

The Living Word

The living word is a strange term. Are books or the words in them alive? I suppose that is a point of view. A well written history book could bring history alive to it's reader. It's like you were really there. I have felt that the movie Titanic was so popular directly because they placed you on the ship. I could see myself walking the decks. Did it make the titanic disaster come alive? To many it did! The book called War and Peace is an amazing piece of writing. Leo Tolstoy made the war between France and Russia come alive. It was so well written. Yet, we all know that the book itself is not alive. However, that is not totally true when it comes to the Bible.

For new (to religion) readers this might be an odd term. Of course, you think your book is special. Call it alive if you want. Yet, to most Christians it is alive. How so? When I first became a Christian, it was shocking! God made the world? There are spiritual battles on earth? Our sin has weight? There were several things in my life that became alive truth. Jesus is more than a lamb holder. That miracles have purpose and fate might be guided. Who knew that was real. So, yes, my Christian world became alive. That world was shaped by my Bible. As I opened that book for the first time it 's words jumped off the page. *"In the beginning God created."* *"God so loved the world."*

I am alive. Yet, after my first day in church, my life became a different alive. I existed for so much more. The word of God gave me purpose. I should serve others. I should try and understand and love those who hate me. My thoughts and actions became alive. Before Christ I just existed. Now I too am alive. I knew the name of Jesus but now (25 years later) I feel like I know Peter, Jesus, and Paul just a little. I talk to God as if He is with me. We generally don't talk to dead things. We pray and talk with God and He answers. How does he answer most of the time? It's in His word. A word that is alive and speaking to our heart and mind.

What does God have to say? Hebrews 4:12 *“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.”* Paul was a religious ruler. I would even say a Hebrew theologian. He knows the Old Testament. Yet, he calls the Bible alive. John begins his gospel by calling Jesus the Word. He went beyond that by saying that word has been there from the beginning. Psalm 46:1 ends by saying “God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.” This is not a new idea. The Bible word is alive to many throughout the centuries.

Did I answer what God says? I think I did because God gave His word. The men in the Bible believed it would change us forever. That it is alive in our hearts. God also says that His word will not return to Him void. That means there is the giving and the retuning of this word. I know a person who claims the word is supernatural. That it has power to transform hearts. To change lives and move nations. It is powerful, but I am not that much of a fan of the word supernatural. Why? It's Gods word to give but it's ours to receive. There is no power exchange. It's always Gods power doing it's will.

Somehow this current generation has led itself to believe it can use the power of God. Yet, if that were true then evil governments would fall. The hospitals would be out of business. No word of a lie I have heard Christians say we have access to Gods power like a fountain of living water. Yet, suffering is here all around us. Now to be fair God did say we would suffer in his name. Do I believe in healing? Actually, I do. Do I believe in the power of the word. Yes, it's real. Do I believe in the pouring out of the Spirit upon us? Absolutely I do! Then why all the negative talk about using Gods power?

It's at-least two-fold for me. One is that we are human. The power of God would probably make us burn up or explode if we had it. Could we use it strictly for good? I'm not that confident in human morality just ask Benny Hinn. Secondly, it's new believers. Why did about 1% of converts still attend church a year later after a Billy Graham revival. It's because Gods will supersede our will. That we get immediate revelation and sometimes we have to wait. Those first saved feelings don't last. Instead, we have to continually read the word to be filled with the Spirit of God. New believers are constantly being told it's all power, joy, and bliss.

I don't know how? Yet, the word does affect me as I read it. I hated the Bible, yet now I love it all the time. I expect it to move me as I read it. Someone said that if you're not understanding what you're reading in the Bible you have to lean in. Put in the homework. Name it and claim it in the Bible requires no effort. At times David had to run. At other times Samson was able to pull pillars down. Moses could lift his hands and the battle was won. Yet, he let them down and they began to lose. In-fact he had help to keep his arms raised. Why? Because he had no power. It was God driving the battle through the faith of the people.

I am giving a Bible to a new believer today. What is my word for him? It's that he must read the word on faith. Trust that it will be living in his life. That God will move and change him through the word. However, I will also tell this man that he should not expect the word to be explosive and powerful everyday of his life. That when we read some passages it feels dry and unusable. Yet, it's not true. Sometimes we take in the word and it was meant to sit and wait. Wait for a future word, sermon, book, or song to bring it to life. Yet, we must take in the word first. That's it! Sometimes we can't feel the power and aliveness of the word. Yet, it is living in us regardless how we feel.