

[Transcript] Theme Sunday: “Reverberate”

Colossians 3:16-17

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Introduction

Hello church family! Every year we have a theme that we believe encapsulates what God wants to focus on for the ministry year. I'm so excited to preach about our new theme for this year today!

The pastors and I believe that our theme this year is the key to keep us on mission to “transform lost people into Christ’s disciples who will then transform the world.” The results of this then will be moving forward, slowly but definitively towards our vision of “multiplying churches in campuses and cities to transform the next generation among the nations.”

The theme for HMCC of Tangerang and HMCC of Jakarta this ministry year is “Reverberate.” The word reverberate simply means a series of echoes: if an echo is sound bouncing once, reverb is sound bouncing over and over again. But instead of just trying to define it for us, I want to show you exactly what “reverberate” means by watching this video of a singer on YouTube who recorded her visit to this church with a domed structure that is like a reverberation chamber. Take a look at what happened when she sang inside it! *Show from 7:10-8:10: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8DRyrKPFrgo>.*

Specifically, we believe the Bible is breathed out by God (2 Timothy 3:16-17)- authoritative and inerrant- thus God speaks to his people through it. The Bible is God’s words to communicate to us through human words! This is how we relate to God- how we know him, his heart and will, and his way of salvation. God’s Word gives and sustains life (Matthew 4:4) and creates and changes new hearts (John 17:17). So what we want to establish deeply in our church this year is for God’s Word to reverberate in us and through us into our world.

Scripture Reading

So what I’ll be preaching from today in light of “Reverberate” is from Colossians 3:16-17. Colossians is a letter in the New Testament by the apostle Paul to the church in the ancient city of Colossae (in modern-day Turkey). I’ll go ahead and read this Scripture now.

Colossians 3:16-17 (ESV): *16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. 17 And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*

Proposition

The “one thing” of Colossians 3:16-17:

Let God’s Word reverberate in our lives!

Organizational Statement

I’m going to cover three questions in this sermon:

1. Why should God’s Word reverberate in our lives?
2. How does God’s Word reverberate in our lives?
3. What happens when God’s Word reverberates in our lives?

Prayer

Let's pray together: Heavenly Father, thank you for the gift of your Word. You said that in the New Covenant you would write your words into our hearts and that you would be our God and we would be your people (Jeremiah 31:33). Teach us at this time and lead us in your New Covenant. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

→ **Transition:** So, let's go right into the first point...

Sermon Outline

I. Why should God's Word reverberate in our lives?

A. I want to focus on the main part of v. 16 here...

Verse 16: *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly...with thankfulness in your hearts to God.*

1. Main lesson #1: God's Word is precious because it preaches Jesus Christ into our hearts.
 - a) What is the "word of Christ" specifically? There's a lot of layers to this. It means the words spoken by Jesus- his life and his teaching. It means the message of Jesus- that he is the fulfillment of the Scriptures, all of which points to Christ. It means the whole of Scriptures too- as Jesus is the Word of God that became flesh, the full revelation of God. So the "word of Christ" can be synonymous with "the Word of God."
 - b) This word of Christ was to "dwell in you richly," which meant that there was this precious treasure- the word of Christ- that would dwell or inhabit within the church in large amounts. They were supposed to be soaked and ooze with God's Word; they were supposed to cherish and love this precious treasure!
 - c) Illustration: Have you ever gotten into something that became a passion of yours? I've shared this before, but our new hobby as a family during the pandemic has been gardening. It's a great hobby- valuable- because of what we can learn in terms of virtues (e.g. patience) and science. I can say that it's somewhat of a passion: I've been reading and watching tons of stuff on the internet, consuming content about germinating seeds, growing various plants, making compost, pruning, and mulching. I'm constantly thinking about it and talking about it with my kids. It's "oozing" out of our lives in the Jun household!
 - d) We can see here that this is a command for the Colossian church: *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly*. Paul wrote earlier in chapter 3 for the church to "put to death" various sinful practices (vv. 5-11) and to "put on" the character traits of Christ (vv. 12-15). The way to do both is to *let the word of Christ dwell in you richly*.
 - e) Context: There was a famous advertising campaign by this beverage called Gatorade where their tagline was, "Is it in you?" Can I ask you to be really honest with yourself? Is the Word of God in you? Is it dwelling richly inside you- this precious treasure of Jesus Christ revealed and made accessible? Or is it just something that consumes your life or something that is a "Sunday thing"? Is the Word something that you are passionate about consuming? Is it exciting or boring? Is it the first or last thing you reach for when you have time?
 - f) Example: Having received counseling, I'm realizing how important it is to be aware of the various voices from the idols inside our hearts. For example, if I examine a recent fight that I had with my wife, the first voice inside me said, "She is misreading my intentions from what I said." I didn't want to be misunderstood. I began to presume that I knew what she was thinking. And I fought back. The second voice inside me said, "What if

