

## **THIS LORD'S DAY**

**Sermon Title: “*The Final Word*”**

**Pastor Charles R. Biggs**

**Scripture Lesson:** Isaiah 45:18-25; 2 Timothy 3:16-17

**Scripture Text: Hebrews 1:1-2**

**Theme of Worship Service:** God has spoken and graciously revealed Himself and His salvation.

“But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.” - <sup>ESV</sup> **2 Timothy 3:14-17**

John answered, "A person cannot receive even one thing unless it is given him from heaven... You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, 'I am not the Christ, but I have been sent before him.' The one who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is now complete. He must increase, but I must decrease." He who comes from above is above all. He who is of the earth belongs to the earth and speaks in an earthly way. He who comes from heaven is above all. He bears witness to what he has seen and heard, yet no one receives his testimony. Whoever receives his testimony sets his seal to this, that God is true. For he whom God has sent utters the words of God, for he gives the Spirit without measure. The Father loves the Son and has given all things into his hand. Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.” - <sup>ESV</sup> **John 3:27-36**

“And we have something more sure, the prophetic word, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.” - <sup>ESV</sup> **2 Peter 1:19-21**

**Read the Book of Hebrews aloud with your family. What do you learn about God's Word? Do you hear God speaking to you? How? What does He say?**

## Hymns

1. **Rejoice the Lord is King #310**
2. **O Word of God Incarnate #140**
3. **We Are God's People # 355**
4. **Gloria Patri - 734**

## Outline of Sermon

- 1) **God has Spoken...**
- 2) **God has Spoken *Progressively*...**
- 3) **God has Spoken Progressive in Christ *His Final Word*...**

## Introduction

We are speaking beings. We speak to one another. We use words and language to get to know others: we reveal ourselves through speaking; we hear about others. This is how we build and develop relationships.

God speaks. God has graciously spoken His Word to us to reveal Himself and to make Himself known. God has condescended to reveal Himself. God uses words to tell about Himself so that we might come to know Him savingly in Jesus Christ.

Are we hearing God when He speaks? The Proverbs constantly tell us of the importance of listening well to God, and to those whom God places in our lives to tell us of God. Have we grown dull of hearing? This is what had happened to many to whom the sermon to Hebrews was written (Heb. 2:1-3; 5:11ff). It is a temptation for us to forget God has spoken, and to cease to be amazed that He is still speaking to us.

Let us not neglect the word of salvation that God has spoken. Let us be careful to live in light of what we have heard (Heb. 2:1-3).

“He who has ears, let him hear what the Spirit says to the church.”

## **1) God has Spoken- God's Word is an act of gracious condescension.**

1. God has not left himself without a witness. All men are without excuse before God because creation is a clear revelation of God (Psalm 19; Rom. 1:19ff); man also has a sense of right and wrong because of conscience (Rom. 2:14ff).
2. God has clearly revealed Himself, but savingly in Special Revelation.
  - a. God spoke at creation.
  - b. God spoke to Adam and Eve and interpreted reality for them from the very beginning.
  - c. The fall broke communion and communication with God; man's understanding of God and His Word was darkened.
  - d. God spoke the Gospel into this broken situation to bring healing to those who believed. God was the first Gospel Prophet-Preacher (Gen. 3:15).
  - e. God spoke His covenant promises to Abraham and His seed.
  - f. God spoke to Moses.
  - g. God spoke through the Prophets.
  - h. God climactically and ultimately has spoken in HIS SON (Heb. 1:1-2). God is the Author and Perfecter of Our Faith, our Great Prophet from beginning to end.
3. God cares; he has cared for His people and doesn't leave them in the interpretive "darkness". God shows His willingness to condescend to us to make Himself known. His revelation is so that we should "KNOW" Him.
4. There is truth.
  - a. Contrary to relativism or postmodernism; there is truth. Even to seek to try and state a "subjective truth" such as "There is no absolute truth" depends upon the Biblical God to make such a statement. To make a statement such as this is absolute. There is no getting around the revelation of God.
  - b. There is objective truth.
  - c. There is God's Word of Truth. God's Word is "expired" or "God-breathed-out" by God Himself. God has committed Absolute/Objective Truth to writing. God has inspired men to write His Word in a library of 66 books.
  - d. Although Scripture is "self-attesting" or is Holy Scripture because it is obvious that it is, and it is God's authoritative word regardless of what man

thinks about it, and the Holy Spirit is required for anyone to hear it (“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches...”), we can witness to the truth of Scripture, that God has spoken:

