

Just Open the Book!

Nehemiah

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Bible Text: Nehemiah 8:1-18

Preached on: Sunday, February 25, 2007

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I trust that if you have spent any time here at Valley Grace that you understand that we spend a great deal of time in this book. Why do we do that? Why do we have Sunday school and why do we open up this book at this time, this hour of the day? Why do we have Bible studies? What is the purpose of Awana? Why do we have youth meetings that focus on this book? What is so important and what is so significant about this book?

You have noticed recently maybe if you have been attending here for a period of time that we have just begun to institute the standing as the Scripture is read. Why do we do that? Is this book really more important than any other book that might be in existence that has been written or maybe even will be written? Is it really unique? Why do we come to church? Why not just come and sing some of the great songs and listen to good music and enjoy those kinds of times? Why do we open up this book? Why do we take this time?

This morning I want to remind you of the significance of this book which we call the Bible or the Scriptures. I want you to be reminded that this book is absolutely unique. It is totally up to date. And we will be studying and we will be looking at, since we have gone through the book of Nehemiah.

And let me just kind of put it into context where we are this morning. We have been working our way through the book of Nehemiah. Nehemiah had been given an assignment by God to go back to Jerusalem and to rebuild the walls that had been destroyed. And as we have come from chapter one through chapter seven the work has really accomplished in regard to that wall.

But in chapter eight [?] and work and look at something different, something also very important. In fact, more important and that is the rebuilding of the lives of those individuals. Just because we have walls of protection if we don't have our lives being rebuilt, my friends, it doesn't really matter much.

We can have nice facilities. We can have nice things, but there needs to be the rebuilding of our lives as well.

So what I want you to see this morning, first of all, I want you to see the uniqueness of this book, the Bible that we hold in front of us. And then I want you to understand that God has given it to us and it is designed for four things.

But, first of all, let's look at the uniqueness of this book. If you happen to be in Nehemiah, keep your place there, but that is not where we are going to start. We are going to start at 2 Timothy chapter three.

So I would invite you to take your Bibles and to turn to 2 Timothy chapter three. And I want you to see from this passage the uniqueness of this book, the Scriptures that have been given to us.

In 2 Timothy chapter three Timothy is a young pastor and 1 and 2 Timothy are often referred to as pastoral epistles along with Titus. And he is being instructed by the apostle Paul in regard to some things within the church. And so we read in chapter three of 2 Timothy beginning in verse 14:

You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.¹

Verse 16.

All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.²

And as you look through that you say, "So what makes it unique?"

Well, you find in verse 16 is what makes it unique, that this Scripture, this Word of God that we hold in front of our hands, it is inspired. Actually you could translate it, "It is God breathed," that God in the original manuscripts has uttered his Word and has given it to us in order that we might understand how to live.

This Word has as its author God himself which means, obviously, it is given to us without error. It becomes the standard by which we understand how we are to live. It is the owner's manual that came with the world.

And often times when we can't figure out what in the world has gone wrong and why am I experiencing these kinds of things and how am I supposed to deal with that situation or that situation, we open up. We ought to open the Word of God. It is given to us to be our guide for life.

¹ 2 Timothy 3:14-15.

² 2 Timothy 3:16-17.

So all Scripture, all of it, from Genesis to Revelation, all that is written and recorded by God is given to us to be authoritative for our lives.

Now we might look at that and say, “You know, but sometimes we have these different translations and what about all that?”

My friends, we have something in front of us that is very, very accurate. Now, we don’t have the original manuscripts. We don’t have the letter that Paul wrote to Timothy and that is probably a good thing because knowing human intention we have this tendency to worship stuff. And what would probably happen is we would have this... you know, some nice room where we could go and venerate the Scriptures, the original writings that Paul has given to us.

So we have in front of us the Word of God to guide us through life. There is no other book that God has written.

So we need to be aware of that. But notice also what does this book, then, since it comes from, what does it do?

Verse 15. First of all we are told that it gives us wisdom to salvation.

Now, as you look at the world around you, you realize that there is a God. You ought to realize that. That is why God said part of the reason for his creation is so that we might know that there is a God who exists, that there is a designer behind the design.

So we can learn some things. We can know that there is a God who exists. I understand that we are told that evolution is supposed to be scientific. My friends, evolution is not scientific. Time plus chance, or time plus luck is not scientific.

