God’s Word Brings Life

1 Peter 1:23 (NIV)
For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.

Why is the Word, the Bible, so important for us Christians? In the last newsletter, I wrote on the Marks of Church. Reformed churches have said more than anything else, the Word and it’s proclamation is the primary mark of the church. It distinguishes the church from all other institutions or organizations upon the earth. This is also why our services are based on and around the passage that morning. This is also why all of our ministries should have a Word centered focus. God’s Word brings life.

Because we humans are under the curse from our rebellion (Gen. 3), our entire natures are corrupt. We need to be remade. We need to be re-borned. We are dead in our sins and trespasses. The person under the curse is a person of flesh. They only have the life they have been given at physical birth. John 3:6 helps us, “Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.” The person reborn by faith in Christ is made a spiritual person. By faith, Christ sends the Spirit to live in us. But is that it? Just believe and then I can go on living my life? Nope!

The Spiritual person needs to be nourished and developed in all of us. We must grow in our faith, in our knowledge of Christ - in our gratitude of our salvation. We must grow in our willingness to serve Christ. Our lives should show we are spiritual people, that is, born of the Holy Spirit. How do we grow to be more mature Spiritual people? We pray lots in all seasons and in all times. We also participate in worship. God grows us through the Spirit in the actions of corporate worship. But first and foremost, we will grow the most by spending time in God’s Word. It is the imperishable seed of life. It is the truth. The more we spend time in it, the more our new natures can grow and develop. We become less worldly or fleshly, and become more like Christ - a Spirit-filled person. Worship and our prayer life are enhanced by our knowledge of Scripture. For example, the Psalms broaden our language for prayer. In times of great hurt and struggle, we may lament. In times of great victory, we praise.

We were awakened from death to life by the Word of God. God’s Word brings us to life. Read the Word as much as you can. Start with fifteen minutes per day three days per week. Then change it to five days per week. Then extend your reading time from fifteen minutes to thirty minutes. As you grow and learn more of the bread of life, you will want more of it, because it brings us the life of Christ.

—— Pastor Ben

(For further reading: James 1:18-21; 1 Peter 1:22-25; Hebrews 4:12-13; 1 John 3:7-10) James 1:18: He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created.
Coffee Schedule

| March | 4 | Renee & Gabe Vlasma  
|       |   | Sherrie & Jack Wolffis  
|       | 11 | Deb & Russ Vlasma  
|       |   | Sandy Volkers  
|       | 18 | Beth & Dave VanRees  
|       |   | Sue & Jim Secord  
|       | 25 | Susan & Bob Vanderlaan  
|       |   | Charry & Phil Snyder  
| April | 1 | Congregational Life Breakfast  
|       | 8 | Rebecca & Scott Sytsema  
|       |   | Marcia & Mike Breuker  
|       | 15 | Kelly Dauser  
|       |   | Val & Steve Morris  
|       | 22 | Marie & Chuck Ritchard  
|       |   | Karen Alphenaar  
|       | 29 | Nancy & Steve Rop  
|       |   | Joanne & Dave Bishop  

If you are unable to serve on your designated Sunday, please try to switch with someone, otherwise, contact Deanna VanderPloeg.

Greeters

| March | 4 | June Walcott, Loie VandenBosch  
|       | 11 | Ro VerHeul, Lois Grinwi  
|       | 18 | Brian & Jill Schuitema  
|       | 25 | Sandy Volkers, Karen Alphenaar  
| April | 1 | Jack & Laurie DeJonge  
|       | 8 | Bob & Jean Botting  
|       | 15 | Cam & Melissa Vlasma  
|       | 22 | John & Sue Sytsema  
|       | 29 | GEMS  

If you are unable to greet on your designated Sunday, please try to switch with someone, otherwise, contact the secretary at aacrcsecretary@gmail.com or at 722-6411.

Nursery Schedule

| March | 4 | Nancy Rop, Shelby Schuitema  
|       | 11 | Kristen VanderStelt, Taylor Johnson  
|       | 18 | Karen Alphenaar, Tekalegn Vlasma  
|       | 25 | Mary Patton, Carlie Vander Ploeg  
| April | 1 | Laura Ridings, Emily Snyder  
|       | 8 | Faith Vlasma, Yeabsira Vlasma  
|       | 15 | Brittany Schuitema, Zoe Sytsema  
|       | 22 | Ashly Schuitema, Devin Snyder  
|       | 29 | Marcia Breuker, Travis Snyder  

If you have any questions, call Sue Sytsema 798-7619.

Children and Worship

| March | 4 | Renee Vlasma, Kayla Johnson  
|       | 11 | Beth VanRees, Deb Vlasma  
|       | 18 | Sherrie Wolffis, Marcia Breuker  
|       | 25 | Sue Sytsema, Zoe Sytsema  
| April | 1 | Easter Sunday, no children in worship  
|       | 8 | Faith Vlasma, Deb Vlasma  
|       | 15 | Faith Vlasma, Carlie Vander Ploeg  
|       | 22 | Amber Johnson, Katelyn Morris  
|       | 29 | Amber Johnson, Deb Vlasma  

If you have any questions, call Amber Johnson 670-4865. Thank you to all the teachers and helpers that serve in Children and Worship. We need a couple of more teachers and helpers. If interested, call Amber.
What Does “World” Mean in John 3:16?

