

HEARING CLEARLY WHEN GOD SPEAKS
WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND
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- ▶ BACKGROUND SLIDE #: This morning we continue our meticulous study in the power, unity and relationship patterns among God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit as revealed in Genesis 1-4.

MY CELL PHONE RINGS: "Excuse me just a minute.

"Can you hear me? Can you hear me now? What did you say? What happened to Brie??? Your words are garbled. Static, I am losing your signal. What is going on with Brie? Why is she in the hospital? I can't hear you again? She's in the hospital?"

Touch side of phone and lose antenna signal....

Important, life changing words—I don't want to miss a one.

So it is when God speaks, we want to hear. We don't want to miss what He has to say. We want to hear Him loud and clear.

- ▶ SLIDE #: Genesis 1:1-5: In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. God called the light "day," and the darkness he called "night." And there was evening, and there was morning — the first day.

EXPLAIN AND DEMONSTRATE GLENN'S CHARTS

For the last several Sundays Glenn has talked about the nature and character of our creative God. He demonstrated the intimate triangle of relationship among the God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The beauty of God's character is that He's not exclusive in His relationships. He invites us right into His relationship triangle so that we can experience personal relationships with Him.

Draw God drawing us into the triangle.

Draw God Himself searching to find lost sheep and bring them into relationship with Him.

Mosque near Ground Zero: Incredibly poor taste.

Ask Roger: "Origins and Beliefs of Islam?"

The fact that we can enter into relationship with Almighty God is what marks the greatest difference between Christianity and Islam. Allah is personally unapproachable. Those in Islam fear Allah, and obey Allah; but, in no unique way do they love Allah; nor does Allah love them.

Christianity is all together different. Elohim (the plural of El demonstrating the relationship unity of the Trinity) actually invites us to enter into the Triangle to experience Kingdom life with Him. Imagine the glorious fact that we can have a personal relationship with Almighty God Who spoke the universe into existence. No other religion in the world is like this!

► SLIDE #: Genesis 1:1-4: And God said, “Let there be light’ and there was light.”

Hear his voice everywhere: sunset, stars at night, internal impressions.

Mother and cute baby with dress and bow. Coo Coo, Look at that... Beautiful scene, picture of love—and life anew. The world will go on.

► SLIDE #: Matthew 8:5-13: The Centurion said to Jesus: “You don’t need to come to my house. Just speak the word and my daughter will be well.” Jesus said, “This is the best faith I’ve seen yet!” Why? Because this man understood the power of the Word of God.

When God speaks, we want to hear. We don’t want to miss what He has to say. We want to hear Him loud and clear. Five by Five!

Therefore, this morning, I want to move us down the road a bit on how understanding and experiencing the Word of God entices us into God’s relationship triangle.

► SLIDE #: “Sticks and stones can break my bones, but words can never hurt me.”

What a lie!

1st grade bathroom. Laura Reich: “Roger did it.”

► SLIDE #: Let’s talk about the words, “I love you.”

In a relationship and there is a line that I call the “I love you” line—that, when crossed takes the relationship to an entirely new level.

I like you, I enjoy being around you. You and I are really good friends.

“I love you” are scary words. So, vulnerable, opened up and taken a great risk.

What you don’t want to happen: “I love you.” Stutter, pause, stutter, pause: “Well, I like you.”
The sense of rejection is incredible.

Remember the first time you said those words?

Not sure exactly when was first time. I said them to a number of girls before I met Julie.

But, I realize now that they were just practice for when I finally met Julie.

Dating Julie, shy and introverted. On way home from movie, she was talking about all the boys she’d dated. I was feeling so intimidated. I decided that she was too hot for me:

One test. If she passes I will ask her out again. If she fails I will never call her again. If she kisses me hard on the front porch, I will ask her out again. Well, she kissed me and we went out a lot after that.

While writing this sermon I wondered if she kissed all the boys like that. I’ll have to ask her.

Several months later the line was crossed—I can’t remember who said, “I love you” first,” but the die was cast. (Think 1st time saw me in swimming suit: I love you.)

Muslims don’t hear the words, I love you.

But, God wrote us an entire book about His love. The Bible is God’s love letter to the world.

We want to hear clearly—to do this we must handle the Bible—the Word of God—carefully.

► SLIDE #: 2 Timothy 2:15: Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a

workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.

- ▶ SLIDE #: Far side, OK ginger stay out of the garbage.;
- ▶ SLIDE #: What ginger hears, blah, blah, blah.

Several, super, simple truths to ensure that we handle it well.

- ▶ SLIDE #: I. OUR HEARTS MUST BE PREPARED.

Certain conditions must be met to prepare our hearts if God is to speak to us from Word.

- ▶ SLIDE #: Regenerated Heart

Natural man doesn't understand.

1 Corinthians 2:14: "The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned."

- ▶ SLIDE #: Humble Heart.

Bible written out of much pain and suffering. Can't come to this Book with proud heart and comprehend anything.

James 4:6 - God opposes proud but gives grace to humble. It's when we're humble that God speaks to us.

Calls us lambs - not giraffes or elephants.

