

Sermon Title: **"A PAUSE TO MEDITATE GOD'S WORD!"**

Sermon Text: **Hebrews 4: 12-13**

Introduction:

GOOD MORNING TO ALL! THANK YOU FOR JOINING US IN OUR WORSHIP SERVICE TODAY! AGAIN, I WOULD LIKE TO WELCOME ALL YOU WHO ARE JOINING US FOR THE FIRST TIME TODAY IN OUR SUNDAY SERVICE CELEBRATION.

LAST SUNDAY, WE POINTED OUT A VERY IMPORTANT & POWERFUL PRINCIPLE THAT WAS USED IN THE BOOK OF PSALM & HABBAKUK – THE PRINCIPLE OF "SELAH" OR "PAUSING & REFLECTING." WE FURTHER SUGGEST THAT WHAT HAD HAPPENED TO US WAS A "SELAH" OR "PAUSE" FROM THE LORD IN ORDER THAT WE HIS PEOPLE MAY BE ABLE TO BE REMINDED OF LIFE'S REALITIES & IMPORTANT LESSONS, TO FORCE US TO REVIEW & EVALUATE OUR LIFE'S PRIORITIES & VALUES & PURSUITS, & TO REFOCUS OUR LIFE TO GOD & HIS PURPOSES.

IN THIS NEW SERIES OF MESSAGES ("THE LORD'S PAUSE: A CALL TO SPIRITUAL RENEWAL!"), WE WILL BE LOOKING AT THIS VERY IMPORTANT ASPECT OF OUR SPIRITUAL LIFE THAT I THINK IS KEY TO IMPROVING OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD & REFOCUSING OUR LIFE TO THE LORD. I AM TALKING ABOUT "SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES." I AM CONVINCED THAT IF WE ARE TO BENEFIT FROM THIS GIFT OF PAUSE, THIS IS THE AREA OF OUR LIFE THAT WE MUST REVIEW & MAKE SIGNIFICANT CHANGES. AND TODAY WE ARE GOING TO BEGIN WITH THE WORD OF GOD. THIS COVID CRISIS, I'M CONVINCED IS A TIME TO "PAUSE & MEDITATE ON GOD'S WORD!" LET US PRAY!!!

WHAT IS MEDITATING? IT IS THINKING, PRAYING, READING, STUDYING & APPLYING THE BIBLE. TO MEDITATE IS TO REFLECT UPON OR CONTEMPLATE, AND GOD WANTS US INTENSELY REFLECT ON HIS WORD SO THAT WE CAN BETTER UNDERSTAND HIM & THE ULTIMATE GOAL IS OBEYING HIS WORD.

"For the word of God is living and effective and sharper than any double-edged sword, penetrating as far as the separation of soul and

spirit, joints and marrow. It is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. No creature is hidden from him, but all things are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give an account.” (Hebrews 4: 12-13)

A. THE WORD OF GOD SAVES ALL THOSE WHO BELIEVES ITS MESSAGE!

“For the word of God is living and effective...” (v. 12a)

THE AUTHOR OF HEBREWS TELLS US THAT THE WORD OF GOD IS LIVING AND EFFECTIVE. “LIVING” MEANS, IT HAS LIFE IN ITSELF. IN FACT, IT GIVES LIFE TO THOSE WHO ARE SPIRITUALLY DEAD! LISTEN TO THE WORDS OF THE LORD JESUS HIMSELF,

“The Spirit is the one who gives life. The flesh doesn’t help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.”
(John 6: 63)

NOW, TAKE NOTE HERE THAT THE HOLY SPIRIT USES THE VERY WORDS/TEACHINGS OF THE LORD JESUS TO GIVE LIFE! EVERY TIME THE WORD OF JESUS IS TAUGHT THE SPIRIT WORKS & ACCOMPLISHES THE PURPOSE OF THOSE WORDS SPOKEN BY THE LORD. IN OTHER WORDS, THE HOLY SPIRIT ALWAYS WORKS IN ACCORD WITH THE LORD JESUS & HIS WORDS & THE FATHER!

