

One-to-One Discipleship (Church Retreat)

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[0 : 00] The scripture reading comes from Hebrews chapters 3 and 4. Please follow along on the screen. It's on the screen. Okay. Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says, today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.

On the day of testing in the wilderness, where your fathers put me to the test and saw my works for 40 years, therefore I was provoked with that generation and said, they always go astray in their hearts.

They have not known my ways. As I swore in my wrath, they shall not enter my rest. Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God.

But exalt one another every day, as long as it is called today, that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

For we have come to share in Christ. If indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end, as it is said, today if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.

[1 : 25] Let us, therefore, strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience. For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him, to whom we must give account one day.

This is the word of God. Great. Thank you, Rhoda. Okay, so we've been talking this weekend a bit about discipleship and the need and the desire for us to be men and women who disciple other men and women, to mature followers of Jesus, who pour out our lives for the sake of others so that they can become followers of Jesus, that help other people become followers of Jesus.

And yesterday we had a couple of pictures. The one picture we had yesterday morning was that tree. And he said, okay, who are the branches of people that you want to pour and invest your life into that are going to do that to others and going to produce fruit?

And that picture of a tree is such a helpful one for me. As I said yesterday, I've often sat in a coffee shop with someone and drawn this tree and said, okay, this is you, who are you pouring yourself into? Another thing is, if you think of your hand, you know that WhatsApp emoji con?

[3 : 00] They're like, all right, okay? So if you think about this, I like to think, who are the three Christians that you invest in your life into, that you're praying for, connecting with, encouraging them, and who are two unbelievers that you are praying for and encouraging and investing your life into?

And five people may be a lot, and so there's no pressure. This isn't like, okay, now you need to find five people and meet up with them every week, okay? We've all got busy lives. But I think if you start with, if you have five people on a list, chances are maybe some of them are too busy or aren't going to want to, but maybe you can come down to one or two people, and you can meet up with once a month.

Just start off with once a month and say, okay, once a month we're going to connect and read the Bible. Once a month I'm going to, yeah, get together with you, find out how you're doing and pray with you. Those are going to be people that I've got on my heart often when I'm on the MTR or I'm waiting at the bus stop, I'm praying for them, I'm going to text them, say, hey, buddy, just praying for you today or really got you on my heart.

So just few or five people that you're thinking of and walking with regularly, right? And it doesn't mean you need to become super busy now and cram all these extra meetings just as you do

normal life.

So you've got a free lunch time. Hey, why don't you text someone, say, hey, tomorrow, got a free lunch. Are you free? Let's get together. Or as you're running an errand, include someone in on that errand or as you're taking your kids to swimming lessons and they stay nearby, hey, do you want to come with me?

[4 : 31] Just include people in your everyday life and do life together. Okay? And reading the Bible 101 isn't the only way to disciple people. There's a whole lot, but it's one tool that I want to encourage us in.

And this morning, we're going to talk about why. Why the Bible? Why do we not just simply listen to podcasts or just share our ideas or just counsel or mentor people?

What's so unique about God's Word and the Scriptures? Why is this such an important and a powerful tool when we want to disciple people? Okay? And so to look at that or to answer that, we're going to look at Hebrews 3 and 4 that Rhoda read to us.

Now, Hebrews 3 and 4 is kind of one flow of thought. And the flow is this. What's happening is the writer's urging the followers of Jesus to keep going and to persevere in their faith.

He's going to say to them, look, it's great that you believed in God and that you made a decision to follow Jesus. That's great. But that's not enough. You can't say, listen, when I was 18, I got baptized.

[5 : 38] Once upon a time, I made a decision to follow Jesus. The rest is done. I'm sorted now. What he's going to say is a follower of Jesus isn't just somebody who makes a decision once upon a time.

A follower of Jesus is someone who walks with Christ through faith and repentance and loving and trusting Him all of their life until they get to glory. So, let me say it again.