You recall in the physical science stage you had to do certain procedures to work your way through these experiments and theoretically you were supposed to come up with the same answer. Remember some of those? You got out the Bunsen burners and did exciting things with those and did all kinds of different strange and wonderful things. But the purpose was you were supposed to end up with something that was in the book. And you couldn’t turn to the teacher and say, “You know, I realize that this was supposed to be the answer in the book, but my scientific project has evolved. It evolved into something different.”

No. There is a designer behind the design.

But there are some things we can’t know. We know that God exists. That is what the creation is shouting forth day and night. But there is something we cannot know and that is how do we know God? How can we be saved? How can we be born again? And that is what Paul writes in verse 15. He says that to Timothy, “You have been given the wisdom that leads to what? Salvation through faith which is found in Jesus Christ.”

You can know that there is a God from creation, but you cannot know about salvation other than what is written in this book.

And if anybody else comes along and says, “Well, I have got something a little different way to do it...”

I remember talking years ago with an individual of another religion. He said, “Well, you know, I kind of think that God is up on the top of this mountain and all of these different religions are just different paths to go up there.”

Absolutely not. It is not in the book.

Timothy, what this book does is tells you, it tells me that we are separated from God, that we cannot be good enough to get into God’s presence and that Jesus came and died for my sin and for your sin so that whoever trusts him for what has been done will be saved.

But that is not the end. Scripture comes from God. It gives us wisdom to be saved. But it also—notice verses 16 and down, 17—it gives us wisdom for mature living.

“All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable.”³

All of it, from Genesis to Revelation is profitable for four things. For teaching, it tells us what to believe.

My friends, if you find that somebody comes along to you and says, “You know, I know what the Bible says, but I have had this experience, therefore I am going to trust in my experience,” that is wrong.

There is a book that has come out recently entitled something about 90 minutes with God or 90 minutes in heaven or something like that and it was supposed to come from a preacher who had a terrible accident. And there may be some things that you can learn in chapter three on but the first two chapters he talks about going out of the body, being pronounced dead, all these other kind.... but being... it wasn’t by really... it was by a police officer and so on and really wasn’t by an individual who had that medical training.

But he said that... that I was 90 minutes I was in heaven. If you read the book, actually he never gets in. He is just at the gate.

Well, you know, my Bible doesn’t say, “Absent from the body is trying to get into heaven or standing at the gate.”

In fact, it talks about seeing family members there and we are assured in Scripture that we have the great hope of seeing those who have died in Christ. There is going to be a great reunion. 1 Thessalonians chapter four, we go to meet them in the air.

³ 2 Timothy 3:16.

But I am convinced that the first person that we see when we get to heaven is our Savior. It would be great to see family, but the only reason we are there is because Jesus died for us.

And so though this individual said, “You know, I had this experience, this out of body experience and I did certain things and...”

It doesn't match the book, my friends. It doesn't match the book.

“Absent from the body, in the presence of the Lord.”

It tells us what to believe, teaching. It tells us, it corrects us, reproof, what we are doing wrong, correction, how to be right, training in righteousness, how to live for God.

Now why do we do that?

Verse 17, “So that...” It is a purpose clause. “So that the man of God [the woman of God, the follower of God] may be adequate...”⁴ And I don't like that translation, New American Standard.

Some of yours say, “thoroughly furnished,” and I like that a whole lot better. When I think of adequate it is sort of like, you know, D+ stuff. Just enough to pass through the class or maybe even D-, you know, just enough to get by.

“Well, how did you do?”

“Well, it was adequate.”

No. The Word means that we will have enough. We will be sufficient. We will be thoroughly equipped.

Peter writes about that, that you have everything you need for life and godliness. It has been given to you and to me already that we may be thoroughly equipped for what? To sit in our chair? No, for every good work of service.

So first of all it is important to understand that this book that you and I hold is absolutely unique. There is nothing else like it on planet earth. God has designed that it is to be our pattern for life.

That is the uniqueness of the book.

Ok, so what are we supposed to do with it?

⁴ 2 Timothy 3:17.

Turn back to Nehemiah chapter eight. Nehemiah chapter eight. I want you to see from this passage that God has designed this book for four things. Now there are other things that God designed it for, but in this passage we find four things that God designed this book to do.

First of all God's Word is designed to be desired. You look at chapter eight verses one through eight.

“And all the people gathered as one man at the square which was in front of the Water Gate, and they asked Ezra the scribe to bring the book.”⁵

The people desired to hear from God. We have not heard from God. We don't open the book.

