

Seven Word Pictures God Uses to Describe God's Word

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[0 : 00] Are you feeling the excitement, the energy that the rain brings? Kind of like God telling us, all right, all fun is over, now it's time. One of the things I wanted to talk to you before I got into today's sermon, and I'm actually asking you guys a favor, a question, a request, whatever you want to call it.

But I wanted to share some news with you, and I wanted your feedback on this. So, I'm not on.

Am I on now? Am I on now? All right. You guys didn't hear me sing, I hope, right? I know God did, but he's a lot more forgiving than you, okay?

All right. A couple of months ago, I was asked to, and this might mean something to our Filipino community, but I've been asked to go to the Philippines and lead a teaching seminar for over 250, 270 Filipino pastors.

So, this is held. I've done it before, and for some reason, they have asked me back. The pressure on it, though, is they want me to be the speaker for the whole time together.

[1 : 23] So, it's basically over a three-day period, 15 messages. And part of it is actually teaching construction of sermons, how to approach the pastorate for a large.

Many of the pastors that are there, they are uneducated. A lot of them jump in for these type of seminars. Now, the ministry that I'm involved in that does it, they actually, we help pay for these pastors to attend, because a lot of them don't have the means.

So, basically, what they do is they come from all over the Philippine islands for this. So, I was asked a couple of weeks ago, or it was actually a couple of months ago, but I said I would put it to you.

So, there's a couple of things that I need. One is I need someone, hopefully from a Filipino background, that would like to help me with the organization and communication with the people back there and helping organize this.

But I also have to raise \$10,000. So, basically, what we do is by raising the money, we're helping the Filipino pastors come. At the conference, there's a doctor there, because a lot of them don't have the ability to get regular medical checks.

[2 : 35] So, that part is taken care of. They are offered free books, so we use the money to ship books over there that we've been able to accumulate from different churches across North America.

So, the money is partly used to ship. And then, therefore, like, we have a deal with one of the companies. It's a really great study Bible. But the problem is shipping them over is where the real cost is.

So, it's getting together, so they each get special study Bibles. So, part of my work there will also be to help them. How do we use these study Bibles?

What's the strength, some of the weaknesses, and those type of things. So, if the Lord would lead you to want to be a part of this ministry, I'm asking if you'd let me know.

You can email me at bk at squamishbaptist.org. Whether it's financial or helping me communicate, helping me organize and get this set up, I have to give them an answer within a month.

[3 : 38] So, just we as elders had talked about this. We felt we'd put it to you, and I told them I would do it if I had your permission. So, it would mean I'd be away for about three weeks next October to do this trip.

So, that's my request to you. Last time I was there, I became violently ill. So, I'm staying away from ice as well as water.

I got fooled on a salad, and that kind of did me in. But it was a great blessing. I actually was on IV between each session that I preached. But it was an incredible blessing, and I've received a lot of great feedback, and I feel honored that they've asked me to come back and lead the whole conference.

So, if you do that, I would really appreciate your prayers, support with that. So, today, new ministry season. I thought I would preach on the subject of God's Word.

We use that. You've heard the phrase around here quite a bit. We base our ministry on God's Word. I think we do more than just base it on God's Word.

[4 : 57] I don't know if you guys read a lot of blogs or follow a lot of Christian news. Sometimes you'll hear me use the word greater evangelicalism.

That means kind of what the church is going on. There are some sad things that happen, I would say. I know Dave owns the book. I don't know if he's got a high opinion of the book.

But I've got a book, and it's by one of our favorite guys. Paul Tripp writes a book called A Dangerous Calling. And it's basically the dangerous calling that a pastor has and those that really serve in ministry and how Satan can get in the ministry.

And one of the saddest aspects, you might have seen my post on Facebook, is that three of the five people who recommended the book are now disqualified from ministry.

Turns out I've met all three of these guys. Some of these men were regarded as very highly influential. One guy just kind of left the faith entirely.

