“The Benefits of God’s Word”
Hebrews 4:1-13

How we respond to God’s Word reveals how we feel and what we really believe about the God of the Word. How we treat our Bible is a mirror reflection of how we respond to God Himself.

Knowing the Word of God points us to knowing the God of the Word.

Philip Brooks—“The Bible is like a telescope. If a man looks through his telescope he sees worlds beyond; but if he looks at his telescope, he does not see anything but that. The Bible is a thing to be looked through to see that which is beyond; but most people only look at it and so they see only the dead letter.”

Priority must be given to God’s Word in our life!

Illustration—“A former park ranger at Yellowstone National Park tells the story of a ranger leading a group of hikers to a fire lookout. The ranger was so intent on telling the hikers about the flowers and animals that he considered the messages on his two-way radio distracting, so he switched it off. Nearing the tower, the ranger was met by a nearly breathless lookout, who asked why he hadn’t responded to the messages on his radio. A grizzly bear had been seen stalking the group, and the authorities were trying to warn them of the danger. Any time we turn out the messages God has sent us, we put at peril not only ourselves, but also those around us. How important it is that we never turn off God’s saving communication!”

In chapter 4, the writer of Hebrews clues us in on several benefits that God’s Word has in our lives.

1. **Emancipates us from sin’s bondage (4:1-2)**

   “Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it. For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it.”

By way of context, keep in mind that the writer of Hebrews has been using a comparison of Old Testament Israel and the hardness of their hearts in the wilderness.

“Rest”—speaks of the freedom and victory believers are to experience in Christ; spiritual inheritance that is ours
When Israel responded to God’s Word with a hard heart, it cost them 40 years of wandering in the wilderness, and an entire generation died having never entered the Promised Land.

Again, the comparison is being made to those who presently ignore God’s Word to their own spiritual demise.

**Adrian Rogers**—“The starting place in Christian growth is to have a firm conviction about the inspiration and authority of the Bible.”

Notice that he refers to the word that does not profit:

- Not received in faith
- Not met with obedience
- Not welcomed in readiness

It is entirely possible to hear the Word, and yet the Word never benefits you. You can hear it to the extent that your ears grow dull and your hearts grow numb from the hearing.

There are some very real hindrances that lead us to neglect the Word and starve our souls in the process.

**One such hindrance is satisfaction with giving God leftovers.**

**Thomas a Kempis**—“*We give all our attention to things that do us little good, or none at all; things that are vitally necessary we don’t bother about them, just give them the go-by. Yes, all that goes to make man drives him to meddle with outward things, and if he doesn’t soon recover his senses, is only too glad to wallow in material interests and pleasures.*”

If people would put as much serious time and effort into seeking God as they do making a living, we would know something of the power and presence of God. The bottom line is that we have grown much too used to giving God leftovers and never the main meal. He never gets anything new from us, but instead the same old hand-me-downs.

The Word will not profit you if all you do is give God your leftovers after having spent the best of your life on yourself.

**Another hindrance is constantly seeking out pleasure.**
There are physical pleasures and creature comforts: food, sex, all pleasures pertaining to the body. There are mental pleasures, such as various mind entertainments. There are social pleasures and so on.

A.W. Tozer—“All these put together simply give pleasant sensations, the same sensation a baby gets by sucking his thumb. The whole human race has simply grown up seeking pleasure so that we are a race of grownup thumb-suckers.”

Acts 2:40—“Be saved from this perverse generation.”

Romans 12:1-2—“Present your bodies a living sacrifice...And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”

When we immerse ourselves in God’s Word and are filled with God’s Spirit, we go through culture detox, and the benefit is freedom and power.

God’s Word alone liberates the soul. A right understanding of the Bible opens to us the only path into the presence of God.

2. Encourages us in our faith (4:3-5)

“For we who have believed do enter that rest, as He has said: ‘So I swore in My wrath, They shall not enter My rest,’ although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. For He has spoken in a certain place of the seventh day in this way: ‘And God rested on the seventh day from all His works,’ and again in this place: ‘They shall not enter My rest.’”

When God’s Word is mixed with faith in our hearts, the benefit is spiritual rest and the satisfaction of our longing souls.

Restlessness and no contentment in life is a symptom of a lack of faith. When our faith is rooted firmly in truth, the benefit will be rest.

