

THE BIG IDEA: The WORD of God ACTIVATES the ARMY of God.The Take-Off

Today I need you to find **Hebrews 4:12**, keep your thumb in it and then find **Ezekiel chapters 36 and 37**.

We'll be back and forth between these 2 sections of scripture a lot today. If you don't have a Bible, but need one, we've got plenty to give you. We'll also have **Hebrews 4:12** on the screens. This week's teaching is critical to being Battle Ready, and we want to make sure you get it.

The first thing I want you to understand is that God is raising up an army to fight

We've been made aware of the fight, aware of our King, aware of our enemy and aware of our need to be engaged

Now, we're going to begin to learn about weapons that we've been given by God for the battle we're aware of, and we're going to start with the powerful weapon of God's Word, and we're going to see how He uses it to activate a powerful army that will fight courageously with it.

God uses His Word to raise up an army that will use His Word in the battle.

Said another way (and this is your Big Idea), **the WORD of God ACTIVATES the ARMY of God**.

My guess is that most of us have under-appreciated and under-utilized the weapon of God's Word, and so you're going to hold that book differently after today, because you're going to realize what a powerful weapon it is.

The Word of God activates the army of God because of 3 very specific qualities that it has, and all of them are found in **Hebrews 4:12**.

Let's read it and then we'll look at the 3 qualities.

1. The Word of God is ALIVE

- a. **Hebrews 4:12** says that God's Word is living
- b. That means that life is a quality of the Word - it has life, carries life, gives life
- c. God's Word brings life TO us - and when that LIFE touches DEATH, something has to change!
- d. You could take my word for it, but I'd rather you see it in the testimony of someone you all know
- e. [Jerry's story]
- f. So we can see that God uses His Word to bring US to life - it gives life TO us
- g. But once God's word comes alive IN us, it will become alive AROUND us!
- h. God's word brings life TO us, and then brings life THROUGH us to dead circumstances around us
- i. We're going to spend some time in **Ezekiel 36 and 37** off an on throughout the message, but let me offer a quick overview to illustrate this point
- j. Israel is dead, and Ezekiel is the prophet called to revive them
- k. Tough call
- l. But God's speaks a life-giving word TO Ezekiel and then speaks a life-giving message THROUGH Ezekiel
- m. You'll see it later, but for now, stick that in your back pocket for later
- n. Right now, let's look at the second quality of this powerful weapon of God's Word

2. The Word of God is ACTIVE

- a. "For the Word of God is living and ... ACTIVE"
- b. What do you call something that's alive but not active? A couch potato, right?
- c. That's NOT God's Word. It's alive, yes, but it is also ACTIVE.
- d. The Greek word for "active" actually means "effective"
- e. God's Word is effective, active, and will do 2 things:
 - Accomplish God's PURPOSE
 - **Isaiah 55:10-13** / it accomplishes what it was sent to do
 - **Jeremiah 1:12** / God is watching over His Word to make it effective
 - Activate God's PEOPLE
 - God could have simply raised the army, but He had Ezekiel play a part in it
 - **Ezekiel 37:4** / Prophecy and say

3. The Word of God is ACCURATE

- a. Alive and active are good, but the third quality is where things get really powerful in the battle!

- b. The author of **Hebrews** says that the Word “penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.”
- c. **Verse 13** goes on to say that it lays us bare before God.
- d. This is the work of a surgeon, not a savage! The Word of God is ACCURATE.
- e. Accuracy is important, right? We don’t want our navigation systems to be a little off, do we? You can miss a lot of things if your watches or clocks don’t keep accurate time!
- f. The Word is accurate; it means that this weapon is precise and personal (**Ephesians 6:17**)
- g. First, it’s PRECISE
 - Look at the fine cutting that is happening
 - Precision like that requires a scalpel, not a machete
 - **Ephesians 6:17** says that we are to take up the **sword** of the Spirit
 - **Sword** isn’t like a pirate’s sword; it’s like a handheld dagger
 - It is used in hand to hand combat for targeted attacks
- h. Second, it’s PERSONAL
 - Paul continues in **Ephesians 6:17** / “which is the word of God”
 - He doesn’t use the Greek word “logos” for word; he uses “rhema”
 - Logos is describes the totality of the Word of God; rhema is the spoken word
 - The Sword of the the Spirit is the (spoken) **WORD** of God / **SpokenWORD** / **SWORD!!**
 - Let me give you some examples before we wrap this up back in Ezekiel
 - **Matthew 4:4** / Not by bread alone, but by every RHEMA that proceeds FROM THE MOUTH of God
 - **John 6:63** / The RHEMA that I SPEAK are...life to you
 - **Romans 10:17** / Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the RHEMA of God
 - Practically speaking, the LOGOS of God becomes the RHEMA of God given to the SOLDIER of God to use in the BATTLE for God
 - **John 13:4** when Wendy and I left First Assembly
 - **2 Kings 4:16** when we were struggling with infertility
 - **Luke 5:4** when we knew it was time to plant this church
 - One more that I know God is speaking to our church right now for the battles we are facing
 - It’s found in **Ezekiel 36:33-38** and we’ll close by reading it

The Landing

At the end of last year, as I stood here during early morning worship one Sunday, I sensed the Holy Spirit telling me a word for 2017: cultivate.

As I studied it and had others tell me about it, I came to learn it meant to prepare the soil for a large harvest.

Then, the Parah CG studied it during the snow week and Renee shared in a leadership Team meeting one of the passages they had read concerning the word cultivate, and I knew that it was a “rhema” word for our church in this season of rebuilding a very old building and a very forgotten city.

Listen to **Ezekiel 36:33-38** with Albemarle in mind.

Now, after that great word, God led Ezekiel into a valley full of dry bones and death, and can’t you just imagine his reaction? “Seriously, Lord? THIS is what I have to work with?”

What he was seeing was very different from what he was hearing, and yet God told Ezekiel to SPEAK/PROPHECY

The rhema word is the **SpokenWORD** of God, and we’re going to put into practice this SWORD of the Spirit in our circumstance.

#200Kin40days

God could do it all without us, but that’s not His plan

The Word of God activates the army of God, and just like God’s word TO Ezekiel activated him, and God’s word

THROUGH Ezekiel activated an army, so God’s word to and through us will raise a city to life.

Let’s pray.