she's made at me and rejects me?" Now this is a bit embarrassing to admit, but one idol in my heart is acceptance by people who are close to me. I fear rejection from people who matter to me. That is an idol in my heart that often speaks loudly and dictates my actions.

- g) Context: There are a lot of voices that come out of our idolatrous hearts: the voices of coveting material comfort or financial prosperity; the voices of seeking out sensual pleasures for escape or enjoyment; the voice of pursuing success to gain a sense of significance; the voice that seeks out specific people's love or approval. These idols of today- just like throughout human history- tickle our ears and hearts at first but leave us unsatisfied and empty.

2. Main lesson #1: God's Word is precious because it preaches Jesus Christ into our hearts.

- a) The key to "why" God's Word should reverberate in our lives is in the phrase "with thankfulness in your hearts to God." Letting the word of Christ dwell their hearts richly was a response to the Gospel- a response of gratitude for the grace of God. We talked about the "main thing" before: believing that they were forgiven much would lead to loving God much. Being shown mercy by Jesus- through his compassionate, generous, and committed act of love- would change their hearts.

- b) In the OT, the "New Covenant" of Jesus Christ was described this way:

Jeremiah 31:33-34 (NLT): 33 "But this is the new covenant I will make with the people of Israel after those days," says the Lord. "I will put my instructions deep within them, and I will write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. 34 And they will not need to teach their neighbors, nor will they need to teach their relatives, saying, 'You should know the Lord.' For everyone, from the least to the greatest, will know me already," says the Lord. "And I will forgive their wickedness, and I will never again remember their sins."

- c) This is what happened to the Colossian church! By the sheer grace of God, God put his words into their hearts and taught it to them. They were forgiven of their sins and were now God's people. In Paul's words earlier in chapter 3, they had been raised with Christ (as stated in v. 1), had died to sin, and their lives were now hidden in Christ (as stated in v. 3).
- d) Context: This is the Gospel for us! This is how God's Word preaches Christ to us! If you never heard this before or it never made sense to you before, this is the message that changes everything: God in his grace sacrificed his Son, Jesus Christ, on the cross to offer forgiveness for our sins; God in his grace gives new hearts to trust him and to want to please and obey him. And the Scriptures say that those who are saved will have a new appetite for God's Word- they will love it and want to obey it.
- e) Context: This message of Jesus is that we can freely and joyfully confess those idols in our hearts that we listen to over the words of our King and Savior. The process of preaching Christ into our hearts is this: confession that leads to repentance (forsaking our idols and choosing Christ), repentance that leads to receiving his forgiveness (by faith in Christ), and forgiveness that causes us to love Jesus more. And in greater ways we'll come to see how precious his words are to us.

→ **Transition**: So the first question was why God's Word should reverberate in our lives. Now second...

