

It's God's Living and Abiding Revelation to Us

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[0 : 0 0] We're going to turn to our Bible reading, and we're continuing our series on why we treasure the Bible. Willie will be preaching to us shortly, and it's a slightly more thematic series that we're doing, so we've got a couple of readings this morning. First, we're going to be in Isaiah chapter 55, reading verses 6 to 13, but we're also going to turn over to 1 Peter chapter 1, reading from verse 22 through to chapter 2, verse 3. So put a finger in 1 Peter, or a marker, because we'll be turning there shortly, but first, Isaiah 55, reading verses 6 to 13.

Isaiah says, Seek the Lord while he may be found. Call upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts. Let him return to the Lord that he may have compassion on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, my ways, declares the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there, but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth. It shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which

I sent it. For you shall go out in joy and be led forth in peace. The mountains and the hills before you shall break forth in singing, shall break forth in singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress. Instead of the briar shall come up the myrtle, and it shall make a name for the Lord, an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.

Turn over to 1 Peter chapter 1, beginning in verse 22.

Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart. Since you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable through the living and abiding word of God.

[2 : 5 7] For all flesh is like grass, and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers and the flower falls, but the word of the Lord remains forever. And this word is the good news that was preached to you.

So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander. Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation, if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good. Amen. This is God's word.

Perhaps you'd open your Bible with me at John chapter 16. We'll come there in a few moments.

I'm not going to recap all the reasons that we've already looked at for why we treasure the Bible. The list is getting quite long now. But you'll remember that last time we were thinking about the Bible as being God's true and trustworthy word. We can trust the Bible because it's divinely authored. And we know that he, the Lord, will always lead us into truth and not into error.

The Bible is written in the words of men, but it's more than that. God fully inspired the writers so that they wrote and spoke as those who, as Peter says, were driven along by the Spirit.

[4 : 38] But he also breathed out the very words themselves. And you remember Paul speaks in 1 Corinthians 2 about that, saying that the apostles impart to us things that are given by God in words taught by the Spirit.

So they are God's own words, and that's why we can trust them. That's why they are therefore infallible and inerrant, because God's words don't err because they can't err. God is neither ignorant nor deceitful. And so his words are always true. They will always therefore lead us into truth and never into error. Of course, that doesn't mean that we can misuse his words because we need to understand the way God speaks to us. He speaks to us in ordinary language so we can understand him. The Bible is not full of technical words about biochemistry and astronomy and particle physics. Thank God for that. But that does mean that we mustn't try and find things that God never intended to speak about. No, rather we're to listen to everything that God did intend and did want to impart to us. And we can understand those things because he speaks purposefully. And he speaks perfectly clearly for all people in all places at all times.

Remember John Calvin puts it this way, he lisps to us. He accommodates himself to us so that he who is divine and eternal and infinite can nevertheless communicate clearly with those of us who are creaturely and mortal and finite. And God can and he always does in language that is perfectly given and that is always sufficiently precise and perfectly precise for the purpose that he desires of it.

He lisps to us as a father to his children in order to lead us to him, in order to convey his true message to us, and in order to lead us day by day in his true way. And we can trust him because his word is true and trustworthy. And because, and this is today's topic, because his word is powerful and not powerless. It's God's living and abiding revelation for us. And it always, therefore, accomplishes everything that God purposes. God's word is not just his speech, it's his action.

And that's such an important thing for us to understand. Now, when you think about that, all speech is like that. Words don't just say things, they do things. Those of you who study language or have studied language will maybe be familiar with what's called speech act theory. It was developed by the scholar J.L. Austin in the early part of the 20th century. And he talks about words having not just a locutionary function, not just the thing said, but an illocutionary purpose and function.

[8 : 03] That is, what the words that are spoken are actually doing. And also a perlocution, that is, what is achieved, what is accomplished by those words spoken. That might sound a bit complicated, but actually when you think about it, it's really just asking the question, not just what did you say, but why did you say it? And what's the outcome of you having said that thing?

