

Spread the Word.

Acts 12:24

Play a little game; Variation of **Scattergories** (hate your opponent/partner)
Give you a category (things that jump); list as many things as can think in that category
Interactive this morning – category is “things that spread” . . .
Forest Fires, Rabbits, Weeds, Fish stories, Vines, Rumors

All of these things spread but not all are worthy of our attention
Certainly none of them are worthy of the focus of our lives
None of them embody the purposes of God
None of them contain the truth that’s necessary for life and godliness
The only thing that does, is the Word of God – the message or revelation of God to us
Which is why the *spread* of God’s Word *is* worthy of our attention and focus

Read Acts 12:20-24

The unstoppable spread of God’s Word is the point of this passage
It’s the point of the remainder of the book of Acts
It has been the goal of believers down through the centuries
The rallying cry of churches all over the world . . .
And it is going to be *our* theme and *our* focus for the entire year – **Spread The Word.**
From Acts 12:24 – *The word of God increased and multiplied*
Stickers, banners, message notes

Look at this one verse this morning, starting with some definitions

Definitions

The Word of God . . .

First of all, it refers to the gospel – the good news of Jesus
That God became man, dwelt among us, lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins and guilt, rose again for our full and everlasting life, and ascended to heaven to prepare a place for us until he comes again to receive us unto himself forever

The Word of God refers to the gospel, but it doesn’t stop there
It’s a reference to the *whole* counsel of God (Paul, Acts 20:27) . . .
The whole truth of God that he has revealed to us through his apostles and prophets that we now have in written form in the Bible
The message of who he is, what he has done, and how we can relate to him/each other

But what exactly does it mean that *the Word of God increased and multiplied*?

1. It was proclaimed in more and more places
2. It penetrated hearts deeper and deeper
3. It was told by more and more people (multiplied)

Things don’t multiply by the actions of one person – that’s *addition*
But when many people act together for same purpose/goal, their efforts are *multiplied*

Illustrate gospel multiplication vs gospel addition
Gospel addition – I’m the only one sharing the gospel, and each time I share it I tell one person and they receive Christ – 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 . . .
Gospel multiplication – Each person I tell, also tells 1 other person –
1, 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, 64, 128, 256 . . . busting out the walls – that’s multiplication
That’s what this verse is talking about, then and now

Beckons us to get on board and devote our full attention, our focus, our lives to the Spread of God’s Word

The rest of Acts and the NT tells us that that happens . . .

The Word of God spreads when . . .

Passionate people boldly proclaim it

The proclamation of the Word is God’s primary way of spreading it
Rom 10:17 – *Faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the Word of Christ*
It’s the *hearing* of God’s word that he uses to draw people unto himself

Started with the apostles boldly proclaiming the gospel message in town after town
Continued with the people who embraced it doing the same thing
Eventually millions of other passionate people boldly proclaimed it over the centuries
We do the same thing each time . . .
We share the impact of Jesus in our lives
The truth of God’s Word is preached and taught
We are passionate to boldly proclaim it

----- SKIP -----

The Word of God spreads when . . .

Broken people gladly receive it

Self-sufficient people rarely pay any attention to the good news of Jesus
But broken people do, because they . . .
See their sinfulness for what it is – an offense against God
Acknowledge the wickedness of their heart in light of God’s holiness
Miserable in their sin/guilt due to its consequences
Can’t help but yield to the powerful, penetrating truth of God’s Word
Truth that brings salvation, freedom, and eternal life through faith in Jesus

Does that describe you? Have you been broken? You have if . . .
Your sin grieves you like it grieves God
You’ve cried out to him for forgiveness
You’ve run to God because you’re helpless without him
You’ve turned from your sin and received God’s free gift of salvation and eternal life
Have you been broken?