Sermon Outline (continued)

II. How does God's Word reverberate in our lives?

A. Let's focus on the three clauses that modify "let the word of Christ dwell in you richly."

Verse 16: *...teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs...*

1. Main lesson #2: God's Word reverberates in his church as they teach, admonish and sing together.
 - a) I want to share how this looked like in the apostle Paul's life himself. Before Jesus saved him, he was someone who was devout and passionate, but full of self-ambition and even violence. He was conflicted because he loved his religion (and even the Scriptures), but he was a slave to sin. By God's grace, when he saw Jesus Christ as the message of the Scriptures, God's Word embodied, and the hero of God's salvation story- his life was turned upside down and his heart was set free!
 - b) His early years as a disciple of Jesus were partially spent in the church in Jerusalem, a church where they were devoted to the teaching of God's Word through the apostles. They gathered in the Temple in large gatherings for this, but they also gathered in people's homes for smaller gatherings where they shared meals and fellowship together, wisely instructing each other in their beliefs and everyday behavior.
 - c) Paul would eventually go to another church in the city of Antioch, where he was commissioned with a team to bring the Gospel to other people and places. In one of those stops (actually this happened a lot), he and his partner in the Gospel, Silas, were thrown in jail. But Paul and his team were permanently set free by Jesus, and even in jail they could not help but sing songs of praise to Jesus and share about him with people there. The Word of God reverberated within Paul's life and within the churches he was a part of! This is now what he instructs the Colossian church to do as well!
2. Main lesson #2: God's Word reverberates in his church as they teach, admonish and sing together.
 - a) First, Paul said that the way that the word of Christ would dwell in them richly was by "teaching one another." They were to learn the contents of the Scriptures- and they were to do it in the context of the church. There were elders (members who were called to lead the church) who were given the responsibility to handle God's Word faithfully in their teaching and preaching.
 - b) But this also says that all the members of the church were responsible for teaching each other. The Word of God was supposed to be studied, explained, dissected, and discussed among the regular members of the Colossian church! They were to learn from each other!
 - c) Second, Paul said that the way that the word of Christ would dwell in them richly was by "admonishing one another in all wisdom." The word "admonish" has a couple layers of meaning: it means to instruct each other's behaviors and beliefs and also to warn or rebuke. So not only were the Colossians supposed to study, explain, dissect, and discuss the Word- they were supposed to help each other live it out!
 - d) They were to be in each other's lives enough to help each other line up what they learned from God's Word to their view of the world and their tangible actions and decisions. They were to speak truth to each other if they were living in ways that dishonored Christ and that endangered their faith and testimony of Christ. They were to do this with wisdom as well: they were to be tactful, firm at times and gentle at times, and consistent with Biblical principles and the Gospel.
 - e) Context: Let's pause here and connect this to our church life. This is why we value expositional preaching when we gather together as an entire church. "Expositional preaching" just means that the main point and specific lessons of each sermon are the

main point and specific lessons from the text of Scripture selected; it also means we preach through books of the Bible the majority of the time. We do occasionally do a topical sermon: a sermon where we examine what the whole of Scriptures says about a particular topic. This year, we'll be going through 1 Timothy to learn about how to be the household of God; we'll also go through a series on "Biblical relationships," studying the topics of family, marriage and dating, and friendships.

- f) Context: We also value teaching and admonishing each other and we do this in our LIFE groups. We know it's uncomfortable and inconvenient. But the church is commanded to do this in order to get the Word of God to reverberate deeper into our own lives. We do something called "inductive Bible study"- we leave it to members to observe the Biblical text themselves, try to understand its meaning, and then connect it to each other's lives. It's always exciting to me when people discover the treasures within God's words for themselves! I can't wait for this to happen in our LG's this year!
- g) Third, Paul said that the way that the word of Christ would dwell in them richly was by "singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs." Now this is an interesting- some may even think this is strange. But if we think about it, the Bible presents God as passionate for singing! For example, the psalms are full of exhortations and commands to sing to God!