So for example, if you're after the service today, if you're out on the pavement standing on the road, speaking to somebody else who's on the pavement, and they say to you, watch, there's a car coming. That's the locution. That's what they say. But what do they mean?

Why have they said that? Well, they're not just saying that to make conversation. It's a warning, isn't it? The right response, if somebody says, watch, there's a car coming, isn't it? Oh, that's interesting. Now the right response is to say, oh gosh, thanks, and just step back onto the pavement. See, that's the illocutionary force of those words. And the perlocutionary result is that you're warned and that you act to save yourself. You stand back on the pavement, so you're not knocked down by the car. Now understanding that purpose, that illocutionary force of those words is vital to understanding, to interpretation, especially in the Bible. If you don't get that, then you're going to miss the real meaning of those words.

So an example would be when you're reading the prophets in the Old Testament. You need to understand what they're doing, what the illocutionary force is of their words. Take Jonah, for example. What was Jonah's message? Forty days and Nineveh will be destroyed, says the Lord.

Well, Nineveh wasn't destroyed, was it? So does that mean Jonah was a false prophet? If you read Deuteronomy 18, verse 22, which says that a prophet who speaks in God's name, something's going to happen, and it does not come to pass, then that man is a false prophet.

[10 : 09] And if you read that, you might conclude, well, Jonah must have been a false prophet. But of course, you'd be wrong, wouldn't you? Because, of course, the purpose of Jonah's words was that the Ninevites would repent and not be destroyed. And God's word achieved its purpose exactly as he intended. But if you're not sensitive to the proper semantics of that utterance, to its intended force, its illocutionary force, then you're getting a right tangle, won't you? You'll think, oh, Jonah must have been a false prophet. But how could that be?

See, so all words are doing something when they're being said. They don't just say something, they do something. And they achieve a result. They bring about a new situation one way or another.

That's the perlocutionary act, the thing that's achieved by those words. So when Parliament speaks, or more properly, when the Queen speaks in Parliament, when Parliament enacts new laws, the illocutionary force, the purpose of those words, is to change things in the nation.

And the perlocutionary act is that a new state of affairs is created. New laws change the face of the nation.

Think of the recent new laws about making you wear masks in shops and so on. That has quite literally changed our faces, hasn't it? For the worse, in many ways. But a law has something to say, but it does something, and it changes the situation.

[11 : 50] And that's a vitally important matter when we consider the words of Scripture. Don't have time to get into that more in more detail today. If you want to read more about that, I recommend you read the works of Kevin Van Hooser.

He's a teacher at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, a very fine theologian, who's done some very, very, very fine work on this. If you want a very accessible, easy thing, his essay, what's it called, Semantics of Biblical Literature, in a book that was edited by Don Carson, published back in the 1980s, called Hermeneutics, Authority, and Canon.

But he's got a lot of other books. And it's very helpful in understanding how the language of the Bible actually works. But my main point today is very simple.

God's words, above all, are powerful words. When God speaks, he acts, he does things. And having spoken, things are changed forever.

It is a living and abiding revelation to effect great change, eternal change, and to achieve very powerful consequences.

[13 : 03] Listen again to Isaiah 55 that we read. For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there, but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out of my mouth.

It shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose. It shall exceed in the thing for which I sent it.

powerful, world-changing words. I want to think about that a little more this morning. A person's words get their power from that person's relative position and that person's status, don't they?

So world leader's words are powerful. They can start wars, they can end wars. They can create peace. They can confer honor, and so on.

Financiers' words these days are very powerful. The chairman of the Federal Reserve of the United States makes a speech, and it moves markets all over the world, increases and decreases the value of currencies, and so on.

[14 : 19] Warren Buffett, the legendary investor, his words are powerful. Somebody reads an article saying Warren Buffett's buying shares in Tesco. You can be absolutely sure the price of Tesco shares is going to rocket, and so on.

The words of the powerful are powerful because of the nature of the person who utters them, and the purpose of that person that's revealed by those words.

