

Text: Heb. 13:22

Title: "God speaks; we must listen"

Time: 10/9/2016 am

Place: NBBC

Intro - We began our study of the Book of Hebrews in October 2013 on Sunday evenings. I have enjoyed our time in this book and am going to miss it when we leave it for another.

The book's theology is an inexhaustible treasure, especially its Christology, its picture of Christ. He is God's Son through Whom God has spoken in these last days (1:2); He is the heir of all things (1:2); the creator of the world (1:2); the brightness of God's glory (1:3); the express image of His person (1:3); He who upholds all things (1:3); He who purged our sins (1:3); He who sits on the right hand of the Majesty on high (1:3).

Christ is better than the angels (1:4); the first-begotten one whom the angels worship (1:6); the one to whom God said, "Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever" (1:8); the one anointed with oil above His fellows (1:9); He is Jesus, made lower than the angels, but crowned with glory and honor (2:9); the captain of our salvation (2:10); our brother (2:12); the destroyer of him who has the power of death (the devil, 2:14); a merciful and faithful high priest (2:17).

Jesus Christ is the apostle and high priest of our profession (3:1); better than Moses (3:3); He is the God who built the house of God (3:3-4); better than Aaron and his priesthood (5:1); He is the great high priest that is passed into the heavens (3:14); the priest after the order of Melchizedek (5:6); the forerunner who entered the veil of the holy place before us (6:20).

Jesus is the King of Righteousness and the King of peace (7:2); He is a surety of a better testament (7:22); the one who is able to save us to the uttermost (7:25); the one who ever lives to make intercession for us (7:25); He is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens (7:26); the Son consecrated for evermore (7:28); the mediator of a better covenant (8:6).

Christ has entered the holy place with his own blood having obtained eternal redemption for us (9:12); He is in heaven itself, appearing in the presence of God for us (9:24); after offering one sacrifice for sins forever, He sat down on the right hand of God (10:12); His enemies shall be made His footstool (10:13); His flesh is the new and living way to draw near to God with confidence (10:20).

Christ is the Author and the Finisher of the faith of the faithful (12:2); He is our God, who is a consuming fire (12:29); the same yesterday, today, and forever (13:8); the One who suffered outside the camp (13:13); the great shepherd of the sheep (13:20); and the One to whom shall be glory forever and ever, Amen (13:21).

It is my hope that our time in Hebrews has caused us to love our Savior more and understand more fully the glory of His nature and work in our behalf. That understanding will save us (7:25-26).

So now we have come to the end, and it turns out that these last four somewhat incidental concluding remarks are also rich in their truth for our lives this morning. We have summed up the message of Hebrews in regard to Christ, and these final thoughts from Hebrews also remind us of four major messages from the book as a whole. We will take them one at a time by way of review as we conclude the

book together. This week, our title is “God speaks – we must listen” (13:22).

Appl: Our verse literally says, “I encourage you, brethren, suffer the word of encouragement. . . .” The word *suffer* here means *to endure*, and it is the word that Paul uses to describe what man’s response to the Word of God and sound doctrine or teaching from the Word of God will be like in the end times: “For the time will come when they will not *endure* sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables” (2 Tim. 4:3-4).

We know Luke was with Paul when he penned these final words before his execution (2 Tim. 4:11). Having heard Paul say this, Luke writes from Rome to the Hebrew believers of Palestine hoping that they would endure his Word of exhortation or encouragement. It too was sound doctrine. I want us to see three things from Hebrews about how God speaks.

I. God has spoken many times and in many ways (Heb. 1:1-3).

Ill: Have you ever had trouble getting someone’s attention? You call their name, and then louder, and then louder, and finally everyone else in the room is hearing you except that one person somehow.

Appl: We live in a world filled with people who seem to have never heard from God. They question His very existence because they do not believe that He has spoken to them or revealed Himself to them in any way. He is somehow hidden to them and imperceptible to them because

they have never heard from Him. Hebrews teaches that the problem is not that God has been silent. Let's note quickly together how thoroughly the book affirms that God has spoken at many times and in many ways.

1:1 - He has spoken by prophets.

1:2 - He has spoken by His Son.

1:6 - "He saith,"; 1:7 - "He saith,"; 1:8 - "and"; 1:10 - "And"; 1:13 - "said He".

2:2 - He spoke through angels.

2:3-4 He spoke to New Testament apostles and prophets and confirmed that message with signs and wonders.

2:6 - "One in a certain place testified."

2:12 - "Saying"; 2:13 - "and again"; 2:13 - "and again."

3:7 - "The Holy Spirit says."

3:10 - "He was angry . . . and said."

3:11 - "I swore"; 3:18 - "He did swear"; 4:3 - "As I swore."

4:4 - "He spake in a certain place."

4:7 - "He said" in the writings of David.

6:5 - Many have tasted the good Word of God.

6:13-14 - "He swore concerning Himself, saying."

7:13 - God's law "says."

