

13th October 2024

Year B Pentecost 20 Hebrews 4:12-16

Sermon Picture:



Hebrews 4:12-16

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. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

“Nothing is hidden from God's sight”.

Of course, when we are fully dressed, especially in our Sunday clothes, and acting right and good, it looks like we have nothing to hide.

We look like normal, decent people – don't we.

But what if we peel back the layers and look deep inside – what are we hiding. Remember what Miss Marple said: she knows what's going on inside of each and every person in her village – not because she is a busy body – but because she knows her own heart.

She knows every village in the world because she knows her own village.

Those who say I have nothing to hide are kidding themselves – it's a lie.

What goes on in your heart?

I have a very good idea because I know my own heart.

God wants it out in the open.

You know most people confess their guilt only when they are caught.

God wants us to spit it out – freely.

God knows what is good – a clean heart is Good.

Create in me a clean heart O God.

Jesus says in Luke (8) *For all that is secret will eventually be brought into the open, and everything that is concealed will be brought to light and made known to all.*

Is that good news or bad news??

I am hunter and a butcher.

I only kill to eat.

On the farm I killed sheep, pigs, cattle, chooks.

Pigs are the best – the most work but the best - you use everything from Snchozzle zum schwanz – from snout to tail.

Mettwurst, liverwurst, bloodwurst, Presskopf, white pudding, black pudding.

Bacon, ham,

In the bush it's anything – Camels, turkeys, rabbits.

Once you kill and skin an animal for meat you instinctively check the animal for defects.

Usually their kidney or liver.

Especially, wild animals -You look for worms or discolouration.

If the rabbit has "mixy" – you soon know – if you can't tell from the outside, you can sure tell on the inside.

You check the lambs Liver – don't you love lambs' fry.

Crumbed brains.

You don't want bad stuff in your meat.

A good butcher – knows where to look for problems.

You check for worms.

Don't worry all animals have worms – even the best prime lamb and beef.

Have you ever given your kids a worm treatment. what does that say?

You don't want bad stuff in your meat.

Quite often there might be a small cyst – you just cat it out.

Their might a bruise – you just cut it out.

You might find an injury – a stick puncture wound – you cut it out.

You might find an infection – you throw it all out.

You don't want bad stuff in your meat.

Meat is good. God said to Peter Kill and Eat.

Vegetarians, Vegans – I don't get it.

If we weren't meant to eat meat – why then are animals made of meat?

Whenever I'm around vegans I walk on eggshells – they hate that.

I love the writer to the Hebrews – I reckon he – or she – we don't know - was a butcher.

What a beautiful analogy:

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. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

The word of God is like a good butcher it opens up the body to every last piece.

Nothing is hidden.

Every bruise is exposed.

Every cyst is exposed.

Every worm is exposed.

You know where this is going – every sin is exposed by God’s word.

Here is God the butcher – his word is his knife.

“You shall not commit adultery”.

No worries on that one God.

“What does this mean for us?”

We should fear and love God, so that in all matters of sex we lead a moral and decent life in word and deed, and that husband and wife each love and honour the other.

“You shall not kill”. No worries here?

What does this mean for us:

We should fear and love God, so that we do no bodily harm to our neighbour, but help and befriend them in every need.

Do not lie, do not neglect worship, Love the Lord with all you heart, mind, and soul.

Every word cuts to reveal a worm, a disease, a bruise.

Every cut says – not acceptable, not fit for human consumption, reject.

This is what the word is meant to do.

You don’t want bad stuff in your gold.

It’s meant to show God and you that behind every sinew there is a worm.

On the tip of every tongue there is a disease.

In every brain and heart there are lies and deceit.

We want those bits exposed and dealt with.

We don’t want them hidden behind our Sunday best for life.

You don’t want bad stuff in your meat.

I see this a bit differently to most.

To me the bigger the pile of cut off cysts, and bruises, and infections, and worms the better.

To me the bigger the pile – the better the meat – the purer the meat.

Jesus promises to make us perfect – fit for heaven – Ephesians, Jude – on the last day he will present us pure, unstained, unblemished, radiant.

Create in me a clean heart o God – let that be your prayer – let the butcher at work in you.



I have a picture of the refiner’s fire.

The gold ore is put in the crucible.

The Gold ore is just like dirt.

It is heated and the Gold melts and gathers at the bottom - the top is the rubbish – the slag.

See how the water is washing the rubbish from the Gold.

Again this is how I see it for us.

The bigger the pile of slag and rubbish the purer the Gold.

The real gold is the slag and rubbish – because it is removed and dealt with by God.

Do you see it that way.

How precious is Jesus on the cross – a beaten ruined man, with the weight of the world's sin on his shoulders. A wreck of a picture.

So that we live in purity and grace.

How precious is that wreck of an image.

How precious is that pile of cysts and bruises.

How precious is that pile of slag – because it is not on us – because it is not in us.

Create in me a pure heart O God.

Not just that I can feel good about myself – by so that I can be that pure hand of Jesus in my world.

Luther always explains that this is a daily thing.

Create in me a clean heart O God is a daily thing as we come to his life saving word.

A daily thing – to be examined and cut – to be hosed and cleansed.

Those 10 little commandments teach them to your kids – there not for fun – they're for life

They are the butcher's knife.

They are the refiner's fire.

Create in me a pure heart O God.

What's more the Butcher gives us the blood of an innocent lamb to drink

Your meant to say poor little lamb – what has he ever done wrong.

Just the point – he has done nothing wrong – his blood is pure and innocent - with his pure innocent blood he makes us pure.

As the writer to the Hebrews – probably the butcher, says (9:22) "...the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness."

Lord bless us with hearts wanting to confess our disease and weaknesses knowing you have willingly poured out your life for us.

Lead us to your word to be opened – exposed – so that we can receive your forgiveness and be pure in this world. Amen.