

# Summer 2020



## Hebrews 4:12

12 For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

### Reflection

These words from Hebrews are famous; and as insightful and incisive as they have

ever been. Hebrews 4:12,

For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

The words of God are not dead words on the page of a book, like every other word that has ever been penned by man. God's words – all of Scripture that has been breathed out by him – are living and active, just as he is living and active and gives us life by them. God's word is alive and active by the power of his Holy Spirit who wields it mightily to effect his purposes in our world. Hebrews 4:12 provides us with an image so that we might see from

one perspective, what this looks like,

For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

The image is that of a double-edged sword. An instrument of justice. God's word is personified as a divine warrior, living and active, sword in hand to effect God's justice in in our world. All of humankind will live or die, rise or fall, on the strength of these words.

The imagery continues. God's word is sharp and penetrating, far sharper and penetrating far deeper into our beings

than any double-edged sword. Can you relate to this? When Peter preached from God's word at Pentecost we read in Acts 2:37 that people,

were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?"

Can you relate to them? When was the last time that God's word shone a bright light into the dark recesses of your soul and moved you like this? Verses like these come to mind; sharp, penetrating words that divide our eternal souls from our earthly spirits, words that search us and sift us, words that sit in judgment over the thoughts and deepest longings of our hearts,

26 What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Matt 16:26

24 “No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money. Matt 6:24

7 For who makes you different from anyone else? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not? 1 Cor 4:7

8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of

God— 9 not by works, so that no one can boast. Eph 2:8-9

9 The heart is deceitful above all things

and beyond cure.

Who can understand it? Jer 17:9

5 Likewise, the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark.

6 The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole body, sets the whole course of one's life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell. Jas 3:5–6

28 But I tell you that anyone who

looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. 29 If your right eye causes you to stumble, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. Matt 5:28

Words like these get at us. They penetrate. They weigh us and find us wanting. They lead us to repentance. They hurt but they are good for us, as God convicts us of our sin by his Holy Spirit and renews us in his likeness. When it comes to God's word it is not 'those who live by the sword that die by the sword' but those who die by the sword who will live. God's word puts to death in us the evil desires of our sinful nature and make us alive in him. By it we

are renewed, redeemed and refined by him and made holy.

12 For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

## **Think & Pray**

Are you allowing yourself to be shaped by the word of God? Does God's word regularly cut you to the heart or have you cut yourself off from it and become desensitized to it? Is God's word still like a thunderclap overhead or do you find yourself drifting off in the pews?



Think about questions like these this morning and pray over them with God. Praise him for the gracious work that he has performed in your life so far and pray that his word would be more alive and active than ever for you in 2017. May it penetrate you and find within you the thoughts and attitudes of Christ. May it regularly remind you of his grace. May it be on your lips as you lead others to him by its power. And may it be your constant joy and hope in this New Year to come.