A follower of Jesus isn't just someone who made a decision once upon a time. A follower of Jesus, a Christian, is someone who walks faith and repentance, faith and repentance, loving, trusting, obeying Jesus all the days of their life, imperfectly, up and down, making mistakes, sure, but all of our life until that day where we get to glory.

Look at how he says it in verse 6. I don't know if you've got verse 6 in your books. I might have forgotten to put it in there. He says here, We are His house, in other words, the people of God, if indeed we hold fast our confidence.

Okay? So, you serve God now. That's great. But you must persevere if you're going to obtain God's promises, if you're going to obtain God's blessings, if you're going to get to heaven one day.

[6 : 43] We can't just say, Okay, once upon a time I made that decision. We must persevere and continue to the end. We are God's house if indeed we hold fast our confidence.

Remember, Colossians chapter 1 says the same thing. He says here, I think we've got it up here. He says, You, me, us, we were once alienated, hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, but God has reconciled us in His body of flesh by His death in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before Him.

So, that's the gospel, right? We're sinners. Jesus died. He's going to one day present us holy and blameless and without any fault before the Father if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you once heard.

And so, this is really important that sometimes we can think, Oh, once upon a time I had a dynamic encounter with God. I know I'm saved. My eternal destiny is secure. It's all fine. I'll just live my own life the way I want to now.

And God says, Don't be so presumptuous. A Christian is someone who perseveres all the way to the end. Now, the good news is this, that if you are a genuine Christian, Jesus is actually holding on to you more than you holding on to Him.

[8 : 01] Remember, Simon quoted Colossians, Philippians 1, He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion. So, one of the ways that you know that He's begun and are going to work in you is that you persevere to the end.

And this is what the whole book of Hebrews is about. It's urging and encouraging and assuring Christians to keep going, keep holding on to Jesus, keep your faith, keep continuing in what you believed.

Okay? Now, so it says, verse 6, we are His people if indeed we hold our confidence firm to the end. Verse 7, therefore, as the Holy Spirit says, today if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as

your forefathers did in the rebellion on the day of testing in the wilderness.

Verse 10, therefore I was provoked with that generation and I swore in my wrath they shall never enter my rest. Okay, so what's happening here? Remember, God's people come out of Egypt, they're saved by the blood of the Lamb, by the grace of God, they come out of Egypt and then God says, okay, that's only half the journey, now I want to take you into the promised land where you get to experience my rest and my blessing and my promises but what happened?

Numbers 13 and 14, Moses sends 12 spies to go and spy out the land and he says, go find out which way we should go. Should we go this way or should we go this way? Should we attack the cities from this side or from this side?

[9 : 24] So he says, go and find out what's the land like, come back and tell us how we can enter God's rest and the spies come back and they say, yes, the land is good, the food is good, it's very spacious, there's enough space for all of us but there's giants in the land.

The giants are too big. I think we should, no, we should, no, no, let's just go back to Egypt. No, we shouldn't go in and Joshua and Caleb say, no, no, no, God has promised.

God is faithful. He's told us if we trust him, we'll get to the rest. We'll get to what he's promised and the 10 spies say, no, it's too hard. I don't think we can do it and the spies spread a bad report and all of Israel don't believe God's promises and they don't go into the promised land.

The voice of unbelief is louder in their ears than God's voice of faithfulness and trustworthiness and so they believe the voice of unbelief in their heart rather than believing God's promises of his faithfulness and his trustworthiness.

Okay? And so, the writer of Hebrews here is giving these Christians a warning and he's saying, what happened to these guys, don't let that happen to you and I.

[10 : 39] It's one thing to get saved from Egypt but that's not the done deal. God's plan is that you get to glory and he's saying, for us Christians in 21st century Hong Kong, it's one thing that you believed in Jesus and got saved by the blood of the Lamb but that's not the end of the deal.