[5 : 59] He's just going a whole new direction. He's repenting from all his Bible teaching. The other guy is just completely immoral. And the other guy is just completely stubborn. And fights with everybody, and it's disqualified him.

It's funny. You know, the Bible warns us that these things are going to happen. In fact, there's websites dedicated by non-Christian organizations to out sinful Christians and demonstrate our hypocrisy.

I think there's probably enough hypocrisy in our own lives to sustain a website for quite some time, right? But we have this God that loves us and is graceful, and we pursue him with a love and dedication.

When I read some of these stories, there is feelings of pain. Sometimes it's a brother that I know that I've prayed on, in fact.

A man that I spent an entire year in prayer with, meeting twice a week. His whole life is being put on the internet to destroy not only him, but to destroy his soul.

[7 : 17] It's vicious. What's interesting is that the attacks don't always come from the outside.

They come often from the inside as well. However, for me, the most painful attacks I get, men are going to sin.

They're going to fall. I believe in total repentance. I love it that God is a great and merciful God.

But the most painful stories for me is the believer who decides to live an immoral life, but still tries to claim that they're a Christian.

That is actually the most painful because within that, there's such a level of dishonesty. I kind of respect the guy who's throwing away the whole Christian faith.

[8 : 15] He's just, don't even put my name in there. I'm just going to go live that life. I feel bad for him, but he's actually showing a level of integrity. I want to be honest with you. But it's the person that really does it.

And you just want to scream at them, do you really believe the Bible? This is a question theologians, pastors have been challenging the church with for decades.

Back in the 70s, a bunch of pastors got together because they realized that there was a shift from God's word. People were saying they were Christian, but they weren't doing what the Bible was teaching.

So they drew up this document. They said, how are we going to be able to discern in churches from within who's kind of on God's side and who's on man's side?

So they drew up this document and it was called the Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy. And it was created by a group of evangelical pastors from all over the world.

[9 : 23] And it was meant to either affirmed or denied certain truths. Well, a generation has happened since that. In 2015, there was a summit.

There was a summit in Southern California and they invited pastors from all over the world. I think there was over 80 countries that were represented, over 6,000 pastors came from all over the world to affirm that we do indeed believe in God's word.

A couple of, let me quote to you a few statements that they came up and affirmed. One, those who profess faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior are called to show the reality in their discipleship by humbly and faithfully obeying God's written word.

Amen? We're going to call ourselves Christians. We're actually going to obey God's word. To stray from Scripture in faith or conduct is disloyalty to our master.

Recognition of the total truth and trustworthiness of Holy Scripture is essential to a full grasp and adequate confession of its authority.

[10 : 38] So why did this need it to happen? Because we've noticed that there's been all sorts of games that people play with God's word, right?

That's what your tribe believes. And we're not talking about different preferences that exist in the overall Christian church. We're talking about denying certain truths that we see in Scripture.

We see it in those that discount its teachings by saying it's good for people from 2,000 years ago, but not for today. We reject that Paul actually wrote it, therefore it's not valid.

People will say that it doesn't equate with our 21st century sensibilities. And come on, let's be honest. Our cultural culture is what we need to determine what is true and relevant.

But we know that the Bible is inspired by God. We believe it's been inspired by God inerrant in the original document and is the final authority in all matters of faith.

[11 : 53] What this means is, if this is God's word, God said it. Amen? It was as if he was speaking to us directly.

Because it is from God, it is truthful. It is good. Doesn't mean red letters are more truthful than black letters.

Doesn't mean the Gospels are more superior to the Epistles or the New Testament is better than the Old Testament. God wrote it all.

We believe it's good in its entirety. Although some will say it's an ancient document for ancient people, God has written a document that lasts all time.

So today I thought I'd put together seven word pictures that exist in the Bible that demonstrate to us what the Bible is.

[12 : 54] So you're going to see in your bulletin today that I put the scripture references. So you will have them to go back. I encourage you to always do this to ascertain what I am saying is indeed true and found in God's word.

