

Sermon Notes  
Hearing God  
Week 5

Hello. One of the reasons we do these Sermon Notes is so that we can be transparent and honest about the process of our preaching. Preaching, for the preacher, is not just about preparing words and studying enough materials. Preaching includes allowing the scripture to work on us first and so it is also an emotional process. I wanted to be honest that I left church frustrated because I felt as though I just couldn't speak as clearly as I wanted to. I felt as though the heart of the message was always just a bit out of reach and that is always frustrating to me. So, in order to make the heart of the sermon a little clearer to anyone who will read this... I want to give an outline to the sermon this week. I hope it communicates the heart of Easter a little bit better and it might also give more insight into the preparations that go into getting a sermon ready. Here I go. Hopefully this helps...

In a sermon series that is focused on Hearing God, I am fascinated by John's introduction to Jesus as the Word. The Holy Spirit's inspiring work when this was being written was working on overdrive because it is such a unique and elegant way to begin a story about Jesus. Jesus as the Word of God is a beautiful way of being introduced to our savior. The clearest way you will ever hear God speaking is through the gospel accounts of Jesus because in these four books we see exactly what God's Spoken Word does when it becomes a human. Let's dive into how John introduces us to the Word of God.

**1. The One Story Since the Beginning**

- John 1:1-2
  - 1 In the beginning was the Word,
    - and the **Word was with God,**
    - and the **Word was God.**
  - 2 He was in the beginning with God.
- As John begins his letter about Jesus, he wants two things (at least these two things) to be in our minds. He wants us to be thinking of this...
  1. Our minds should go to Genesis 1:1 and consider that This Word figure existed before Creation took place.
  2. That this Word figure was there and with God the Father and yet also God himself. He is with God The Father and yet also distinct from him.
- Before anything that was made was made, this Word figure was there. The Word is God and with God which somehow makes this figure the same and yet distinct.
- Because of this, the Word then shares God's eternal nature and was himself present before creation took place.
- John is making the case that this Word figure (Jesus) is God and that it was through him that the Father made everything. It is so important that John roots his gospel account in the Old Testament because Jesus' story

is the story that the Old Testament was pointing towards. This is a new chapter of the story but not a new story that is being told. The Word was embedded into God's story all the way back from the very beginning. The rest of the New Testament agrees with this point.

- Hebrews 1:1-3
  - Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, 2 *but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son*, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also *he created the world*. 3 He is the *radiance of the glory of God* and the *exact imprint of his nature*, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power.
- Colossians 1:15-17
  - 15 He is the *image of the invisible God*, the firstborn of all creation. 16 For *by him all things were created*, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—*all things were created through him and for him*. 17 And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.
- In just the first two verses of John 1 we see Jesus is where the story was always headed. The Bible was always going to find Jesus because He is the story God has been telling.
- Now that John has given us our much needed foundation about the Word. He now starts to introduce why this Word came and what this Word accomplished for us.

## **2. The Word Who Creates & Incarnates**

- John then transitions to give us a synopsis of what the Word came to do. Remember that this is an introduction to the rest of the story. Whatever John states here is fundamentally important to the rest of the story. Whatever gets mentioned in the introduction needs to be viewed as central to the story that is being told. John now wants us to think of two events from the Old Testament.
  - The Word came and it relates to
    - The Creation Event in Genesis
    - God's Incarnation when the Hebrew people wandered in the wilderness.
- Creation
  - Read John 1:3-13
    - :3-5-
      - a. 3 All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. 4 *In him was life, and the life was the light of men*. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

- John brings up the creation event reminding us that the Word was there and that it was the one who spoke everything into existence. Furthermore this Word was two things for humanity...
  - Life
  - Light
    - a. Two things that only come from God
- Life refers to God giving humanity life and light refers to God's ability to organize chaos and evil. Jesus is continuing God's work in both by bringing us life and by showing us that when He speaks evil/chaos/sin/sickness/oppression listens to him.
- Both of these two qualities result in what John brings up in verse 12...
  - :12 But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to ***become children of God...***
- The Word who brings Life & Light was God's plan to bring us back in vital union with Him. Because Jesus is our Life and Light he gives us the ability to become God's children. Our relationship is restored all because the Word came to us.
  - Romans 5:1 Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, ***we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.***
- Incarnation
  - John 1:14-17
    - 14 And the Word became flesh and ***dwelt among us***, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, ***full of grace and truth.*** 15 (John bore witness about him, and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.'") 16 For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. 17 For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.
  - The key Greek word here is Dwell- (σκηνώω) which means "To live in a tent" or "To Tabernacle."
  - The purpose of this section is to bring our minds back to when God's people were wandering in the wilderness. In those days God was directly with them as he led them through the wilderness and then stayed in the Tabernacle. The Tabernacle was a tent that was set up when they camped and God's literal presence would stay in the tent.
    - Exodus 25:8 says...
      - a. 8 And let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst.
  - God was with them and in this tent He made them know that He was present. They were not alone.

- The heart of this is to allow us to remember that God is present with his people. He was present in the Old Testament through this tent, the Ark of Covenant and then later through the Temple. John wants us to know that this Word was also God's very presence here on Earth. The Word came and it was God.
- The heart of this section is to show God's closeness to us. He knows our struggles and knows how to sympathize with us because he became one of us. Through this closeness he brings Grace & Truth.
- There is so much richness in these words but I'm trying to keep this short and so we'll go to the last part of the sermon.

### **3. John's Introduction Stays Open.**

- John 1:18
  - No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known...
- In the Greek, John doesn't actually finish this sentence and this is done deliberately. Think about it like this with me...
  - John could have started his gospel account in a million different ways. Through the Holy Spirit's inspiration he landed on this...introducing Jesus as the Eternal Word. The Word who created everything and then lived among us. John wants us to know that the Word came and ultimately saved us and as he is introducing the story he leaves the intro open ended. He's communicating this...
    - You want to know what the Word does when it becomes human? Continue reading and you'll see how he made a way for us to receive grace and truth and the possibility of becoming God's children. Everything you read going forwards in the story of God's Word coming to save us. The Word came and look at all that He did!

So what does this mean for Easter?

I wanted to take a different approach to our Easter Sermon this year. I wanted to speak about Jesus being the Word because in a sermon series about Hearing God, looking at Jesus is the clearest way for us to see what God says. John calling Jesus the Word isn't just a cute literary style, it's the truth that finds its roots back in Genesis 1. The Bible was always leading to Jesus because God's plan was to always have us "in Jesus" (Ephesians 1:4). The Word came and it lived a perfect life. It healed every disease. Casted out every demon. Answered every question. And then it went to the cross and was resurrected (brought back to life to never die again) by the Father. The Word came and He saved us through his death. All that he earned was then finalized when the Father resurrected him so that all those who receive Jesus as their Lord will share in his resurrection (1 Corinthians 15). On this Easter Sunday we praise the Word of God who came and gave us such a visible answer to the question→ What would God

look/sound like if He became human? You can tell someone the answer to that question this week by pointing them to read the Gospel accounts about him.

John 1 reminds us that Easter is a celebration of us becoming Children of God and receiving Grace & Truth forever.