**HOW TO BE WITH JESUS IN HIS WORD**

Ron Ward, Juan Seo, Philip Lee

*“If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.” (Jn 15:7)*

 When Jesus was on earth, he called disciples that he might be with them, and that he might send them out to preach the gospel to the whole world, advancing the kingdom of God until he comes again in glory. The first thing mentioned is “being with” Jesus. Being with Jesus was and is most important for his disciples. The question is how can we be with Jesus now? We can be with Jesus through his word. Jesus said, *“If you remain in me and my words remain in you...” (Jn 15:7a).* Jesus’ words are not just written letters, they are life. John 6:63 reads,*“The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you—they are full of the Spirit and life.”* How can we experience that his words give life? Through obedience. Jesus said, *“Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them” (Jn 14:23).* When we obey his word, the Holy Spirit comes to dwell in our hearts. The Holy Spirit teaches us of Jesus. In this way, Jesus is still with us through his word today.

**The Significance of Being with Jesus in his Word**

**First, Jesus is God’s Word Which Gives Life**

John 1:1 *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”*

John 1:14 *“The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.”*

The Word in these verses is Jesus. Jesus is the incarnate God who took on flesh to come and dwell with his people. To be disciples of Jesus is to have him dwelling in our hearts through his words. Being disciples of Jesus is not an abstract concept, but is to have a very personal relationship with Jesus by hearing and obeying his words. Since Jesus is the very Word which was in the beginning––that is, the word of God the Creator––his word is different than that of mere men; it is the word of God. Jesus’ word is God’s word. Let’s consider two characteristics of God’s word.

In the first place, God’s word is eternal (Isa 40:7-8; 1Pe 1:24-25). God has spoken his word from the very beginning. God’s words are recorded in the Bible. Jesus said of the words in the Bible, “the Scripture cannot be set aside” (Jn 10:35b). This word is not like worldly knowledge, such as human systems of philosophy which change and eventually become obsolete. Only the word of God is eternal and unchanging (1Pe 1:24-25). It is a sure foundation on which we can build our lives.

In the second place, God’s word is life-giving. God’s word is the power by which the heavens and the earth were created out of nothing. God’s word has power to give new life to human beings (Jn 5:24; Heb 4:12). While Jesus was on earth, when he spoke to people, diseases were healed, demons were driven out, and the dead were raised. Jesus’ words worked in the hearts of his disciples to transform their value system, worldview and way of life. As it did then, so it still works now. We can have a new Spirit-filled life through God’s word (Jn 6:63).

**Second, the Word of God Makes Us Wise for Salvation Through Faith in Christ Jesus**

2 Timothy 3:15 *“...and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.”*

Here “salvation” does not mean simply the healing of diseases or escaping from danger and harm. It means salvation from sin, which brings death and eternal condemnation. This salvation is given freely by grace to all who have faith in Jesus. This blessing was written in the word of God. Without enlightenment from God’s words people do not know the way of salvation.

**Third, the Word of God Trains Us in Righteousness**

2 Timothy 3:16 *“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness….”*

Since we have been born again through the word of God by the work of the Holy Spirit, we need to grow to maturity in loving Jesus and living a godly life. To grow, we need spiritual food--teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness. Human words, no matter how great they seem, cannot change a person from the inside. Only the words of God have transforming power to change people from the inside out.

**Fourth, the Word of God Equips Us to Do Every Good Work**

2 Timothy 3:17 *“... so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”*

 The words of God help us to be thoroughly equipped for every good work. Good work is not the basis of our salvation, but its fruit. True faith produces good works. If we do not do good works, it is the evidence that one does not have true faith (Jas 2:17). The danger of doing good works is that we may become self-righteous and proud. But when we know that doing good works is the fruit of our salvation, we have no reason to be proud. We can only be thankful to God and give glory to him. It is because God enables us to do good works by equipping us through his word.