Psalm 47:6-7 (ESV): 6 Sing praises to God, sing praises! Sing praises to our King, sing praises! 7 For God is the King of all the earth; sing praises with a psalm!

- h) In these two verses "singing" is mentioned five times! When the people of Israel crossed the Red Sea, they sang to God; when they assembled in the Temple, they sang to God; when the church in the NT gathered together, they were to sing to God; and when God's elect from all over the world gather in heaven, we will sing to God!
- i) Context: Bob Kauflin, a pastor and musician, explains three reasons for singing: First, it helps us remember words- so when the songs we sing are saturated with God's Word, it reverberates into our minds deeper. Second, singing helps us engage emotionally with God's Word. Emotions are a peek into what we value, love, and desire in our hearts. When Jesus becomes the center of our lives, our emotions slowly align with him and the things that are important to him. By the way, this is not manipulation of emotions, or emotionalism, but becoming emotional about the most essential and important things of life.
- j) Context: Third, singing can help us demonstrate and express our unity around the Gospel. We see this phenomenon in our world- at music concerts, holidays, or sports events (just imagine how awesome it is when 50,000 people are singing in unison "Olay, olay olay olay, olay, olay"). How much more for the church when we gather together. When the music doesn't distract us from God's Word, but helps make it reverberate in our souls and brings us together- it's beautiful! One of the things I miss about gathering together physically is watching our church worship this way. Sometimes when in the front of the service, I pause, watch, and listen. I see faces of people going through great trials or struggles, still singing their hearts out to Jesus. That makes me want to sing my heart out to Jesus too!

→ **Transition**: We've seen why God's Word should reverberate in our lives and how God's Word reverberates in our lives. Now the final point...

Sermon Outline (continued)

III. What happens when God's Word reverberates in our lives?

- A. Let's look at v. 17 now- this is the effect of God's Word reverberating through us...

Verse 17: *And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*

1. Main lesson #3: When God's Word reverberates in us, it connects Jesus with every aspect of our lives.
 - a) The Colossian church received the "word of Christ" (that is, God's Word) and it reverberated when they gathered together. But it does more, because when they "scattered," the Word of God was supposed to reverberate in everything that they did. That's how v. 16 ("let the word of Christ dwell in you richly") is connected with v. 17- the main command here being "do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus."
 - b) So the word of Christ would then reverberate into everything that the Colossian church would do- in all of their words and in all of their deeds. Literally whatever they did. And they were to do it all "in the name of the Lord Jesus": because he was their King and Savior and they would want to honor him and live according to His will.
 - c) Think about what Jesus himself said about what would happen through his disciples as God's Word reverberated in them:

John 15:5, 7 (NLT): 5 I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. ...7 If you remain in me and my words remain in you, you may ask for anything you want, and it will be granted!
 - d) The way his disciples were to "abide" or "remain" or "live" in Jesus was by having his words "abide" or "remain" or "live" in them. As this happens, his disciples will bear the fruit of Christ-like character that is listed in 3:12-15: compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, patience, forbearance, forgiveness, and love. When Jesus' disciples pray for this kind of stuff, Jesus says that he'll certainly answer with "yes!"
 - e) Context: What we hope for is that the way God's Word reverberates when God's people gather is how God's Word reverberates within ourselves in our everyday, personal times with God. We want everyone in the church to read and study the Bible the way we do in SC and LG. Sometimes that's hard to do, but I want to read something by J.C. Ryle wrote to encourage people with a proper perspective:

