

Based on the presentation to the Southern Diocese Clergy Conference January 2025

Overall theme - 'Plug in to the Power' :- John chapter 15, verse 5 - "Apart from me you can do nothing".

Acquire the power by being in God's Word. Led by: Rev'd Terry & Mrs Valerie Brighton

We used examples from the time we spent living and working with the Wichi peoples in the Northern Argentine Chaco . They only had the New Testament and selections from the Old Testament in their own language. The 'heart language' - 'mother tongue' is essential for full understanding.

The text we were asked to speak on was **Hebrews chapter 4, verse 12**

"For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart."

The verse as it stands is applied to the heart and mind of individual Christians.

The context of this verse is crucial. It is set as a comment on the ultimate section of Psalm 95 (the Venite).

*To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts as in the provocation,
and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness;*

When your fathers tempted me; proved me and saw my works.

Forty years long was I grieved with this generation and said;

It is a people that do err in their hearts; for they have not known my ways.

Unto whom I swore in my wrath, that they should not enter into my rest.

Hebrews chapter 4, verse 11 warned Christians to strive to obey God, lest we lose our heavenly rewards.

Here in verse 12 we are reminded that the Word gives us all the power we need to learn the true will of God. See also Philippians chapter 1, verse 9, Romans chapter 12, verse 2.

Hebrews chapter 4, verse 13, will point out that God's judgment is impossible to escape: nobody is beyond His sight (see also 2 Corinthians chapter 5, verse 10). The text goes on to point out that only in Christ do we find a God who truly understands our failures (Hebrews chapter 4, verses 14 - 16).

Our brethren the Wichi fully understood the implications of this!

The 'sword of the Spirit which is the word of God' is part of the whole armour of God

In Ephesians chapter 6, verse 12 – *We are not contending against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take the whole armour of God*

and verses 17 – 20:- **Take (the helmet of salvation and) the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.**

And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.

Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.

Working in a culture which lived in a spirit as well as a material dimension and with the witch-doctor over the back fence the words of Ephesians 6 were an every day necessity and reality for us and the Wichi believers.

*May the mind of Christ my Saviour
Live in me from day to day,
by his love and power controlling
all I do and say.*

*May the Word of God dwell richly
In my heart from hour to hour,
so that all may see I triumph
only through His power.*

Kate B. Wilkinson (1859 – 1928)