

Thesis: God's Word razes hell in our lives!

It is my goal to raise up strong followers of Jesus who can raze hell! I believe a child of God, operating in the power and authority of Jesus Christ, can destroy the works of the devil!

In my previous message I made two observations, which I want to repeat today: First, a strong and healthy Christian life is a prerequisite to **razing hell**; and, second, there is a direct correlation between a healthy Christian life and the Word of God. We cannot be strong followers of Jesus who can raze hell apart from having a healthy Christian life grounded firmly in the Word of God!

In 1 John 2:14 we hear John saying, *I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the wicked one.* In my last message, I pointed out the connection between the clauses. To be strong and to overcome the wicked one, the Word needs to abide in you! I spent most of my time in that message underscoring the profitability of God's word in bringing us to **salvation**. Specifically, the word reveals our condition, leads us to repentance, imparts the gift of faith, brings new birth, and works effectively in our lives.

Let me pause at this point to say this: **Bringing people to Christ and to salvation is the preeminent example of razing hell!** That is not the only way to raze hell, but apart from bringing people to salvation, much hell-razing is only temporary! There is no eternal difference between entering hell with an empty stomach or a full stomach. Please do not hear what I am not saying: I am not saying we should not feed the hungry unless they convert to Christianity. I am saying we should not stop with feeding the hungry physical food; we should offer them the Bread of Life! We should not stop at seeking to provide the thirsty with clean drinking water; we should tell them of the Living Water in Jesus Christ! We should not stop with providing safe houses; we should also point them to Jesus Christ who is the Door to eternal life!

How do we bring people to salvation? Primarily by sharing the Word of God, the gospel, the good news that Jesus died for our sins and rose from the dead!

Today, I want to look at hell-razing from a different perspective. I want to acknowledge that much of the hell we need to raze is not “out there” in the wicked world, but in here, in my heart and yours. We need to get the hell out of our own lives! Thankfully, Jesus not only delivers us from the penalty of sin, He also progressively delivers us from the power of sin. The first is through **regeneration** – He gives us new life! The second is through **sanctification** – He transforms us to be more and more like Himself. And even though it is not the topic for today, I am glad to tell you that someday He will deliver us from the very presence of sin – that is **glorification!**

So let me say again: I have been saved, I am being saved, and I will be saved! My past, present, and future are all in good hands!

Today I want to focus on the work of the Word of God in **sanctification**, in making me more and more like Jesus. We are being “set apart” or sanctified for Christ and His cause. Turn with me to the Lord’s Prayer – not the model prayer in Matthew 6 but the high priestly prayer of Jesus in John 17. What a treasure it is to have recorded this example of the prayer life of Jesus! We can listen to our Lord as He prays! I want you to bow your heads and listen:

John 17

Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: "Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, 2 as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him. 3 And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. 4 I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. 5 And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.

6 "I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. 7 Now they have known that all things which You have given Me are from You. 8 For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me.

9 "I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours. 10 And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them. 11 Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your

name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are. 12 While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. 13 But now I come to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves. 14 I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. 15 I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. 16 They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. 17 Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. 18 As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. 19 And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth.

20 "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; 21 that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. 22 And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: 23 I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.

24 "Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world. 25 O righteous Father! The world has not known You, but I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me. 26 And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them."

Amen! What a prayer! Let me invite your attention to verses 14-19. May I read them one more time? *14 I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. 15 I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. 16 They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. 17 Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. 18 As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. 19 And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth.*

Jesus specifically prayed to His Father asking Him to sanctify us. How would that be accomplished? By God's Word! Hear me clearly: **God's Word brings us to sanctification!**

I am confident you did not miss the element of conflict in our text (vv. 14-16). We have an adversary, the evil one, who opposes the sanctifying work of God in our lives. One of the evil one's strategies is to keep us from growing in God's Word. He knows what God's word can do! Do you? Friends, God's Word can raze hell – not just “out there,” but “in here!”
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So how does the Word of God do His sanctifying work? How does His Word raze hell in our lives? Why should we make a radical commitment to living in the Word and living by the Word? “Pastor, give me one good reason!” I'll do better than that. Let me offer you ten good reasons:

1. The Word of God gives us **assurance** of salvation (1 John 5:13)
13 These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life. . . . NKJV
2. The Word of God brings us **hope** (Romans 15:4)
4 For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. NKJV
3. The Word of God enables us to **grow** in Christ (1 Peter 2:1-3)
Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, 2 as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, 3 if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious. NKJV
4. The Word of God **guides** our life (Psalm 119:105)
Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. NKJV
5. The Word of God enables us to **discern** between right and wrong
For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. 13 For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. 14 But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. (Hebrews 5:12-14 NKJV).
6. The Word of God **transforms** our minds (Romans 12:2)
And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. NKJV
7. The Word of God enables us to **avoid sin** (Psalm 119:11)
Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You.

8. The Word enables us to **overcome Satan** (Ephesians 6:14 - 17)

Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, 15 and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16 above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. 17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. . . NKJV

9. The Word of God **purifies** our lives (Psalm 119:9)

How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word. NKJV

10. The Word **informs** our prayers (1 John 5:14-15)

Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. 15 And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him. NKJV

Incredible, powerful Word of God! Powerful in salvation; powerful in sanctification. Is His Word dwelling in you richly? Are you hungry for the Word? Remember this: **God's Word razes hell in our lives!**

This brings us to the brink of a life-changing commitment, a commitment I am calling the 7/24 Challenge. The 7/24 Challenge is a radical invitation to seven days each week spending at least 24 minutes each day interacting with God through His powerful word! Next Sunday I call for the commitment, and then I will teach you how to hear God through His word. Will it cost us something? Absolutely! But your time will yield rich dividends. **God's Word will raze hell in your life!**