

SHARPEN YOUR SWORD

(No. 1269 – 6/16/25 – Sermon Online Zoom)

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. God encouraged young Joshua as the new leader and commander of Israel after the death of Moses:

Josh. 1:5-9¹: *⁵No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life; as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you. ⁶Be strong and of good courage, for to this people you shall divide as an inheritance the land which I swore to their fathers to give them. ⁷Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go.*

⁸This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. ⁹Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.

- B. God told Joshua that his strength, courage, and success depended on his relationship to the Book of the Law, God’s Word, in three distinct areas:
1. Meditate in the Word, day and night;
 2. Observe to do everything commanded in the Word, not turning from it to the right hand or the left;
 3. Not allow God’s Word to depart from his mouth.
- C. Let us briefly look at each of these three areas and see how they apply to our lives...

II. MEDITATE IN THE WORD DAY AND NIGHT

- A. The Hebrew word translated “meditate” is the word *hagah* which means “to murmur, mutter, ponder, study.”

¹ Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are taken from the *New King James Version*®.

- B. Obviously, we can't ponder or meditate on something we don't know, so this first important step involves learning and studying God's Word (this is much more than listening to the pastor on Sunday or a 5-minute Bible reading each day!)
1. **2 Tim. 2:15: *Be diligent*** ["study" KJV] *to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing* ["correctly handles" NIV] *the word of truth.*
 2. **Ezra 7:10** (NIV): *For Ezra had devoted himself to the study and observance of the Law of the LORD, and to teaching its decrees and laws in Israel.*
 3. Reading and studying God's Word requires diligence and devotion—it takes time! There are many great, free resources online to assist you.
 4. Meditation in God's Word is a prevalent theme in the Psalms (Ps. 1:1-3; 119:97, 99, 148).
 5. NOTE: Memorization of Scripture is one of the best ways to practice meditation!
- C. Read, study, meditate, memorize—a famine is coming—a famine of hearing the Word of God (Amos 8:11)!

III. DO EVERYTHING COMMANDED IN GOD'S WORD

- A. Hearing and knowing God's Word isn't enough—we need to DO IT:

James 1:22: *But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.*

- B. Jesus taught that we build our lives on a solid foundation by putting His Word into practice:

Mat. 7:24-27: ²⁴*Therefore whoever hears these sayings* ["words" NIV] *of Mine, and does them* ["puts them into practice" NIV], *I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock:* ²⁵*and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.* ²⁶*But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand:* ²⁷*and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall.*

IV. DO NOT LET GOD'S WORD DEPART FROM OUR MOUTH

- A. What a strange command that God gave Joshua: "This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth." To know God's Word and meditate on it, we need it in our hearts and minds, but why the *mouth*?
- B. If we want to experience the full power of God's Word, we need to learn two important skills or disciplines:
 - 1. Confession
 - 2. Teaching and preaching

C. Confession

- 1. **Heb. 10:23:** *Let us hold fast the confession of our hope ["faith" KJV] without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.*
- 2. Confession comes from the Greek word *homologia* which means "to say the same thing"—we are simply declaring what God has already said in His Word!
- 3. Real faith speaks, and confession is essential for salvation:
 - a) **Rom. 10:8-10:** ⁸*But what does it say? "THE WORD IS NEAR YOU, IN YOUR MOUTH AND IN YOUR HEART" (that is, the word of faith which we preach):* ⁹*that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.* ¹⁰*For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*
 - b) **2 Cor. 4:13:** *And since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, "I BELIEVED AND THEREFORE I SPOKE," we also believe and therefore speak.*
- 4. God created all things by speaking His word; real faith believes that God can call into being things that did not previously exist (*ex nihilo* creation):
 - a) **Rom. 4:17** (NASB): *(As it is written, "A FATHER OF MANY NATIONS HAVE I MADE YOU") in the presence of Him whom he believed, even God, who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist.*

- b) **Mark 11:22-23:** ²²“Have faith in God,” Jesus answered. ²³“I tell you the truth, **if anyone says to this mountain, ‘Go, throw yourself into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart but believes that *what he says will happen*, it will be done for him.”**
5. God told the prophet Ezekiel to speak to a bunch of dry bones in the desert and they listened—they came to life and stood up on their feet—a vast army! (Ezek. 37:1-14)
6. Israel came to a well in the Sinai desert, and rather than draw water from the well, they sang to it:
Num. 21:17: *Then Israel sang this song: “Spring up, O well! All of you **sing to it!**”*
- D. One of our great spiritual weapons is “the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God”. Where is the sword? IN OUR MOUTH!
1. **Eph. 6:11, 17:** ¹¹Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil... ¹⁷And take the helmet of salvation, and **the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.**
 2. **Heb. 4:12:** *For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*
 3. **Rev. 1:16:** *He [Jesus] had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength.*
 4. **Rev. 2:12, 16:** ¹²And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write, “These things says **He who has the sharp two-edged sword**... ¹⁶Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and **will fight against them with the sword of My mouth.**
 5. **Rev. 19:11-15, 21:** ¹¹Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. ¹²His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. ¹³He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and **His name is called The Word of God.**

¹⁴And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. ¹⁵Now **out of His mouth goes a sharp sword**, that with it He should strike the nations... ²¹And the rest were killed with **the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse**. And all the birds were filled with their flesh.

