

Theme: GOD’S WORD IS OUR GREAT HERITAGE

- I. God commands us to take it to heart
- II. God charges us to spread it
- III. God promises to bless it

“[God’s] word is a lamp to [our] feet and a light for [our] path.” Psalm 119:105

Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds; tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. ¹⁹ Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. ²⁰ Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates, ²¹ so that your days and the days of your children may be many in the land the LORD swore to give your ancestors, as many as the days that the heavens are above the earth.

²⁶ See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse— ²⁷ the blessing if you obey the commands of the LORD your God that I am giving you today; ²⁸ the curse if you disobey the commands of the LORD your God and turn from the way that I command you today by following other gods, which you have not known.

August, 1845. Settlers from Glarus, Switzerland arrive in south central Wisconsin. They brought with them rich experiences and cultural heritage, but not tools for working their craft. They had to innovate with the tools available to them. Their cheese-making Swiss heritage aided their endeavor. That same heritage still lives on in our communities today and feeds many of us.

In the future, what will people say about our heritage? Will Monroe still be famous for cheese? New Glarus for Swiss culture? Verona for Hometown, USA and Epic? We cannot answer what the future holds for our communities. Today we consider the heritage of Resurrection Lutheran Church in Verona, Monroe, and the surrounding area for generations to come. More than our cultural heritage, we pray we continue in the heritage we have from God. GOD’S WORD IS OUR GREAT HERITAGE.

Repetition is the mother of learning. Our sermon comes from the book of Deuteronomy, a word which means “second giving of the law.” It’s a repeat. *And* the section we read repeats what Moses spoke a few chapters before. A repeat of a repeat. So what’s so important that God had to say it twice?

Moses spoke to God’s people as they prepared to invade the Promised Land. As a faithful pastor, Moses prepared the people for what was going to happen. He repeated himself so God’s people would know how serious God is about his Word. **“Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds; tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads.”**

God is so serious about his Word he wants you to write it on your heart and soul. Fasten it as the belt that holds your whole life together. As your heart pumps blood to the rest of your body, God wants you to treat his Word as your life depends on it. Eternal life does depend on it. So make **GOD’S WORD YOUR GREAT HERITAGE**. Write it on your heart.

Repetition is the mother of learning. You don’t need to memorize every passage of Scripture, but writing this Word on your heart requires repetition. Hours in the Word. Once it takes root in your heart, it spills into your mind, into the operating center of your soul. Fixing God’s Word in us is not merely a mental or emotional exercise. It starts with the heart, then moves to the hands and head.

Jews still wear little boxes called phylacteries on their arms and hands today. They place four Bible passages in one, including this verse. They take these words literally because they’re serious about their heritage. If you’re worried putting a little box on your forehead is going to mess with your hairdo, don’t worry. God is not looking for you to show off how well you keep his commands. True religion begins with heart and soul. But it will also affect the head and hands. Once we’ve taken God’s Word to heart, won’t we naturally want to use our hands to help, not hurt? Just imagine how your conversations with others would go if you viewed them through the lens of the Bible, wearing cross-shaped glasses everywhere!

How can anyone find time to learn God’s Word so well that your head, heart, hands, and heels automatically know what to do? God is not suggesting you learn his Word if you have time. His Word is your life. **GOD’S WORD IS OUR GREAT HERITAGE**.

What hobby are you so passionate about you would never give it up? If you love running, you don’t need a gun to your head to make you run. If you enjoy

gardening, you don't wait until the groceries are gone before you plant your garden. Whatever you love doing, you don't need threats to do it. You make it a priority. You find time for it.

Then why does God's Word so often get set aside in our lives? God is so serious about it he has commanded us to make it the priority. Often we promise to read it when we get around to it. Even when we do get around to it, do we "fix" it in our hearts and minds, or do we just gloss over the page and move on as though what we read is separate from my life? I listen to pastor's sermon until my mind wanders off to the cancelled game I won't watch or the thousand-and-one things I need to do before I start the week. Whether you've been in worship every Sunday since the day you were born or this is the first time you've ever been in worship, we don't take God's Word as seriously as he does.

God is so serious about his Word that he promises to bless everyone who keeps it. Taking it seriously at every point all the time will earn you heaven. God is also so serious about his Word he reinforces it with threats. When we fail to take it seriously, we follow other gods—gods who haven't made themselves known to you like the God of the Bible. God's like money. Sex. Self. Convenience. Happiness. Health. The Green Bay Packers. Sports. You know them. We don't call them gods, but we act like they are. God is so serious about sin, he threatens us with curses.