Well, how much more so is that the case then for God who is the creator of heaven and earth and the Lord of earth and heaven? God's words have almighty, eternal power.

God's word is living and active. Hebrews 4.12, It's sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, discerning the thoughts and the intentions of the heart.

And no creature is hidden from his sight. Everyone is naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give an account.

[15 : 32] What is the Bible? Well, this book contains the very words of God, and those words are powerful words.

The Bible is a living and active and abiding revelation. Thomas Cranmer, the great English reformer and martyr, put it this way, God's word, the Bible, is powerful to tell the world to turn the sinner and to tether the saint.

It has convicting power, it has converting power, and it has keeping and controlling power. I think that's a very helpful summary to guide our thinking about the power of God's word in Scripture.

So I want to just think about each of these in turn this morning. First, God's word is powerful to tell the world. That is, the Bible's message carries God's power to convict the world.

John 16, verse 7. I tell you the truth, it's to your advantage that I go away, says Jesus, for if I don't go away, the helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you, the Holy Spirit.

[16 : 43] And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness righteousness and judgment. Now we saw last time that in John 16, Jesus is in the upper room with his closest disciples, those who are going to become the apostles of the New Testament church.

And he's teaching them here about the coming of the Holy Spirit after Jesus' resurrection and ascension to empower them for their ongoing witness to Jesus in the world.

Look down to verse 13. When the spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth. For he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears, he will speak.

And he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me because he will take from what is mine and declare it to you.

All that the Father has is mine. And therefore I said that he'll take what is mine and declare it to you. Back in chapter 15, verse 27, similarly he said, he will bear witness about me and you also will bear witness because you have been with me from the beginning.

[17 : 54] So that's very important. He's not speaking these words about leading into all truth to you and me. He's speaking them very clearly, isn't he? To his apostles, to those who've been with him from the very beginning, to those who have heard his words, and as Jesus says in John chapter 14, he's going to bring them to their remembrance fully.

So the Holy Spirit is going to come. He's going to lead the apostles into all truth. He's going to bring into remembrance all the things that he has taught them so that in proclaiming this authentic gospel to the world through their words, the ministry of the Holy Spirit will be accomplished throughout the whole world.

A ministry that chapter 16, verse 8 here says is to convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment.

God's word in scripture is powerful to tell the world, to convict the world's people, to convince them about the great eternal realities, about heaven and hell and judgment to come.

that the risen Lord Jesus will judge their lack of righteousness if they do not repent. And that's exactly what the apostolic preaching did.

[19 : 13] Read it in the Acts of the Apostles. It told the world. It heralded the news, the gospel of the coming Lord and judge, Jesus Christ. That was the very heart of the apostolic preaching.

That defined gospel preaching. Chapter 17 of Acts, Paul's speaking to the Areopagus, the wise men of Athens, and he says, the times of ignorance God has previously overlooked.

But now, he commands all people everywhere to repent because he's fixed the day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by the risen Lord Jesus.

God's word powerfully tells the world the truth to convict people's hearts, to convict their consciences about the weightiest matters in the world, sin and righteousness and judgment to come.

And God's word has powerfully convicting power. You can read in Acts chapter 24, for example, of how Paul spoke that gospel message to the Roman governor Felix.

[20 : 21] Paul reasoned about righteousness, self-control and the coming judgment. And Felix was terrified. Well, no wonder. Because he was a ruthless, savage ruler.

He was a corrupt man. He was an immoral man. And God's word was powerful to convict the human heart. No creature is hidden from his sight.

Not Roman rulers. Not our rulers today. Not anyone. It's a two-edged sword, a sword piercing. The very thoughts, the very intentions of our deepest hearts to expose sin and to face us with the terrible consequences of that sin.

You know that. I certainly know that. We know the power of God's word to penetrate to our hearts, to convict us before God. That's why we so often want to hide from the truth of God.

That's why the world wants to hide from the truth of God, to silence it, to close it down. I remember some years ago hearing through the Christian Institute of a cafe owner in a, I think it was Blackpool, it was one of these seaside towns, and he had a TV screen just running in his cafe, playing the words of the New Testament.