6. Note: Jesus has given us the same sword, HIS WORD! We overcome the devil by the word of our testimony:

Rev. 12:11: *And they overcame him [Satan] by the blood of the Lamb and **by the word of their testimony**, and they did not love their lives to the death.*

E. The sword of Gideon:

Judges 7:9-15, 20: ⁹*It happened on the same night that the LORD said to him [Gideon], “Arise, go down against the camp, for I have delivered it into your hand. ¹⁰But if you are afraid to go down, go down to the camp with Purah your servant, ¹¹and you shall hear what they say; and afterward your hands shall be strengthened to go down against the camp.” Then he went down with Purah his servant to the outpost of the armed men who were in the camp. ¹²Now the Midianites and Amalekites, all the people of the East, were lying in the valley as numerous as locusts; and their camels were without number, as the sand by the seashore in multitude. ¹³And when Gideon had come, there was **a man telling a dream** to his companion. He said, “I have had a dream: To my surprise, **a loaf of barley bread tumbled into the camp of Midian; it came to a tent and struck it so that it fell and overturned, and the tent collapsed.**” ¹⁴Then his companion answered and said, “**This is nothing else but the sword of Gideon** the son of Joash, a man of Israel! Into his hand God has delivered Midian and the whole camp.” ¹⁵And so it was, when Gideon heard the telling of the dream and its interpretation, that he worshiped. He returned to the camp of Israel, and said, “Arise, for the LORD has delivered the camp of Midian into your hand...” ²⁰Then the three companies blew the trumpets and broke the pitchers—they held the torches in their left hands and the trumpets in their right hands for blowing—and they cried, “**The sword of the LORD and of Gideon!**”*

F. Joshua's success

1. God had promised young Joshua to “make his way prosperous” and give him “good success” (Josh. 1:8) IF he:
1) meditated in God's Word day and night; 2) observed to do God's Word; 3) never allowed God's Word to depart from his mouth. How did Joshua do?
2. **Josh. 23:14:** *Behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth. And you know in all your hearts and in all your souls that **not one thing has failed of all the good things which the LORD your God spoke concerning you. All have come to pass for you; not one word of them has failed.***
3. The power of Joshua's words:
 - a) **Josh. 6:26-27:** ²⁶*Then Joshua charged them at that time [after the conquest of Jericho], saying, “Cursed be the man before the LORD who rises up and builds this city Jericho; he shall lay its foundation with his firstborn, and with his youngest he shall set up its gates.”* ²⁷*So the LORD was with Joshua, and his fame spread throughout all the country.*
 - b) **1 Kings 16:34:** *In his days [King Ahab's, 500 years later!] Hiel of Bethel built Jericho. He laid its foundation with Abiram his firstborn, and with his youngest son Segub he set up its gates, **according to the word of the LORD, which He had spoken through Joshua** the son of Nun.*

G. We need to sharpen our swords and learn how to handle them:

1. **Eccl. 10:10:** ***If the ax is dull, and one does not sharpen the edge, then he must use more strength; but wisdom brings success.***
2. **Isa. 49:2:** *And **He has made My mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of His hand, He has hidden Me, and made Me a polished shaft; in His quiver He has hidden Me.***
3. **Ezek. 21:9-11:** ⁹*Son of man, prophesy and say, “Thus says the LORD!” Say: “**A sword, a sword is sharpened and also polished!**” ¹⁰*Sharpened to make a dreadful slaughter, polished to flash like lightning! ¹¹And He has given it to be polished, **that it may be handled; This sword is sharpened, and it is polished to be given into the hand of the slayer.**”**

4. **1 Chron. 5:18** (NIV): *The Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh had 44,760 men ready for military service—able-bodied men who **could handle shield and sword**, who could use a bow, and who were **trained for battle**.*
5. **2 Tim. 2:15**: ***Be diligent** [“study” KJV] to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, **rightly dividing** [“correctly handles” NIV] **the word of truth**.*
6. **Heb. 5:11-14**: ¹¹[Melchizedek] *of whom we have much to say, and hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. ¹²For though by this time **you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God**; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. ¹³For everyone who partakes only of milk is **unskilled in the word** of righteousness, for he is a babe. ¹⁴But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who **by reason of use** have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.*
7. Skill comes with practice, and practice makes perfect! Learn the Scriptures and use them in every situation just as Jesus did in His temptation in the wilderness, when He repeatedly asserted: “It is written...”
8. [GIVE AN EXAMPLE: Read part of “Victory over Enemies” in *My Confession of Faith*]

The Lord will grant that EVERY enemy that rises up against me will be defeated. They will come at me from one direction but flee in seven. Let God arise, and ALL of His enemies be scattered! The Lord will march out like a mighty man, like a warrior He will stir up His zeal; with a shout He will raise the battle cry and will triumph over His enemies.