You see, my friends, they obviously didn't have printing presses in those days like and I enjoy and we each have two or three Bibles at home if not more. There was one scroll, one Old Testament law, the first five books probably of the Old Testament. That is what they had in a scroll that copied meticulously by hand from generation to generation and passed down so that they needed to come together to hear. And the people had a hunger. They desired this book.

We haven't heard from God in a while.

Notice the congregation, verse two. It is everyone, all men and all women and everyone who could understand. Everyone who could understand.

Now, folks if you ever teach or preach you understand that that is a real challenge because we are dealing with folks from maybe seven years old or a little bit older than that up into their 90s. And we are dealing with individuals who come from all different kinds of walks of life. And yet in this passage we see that there were parents who considered it important enough that their kids, regardless of the age were involved in hearing God's truth.

Something that disturbs me is when I hear individuals say, “Well, you know, I was forced to go to church when I was a kid so I am not going to force my kids to go to church.”

Well, obviously there is something called tact involved in that and there are certain ways that you can help and certainly we want it to be instructional and we want it to be something that is applicable. But it is so important in our lives. There is nothing else that is as important as this. We force our children to go to school.

Now maybe you are afraid of the truant officer so that is why they go. I don't know. Maybe it is the fact that you don't want them around the house. Here is a good babysitting kind of thing. Send them to the teacher.

⁵ Nehemiah 8:1.

Some of you teachers are challenged with that, I know. But they said, “You know, there is nothing as important as this.”

When you set a meal in front of your kids your kids may, like I could, you know, ice cream for breakfast sounds pretty good, lunch, dinner, snack. But it Is not healthy.

So what do you do? You set out a meal prepared for them so that it is nutritious and it may feed them and make them healthy.

There are certain things that are prerequisites for families and for kids. It is to learn God’s truth.

The congregation was made of men and women and all who could understand. Notice that Ezra ascended up into a wooden podium and that was so that he could be seen. He opened the book in the sight of the people in verse five, which is, by the way, the reason why we carry Bibles and place them on a podium up front. It is... we could definitely show them with a video projector on a screen, but what we are trying to symbolize is this book is the center of what we do because it tells us about what Jesus did for us and it comes from God.

It is authoritative for our lives.

And so we place it front and we place it center so that you might understand we are reading from this book. There is something unique about it.

And notice what happened when Ezra opens it up and before he even starts reading. Everybody stands up. They lift up their hands as Ezra has blessed God for who God is, probably the fact that God is a great God, but also the fact that God, you have chosen to speak to us and as Ezra blesses God everybody stands up. They raise up their hands and they say, “Amen, amen,” which means it is true, it is true.

Preach it, brother.

That is true. It is from God.

We need to hear.

You know, sometimes that jolts us. And then what happens they fall down and worship. You see, worship is to be participatory. And what we are doing right now as we open up this book is every bit as much of worship as we do through singing or music. Sometimes I hear individuals who say, “Yeah, I really enjoy the worship part of the service.”

What part isn’t?

It isn't just the music. That is important. We are to speak to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, but we are to open up the book to instruct individuals about God.

They bowed with their faces to the ground.

Well, how long did this go on?

Verse three, for six hours.

“Yeah, but the roast is going to burn.”

And we can't beat all those other churches to the fine restaurants. We are going to be standing in line.

Don't worry about it. By the time you are done the restaurants are going to be closed.

But there was a hunger for the Word of God.

And he read, Ezra read for six hours. And look at what happens in seven and eight. They were explaining what was being read.

You see, if we don't understand the Word of God it doesn't do us any good. And so Ezra is taking the Word of God and he is explaining to individuals, this is what it looks like in your life. This is what it is to look like in my life.

The importance... I don't like the term. I hear it from... too often.

“Well, we need to make the Bible relevant.”

My friends, it is relevant. The problem is I may hide its relevancy. I may get done teaching and I say, “Well, let me tell you about the ancient Near history and about the Sumerians and what they did and we can talk about a number of these other things and Enûma Eliš and the Gilgamesh Epic and all those kinds of things.

And you say, “What in the world is that? I don't see the application.”

My friends, this applies to our life. The part of what our job is as pastors and teachers is to say, “Look, this is how it is lived out.”

And in too many churches... even some... they have great, great numbers and you open up a *Time* magazine or something like that and they say, “Here are the top 10 churches in America. And what is going on? We are not telling people what the book says.