[21 : 39] And people complained and the police were called and he was arrested. He was told to close it down because why? Well, those words were so offensive. Those words were convicting those who read them. We're facing something very similar at the moment with our Scottish administration wanting to pass this new incitement to hate crime bill.

The words of Scripture themselves are deemed to be so offensive that perhaps it'll become an offense even to read the words of Scripture because they have convicting power.

the Bible constantly is telling the world about sin, about righteousness, and about judgment. And none can escape that.

However uncomfortable people may find it. James, the apostle, speaks in chapter 1, doesn't he, about the word of God being like a mirror. When we look at it and read it, it shows up the spots and the blemishes in our lives.

The things that we'd never accept about ourselves. But the mirror does not lie. I don't know if you saw this week, I read that there's been an absolute boom for plastic surgeons in lockdown because so many more people are wanting to have Botox injections and facelifts.

[22 : 58] And you know the reason? Because they're spending so much time looking at Zoom and seeing their own face right up in front of them. And at last, they're having to face up to the terrible reality of what other people are seeing all the time. Zoom does not lie, apparently.

And the Bible shows up like a mirror our ugliness and our guilt before our holy God so that we're convicted by the convicting words of God.

Paul speaks of that in Romans chapter 3, doesn't he? All alike are under the power of sin, he says. No human being will be justified in God's sight.

There is no distinction. All lack the glory of God. That is what the Bible tells the world. And that's what the Bible tells you and me personally as well.

A word that powerfully convicts and forces us to see the truth like a mirror, like looking at our face in Zoom. To convince us about sin and its reality, about righteousness and its necessity, and about judgment and its coming certainty.

[24 : 18] It tells the world. But that's not the only power, thankfully, in God's word. God's word is powerful also, said Thomas Cranmer, to turn the sinner.

That is, the scriptures are not just a mirror to reveal the truth about ourselves. They're a wonderful window through which we can see the truth about God and his great salvation through his son, Jesus Christ.

God's word is not only a convicting power convincing us of these things, but it's a converting power. It has power to change. It points us to the Savior and it leads us to the Savior and it calls us into the life that he alone can give, into eternal life.

The gospel is a two-edged sword. It tells us about sin, but it tells us also about salvation. Listen to Peter speaking in Acts chapter 10 to Cornelius and his household, telling him about what the gospel message is.

Jesus, says Peter, commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed to be judge of the living and the dead. You see, convicting and convincing about sin and righteousness and judgment.

[25 : 35] But he goes right on, doesn't he, to summarize the message of the whole of the Old Testament scriptures. To him, that is to Jesus, all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.

God's word has power to convert, to change our state from guilt to forgiveness, from darkness to light, from sin to mercy, from death to life.

That's what Jesus' own ministry demonstrated repeatedly so powerfully in his words and in his signs. Remember in John chapter 5, Jesus calls out to the cripple at the pool of Bethesda.

Jesus spoke to him and he commanded, rise, take up your bed and walk. And immediately he went on to say, didn't he, that this sign is like a visual age because he said, the time is coming and is now here when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live because the words of Jesus Christ have converting power, they have life-changing power, they impart eternal life.

In John 6, 63, Jesus says that plainly, the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. If you abide in my word, he says, you are true disciples and you will know the truth and the truth will set you free.

[27 : 10] The words of life that turn the sinner, that raise the dead to eternal life. And just as for Jesus' words, he promised that the words of his apostles would go on speaking these words of life, Jesus' own words, after his ascension through the coming power of the Holy Spirit upon his church.

That's why in John chapter 17, in Jesus' great prayer, he says to his father, this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

And he says, I have given them, his apostles, I have given them the words that you gave me and they have received them and they have come to know the truth.

But he goes on to pray for others in the future. And he says, I don't ask for these only, his disciples then, I also ask for those who will believe in me through their words.

You see, the words of the apostolic gospel. their words too will have converting power, power to bring life to the dead.