THEREFORE, THE WORD OF GOD IS THE TEACHINGS OF THE LORD JESUS IN BOOK FORM! IT REPRESENTS THE LORD. IN FACT, THE APOSTLE JOHN REFERED TO JESUS AS THE WORD OF GOD.

“Then I saw heaven opened, and there was a white horse. Its rider is called Faithful and True, and with justice he judges and makes war. His eyes were like a fiery flame, and many crowns were on his head. He had a name written that no one knows except himself. He wore a robe dipped in blood, and his name is called the Word of God.”
(Rev. 19: 11-13)

1) The Word (the Gospel) causes sinful men to be born again!

LISTEN TO APOSTLE PETER:

*“Since you have purified yourselves by your obedience to the truth, so that you show sincere brotherly love for each other, from a pure heart love one another constantly, **because you have been born again—not of perishable seed but of imperishable—through the living and enduring word of God.**” (1 Peter 1: 23-24)*

*“Truly I tell you, **unless someone is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. Whatever is born of the flesh is flesh, and whatever is born of the Spirit is spirit.**” (John 3: 5-6)*

*“For God loved the world in this way: He gave his one and only Son, **so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.**” (John 3: 16)*

THESE PASSAGES CLEARLY TEACHES US THAT WE CAN NEVER ENTER GOD’S KINGDOM OR HEAVEN WITHOUT BEING BORN AGAIN. AND TO BE BORN AGAIN MEANS TO BELIEVE THE WORD OF GOD OR THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST THAT IS PREACHED/TAUGHT AND WHICH THE HOLY SPIRIT USES TO CAUSE THIS SPIRITUAL BIRTH OF ALL THOSE WHO BELIEVED OR TRUSTED CHRIST AS SAVIOR!

SO, HAVE WE BEEN BORN AGAIN? IT IS NOT A RELIGION OR RELIGIOUS ACT TO PERFORM. IT IS AN ACT OF FAITH. WE ACTUALLY DO IT EVERYTIME. IT IS LIKE RIDING A PLANE. YOU PUT YOU FULL TRUST & CONFIDENCE IN THE PILOT WHOM YOU DON’T EVEN KNOW & HIS PLANE TO BRING YOU TO YOUR DESIRED DESTINATION. BUT UNLIKE THAT HERE YOU PLACE YOUR FULL TRUST & CONFIDENCE IN THE ONE WHO SAID, “I AM THE RESURRECTION & THE LIFE. HE WHO BELIEVES IN ME WILL NOT PERISH BUT LIVE FOREVER!” HAVE YOU PLACED YOUR TRUST IN HIM & HIS WORD? WHY NOT DO THAT TODAY?

2) The Word **sustains** & **strengthens** the believers’ faith in the Lord!

OUR LORD JESUS EMPHASIZED THIS VERY TRUTH WHEN HE SAID TO THE DEVIL WHO WAS TEMPTING HIM IN THE DESERT:

“Man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.” (Matthew 4:4).

THE WORD OF GOD IS OUR SPIRITUAL FOOD! SOMEONE SAID THAT “YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT.” AND I THINK THERE ARE MANY SPIRITUALLY MALNOURISHED CHILDREN OF GOD TODAY. NOT BECAUSE GOD FAILED TO PROVIDE FOOD BUT WE FAIL TO FEED ON THE WORD. AS FOOD STRENGTHENS OUR PHYSICAL BODY GOD’S WORD STRENGTHENS OUR FAITH IN THE LORD. THIS GIVES US SPIRITUAL STAMINA TO WITHSTAND LIFE’S STORMS OR CRISIS LIKE THIS COVID CRISIS! FOR GOD’S WORD INCREASES OUR FAITH.

“So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the message about Christ.” (Rom. 10: 17)

IN OTHER WORDS, THE MORE WE READ OR HEAR & MEDITATE ON GOD’S WORD, THE MORE WE HAVE FAITH OR OUR FAITH IS STRENGTHENS!