Faith spoken of in verse 2 is not referring to general belief. When the Israelites stood on the verge of the Promised Land, they looked and believed that the land was there. Yet they had no faith.

Faith is acting upon belief.
Ray Stedman—“The Word of God knows nothing of the easy believism that is so widely manifest in our own day. We think we can receive Jesus as Savior, raise our hand to accept Christ, and that settles the matter. We will go to heaven and there can never be any doubt about it from then on, though there is no change in our life. But the problem of Christ is that when He comes into the human heart there is a radical change of government which must...result in a revolutionary change in behavior.”

It is a tragic think that Hell populates itself every day with people who had vague belief but had no specific faith.

3. Exhorts us to live obediently (4:6-11)

“Since therefore it remains that some must enter it, and those to whom it was first preached did not enter because of disobedience, again He designates a certain day, saying in David, ‘Today,’ after such a long time, as it has been said: ‘Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts.’ For if Joshua had given them rest, then He would not afterward have spoken of another day. There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His. Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience.”

The idea here is that Israel missed out on REST because of the disobedience of their hard hearts.

God’s Word brings no benefit to the heart and life that is bent on disobedience. HEARING the Word does not equal HEEDING the Word.

Be careful that you not fall into the trap of convincing yourself that you are heeding it when you are merely hearing it.

In verse 11, there is a call to diligence.

“Diligence”—being constantly active in our faith

A.W. Tozer—“The most important thing we can devote ourselves to is giving attention to the things of God to save our soul. This must be an active, persistent and deliberate intent on our part, regardless of the difficulties that lie in our path. Too many people have made coming into God’s presence not only complicated but also all but unattainable, discouraging many from trying. It is not a journey for the indolent or for those addicted to entertainment and the coarse pleasures of the flesh. The fact that there are hindrances only emphasizes the value of coming into God’s presence...Someone has well said that
whatever is without cost does not have value. When we think of coming into the presence of God, what could be more valuable than that?”

Nothing of value is ever without cost. The Bible points us to the cost of being a follower of Jesus Christ.

Tozer says that a faulty view of God’s Word leads to committing three man-made errors:

1) The idea that all roads lead to God
2) The idea that man has no spiritual responsibility
3) The idea that the message needs to be palatable

How we react to the Bible, not just what we SAY but what we SHOW through response, reveals where we are in relationship to Him.

A.W. Tozer—“The great labor of the church has always been to get people to give serious attention to spiritual matters. A great many pastors and preachers do not worry about this at all, because they do not expect anything and, therefore, they do not get it. But a man of God, with the burden of the Holy Spirit on him, will want to stir the people to serious attention. Until serious attention has been given to the claims of Christ, it is for us as if the Bible had never been written.”

Medicine left sitting on the shelf never cured anybody. Food left sitting in the refrigerator never fed anybody. Heat never turned on never warmed anybody. And God’s Word, though it is medicine, though it is food, and though it is fire, has never benefited a person who has never given serious attention to it!

The average believer in our day is so drunk on the world that he or she has stifled his or her hunger for the things of God. Our Bibles are remaining unopened and unread, a spiritual banquet is ours to be feasted upon, but we are too preoccupied with the world’s cotton candy.

A.W. Tozer—“Contemporary Christianity is so taken up by the world that pressing on to the deep things of God becomes rather difficult. Our contemporary times stand in the way of anybody taking his or her spiritual life seriously. So many things are thrown at us; it takes a very resilient soul to resist the onslaught...Moral insensitivity and spiritual lethargy are two great curses because they keep us from taking earnest heed to our spiritual health.”

Moral insensitivity and spiritual lethargy keep us from God’s Word. Thus, the message of Hebrews rings as loud and clear as it ever has.
4. Exposes us to our heart condition (4:12-13)

“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. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.”

The writer of Hebrews compares God’s Word to a sword, meaning that it cuts and lays bare the contents of our heart.

The emphasis is on the power of the Word to penetrate and expose the inner heart of a person. God’s Word is a discerner or critic of the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

James 1:22-24—“But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was.”

We are to gaze into the Word, not glance at the Word!

In the Word we see God and we also see how God sees us. It exposes us to who we really are and what we really need.