

25. Encouragement for the Journey

Plus, Strength for the Day

Sermon



Wednesday, 10th February 2021 – Glenda Bolitho



“The Bible – A Tapestry of Similes & Metaphors”

Bible Reading: 2 Timothy 3:14-17

Greeting

Greetings and a very warm welcome to our service here at St Luke’s Anglican Church Concord and to those who may be following us on line. I’m Glenda Bolitho a member of the ministry team here at St Luke’s and we gather together today to hear God’s word, to pray with one another, and to share our time together.

Before I commence let me pray.

*“May the words of my mouth and the
Meditation of my heart
Be pleasing in your sight
O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer.”*

Amen

Introduction

I've titled today's talk :

"The Bible - a Tapestry of Similes & Metaphors"

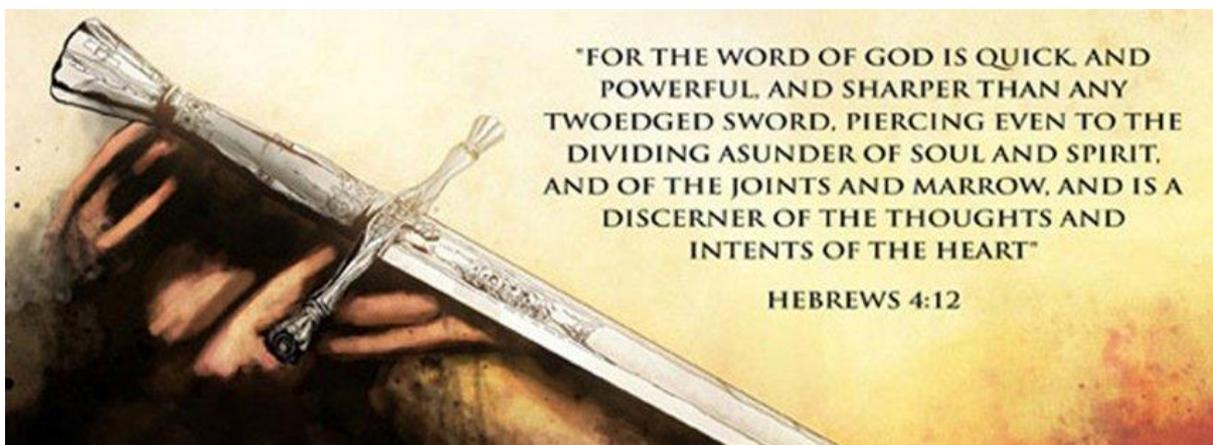
We had our first Bible reading, which was from 2 Timothy 3:14-17 a few moments ago, and the other readings I will read as we go along. In our first reading Paul is speaking to Timothy. Traditionally, a Jewish boy began to study the Old Testament when he was 5 years old, however, Timothy was taught at home by his mother and his grandmother, even before he reached this age.

Throughout the Scriptures, the Bible uses a number of different pictures of itself, to bring home to us the breadth of God's purpose in it for all his people. It's some of these I'd like to share with you today.

A Judge

The Bible is like a judge. In Hebrews 4:12, we read: -

"For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any two-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joint and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart."



The Bible reaches parts that no other book can reach. It discerns our hearts and motives. It sees what goes on deep down inside, beneath the veneer we put on for others and passes judgement on “what makes us tick”. We may have experienced an uncomfortable uncovering of wrong as we have listened to a sermon or read our bibles. However, such judgement is not meant to leave us in condemnation, but rather to bring us to God who loves to cleanse whatever is confessed (1 John 1:8-9).