God’s light shines into the darkness, and the darkness cannot overcome it. Even when the enemy comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against him. NO weapon formed against me will prevail, and God will refute EVERY tongue that accuses me. As a servant of the Lord, this is my heritage, and my vindication comes from the Lord.

The battle is the Lord's, and He will give me victory over EVERY enemy. I will not be afraid or discouraged because of this vast army. For the battle is not mine, but God's! Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for God my Shepherd is with me; His rod and staff comfort me. He prepares a table before me in the presence of my enemies. He anoints my head with oil and my cup overflows. Surely goodness and mercy will follow me ALL the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Thanks be to God who ALWAYS leads me in His triumph. I believe that Jesus, the Son of God, was manifested to destroy EVERY work of the devil and that through His death on the Cross, He destroyed him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and freed me from the fear of death. And having disarmed the powers and authorities, He made a public spectacle of them, shaming them and triumphing over them by the Cross.

Jesus now holds the keys of hell and death. EVERYONE who is born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith. It is not by human might or power, but by God's Spirit that EVERY mountain and obstacle is flattened.

Spanish:

El señor derrotará a TODOS los enemigos que se levanten contra mí; por un camino saldrán contra mí y por siete caminos huirán de mí. ¡Levántese Dios, que TODOS sus enemigos sean esparcidos! El Señor saldrá como un gigante y como el de un guerrero despertará su celo; gritará, dará su grito de guerra, prevalecerá sobre sus enemigos. La luz de Dios resplandece en la oscuridad, y la oscuridad no puede vencerla. Incluso cuando el enemigo venga como río, el Espíritu del Señor levantará bandera contra él. NINGUNA arma forjada contra mí prosperará, y Dios condenará TODA lengua que se levante contra mí en juicio. Esta es mi herencia como siervo del Señor y mi vindicación proviene del Señor.

Porque del Señor es la batalla, y Él me dará la victoria sobre todos los enemigos. No tendré miedo ni me desanimaré por este vasto ejército. ¡Porque no es mía la

batalla, sino de Dios! Aunque ande en valle de sombra de muerte, no temeré mal alguno, porque tú estarás conmigo; tu vara y tu cayado me infundirán aliento. Aderezas mesa delante de mí en presencia de mis angustiadores. Unges mi cabeza con aceite; mi copa está rebosando. Ciertamente el bien y la misericordia me seguirán todos los días de mi vida, y en la casa del Señor moraré por largos días.

Más a Dios gracias, el cual nos lleva SIEMPRE en triunfo en Cristo Jesús. Creo que Jesús, el Hijo de Dios, apareció para destruir TODA obra del diablo, y que a través de su muerte en la Cruz, Él destruyó al que tenía el poder de la muerte, es decir, el diablo, y me liberó del miedo a la muerte. Y después de desarmar los poderes y las autoridades, hizo un espectáculo público de ellos, avergonzándolos y triunfando sobre ellos en la Cruz. Jesús ahora tiene las llaves de la muerte y el Hades. Porque TODO lo que es nacido de Dios vence al mundo y esta es la victoria que ha vencido al mundo, nuestra fe. No con ejército, ni con fuerza, sino con el Espíritu de Dios que TODA montaña y obstáculo se aplasta.

9. Start speaking to your mountains, prophesying to the dry bones, and singing to desert wells—the Word of Faith is in your mouth! Sharpen your sword and use it!

H. Teaching and preaching

1. The Great Commission calls *everyone* to teach and preach!
 - a) **Mat. 28:18-20:** ¹⁸*And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen.*
 - b) **Mark 16:15, 20:** ¹⁵*And He [Jesus] said to them, “Go into all the world and **preach the gospel to every creature...** ²⁰*And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen.**
2. **Acts 4:29:** *Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that **with all boldness they may speak Your word.***

3. **2 Tim. 2:1-2:** *¹You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. ²And **the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit [“teach” NLT] these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.***
4. **2 Tim. 4:1-4:** *¹I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: ²**Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.** ³For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; ⁴and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.*
5. **Heb. 5:11-14; 6:1-2:** *¹¹[Melchizedek] of whom we have much to say, and hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. ¹²For though **by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God;** and you have come to need milk and not solid food. ¹³For everyone who partakes only of milk is **unskilled in the word** of righteousness, for he is a babe. ¹⁴But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil... ¹Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance... faith... ²baptisms... laying on of hands... resurrection... eternal judgment.*

V. SUMMARY

- A. God told young Joshua that his strength, courage, and success depended on his relationship to the Book of the Law, God’s Word, in three distinct areas:
 1. Meditate in the Word day and night;
 2. Do everything commanded in the Word, not turning from it to the right hand or the left;
 3. Not allow God’s Word to depart from his mouth.

- B. If we want success and prosperity in our Christian lives, it is no different:
 - 1. We need to study and learn God's word, and then meditate in it day and night;
 - 2. We need to be doers of the word, not hearers only; there can be no compromise (turning from it to the right hand or the left);
 - 3. The word of God must always be in our mouth through confession, teaching, and preaching.
- C. Through diligence, consistent practice, and use, we can develop skill in handling the word of God.
- D. God, sharpen our swords! Amen.