He wants to take you into glory, into his rest and to do that, we've got to trust his promises and believe him. Don't let what happened to them happen to us because they did not enter God's rest. Okay, does that make sense? You're tracking the logic? Okay, verse 11, I swore in my wrath they will never enter my rest. Friends, we face the same challenges today.

We're tempted to trust the voice of unbelief rather than the promises of God every single day when it comes to relationships and dating and sexuality or we listen to the voice of unbelief which says we better take things in our own hands fulfill our own happiness or will we trust God's promises to us? When it comes to money and wealth and what we do with our money are we going to listen to the voice of unbelief hoping and trusting what money can do for us? It'll make us happy, it'll keep us safe, guarantee our future or are we going to trust the promises of God?

[11 : 55] When it comes to our career or honesty or integrity every one of us are challenged, tempted to trust the voice of unbelief and so look at what his recommendation is here, look at verse 12 of chapter 3 he says, so take care brothers and sisters lest there be in any of us an evil unbelieving heart leading us to fall away from the living God that's what happened in the desert they fell away from God's promises but exhort one another every day as long as it's called today so that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin okay so remember we spoke about this last year at the retreat this is one of the most important verses talking about spiritual community and the reason is because he says that sin and particularly unbelief makes our hearts hard and it deceives us and so we need brothers and sisters around us encouraging us and exhorting us to keep our hearts soft to Jesus and so that's why we need spiritual community so remember last year the way we spoke about this we said when I sin which is hundreds of times a day and when I'm tempted not to believe in God what happens what happens in my heart something happens

I justify myself and I get defensive right so the decision comes my way and I think let me trust the voice let me take the matters into my own hand rather than trusting God automatically the first response in my heart is I justify myself and I get defensive I tell myself yeah well yeah it's a good reason to do that because this and this and this and this and what happens is my heart starts to grow hard towards God and I no longer want to trust Him okay but the problem is that when I do that I don't confess my sin and the idols of my heart don't get dislodged they just get re-entrenched and over time I find it easier and easier to fall away from God okay does that make sense so what do I need in that situation what do I need in that time I need two things okay I need to hear God's voice I need God's word to come and speak against the voice of unbelief and to remind me of God's

promises and His faithfulness I need God's word to penetrate into my heart of unbelief and to say trust God

He is faithful don't trust yourself don't trust money don't trust whatever trust God what do the Israelites need they need the voice of God to say yes there are giants in the land but God is faithful trust Him but the second thing I need is I need friends I need brothers and sisters to come around me look at what verse 12 says take care brothers and sisters lest there be in any of you an unbelieving heart leading you to fall away from God therefore exhort one another every day as long as it's called today so that you do not get hardened by the deceitfulness of sin so I need Christian brothers and sisters around me I need my wife and I need Oscar and Simon and Ed and staff and CG leaders to come around me and say Kevin you're making a silly decision trust God don't trust yourself okay does that make sense following the logic okay look at verse 14 he says for we share in Christ if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end okay it's the same as verse 6 we've got to hold on to Jesus verse 15 as it is said today if you hear his voice not just your friend's voice not just Oprah Winfrey's voice or Dr. Phil's voice or some opinions voice or the Washington Post's voice or the New Yorker's voice today if you hear his voice his voice do not harden your hearts we need

Christian family brothers and sisters around us who will help us to hear God's voice and hold our faith firm to the end see friends when I'm tempted not to believe God I don't just need friends to come around me and say Kevin I know you can do it I know you can you're such a good man you've got such good faith I know you can do it that's not what I need to hear what I need is someone to look me in the eye and say Kevin I know you're tempted not to trust God he is faithful he is trustworthy trust his word listen to him I need people to bring God's word to me so that God's word will put faith in my heart not just the opinions of man and woman today if you hear his voice we need people to bring us God's voice so let me give you an example when I'm tempted to be greedy hold on to some money and actually I know God wants me to give it away so let's say I've got some I've got some money and I feel like God wants me to give it away to someone or something or some cause do you know what happens every time that that happens the first thing that goes there's a bunch of thoughts that go through my mind which is

