

The Great Communicator, God

Genesis 1

Pastor Tim Nixon

This evening we will be looking at Genesis 1, but not in the way that you might think.

We won't be looking at the relationship between the first Adam and the last Adam.
We won't be looking at the relationship between the original creation and the new creation.
We won't be trying to prove or disprove the gap theory.
We won't be interested in whether the world is created in six literal days or six eons of time.
And we won't focus significantly on what God created.

This evening we begin a series on communication.

We won't be looking at communication between husbands and wives.
We won't be looking at communication between parents and children.
We won't be looking at the four principles of communication from Ephesians chapter 4.

This evening we began a series on communication from God, and how God is a speaking God. We began a series on how we can glorify God in our communication, because he teaches us how to communicate. One of the great troubles in people's lives is communication. With biblical precepts, principles and practical examples we will seek to grow in being pleasing to God in the way we talk.

We will look at God the father, Jesus Christ the son, and the Holy Spirit throughout the next few weeks. We will look at God's written word as well.

All thinking about communication must begin with God.

Tonight, I'll be focusing on God the great communicator.

Follow along with me as I read through Genesis chapter 1.

In Genesis 1 to 3, God's word invites and divides. God sets the stage but man rebels. God chooses to create and relate to his creation by means of his word. By his word God establishes all things in ordered relationship and thus mankind is created in a unique relationship to God.

The theological importance of Genesis 1:1 cannot be overemphasized. The verse identifies God as Elohim, which emphasizes his majestic power and glory. It is generally agreed that the noun's root meaning is "power, strength, and glory."

And so, in verse 3, the God of all power, strength, and glory – speaks for the first time in Scripture. In fact, each of the six days begins with this announcement. The psalmist declares, "for he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm." (Psalm 33:9). The writer of Hebrews similarly affirms that, "By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible." (Hebrews 11:3).

The words that begin the third verse mark the beginning of earth history. God did not merely think it but spoke it. In the same way our Lord Jesus brought about miracles on earth through his words.¹

“Each of these creative day periods follows a formula.

First, there is the act of God to create, usually His spoken, fiat command.

Second, there is the result of His creative command, that which comes into existence.

Finally, there is God’s evaluation of what is made through the assignment of its name and character, then a declaration of its being good.”²

Look at this pattern with me:

Verses 3-5

And God **said**, “Let there be light,” and there was light. 4 And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. 5 God **called** the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

Verses 9-10

9 And God **said**, “Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.” And it was so. 10 God **called** the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he **called** Seas. And God saw that it was good.

And we continue to see this same pattern throughout all six days of creation.

And then God talks to himself (within the trinity) let us make man in our image (Genesis 1:26) We talk to ourselves because God talks to himself (themselves).

And then God talks to man in verse 28.

²⁸ And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” ²⁹ And God said, “Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food. ³⁰ And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.”

We cannot escape the spoken revelation of God. All of our human speaking is a mere reflection of the true speech that created the world.

All communication we have, is because God is a communicating God.

When we are suffering and don’t know what to say, the lament Psalms give word to our thoughts. They give us God’s words to speak back to him. Don’t forget that although these psalms are expressing very raw emotions, they are **words** that God himself is giving you! God is the father that is, in a sense, teaching you how to speak.

¹ *Paradise to Prison*, John Davis

² *The Beginning*, Russ Kennedy, Sermon on Genesis 1:1-2:3 given at Clearcreek Chapel

Like a baby learning language, we learn how to communicate with God by listening to His words first. (Tim Keller)

In these Psalms, God speaks to us so that we can speak to him through:

- Crying out to God (your address to God);
 - Hosea 7:14 proclaims, “They do not call out to me from their hearts but wail upon their beds.”
 - You can sit in silence or cry out to the Lord.
 - You can cry on your bed or cry out to the Lord.
- A Righteous Complaint (your anger, pain, heartache, or sadness);
- Affirmation of Trust (your remembrance of God’s presence in your past);
- Petition/Request (your deepest desire);
- Additional Argument (anything more, why God should intervene);
- Rage against Your Enemies (bringing your enemies before God);
- Assurance of Being Heard (what you need to feel heard);
- Promise to Offer Praise to God (the promise you can offer to God); and
- Assurance (the attribute of God you are thankful for in the moment).³

In all these things, God speaks to us so that we can speak to him in ways that glorify him with righteous speech.

