

**ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S ANGLICAN PRO-CATHEDRAL IN THE TOWN OF TONAWANDA**

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Scripture: Various

***"Be All You Can Be in Christ – Be OF the Word!" (part 3)***

**BE ALL YOU CAN BE!**

Be all you can be in Christ! That is the message we have been looking at the last couple weeks. We want to be all that we can be as followers of Christ and as the body of Christ. I likened it to having a new car. To maximize the potential of the car, you need the key, an engine that sparks, and fuel. The key to being all we can be in Christ is to be born again; the engine that sparks is the Holy Spirit whom we receive when we are born again, and the fuel – well that is what the Holy Spirit needs if the engine will run well. Our Mission Statement gives us the fuel for what we need to be all we can be. We have already looked at the importance of prayer. Last week we looked at the importance of being in God's Word. To be in God's Word means to hear it, read it, study it, memorize it and meditate on it! That is, in fact, what God's Word tells us to do.

But I want to talk more about God's Word. Biblical study and reflection is important but we can't just end there. I am sure most of us have heard the expression – be in the world but not of the world. That means we are to be engaged in affairs or society, but we are not to be like the society in our thinking or actions. It's why the Apostle Paul tells us in **Romans 12:2** – ***"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind."***

But when it comes to the Word of God we are to not only be IN it, we are to be OF it. It's not enough to simply know and understand God's Word. We need to put it into action. We need to be people of the Word.

Now you may have noticed that last week's sermon had five points; this week's does as well. God has given us two hands with five fingers each. Now look at your hands – if we are to be in and of God's Word, let your hands remind you of this. For the first hand – five things to be in the Word – hear, read, study, memorize, and meditate. And the other hand – five as well. What is the first thing we need to be about after we are in the Word of God?

**BELIEVE IT!**

We need to believe it! The Apostle Paul writes in **1 Thess. 2:13** – ***"For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe."***

How else will God perform His work in us unless we believe His Word? It is not a word from man, its origin is not from earth. It's called the Word of God for a reason! It is from heaven. It is from the Creator of the universe! After we hear, read, study, memorize and meditate on the Word, we must believe it.

**Heb. 11:6** reminds us that *“without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.”*

And the Apostle Paul again affirms in **Gal. 3:22**, *“But the Scripture has shut up everyone under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.”*

What we learn will not benefit unless we believe it. And when the Bible talks about belief, it is not talking merely about believing in the mind. It is belief in the heart – in other words, it is really trusting that something is true and then acting on it. And if we truly believe, then the actions that follow will include the following. The second way we are to be in the Word.

### **PRAY IT!**

We are not to just believe the word; we need to pray the Word and even speak it aloud. What do we hear at the beginning of creation? And God said, “Let there be light!” There is power in the spoken Word; there is power in praying the Word. Jesus prayed aloud so others could hear, but not just others, so the angels would hear, and that includes the demonic realm.

God’s Word gives us everything we need to pray. Think of the Lord’s Prayer (**Mt. 6:9-13; Luke 11:2-4**). It is God’s Word, the words of Christ and the foundation for our prayer life. But the Bible gives us even more specifics to flesh out the themes of the Lord’s Prayer.

Let me give you one example. Please turn with me to **Ephesians 1:15-19**: *“For this reason I too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which exists among you and your love for all the saints, 16do not cease giving thanks for you, while making mention of you in my prayers; 17that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him. 18I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, 19and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe.”*

Do you see the various things the Apostle Paul prays for? He prays for others that God would give them a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of God. That there would be further spiritual enlightenment and that we would understand the glory of our future inheritance and the power that we have in Him. Take some time to reflect and pray on that!

### **OBEY IT!**

In addition to praying the Word, if I am truly OF the Word, then I need to not only believe it but obey it. Do you remember what Jesus said at the end of His Sermon on the Mount in **Mt. 7:24-27**? He said those who hear His words and do them is like the wise man who built his house on the rock, and those who hear His words and do not do them is like the foolish man who built his house on the sand. When the storms come, the one who has his home on the rock will survive; but the one whose home is on the sand will fall apart.

Who can forget the words of **James 1:21-25**? *“Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls. 22But*

*prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. 23For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; 24for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was.25But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does."*

If there is one message that is said over and over again in the Bible, it is that obedience to God's Word is the most important action one can take in one's relationship with the Lord.

As **Rev. 1:3** declares, "*Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy, and heed the things which are written in it; for the time is near.*" The point of this important verse is clear - The blessing is not simply in hearing and reading the Word of God; it is in keeping it! And if we are going to obey God's Word, then it means we will also....

### **SHARE IT!**

That's right. To be OF the Word means to SHARE the Word. We are all familiar with the Great Commission in **Mt. 28:19** to make disciples of all nations. And we cannot do that unless we are willing to share God's Word with others. How did you learn about Jesus? Most likely because someone shared His word with you.

We find the same message in the Old Testament. **Psalm 96:3**: "*Tell of His glory among the nations, His wonderful deeds among all the peoples.*"

Jesus said in **Mk. 16:15**: *And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation."*

And the Apostle Paul wrote in **2 Cor. 5:18-20**: "*Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.*"

We are ambassadors for Christ given the ministry of reconciliation to let others know about God's means of peace and reconciliation for our world; namely, His Son, Jesus Christ. An ambassador not only represents someone in higher authority, an ambassador is the ruler's mouthpiece in the community he is in.

Some people like to say that all they have to do is to share Christ by their actions. That is incorrect. We need both word and deed. Otherwise, you will be getting the credit for your actions because the people around you will not know who is your Lord and why!

### **DEFEND IT!**

Finally, if we are truly to be OF the Word, we need to defend it. We need to be able to explain why we believe what we believe to others. **1 Peter 3:15** tells us, "*but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence.*"

When we defend the Word both in word and action, we are standing for God's truth and His righteousness. Look now in **Acts 17:2-3**: ***"And according to Paul's custom, he went to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and giving evidence that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and saying, "This Jesus whom I am proclaiming to you is the Christ."***

**2 Tim. 4:2** says ***"preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction."***

And **Jude 1:3** exhorts ***"Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints."***

The truth is that we live in a world that is actually AGAINST God's Word – both the written word and the living word, Jesus Christ. You have heard me say it before. The world doesn't hate the baby in the manger – the baby is not a threat. The world hates the man the baby became. King Herod did not want to kill the baby Jesus because He was a threat to his kingdom when he was a little child. He wanted to kill the baby because he was afraid of what would happen when the baby became a man.

Jesus said, If they hated Me, they will hate you. Jesus said, you will be persecuted on account of Me and My Word. The only time we are persecuted is if we are either standing in the way of evil or if we are going against evil. God asks the question in **Psalm 94:16**: ***"Who will stand up for me against evildoers? Who will take his stand for me against those who do wickedness?"***

To defend God's Word means to both defend it against error and to proclaim it against evil.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, AMEN!