I find some way to tell myself why I shouldn't do it you never know what's going to happen you know the economy's tough you might just need to save up a little more or Kevin your first responsibility is to look after your family just make sure you've got enough of them there's a thousand voices that go through my mind justifying why I shouldn't trust God and I should hold on to it okay what I don't need is Claire to come to me or some friends or brothers to say Kevin you've got such a good heart I'm sure God understands I'm sure God understands or you know maybe just give away some of it maybe just half of it I think God will be happy I don't need the opinions of friends I need God's voice I need someone I need Claire or my friends to come and say Kevin God is trustworthy has he ever let you down has he ever not fulfilled his promises has he ever left you high and dry no you can trust him to bring God's word today if you hear his voice not just your friend's voice do not harden your hearts if friends bring me my own opinions it's not going to be powerful enough to confront the idols in my heart and I'll find a way of justifying myself or telling myself that their wisdom doesn't apply to me so let's say

[18:02] Sukai comes to me and we're having coffee and I'm sharing this thing if he just gives me his opinion I'm as true as that may be I'm going to find a way in my mind of telling myself yeah but it doesn't apply in this situation you know it's true for him but what's true for him isn't true for me right but if he brings me God's word he opens up God's word and says hey Kevin let's just look at what God says here he says this that word finds a way of penetrating my defenses and putting faith in my heart encouraging me to trust him okay here's another example let's say someone is tempted to move in with their girlfriend or go on a romantic holiday away just the two of them by the way that's not a good idea don't do that if you're tempted what does our friend need they don't just need someone saying that might not be a best idea let's think about that what do they need they need us to bring God's word to put faith in their heart because otherwise we'll find a million reasons to justify our decision we'll say oh you know housing in

Hong Kong is so expensive it just makes financial sense it's prudent it's good stewardship of our finances right or we'll say well we're just checking that we're compatible before we get married you know we don't make a mistake so we're just checking that we're compatible we'll find a thousand reasons to justify ourselves but what we need in that situation is someone to bring the light and the

power of God's voice to shine in our hearts to arrest our fears to give us faith to help us see the foolishness of our decisions and to turn to God in faith and trust him and it's not just sin what about a challenge comes your way so what happens your child gets diagnosed with some disease or some sickness or some challenge right we don't just need someone to come and say oh you know you've been such a faithful Christian I'm sure God's going to look after you that's just your opinion we need someone to come bring God's word to speak God's word into our hearts to give us faith to trust him to arrest the voices of unbelief and to put faith in our hearts so that we can trust him in the midst of challenges and difficulties for the Israelites at the moment of decision the voice of God's faithfulness was drowned out by the voice of unbelief so God said will you trust me to go into promised land and the voice of unbelief saying the giants are too big the food is not good enough the battle is going to be too hard that voice was too loud in their ears and so they listened to that voice rather than the voice of God's faithfulness okay now all that to say let's look at chapter four in chapter four he's going to continue the same train of thought okay and so look at verse 11 he says here don't fail to enter

God's rest by hardening our hearts verse 11 therefore let us strive to enter that rest so that no one may fall away by the same sort of disobedience for the word of God is living and active it's sharper than any two-edged sword piercing to the division of soul and spirit of joints and marrow discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart and no creature is hidden from his sight but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom they must give an account see friends for you and I to become the people that God called us to be to make disciples and to help other people make disciples and to obtain the promises of God and to get to heaven God calls us to do the same things that he called them to which is to trust him even in the midst of great difficulty and even in the face of great opposition they didn't trust him because they saw the giants and the obstacles they didn't become the people God called them to be because in the face of challenges they weren't able to quieten the voice of unbelief okay so what did they need to foster that belief what did they need in order to trust