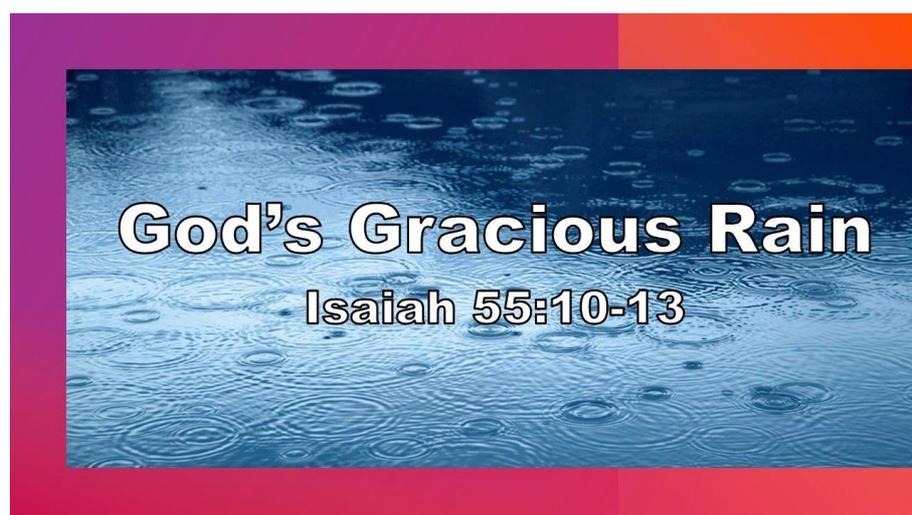
Rain or Water

The bible is like rain or water. In Isaiah 55:10-11 we read: -

“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, so it 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.”

(Mission statement for Gideons)

As surely as God sends literal rain on the land, feeding and refreshing it, so He brings “*spiritual rain*” on his people to feed and refresh them through his words in the Bible.



WASHED CLEAN...



Water is also used for washing. The word of God can sanctify and cleanse us. Jesus says in John's gospel, when he is praying for his disciples, "*Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth*", (John 17:17).

Seed

The Bible is like a seed



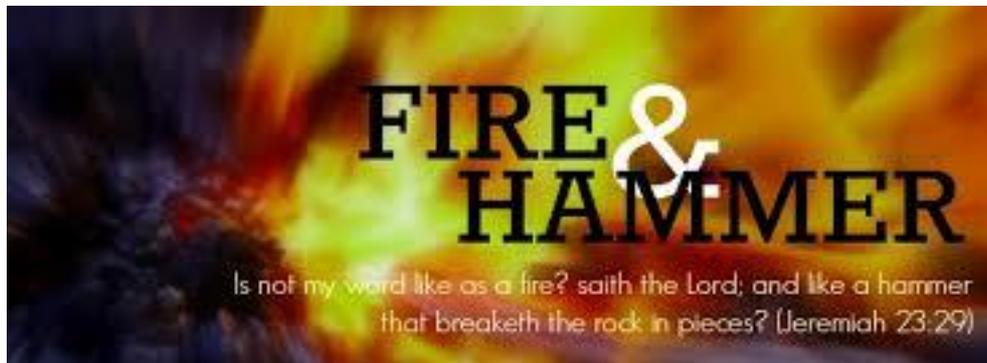
In the Parable of the Sower, (Mt. 13:1-23), Jesus tells us, "*The seed is the word of God*". Remember the farmer going out to sow seed. As he was scattering it, some fell on the path where it was trampled or eaten by birds. Some fell on rock and withered when it came up because of lack of moisture. Other seed fell among thorns, which choked as it grew. But the seed which fell on good soil came up and yielded a crop, a hundred times more than was sown. The promise is

of fruitfulness. The seed itself is living and imperishable. Our part is simply to sow the seed. The responsibility for growth lies with God. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 3:6-7, *“I (Paul) planted the seed, Apollos watered it but God made it grow. But neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow”*.

Fire and Hammer

Jeremiah says that the Bible is both like fire and a hammer.

“Is not my word like fire, Declares the lord! Like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces?” (Jeremiah 23:29.)