From John Tweeddale Feb 09, 2018 Category: Articles

One of the most surprising twists of John 3:16 is that we are told God loves the world. We might be tempted to think that there is much about the world for God to love. After all, what’s not to admire about cityscapes and farmlands, fine cuisine and backyard barbecues, classical symphonies and folk ballads, Renaissance paintings and kindergarten squiggles? The world we know is filled with texture, intrigue, opportunity, and cheer. The problem is that for all that is good and interesting and beautiful about the world, it is overrun with sinners. Ever since Adam and Eve rebelled against God in the garden, the world has become a wasteland. No matter how wonderful the world may appear, it is not worthy of God’s redeeming love.

Understanding how undeserving the world is of God’s love is the key to John 3:16. Only then will we appreciate the unexpected gift that God gives. This point was well made many years ago by the esteemed theologian Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield. In his sermon “God’s Immeasurable Love,” Warfield probes the meaning of the term “world” (Greek kosmos) in John 3:16 in order to plumb the depths of God’s love.

What is the meaning of “world” in this passage? Drawing from the insights of Warfield, there are four possible answers.

In the first place, many people believe that “world” means all people without exception. In other words, when John 3:16 says that God loves the world, it means that He loves every person, head for head, equally. The logic goes something like this: God loves every person; Christ died for every person; therefore, salvation is possible for every person. However, this view seems to suggest that God’s love is impotent and Christ’s death is ineffectual. Otherwise, the natural conclusion of this position would be that every person is actually saved rather than just potentially saved. If God loves every person, and Christ died for every person, and God’s love is not impotent, and Christ’s death is not ineffectual, then the only conclusion one can draw is that salvation has been secured for every person. Yet this viewpoint contradicts the Bible’s teaching on God’s judgment as is evidenced by the immediate context in John 3:17–21.
Second, others argue that “world” means all people without distinction. This option emphasizes that God loves more than one type of person or ethnic group. The death of Christ on the cross was not only for Jews but also for Gentiles. The love of God is not confined to national boundaries but extends to all kinds of nations, tribes, cultures, tongues, and peoples. To this, all God’s people—Arminian and Calvinist alike—say a hearty “Amen.” While this view has the benefit of being undoubtedly right and fits within the larger context of John’s gospel concerning the global identity of the “children of God” (e.g., John 1:9–13; 4:42), it doesn’t quite capture the jolting contrast between “God so loved” and “the world” that John 3:16 deliberately draws.

Third, a popular nuance of the previous option among Reformed theologians is to argue that “world” in John 3:16 refers to the elect. Throughout John’s gospel, Jesus emphasizes the particularity of His grace. “All that the Father gives me will come to me” (6:37). “I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me….I lay down my life for the sheep” (10:14–18). “If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you” (15:9). “I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours” (17:9). And so on. The point is that God’s people are chosen from an unbelieving world. Again, this view strikes an important note by underscoring the biblical doctrine of election, but the focus of the term “world” in John 3:16 is not so much on the identity of God’s people but on the nature of God’s love.

This leads us to the final option. A solid case can be made for believing that “world” refers to the quality of God’s love. Warfield convincingly states:

[World] is not here a term of extension so much as a term of intensity. Its primary connotation is ethical, and the point of its employment is not to suggest that the world is so big that it takes a great deal of love to embrace it all, but that the world is so bad that it takes a great kind of love to love it at all, and much more to love it as God has loved it when he gave his Son for it.

The world represents sinful humanity and is not worthy of God’s saving love. Apart from the love of God, the world stands under God’s condemnation. But in Christ, believers experience God’s surprising, redeeming, and never-ending love. John 3:16 is not about the greatness of the world but about the greatness of God.

This article was found at https://www.ligonier.org/blog/what-does-world-mean-john-316/

It was written by Dr. John W. Tweeddale is academic dean and professor of theology at Reformation Bible College. This post was originally published in Tabletalk magazine.

—Submitted by Pastor Ben
On Monday, February 19th, my family and I said our final goodbyes to our Mom. It was an "AWESOME" funeral service! Pastor Ben, my two brothers, Thom and Scott did OUTSTANDING jobs in their part of it. As I mentioned before when my dad went to be with our Lord, this will stick with me more for some time because later in our lives, I relied a lot on my parents in several ways to live my life and help me accomplish quite a few goals that I achieved! Yes, I realize that she is in heaven, free from all suffering here on Earth, but it's going to take some time for me to completely let go! I went up front of church (at the end of the service) while the last song was being sung (my choice) and said "goodbye Mama, I love you very much and will see you soon!" I touched her box of ashes to bring closer to everything for myself. I also want to thank my sister Sue for coming up to comfort me during this difficult time!!! Our whole family received an "AMAZING" amount of love and support from many others before, during and after the service! GOD BLESS "EVERYONE" involved who helped to make a difficult day a lot more happier and cheerful for all of us!!!

