



International Conference – Feb. 2023

**General Theme: He who has an ear,
LET HIM HEAR!**

**Mess. 02: The Factors for the Church's
Decline.**

Scripture Reading: Rv 2:14-17; 3 Jn 9

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Word given by brother **Pedro Dong**, transmitted by Instituto Vida para Todos directly from São Paulo - SP, Brazil, on **05/21/2023**. Text not revised by the author.



1. I would still like to remember what we talked about in message 1, which I couldn't finish. The first thing that the Children of God need to bear in mind is **the importance of the Word of God**. The word of God is still misunderstood. The word is essential for our communication. The word is the vehicle that transmits and expresses our thoughts, what we have in mind, to others. But the word that God has given is a privilege. **Man, created differently from other creatures, is the only being who is capable of using words for communication**. We can express our emotions and thoughts through words. As much as people say that the monkey is similar to man, they cannot articulate words to communicate, as well as other animals.

Jn 1:1

2. We are the only creature God created that has the ability to utter words to communicate. All this is because God is the Word. **The Word is God, and the Word is the Son of God – Christ**. This Word already existed from the beginning and one day became incarnate, becoming a man. While Jesus lived on earth He was the Word of God and life was in Him. The Word which is God, which is Christ has a little different meaning than the word we use to communicate our ideas. **The Word is not merely to communicate to us the idea of God, the Word communicates to us the thoughts of God, what God wants to speak to man**. It is the means of communication similar to what we men use to communicate.

3. But there is a difference that very few Christians realize, which I want to point out: **this Word is not just a means of communication, it is God Himself!** This Word brings God! Not just God's thought, but God Himself, His life and nature. The divine attributes: righteousness, holiness and glory and the essence of God which is light and is love. This Word not only communicates an idea or thought of God, but it brings God into our being! That's why we have been repeating that the work of God is the Word that does: this Word brings God Himself in us, which once activated by faith, does the work of God. The word of communication we use with one another is a shadow of the very Word.

Jn 15:5; Mt 4:4

4. Jesus says in the 15th chapter of John: "I am the true vine and you are the branches..." We know that here on earth we have several vineyards and several vine trees. The vines on earth are a shadow of the true vine, which is Christ! Similarly, **the word we use to communicate is a shadow of the true Word which is God**. And this true Word of God not only communicates God's information to us, but communicates God Himself to us. Then we understand when Jesus says in Matthew 4:4 "man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds from the mouth of God". It is not merely on information from God that man lives, but on the very Word that brings God Himself. It gives life to man! That's why we've been reading this wonderful word from the 6th chapter

of Deuteronomy. I didn't imagine that already for the people of Israel, **God was saying that the people should live by the word of God**. It was not to be merely to be kept and enforced to the letter as laws, but it was to be God's supply for His people.

Dt 6:1-6

5. God promised the Good Land of Canaan. This land, in typology, prefigures Christ. **He is that Good Land that God wants to introduce us to**. One day, when we were saved and believed in the Lord Jesus, God brought us into a Good Land, brought us into Christ. He placed Christ within us and placed us in Christ as the Good Land to enjoy the fruits of this land. But how can we enjoy these fruits, once we have won this land? Most Christians do not know how to enjoy; they still live miserably like any man in the world. **The way to take advantage, enjoy and prosper in this Good Land**, with all our family: father, son and grandson, is **to live by the Word**.

6. If God's people listen to God's Word and take heed to fulfill God's Word, we will live, prosper, and multiply. The Lord promised us that we would have the multiplication of our offspring. **The Word is not merely instruction and information, but God Himself who will prosper us in the Good Land**. We have no other Lord, no other owner. We must not listen to other voices. Our ear must hear only one voice: that of our Lord and God!

7. In the last message we saw that the church in Ephesus had everything right, but God warned her that she had abandoned her first love, and needed to repent, realize where she fell from and return to her first works. **We can never lose our love for the Lord**. We must love the Lord with all our heart, soul and all our strength. How do we do it? Who does not want to keep the love for the Lord? All want! But over the years of Christian life, we begin to grow cold in love. It is no longer that crazy love we had for the Lord, that we consecrate ourselves, we surrender our whole life and future to Him. Then come the day-to-day difficulties that cause this love to cool down. How can we ensure that our love with the Lord does not grow cold? Honeymoon love? We don't have the capacity for that.