God and get to the promised land they needed God's word and God's voice to be louder and more powerful in their minds and their hearts than the voice of unbelief okay and so they needed to hear God's word verse 2 says they needed to hear the gospel it says for the good news came to them as just as it comes to us they needed to hear God's word and so let's look at this description of God's word okay look at what he says here he says the word of God is living and active what does that mean what does it mean when God's word is living and active okay it's relevant yeah what are other thoughts it's powerful yeah it's got a life of its own actually it can activate life it can cause stuff to happen it's not blunt and dull right I don't know if you've I know most Hong Kongers we're such city slickers you might never have done this but if by some chance you've ever tried to chop wood with an axe okay have you tried to do that

I was chatting to someone the other day about some analogy from the bible about sheep and farming and he was like bro I live in Hong Kong I don't know about sheep and farming okay so if you know about chopping wood my parents in Cape Town we were there in July and it was winter and they've got a wood fire and so they've got a whole bunch of wood outside and so I was trying to chop some wood and if you've ever tried to chop wood with a blunt axe do you know what happens you bring it down as hard as you want and it just bounces off the wood it's like ding and just bounces straight up and it doesn't do anything but if you sharpen that axe it just splits it so beautifully straight down the middle and you just get all these pieces okay God's word is living and active it's sharp it accomplishes what it wants to do it doesn't bounce off it's not like our opinions when we listen to people's opinions if I'm struggling with something and Claire just gives me her opinions sometimes it's like yeah okay

[24 : 06] I can kind of see that yeah that maybe makes sense but God's word isn't just blunt it doesn't bounce off our hearts it's able to penetrate our hearts and because it's living and active and it's as sharp as ever I don't know if you've ever experienced this where maybe you opened up God's word and it just came alive to you and you're like oh my goodness like God spoke to you like God was right in the room have you ever experienced that I've got a bunch of experiences like that I'm going to tell you one or two stories so I remember I was 20 years old in Cape town and my first year in Cape town and pretty much I had grown up in this church family and church culture in Johannesburg in South Africa and this church culture everyone just spoke about planting churches and going to ministry that was like what everyone wanted to do okay and so I as this very religious youthful person

I thought I'd serve God so hard and I was such a faithful diligent Christian youth and my dream as a teenager was I wanted to plant a church or lead a church in Asia so when I went to first year university I studied Mandarin just I can't remember anything but I studied Mandarin because I wanted to lead a church in Asia that was all I wanted to do with my life and I remember I felt like God had said that you will go to another nation not South Africa I will send you to another country and Asia was my passion anyway I am now living in Cape Town I am 20 years old and I am just feeling useless I feel like God you could never use someone like me I am not gifted enough I am not talented enough and I remember praying this I was house sitting a friend house and I was walking around the house one Friday evening and I was just saying you know God I have really tried to serve you I have tried to be faithful but I think it's all been in vain

I remember using that word it's all been in vain because you could never use someone like me I'm just not gifted enough I'm talented enough I guess I'll just be like car salesman or something Cape town and you know it's all just been a pipe dream that night I opened my Bible and I opened to Isaiah 49 I was busy reading through the book of Isaiah so I'm like before I go to bed I better read my Bible go to Isaiah 49 and Isaiah 49 says this it says I will make your mouth sharp like an arrow he's talking about being a preacher and he says you say you've spent your strength in vain but I say I've got plans and purposes for you I will send you as a light to the nations to the Gentiles to the nations far away so right there I'm like oh God I have this dream but I guess it's all been in vain open God's word says you say it's all been in vain but I've got a plan for you you will go to the nations isn't that incredible that night it was like Jesus was in the room speaking to me his word was living and active