The first and perhaps the most powerful description, word picture that we have for God's word is that it is a sword. It is a sword.

The writer of Hebrews tells us quite clearly, Hebrews 4, 12, 13, For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword.

The sword is something that cuts, it pierces. The writer of Hebrews then goes on to tell us about four qualities to this sword and four things that it does.

The first quality of the sword is it is the word of God. The Bible is never advertised as the word of man. It is advertised as the word of God.

[14 : 00] If you're familiar with the context of the book of Hebrews, they were a bunch of Jews that were living in a community that had placed their faith in Jesus Christ, but because of the trials of life, they were wanting to go back to Judaism.

They wanted to go back to the law. Kind of reminds you of those first, or the Jews under Moses, right? Freedom from Egypt, they're free of that slavery.

Then they got asking, man, maybe it was more easier to live under slavery in the yoke of Pharaoh than it is here to be worshipping God.

You see, if it is God's word and God is speaking to us, we have to obey it. God is not saying, perhaps some of you are smarter or some of you guys are more enlightened.

It's not for you. No, there is no one greater than God. This morning, I read to you from Psalm 95, which provides a clear warning.

[15 : 11] If you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts. God and his word cannot be separated. Haddon Spurgeon wrote, The word of God, this revelation of himself in holy scriptures, is all it is here described to be, because Jesus, the incarnate word of God, is in it.

Amen? You cannot have Christ without the word, so neither can you have the word without Christ. If you leave Jesus Christ out of the scriptures, you have left out the essential truth that it was written to declare.

The Bible is not just a collection of religious writings from ancient past, but a book that speaks to all people, everywhere, in nearly all languages of the world.

It's not born of culture, tradition, or society. Let me ask you a question. Who here grew up with a Bible that wasn't in English? Amazing, eh?

People outside of our culture speaking a different language. The Bible saved them, just like it saves us here. Or rather, saves us.

[16 : 31] The second quality that we read about this sword is that it is living. In the Greek, the first word of the sentence is actually a participle, and it's living.

Living is the word of God. And what Paul, or the writer, is doing is he's putting an emphasis on what this sword is. And that emphasis is that it is alive.

It is not dead. Meaning the most important quality is it's alive. You see, this is a mystery which only living men brought to life by the Spirit of God can understand, right?

If you are a believer, you can understand why that book is alive. It pierces you. Sometimes it angers you. It frustrates you.

It breaks you. It busts you. There's no other writing that has this type of power to bring life, to perform miracles, and to impart life to its readers.

[17 : 38] I've got several friends that have great testimonies. One man that I knew, I worked in youth ministry. He used to be a homeless man. He had come over from Mexico many years.

He was an illegal immigrant wandering San Diego, and he would go hotel to hotel dumpster looking to food to live. Someone threw out a Gideon Bible.

He found that Bible and got saved. Who does that, right? My other friend, she was a Muslim, diehard feminist Muslim if there's ever such a thing.

Pastor didn't like her, so to get revenge on the pastor, she stole a Bible from his pew. Got home, read it.

She's now in charge of evangelism and married to an elder at her church. Just by simply picking up this book and reading it.

[18 : 33] This Bible, it moves us. It stirs us. It communes with our spirit. The wisest man who ever lived said the following, My son, keep your father's commandment and forsake not your mother's teaching.

Bind them on your heart always. Tie them around your neck. When you walk, they will lead you. When you lie down, they will watch over you. And when you awake, they will talk with you.

That is a living word. So the third quality that we read here is because it's living, God's word is active. And it's where we get this word energy in our language.

It means it's capable. It's forceful. It's effective. It is not dead. It is not outdated. It is not flat. Nor is it expired.

And it is certainly not meant for any other century. The Bible always works. The Bible takes no days off. There is no sabbatical to the truth we find in God's word.

[19 : 40] Nobody can escape the energy that it has. Just as God's word brought forth creation in Genesis, so God's word brings life in us.

