



THE JOURNEY CHURCH

SERMON GUIDE 1.16.2022

GENESIS

God Speaks His Word

SCRIPTURE:

Genesis 1:3

RECAP:

I imagine in your lifetime you have heard on more than one occasion someone say, "God told me..." In fact, many of us have probably said it (or something like it). People have done all kinds of terrible things in the name of "God told me..." and they've also done a lot of great things under the banner of "God told me..."

I remember one time, many years ago, a person who we had never seen before at church, who didn't give me vibes of someone that everything straightened out upstairs, told me right before service started "God told me to get up and speak." And I'm like "Did He now? Well, He didn't tell *me* to have you get up and speak so we're going to take a hard pass."

This particular sermon is not on discerning when God is speaking, but on the very fact that He does. We don't stop to think about all the implications of this. **And it is God's voice, going out in power, that created the world, saves our souls, and will one day make all things new.**

Scripture Exegesis: Genesis 1:3

Language has power. It has the power to be creative or destructive. A racial slur, teasing/bullying, or fear can have destructive power in our lives. There are people who deal with a lifetime of insecurity, worry, fear, or self-hatred because of words people spoke to them. At the same time, our words can be a source of encouragement, hope, confidence, and love. Parents and loved ones telling us they love us matters a great deal. A father telling their child "I'm proud of you" can shape the entirety of that child's life. A teacher instilling encouragement into a student about their abilities to learn and grasp concepts can change the trajectory of the student's life. Words have power.

Proverbs 18:21 -- Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruits.

The book of James speaks in multiple places about the power of words and guarding our mouths. Why? Because words carry power. And think about this: if our words carry power, imagine the power of God's words.

Let's look back at the text we read. A key point to notice in this passage and what is going to unfold in this message is that God speaks. The Creator is not an impersonal force. The God revealed in vs 1 as the Creator of the Heavens and the Earth speaks. This is a God who communicates and reveals. This is a personal God. And what God speaks comes into being. His words have power behind them.

Ten different times in Genesis 1 it says that God spoke. Notice that God doesn't have to labor over it like a project. He speaks, and it becomes. His Word goes out and what He speaks comes forth. God makes no preparation, He employs no means, needs no secondary agency. He speaks, and it is done.

This idea is not only found in Genesis 1, but throughout Scripture.

Proverbs 33:6 -- By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and by the breath of his mouth all their host.

Psalm 147:15-18 -- He sends out his command to the earth; his word runs swiftly. He gives snow like wool; he scatters frost like ashes. He hurls down his crystals of ice like crumbs; who can stand before his cold? He sends out his word, and melts them; he makes his wind blow and the waters flow. He declares his word to Jacob, his statutes and rules to Israel.

God's Word is the agent of creation. It is by God's speaking that the universe came to be. Once you understand the power of God's Word, many things begin to fall into place for you. It isn't hard to imagine locusts, gnats, frogs, and other creatures invading Egypt because God's Word spoke it. These creatures are made by God, but even more, His Word creates what it commands. The parting of the Red Sea would be spectacular for a man to accomplish with his word, but with God, He is under no restraint and the waters have no capacity for resistance. His Word creates what it commands. When Balaam's donkey starts talking, that shocks our conscience, because donkeys don't speak. But if God commands the donkey to speak, not only can it, but it will. It has no choice. God's Word creates what it commands.

This is why Jesus' miracles in the Gospels are significant evidence of who He is. Jesus' words have power. His word had the power to heal sickness and disease. His word quieted storms and calmed the raging sea. His word brought Lazarus' body surging back to life after being dead for 4 days. These are not tricks or illusions or magic. These are the works of someone whose word has unbridled power and authority. It shocks us. But it is simply what it means to be God.

As Jesus is being arrested, Peter goes for the sword of one of the soldiers and cuts his ear off. This could have led to a fight between the disciples and soldiers to rescue Jesus, but Jesus stops them. He tells them to quit and says:

Matthew 26:53 -- Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels?

With a word, Jesus could be out of the situation. With a word, twelve legions of angels. With a word.

This fact, and the evidence of His life point us to who He truly is. Why does the creation obey Him? Because He is its author and maker. He is the living embodiment of the God who in the beginning created all things. In fact, listen to what the New Testament says about this.