I remember a few years ago I was sitting in church I was leading the meeting and my friend called Ian Kruger was preaching from John 21 Jesus has died he's risen from the dead and he goes and he finds the disciples fishing on the boat and he calls them ashore and he says Peter Peter do you love me Peter says yes feed my sheep Peter do you love me yes I do feed my lambs a third time Peter do you love me yes I do take care of my sheep and so my friend Ian is preaching and he says why does Jesus ask Peter three times and I sit there I'm thinking yeah that's a good question I have no idea I've often wondered about that why does Jesus ask Peter three times do you love me and then Ian says well remember earlier how Peter had said to Jesus even if everyone denies you and runs away I will never deny you I'll be faithful and then the next chapter where's Peter he's standing at the call of fire and he denies Jesus and he denies

Jesus a second time and he denies Jesus a third time and then after that Jesus goes to him and three times the same number of times he denied him he elicits a proclamation from his mouth saying I love you Lord I love you what's Jesus doing there he's saying to Peter Peter I knew I know how many times you denied me but I know in your heart that you still love me and you feel guilty and you feel ashamed and you feel like your calling has been written off but I'm going to help you see that actually you do love me and it's not done and I'm not finished with you and I've still got a plan and purpose for you and as my friend Ian was explaining that as soon as he said Peter denied Jesus three times it was like the penny dropped and I just remember tears streaming down my eyes and I was like oh my goodness God's mercy is unbelievable it was like God's word just exploded in my heart I was like oh my heck how gracious is Jesus that Peter denies him three times and

[29 : 13] Jesus says you know Peter I know about that and it's okay I still love you and I know you love me and I'm going to help you see that you love me and I'm going to send you out to go and be my agent God's word exploded in my heart and tears streamed down my face I remember another time listening to John Piper sermon expounding God's sovereignty from Isaiah 46 where he says I am the one who calls things before they even exist I speak about them things that have not yet been done I proclaim them I will accomplish my purposes I will bring them to pass there is no one like me and as he just opened that up line by line and explained it it was like this combustion of explosion in my heart God's word cut my heart and I knew that I knew that I knew God is sovereign there is no one and nothing in all the world that can thwart his sovereignty but I my mind so that

I could trust him so why is that the reason is because these words aren't just words on a page and they aren't just advice these are living words it isn't just information for our minds it's getting to our heart so that we can encounter God in his word when we disciple people by reading God's word with them whether they are Christians or not the goal isn't just information in their minds the goal is that they encounter God through his word that's why we open it up so that we can meet with God now look at what Simon said he says it's living and active which means it's always fresh it's never

obsolete so think about this every day technology makes thousands of books completely obsolete right especially textbooks if you ever picked up a textbook from the 1920s or something or the 1950s there's a whole lot of stuff that is completely obsolete friends this book the words here are never ever going to be obsolete because God's word is eternally relevant it's as relevant to the next generation as it was to the people 2000 years ago it's living and it's fresh and it's active it's never obsolete look at what also he says it's

God's word is so sharp it's able to dissect what's going on in our lives and speak to the deepest areas of our lives even the areas that no one knows about so again I don't know if you've ever had this where you're grappling with something and you're struggling or maybe you've got fear or there's something you're not so sure about or you're wondering about something and somebody opens up God's word or you go to church or you go to CG and it speaks exactly to what you're wrestling with but nobody knew you're wrestling with it it was like the secret in your heart and you're like oh my goodness have you been listening to my thoughts how did you know I was wondering about that you've experienced that okay so here's another story Isaiah 49 remember 20 so hard I've tried to serve you but I'm just such a mess you'll never be able to use someone like me my brothers yeah you can use my brothers but me oh my goodness my heart is just like

I'm a mess anyway I have forgotten about that time five years previously so I go to my friend John Smythe and John says to me I go have coffee with him but God didn't give me anything so let's just read the Bible together why don't you open to Isaiah 49 let's just read it together and I had forgotten so we're reading it and as I'm reading it I'm like oh my goodness this is the scripture God gave me five years ago you say you spent your strength in vain but I say I've got purposes for you I'll send you to nations as a light to the earth exactly what I was struggling with nobody knew it God's word was sharp and living and active I remember when Claire and I were wondering to come to Hong Kong we came to visit two years ago and we met a whole bunch of you guys and at the end of the trip it was on the Saturday night and we were exhausted and we were finished

