

Sermon series: New Year's 2023  
Sermon title: Beavers for the Bible  
Scripture: Colossians 3:16-17  
Clearwater Bay International Baptist Church  
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In 2005, Botanist Sarah Sallon acquired some Judean date seeds from an archaeological dig at Herod's fortress of Masada.

She gave the seeds to Elaine Solowey a Horticulturalist at Arava Institute in southern Israel to see if they could grow the seeds.

The seeds were 2000 years old, from the time of Christ. The Judean Palm produced world renown dates that Herod sent to Caesar every year. They were in fact the reason why the Promised Land was called the land of milk and honey...the honey not being bee honey but date honey.

The dates were big and tasted like caramel and honey and were rich in nutrients and used as medicine.

The date palms were all destroyed and it was extinct. There were none left in the world.

Sarah and Elaine watered the date seeds slowly and waited.

The seeds sprouted and today they have successfully grown several date palms and they are reproducing. They hope to see them flourish in Israel again.

What is amazing in all of this is the power of a seed! A seed 2000 years old can sprout and produce juicy delicious dates.

The word of God is called many things in the Scriptures.

A light, a lamp, a sword, a hammer, milk, bread, and also it is referred to as seed.

Oh the power of a seed to produce life.

What can happen when we plant the seed of the word of God in our lives?

**Let's pray.**

I can't think of a better thing to encourage us in than to BEHOLD God more this next year- to encourage us in Bible reading in 2023.

Some of you may find that you can't get over the hump spiritually. Some of you may feel like you have hit a wall in your spiritual walk!

Well, if you want to grow in your faith and BEHOLD God; get to know God....then you must learn to plant the seeds in your mind and heart.

You must cultivate the word in the soil of our lives.

You must marinate in the Scriptures.

You must consume the milk of the word like an infant, as 1st Peter chapter 2 says.

I want to encourage us to be BEAVERS FOR THE BIBLE again this year! But with a twist.

We usually talk about being Beavers for the Bible and that is a good metaphor.

A beaver is an interesting creature.

They live in many places around the world, mostly in the USA and Europe. I recently found out that there are about 500 beavers in Xinjiang province.

**What do we know about Beavers?**

**Why do we need to be like them?**

We want fast instant results....

We like quick and exciting spiritual bursts.

But the Christian life is slow chewing...and work...like a beaver.

- Beavers work slowly but consistently and accomplish a lot.
- Beavers are excellent engineers. They can build a solid dam that changes the entire ecosystem.
- Only until recently, most people considered them pests and a nuisance. But now we know that they sustain the ecosystem and life buds where they build their dams.
- Beavers devour wood with their sharp teeth which are made partly of iron. They can eat a tree like we eat a Bo Lou Bao.
- They devour wood to get at the sweet layer under the bark.
- Beavers' teeth never stop growing. They MUST chew or they will die because their teeth will grow to cover their mouth and they will starve to death.

Now, this sermon isn't about beavers. We want to be like beavers though.

We want to work slowly everyday to get at that sweet pulp under the cover and we want to devour it.

But our wood is the Bible; the word of God.

But I want us to think of this metaphor today....the Bible as seed.

We want to plant the seeds of the word in our hearts.

No seed.

No growth.

Sow the seeds of the word in our hearts and minds...

Growth will occur.

I'll never forget when I was discipling a friend who was living in an apartment connected to the house we were renting.

He'd been a "Christian" his whole life but had never grown. He had a lot of struggles.

So, we read the Bible together.

One day, when reading Luke 8... the words of Luke 8:11 jumped off the page at him...or I should say, the Spirit of God used the word to illuminate his heart and mind.

### **Luke 8:11**

The seed is the word of God.

He realized that he had never really cultivated the habit of planting the seed of the word in the soil of his heart.

He grew so much.

But the Bible isn't just seed it is also food.

We plant it.

We eat it.

We drink it.

Why? To live!!!! To grow. To see fruit. To be close to God. To BEHOLD God.

### **Matthew 4:4**

Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.

### **Psalm 63**

1 "O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water. 2 So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary, beholding your power and glory. 3 Because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise you. 4 So I will bless you as long as I live; in your name I will lift up my hands.

5 My soul will be satisfied as with fat and rich food, and my mouth will praise you with joyful lips, 6 when I remember you upon my bed, and meditate on you in the watches of the night;"

The word of God is the Christian's food.  
We will 'behold his power and glory' as we are  
'satisfied as with fat and rich food' as we spend time  
with God...and we spend time with God by spending  
time in his word!

There are so many pictures and metaphors of the  
word.

There are numerous ways to express it.

We could say, 'Behold God.'