8. God knows that it is not just hearing His Word that we will be able to fulfill it. Therefore, **the Word of God is not just information. It comes with power; it comes to enable us to fulfill the very Word of God**. The Word needs to dwell in us and that is not something simple, it is not the one that is heard and forgotten. Many times men are presumptuous, listen to it once and think they already understand and know everything, especially their children, when they receive a recommendation from their parents. We hear and forget. We don't have the ability to keep and we don't have the ability to fulfill the Word of the Lord. That's why we need to put the Words that the Lord speaks to us in our heart. And how to do it?

Dt 6:7

9. This is amazing and it was already in the Old Testament! God knew that man would not have the ability to fulfill. That's why He **gave His word to give us the ability to fulfill. What is the word "inculcate"? It means to engrave, to imprint the word in the spirit of man**. I would say not only in the spirit, but also in our soul: mind, emotion and will. But the definition does not end there, it goes on: **"to repeat these words over and over again, so that they may be engraved in our hearts"**. If we use Strong's dictionary, we will see that this word inculcate also means **"to sharpen", "engrave making incisions"**, the Word makes incisions and engraves in our heart. But record what? The very Word. It is not merely writing with ink and then erasing. It is to engrave incisively, to perforate.

10. In the past, there was no cell phone or WhatsApp, we sent messages from one company to another via Telex, via the telephone line, but it would arrive in writing. To write a message, the person should do it, as in a typewriter, and a machine beside it, perforated a paper, and a ribbon remained. After writing the text, the person took this perforated tape, put it in the Telex transmission machine, waited for the telephone line and answered and passed the Telex. Thus, the text was received from the other side. This perforated paper tape could not be changed or corrected. **What God writes in our heart is pierced in our heart and engraved in a way that no one else erases!**

He 1:1-2; 2 Co 3:1-3

11. **The Old Testament is a record of God's work.** God's work happened because God spoke. God's Word accomplishes His work. In the Old Testament, God used the prophets of the time to speak and that word performed His work. But in these last days, God speaks to us through the Son. New Testament is the age of the Son of God. **Today who speaks is Christ.** He uses His prophets, but He is the one who speaks, for He is the head of the church. God, through the Son, made the universe. Hebrews 11:3 reports that God formed the universe by His Word. So, the Son is the very Word. How did God create this universe? By the Son and by the Word. So, the Word of God is not merely an information or thought transmission. **The Word has power! It created the universe!**

12. Who is glory? God Father. **But Christ is what?** The glow of glory. No one can get close to the Sun. Just as God dwells in unapproachable light, which no man is able to see, but we receive the benefits of the Sun through the sun's rays. And **Christ is the brightness of glory, He brings God for our enjoyment and brings God to us through the Word.** So the Word doesn't just bring information about God. I am insisting on this because many Christian teachers, because they have a lot of biblical knowledge and eloquence, speak well and articulate words well, so they can preach the word of God. It can preach the word as information and knowledge, but it cannot preach the Word of God itself, which conveys God Himself. If we only have biblical knowledge, we can transmit the word of knowledge about God, but it is not the very Word that transmits God. Therefore, brethren, **we must know how to distinguish the words that come out of the mouth of God and transmit God Himself**, which give power and have power to carry out God's work and enable us to carry out His work.

13. **Christ is the exact expression of the Being of God**, which in Greek is "*hyposthesis*". So Christ is the exact expression of what God is. In Greek the word for "exact expression" is "*charakter*". And what is a *charakter* and what is it for? Especially in the emergence of the press, which made it possible to print the Bible, they invented our alphabet, each letter is a character, and each character needed to be used to print a page of a book. They made wooden characters, then metal, such as lead which was easy to cast and engrave. Like a typewriter that has the character printed on each of the keys and words are formed. Christ is that character. **He is the character which conveys the very Being of God.** It not only engraves us like ink, but carves the being of God into our hearts.