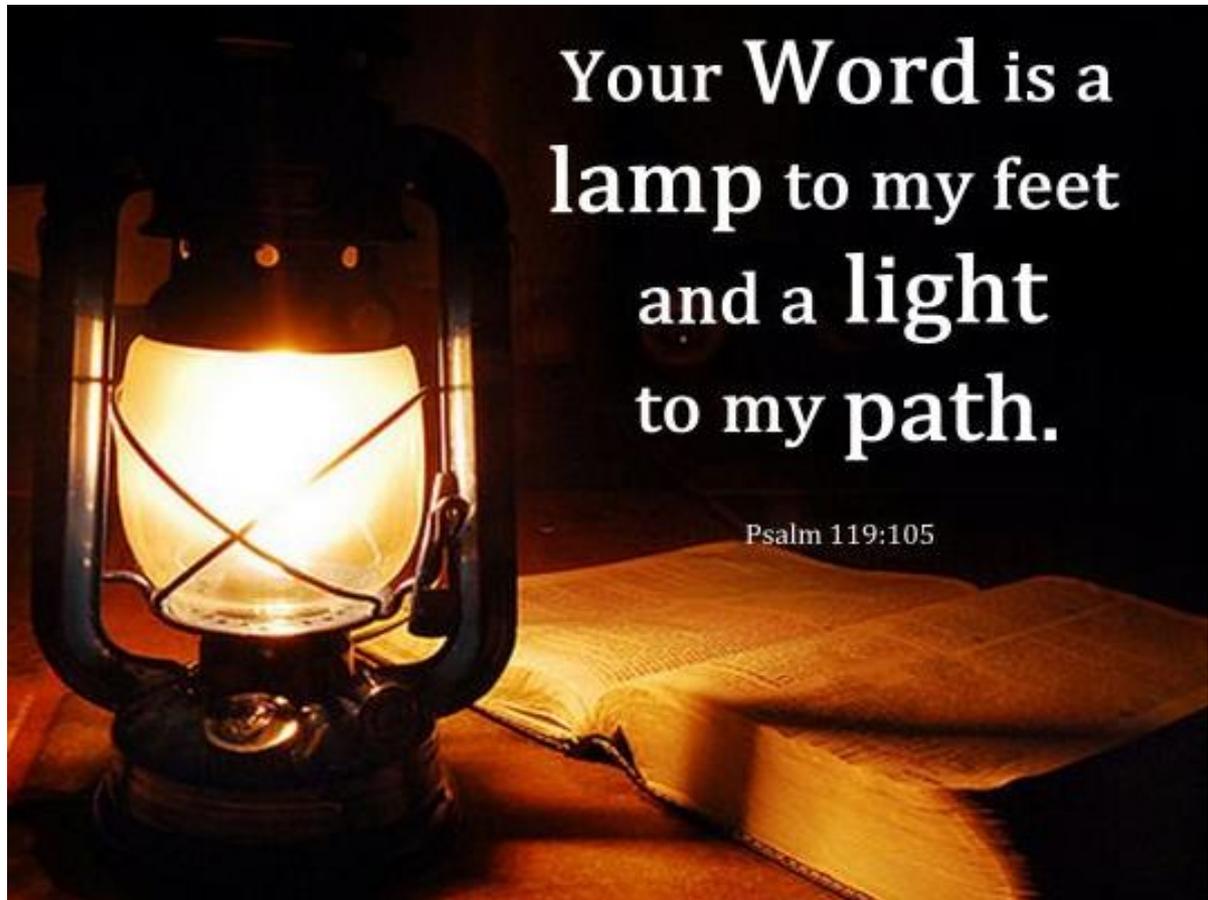


There are times when God woos hearts gently, but also times when hearts become so hard that only a hammer can crack them open. God’s word, Jeremiah says, is such a hammer. It breaks open rock like hearts, so life can burst in- whether into an unbeliever responding to the gospel, or into a believer repenting of careless living. But hammers are also used to smooth and shape objects, Isaiah 41:7 says, *“The craftsman encourages the goldsmith, and he who smooths with the hammer spurs on him who strikes the anvil”*.



A Lamp

The Bible is like a lamp



“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path” (Psalm 119: 105).

Lift stones in the garden, and insects will scurry for cover as they are exposed to light. That’s what the Bible does; it brings things into the light, just like Jesus himself did (John 3:19-21).

We need the light of the Bible to dispel darkness and we also need its light to guide us.

A Mirror

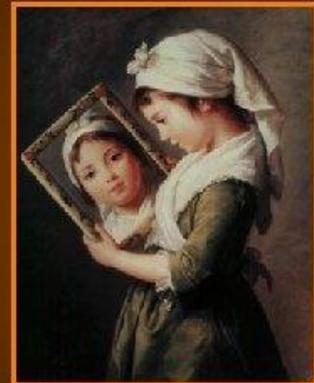
The Bible is like a mirror.

“Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it – he will be blessed in what he does.” (James 1:23-25.)



James 1:23-25

“But if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer; he is like a man beholding his natural [lit., face of birth] face in a glass: for he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whosoever looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the word, this man shall be blessed in his deed.”

