

## Say What?

### Christ: The Living Communicator

John 1:1-18, Hebrews 1:1-4

*Pastor Dale Evan, March 10, 2019 pm*

As we continue our thinking on Biblical communication, this week we need to continue to lay some foundational principles that will be applied to practical situations over the next several weeks. This week we want to present Jesus of Nazareth as the prime example of God's communicator. Take your copy of the Scriptures and turn first of all to the Gospel of John and the first chapter. Let us read the first 18 verses and then make some observations.

#### John 1:1-18

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

*<sup>2</sup> He was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup> All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. <sup>4</sup> In him was life, and the life was the light of men. <sup>5</sup> The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.*

*<sup>6</sup> There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. <sup>7</sup> He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. <sup>8</sup> He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light.*

*<sup>9</sup> The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. <sup>10</sup> He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. <sup>11</sup> He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. <sup>12</sup> But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, <sup>13</sup> who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.*

*<sup>14</sup> And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. <sup>15</sup> (John bore witness about him, and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.'") <sup>16</sup> For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. <sup>17</sup> For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. <sup>18</sup> No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.*

As passage unfolded, those of us who have been Christian for any length of time were reading about Jesus. But did you notice that he was not named until verse seventeen? The apostle John was piling on idea after idea about someone and then dropped the bomb at the end of the introduction to his Gospel. That everything he was referring to comes to light and life in the person of Jesus. John refers to Jesus as the "Word". He doesn't define what he means by that reference so likely it is a summary of all that he continues to unfold.

So in this the Word is described as divine (with God-was God), creator (all things made through him), life and light (in him was life and the life was the light of men). This should remind us of the beginning of Genesis. John is identifying the work of God at the beginning with this one he is introducing. All the worship and awe due to God is due to this one he is presenting.

John also then describes the word as the agent of the gospel, the good news that has come to rescue the fallen world. This should cause us to recall Genesis chapter three with its description of the coming of darkness and the promise of a personal deliverer. Indeed this one even gives us the renewal of Adam's true posterity, "giving the right to be called children of God."

But this word was given flesh, became human. This accomplished several works as once. In so doing, this Word was able to reveal the glory, grace and truth of God the Father. This word is the perfect Son that accomplishes perfectly the will of the one who sent him.

And then as John declares this Word is Jesus the Messiah, Jesus Christ he states that he the perfect and complete revealer of God the father and his plans, purposes. He communicates his character, will and work without flaw.

Now let us turn over to the Epistle to the Hebrews and read the first four verses from chapter one.

Hebrews 1:1-4

*Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, <sup>2</sup> but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. <sup>3</sup> He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, <sup>4</sup> having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.*

Notice first of all that the author of "to the Hebrews" also builds a strong case about someone that he does not name until verse 9 of chapter two where he says that:

*"But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone."*

But this author does declare, in common with the apostle John; that God speaks to us by/in the concept of "Son." And like John's use of Word, he does not define completely but lets us understand it as we go along in the passage.

There are many parallels to John's introduction. This "Son" created and reveals the character, will and glory of God in a unique way that identifies him with the divine himself. And not only that but this revealing of the majesty is coupled with gospel as seen in verse three. So in both texts, Jesus is declared to be the unique revealer of God and the bearer of the gospel. Both texts link a communicative concept with the gospel.

And then in the four Gospels' portrayal of this Jesus, how do their authors present the revelatory activities, the communication of Jesus? We could spend many hours reading texts from the Gospels to undergird this but let's just summarize for time's sake tonight with just one example for each of my categories.