- i. We can show that the Bible contradicts what man thinks about life and philosophy.
  - ii. We can demonstrate that the Bible is counter-intuitive to what man would teach: Man must die to live; sacrifice is the way to life; God became flesh, etc.
  - iii. We can witness to the fact that only the Bible makes sense of man’s desire to communicate, to have speech because Scripture alone reveals a Triune God who speaks, and has spoken eternally within the Godhead.
- e. God does not lie (Heb. 6:18ff), therefore all of His promises should be believed (cf. Heb. 3:19; 11:1ff: <sup>ESV</sup> **Hebrews 11:6** And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him).
- f. God is the Master Interpreter of Himself, Us, and Reality. We need God’s interpretation of reality. No one can, has, or ever come to saving knowledge of God, and know the true God, the truth about themselves and the world, clearly and sufficiently apart from Holy Scripture.

## **2) God has Spoken *Progressively*... “*Many times and in many ways to the fathers through the prophets...but to us in these last days.*”**

1. Special revelation has come in two stages: Old and New Testaments
  - a. Past: Patriarchs and Prophets
    - i. When the prophets spoke, they listened and spoke God’s very Word and spoke in His council (Jer. 23:18, 22).
    - ii. “Priest and prophet, sage and singer were in their several ways His spokesmen” (F. F. Bruce).
  - b. Present- Now
    - i. Christ by His Spirit through His Word
      1. Notice throughout Hebrews: “God spoke...” (whenever Scripture is quoted it is God speaking; cf. Heb. 12:25).

- a. 2 Tim. 3:14-17
- b. Psalm 19:7ff
- c. 2 Peter 1:19-21

ii. Important: God still speaks by His Word and Spirit (Heb. 4:12-13).

“God has spoken His revealing, redeeming, and life-giving Word, and in His light we see light” (F. F. Bruce).

2. God’s revelation is promise and fulfillment. Similar to bud and full blossom; acorn and oak tree; baby and full, mature adult. We have important revelation in the Old Testament, but incomplete. The Old Covenant is glorious, but the glory was fading, because without the full revelation of the New, through the Lord Jesus Christ, we cannot know as clearly. Note 2 Corinthians 3:7ff:

<sup>ESV</sup> **2 Corinthians 3:7-18:** Now if the ministry of death, carved in letters on stone, came with such glory that the Israelites could not gaze at Moses' face because of its glory, which was being brought to an end, <sup>8</sup> will not the ministry of the Spirit have even more glory? <sup>9</sup> For if there was glory in the ministry of condemnation, the ministry of righteousness must far exceed it in glory. <sup>10</sup> Indeed, in this case, what once had glory has come to have no glory at all, because of the glory that surpasses it. <sup>11</sup> For if what was being brought to an end came with glory, much more will what is permanent have glory. <sup>12</sup> Since we have such a hope, we are very bold, <sup>13</sup> not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face so that the Israelites might not gaze at the outcome of what was being brought to an end. <sup>14</sup> But their minds were hardened. For to this day, when they read the old covenant, that same veil remains unlifted, because only through Christ is it taken away. <sup>15</sup> Yes, to this day whenever Moses is read a veil lies over their hearts. <sup>16</sup> But when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. <sup>17</sup> Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. <sup>18</sup> And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

The glory of the New Covenant is “superior” and “better” because it fulfills the Old Covenant. The glory of the New is more glorious because it completes and fulfills the Old. In fact, the Old Covenant (like the glory on Moses’ face) was already passing, fading, as it was being revealed, because it was pointing to Christ, someone greater, the fuller revelation of God’s Word that would come in the Last Days (Heb. 1:1-2; cf. Heb. 8:13: “Growing obsolete...”). Only through the work of the Holy Spirit can we

understand the Old or the New Covenant revelation: “The Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom...”