I got nothing to watermark I remember just feeling I got nothing nothing nothing nothing that night I opened my Bible reading 2 Corinthians 13 and it says this my grace is sufficient for you my power is made perfect in your weakness just that day I was thinking God I got nothing I got nothing and as I read that God's word dissected my heart my mind and spoke faith into my heart and suddenly I realized God you calling us here is fine I know we are weak but you say that you will be with us two weeks after that we go back to Cape town and we kind of knew God was calling us to Hong Kong but one of the things I was worried about was God Hong Kong is so expensive how are we ever going to afford to live driving in my car

[34 : 44] I pray this prayer I say God I just need to know that you know that I am worried about finances right you don't need to tell me what the answer is but I just need to know that you know that I am worried okay and I go to the office we have a staff meeting and there is another organization that joined us so there 80 people in the according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus and as I say that I'm like oh my goodness that's exactly what I needed my God will supply everything you need just half an hour before

I don't know how it's going to work God like just I need a sign that you know God's word just came and in that moment it was those faith in my heart you see come unbelief the voice of doubt was so loud in my ears now in theory I knew that God was faithful if you said to me Kevin do you believe God is faithful yes in my head I knew God was faithful but in that moment my heart didn't believe it my head understood it but there was a disconnect between the theology in my head and actually what my heart was trusting in in God trusted God and so I could go ahead and trust him now of course sometimes God's friends sometimes our friends can do that sometimes the Holy Spirit can just use a friend but generally I find my friends their advice is good but it's kind of a bit blunt but God's word when it opens up God's word it speaks to my heart and it gives me such faith God through his word finds a way of cutting through the stuff and getting to heart it somehow knows what my fears and anxieties are it speaks to those knows where I'm proud and it humbles me it knows where I'm short sighted and I need faith it's razor sharp like a knife that cuts to my heart and speaks the deepest part of me okay does that make sense okay we're almost done so think about this in Genesis chapter 3 the devil comes to Adam and Eve or Genesis 2 and he tempts them to rebel against God and sin enters the world and there's a mess but how does he do it what does the devil say to Adam and Eve remember he comes and he undermines God's word he says did God really say that he makes them doubt God's word he puts seeds of doubt and unbelief he wants to

drown out God's word but the second thing he does is he twists

God's word remember God had said you can eat of any tree you want there's just that one tree don't eat of that the devil comes to Eve and says did God really say you can't eat of any tree in the garden I mean that's not very kind of him he twists God's word and subtly twists it so that Eve starts to doubt the faithfulness of God's word because the devil knows that if he can malign God's voice and God's word he's won half the battle now just on a side note that's why there's three implications of this one implication is this every Sunday at watermark we're going to teach God's word you don't need you in your situation when in the day to day trenches of life the voice of unbelief is loud in your ears you don't need to hear the blunt acts of my thoughts and opinions you need to hear God's word that's why every Sunday we're going to try and open up God's word second implication is this let's have devotions again to God's word we need

God's word one morning you struggle you open up your Bible God's word can speak to us on Sunday mornings can I ask you pray for us as a church throughout the sermon just be praying God speak to us God let your word come alive on the way to church be praying God we want to hear your word this morning we don't just want to be entertained God come speak your word to us so three quick implications look at verse 13 with me here okay so God's word is living and active it's sharper than any two edged sword verse 13 and no creature is hidden from his sight all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give an account now does that sound like a description of God or a description of God's word okay that to me sounds like a description of God but we've just been talking about God's word right it says God's word is living and active