"Do not think you are getting no good from the Bible, merely because you do not see that good day by day. The greatest effects are by no means those which make the most noise and are the most easily observed. The greatest effects are often silent, quiet, and hard to detect at the time they are being produced. Think of the influence of the moon upon the earth, and of the air upon the human lungs. Remember how silently the dew falls, and how imperceptibly the grass grows. There may be far more doing than you think in your soul by your Bible-reading." - J.C. Ryle
 - f) Context: The effect of getting on a Bible reading plan, working through a Bible study, or memorizing Scripture regularly is subtle but effective- like water smoothing out a rock over decades. When we read, study, and meditate on God's Word by faith, it will change us- our perspective and the way that we work, deal with our families, and engage with our city.
2. Main lesson #3: When God's Word reverberates in us, it connects Jesus with every aspect of our lives.
 - a) Paul goes further in 3:17-24, explaining how to do this in specific areas of life: between husbands and wives, between children and parents, and between servants and masters. God's Word- his will, his heart, his purposes- would continued in a series of echoes all areas of their lives. It reverberated in their personal, inner lives. It reverberated in the way they treated and talked to people. It reverberated in their church of course- but also in their perspective and way they functioned in their work, homes and communities.

b) Example: Jonathan Leeman, in his book *Word-Centered Church*, shared a report about an interesting team of missionaries. They relied entirely on the Gospel to start in a church in a city where there was none. They didn't have a lot of financial support from their sending church, so they worked to support themselves. They built relationships with the people that lived by them and worked with or for. And people started to respond positively! A lot of people converted from the traditional religions of the city to faith in Jesus, so much so that others got jealous and started opposing them. It got so bad that this missionary team had to evacuate after only about a month there. But the story didn't end there: even as persecution got worse, the church's faith and love increased- even without the missionaries there.

c) This, of course, is the story of Paul and his team starting the church in the city of Thessalonica. This was what Paul wrote to them:

1 Thessalonians 1:8 (NLT): *8 And now the word of the Lord is ringing out from you to people everywhere, even beyond Macedonia and Achaia, for wherever we go we find people telling us about your faith in God.*

d) Context: Do you see that? The Word of God reverberated through them all the way out to their city and province! Can you just imagine with me: The Word of God, reverberates from our hearts and minds out to our homes and workplaces (or campuses). We pray God's Word over the people and places that we live and work, confident that God will answer our prayers. The Word of God reverberates into the way we work, the way we operate as a family, and the conversations we have with people.

e) Context: Can you just imagine with me what it could look like in our church? Maybe some Bible studies with unchurched people start happening- just like we heard in our "yay God" testimonies- so that they can learn about who Jesus is. Maybe family devotions launch so that spouses can grow in Christ-centered oneness and children (or parents) can have the Gospel planted in their hearts. Maybe missional initiatives get started in our city to address the various pains in our city; or maybe we take steps to be involved with getting the Gospel to the unreached people groups of Indonesia- these are examples of God's Word reverberating in the dark corners of our world.

f) Context: This is our mission isn't it? It's to "transform lost people into Christ's disciples who will then transform the world." This will happen as we let God's Word reverberate in our lives. Let's start here this year as a church! Let's commit to this together to make this happen- of course when we gather together in SC and LG, but also in our own personal lives and ministries.

→ **Transition**: So we've gone through why God's Word should reverberate in our lives, how God's Word reverberates in our lives, and what happens when God's Word reverberates in our lives. What next?

Conclusion

IV. Life Application

A. What are the next steps that we can take as a "life application" from today's sermon?

1. Commit to personally contribute to God's Word reverberating in our church.
 - a) Have this faith perspective when we gather as a church for SC and LG's. Come ready to learn from one another and to admonish each other.
 - b) Point each other to Jesus from the Word. Get the Word reverberating into our everyday lives: our personal devotions, workplaces, and homes!

2. Commit to a personal, regular intake of God's Word in your life.
 - a) Get started on a Bible reading plan, personal Bible study, or plan to memorize Scripture. We have resources available for everybody: look online and ask the pastors and leaders.
 - b) Do this together with others as well: with friends, family members, co-workers, and people from church!

→ **Transition:** Let God's Word reverberate in our lives! We'll go back to the live worship service now for a time of personal and corporate response. May Jesus Christ's words dwell in us richly this ministry year and until he returns!

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