John 1:1-3 -- 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. 3 All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.

Jesus is the Word from the beginning who is with God and is God. There is a distinction between the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. But the Word here in John is said to have made all things.

There is not anything made that wasn't made through him. He is the agent of creation. He is the Word. In some ways you can say He is the voice of the Father. When the Father says in Genesis 1:3 "Let there be..." it is the Word (the Son of God) who goes forth and creates. God's Word has agency. God's Word is a person -- His Son. Paul echoes this in Colossians 1.

Colossians 1:15-16 -- He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. 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.

By Him all things were created. They were created through Him, and for Him. In addition to the creation being formed by His Word, the creation itself reveals and serves as an ongoing word that reveals God. What I mean is this: God speaks to us and reveals Himself through the creation He made by His Word. His Word goes out, forms the universe, and that universe becomes a carrier of that word, revealing God.

Psalm 19:1-2 -- The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge.

Romans 1:19-20 -- For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.

The Word, the Second Person of the Trinity is the agent of that creation. He made it. Jesus is the living embodiment of the Word. He is the Eternal Son of God and Second Person of the Trinity. He became flesh. And His Word still creates what it commands. This is why we should take such hope in His teachings.

When he says "**It is finished**" in regards to the work of redemption. We should believe him. When he says "**My grace is sufficient for you and my power is made perfect in your weakness**" we should believe Him. His Word creates what it commands.

When he says "**Come to me all who are weak and needy and I'll give rest to your weary souls**" we should believe him. His word creates what it commands.

When he says "**Lo, I'm coming soon**" we should believe Him. His Word never returns void.

The Hebrew writer even tells us that the universe was made by the word of God and is sustained by the Word of God. It keeps existing because Jesus keeps telling it to.

Hebrews 1:1-4 -- God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through

whom also He made the world. And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much better than the angels, as He has inherited a more excellent name than they.

It is God's Word that goes out and saves us. The gospel, or good news, is the message (the word) that goes out. It tells us of our need for a Savior and that Jesus is that Savior. It is the message that he died a purposeful death to save sinners, and demonstrated the power of that death to save by rising from the grave. We receive forgiveness of sins by believing His work is applied to us. When we come open handed and needy, He graciously gives it to us. This is why we're told in ***Romans 10:17 "So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ."*** Faith comes by hearing the Word.

This is why here at TJC we take singing the Word and preaching the Word so seriously. We don't do pop-psychology or self-help sermons. We do not try to entertain you with a stand-up comedy routine. No, we are changed and transformed when God's Word is delivered. Our preaching, discipleship, singing, has transformative power when it is the vehicle for God's Word, because God's Word is a change agent and creates what it commands.

Now watch this...where does this faith come from? It comes from God Himself. It is a gift (as Ephesians 2:8-9) remind us. And what happens? How does it come? How does that gospel message awaken our hearts to receive it? Paul explains in 2 Corinthians 4.

2 Corinthians 4:6 -- For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

The God who said, "Let there be light" and spoke a universe into being, said "Let there be light" into our hearts, and a new heart and life came into being. What a glorious truth. It may be happening right now for some of you, or maybe in recent days or weeks. God has opened your eyes, transformed your heart, and you now have faith that did not exist before. This is a gift from God! Respond with trust! Respond with acceptance! Respond with a life of repentance, turning from sin and living for Jesus.

Believers, rejoice today in the God of your salvation. Our God speaks. He spoke the world into being, life into our hearts, and He speaks His promises continually to us to sustain us. His Word keeps shaping and forming. It keeps sustaining us in our trials and as we walk through this world. And One day is returning. He will call forth the dead from their graves. He will speak a sentence of life or judgment, a proclamation of sheep or goats over all people. And then He will speak the world into a newness that we will enjoy for eternity. These are the truths we know because the God who speaks has revealed it to us. And His Word always produces what it commands.

QUESTIONS:

1. Have you experienced the power of words in your life? Was it positive or negative?
2. Read James 3:7-8. Why is it so difficult to tame our tongue (Matthew 15:18)?
3. What does it mean that God's Word creates what it commands? Likewise, what does it mean that God's Word commands what it creates?
4. What attributes of God are reinforced when we ponder on the fact that He only has to speak in order to create?
5. In light of this, how should we handle our words? How should we handle the Good News?