<sup>ESV</sup> **Romans 16:25-26:** Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages <sup>26</sup> but has now been disclosed and through the prophetic writings has been made known to all nations, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith-

The Old Covenant was “mysterious” and “kept secret” for long ages (Rom. 16:25), but was known through the prophetic writings (Rom. 16:26). How? The Old Covenant revelation was clear, but not fully understood until Christ. There was clarity, but incompleteness. The New Covenant completes, like a full library of books brings clarity to a story. The New Covenant is the final ending and climax, and consummation of the story of God’s revelation in Christ (cf. Heb. 9:26ff).

3. What does “In these last days” mean?
  - a. The time of Messianic fulfillment has come (Gen. 49:1; Num. 24:14; Deut. 4:30; 31:29; Isa. 2:2; Jer. 23:20; 30:24; Ezek. 38:16; Dan. 10:14; Hos. 3:5).
  - b. Last Days means the “consummation of the ages” (Heb. 9:26).
  - c. The Son’s revelation in these last days is SUPERIOR REVELATION; it is “better” which is the comparative adjective used 13 times in Hebrews.
4. Christ-centered interpretation of God and His Word. Because God has spoken finally in Christ, we should see Christ as the center of God’s revelation, the focus of God’s revelation, the climax of God’s revelation. Like in Luke 24:24-27; 24:44-48. Christ is the focus of all revelation, although all the revelation should be rooted in history and its first historical context (to avoid simplistic allegorical interpretations). The first historical context meant something to our fathers in the Old Covenant, but means so much more in light of the coming and full revelation of Christ.
5. Distinction but never separation or confusion of the two eras of promise and fulfillment:
  - a. Dangers of Separation/Division of two eras- Dispensationalism: two peoples of God; two applications of God’s Word. Dispensations should be distinct, but never separated from one covenant (Heb. 13:20-21).

- b. Dangers of Confusion of two eras- Roman Catholicism: High church worship practices: Not realizing Old Testament practices and types were fulfilled in Christ.
- c. We should not continuity and discontinuity between the covenants, while also recognizing the unified eternal covenant Heb. 13:20-21).
- d. Illustration: Of the worship “box”. In the Old Covenant worship the box was glorious, then the incarnation, then heaven came down ultimately, and now the box is empty. We now worship in a stripped down box, that is lifted up to heaven. We dare not bring heaven down to us again. That way is over...

When we gather together now, we should not make our worship look like heaven; rather, we should understand that as we focus on Christ’s Word and Christ Himself through the Word and the Sacrament, we are lifted up *to heaven. We are seated with Christ in the Heavens...Our worship is coming to Heavenly Mount Zion—let us rejoice!* (see Col. 3:1-4; Heb. 12:18-29).

- e. Peoples, feasts, ceremonies, laws, etc. all find fulfillment in Jesus Christ.

### **3) God has Spoken Progressive in Christ *His Final Word...***

- 1) Who is Christ and why is His revelation so superior and wonderful to all that has come before? (focus on Hebrews 1:3-4).
  - a. Christ is God.
  - b. Christ is Prophet, Priest and King.
  - c. Christ’s revelation is the final word from God.
- 2) Scriptures are all we need for life and godliness; no further revelation is needed (contra Mormonism/Islam, cults, continuing revelation of Pentecostalism).
- 3) Christ is the center of all of God’s revelation. The world is created through Christ, for Christ, and God’s people are saved to worship and serve and enjoy Christ. Let us hear Jesus Christ when He speaks to us at KCPC- **-HE STILL SPEAKS** (Heb. 12:25).

More on this next week. What a glorious Savior! Let us worship Christ.

Let us pray.

CRB