He's so serious about his Word, he calls us back. If the budget is tight right now, He might be teaching you not to rely on money. The sports teams not playing, they're not your great heritage. God is so serious about his Word, his Word became human. Named Jesus. He alone was able to fix this Word on heart and mind, to train his actions and attitudes to follow it. He spread it everywhere he went. Jesus took God's Word so seriously, he gave his life to keep it. On the cross, Jesus left us his great heritage: forgiveness.

Moses preached these words to prepare Israel for the Promised Land. Jesus promises you will enter another Promised Land. Moses and all the faithful before us entered it. Jesus is so serious about his Word that he used it to take you off the highway to hell and put you on the path to heaven. Jesus is so serious about saving you he gives us his Word to keep us on that path. Jesus is so serious about his Word he promises he will bless you for learning it. **GOD'S WORD IS OUR GREAT HERITAGE.**

The teacher almost always learns more than the student. God understands that, too. **“Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home**

and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.”

God is so serious about his Word that, once we have taken it to heart and trained ourselves, he wants us to pass it on. Start with those closest to you. Teach it to your children. When they see you learning God’s Word, they may just follow your example. You don’t have to study hour upon hour day by day. Talk about it with your children in the car or at home. Ask the children what they learned in church. Let this Word of God be the first thing on your mind when you wake up in the morning and the last thing on your mind as you go to sleep. Talk about it at the dinner table. You need it as much as the food you eat or the air you breath. Without God’s Word, you have no life.

Children, listen. Like Mom and Dad, listen when Pastor is speaking. Listen to Mom and Dad when they talk about Jesus with you. They are telling you things so important God told them to us!

Maybe you don’t know how to learn. If you’re not in the habit of studying this Word of God every day, y read a verse or two. If you know where to start, begin with the words of Jesus, maybe Mark or John. Ask yourself or your family what Jesus is saying to you there. See what he is asking you to do or believe. Pray about it. Keep going back to the Word daily. If you don’t understand, your pastoral staff studies these words as their job. Ask! We have nothing more important than talking about God’s Word with his people.

Our church has many options for you to grow in the Word. Start at home. Then come here. How can one hour a week learning about the God who gave his life for you be enough? Come to Bible study—we have one Sunday, one Tuesday morning, and one on Thursday. If that’s not enough, just ask; we’ll make it happen! Send your children to Sunday school! We need them very badly. They are a blessing to our teachers, and Sunday school is the first step in preparation for spiritual adulthood. In confirmation class, students learn the precious truths of God’s Word. We have a teen group! We need your teens! We want God’s Word to touch their lives, too. I’ll be the first to admit I haven’t done enough—whether you are a child of 2 or 102, or anywhere in between. But bring them to hear God’s Word, OUR GREAT HERITAGE!

Jesus died for you. He’s so serious about sin that he paid for the sins of all people. He wants you to spread his Word to all people. **“Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.”** With these words on your door, you would remember God’s Word every time you leave home and every time you

come back. Your neighbors would also see it. Visitors to your community could see them from the gates. It's still a matter of the heart. Take these words to heart. Then take them to the hearts of others, as you speak them.

Maybe you think someone else can do it. You're not gifted. Again, God didn't suggest you spread his message. He's serious about it. He's so serious about it, he died to bring you the message you're on the path to heaven. Heaven's so indescribably wonderful, nothing on earth can compare. If you don't tell others about the love of Jesus, who will? It's still God's Word; he has to convince people. But if they don't hear, how will they ever know? You have the very words that bring the blessing of heaven. **GOD'S WORD IS OUR GREAT HERITAGE.**

Maybe you don't know how. Just tell them what Jesus means to you. Tell them why his Word matters so much to you. Tell them how serious God is about his Word, and how seriously we have offended him by not listening. Tell them how seriously he took it, by dying to forgive us. And tell them how serious God is about heaven. He has put you on that path. Stay on it. Stay in the Word. **GOD'S WORD IS OUR GREAT HERITAGE.**

If we, some 400 souls in the communities around Verona and Monroe, make this Word our lives, what will our heritage be? We already have the heritage laid out for us—the inheritance of heaven, won by Jesus. We prepare for heaven by staying in touch with God's Word. One person, Jesus forgave the sins of the world. 12 apostles spread that message to every corner of the globe. God's Word will have its way with 400 of us. **GOD'S WORD IS OUR GREAT HERITAGE.**

“Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds.” (Deuteronomy 11:18, NIV)
Amen.