[28 : 22] That's why Jesus speaks of the greater works that the father will do through the son when the Holy Spirit comes after the resurrection and giving life to multitudes of the dead.

Through the proclamation of the apostolic gospel, through the word of the gospel of Jesus Christ, which is powerful to turn the sinner from death to life, from judgment to the mercy of God.

That's how the church was born. All through the book of Acts, it's describing these greater works as the gospel of Jesus tells the world and turns sinners to find salvation.

to find in Jesus Christ life so that those who are convicted of their sin will be converted as they bow the knee to Jesus Christ in response of faith.

And if you're a Christian believer today, it's thanks to that convicting and converting power of the word of God. That's what we read in 1 Peter chapter 1.

[29 : 35] Turn there with me to look at these verses for a few moments. Look at what Peter says. Look at how he describes what has happened to people who have become Christian disciples, who have been born again.

To use that language that John uses in 1 Peter 1 verse 23. You have been born again, he says, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable. How?

Through the living and abiding word of God. That's how you've been born again. Converted through the power of the word.

Verse 25. This word is the good news. It is the gospel that was preached to you. James says almost the same thing in chapter 1 verse 18.

Out of his own will he has brought us forth, brought us to birth by the word of truth. It's God's word. It's the biblical gospel of good news and all the scriptures that turns sinners and imparts new life, eternal life.

[30 : 37] The word of God is the instrument, it's the weapon, the two-edged sword by which the spirit of God imparts everlasting life. It has converting power to change the future forever and ever.

That's why Paul, when he writes to the Thessalonians, gives thanks that they receive the word of God as it truly is, not as the word of men, but as what it really is, the word of God at work in you who believe.

God's abiding word, living, active, at work, to convict and to convert and to impart life. He says to the Philippians in chapter 2, verse 16, he talks about it and says it's the word of life.

This word of life was made manifest to us. That's how John puts it in his first letter. The word that is made flesh in Jesus Christ.

But he goes on, doesn't he, to say, what we have seen and what we have heard, we proclaim also to you so that you might have fellowship with us and therefore through us, the apostles, with the Father and the Son, which is eternal life.

[31 : 54] You see, the word is powerful, it's living, it's abidingly active to create life, to impart life, to change the future, to change everything forever and ever.

Just like the words spoken in a marriage fire are powerful and abiding, aren't they? They create on that day a new union and they keep that new union, that new life forever and ever.

That's why the words spoken by a judge are not just words, they are power to either acquit or to imprison, to confer slavery and bondage or to confer liberty.

And once it's done, it's done permanently. And this ultimately powerful word is the good news, the gospel, the word that was proclaimed to you, says Peter.

And notice, by the way, in 1 Peter 2 verse 9 where he goes on, he says, this is a word also that's to be proclaimed by you, not just proclaimed to you, but by you, to unleash that converting power, that convicting power to others.

[33 : 10] You're a chosen people, you're a royal priesthood, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness and into his marvelous light.

It's given to us, to the church of Jesus Christ, to proclaim this word of abiding power, telling the world and turning sinners.

sinner. It's given to us to join in the greater work of the Son. That's through his gospel. He gives life to the dead all over the world.

People who are born again through this living and abiding word of God. Isn't that an extraordinary privilege that should be given to us? That's the mission of the church.

That is the great commission. to proclaim this word, to call people to obedience, to teach them the way of this Savior, to tell the world, to turn sinners.

[34 : 11] God's word is powerful and that is the task that he has given us. And we must never be sidetracked ever as the Christian church from that primary task, must we?

Not anything can intrude upon the primacy of that marvelous thing. God's word alone, his gospel alone has power to tell the world and to turn sinners.

And finally, of course, and thankfully for every one of us who is a Christian believer, God's word is powerful to tether the saint. Not only does his word convict and convince the world, not only does it convert and change sinners, but it keeps and it controls the whole of that new life that it's brought to birth.

So that that new life will grow and develop and grow up into maturity in Christ. That's what Peter goes on to speak about there in 1 Peter 2, verse 2.