We could say, 'be satisfied with the fat and rich food of  
the word.'

We could say, 'be a beaver for the Bible.'

We could say....plant the seed of the word in your life.

**Colossians chapter 3** gives us another one.

Colossians explains it by saying, "Let the word dwell in  
you richly."

### **Colossians 3:16-17**

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  
thanksgiving in your hearts to God.

The first phrase is, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.”

## **What does it mean?**

We need to say first off, that the YOU is plural and not singular. It is ‘you all’ or ‘you guys’ or ‘y’all’  
He’s writing to a church, a group of believers.

The WORD OF CHRIST here means the message about Jesus...we could say the gospel.  
But, since the whole Bible is the message about Jesus and the coming of his Kingdom, it isn’t a stretch to say that it means THE BIBLE.

He says that the Bible needs to DWELL in our church richly. There is no word “Let” in the original language.  
The action is on the word DWELL.

The Bible is to reside in our church.  
The Bible is to find a home in our church.  
The Bible is to settle down in our church.  
The word RICHLY accentuates this.  
It means abundant and plentifully.

It’s supposed to ‘fill the house’ not just reside on the shelf or the nightstand.



As a church, the Bible should dwell in us richly. It shouldn't be a dietary supplement but it should be our food.

### **How does the church (as a whole) become a people whom the Bible dwells in richly?**

Answer: By each and every person individually in the church...dwelling in the Word themselves and helping each other.

Look what it says in the later part of the verse....

TEACHING AND ADMONISHING ONE ANOTHER IN ALL WISDOM. Teaching here is the positive instruction of each other in Biblical truth.

Admonishing is negative...it means warning each other the danger of straying from the truth. Checking each other. Cautioning each other.

Here's a summary of this verse as I have translated and dissected it:

"So, as a church...be saturated in the Word. Teach the truth to one another and warn one another not to stray from the truth...even SINGING (psalms, hymns and spiritual songs) to one another about the Word, about Jesus and songs prompted by the Spirit....

–and you can't do this corporately unless you do it individually...Do both.

Therefore, I want to encourage all of us as individuals in 2023 to again be 'beavers for the Bible'.

**Plant the seeds of the word of God in the soil of your life.**

Feed your affections for Christ this year.

Don't starve your soul and your affections for Jesus by chewing on other things.

Don't let the soil of your life become dry and cracked and like a desert, bearing no fruit and life.

The world, the flesh and the devil will work overtime this year to get you and I to neglect the Bible.

They will war against our souls by trying to get us to not digest seed.

But the Bible promises great things if we will plant the word.

**Psalm 1** says, "Blessed is the man..who delights in the law of the LORD and on his law meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all he does he prospers."

**Psalm 19**, "The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple; the precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes."

**Psalm 119:9**, "How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word."

**Psalm 119:103**, "How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth."

**Psalm 119:105**, "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."

**Psalm 119:111**, "Your testimonies are my heritage forever, for they are the joy of my heart."

**Psalm 119:127**, "Therefore, I love your commandments above gold, above fine gold."

**Psalm 119:162**, "I rejoice at your word like one who finds great spoil {treasure}."

**Psalm 119:72**, "the law of your mouth is better to me than thousands of gold and silver pieces."

Your Bible may be dusty.  
You may have not planted much seed in 2022.  
But take heart. Seeds are powerful.  
Just like the 2000 year old seeds could still bear fruit,  
you can start fresh today. Water the seeds.

**I have sent some Bible reading plans already to our  
WhatsApp Broadcast. We all need a plan.**

There is one that has you reading the whole Bible in a year. It takes about 15 minutes a day and you get 5 days off per month.

The other one is the New Testament. It takes 5 minutes a day and you read 5 days a week.

Oh, what hard work it is, but it is rewarding to your soul.

We all need help...get help from each other.

As a church, let's be saturated in the Word this year both as a whole, as small groups and as individuals.

I hope that you'll join us on this quest to plant the seeds of God's word in 2023.

## **Let me give you some tips:**

### **1. Get some help!**

Find a partner in 2023 to help admonish you.

Find a small group in 2023 where you can teach and admonish one another in all wisdom. Singing and being thankful together. We all need this. I need help, too.

### **2. Don't worry about it if you get behind.**

I'm almost always catching up. Just keep going, even if it takes you 3 years. You will get discouraged.

Don't quit. In fact, stop and go deep when God is showing you something. Then catch up.

### **3. Set a time. Set a place.**

Treat it like a meeting with a person, cause that's what it is! You have a meeting each morning or evening with God.

I'd love to help you in any way I can to read the Bible more.

You may not be a Christian today.

Read the Bible. You will see God.