14. When the Word of Christ comes to us, Christ Himself is the character which impresses the very Being of God upon our hearts. **God is, through the Word, engraving Christ in our hearts!** To inculcate the word of God is to engrave the Word in our hearts. Engrave Christ Himself, the karakter who bears the essence and substance of God engraved in our hearts. That's why we need the Word of God to live the Christian life.

Dt 17:18

15. God established, through Moses, a principle **to guide how a king should proceed**. When this king began to reign, the first thing he should do would be **to write a copy of the law that God gave through Moses and read it every day**, and not just have decrees for the people taxing and various forms of administration. A king, to govern well over Israel, who represents God to govern God's people, being delegated, **is not free to do what he wants, but only what the Lord wants.** **The way to do what the Lord wants is to have the Word of God.** The king must always carry with him the book of the law, which is the Word of God. God's goal was for the king to read His Word every day of his life.

16. **The very Word gives power to fulfill what the Word speaks.** So it's not us who have to have ability, but the Word that should give us ability. It must not be mere information or knowledge of what God thinks, but God Himself and God's power! We need to fear the Lord. **No one is free to do what he wants.** We are members of the Body of Christ and Christ is the head, He is the boss. The word that the king read every day would empower him to fear the Lord and keep what was written in the book of the law and his life and that of his son would be prolonged. That's what the Lord is doing in the church today!

He 1:3

17. **All things are supported by the mighty Word of God.** The Word has power and gives ability. The Word gives power to fulfill the Word of God. In ourselves we don't have this ability, but the Word gives us that! Today the Lord has given us a gift of how to approach people: "May I pray for you?" This sentence came from God! And colporteurs learned that by believing the prophets they prospered. With dynamic colporting, they became focused on the Word. **The Word gives power and ability. Make things happen! The Word does the work!** Last year, they discovered the secret of immersion in the Word: read every day of your life, inculcate the word in your children, read at home when you sit down or go to bed.

18. **Daily biblical reading does not dispense with immersion. Immersion is imprinting the Word in our hearts;** repeat afterwards. It's the only way the church in Philadelphia will ever get the Lord back. Do you want to be part of this generation that will bring the Lord back? **The Lord is taking us out of our complacency of past church life**, of conventional, traditional life, where we are little bothered, where we lived most of our time in the comfort zone, we were little required to preach the word and care for people. But today the Lord wants all the members of that Body to do this work on a grand scale.

19. Thank God today not only colporteurs live like this, **they wake up listening to the message of the day.** At breakfast and before the colporting, there is immersion and prayer. Going out for colporting on transport, subway, uber, they do immersion. And when contacting people pray, according to immersion! **If we do it our way, it doesn't work, but the Lord's way works!** This Word has power and empowers us! This will culminate in the fulfillment of God's purpose in our day. That's why Satan is furious. The gates of Hades are raging because they know this will pull members of the Body of Christ out of the comfortable, traditional, self-deceiving life. Have you ever thought about arriving before the Judgment Seat of Christ and hearing the Lord saying that he doesn't know us and didn't approve of any of our works? So, isn't it better today to wake up and live in reality?

20. The Word does the work of God. While Jesus was on earth, He said that He did not speak His own words. The way He heard, He judged. That is to say, He did not come to earth to do His own will, but that of the One who sent Him. **It is God who did things through Him and His Word. Today, we are like channels, to transmit the Word of God.** It is not just information about God, but it is imparting God Himself with all His power, enabling man to fulfill the Word of God. When Jesus then died to accomplish our redemption, the disciples were lost. Jesus was training His disciples, after His resurrection, **that His presence continued to be in the Word.** Why did Jesus have power when He lived on earth? **Because the Word dwelt in Him.** But that body died on the cross and Jesus took on another body, but the Word was there in the resurrection body. So when Jesus spoke He had power. When Jesus spoke after the resurrection, it was fulfilled!

21. Jesus appeared to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, walking with them. He started talking to them and explaining about the Word, from Isaiah to the prophets, until they reached the village. Jesus broke the bread, blessed and disappeared. Then they realized it was Jesus. They said that their hearts burned as Jesus spoke to them. **The Word of God burns our heart.** It is not mere information or biblical knowledge. It burns, it burns, it sets our hearts on fire. **Thanks to the Lord, the Word that we immersed is putting fire in our heart.** So it's the Word. On the day of Pentecost, the Father sent the Holy Spirit down and the church was generated. After that Jesus never appeared again, because God used the church. So **Jesus raised up Peter to be a spokesman and channel,** and he spoke boldly about Jesus in Jerusalem, Judea. They tried to stop him from speaking in the name of Jesus and continued speaking at the risk of death. An angel went to save him in prison. Thank the Lord, He used him and the gospel spread.