SO, THE QUESTION NOW IS - ARE WE FEEDING ON THE WORD? DO YOU HAVE A PERSONAL BIBLE? DO YOU HAVE AN E-GROUP/D-GROUP WHERE YOU RECEIVE CONSTANT/REGULAR FEEDING OF THE WORD? DO YOU HAVE A PERSONAL QUIET TIME OR TIME TO READ & MEDITATE ON GOD’S WORD?

THIS COVID CRISIS IS TEACHING US THE FAITHFULNESS & TRUTHFULNESS OF GOD’S WORD!

“All flesh is like grass, and all its glory like a flower of the grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls, but the word of the Lord endures forever.” (1 Pet. 1: 24-25)

B. THE WORD OF GOD CONFORMS BELIEVERS TO CHRIST’S CHARACTER!

“We know that all things work together for the good of those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. For those he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son,

*so that he would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.”
(Rom. 8: 28-29)*

“As obedient children, do not be conformed to the desires of your former ignorance. But as the one who called you is holy, you also are to be holy in all your conduct; for it is written, Be holy, because I am holy.” (1 Peter 1: 14-15)

SOMEBODY SAID THAT IF WE ONLY KNEW THE REASON WHY WE EXPERIENCE TRIALS & TESTINGS OF OUR FAITH OR WHY THE LORD ALLOWS HIS PEOPLE TO SUFFER TRIBULATION & ADVERSITIES IN LIFE, WE WILL NOT HAVE MUCH ANXIETY OR FEAR ABOUT THESE THINGS! THE REASON IS CRYSTAL CLEAR ACCORDING TO PAUL & PETER– TO CONFORM US TO CHRIST’S CHARACTER OR TO BE HOLY IN CHARACTER!

NOW, HOW DOES THE WORD OF GOD ACCOMPLISH THIS IN OUR LIFE? THERE ARE TWO MAJOR WAYS HE DOES THIS THROUGH HIS WORD, THE BIBLE.

1) The Word convicts the Lord’s people of their sins!

THE WRITER OF HEBREWS SAYS:

“...It is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. No creature is hidden from him, but all things are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give an account.” (Heb. 4: 12-13)

WE LEARN EARLIER THAT THE HOLY SPIRIT USES THE WORD NOT ONLY TO TEACH US THE TRUTH BUT ALSO TO CONVICT US OF OUR SINS. THIS I THINK IS THE REASON WHY SOME DO NOT WANT TO READ THE BIBLE – IT WILL EXPOSE THEIR HEARTS! JAMES EXPLAINS THIS IN HIS LETTER.

Because if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like someone looking at his own face in a mirror. For he looks at himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of person he was.” (James 1: 23-24)

THE WORD OF GOD IS LIKE A MIRROR! IT SHOWS US THE DIRTS IN OUR HEART OUR LIFE & TELLS US TO CLEAN UP. IT IS UP TO US IF WE WILL TAKE HEED TO THE SPIRIT'S CALL! FOR ALL MEN WE CALL THIS CONSCIENCE BUT CONSCIENCE AS WE IT BY EXPERIENCE IS. NOT RELIABLE FOR IT COULD BE SEARED & CORRUPTED. BUT FOR BELIEVERS WE HAVE THE SPIRIT WHO CONVICTS & LEADS US BACK TO THE RIGHT PATH.

2) *The Word **cleanses/sanctifies** God's people of their sins!*

THE HOLY SPIRIT NOT ONLY CONVICTS US OF OUR SINS BUT IT ALSO CLEANSSES & RESTORES OUR HOLINESS! THROUGH THE GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS, WE ARE NOT ONLY GIVEN ETERNAL LIFE BUT WE ARE MADE HOLY IN CHRIST. THE LORD JESUS PRAYS FOR HIS DISCIPLES AND SAID,

"Sanctify them with Your Word; Your Word is Truth." (Jn. 17:17)

IN ANOTHER PLACE, OUR LORD JESUS SAID,

*"You are **already clean** because of the **word I have spoken** to you."* (John 15:3)

"I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you." (Ps. 119:11).

