

SERMON OUTLINE

Introduction

- Image: My first date with Meredith did not start off well until we learned how to communicate
- Need: The invitation to draw near to God is an invitation into a dynamic relationship, and at the center of every relationship is communication.
- Subject: How do we hear the voice of God?
- Text: Psalm 19

Body

How God Speaks

- The Wordless Word
 - These verses are all about words
 - Creation is proclaiming to us something about God, namely his glory
 - However, the speech is wordless. It's non-verbal communication
 - With a look, a spouse can say, "stop talking" to their spouse at a dinner party
 - That's what creation is doing. It's not speaking audibly, but it's telling us something about God
 - What's it saying?
 - Think about the experience of beholding some amazing sight
 - You behold something
 - It stirs a response of joy, longing, awe
 - It's a non-rational experience. It comes upon you
 - In other words, beholding creation works on us just like a great piece of art. Why? Because it is art.
 - The Message: "We are the handiwork of a great artist."
 - Implication 1: God's more talkative than we think he is
 - If this is true, it means we can learn something of God not just on Sundays, but on a hike on Saturday
 - The trick is to learn to listen to the speechless words of creation (C.S. Lewis Quote)
 - What does this piece of art (e.g. tree, wave, mountain) tell me about the artist who made it?
 - Implications 2: Christianity has a higher view of the material world than any other worldview

- Materialism: There is no purpose to the universe. Any dignity you think people have is just an illusion of evolution. Nature is nothing than an accident.
 - Eastern Philosophies: The material world is an illusion
 - Christianity: Creation is a master work of art and therefore has a purpose and worth
 - It's Limited
 - Wordless words are helpful to a certain extent, but they aren't sufficient by themselves. Bill can communicate, "wrap the sermon up" but if he wanted to say something specific, he'd have to use words
 - Creation tells us something true about God, but not everything we need to know about God
- The Written Word
 - The other way God speaks is through his written word
 - "Torah" is the word for this other avenue of revelation
 - The word used for the first five books, but the more general meaning was the teachings of God
 - This method of God's speaking is the main way David says we hear God's voice
 - Superior in that it is the word of Yahweh versus El

Why We Should Listen

- The law of the Lord is perfect
 - "Perfect" is an umbrella term for all the other attributes of God's written word (sure, right, pure, clean, true)
 - If we had time we could look at each term, but here's the main idea they're getting at.
 - God's word is a perfectly reliable map that guides us along the only road that leads to life
 - See, why does David write soaring poetry when he talks about God's word instead of a stale systematic theology?
 - Because the law of God is beautiful to him. It's not something he begrudgingly submits his life to because God said so. He embraces the law because it's life. It revives the soul. It makes the simple wise. It rejoices the heart. Enlightens the eyes.
 - IOW, we delight in the scriptures like gold and honey because they put us in touch with the way things are.
 - Illustration: The physical world we live in subject to certain laws. If you decide you're a bird and so you climb up a tree and jump off to

fly into the sunset, it's not going to go well. Why? Because you're life is crashing into the laws of physical reality. Or take your health. We know our bodies need certain things to be healthy. Water, a balanced diet, exercise. If you eat only ice cream and never move, you may feel very free to do what you want, but you will eventually crash into the laws of biology and die.

- Just like the visible world has a clear set of laws that we must align ourselves with to find life, so does the unseen world. Marriage works best one way and not the other. Friendships. There are certain ethics that are better than others (Torah says, love your neighbor as yourself in a time when the pagan God's were sacrificing their children. The scriptures align us with that unseen reality perfectly because they are the very words of the one who created that reality.
- The law of the Lord is powerful (because it's perfect)
 - Revives the Soul: Helps you understand who you are from God's point of view
 - Theoden in the LOTR
 - We live in a time where people have been told we define who we are, but that's unbelievable pressure that has led to great confusion
 - Makes the Simple Wise: Helps the inexperienced navigate life well / Enlightens the Eyes: Gives you insight into life you won't have otherwise
 - Simple is the inexperienced
 - There is wisdom here for navigating the complexities of life

How To Hear Clearly

- Metaphor: There are messages passing by us all the time, but we can only hear them if we have a properly tuned receiver
- How do we tune the receiver of our souls to hear more clearly God's voice?
- Practice of Listening to God
 - We need a consistent space
 - We need to protect a time and place to turn down the volume of the other voices in our lives and turn up the volume on God's voice
 - The number one influence on the compassion of people are novels because they help us enter into the world of another person / more than films because of time spend in the story
 - In the same way, we have to inhabit this story over time. As we hear God's word, we're allowing God to tell us what story we're living in and what his will is for our life, and the more

time we spend with open ears, the more we become attuned to his voice

- Example: 30 minutes in the morning to meet with Jesus - Start by reading a Psalm or a chapter in one of the gospels / Memorizing scripture
- We need a reliable guide
 - Scripture is a library of books written over thousands of years in a very diverse culture in many different literary styles
 - While it is accessible enough for a child to read it and hear the profound truths of God's voice, it's rich enough to warrant an investment in understanding it more deeply
 - Find a Guide
 - Read a book on how to study the Bible (resources online)
 - Listen to the insights of others (Bible Project)
 - Join a group committed to regularly opening up this book to hear the story we're living in (CG, women's bible study)
- We need a redeemer
 - This is the last word in the Psalm "redeemer"
 - The reason is because David knows if the law is to be like a honeycomb, he has to have a redeemer
 - C.S. Lewis: It's strange that David says the law is sweet. Why? Because David admits he doesn't keep the law perfectly. He's not innocent.
 - So how does he hold these things together? It's because he believes God is a redeemer
 - That's pretty vague, but for us, we know the name of the redeemer
 - Jesus listened to God's law perfectly. He was always in tune. (temptation, obeying the father's will, on the cross)
 - He therefore should have always experienced the power of the law and been freed from it's curse. But he wasn't. Why?
 - So that we could be declared innocent. So that we could be acceptable in his sight. (Galatians 3:13)
 - You need that to let the law shine into every area of your life. If you don't have the safety of a redeemer, then you'll stay in the shadows.
 - The law is objectively beautiful like a sunny day, but for those of us who come to it out of darkness, the experience of it can be painful. How does it become not just objectively delightful, but experientially delightful to us?