Ac 1:9

22. God needed to reach the Gentiles, because the gospel is not just for the Jews, but for all nations. The Lord will be with us until the end of the century! This is the promise of the Lord! This gospel has to spread. **The seed of the church is to be sown throughout the earth.** So we saw the difficulty that Peter had with the Gentiles, on account of Judaism. He could not shake off this concept. When he had a vision of the sheet with all sorts of four-legged animals, and God telling him to kill and eat, Peter refused because of the concept of Judaism. The Lord still had mercy and

opened the door to the Gentiles in the house of Cornelius through Peter. When he was barely returning to Jerusalem, the circumcisionists surrounded Peter. In Galatians, Paul writes that Peter even withdrew from among the believing Gentiles when he learned that Jews were coming from Jerusalem. This shows that **God was unable to make His way through Peter to the Gentiles.** **So God prepared Saul, Paul, on the road to Damascus. A persecutor of the church.**

23. The first Gentile church, at Antioch, was raised up. After some time, Barnabas took Paul there and after a year they were sent out to work. Paul uses this channel to speak the Word of God. **It is not talking about God, but the Word of God.** He not only has knowledge about God to speak about God, but he spoke the Word of God.

Ga 2:7-9; Ep 3:2-7

24. Paul was entrusted with the responsibility of serving as a channel for the Word of God to flow as grace. This is God's choice! Paul did not apply, did not choose to be this channel. **It is God who chooses. And the one chosen by God knows his inability.** Moses was called at the age of 80. Although Paul did not speak plainly, he repeatedly spoke of himself as the least of the apostles. He knew that he was unworthy of being a dispenser of God's grace. Generally, those who have ambition and apply, God does not choose, because He knows our heart. **God is the one who puts the Word in the mouth of his channel. Paul spoke only what God revealed to him.** When God puts His Word in our mouths, it comes out with power. That Word then has His operative force of power! The Word works!

25. So many years of church history have been steeped in dense religion, where the Word was spoken as dogma and doctrine. The Word did not produce for God, to do His will, like the rain and snow in Isaiah 55. **All true Word of God does not return void, it works effectively and bears fruit!** These last times, when the church realized the importance of the prophetic word, the Lord has worked a lot among us. But it is not our own ability, the very Word has the operative force of His power.

1 Thes 2:13

26. When the church receives and accepts the word of Paul, not as the word of men, but of God, **the word operates in him who believes!** Churches were raised up in the regions of Antioch, Galatia, Asia Minor, crossed the sea, went to Macedonia, Achaia, Greece and then, when Paul was taken to Rome in prison, he took the gospel to Rome and spread throughout the western world. It is the Word that does the work!

Ga 4:16-17

27. There were disputes over followers in the church and Paul was never concerned about that. He made disciples of Jesus! **The prophetic word sometimes comes to take us out of the comfort zone.** Paul seems to have offended some by telling the truth. We need to be simple because the Lord wants to tell us the truth. The truth not everyone likes to hear. **If we want to bring the Lord back, our lives must have reality.** Religious life in the traditional way will not bring the Lord back and will not bring approval before the Judgment Seat of Christ. Each has its speed; some are faster to keep up, some are slower. Let's embrace everyone in love, but let's not force it. But this is the way! We cannot go against what the Lord is doing.

28. **Why are there war cries? Because there are some who are ahead of the battle!** In the army, although not everyone is at the forefront of the battle, everyone must have the same battle spirit and recognize the pressure on the streets. Therefore, if those who leave don't leave full of fighting spirit, they won't win. Who is in front or behind, is part of a single army. **Let's rejoice, because the battle has been won! That's why the enemy is attacking us. Let's support each other!**

Ac 20:28-32

29. Paul passed through Miletus and sent for the elders of the church in Ephesus. Who established elders in Ephesus was Paul. So we can think that Paul gives charge. But here it says that the one who constituted it was the Holy Spirit. **Who constitutes is the Spirit!** It's no use for man to put someone in a position or function that the Spirit has not confirmed and inspired to do so.

