

Title: Christ, the Perfect Prophet
Text: Hebrews 1.1-2
Theme: Christ is the perfect revelation of God
Occasion: Advent 2015 #1
Prop Stmnt: Since God has spoken; we must listen.

Read Text:

Have you ever become angry with someone and said, "I am not talking to them." Who hasn't either done that, or been on the receiving end of that? I had a wife tell me one time that her husband was so angry with her that he did not speak to her for 9 months. Now, most of the time when I am counseling people I try not to go, "What?! Are you stinking kidding me???" It is generally not a helpful response. I think I responded like that then. I seriously could not imagine that. I figured that she was exaggerating a bit. So I asked her what she meant. And she meant, no talking at all. No hello, good-bye, I'm going to work, can you pick up some milk, what time is dinner... - nothing! The guy was angry and would not talk. I thought, "I've got to meet this guy." Because I have never heard of such a thing. Eventually I did and he confirmed the story. But, we can relate with this idea, can't we? If you hate someone, you are not interested in communicating with him. If you love someone you can't wait to talk with him or her. So, what are we to think, when the book of Hebrews opens up by telling us that God has spoken?

I. **God has spoken.**

A. **It is an act of love.**

We are to think that it is an act of love that God has spoken. The fact that God has spoken means that God has communicated with us. He has revealed to us what we naturally wonder about. Where did we come from? Who made all of this? Why are we here? How do I make sense of my life and my world? What is going to happen? If God had not spoken, we would not know any of those answers. But God has spoken and God is the One who has and continues to initiate the relationship. He speaks and has spoken because he loves us. But, the fact that God has spoken brings a response; rejection.

What our world desperately needs is what so many in our world fiercely despise. God has spoken and he has said too much. In other words, he has revealed the fact that He is God and we are not. He is perfectly righteous and we are not. He is holy and we are not. He is right and we are not. God has spoken but mankind does not like the message. If you do not like the message, what are people tempted to do? Shoot the messenger!

B. **It is an act of condescension.**

God has spoken and he has revealed himself through his communication. For example, God has revealed that he is the Creator and we are the creation. As the Creator he is bigger than us. He is before us. He defines us. He governs us. He is over us. He is our designer. He is our interpreter. God is infinite and we are finite. We have a beginning, he

has always been. God created time, space and mass and we were born into time, space and mass. Therefore, the gap between God and man is infinite in the sense that no human has the mental capacity to bridge that gap. We do not possess the intellectual horsepower to grasp God. We are limited to being in one place at a time, and do not possess the ability nor the capacity to even imagine what it is like to be perfectly present in all places at all times. So, I call the gap between us and God “the gap of incomprehensibility.” Now, think of that in relation to the fact that God has spoken. Here is what I mean.

Imagine that you are listening to a conversation between three or four high level mathematicians discussing and debating the latest theories of quantum physics. These brainiacs talk about photons and the quantisation of light, the quantisation of matter and the Bohr model of the atom along with wave-particle duality. They banter about Dirac wave equation, quantum entanglement, field theory and electrodynamics. What do you think? You feel like a clod, don't you? But, if fellow created beings can talk at a level that overloads your mental circuitry what do you think it would be like listening to the Trinity talk? What good would it be for God to speak if he always talked over our heads? Since God loves us, he has spoken. And since God loves us he has spoken in a way that we can understand. We could not go to his level, so he came to ours. He spoke in ways that we can understand. As incredible as the Word of God is, and it is, it is, in this sense, “baby talk” from God to his creation.

Now, keep that in mind because that is very, very important to remember. In order for us to understand some things about God, God had to communicate down on our level. But, there is no way that God can explain everything about himself to us, because we would have to be God in order to understand it. But, what God has done is communicate a lot and he has told us everything that we need to know although he has certainly not told us everything there is to know. And, that is one of the glorious aspects of eternity that awaits us. We will never stop learning. We will never stop being amazed. We will never stop being delighted and satisfied and overwhelmed with God's perfections and beauty and magnificence.

