

Eighth Sunday after Pentecost – July 30, 2017
Good Shepherd Ev. Lutheran Church

Pastor Charles Heup

Isaiah 55:10-11 (NIV)

As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, (11) so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.

Friends in Christ,

This pruner works great for clipping off the old flowers on some of the bushes in my yard. I can even use it to shape some of the trees in my yard. This hedge clipper works great on bushes and shrubs but it's not real useful on my trees. If I need to cut off a low limb or branch on a tree I can always use my saw. These are some handy tools to have when I want to do yard work but they wouldn't help me much if I needed to fix my car. I'd need a whole different set of tools for that project, wouldn't I?

Our text speaks about a tool that can be used to change lives –the Word of the Lord. It's the only proper tool for the job. As we consider our text for today we will be reminded that

God's Word is Effective – It's the right tool for the job.

1. God's Word is Effective because it is divine
2. God's Word is Effective therefore it satisfies our hearts like rain and snow
3. Because God's Word is Effective it always accomplishes God's will

When a person is looking for a quality tool it can be important to look for a well-known brand name – Craftsman and Stanley tools have a lifetime guarantee.

The Holy Scriptures are a quality tool because they come from the Lord. In our text, Isaiah quotes the Lord as he writes about the effectiveness of the word that goes out from my mouth. The Bible is not based on the power or authority of men. God himself stands behind and backs up every statement, promise, teaching, and command of the Scriptures.

God uses his word to make contact with sinners and to change their lives. His word is living and active - (Hebrews 4:12 NIV) **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.** God's Word pricks our consciences, as it judges not just our sinful actions but our sinful thoughts and attitudes.

The Apostle Paul reminds us of the power of God's Word as when he writes: (Romans 1:16 NIV) **For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile.**

God's word not only has the ability to judge our lives, it has the ability to bring salvation to us. The Gospel works faith in the hearts of sinners leading them to trust in what Christ Jesus has done for them.

The Lord Jesus who proclaimed, “**Your Word is truth**”, reminds us of the truthfulness of God’s word. Moses wrote: (Numbers 23:19 NIV) **God is not human, that he should lie, not a human being, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill?**

The Holy Scriptures are filled with reminders that they are words from the mouth of the Lord – for example Isaiah repeatedly mentioned that he received his message from the Lord; for example: (Isaiah 8:11 NIV) **This is what the LORD says to me with his strong hand upon me, warning me not to follow the way of this people:**

Other prophets made similar claims, as did the writers of the NT. (2 Peter 1:21 NIV) **For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.**

The Apostle Paul reminds us: (1 Corinthians 2:13 NIV) **This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words.** (2 Timothy 3:16 NIV) **All Scripture is God-breathed...**

Finally, God’s word is long lasting – the various Gospels remind us that Jesus said, “**Heaven and earth will pass away but my word will never pass away.**”

One way to determine the quality and usefulness of a tool is by checking the brand name that stands behind it. God stands behind the Scriptures. God’s word is effective because it is divine.

As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, (11) so is my word that goes out from my mouth:

The Lord uses a simple yet memorable comparison as he speaks about the effectiveness of his word. The Lord God of heaven and earth compares the effect his word has on the lives and hearts of all people with the effect rain and snow have upon the earth. God is the one who is in control of bringing needed moisture to the soil. Such watering provides a necessary ingredient in the sprouting, growth and production of the seeds planted in the earth. The harvest of wheat provides seeds that can be milled into flour for bread as well as seeds that can be planted the next season to produce another crop. This process allows people to live year after year through the power of the Lord who is in control of everyone and everything. The moisture provided by the snow and the rain brings good results before it evaporates and returns to heaven.

God’s word goes out from his mouth and touches the lives of people to bring them under the Lord’s grace and pardon. God’s word is effective. It satisfies the desires of our hearts like rain and snow. There is a divine purpose behind every proclamation of God’s word in this world. God’s word creates faith in the hearts of men, women, and children. That same word of God produces fruits of faith in the lives of God’s children.

The Apostle Paul told Timothy what the power of God’s word could do: (2 Timothy 3:15-17 NIV) ... **you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.**

No matter what section of God’s word we might be studying – God has preserved it because it is important for us to know. What purpose does God’s word have? 1) It makes us wise for salvation through Christ. It saves us from sin and damnation through faith in Jesus. 2) It educates and trains God’s children to live for him. 3) Finally, it brings glory to God.

One primary reason for searching the Scriptures is to come to faith in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Concerning the words of his Gospel the Apostle John declares: (John 20:31 NIV) **But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.** Jesus himself said: (John 5:39 NIV) **You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me,**

Sometimes the Bible teaches us about God, or about our world or about ourselves. At other times that word rebukes – it points out and condemns what is improper or sinful. Sometimes God’s word corrects our false ideas and notions as it points us to the truth. It trains us in righteousness – helping us to see what is pleasing and acceptable in God’s eyes. The word equips us to do works God considers good because they are done through faith in Christ Jesus.

The Bible is a unit in which all parts, statements, doctrines, commandments, and promises, either directly or indirectly serve the purpose of teaching men how to be saved through faith in the Savior and how to live as children of God in this world to the glory of their Lord. It is for this purpose that the word of God should be used. Using it for other purposes means taking the name of God in vain.

3. Because God’s Word is Effective it always accomplishes God’s will.

One of the ways that God was using Isaiah was to call men to a knowledge of their sins. God’s word would harden their hearts. Another way that God used Isaiah was to enable men to see their Savior – the word drew nations to the Lord.

We need to keep these thoughts in mind as we consider the wonderful tool the Lord has given us.

A person can have an entire garage full of tools but they won’t accomplish anything if we don’t use them. Isaiah’s words serve to encourage us to use the word. The word is for all people. We are to use the word by hearing it: as our Lord tells us: **Blessed are they who hear the word of God and obey it.**

Secondly, we use the Word by reading and studying it in such a way that we can understand and apply what we have read.

Thirdly, we are to meditate on what we have learned – seeking to implant these truths into our hearts, minds and lives. As we meditate on the truths of Scripture, their meaning will become more clear to us and they will sink deeper and deeper into our hearts.

Fourthly, we are to accept what the Scriptures say as truth and believe them. It is not our purpose to challenge or to question their authority.

Fifthly, we will observe or follow or do what the Scriptures teach – making a practical use of the Scriptures.

Sixthly, we will teach the scriptures to others – to our children and to all creation.

As we use the word in these ways, we have the promise that God’s Word is effective. It will accomplish whatever he desires.

God’s Word is Effective – It’s the right tool for the job.

1. It is divine
2. It satisfies our hearts like rain and snow
3. It always accomplishes God’s will

Amen.