We could be entertaining. We could tell a lot of jokes. We could tell a lot of stories, but just open the book.

God said in the Old Testament that his people were dying for lack of knowledge. They weren't hearing what God had said from the book.

God's Word, first of all, is designed to be desired. Secondly, God's Word is designed to produce a response. It isn't just a matter of saying, "Oh, that is a nice little talk."

You look at verses nine and down through verse 12 and you find out that there is an emotional response. The people are weeping in verse nine. Why are they weeping? Well probably one thing is the fact that they haven't heard the book for so long, but even more important is they understand that there are certain areas in which their life is not matching up to what God had said. And when God speaks in the book and I don't obey him in the book it is called sin, disobedience.

And they begin weeping because they realize that they are not in conformity with what God has said. And so there is this emotional response. There is a sorrow for sin.

But I love what God does next. He gives instruction to Ezra and the priests and he says, "Look, tell them to stop crying. In fact, let's hold a celebration. Let's hold a party because hearts are being changed. Kill the fatted calf and eat the fat."

Now your cardiologist wouldn't really like that, but you need to understand what they are talking about is the best of the food. Put on the filet mignon, the prime rib. It is time to celebrate because God is working in your heart.

Dear friends, there is nothing more exciting than to watch and to see God at work in the lives of people who take this book and say, "I want to live it."

So there is a party that is being thrown and time for celebration.

Why? Last part of verse 12.

"Because they understood the words which had been made known to them."⁶

So first of all God's Word is designed to be desired. Secondly, God's Word is designed to produce a response. Thirdly, God's Word is designed to be shared.

I love this verse, a challenging verse. Verse 13.

"Then on the second day the heads of fathers' households of all the people, the priests, and the Levites were gathered to Ezra the scribe that they might gain insight into the words of the law."⁷

⁶ Nehemiah 8:12.

⁷ Nehemiah 8:13.

You notice in that previous day, you know, the first day they all get there. They stand up and Ezra reads from the scroll for six hours. And they are a group of individuals that are listed so it is very possible that then they scattered off into smaller groups to explain it.

The next day they call for the dads. Dads, we want you to come because we want to explain to you what this text says so that you can teach your families.

Deuteronomy chapter six verse four. You remember some of that passage.

“Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one!”⁸

And then you get down to verse seven that is, “Dads, you are to teach to your families when they rise, when they sit down, no matter where they go.”

My friends, as fathers and as men we have a responsibility before God to our families. We have a tendency to take it... but I haven't... I have been... I haven't been off to seminary. I am not been trained.

That is part of our job of helping you to work through the Scriptures, to get the tools. You can do it, to lead your families for God. You are your family's pastor. You have that accountability.

When I stand before God he is going to ask me, “Dan, how did you lead your family? Did you instruct them in truth?”

Maybe the one of the best I know... I know it was scheduled. I know all about, though, that is really tough. What we found in our household was the best time to do family devotions—though we struggle—was right after supper.

You know, your wife—and I don't mean to be chauvinistic—maybe you cook and that's fine. But, you know, if your wife just gets done fixing a real nice meal and putting it out there and every, you know, steam is rolling off and you say, “Ok, we are going to open up God's Word for a little bit here,” and things begin to grow cold, I think there is going to be more thought about that. Plus your kids are sitting there smelling this great aroma thinking, “Man, when can we get at that.”

They are distracted.

When you are done, you push it all there. Let's get out the Bible and let's open of God's truth.

I am not suggesting that you say, “Ok, kids, we are going to start in the book of Leviticus tonight and we are going to talk about the clean and the unclean animals, how you can determine the difference between the split and cloven hoof.”

⁸ Deuteronomy 6:4.

There are a lot of good tools. There are a lot of good tools for you guys. There is some great devotional stuff written for specific age groups. You can find it. Chase the internet. There are some good things on there. Go to Christian bookstore and thumb through it and say, "Man, is this something that is going to help my family?"

And when you come to the end, don't quit.

"Well, I just gave them the truth."

You need to ask and answer this question. So what? So what? That is application. How is it lived out? So what? That is part of the reason why we are burdened to try and help with this men's Saturday Bible study and time.

Why? So that we get into the Word of God, get interact in it together and say, "Ah, so that is how we apply it. That is what it looks like in my home. Now I can take that back."

It is to give you the tools to be the pastor of your home.