Again, in the gospels then how does Jesus speak? I think we can recall many passages where Jesus is noted to speak with authority--coupled with Scripture. One such example is noted in the response of the people following what we refer to as the Sermon on the Mount in the Gospel of Matthew in verses twenty-eight and twenty-nine of chapter seven:

*And when Jesus finished these sayings,  
the crowds were astonished at his teaching,  
for he was teaching them as one who had authority,  
and not as their scribes.*

Jesus is also portrayed as speaking and communicating a powerful sense of patience and grace. An interesting example of this comes from the Gospel of Mark in the opening of chapter eight where he feeds 4000 with seven loaves and a few fish. Jesus himself says:

*"I have compassion on the crowd, because they have been with me now three days and have nothing to eat. And if I send them away hungry to their homes, they will faint on the way. And some of them have come from far away."*

Jesus taught his disciples with intention. We could demonstrate this all through the Gospels, but let's just think about the episode that occurred after the resurrection presented in Luke's Gospel in chapter twenty-four beginning with verse forty-four:

*Then he said to them,  
"These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you,  
that everything written about me  
in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms  
must be fulfilled."*

*Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and said to them, "Thus it is written,  
that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead,  
and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins  
should be proclaimed in his name to all nations,  
beginning from Jerusalem.*

Jesus also spoke with thoughtfulness and with care to consider the heart not only the behavior. The Gospel of John has an interesting passage that illustrates these ideas in chapter six and beginning at verse twenty-two. It is a longer passage but I think is worth reading in its entirety.

*On the next day the crowd that remained on the other side of the sea saw that there had been only one boat there, and that Jesus had not entered the boat with his disciples, but that his disciples had gone away alone. Other boats from Tiberias came near the place where they had eaten the bread after the Lord had given thanks. So when the crowd saw that Jesus was not there, nor his disciples, they themselves got into the boats and went to Capernaum, seeking Jesus.*

*When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, "Rabbi, when did you come here?" Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you are seeking me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you. For on him God the Father has set his seal.*

*Then they said to him, "What must we do, to be doing the works of God?" Jesus answered them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent." So they said to him, "Then what sign do you do, that we may see and believe you? What work do you perform? Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.' "*

*Jesus then said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." They said to him, "Sir, give us this bread always."*

*Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst. But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe. All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day."*

*So the Jews grumbled about him, because he said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven." They said, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does he now say, 'I have come down from heaven'?"*

*Jesus answered them, "Do not grumble among yourselves. No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day. It is written in the Prophets, 'And they will all be taught by God.' Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me—not that anyone has seen the Father except he who is from God; he has seen the Father. Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life.*

*I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh."*

*The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever feeds on me, he also will live because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like the bread the fathers ate, and died. Whoever feeds on this bread will live forever."*

*Jesus said these things in the synagogue, as he taught at Capernaum.*

*When many of his disciples heard it, they said, "This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?"*

*But Jesus, knowing in himself that his disciples were grumbling about this, said to them, "Do you take offense at this? Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. But there are some of you who do not believe." (For Jesus knew from the beginning who those were who did not believe, and who it was who would betray him.) And he said, "This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father."*

*After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him. So Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you want to go away as well?" Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God."*

So what should take away from all of this? I have four final assertions regarding our understanding of communication from Jesus.

We must know Jesus from the Gospels

We have a tendency to create a vision of Jesus or Christianity in general from our own minds or from vague memories we may have from teaching we had as children. We need to frequently read and be engaged with Jesus as he is in the text of Scripture. This means being aware of who is actually was and claimed to be. This means understanding his Old Testament preparation. This means understanding how the disciples early Christians understood Jesus as Peter, James, Paul, John and others explained who he was and the implications he brought to living. We need to read, think, reflect and act with respect to the Jesus that is in the Scriptures, not our imaginations.

We must be committed to know Jesus from the Gospels

As I have used in my conclusions recently, this means we need to have a conscious commitment to this proposition. It is one thing to say "yeah" to the paragraph above and another thing to engage it personally. We need to engage

this as a congregation. We committed to providing Scriptural sermons and classes to understand and read the Bible better.

We must be committed to love Jesus in the Gospels

And even more so, we need to love the Jesus we come to know. We need to care deeply about what he says. We need to find our happiness and satisfaction in wanting to be near and like him.

We must speak/live like Jesus because we love him.

And then we must care to live like him. In particular to communicate the gospel to those around us, not just in its content but in its expression. We need to reveal our dependence on grace, our need of forgiveness, our sharing of kindness and forgiveness.