7:21 - "Him that said unto Him."

8:5 - "He said" to Moses.

8:8 - "Says the Lord"; 8:9 - "says the Lord"; 8:10 - "says the Lord."

9:8 - "The Holy Spirit signifies."

9:20 - Moses's commandments "said"; 9:22 - "according to the law."

10:5 - "The one entering the world says"; 10:7 - "then I said"; 10:9 - "He has said."

10:15 - The Holy Spirit is a witness to us, "for He said."

10:16 - "Says the Lord."

10:30 - "We know him who said"; "saith the Lord"; "and again."

11:4 - God testified regarding Abel's gift and by it "still speaks."
11:7 - Noah was warned of God.
11:11 - Sarah judged Him who had promised.
11:18 - God said concerning Isaac.
11:33 - The faithful obtained promises.
12:5 - The exhortation that speaks to you as sons - instruction and reproof.
12:19 - A voice of words was heard at Sinai.
12:24 - The blood of Christ and the blood of Abel speak.
12:25 - One speaks from heaven.
13:5 - He has said, "I will never leave thee."
13:7 - Leaders are those who spoke the Word of God to you.
13:22 - "Endure this the word of encouragement."

Appl: If we are ignorant of what God has to say, it is not because He has not been speaking. Hebrews assures us that God has spoken many times and in many ways. Have we taken the time to listen? Have you heard this week what He has been saying to you? In order to answer *yes* with our lives, we have to have our Bibles open daily. Our author was a believer who had his Bible open. He knew what God had said when He spoke in many times and in many ways.

II. When God speaks, He does so as no other (4:12-13).

Appl: When God speaks, mighty works are accomplished. The Bible tells us that He spoke the worlds into existence. Martin Luther's hymn, "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God," tells us that when Satan is finally destroyed, it will be one little word that shall fell him. This is the way God speaks. He speaks like no other. He spoke the universe into existence out of nothing. This passage tells us that His word is both powerful and living. That means two important things for us when we read it.

1. His word is alive in the sense that every time we read our Bibles it is as though God is speaking directly His message to us in person. This is how the Holy Spirit uses the Word of God in our lives. We are not reading merely the historical things that God said to dead people who lived long ago. We are reading what the Holy Spirit wants us to hear, to think, to believe, and to do right now in person.

2. His word is alive in the sense that it can impart life; it can reproduce spiritual life. The law of biogenesis says that physical life comes from living things, and spiritual life comes from the Word of God because it is spiritually alive. It is powerful and sharp and piercing and exposing, and all of this is life-changing to the point where it can take a faithless dead soul separated from God and make it alive by faith and bring it into vital union with Christ. Has God's Word done that to you? It can, for when God speaks He does so as no other.

III. When God speaks, we must believe (4:2).

III: A certain amount of skepticism can be healthy. Certainly, we need to practice the principle of buyer-beware in many contexts today (advertisements, politics).

Appl: But that attitude is entirely inappropriate when it comes to our response to what God has said. Heb. 6:18 tells us that God cannot lie. 10:23 tells us, "faithful is the One who promised." Heb. 11:6 tells us, "For without faith, it is impossible to please Him; for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." And throughout Hebrews, we find passages that tell us that when God speaks, we must believe.

3:15 – “Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation.”

4:7 – “Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.”

5:11 – “Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing.”

10:26 – “For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins.”

12:25 – “See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven.”

13:22 – “And I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation: for I have written a letter unto you in few words.”

The warning of all of these passages points to the truth of 4:2, “For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as they also; but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard.” There are two categories of people in our congregation this morning hearing the preaching of the Word of God – those who will be profited and those who will not. What will determine which category you fall into? Whether or not that Word is mixed with faith in the heart of each one who hears this morning. Do you listen to God’s Word? Do you really believe what you hear? If so, it changes you.

Conclusion: Our author begs God’s people, “I beseech you brethren, suffer this word of exhortation.” Paul warns us that in these last days, not many will be willing to do that. God speaks, and we must listen. And so what is it again that He says? 4:2 calls it the *gospel preached*. Simply, Jesus Christ is the sacrifice that atones for your sin and mine and

brings us to God. This you must believe. Have you? Will you today? God has spoken; He has done so as no other; and we must believe what He says.

“A man came – I think it was actually in Philadelphia – on one occasion to the great George Whitefield and asked if he might print his sermons. Whitefield gave this reply; he said, ‘Well, I have no inherent objection, if you like, but you will never be able to put on the printed page the lightning and the thunder.’ That is the distinction – the sermon, and the ‘lightning and the thunder.’ To Whitefield this was of very great importance, and it should be of very great importance to all preachers, as I hope to show. You can put the sermon into print, but not the lightning and the thunder. That comes into the act of preaching and cannot be conveyed by cold print. Indeed it almost baffles the descriptive powers of the best reporters.”

– David Martin Lloyd-Jones,

Preachers and Preaching