When I read in Isaiah 6, Ezekiel 1, Daniel 7, Revelation 1, 4 and 5 of the visions that these men were given of God, I get the sense that each of them were grasping for a vocabulary that could adequately capture and communicate all that they had seen. Human language has limits and therefore it will never tell you everything there is to say about God. But, the fact that God has spoken and has spoken on our level is an act of love and condescension. He has spoken in terms that we can understand and has told us what we need to know and has told us that there is an infinite amount of knowledge that we have to eternity to learn. The fact that God has spoken ...

C. It is an act of grace.

If God had not spoken then we would have no gauge by which to measure the value, worth or meaning of life. If God had not spoken then we would have no absolutes, no standards and no categories. If God had not spoken, then man would be the measure of all things. Let me show you how this plays out. A student in our church was talking to a

friend in her school recently about God and her friend said that she has had too many bad things happen to her so she does not believe in God. I.e. How can you convince me that God is worth trusting when my life has so many awful experiences? That is a deeply personal question and it should be answered with great compassion, but it should be and can be answered with equally great conviction. The question itself reveals a fundamental belief in God. Do you see that? This girl is saying that the existence of evil and pain in my life has led me to the conclusion that there is no God. Do you see what she has done? She has attempted to borrow the language of God in an effort to disprove God. Here is what I mean.

If there is no God, then man is free to create whatever categories that he wants, right? If there is no God, then who is there to say that there is such a thing as evil? And, if the human race collectively agreed (as inconsistent as it would be) that there was such a thing as evil, whose view of evil and morality would win? If the abuse of a girl is wrong, then would that not assume that the girl had intrinsic worth? If the abuse of a girl is wrong then would that not assume that a person in power over that girl does not have the right to wield that power anyway that he wants? Well, why not? Who says? Just because you think that, does not give you the right to impose your beliefs on others. Boko Haram believes that young girls do not have intrinsic worth. Would you not be guilty of cultural elitism to assume that they were wrong? To assume that Boko Haram is wrong means that we would be imposing our values upon them, right? To judge them means that there is an absolute law of right and wrong, which means that there is an absolute lawgiver. But, if value is placed upon a person simply because the culture or society sees it that way, then the value of that person is only there as long as the culture or society sees it. If value is determined by what the culture feels at the moment, then there is no actual or intrinsic value. If the culture decides that black lives do not matter, or that white lives do not matter or that Jews do not matter or that unborn lives do not matter, or that mentally challenged lives do not matter, or that old and unproductive lives do not matter then on what basis can you say that they are right or wrong? Without God we are left with, "do whatever you need to that works for you." That sounds plausible until you try to define what does "works" mean.

I realize that accepting the proposition that God has spoken does not instantly eliminate the tension of wrestling with the existence and purpose of evil in this world. That is a topic to wrangle with on another day, but using the presence of evil as an excuse to reject God is not only inconsistent and is an argument that collapses underneath its weight, but it is a sure fire way to accelerate the expression of evil to unprecedented levels.

Do you see how gracious it is that God has spoken? Being made in the image of God means that we have been made with an internal compass. If God had not spoken, then our compass needle would just spin. We would have this sense that there is a direction to go, but we would never know where to go. But, God has spoken, and God's word is the north pole for our compass. It establishes the direction so that we can know where to go. That is a gracious act of God. But, as gracious as it is, most people have not seen it like that. That is clear from how people have historically responded to what God has spoken.

II. God has spoken purposefully. (by the prophets) (1)

Long ago, at many times and in many ways God spoke to our fathers by the prophets. The fact that God has spoken is not unusual, although it is loving, gracious and wonderful. God has a habit of speaking and has done so throughout the ages. But, this habit of God speaking was never haphazard or random, but has always been with great precision and purpose. Whenever God's people needed to know something, or be warned of something or be encouraged of something or be reminded about something God sent them a prophet.