INDEED, THE WORD OF GOD NOT ONLY SAVES US BUT ALSO SANCTIFIES US & CLEANSSES US! EVERY TIME WE READ & MEDITATE ON IT, WE ARE CLEANSSED & THE SPIRIT CONFORMS US TO CHRIST'S IMAGE!

C. THE WORD OF GOD **EQUIPS** GOD'S PEOPLE FOR **LIFE'S BATTLES!**

THE BIBLE, GOD'S WORD, TEACHES US THAT WE HAVE AN ENEMY. WE BATTLE AGAINST OUR SINFUL NATURE OR FLESH. WE BATTLE AGAINST THE DEVIL & HIS DEMONS! WE BATTLE AGAINST THIS SIN-SICK & BROKEN WORLD! AND THIS IS THE REASON THE LORD HAD PROVIDED US WITH THE ARMOR OF GOD TO EQUIP US

IN OUR DAILY BATTLES. WE READ & LEARNED THIS IS EPHESIANS.

INTERESTINGLY, THE WRITER OF HEBREWS, SAYS THAT “THE WORD OF GOD... *SHARPER THAN ANY DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD, IT PENETRATES EVEN TO DIVIDING SOUL AND SPIRIT, JOINTS AND MARROW.*” THIS IS CONSISTENT WITH THE TEACHING OF PAUL WHEN HE REFERRED TO THE WORD OF GOD AS THE “SWORD OF THE SPIRIT WHICH IS THE WORD OF GOD.” (EPH. 1:17). INDEED, THE WORD OF GOD EQUIPS US FOR SPIRITUAL WARFARE – WE WAR AGAINST OUR FLESH, THE DEVIL & HIS DEMONS, & THE WORLD! AND HOW DOES THE WORD EQUIPS US?

1) *It eliminates **bondages/strongholds** in our life!*

STRONGHOLDS ARE SINFUL & DESTRUCTIVE HABITS THAT WE HAVE DEVELOPED IN OUR UNSAVED DAYS & WHICH SATAN IS USING TO DECEIVE & OPPRESS US. ONE OF SATAN’S LIES IS TO CONVINCE US THAT WE CAN NEVER CHANGE OR BE FORGIVEN BY GOD BECAUSE OF A SIN THAT WE COMMITTED IN THE PAST OR IT COULD BE AN EVIL OR WRONG DONE TO US & SO WE HARBOR UNFORGIVENESS OR BITTERNESS IN OUR HEART. THE PROPHET JEREMIAH COMPARES THE WORD INTO A FIRE AND HAMMER:

*"Is not my word like **fire**," declares the LORD, "and like a **hammer** that breaks a rock in pieces? (Jer. 23:29).*

ELSEWHERE, PAUL DECLARES THAT WE HAVE DIVINE WEAPONS.

*"The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, **they have divine power to demolish strongholds.** We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ." (2 Cor. 10:4-5)*

2) *It empowers believers to **resist** our enemy, the Devil!*

IF OUR LORD JESUS WAS NOT SPARED FROM SATAN’S TEMPTATION, WHO ARE WE TO ASSUME THAT THE DEVIL WILL NOT TRY TO HARM US SPIRITUALLY. THE TRUTH IS – SATAN WILL TRY

TO DO ALL TO DISCOURAGE US AND DISTRACT US FROM OUR CLOSE WALK WITH JESUS. SO, THE APOSTLE PETER EXHORTS US TO RESIST THE DEVIL IN ! PETER 5: 8-9!

*“Be sober-minded, be alert. Your adversary the devil is prowling around like a roaring lion, looking for anyone he can devour. **Resist him, firm in the faith...**” (1 Pet. 5: 8-9)*

HOW DO WE RESIST HIM? THROUGH GOD’S WORD!