**How to Be with Jesus in his Word**

**First, Listening to and Meditating on His Word**

Mark 4:3 *“Listen! A farmer went out to sow his seed.”*

Mark 4:9 *“Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear.”*

Mark 4:20 *“Others, like seed sown on good soil, hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop—some thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times what was sown.”*

Mark 4:24 *“Consider carefully what you hear. With the measure you use, it will be measured to you--and even more.”*

Psalm 1:2 *“…but whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on his law day and night.”*

Jesus’ word “Listen!” is a keyword. When Jesus taught the parable of the sower, he mentioned different responses to his word. Those who really listen come to understand and live by his word; they can bear the fruit of his word. But those who don’t listen, understand and hold to his teaching will not bear the fruit of his word. If we are too busy with other things, we will not listen to Jesus’ word. So we need to give first priority to listening. This listening is not just hearing sounds, but accepting, meditating on, valuing and practicing. In the Old Testament, the word “Hear, O Israel,” carried the same meaning to the people of Israel (Dt 6:4). God prefaced his teaching with a warning about the importance of how we listen. We should not listen to Jesus’ words casually, like social chitchat. As we listen, we must know we are hearing the very word of God that can give life to our soul.

In addition to listening, these verses tell us that we need to “consider carefully,” and “meditate.”As we meditate on Jesus’ word, it exposes worldly mindsets and value systems within us, including materialism, hedonism and humanism. Furthermore, Jesus’ word helps us to experience the power to be transformed. For example, when we are anxious and worried about material things, we need to meditate on Matthew 6:33. Then anxiety and worry will disappear and we can experience God’s provision based on his word. We should pay attention to what the passage actually says and meditate on it in light of the main truths taught in the Bible. Then we should apply what we learned practically.

**Second, Holding Onto and Remaining in Him**

John 8:31-32 *“To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, ‘If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free.’”*

John 15:7 *“If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.”*

As we struggle to live by Jesus’ word in this world, we face many difficulties and problems. Sometimes spiritual desire wanes. This may happen because we are caught up in the hard struggle to survive in this world, or we are distracted by the flow of information through mass media, or because we indulge in the flesh. There are also temptations of the devil. God uses all of these things to train us. We need to hold on to Jesus’ words during these times. However, some people let go of Jesus’ words. Those who let go of Jesus’ words do not discover the truth, nor do they grow closer to God in his deep love. But when we hold on to Jesus’ words and meditate deeply on them, God reveals deep truth to us and guides us into true freedom. He forgives us and delivers us from evil. We can grow in his love to be like him.

When we have fully meditated on the words of God, we are motivated to write down what we have learned. This struggle causes us to think logically and systematically about the inspiration we have received. We can more clearly understand its meaning. It also helps us to remember what we have learned and to put our thoughts in language that can be communicated with others. This process enables us to grow and can bring healing to our wounds. Also, we can be a witness to others by sharing what we have learned with them (Ac 1:8b; 11:20).

 When we share reflections in small groups, we should be very prayerful about the dynamics of the group and set some guidelines. Reflection sharing should always be a sincere struggle with God’s words, recognizing the presence of the Holy Spirit in the meeting. Confessions should be sincere. The environment should be one of mutual participation, honesty and growing together. There should be an increasing love for and understanding of one another. For this, as we hear others’ reflections, especially the confession of their secret sins, we should not be critical or gossip about it. Rather, we should really pray for them, encourage them, and protect them. We should also examine ourselves.

 Though there are great benefits to writing reflections and sharing them with others, there are also dangers. When it becomes a regular practice, we can develop a sense of duty or a legalistic mindset. When we keep up the practice regularly, we can become self-righteous and judgmental toward others. On the other hand, if we fail to write and share a reflection, we can fall into self-condemnation. We should always remember that reflection writing and sharing is just one method of internalizing the words of God. It is not the only way, and in some cases, may not be the best way.

**Third, Putting into Practice**

Matthew 5:19 *“Therefore anyone who sets aside one of the least of these commands and teaches others accordingly will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.”*

Matthew 7:21-24 *“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?’ Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers! Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock.”*

Matthew 12:48-50 *“He replied to him, ‘Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?’ Pointing to his disciples, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers. For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.”*

1 John 2:3-6 *“We know that we have come to know him if we keep his commands. Whoever says, “I know him,” but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in that person. But if anyone obeys his word, love for God is truly made complete in them. This is how we know we are in him: Whoever claims to live in him must live as Jesus did.”*

John 14:15 *“If you love me, keep my commands.”*

James 2:24 *“You see that a person is considered righteous by what they do and not by faith alone.”*

James 2:26 *“As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.”*

The application of the words of God in our life is the most important process because the Christian life is not a theory but a practice. To put in practice the words of God, first of all we need to examine ourselves before God. We need to recognize ourselves as sinner before God. Then we should repent of our sins and be forgiven by the grace of Jesus. Later we should make decision to live according to the words of God. This process should done very personally before God, not for others. The personal relationship with God is the priority for our life to be with Jesus in his words.