—Mike Fongers

Angels Explained by Children

I only know the names of two angels. Hark and Harold.
—Gregory, 5

Angels work for God and watch over kids when God has to go do something else.
— Mitchell, 7

Angels talk all the way while they're flying you up to heaven. The main subject is where you went wrong before you got dead.
—Daniel, 9

Angels live in cloud houses made by God and his son, who's a very good carpenter.
—Jared, 8

Some of the angels are in charge of helping heal sick animals and pets. And if they don't make the animals get better, they help the child get over it.
—Vicki, 8

What I don't get about angels is why, when someone is in love, they shoot arrows at them
—Sarah, 7
First-Hand View of West African Ministry

Rev. Kurt Selles came home to the United States from a recent visit to Burkina Faso and Niger in West Africa excited and grateful for what God is doing through Back to God Ministries International (BTGMI) French outreach there.

This was the fourth time Selles, BTGMI director, had visited the new French ministry since it launched in 2015 in partnership with Timothy Leadership Training Institute (TLTI).

Rev. Harold Kallemyn, former TLTI director who helped establish the partnership, accompanied Selles on this visit.

“Because it is a relatively young ministry, my visits there are important; to see how things are going, encourage them in ministry, and learn what support they need from BTGMI,” noted Selles. “To see the joy and passion of this ministry team, to watch their outreach grow, is so inspiring.”

Rev. Marc Nabie, BTGMI French ministry coordinator in Burkina Faso, reported on the growing radio outreach, demonstrated the expanded ministry through Facebook and the Perspectives Réformées website. They also discussed the potential for developing an app for a daily devotional.

Nabie also introduced Selles and Kallemeyn to new staff members.

Loraine is a relatively new believer who serves as administrative assistant. Because of her Muslim background, Loraine has frequent opportunities to minister to Muslim women who call or visit the ministry center in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso’s capital city and home to BTGMI ministry facilities.

“Burkina Faso is a primarily Muslim country, where Christians and Muslims live together peacefully,” explained Selles. “That made it an ideal location for expanded outreach to French-speaking Muslims in Africa.” He added, “Harold and I took a walk every evening and never felt unsafe.”

Selles also met Rahamata Ousdrago and Nacro Fluer, two prayer partner volunteers who felt called to produce a new radio program addressing the needs of women in Burkina Faso. “Their enthusiasm was inspiring,” he recalls. “Such a blessing. And women are responding.”

As the staff shared many stories about lives changed through BTGMI ministry, Selles and Kallemeyn gave thanks to God for his work in Burkina Faso.

The two also stopped in Niger to visit with Rabo Godi, who leads BTGMI’s ministry partnership with The Evangelical Church in Niger, along with TLTI and Words of Hope. They visited with the pastor of a church burned to the ground in 2015 by radicals opposed to ministry there.

Members of the church responded with love and forgiveness and the ministry became stronger. Selles was amazed to see the new, large church facilities that rose up from the ashes of the previous building.

Selles also makes bi- or triennial visits to review and assess the ministries of the other nine BTGMI language teams, giving him the opportunity to encourage our global outreach team members.

—Nancy Vander Meer, Back to God Ministries International

From the CRCNA Website
Happy Easter
The Easter of the Bible

The true meaning of Easter is all about celebrating the resurrection of Jesus Christ after his death on the cross, providing salvation to any who will trust in Him. Read the whole story in chapters 19 and 20 of the Gospel of John.

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Apostles Celebration Christ Christian Church Cross Crown of Thorns Crucifix Faith God Good Friday Hope Jesus Jews King Lamb Love Miracle Passover Pontius Pilate Prayer Redemption Resurrection Romans Sacrifice Salvation Savior Thieves

Come visit www.WordSearchBoard.com for more fun word puzzles!
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The resurrection of Jesus Christ
from the Books of Matthew and Mark

Bible Crossword No.3

Across
1 where they laid Jesus after He died (Matt.27:60)
4 the place where Jesus died (Matt.27:33)
5 Jesus and two thieves were ______ together (Matt.27:38)
8 mother of Jesus
9 The angel said "He is ____
He is not here" (Mark 16:6)
10 They made Jesus wear a scarlet ______ (Matt.27:28)
12 Jesus was betrayed for ______ pieces of silver (Matt.27:3)
14 Jesus was ____ of any crime (Matt.27:4)
15 The 12 companions of Jesus

Down
2 Jesus shed His ____ for our sins
3 Judas Iscariot ____ Jesus (Matt.27:4)
5 Roman commander of a hundred men (Matt.27:54)
6 Jesus said " My God, My God why hast thou ____ me" (Matt.27:46)
7 a title of Jesus (it means anointed one) (Matt.27:17)
11 They laid the ____ of Jesus in a tomb (Matt.27:59)
12 Jesus wore a "crown of ____"
13 our Lord and Saviour

more puzzles at http://biblewordgames.com
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