*“**It is written**: Man must not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of God... **It is also written**: Do not test the Lord your God...“Go away, Satan! **For it is written**: Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.” (Matt. 4: 4, 7, 10)*

3) *It enables believers to **overcome** life’s storms & adversities!*

*“Therefore, **everyone who hears these words of mine and acts on them** will be like **a wise man who built his house on the rock.**”
(Matt. 7: 24)*

THEREFORE, IF YOU PROFESS TO BE A FOLLOWER OF CHRIST, THEN YOU JUST VOLUNTEERED TO BE IN A WAR. AND THOUGH WE KNOW THAT OUR ENEMIES ARE ALREADY DEFEATED AT THE CROSS WHEN OUR LORD JESUS DIED ON THE CROSS & DESTROY HIS POWER & WORKS OVER US, HE IS STILL WAITING HIS FINAL JUDGMENT WHICH WILL TAKE PLACE AFTER THE LORD RETURNS.

THIS MEANS THAT HE COULD STILL DECEIVE & DISTORT & OPERATE IN THIS WORLD WHERE HIS RULES. NOW, WE KNOW THAT THIS CAN HAPPEN BECAUSE FAMOUS DRUG LORDS & BOSSES COULD STILL OPERATE THEIR BUSINESS EVEN BEHIND BARS! RIGHT! THAT’S PRECISELY WHAT’S HAPPENING TODAY IN THIS WORLD THAT IS RULED SPIRITUALLY BY SATAN & HIS COHORTS. AND THIS IS THE REASON THE LORD HAS GIVEN US HIS WORD THROUGH THIS BIBLE. THIS IS ONE OF OUR POWERFUL WEAPONS THAT OUR LORD PROVIDED FOR US TO RESIST & DEFEAT OUR SPIRITUAL ENEMIES AS WELL AS LIFE’S ADVERSITIES & TROUBLES!

**THE WORD OF GOD EQUIPS US FOR LIFE'S BATTLES OR WARS!
THE QUESTION IS – ARE WE USING THIS WEAPON TO EQUIP &
EMPOWER OURSELVES FOR THESE BATTLES?**

CLOSING CHALLENGE:

CHURCH/FRIENDS, LET ME CLOSE WITH THE WORDS OF RAVI ZACHARIAS-

*“Many Christians have so **busied themselves** with programs and activities that they no longer know how to be silent and meditate on God's word or recognize the mysteries that are in the Person of Christ.” (Ravi Zacharias)*

IF YOU SAY YOU ARE A BELIEVER AND FOLLOWER OF CHRIST & SAY YOU ARE BUSY & DON'T HAVE TIME FOR THE WORD OF GOD, THEN YOU ARE MOST PROBABLY NOT A BELIEVER YET OR YOU ARE BEING DECEIVED BY OUR ENEMY, THE DEVIL! FOR I THINK THAT “BUSINESS” IS NOT A VALID EXCUSE FOR READING & MEDITATING ON GOD’S WORD. FOR ME, I AGREE WITH THAT DEFINITION OF “BUSY” - **“BEING UNDER SATAN’S YOKE!” IT MEANS YOU ARE BEING DECEIVED IF NOT DISTRACTED BY OUR ENEMY THE DEVIL. AND I THINK THAT THIS IS THE PROBLEM OF MANY BELIEVERS HERE IN AMERICA.**

I THANK THE LORD THAT THAT IT IS NOW FISHING TIME IN ALASKA. OKAY! NOT BECAUSE WE WILL BE ABLE TO FISH SALMON AGAIN BUT BECAUSE THIS FISH SALMON ALWAYS REMINDS ME OF OUR CALLING AS THE CHOSEN GENERATION, A HOLY NATION, A HOLY PRIESTHOOD. THE SALMON AS WE ALL KNOW INSTEAD OF SWIMMING ALOMHWITH THE CURRENT OF THE WATERS AROUND IT SWIMS AGAINST THE CURRENT IT – BECAUSE THEY INSTINCTIVELY KNOW THEIR CALLING & DESTINY - TO RETURN TO THE PLACE WHERE THEY BORN, THEIR SPAWNING GROUND & FULFILL THEIR PURPOSE – TO SEE TO IT THAT THEY PERPETUATE THEIR KIND BY THE MILLIONS!

