

**God's Word in Worship**  
Heb 4:12 & Rom 12:1-2

The Lord's Day assembly is about gathering with our brothers and sisters to encounter the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit. In this encounter we *give* praise and *receive* strength.

- We are strengthened as God hears and answers our prayers.
- We are strengthened as we eat the Lord's Supper.
- We are strengthened as we hear God speak to us *through His word*.

Let's consider *God's Word in Worship*. Begin in an unusual place:

- I. Our lives are to be offered up to God as a living sacrifice: Rom 12:1-2 *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. 2 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.*
  - A. In O.T. Animals were offered up in place of the worshiper.
    1. The worshiper pressed his hand on head of animal in order to identify himself with the animal.
    2. He would then take a sacrificial knife, cut its throat, cut it in pieces, cook it on alter where aroma ascends as sweet smell to God
  - B. In the N.T. Christians offer themselves.
    1. Our whole person is to be offered up to God.
    2. We are to offer a holy sacrifice. Holiness is described in v. 2 as:
      - a. non conformity to this world
      - b. transformation through a renewed mind.
    3. The parallel between the OT offering is more detailed.
      - a. The whole animal wasn't just thrown on the alter and burnt.
      - b. First, it was cut up and arranged in a particular way.
      - c. The animal was transformed by the sacrificial knife and processed in such a way as to be pleasing unto God.
      - d. In this same way we must be transformed.
  - C. In the N.T. the knife that kills/processes/transforms us is God's word. By means of His **word** God renews our minds and transforms our lives into a living sacrifice and a holy offering.
- II. The Word - God's sacrificial knife: 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.*
  - A. Sword - **machaira**: *a large knife, used for killing animals and cutting up flesh* (Thayer's).
  - B. The word of God is a knife that cuts us up.
    1. It **exposes our sins**, including the secret sin.
    2. It **rearranges our lives** and transforms us so that we can be holy and acceptable offerings to God.

- III. The implications of all of this are very important.
- A. God's word is an instrument designed to kill and resurrect.
1. The assembly is a place for slaughter: 1Cor 14:24-25 *But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or an uninformed person comes in, he is convinced by all, he is convicted by all. 25 And thus the secrets of his heart are revealed; and so, falling down on his face, he will worship God and report that God is truly among you.*
    - (1) Prophecy - speak forth word of God (bring to bear)
    - (2) Paul gives us a glimpse of an ideal church service.
    - (3) hearers are to be *convinced* and *convicted*,
  - b. Preaching is to expose sins (esp. hidden sins).
  - c. The hearer falls down and worships.
    - (1) After being slain with the gospel blade.
    - (2) He becomes a holy and can worship God acceptably.
- B. This is why our assemblies should be word saturated: This does not necessarily mean that preaching must always be at the center because the word is presented in various ways:
1. **In song:** Eph 5:19 - The word of God should be at the center of our singing.
  2. **In prayer:** we saw last week how the powerful prayers of the Bible are based on and filled with the word of God.
  3. **In Reading:** 1Tim 4:13
  4. **In Preaching:** 2 Tim 4:1-2
- IV. So we must be a people of the book:
- A. We must remain a Bible centered people.
- B. Not the same as tradition centered people.
1. Tradition - *living faith of the dead.*
  2. Traditionalism - *the dead faith of the living.*
- C. Doesn't mean we have to always be in 100% agreement.
1. We do have to agree that the Bible has the answers
  2. We do have to agree to pursue like mindedness.
  3. Fellowship isn't the reward that comes after we attain like mindedness, but is often the means by which we grow into like mindedness.
- D. The Bible isn't a book of ideas for us to understand, it is a sword that dismembers and reconfigures us to go out and live for God in the world.

Deut 32:45-47 *Moses finished speaking all these words to all Israel, 46 and he said to them: "Set your hearts on all the words which I testify among you today, which you shall command your children to be careful to observe -- all the words of this law. 47 For it is not a futile thing for you, because it is your life.*