

God's Word is Good
Isaiah 55:10-13
Psalm 145:8-14

At Sunday school the teacher was teaching about how God created everything, including human beings. Little Tommy, a kindergartner, seemed especially intent when he heard how Eve had been created out of one of Adam's ribs.

Later in the week his mother noticed that he was lying down as though he were ill. She asked, "Tommy, what's the matter?"

Tommy responded, "I have a pain in my side. I think I'm gonna have a wife."¹

Have you ever witnessed an avalanche? The force of the initial falling rocks or snow is enough pressure to make a domino effect on the land downhill. Kind of like the snowball effect, an avalanche gains momentum and doesn't stop until the ending point is stronger than the force slamming into it. The effects of the avalanche have a lasting impression and things are never exactly the same as they were before the avalanche.

The same is true about God's Word. Once spoken, it cannot be taken back. And because God's Word is good, it doesn't stop until it has a lasting impression. Think about the experiences you may have had as a child. They touched your life in ways that you will always remember. For the good or the bad, they are there as memories that impact your life. So too, the Word of God has a lasting impression. Because ultimately God's Word is good, and God's goodness cannot be halted, it will eventually find its way to where it needs to be.

So when you share the Word of God—even if you do not see the immediate effects—it has an everlasting impression on the hearer. I think of those who having helped someone in need felt as if they were failures because the person they shared with did not exhibit the response they expected. But who knows what will happen months, years, and even decades later? That person may never forget that kindness and may eventually turn to God's love and care.

We should not be discouraged when we make efforts and feel as if we fail. The prophet Isaiah reminds us that God's Word is like the rain and snow that come from heaven and water the earth. The water does not simply get close to the ground and then evaporate up to the sky again. Rather, the water nourishes the ground before it evaporates. It fulfills its purpose before it goes back to the clouds.

Isaiah continues by saying that God's Word does not return to God empty. Rather, God's Word goes out and fulfills God's purpose. God's Word is always successful, even when we think otherwise.

¹ Michael E. Hodgin, Ed. *1002 Humorous Illustrations for Public Speaking*. Grand Rapids, MI. Zondervan. 2004. p. 32.

Personally, I am always amazed when I hear stories of how the Word of God, spoken through my sermons, has touched the lives of others. Week after week of preaching makes me wonder if I am just preaching to deaf ears. Yet, hearing how one person was inspired to make a difference or another person did this or that helps me understand that God's Word doesn't fail.

I have heard stories of persons who shared situations where they prayed for someone to hear the Word of God and respond to it. For years, their loved one refused to believe. Then one day, their prayers were answered and God's Word broke through that person and changed his or her life.

God's good Word pervades life in many ways. We can speak God's Word without using words—like St. Francis of Assisi—or we can speak God's Word in subtle ways. Consider this example:

A young woman returned home early from a date with a long look on her face. Her mother asked her what was bothering her. The girl explained, "My boyfriend just proposed marriage."

Her mother asked, "What's so bad about that?"

The girl answered, "He also told me he is an atheist. He said there is no way he could ever believe there was a hell."

The mother consoled her daughter: "Don't let this bother you. Marry him anyway. With a little time and between the two of us, we will be able to convince him there is a hell."²

Of course, that may not be the best Biblical lesson to teach someone. But the point is that God's Word is good and cannot fail. There is no such thing as deaf ears to the Word of God. Even when a person says he doesn't believe, the Word was still spoken.

Isaiah goes on to say that we should rejoice in God's Word. Like Jesus, when riding the colt into Jerusalem, said to the disciples that they could not stop the praise of God... "I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out." The prophet Isaiah proclaims the same when he says: For you shall go out in joy, and be led back in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall burst into song, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands." Even if all of humankind abandons God, the rest of creation will sing God's glory and praise.

So do not be discouraged when you make efforts to care for others and they seem to fail. Do not worry when you teach others about God's love and they seem to ignore your words. Because God's Word is good and does not fail, it may be that your example touches the lives of someone you never expected to touch. It may be that your words appear to fall on deaf ears only to nag that person into believing God's Word. Like Mother Theresa notes, God does not call us to be successful—God calls us to be faithful.

² *Ibid.* p. 193.

In our efforts of faithfulness, God's Word is like a snowball being rolled in the snow. It is like an avalanche that cannot be stopped before it meets its final resting place. It touches the lives of others and cannot be taken back, ignored, or forgotten. God's Word is good and God's Word does not fail. As humans, we can fail, but God's plan is perfect. Amen.

Prayer:

Everlasting Lord,

Help us to trust that you are not discouraged in our efforts to do your will. Help us to know that our efforts are pleasing in your sight because you know that your Word is good and cannot fail.

In Jesus name we pray. Amen.