I know that some of you who are here are single moms and single parents and I understand that and that becomes your job to help raise your children in the truth. But that is also the reason why... and I am so grateful that we have men who are involved in helping to teach Sunday school and helping... and involved in Awana, who are involved in these other things who can come along side of young men and say, "Man, this is what God wants of us in our life."

You see, God's Word is to be shared. It is not to be taken and stuck on a shelf. It does us absolutely no good.

I could have 20 Bibles in my home all sitting on a shelf. It doesn't do me any good if it is not open. It doesn't do me any good to open it up and kind of read down real quickly through it and my eyes are glazed over thinking, "What's that? And at least I got my devotional reading for today. It didn't mean a thing to me."

God's Word is to be shared, why? So that we may gain insight.

You may be grandparents, a granddad. You have the privilege of maybe passing on to your grand kids. This is what it looks like to be a man for God and to live in this world in this way. This is what it is like and what God instructs us to do is you maybe teach a granddaughter.

We will... I am convinced from Scripture, men, we are going to stand before God. You can do it. You can do it and give an account for how we pastor our homes.

Part of what we are doing here is I am trying to show you how we go through this process of opening up God's truth.

Now there isn't... it is not just sort of stream lined.

I got this past week a little email. "Sermon Preparation made easy."

That's tempting. When you are wrestling with a text and trying to say, "Lord, I want to make it clear to your people." But, you know, there is something about fast food that just doesn't taste quite as good as the prep time put into something really real.

And to take God's truth and apply it to where we are living here as a church family, Valley Grace. So God's Word is designed to be shared.

Fourthly, God's Word is designed to be applied. Notice verses 14 to 18.

You say you read through there and it is the Feast of Tabernacles and you say, "What is that business about going out and building booths? You know, what in the world is that?"

Well, part... apparently what had been taking place is the Feast of Tabernacles is, in a sense, a sort of a Thanksgiving time. And apparently they were doing a part of that, but what they had failed to do was to construct. They were told to build these booths out of sticks and little leanto kind of shack and to kind of live in there and it was a reminder that God had taken them out of Egypt and brought them across the wilderness and taken them into the Promised Land. It was part of that Thanksgiving. And they weren't doing that.

And so they realized that, hey, we need to adjust our lives.

You see, the emotional response that they had in the previous verses is not enough.

My friends, I can have an emotional response to God's truth and I can shed tears, but if it doesn't change my life I really haven't accomplished much.

So they were instructed. Everyone, notice verse 17. Everyone responds. There is great rejoicing, last part of verse 17.

Why? Because God's Word brings joy.

They read from the book daily, verse 18.

Taking God's truth and applying it.

My friends, we have been given a very unique book by God designed to change our lives. And it makes no difference where we are in life. You may be in middle school and you are kind of wondering, you know, how do I deal with some of these situations? I got this guy who is being a bully.

You know what? There are some things in God's Word about that.

How do I deal with my parents? We seem to not be clicking very well and I have got to struggle there with my parents.

You know, it is just in the book. Open the book.

How do I deal with my son or my daughter? I am wrestling with that relationship?

It is in the book.

How do I deal in a marriage relationship, kind of having some difficult times?

It is in the book.

Too often what do we do? Let me go by a book by Dr. So and so on fixing this thing when it is just in the book and I haven't opened it.

How do I deal with my work relationships? I have got a difficult boss. What does God expect from me?

Ephesians tells us about that.

What kind of employee am I supposed to be in that relationship?

God's Word tells us about that.

My friends, there is not anything in life that God's Word doesn't tell us if we would just open the book.

But it is so easy to pick up the newspaper, click the remote and go to the internet and being searching all the interesting articles that might be there.

We need to open the book.

One of the first things that you will notice when you open the book is that it tells us that we are not right with God. I know, again, that there are some churches who say, "We don't want to talk about anything negative. We don't want to talk about sin. We don't want to talk about a break in relationships. We just want to make people feel good when they go out."

My friends that is not what the Bible tells us. The Bible tells us first of all the bad news so that we might appreciate the good news. Otherwise if you don't know what the bad news is, you can't know the good news, right?

And so the Bible tells us that every single one of us are born separated from God. In fact, you want a real good illustration of that? Look at the book of Romans. It starts off in the first few chapters. We are in trouble. We are separated from God.

And then Paul goes on the second part and begins to tell us that there is a cure that is found in Jesus Christ who died on the cross so that whoever believes in him will have eternal life.