Paul always warned about Satan's subtlety: among us there may be men speaking perverted things to draw disciples, to get followers. Let's encourage each other instead of discouraging!

2 Co 10:12, 11:12-14; Php 1:15

30. They have preachers who praise themselves, who think their own message is beautiful. We are not here disputing good messages, but concerned with the Word that comes out of the mouth of God! **We are here for the Word of God to do the work of God.** Satan often transforms himself into an angel of light, in a good garment, and that is why we need to open our eyes. There were people preaching out of envy seeing that Paul had a status that everyone respected and honored. But Paul didn't seek that, he was just faithful preaching the Word of God. Those who wanted a little for themselves caused division, discord. **In Paul's time there were many competitors competing with the Word. God cannot speak two Words to His church.**

1 Tm 1:3-7

31. When Paul was released from the first prison, he realized that the situation of the churches had already deteriorated. **The root of decay is the absence of the prophetic word.** Churches began to embrace other words. Paul saw that they were teaching a word that did not come from him. Paul was in danger of being misunderstood, but he wanted to speak the truth. **Other teachings do not produce God's work in faith, but they do produce arguments and divisions!** Paul warned Timothy at the risk of being misunderstood, for the love that proceeded from a pure heart, a good conscience, and unfeigned faith.

Rv 2:4-5

32. Without the supply of the Word, which brings to man the supply of grace and truth, the church of this period has lost its first love. That's why it was important to know where they fell from. The first-century church in Ephesus did everything the apostles taught, but lost its first love. And **when first love is lost, the freshness of the Christian life is lost.** We cannot lose this freshness. We have to love the Lord like the first day. But how to keep that love? Immersion every day of our life!

33. After the death of Peter and Paul, John continued his prophetic speaking around A.D. 90. Before he was exiled on the island of Patmos and gained the revelation of the book of Revelation and later returned to live in Ephesus. **John's ministry is the prophetic speaking that concludes the Gospels, the Epistles and the entire Bible.**

1 Jn 4:11-12

34. The end product of life in His Son that God wants to bestow on man is love! And the love of God needs to be perfected in us in loving one another producing an interweaving through Christ as the connector between God and men, between man and man, **resulting in a fabric of love that is the building up of the church, the consummation of God's will.** These were John's concluding words in 1 John 4. The world has not seen God. But if, every day, we live immersed in the Word, we receive the source of love, which is God and our heart is filled with love! Only then can we rescue and care for people. This love causes them to see God manifested to the world!

35. The love of God is represented by the vertical threads (warp). But the making of the fabric only happens when, through immersion, we inculcate the word, which is God's own love, in our heart and we go out to love other people. So they can see a result, realize that God uses us to love them, and recognize Him in that work.

3 Jn 1:5-12

36. In John's time, there were already people against his work. Usually these people have ambition, they want to have fame, primacy, privileges. You are not one with what is happening. But whoever helps the spread of the gospel is a fellow worker for the truth, and the truth itself bears witness to us.

Rv 2:6, 15

37. **The term "nicolaitans"** comes from two words: nico – to win over, conquer or dominate over, laites – comes from common people, or lay people. Nicolaitan means "those who gain victory or rule over the common people and lay people." This happened in the decay of the church. There is a

group of people who consider themselves superior to the common people in the church. This is clearly **the introduction of hierarchy into the church from the 2nd century onwards, causing great harm to the church**. In the first century it had not yet been introduced, because this letter is for the first century church. But in the letter of the church in Pergamum there were already some who supported the doctrine of the Nicolaitans.

38. But we are members of the same Body! That's why the titles are not good. Over time titles end up becoming hierarchies. The king of Israel had to read the word of the Lord every day, lest his heart be lifted up. A king in the people of Israel did not rule over subjects, God is the king. **In the church there is no category superior to others**. The glory must be given to the Lord alone! But that doesn't mean we shouldn't honor our guides. They give an account to God for our souls! We must respect them, but not treat them as another class of people. **They have their roles, but we are all equally members of the same Body!**