Ephesians 2. We've covered this so many times. But it's a good word. Ephesians 2, 1 to 4. And you were dead in the trespasses and sin in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience, among whom we all lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of this body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath like the rest of mankind.

But God, rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ.

By grace you have been saved. Amen? It's not a dead letter. It's not a dead word. Those who choose to ignore the message of scripture will experience not merely the power of God's word, but the keen edge as well.

That brings us to the fourth quality of the sword. It is sharp. It's a double-edged sword. There is no blunt side.

[21 : 20] And what's interesting is that it cuts both ways. It both brings life and brings condemnation. We read in Revelation that God's word is equally fit to save and it's equally fit to judge.

We all know that God's truth is a wonderful blessing to those who choose to believe, and it's a curse to those who choose not to believe. So now that we know what the word of God is, what does it do?

First quality, it pierces. The sword is meant to pierce. Like a rapier, it pierces through our artwood facades, the masks that we wear.

It pierces through our excuses that we have in life. In fact, it's so sharp, it cuts to our inner being.

It discerns our thoughts, our attitudes, our intentions of the heart. It plunges its way to the deepest part of us.

[22 : 30] The word of God knows us. The second thing it does is the word of God judges.

Judges in the Greek word means to, it's the word critical, where we get the word critical from. It's able to render a divine verdict on those thoughts that it sees, on those intentions that it sees, and on those attitudes that it sees.

We as men and women are so used to looking on the exterior, looking on the first impressions. It's easy for us to be impressed, isn't it?

However, God knows our heart. God does where no one else can see. He sees and judges not only our secret actions, but our secret thoughts as well.

The word of God reveals our innermost thoughts, our inner ambitions, our deepest motives, and our deepest attitudes. Why? Because it's meant to convict us of the rebellion against God.

[23 : 44] And it does so to subdue us and lead us to Jesus Christ, the good shepherd. The third use, and the fourth, it's the word of God opens us up, and the word of God exposes us.

Like a surgeon does on a surgeon table, and he takes that scalpel, and he opens us up to see their inner workings. So does the word of God.

In fact, nothing remains untouched by Scripture, and it addresses every aspect of our lives. Psalm 139 says, There's no hiding from this word.

This word exposes. What's interesting is, we think it's like it almost renders us naked where everybody can see, but that's actually not what the word exposes. What it's using, it's like on the armor that a Roman soldier would have, he was exposed at his neck.

And what that means is that was the most vulnerable part of his body as he went to war. And that's what God's word does. Like the Roman soldier has his neck exposed.

[25 : 27] It's where he is the most vulnerable. The Bible does so with us. God's word of the Bible is so alive, so currently powerful, and so currently effective, it reveals to us where we are vulnerable.

It tells us that our excuses don't work. Tells us that our false pretenses don't work.

Our cover-ups won't work. You see, God's word is a death blow to our pride.

It's a death blow to our self-sufficiency, our self-flattery, and our self-righteousness.

Like the sacrificial knife to the throat of the lamb who was shed for our sin, God's word cuts out our sinful tendencies.

[26 : 34] God's word cuts out our sinful thoughts. And God's word cuts out our sinful habits. Wherever it goes, it goes as the sharpest sword, afflicting death on evil.

You see, the word of God is meant to kill our old depraved life. That rebel who remains in our flesh, by submitting ourselves to God's word like a sharp scalpel, it comes in and cuts out that cancer.

So that is the first word picture that God uses to describe his word as a sword. The second word picture that the Bible uses to describe itself is a mirror.

Is a mirror. James 1.23 says, For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror.

For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forget what he was like. One of the most clever songs when I was a teenage kid was a song called Mirrors.

[27 : 50] It simply had the lyric, A mirror is but a negative space with a frame. It's a place for your faiths. It reveals what the rest of us see.

And it conceals what you'd like to be. Mirrors reveal a lot of things that we don't like about ourselves, right? Whether it be that extra blemish.