These prophets stood as the representatives of God before the people. They said what God said and they were to say all that God said; nothing more and nothing less. These prophets, like Moses would hesitate to speak. Like Jeremiah, wanted to quit. Like Habakkuk did not understand what God was doing. Like Daniel, were overwhelmed with what they were told. Like Jonah wanted to run away. Like Hosea and Ezekiel lived daily with ridicule, misunderstanding, and mockery. But, in each case they delivered God's message to God's people and in many cases were resented and rejected for it. The very message that the people needed was the message that they did not want to hear, but it was exactly what God had given to them.

Every prophet was a preview of Jesus. Every prophet pointed toward the perfect prophet who was going to come. The way people responded to those prophets was a preview of how they would respond to Jesus. Every prophet stood and spoke on behalf of God and yet while the message of every prophet was what God had given, the message was delivered through an imperfect messenger. These messengers would at times doubt their own message. These prophets made it clear that we needed a prophet who would speak perfectly and powerfully and in such a way that the people would be compelled to believe. Moses said in Deut 18, that one day God was going to send his people a prophet like that.

Read Deut. 18.15-19

Do you remember what was going on at Horeb? The children of Israel had come out of the land of Egypt. They were living as a lawless, "godless", mass of people who were unified in their hatred of slavery and their desire for freedom, but now faced the daunting and seemingly impossible task of forming a nation. They did not know much about God, except that he was the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and this God had delivered them out of slavery and delivered them through the Red Sea. Now, this God wanted to talk to them. This God wanted to give them a constitution. This God was forming them into a nation and was setting the terms of their existence. This was not going to be a representative democracy; this was a theocracy. At Horeb, (Mt. Sinai) God spoke. But, when God spoke, there was thunder and fire on the mountain and the people could not handle it. The people were terrified of God. They pleaded with Moses in Exodus 20. They said to Moses (v.19) "*You speak to us, and we will listen; but do not let God speak to us, lest we die.*" So, God spoke to Moses and Moses spoke to the people. But, when

God spoke to Moses, Moses' appearance would change. Moses would radiate the glory of God and the people could not handle that, so Moses had to put a veil over his face. But, Moses was a preview of Christ. And just as Moses had to put a veil over his face to scale back his glory, Jesus did the exact same thing only Jesus veiled his glory in a human body. Jesus came to this earth as the perfect prophet. Like Moses he went down into Egypt and came out again. And in fulfillment of the Deuteronomy promise he was the mediator between God and man. Like all the other prophets before him, he spoke the Word of God, but unlike all the other prophets, everything that he said was the Word of the Lord.

III. **God has spoken perfectly.** (by his Son) (2)

So, let's look at our text again. This book begins by establishing the Supremacy of Christ by showing that long ago, scattered over different times, different places through different prophets and to our fathers, God spoke. It was gracious for God to speak. It was illuminating and needful and loving for God to speak. But, back then, God delivered his message through different men who lived in different places and these men only knew certain parts of the story. But now! But now God has spoken. It is better than long ago, it is now. It is not to our fathers, it is to us. It is not pieces here and there, but one final, unified and complete message and it all came, not through different prophets, but through a perfect prophet. Every prophet then spoke on behalf of God, but Jesus is the perfect prophet because he is God.

In the Old Testament we read that the word of the Lord came to the prophet Jeremiah, or Ezekiel, etc. In response to that, the prophet would then say to the people, "Thus says the LORD" or "Hear the word of the LORD." The prophet had to do that because the prophet had to distinguish between his own words and the words of God. For example, one of the Old Testament prophets was a guy named Amos. Amos was a herdsman (shepherd) and he also raised figs and cultivated fig trees. Over and over and over Amos says, "This is what the LORD showed me. Here is the word of the LORD." Amos said that so that the people would know that he was repeating God's words after him. The word of the Lord did not come from Amos, the word of the Lord came to Amos. But Jesus never had to say that. The word of the Lord did not come to Jesus because Jesus is the word of the Lord. He is the perfect prophet because he is the perfect message.

