

179 Part 3: The Two-Edged Sword

In our recent Reflections we have seen first how the Bible, as God's Word, acts as a "canon" for us, a perfectly straight edge by which we can assess right and wrong, truth and falsehood, in both our own lives and in the lives of others. Last week, in relation to our seeking to use the Bible in our witnessing to the Christian Gospel, we considered the "clutter" that so often exists in people's minds regarding the Bible - clutter that we need to address and clear away before a listener will be in a position to take the Bible seriously: "Science has shown the Bible to be false" is a common example of clutter, or, "The Bible is no different from any other ancient book". Part of our Christian armoury these days is an ability to be able to refute such clutter, by demonstrating the numerous features of the Bible that set it apart as uniquely authoritative and trustworthy. For our listener to accept such things from us will not make him or her a Christian, but will at least bring about an openness on their part to biblical truth, perhaps for the first time in their lives.

Hopefully then we will often have opportunities prayerfully to bring the Bible to bear in all its power. In Hebrews 4.12 we read - "For the Word of God is living, and powerfully working, and sharper than every two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of both soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge of the thoughts and intentions of the heart" (JPGreen Literal). So the Bible isn't just a dead and fusty old book, but through the activity of the Holy Spirit it literally lives, being used to work powerfully into the deepest depths of human lives - ours included.

In so doing God's Word fully exposes reality and truth (verse 13), and always has the effect of bringing division - a division which ultimately comes down either to God's salvation in Christ or to God's judgement in Christ. Which side of that division an individual ends up on depends on the setting of their will in response to the gracious call of God in His Son Jesus Christ - "Come follow Me". By grace, some accept and are saved; by wilfulness, many refuse and continue on the path to judgement (eg., Matthew 7.13-14 / John 3.16-18, 36)

So this is not a game, and the Bible as a two-edged sword is no play-thing! - but a strong weapon designed to achieve permanent results. The Lord tells us - "For as the rain and the snow go down from the heavens and do not return there, but water the earth and make it bring forth and bud, and give seed to the sower and bread to the eater - so shall my Word be, which goes out of my mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in what I sent it to do" (Isaiah 55.11-12, JPGLit).

This powerful, dangerous weapon is entrusted to ordinary Christian people like us - indeed it is to be part of our official kit, to be put on and then put to good use (Ephesians 6.11-18). We get a clear, strong message from these famous verses that a genuine war is being waged, against the devil and his forces: that all who bear the name of Christ are soldiers on the battlefield, whether that suits us or not; that the Lord provides all the equipment we could ever need; and that the one offensive weapon He gives us is His Word, that straight-edged, two-edged sword.

Thanks be to God, the outcome of this great battle is already decided, as both sides already know (eg., Matthew 16.13-18 / Luke 10.18 / John 19.30 / Romans 8.28-39 / I Corinthians 15.57-58 / etc!). And meanwhile, for the Lord's foot-soldiers such as us on the battle-field, success is defined in a rather surprising way, by our simply continuing to STAND amid the turmoil going on around us (Ephesian 6.11,13,14).

There we all are, not dashing about and tripping over, but simply standing firm, each putting our own two-edged "swords of the Spirit, the Word of God", to effective use (verse 17). For Christ's faithful sheep are to be Christ's faithful soldiers too.

© 2016 Faithful Sheep Ministries - www.fsmins.org