For me, I love the gray hairs that it's starting to show. Right? But it's all those things. I don't know if you guys read about the store in LA. They were getting sued because they were actually using mirrors that made you appear thinner.

Right? And it wasn't a carnival trick. Like it was one of those carnival, but it was just slightly a bit to align your true perspective of yourself. So you'd want to buy your clothes, right?

You see, the mirror reveals our thoughts, our attitudes. Sometimes those are the things our friends and counselors cannot see.

[28 : 54] Sometimes we don't get the best accurate picture of who we are from others. We need God's word. So when I was telling my wife about this sermon, kind of jazzed up about it, she suggested I should get kind of dressed up for it like a knight, right?

And have a sword and show a mirror. But the third word picture kind of does away with this. It's a seed that germinates.

And the fourth one is milk. I didn't know how I was going to do that. So, the fourth word picture, the third word picture that the Bible uses to describe itself is a seed.

1 Peter 1.23 says, Since you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable through the living and abiding word of God.

Amen? Amen? A seed is meant to bring life from something so small. We see something so great and big. Sadly, we have a lot of great big kale growing in our garden right now.

[30 : 03] Apparently, if you dehydrate it and turn it into chips, it doesn't really taste any better. But one of my professors was very clear on this.

An apple seed doesn't grow into a bowling alley, right? An apple seed grows into apples. It brings up something of its own kind.

And once we're planted with that imperishable seed of God, it brings about the fruit of the Spirit, something that we need to nourish in water.

As we stated in Ephesians 2, God is the one who brings us alive. We get supernatural life from a supernatural seed.

The fourth word picture used is, as I said, it's milk. Milk is meant to nourish. 1 Peter 2, 2, Like newborn infants long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation.

[31 : 08] If you have no desire for God's word, this is the word rendering judgment on you, you may not be of the imperishable seed.

If you have no desire to know what God teaches and what he has for you in his wisdom, God may not be your father.

We're to desire this milk to grow like newborn babies. Babies. The tragic thing is, I've got, my friend has two sisters.

They live in LA. Probably the most wonderful, beautiful sisters I've ever met. They were three of them, and their whole life is built to adopting babies that are drug addicts.

Not babies that were born to drug addicts, but babies that are born by drug addicts and are drug addicts. What we take in can poison us.

[32 : 21] It can destroy us. Most of these children, some of them only have a few months to live, but they still take them into their homes and love them as if they were very, their very own, and they were going to live a complete and full life.

They're convicted and convinced that they want to give these babies the best loving environment even for their short lives here on earth.

See, when we drink of the wrong substance, it can deform us. It can kill us. It can poison us. It can deprave our mind.

When we listen to truths that are outside of God's word. You see, only truth comes from the word of God.

We are to be always craving for more of this church, this truth. We will never outgrow our need for this growth. We will never outgrow our need for maturity, and we will never outgrow our need for holiness.

[33 : 33] Psalm 119 says, I have stored up your word in my heart that I might not sin against you. In fact, the matter is, God's word helps us resist temptation.

It helps us to stay out of sin's way. It keeps us pure. It keeps us faithful, and it keeps us holy, which leads to joy. Amen? How many times are we in anxiety and anxiousness and upset because of sin or we're living in the consequences of it?

So the fourth word picture is milk. The fifth one is, it is a lamp that shines. Psalm 119, 105, your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

Right? A lamp shines. It leads our path. The reality is we live in a very dark world, and I've seen, like I said, many Christians with right sentiments destroyed on the rocks of this world because they chose to ignore the wisdom of God's word.

One of the things that I'm actually joyful of when I see these young children up at the front, not only, not because of what we're doing in our time of junior church with them, but it's often been reported to me how well our children are knowing God's word.

[35 : 00] That means you at home are making the time to teach these impressionable minds God's truth. That is a great and mighty thing.

I can tell you, just through my time in evangelism and being involved in parachurch ministries, those who were exposed to God's word at an early age when they start working through things are way easier to convert because I don't have to go through the whole argument that there is a God.