If you haven’t, ask God to show you your sin; your sinfulness
If you are now, gladly receive the good news of Jesus as found in the Word
Good news that Jesus died in *your* place for the forgiveness of *your* sins, and the assurance of your life forever with him heaven

I can’t do that for you – *You* have to call on the name of the Lord

Rom 10:13 – *Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.*

Are you broken . . . Is 59:2; Rom 3:23; 6:23; 5:8; 10:9-10; Jn 3:16; Heb 9:27; Rev 3:20
Jn 5:24 – *Truly, truly I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.*

Call on the name of the Lord this morning – doesn’t have to be a complicated prayer
“God, I’m a sinner. Forgive me and save me because of Jesus.”
If you’re broken this morning, let that godly sorrow lead to repentance and salvation
A personal relationship with Jesus Christ – do that now as we **pray**

Sing – Come Ye Sinners (read the words)

If you are broken and prayed that prayer . . .

Come forward as we sing

Take a stand – profess Jesus publicly

Don't be ashamed of Jesus – if you are, he will be ashamed of you before the Father

Pray with you, rejoice with you

Pair you up with someone to open God's Word with you so that your decision to commit your life to Christ is based on the truth of God's word

Come as soon as we start singing and say – I prayed; I have questions; I need help

Make this your first, bold proclamation that spreads God's word

The Word of God spreads when . . .

Humble people faithfully apply it

Humble people who faithfully apply God's Word are those who read/hear the word of

God, and *do* it – they apply it in their daily lives

James 1:22 – *Be doers of the word and not hearers only*

When God says use your gifts to serve others, humble people faithfully do it

When God says use your resources – time, talent, and treasure – for his purposes and kingdom, humble people faithfully do it

When God says to think only on things that are praiseworthy and good, humble people faithfully do it

Humble people are faithful doers of the word

In little ways and big ways, dramatic ways and subtle ones

When they are, it's *obvious* and *attractive* to people, and *that* spreads the Word

The Word of God spreads when . . .

Godly people carefully guard it

Paul ends his letter to Timothy by saying . . .

1 Tim 6:20-21 – *O Timothy, guard the deposit entrusted to you. Avoid the irreverent babble and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge, for by it some have swerved from the faith*

Guard the deposit entrusted to you – Keep it pure; Teach only the truth; Don't add to it

Don't detract from it; Don't withhold it

- Godly people guard the word of God by keeping it pure

- They also guard it by avoiding mixed messages

That's the *irreverent babble and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge*

Avoid things that don't honor God – *irreverent babble*

Avoid beliefs or "knowledge" that is contrary to the word of God

If you don't, you end up with a mixture of falsehoods, half truths, and even heresies

Article – "The New Multi-faith Religion" (World, 12/15/01, p.16)

That's false knowledge and *irreverent babble* that contradicts God's word and inhibits its spread

- Godly people also guard the word of God by handling it right – 2 Tim 2:15

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved [tested and found worthy], *a worker who has no need to be ashamed* [because your doing your best], *rightly*

handling the word of truth [interpreting and applying it accurately in your own life and in the lives of others].

The word of God spreads when godly people carefully guard it – avoiding mixed messages, keeping it pure, and accurately applying it

The Word of God spreads when . . .

Committed people diligently study it

That's what we're going to do this year – we're going to search and study the Scriptures just like the Bereans of the first century

Acts 17:11 – *They received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.* [the things Paul and Silas said]

The diligent study of God's Word (3 things) –

Increases your confidence in what it says

You can't speak about what you don't know

The more you know, the more confidently you can speak

Deepens your convictions about what to do

The more you know, the more convinced you'll be of the right action

The more you know the more truth the HS can bring to bear on a situation

Changes the desires of your heart

It affects every single aspect of your life – speech, actions, thoughts, motives

I've never seen a person spread the Word with any effectiveness, for any length of time, who wasn't first and foremost a diligent student of the Scriptures

The word of God spreads when committed people diligently study it

----- **Back to point #2** -----

Close

If you've recently committed your life to the Lord and haven't had the chance to proclaim him publicly (baptism, etc.) – come now so we can rejoice with you

What are you going to focus your life on this year? Anything?

How about – Spread the Word. Focus on that

Study it diligently; Guard it carefully; Apply it faithfully; Proclaim it boldly

Receive it humbly