Long, he says, for the pure spiritual milk that by it you may grow up into salvation. We're being built, he says, as living stones into a spiritual house, but God doesn't want us to remain as infants.

[35 : 29] God has purposed that eternity should be populated with mature Christ-like images of his son. And we're growing up if we are feeding on the pure milk of God's word.

just as we were saved, just as we were born into that new life, so we will go on and grow in it. God's word tethers his saints and holds them.

Turn back just finally to Ephesians chapter 4 and have a look there. Paul, I think, is going to be speaking more on this this evening. But here, here Paul is telling us what it means to live the Christian life, the life of being saints in Christ Jesus.

And in Ephesians 4, verse 1, he says, walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you've been called. Look down to verse 13 there. What does that mean?

It means he wants us to attain maturity, mature manhood, the measure of the stature of Christ. Verse 14, so that we may no longer be children tossed around and so on.

[36 : 42] But rather, verse 15, we're to grow up in every way into him who's the head. He's talking about growing in faith. And how's that to happen?

How are Christians and how is the church to grow, to be no longer children so that we're not tossed around, so that we do reach maturity and stability? Well, the answer's right there in verse 11.

Do you see? Through the ongoing ministry of God's word. that's what all these gifts of the Spirit to the church are all about. The apostles and the prophets who spoke first and who wrote down the very words of Scripture as they were given by the Spirit.

The very foundation of the New Testament church. That's how Paul puts it in Ephesians 2.20. But also, you see there, evangelists, pastors and teachers, what do they do?

They go on teaching this same powerful word to equip the saints for all of their ministries, he says. So that the whole body, the whole church is built in unity and in the knowledge of the Son of God.

[37 : 46] You see, it's the word of God and it's the ongoing ministry of the word of God in the church that tethers the saints, that guards us, that keeps us, warning us against sin and falsehood, leading us in paths of righteousness, keeping us in fellowship with the Lord, strengthening us, encouraging us in the battles of the Christian life so that we are kept safe until the very end, until the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul's teaching here that it's the word of God that controls our Christian walk. And it's chapter 6 of Ephesians, so famously reminds us, he's saying it's the word of God, it's the sword of the Spirit that comforts us, that strengthens us in our Christian warfare.

It controls our walk, it controls our warfare. comforting us and strengthening us. And that's why, Peter says, and the other apostles say, what the church needs, what every Christian needs, is to long for the pure spiritual milk.

Because by that, by feeding upon the word of God, and by that alone, he says, you will grow up into your salvation. That's why only, only where the word of God is cherished and trusted and put at the very heart of its ministry, only there will a church ever flourish and grow and become mature and effective.

With Christians growing through the controlling and the keeping power of God's word. People becoming Christian through the convicting and the converting power of God's word.

[39 : 33] If God's word, his living and abiding word, if it's not cherished like that, if it's rejected, or even if it's sidelined, even if it's largely ignored, if that happens, friends, no church on this earth can ever flourish.

it will inevitably eventually wither and die. Because people are born again, they're born into life, and people grow up into maturity in life only through the living and abiding word of God.

And it's the Bible that gives us God's living and abiding revelation, a powerful word by which his Holy Spirit accomplishes everything he purposes, both in salvation and in judgment.

He tells the world. And the Bible's convicting power alone will convince the world of the truth regarding sin and righteousness and judgment.

It turns the sinner and its converting power alone can change the sinner from darkness to light, from death to life everlasting. And it tethers the saint.

[40 : 53] It's only its keeping power that can control our way on the path of life and can comfort us and care for us right till the very end. So friends, let's give thanks for the Bible, the scriptures we have in our hands, and let's be longing and encouraging one another to be longing for the pure spiritual milk, for the living and abiding word of God in our Bibles.

That way is the way of salvation and the way of safety. Let's pray. blessed Lord, who has caused all scripture to be written for our learning, grant that we may in such wise hear them, read and mark and learn and inwardly digest them, that by patience and the comfort of thy holy word we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life which you have given us in our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Amen.