They already know there's a God, right? They already have this conscience because they've been exposed to these truths which they readily accept. And I encourage you as parents and grandparents to continue doing that.

But for those parents who are relying on the school and the educators outside of yourselves to be the ones to impart truth on your children, you're actually sending your kids out to be lambs to a slaughter.

The world outside does not preach Jesus Christ. As we become a more secular and secular culture, it's actually more work for you to counter that teaching and to give them that truth.

[36 : 23] You see, there's an assumption that once it's gotten through to the head and the heart, we want to see this faith go to their feet which is the actual belief part.

And that's what you need to be doing. It's not just instructing them God's ways. It's actually modeling for them God's ways. It's actually asking about their hearts and being aware of the hearts and not so much the external actions but the inward motivations.

It's interesting just reading upon for my next sermon series that will be coming up out of Ephesians, one of Satan's greatest temptations that he uses against us is he keeps us away from sin because we fear others will find out about it.

You know, sometimes we use accountability to keep us from sin when the real response is we are to hate the sin because we hate the sin. It's not because we're afraid it's going to get exposed.

It's not because we're afraid it will lead to open shame. But we need to have an attitude that we hate the sin because it's against God himself.

[37 : 46] The sixth word picture is God's word is a consuming fire. Jeremiah writes for God when he says, is not my world like fire declares the Lord.

Fire consumes what it comes in contact with. If there is no repentance and there's no turning to God, there's only eternal fire for those that choose not to believe.

Leads us with two choices, be blessed or be burned. And the seventh word picture that we see in the pages of Scripture is also found in Jeremiah 23, 29 when he says, and my word like a hammer that breaks the rocks in pieces.

God's word shatters our pride. It shatters our self-knowledge. It shatters our self-righteousness.

And it shatters our self-trust. You see, this hammer is meant to break our hardened hearts. It's meant to break through our thick foreheads.

[39 : 08] It's meant to break through our stony souls. And it's meant to crush the rock of our disbelief. It's a good thing when God's word comes against us.

You know that? It is a good thing. I think the even application is revere God's word.

Read it, study it, pray it, prize it. When we feel dead, pray God's word. Spurgeon wrote, the best private devotion is made up of half of searching scripture and what God speaks to us and the other half of prayer and praise in which we speak to God.

But if there's an application that I might impart you with from today, allow the word of God to criticize you. Let's be honest, we're soft.

We don't like job reviews. We don't like tests. We don't like to be found circumspect, to be examined. Don't run away from God's criticism of you.

[40 : 40] Stay. Be convicted. Be broken. Do confess.

And do mourn. Those are all powerful, wonderful actions before the Lord. I am nervous for the person who's quick to admit fault yet doesn't mourn over their sin.

If the word of God approves you, you are approved. But it's meant to search you, to try you, to expose you.

But God doesn't do so because he can condemn you or to show hatred to you or to make you feel judged. The purpose God does that is to reveal who you are so you can understand your need for a Savior.

So you can need and understand your need that you can't fix all these things. That you cannot make yourself right before God.

[42 : 22] But there's only one person who can. And God the Father and his wonderful and perfect love for us provides for us this cross upon which his son died.

Sinless, guiltless, perfect. So that ultimately when you stand before the great throne of judgment, God asks you that question, why should I let you into heaven?

If I let you into heaven, we can say you shouldn't. But because of the great love you showed towards me by pouring out your wrath on your son for me, I now live in his righteousness.

And I can come now boldly before the throne because you have removed that wonderful or that horrible stain of sin and clothed me with robe of righteousness.

How does that happen? I accept those facts. I accept Jesus Christ lived a perfect life. He was indeed the Son of God.

[43 : 49] I trust and believe in the fact that I am a sinner separated and bound for hell. There is no argument I can make to God to claim that I have any sort of righteousness.

And if I believe those things and declare with my lips that Jesus Christ is Lord, I will be saved. Let me pray.

Let me pray.