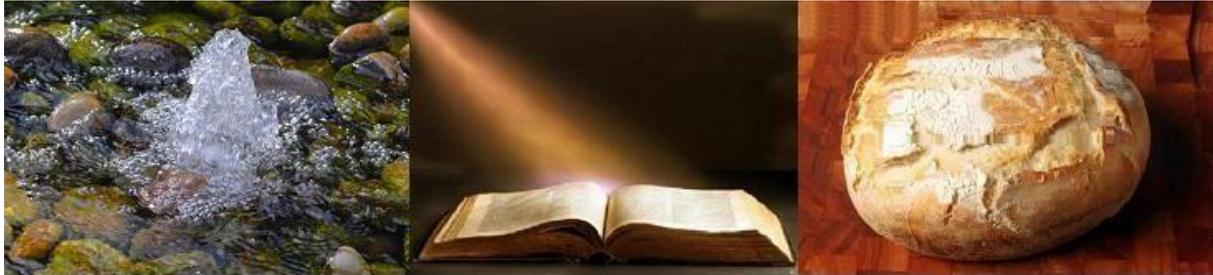


This promise is very practical. We don't look in the mirror and then forget what we see. Do we? No, we act on it, adjusting our hair or our clothes. Similarly, the Bible calls on us not to be casual passive listeners but doers of the Word. And as we act on what we see there, we are gradually changed to become like the Lord Jesus. Or as the study notes of my NIV Bible say in reference to 2 Corinthians 3:18,

“We who believe are made partakers of this glory by being gradually transformed into the likeness of Christ – a reference to the process of Christian sanctification.”

Food

The Bible is like food.



**But he answered and said, It is written,
Man shall not live by bread alone,
but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.**

Matthew 4:4 (KJV)

We all need food in order to live and the same is true spiritually. Without a regular intake of spiritual food, we will never grow and become thoroughly equipped, as 2 Timothy 3:16-17 says for doing every good work. There are a number of references to food in the Scriptures. Let's see what Jesus says about bread in Matthew's Gospel: Jesus answered, *“It is written, ‘Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God’”* (Mt 4:4).

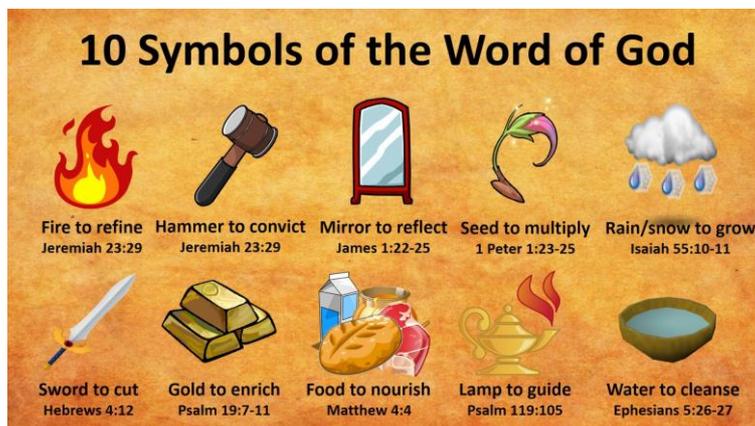
Conclusion

And now, a closing thought to take with us:-

For our physical life, we need daily sustenance, daily bread. How much more is that true of our spiritual sustenance. Time spent in the Bible each day is never wasted; it is God's very own enduring food being put into our lives. As Isaiah says, *“The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God stands forever”*. **AMEN**

Bible Reading 2 Timothy 3:14-17

¹⁴ But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it,¹⁵ and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. ¹⁶ All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, ¹⁷ so that the servant of God^[a] may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.



A Prayer for Strength for the Day

O God, the Father of the forsaken, the helper of the weak, the supplier of the needy, You teach us that love towards the race of man is the bond of perfectness and the imitation of Your blessed self.

Open and touch our hearts that we may see and do, both for this world and that which is to come, the things that belong to our peace. Strengthen us in the work that we have undertaken; give us wisdom, perseverance, faith, and zeal, and in your own time and according to your pleasure prosper the issues, for the love of Your Son, Jesus Christ.

-Lord Shaftesbury