



Divine Dining

An invitation to feed ourselves from God's Banquet

Week 4

Mining



Words – just breath, or something more powerful?

Warm-up question: “You say the nicest things...”

What is the best thing anyone has ever said to you? Can you remember a time when someone's words have had the power to change your life, or at least, lift your day? When have the words of another really made the difference?

Read: Hebrews 4:12

Discuss

1. The writer of the letter to the Hebrews describes the Bible in challenging terms; God's word has the power to uncover thoughts and attitudes. Take a moment to think about Scriptures which have been particularly significant to you. You may want to share favourite verses in which you have found encouragement; but think too about Scriptures which you have found particularly challenging. When have you experienced the power of the word of God to penetrate "...even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow, [judging] the thoughts and attitudes of the heart"?

Don't worry if you can't think of particular verses or sections of the bible – think about some of the key ideas and principles which run right through scripture which you find particularly challenging – you may think of God's omnipotence and sovereignty, his role as judge of all mankind, our own God-given responsibility for creation. In what ways do you find the witness of scripture as a whole particularly challenging?

2. Throughout the Bible, the phrase 'Word of God' is used of the revelation of God's truth, which accomplished his purposes with power. In the Old Testament it is often used of the words of the prophets; in the New Testament it refers to the good news of Jesus Christ, being used in this sense throughout Acts, and in the same sense by Paul (see 1 Thessalonians 2:13 for a typical example), or the term is linked with the work of the Holy Spirit (see Ephesians 6:17 for a famous example). Most famously, the Word of God is used of the eternal and incarnate Jesus.

How does the idea of the Bible being the Word of God affect the way you read it? Do you find the idea equally easy to apply to every part of scripture? Why?

Why do you think the writer might have wanted to use this term? What does it tell us about how we might approach reading both the Old and New Testament?

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How can we study the bible so that we become not merely hearers of the Word, but doers? (see James 1:22-25)

3. Why do you think so many Christians find it difficult to set aside regular times to read or study the Bible? Have there been times in your life when you have found it particularly difficult, or particularly rewarding? What do you think has made the difference? How do you think your journey with God would suffer if you were never to read the Bible? What difference would it make to your experience of church? How do you think the mission of the church as a whole would be affected if every Christian really was a daily bible reader?

4. What do you think is the difference between reading the bible, (for example in our quiet times to lead us into prayer), and studying the bible? Why do you think it might be important for us to do both?

Reflect: Slowly read out aloud the passage below, which is from Psalm 119, verses 10-16:

*I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands.
I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.
Praise be to you, O LORD; teach me your decrees.
With my lips I recount all the laws that come from your mouth.
I rejoice in following your statutes as one rejoices in great riches.
I meditate on your precepts and consider your ways.
I delight in your decrees; I will not neglect your word.*

You may want to let this passage lead you as a group into prayer, thanking God for his Word, for the truth, warning and encouragement it contains, and for his love for us expressed through it.

Respond:

Pray for one another – ask him to help you to read and study his word, to really absorb it and let it lead you into truth and prompt you to action for the Kingdom.