

Read: Hebrews 4:9-16

Living for the Lord

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.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Zavier was a mess. The tears were streaking down his face and dripping onto his legs. His eyes were red and puffy. His nose was running. His lips were quivering as he took big breaths trying to calm himself down. “I’m sorry . . . I’m . . . just . . . so . . . sorry!” He managed to say while crying.

Zavier had been caught using his dad’s iPad without asking. But not only did he not ask to use the iPad, Zavier made bad choices while using it, and then he lied about the whole thing. His parents found out and told Zavier how upset and disappointed they were because he had sinned against God and against them.

Now Zavier felt terrible and could hardly calm down—that is, until he heard something very special from his parents. “Zavier, this was very wrong. But we love you and we forgive you . . . and so does Jesus.” “Really?” Zavier asked. “You really forgive me?” “Yes, we forgive you, just like Jesus has forgiven all of us.” Zavier cried again, but this time because he was so relieved and thankful.

Zavier experienced the very thing that God describes in the Bible verse for this devotion. God says that his Word is like a double-edged sword. That means that it is powerful and very sharp as it goes to work. One side of God’s Word we call the law. The law shows us our sin as it reminds us how we break God’s commands. Zavier was “cut” by God’s Word when his parents told him how he had sinned against God and against them. He felt guilty and it hurt.

But then Zavier experienced the other powerful side of God’s Word, something we call the gospel. The gospel is the good news that Jesus loves us, forgives us, and is our Savior from sin. Amazingly, this side of the sword of God’s Word doesn’t hurt—but actually comforts and relieves us. Zavier’s parents shared the gospel with him, the good news that Jesus forgave what he had done.

This week the Scripture readings and devotions have focused on having a humble heart of love like Jesus. Part of being a humble Christian is continually going to the powerful Word of God. There we are reminded that we have sinned against God (that’s the law). But there we are also

comforted that we are forgiven for Jesus' sake (that's the gospel). God's Word is so powerful when it creates faith in our hearts to humbly trust in our Savior Jesus!

Now we have the opportunity to put the sword of God's Word to work too. We can share with other people both the law and gospel so that they also know they need a Savior and that they have one in Jesus Christ. God bless us as we humbly share his Word with others!

The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.

Questions for the Younger Children

- God's Word is like a two-edged sword. Name the two powerful sharp sides.
- What are times or places that you can read or hear God's powerful Word?

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- Explain what the law does and what the gospel does in God's Word.
- When would you share the law with someone? When would you share the gospel with someone?

Questions for Middle School and Above

- Agree/Disagree: Some people have sinned so much and so badly in life that they don't deserve to hear the good news of the gospel. Explain your answer.
- Even though God's Word is so powerful and effective, why is it that we are often so afraid to share it? How can we overcome that?

Closing Prayer:

Heavenly Father, your Word is so powerful! It shows us our sin, but it also shows us our Savior. Thank you for creating faith in my heart to believe in Jesus. Now fill my heart with courage to share your Word with others too. Amen.