CHURCH/FRIENDS, LET US NOT RESENT THIS CRISIS WE ARE

FACING TODAY OR THE MANY MORE TO COME. FOR THEY ARE GOD'S GIFT OF SELAH OR PAUSE SO THAT WE CAN TAKE TIME TO REFOCUS OUR LIFE AGAIN TO THE GOD & HIS PURPOSES FOR OUR LIVES. AND FOR US TO ACCOMPLISH HIS PURPOSES WE NEED TO REVIEW & STRENGTHEN OUR BASIC SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES/HABITS. AND TODAY, WE ARE REMINDED OF THIS DISCIPLINE OF THE WORD.

CHURCH/FRIENDS, WE ARE REMINDED TODAY OF THIS VERY CRUCIAL DISCIPLINE THAT WE NEED TO HAVE OR BE IN PLACE IN OUR LIFE. WE ARE REMINDED TODAY THAT WITHIN THE PAGES OF THIS BOOK LIE THE KEY TO OUR TRUE JOY & HAPPINESS. ONLY IN KNOWING THE TEACHINGS OF THE LORD JESUS CONTAINED IN THIS BOOK & OBEYING OR APPLYING THEM IN OUR DAILY LIVING CAN WE TRULY HAVE A STRONG, AN OVERCOMING LIFE, & A MEANINGFUL LIFE. GOD BLESS!

CLOSING PRAYER:

OUR HEAVENLY FATHER, THANK YOU A! YOU ARE SOVEREIGN & IN FULL CONTROL OF ALL THINGS. WE THANK YOU THAT YOU EVEN ALLOWED THIS CRISIS TO HAPPEN TO FORCED US TO HAVE A PAUSE OR A BREAK IN OUR "BUSY" LIFE ESPECIALLY AS BELIEVERS TO BE REMINDED THAT YOU SAVED US NOT TO LIVE FOR THE GOD OF THIS WORLD, THE DEVIL BUT TO LIVE FOR YOU & YOUR PURPOSES. FATHER GOD, OPEN OUR EYES OF FAITH TO SEE IF WE ARE NEGLECTING THIS VERY CRUCIAL SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE OR HABIT THAT A FOLLOWER OF CHRIST SHOULD HAVE -THE DISCIPLINE OF THE WORD!

FATHER GOD, OPEN OUR EYES TO SEE WHAT WE WILL LOSE IF We CONTINUE THIS PRESENT PATH THAT WE ARE WALKING. FATHER, SET US FREE FROM THIS YOKE OF SATAN & EMPOWER US TO RETURN TO OUR FIRST LOVE- THE LOVE OF YOUR WORD! CAUSE US TO HUNGER AGAIN & BE EXCITED AGAIN TO HEAR YOUR VOICE THRU WORD SPEAKING TO ME. USE OTHER BELIEVERS OR SITUATIONS TO CAUSE ME TO START AGAIN TO CULTIVATE THIS HABIT THAT WE WERE REMINDED TODAY IS THE KEY TO OUR JOYFUL, STRONG, & OVERCOMING LIFE.

FATHER GOD, HELP ME TO CHANGE & TO PRIORITIZE MY RELATIONSHIP WITH YOU THRU YOUR WORD & PRAYER & I KNOW THAT EVERYTHING ELSE WILL FOLLOW. I CLAIM YOUR PROMISE IN YOUR WORD WHEN YOU SAID, "SEEK FIRST HIS KINGDOM & RIGHTEOUSNESS & ALL THESE THINGS WILL BE GIVEN TO YOU AS WELL." FATHER GOD, THANK YOU FOR HOW YOU WILL GIVE ME THE WISDOM & POWER TO BE ABLE TO MAKE THESE CHANGES IN MY LIFE STARTING TODAY. MAY YOU CONTINUE TO REMIND ME OF THESE THINGS & RESOLVE TO GIVE MY BEST TO DO YOUR WILL.

FATHER GOD, TO YOU WE GIVE ALL THE PRAISE, THE WORSHIP & THE GLORY & THE HONOR. IN JESUS' MOST PRECIOUS NAME WE PRAY. AMEN!