Scripture contrasts idol worship against true faith in the contest between Elijah and the prophets of Baal in 1 Kings 18:20–40. We see a memorable scene on the mountain: hundreds of false prophets dancing around and shouting, “O Baal, **answer** us.” They even try cutting themselves to get their idol’s attention,

“But there was no voice, and no one answered. And they limped around the altar that they had made.” (1 Kings 18:26)

The account is tragic and hilarious. Elijah even joked at their solemn observance, “Maybe your god is in the bathroom. Perhaps he’s asleep” (1 Kings 18:27). Can you imagine how shocked the false prophets would have been if Baal **actually spoke**? How many ceremonies had these prophets participated in without hearing so much as a sigh from their revered deity?

Yet, speaking is central to God. God himself is Word, and his speech commanded *nothing* to be *everything* (John 1:1–3).

- “The **voice** of the Lord is powerful; the **voice** of the Lord is full of majesty” (Psalm 29:4).
- When God wants the dead to come to life he **says**, “**Live!**” (Ezekiel 16:6)
- When Jesus wanted his friend to walk out of the grave, he **spoke**, “**Lazarus, come out!**” (John 11:43).
- Even now, Jesus is holding together your molecules with his words (Hebrews 1:3). If Jesus were to stop speaking, you would stop existing.⁴

³ This is not an original list. I do not remember where I first came across it.

⁴ <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/only-our-god-speaks> - Ryan Shelton

God Spoke in Christ

As the Word - John 1:1–5

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

Christ Spoke for the Father - John 8:34–38

34 Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin. 35 The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. 36 So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. 37 I know that you are offspring of Abraham; yet you seek to kill me because my word finds no place in you. 38 I speak of what I have seen with my Father, and you do what you have heard from your father.”

Christ Spoke in Fullness and Finality - Hebrews 1:1–4

1 Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, 2 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. 3 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, 4 having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

God Speaks to Us Through the Bible

We go to the Bible to hear the living **Word** of God. We don't go to the Bible to judge its authenticity, or its reliability. We go to the Bible with a sense of submission because the **Word** of the God of the universe has been *spoken and written* to us.

And this submission is critical. God speaks to us in order to communicate with us. And as God speaks, he intends for us to understand what he is saying, that is, his aim for speaking. It is God's speech that controls the meaning of his message. It is not our interpretation, but the very word of God with which he communicates.

That is why we offer Adult Bible Education classes to help us learn how to properly read our Bibles so that we may understand what God wrote to us.

It is very popular in our time to determine the meaning of the Bible through what it means to me (known as reader response), rather than what God meant when it was originally written (known as authorial intent). As God speaks to us through his word, it is absolutely critical that we

understand what God is trying to say to us, not what we are taking away from the text. Let me give you an example.

When I was in college in Iowa, and Jayne was here in Dayton, we wrote many letters to one another. When I would receive a letter from Jayne, I would read each word and line, searching for the meaning that she intended. I wanted to know what she was trying to say to me. I was trying hard to determine what Jayne, the author, meant to say. This is authorial intent.

But suppose you were walking down the hall and happen to pick up one of those letters. The letter is full of love. It is beautiful and you enjoy it as you read it. In that situation you may not care what Jayne intended or what she meant. You are simply reading our love letters without any context and determining what they mean to you. While you will never truly understand what Jayne, the author, meant to write, it is beautiful, and you enjoy it. Jayne's intent may not be important at all to you. This is reader response.

Another example. In Springboro Ohio, there are red octagonal signs at many street intersections with the big word STOP printed on them. If you choose to, you can follow a reader response approach and interpret the text to mean: slow down just a bit, look for cars, and then speed on through the intersection. The police, however, believe strongly in authorial intent for the determination of meaning, so they will respond to your reader response interpretation with a traffic ticket and fine.

And finally, we recognize the **Penetrating Power of God's Word**.

“For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. 13 And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.” Hebrews 4:12-13

Interestingly, the word translated “give an account” is the word *logos* (word). We have seen that word in verse 12 (word) and now verse 13 (account). So, the truth of Word *to* us uncovers the truth *about* us so that we will respond in truth to God.

This section of text comes to us as a strong and gripping and powerful exhortation. We must make every effort to believe God in an obeying way because the Word penetrates our sin justifying deceptions and motivations and because we are utterly visible and vulnerable to God.⁵

Conclusion

This is why God speaks. Because the very words of God have within them the power to penetrate and transform.

⁵ Russ Kennedy, *The Penetrating Power of God's Word*, preached at Clearcreek Chapel

This is why week after week and year after year we work hard to understand the words of God and how he means to speak them to us. We are not sloppy. We do not read these words as whimsical. We understand that God is speaking to us with his very words.

And so, we learn to speak and communicate because God is communicating God. And we submit to his words and believe him in an obeying way because of them.