

## ***117 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly***

All through this journey, I've tried to be positive, not so much to speak against things that I think are unhelpful in the Christian tradition that I've received, but to focus on the glorious positives I've been discovering.

It's been an eye-opener to see 'the gospel' not as the mechanism by which we are saved, but as the good news about Jesus, the message of Jesus, his life, death, resurrection and ascension – who he is, what he's done, how he's conquered sin – a vast wealth of wonderful things, all summed up in the one word 'gospel'.

So yesterday, having cleared the ground that 'the word of God' does not mean 'the Bible', I started to look at the New Testament use of word of God/word of the Lord/word of Christ (38/10/2 times) – what a joy it was to read all of those Scriptures (reproduced below).

So did my Bible study bring any startling revelations to me? No, not really. I did note that it was largely verbal: speaking, preaching, proclaiming and hearing, listening to, accepting, receiving. Also, I saw that you could sometimes read it as almost personal – the 'word of God' as a person. Well, the Word of God *is* a person; it's Jesus.

I was reminded by a friend's feedback response yesterday that I am in danger of over-analysing (referring to my insistence that I had found two 'mistakes' in the Gospels), but I think that is the spirit of the age, to which I am succumbing, despite my best efforts.

But I'm trying to release myself from over-defining things, as this can so easily rob us of the wealth of meaning that God has for us. But interestingly, I've just realised that my two 'definitions' have come together:

the gospel = the message about Jesus

the word of God = the message about Jesus

In fact, if you read all the occurrence of 'the word of God' below, you could read them, instead, as 'the gospel' without hardly changing the meaning.

Paul Bev. 8.3.20

Matthew 15 5 But you say that if a man says to his father or mother, ‘Whatever help you might otherwise have received from me is a gift devoted to God,’ 6 he is not to ‘honour his father [or his mother]’ with it. Thus you nullify the **word of God** for the sake of your tradition.

Luke 3 1. In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar – when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, Herod tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and Traconitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene-

2 during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the **word of God** came to John

Luke 5 1. One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret, with the people crowding round him and listening to the **word of God**,

Luke 8 11 “This is the meaning of the parable: The seed is the **word of God**.

Luke 11 28 He replied, “Blessed rather are those who hear the **word of God** and obey it.”

John 10 34 Jesus answered them, “Is it not written in your Law, ‘I have said you are gods’? 35 If he called them ‘gods’, to whom the **word of God** came – and the Scripture cannot be broken – 36 what about the one whom the Father set apart as his very own and sent into the world? Why then do you accuse me of blasphemy because I said, ‘I am God’s Son’? 37 Do not believe me unless I do what my Father does.

Acts 2 30 Stretch out your hand to heal and perform miraculous signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus.” 31 After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the **word of God** boldly.

Acts 6 1. In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Grecian Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. 2 So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, “It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the **word of God** in order to wait on tables. 3 Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them 4 and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word.” 6 They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them. 7 So the **word of God** spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.

Acts 8 14. When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the **word of God**, they sent Peter and John to them. 15 When they arrived, they prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit,

Acts 11 1. The apostles and the brothers throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the **word of God**.

Acts 12 24 But the **word of God** continued to increase and spread.

Acts 13 5 When they arrived at Salamis, they proclaimed the **word of God** in the Jewish synagogues.

— 7 The proconsul, an intelligent man, sent for Barnabas and Saul because he wanted to hear the word of God.

— 45 When the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and talked abusively against what Paul was saying. 46 Then Paul and Barnabas answered them boldly: “We had to speak the word of God to you first. Since you reject it and do not consider yourselves worthy of eternal life, we now turn to the Gentiles.

Acts 17 13 When the Jews in Thessalonica learned that Paul was preaching the word of God at Berea, they went there too, agitating the crowds and stirring them up.

Acts 18 11 So Paul stayed for a year and a half, teaching them the word of God.

1Corinthians 14 36. Did the word of God originate with you? Or are you the only people it has reached?

2Corinthians 2 17 Unlike so many, we do not peddle the word of God for profit. On the contrary, in Christ we speak before God with sincerity, like men sent from God.

2Corinthians 4 1. Therefore, since through God’s mercy we have this ministry, we do not lose heart. 2 Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God. 3 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing.

Ephesians 6 17 Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Philippians 1 14 Because of my chains, most of the brothers in the Lord have been encouraged to speak the word of God more courageously and fearlessly.

Colossians 1 5 the faith and love that spring from the hope that is stored up for you in heaven and that you have already heard about in the word of truth, the gospel 6 that has come to you. All over the world this gospel is bearing fruit and growing, just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and understood God’s grace in all its truth.

— 25 I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fulness—

26 the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints.

1Thessalonians 2 13. And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God, which is at work in you who believe.

1Timothy 4 4 For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, 5 because it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer.

Titus 2 4 Then they can train the younger women to love their husbands and children, 5 to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no-one will malign the **word of God**.

Hebrews 4 12 For the **word of God** is living 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.

Hebrews 6 4 It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, 5 who have tasted the goodness of the **word of God** and the powers of the coming age, 6 if they fall away, to be brought back to repentance, because to their loss they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting him to public disgrace.

Hebrews 13 6 So we say with confidence, “The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?” 7 Remember your leaders, who spoke the **word of God** to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith.

1Peter 1 23 For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring **word of God**. 24. For, “All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, 25 but the **word of the Lord** stands for ever.” And this is the word that was preached to you.

1John 2 14 I write to you, fathers, because you have known him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and the **word of God** lives in you, and you have overcome the evil one.

Revelation 1 1. The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, 2 who testifies to everything he saw – that is, the **word of God** and the testimony of Jesus Christ.

— 9. I, John, your brother and companion in the suffering and kingdom and patient endurance that are ours in Jesus, was on the island of Patmos because of the **word of God** and the testimony of Jesus.

Revelation 6 9. When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the **word of God** and the testimony they had maintained.

Revelation 19 13 He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God.

Revelation 20 4 ... And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony for Jesus and because of the **word of God**.

Acts 8 25 When they had testified and proclaimed the **word of the Lord**, Peter and John returned to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel in many Samaritan villages.

Acts 13 44 On the next Sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the **word of the Lord**.

— 48 When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and honoured the word of the Lord; and all who were appointed for eternal life believed. 49 The word of the Lord spread through the whole region.

Acts 15 35 But Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch, where they and many others taught and preached the word of the Lord.

Acts 16 30 He then brought them out and asked, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” 31 They replied, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved – you and your household.” 32 Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house.

Acts 19 10 This went on for two years, so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord.

— 20 In this way the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power.

1Peter 1 24. For, “All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, 25 but the word of the Lord stands for ever.” And this is the word that was preached to you.

Ephesians 1 13 And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God’s possession – to the praise of his glory.

Colossians 1 3. We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, 4 because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all the saints- 5 the faith and love that spring from the hope that is stored up for you in heaven and that you have already heard about in the word of truth, the gospel 6 that has come to you. All over the world this gospel is bearing fruit and growing, just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and understood God’s grace in all its truth.

2Timothy 2 15 Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.

James 1 17 Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. 18 He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created.

Romans 10 17 Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.

Colossians 3 16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.