He tells us the bad news so that we might comprehend the good news that Jesus took our place.

So we need to start. We need to understand.

And I would trust, maybe if you are here this morning. You have never trusted Jesus Christ maybe you thought, well, you know, I think it was just a matter of going to church. I thought maybe if I show up on occasion, especially on a snowy day I would get extra brownie points with God. Or if it is baptism or membership or whatever those things are. Some of those things are really, really important. But they will never get you into heaven, my friend. If that were the case then what Jesus did on the cross was a nice mystical story, an emotional story which makes us feel sympathetic to what he did, but he really didn't need to do it if that is our approach.

There is no other way and the Bible tells us that.

Secondly, you need to understand that this Word of God is powerful. In fact, the Bible refers to itself as being the power of God and the word that is used there is the word that we get our word dynamite. This word will change your life and it will change my life if I allow it to do that. It is the power of God for salvation.

But there is really a joint effort involved in this. Number one, part of my job or anyone who teaches the truth of God is to take it and to help show you how to apply it.

By the way, just for your information, when I look around and I try and look into your eyes, please understand it is not that I am preaching at you. I want to see if I am connecting. You know, if you get this look like... I am thinking, you know, I am not really making much sense here. I need to take another run at that thing. You know, they are gone someplace on a long journey.

So when I am looking around it is not really that I am trying to preach. I want to see if I am making a connection there.

I had a lady tell me this morning in the first service. She said, "You know, but there is another thing that my mother taught me and that is that even though the preacher is looking into your eyes to see if he is connecting, you need to look into his eyes to see if he is telling the truth."

Oh, that is pretty good.

So we need to take and help you apply God's truth. But, dear friends, you need to be involved in this process. It does absolutely no good for someone to stand up and to share with you God's truth if your mind is miles away. If maybe like when you left his morning, you know, you got ready to close the door of the house. You said, "Man, there is really a strange smell in there." And you are kind of thinking through, I wonder what that is as you sit here this morning instead of focusing on God's truth.

You know, I have got this problem. I got tomorrow is coming. I need to talk to the boss about this and, you see, you have got to be receptive. You are part of this.

I can't do that for you. My job is to take God's Word and to the best of my ability—and, friends, that is an ongoing process. In fact, you can pray for me. I am taking a class this summer, trying to learn how to do that even better. I got a lot of ways to go, you know. But my call is to be the Bible says a skilled workman for God who handles his truth accurately, helps his people to understand and your job is to listen and to say, "God, how does that apply?"

But, you know, there is a third part of that? The Holy Spirit of God, he takes the Word of God and applies it to our lives and begins that process of convicting and challenging us.

This Word of God is powerful. It is sharper than any two edged sword, but the problem is we need to open the book.

I would encourage you if you want something to do this afternoon, sit down and say, "Well, tell me, God, well, what is this book about?"

Open up to Psalm 119, the longest chapter in the Bible. And yet in that it begins to explain what the Word of God will do in your life. And I am not suggesting that you have got to say, "Well, ok, my goal and my assignment is to read all of the verses."

No. Because you could maybe read all the verses and not... didn't click. Take a verse or two and just kind of meditate and think on it and say, "Ok, Lord, how do I apply this?"

Well, we have got to desire it, my friends. We have got to value it. God's Word is designed to be desired. God's Word is designed to produce a response. God's Word is designed to be shared. God's Word is designed to be applied.

Let's pray together.

Father, too often we don't open the book and yet you have instructed us that everything we need for life and godliness, no matter what our age, no matter what our position in life, no matter what our cultural setting, it is that which is designed to help us to know how to live. It is the words of life to those who accept it. And, Father, we need to be

reminded that we need to open the book, that we need to hear from you, we need to pay attention and we need to listen.

Father, I pray for dads, granddads who are here in a special way. Father, that they might understand the importance of being the pastor, the teacher, the leader, the spiritually in their home. Might be going home and saying, "Well, we haven't been in this habit, but we are going to start something now. I am going to find the tools. I am going to learn how to lead my family for God."

Father, I do pray in a special way, too, for single moms, the challenges that they face. And, Lord, as they have responsibilities even in their own homes to help lead their children in the truth even as we saw regarding Timothy that it was his grandmother who had invested her life in his and there was a response.

Father, help us to understand the importance of this book without error to guide us in life. In our Savior's name we pray. Amen.