[39 : 53] God's word is sharp and then it says and no creature is hidden from his sight all are naked and exposed the eyes of him to whom we must give an account what's going on here well if you in the scriptures God's word is so aligned to God himself that in many ways what God does his word does and what God's word does is the same thing that God does now that doesn't mean that this is God we don't bow down and worship his word but God's word is so aligned to God himself that what God does is what his word does last week Chris read Psalm 29 for us as our call to worship I think we got it up on the screen let's look at Psalm 29 look at this look at verse 5 it says the voice of the Lord breaks the cedars the Lord breaks the cedars the voice of the Lord shakes the wilderness the Lord shakes the wilderness so who's who it's a description of God's power and authority is God's word powerful and authoritative or is

God powerful and authoritative well the answer is both right both we see friends that God's word carries authority and power because God inhabits his word when we open up the word when someone sits across the table with us when we read God's word in CG when we let it speak to us it has power and authority because it's living and it's active it knows and discerns the intentions of our hearts our private thoughts God's word is able to cut through our fears and give us faith but you know what last thought is this you know the book of Hebrews is all about persevering to the end but the book of Hebrews is actually not about God's word the book of Hebrews is actually about God himself you see all of us you and I we just like the Israelites we don't trust God we don't love him supremely we don't always obey him we tend to trust ourselves and we don't always obey him but you know

God continued to give his word to his people he sent prophet after prophet after prophet to continue to give them God's word to pour faith in our hearts and to cause us to trust him but we just like the Israelites we spurn and reject his word time through the prophets and through the law God was revealing himself to his people but through Jesus he reveals himself ultimately and so Hebrews 1 actually starts off and it says this long ago at many times and in many ways God spoke to his people through his prophets but in these last days he has spoken to us by his son by Jesus whom he appointed the heir of all things through whom he created the whole world this son Jesus is the radiance of the glory of God the exact imprint of his nature he upholds the universe by the word of his power and after making purifications for sins he sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high friends the good news of the gospel is that though you and

I day fall away Jesus comes to us again and again and again and reminds us that he is faithful he is trustworthy his promises are true and that we can bank our lives on him he is the one that came when we were dead and made us alive he the one who poured faith into our hearts he is the one who by grace we have been saved because of him and that is why Hebrews 12 says this therefore since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses let us lay aside every weight and sin that clings so closely running with endurance the race that is set before us how looking to Jesus to

the word made flesh the founder and the perfect of our faith who for the joy set before him endured the cross friends as beautiful and as magnificent and as glorious as the scriptures are the bible didn't die on the cross for us the bible didn't take away our sins the bible brings god's word into our hearts but ultimately we look to

Jesus and the reason we come to god's word is because it shows us jesus beautifully and powerfully the word made flesh god's word says to us what the people of god have always needed to hear that god is faithful and that we can trust him let's come before him now let's do that together let's pray father god thank you so much for your god thank you that you such a faithful god christ you are so incredibly faithful god we are just like the israelites god every day we are tempted to listen to the voice of unbelief god every day we trust ourselves rather than you god you are so exceedingly abundantly incredibly patient and gracious and we are so grateful lord thank you thank you thank you for your mercy and your grace god thank you god as roman says we're sin abounded grace super abounded all the more father thank you for your faithfulness god god god thank you for your word god i pray that you will make us as a church people of your word lord pray make your word come alive to us god we want your word to be at work in our hearts and our lives god send your word to penetrate our hearts i pray father for each one of us here where fear and doubt has gripped us god and is the reality of our hearts god i pray that your word will cut like a knife and penetrate the depths of our hearts and implant faith into our hearts god may we trust you god god i pray in a moment your word of faith will arrest the fear and arrest the doubt and arrest the unbelief god and pour faith into our hearts that we will trust you god father we don't know the battles that so many of us are facing and the challenges that so many of us are facing god we don't minimize those challenges but god we look to you help us to trust you god father we pray that our hearts won't be hardened but that we can hold fast our confidence firm to the end that we all get to inherit the promises of god and enjoy that rest and god as we seek to disciple each other and let your word light a fire in us that explodes in our hearts and spreads beyond us god like a flame throughout hong kong god oh lord we pray come and help us in your wonderful and powerful name amen