A. Christ is the perfect message.

Christ not only said everything perfectly, but his life was that message. Christ was superior to all other prophets because Christ was the fulfillment of the message that all of the other prophets were talking about. He not only spoke the word of the Lord, he was and is the Word of the Lord. He not only spoke about the way, He is the way. He not only spoke about the truth and spoke the truth, He is the truth, the life, the resurrection, the door, the shepherd and the great I AM. He spoke about salvation and He is salvation. Christ is the perfect message and ...

B. Christ is the perfect messenger.

When the prophets spoke of the perfect prophet who was coming, they were talking about Christ. When the prophets spoke of the suffering servant who was going to come, they were talking about Christ. When these prophets spoke about the perfect King and perfect sacrifice, and perfect kingdom that was coming they were talking about Christ. But, everything that the prophets spoke about, they spoke about by faith. They did not understand how everything was going to fit together, but Christ did. When Christ spoke, he spoke with inherent authority. He spoke with perfect integrity. He spoke with perfect and complete understanding. Every other prophet proved in one way or the other to be a disappointment. Even the best ones died. Jonah tried to run. Jeremiah was discouraged. Moses became angry and publicly disobeyed God. Samuel's sons were an embarrassment. Hosea's wife didn't exactly sit on the front row of church and take notes while her husband preached, if you know what I mean. Every one of these prophets had weaknesses, failures, limitations and faults that would prove to be distractions from what they said. No one is as good as his sermon, except Jesus. And what is so amazing is this. The closer you get, the better he is.

Christ is perfect messenger because he perfectly lived his message. He is the entire package. While the prophets would tell their people to trust in the word of the Lord, Jesus tells us to trust in him. While the prophets would call their people to listen to the Word of God, the Father spoke in Matthew 17 and said to listen to his Son. Jesus is the message and the messenger. He is the complete package. He is all and in all. And finally...

C. Christ is the personal messenger. (to us)

In these last days, Jesus has spoken to us. Granted, we were not there. We did not live when Jesus was on the earth. So, how can I say that? In John 10, Jesus was talking to his disciples about those who had not yet heard about him, but when they do hear, they will believe. Beginning in v.14 Jesus says some incredibly profound things about those who believe on him and follow him.

“I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. And I have other sheep who are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. (Remember what Moses promised? They will listen to him. Peter said the same thing in Acts 3. They will listen to him.) Why do his sheep listen to him? His word is so powerful that when he calls his sheep by name, they believe. He knows his sheep. He names his sheep. He died for his sheep. He keeps his sheep. His voice is so powerful and so authoritative and so wonderful and so life-giving and heart-changing that when he speaks eyes are opened, ears are opened, dead hearts start beating, chains fall off, sin is forgiven and eternal life is given.

Jesus is the message who is worth believing. Jesus is the messenger who is worth listening to. Jesus is the perfect prophet who cannot be silenced and who cannot be confounded, and even if you kill him, he will come back to life. As you know, our world has rejected his message and they did more than shoot the messenger, they crucified him. But, you cannot kill truth. And neither can you kill eternal life.

Jesus is the perfect prophet. That is undisputable. The issue is, do you believe him? Do you even listen to him? Do you know what he has said? Now, before you answer that, stop and think. I am not asking you if you believe some of what he has said. Do you believe him? Do you believe all that he has said? In order to believe in all that he has said, you have to let go of your excuses. You have to let go of your justification for why you get a pass. You have to let go of thinking that your sin is too great for him to forgive, or that you are too broken for him to love. You have to let go of your thinking that you have been too wounded that you cannot learn to sing or that you cannot learn to forgive, or that you cannot love from the core of your being or be loved in the core of your being.

Years ago, we were pretty amazed when we discovered that matter was made up of tiny particles called atoms. Then we discovered that we could split an atom. Inside of atoms are protons, neutrons and electrons. Now we know that protons and neutrons are made up of quarks. Each proton and neutron is made up of three quarks each. Here is what I am saying, Jesus is the message and the messenger who gets into and fills up and takes over the quarks of your soul. He is so true and so perfect that he is worth believing and trusting with everything that have and with all that you are. And this prophet who came, said that he is coming again. Be ready. He has come...and is coming again.