE TWOFOLD EFFECT OF THE WORD

- **John 12:46-48** I have come into the world as light, so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness. ⁴⁷ If anyone hears my words and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. ⁴⁸ The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge; the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day.

1. THE WORD AND MY SEARCHING

- Josiah was repairing the House of the Lord when they found the Book of the Law of Moses...
- ⇒ he lived according to what he knew was right, although he did not know all he should have...

1.1. THE LOST SHEEP

- **Is 65:1** I was ready to be sought by those who did not ask for me; I was ready to be found by those who did not seek me. I said, "Here am I, here am I," to a nation that was not called by my name.

1.2. THE PRECIOUS PEARL

- **Mt 7:7-8** Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ⁸ For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened.
- **Jer 29:13** You will seek me and find me. When you seek me with all your heart,

¹ ACHTEMEIER, P. J. *Harpercollins Bible Dictionary*, San Francisco : Harper, 1996.

² KIERKEGAARD, S. *Concluding, Unscientific Postscript*, Cambridge : CUP, 2009, p. 165.

2. THE WORD AND MY RESPONSE

- The power is where response of the heart (faith) is...

2.1. “TO THE ONE WHO HAS, MORE WILL BE GIVEN”

- **Mt 13:12** For to the one who has, **more will be given**, and he **will** have an abundance, but from the one who has not, even what he has **will be** taken away
- → use what you have, if you want to get more...

2.2. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

- **2Chr 16:9** For the eyes of the LORD range throughout the earth to show Himself strong (לְהַתְּהַדִּיק) for those whose hearts are completely His (עַם-לְבָבָם שְׁלֵם אֵלָיו)
- → make sure, you love God more than his power...!

3. THE WORD AND MY WALK IN THE WORD

- the right beginning is not enough
- king Saul and his spiritual development...

3.1. BEING BARELY ALIVE – OR LIVING FULLY?!

- **Gal 5:25** If we live by the Spirit, we must also follow the Spirit. (Εἰ ζῶμεν πνεύματι, πνεύματι καὶ στοιχῶμεν)
- **Gal 3:3** Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?

3.2. THE WORD OF GOD AND MY GROWTH IN WISDOM

- **Col 1:9** ...we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,
- **James 1:5** If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him
- **1Cor 1:18** For the word of the **cross** is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the **power** of God. —...**23-24** we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, ²⁴ but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

4. TO REMEMBER

- We cannot expect to experience the power of the Word without giving ourselves to God in faith.
- The first manifestation of Word’s power should be over our mind and heart.
- The lasting powerful working of the Word requires growth in spiritual wisdom.