- ▶ SLIDE #: Obedient Heart

Can't come to Bible and want to learn and then obey just what we want to! God does not instruct disobedient children. Bible contains principles for living understood only by those who are willing to obey.

John 7:17: "If anyone is willing to do his will, he will know the doctrine of God."

- ▶ SLIDE #: Devoted Hear

Psalm 119:97: "Oh how I love thy Law! It is my meditation all the day!"

Must want to study Bible - not just dip into it for five minutes a day!

"God never reveals the deep things of the Spirit to the Christian who just drops by for a little chat."

One of greatest problems with Christians today is that we are too busy. It's in quietness that we find strength, says Isaiah. It's when we're quiet that the Holy Spirit speaks to us.

"Better come apart and rest awhile before you come apart."

- ▶ SLIDE #: 2. THE HOLY SPIRIT IS GOD'S PROVISION FOR UNDERSTANDING GOD'S WORDS.

High I.Q. is no guarantee to understanding the Bible; it is a spiritual matter.

- ▶ SLIDE #: John 14:26: But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.

- ▶ SLIDE #: John 16:13: But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth.

What better teacher could there be than the one who wrote the Book. It pays to be on good terms with the Holy Spirit.

► SLIDE #: 2 Timothy 3:16-17: All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

- *Training in Righteousness:* This deals with our relationships with God and others. The Greek word here is *παιδία*. The idea is the parenting of children. This book is going to parent you. This book is going to raise you...in righteousness.

► SLIDE #: 3. WE MUST FOLLOW BASIC BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES TO INTERPRET THE BIBLE PROPERLY.

Main task as Bible Student is to discover what the Biblical writer had in mind when he wrote what he wrote.

Often heard it said: "You can interpret every verse in Bible many different ways!" Not so! There is only one correct interpretation for every verse.

Some say, "Well, I feel that this verse can mean this or that. But I'm really not interested in anyone's opinion or feeling about the verse!"

I want to know what the writer thought and wanted to say when he wrote what he wrote. There's only correct interpretation. Our job as Bible students is to find it out!

Simplified this into three Basic principles - Call them ABC principles. Grasp these principles.

► SLIDE #: A: ACCURACY PRINCIPLE.

► BE SURE ALL PERSONS, PLACES, OBJECTS AND EVENTS ARE ACCURATELY IDENTIFIED AND DEFINED BEFORE INTERPRETING A PASSAGE.

Lady said: "Can't believe Bible is true because impossible to carry Noah's Ark around in wilderness for forty years."

Must be careful about identifying people and places.

Example: Ten different Simons in New Testament; four men named John; three James. Acts 12 - James has head cut off. Peter in prison, released. Now go tell James I'm out of prison. (First James is Apostle; Second is James half brother of Christ.)

The Herod who tried Jesus Christ and the Herod who murdered the babies are different Herods.

Must be careful to know correct meanings of words.

Example from KJV

► SLIDE #: 1 Peter 3:1: Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives;

Very seldom will a wife's talking lead a man to Jesus!
In 1611 conversation meant "lifestyle."

You say, Well how can I know all of this? I've never been to school. I don't know these things!

If you want to fix a car, need tools. If you want to build a house, need tools. If you want to properly study Bible, need tools.

► SLIDE #: To get the words straight buy a ► modern translation of the Bible.

Now I know that the little old lady said that "if the King James Bible was good enough for Paul, then it was good enough for me".

You know good and well that Paul didn't write the King James Bible. He wrote in Greek. Never even heard of English.

Good to have modern translation, not because Bible changes but because language changes:
NASB to NIV to MESSAGE

"Greet one another with a holy kiss" becomes in Phillips, "Shake hands all around." Kiss on the lips in the Ukraine."

Wycliffe to Eskimos: Christ the keeper of the huskies. They'd never seen a lamb.

- A good Bible dictionary
- A detailed study Bible
- Commentaries
- Bible Software (P.C. Study Bible)
- SLIDE #: Good Bible handbook: Henrietta Mears

Not saying that you can't get a spiritual blessing from Bible without Books. Am saying that you'll get a greater Spiritual blessing from Bible with books.

Paul wanted his books. In prison in home writes to Timothy - "It's cold; bring my coat before winter, and bring my scrolls, and especially the parchments."

Psalms 119: 18: Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law.

Science professor eager to teach his new freshmen. Holding up a beaker filled with a yellowish liquid, the professor began his first class: "The essence of the scientific method, from electron microscopes to the Hubbell telescope, is observation.

"I have a beaker of horse sweat. What can we learn from it? Do as I do. Watch carefully."

He then dipped his index finger into the beaker and licked his finger. Dismayed but obedient, the students dipped their fingers into the vile beaker and licked them.

"What have we learned from this?" the professor asked, surveying the startled faces. "You have already discovered the importance of observation! You see," he said, holding up his fingers, "I didn't lick my index finger. I licked my ring finger."

► SLIDE #: B: BACKGROUND PRINCIPLE

► BE SURE TO UNDERSTAND THE BACKGROUND AND THE CONTEXT BEFORE MAKING AN INTERPRETION.

Enemies of the Bible say, "You can prove anything by the Bible!" Now, that's true if you take things out of their context. I can prove by the Bible that there is no God! Psalm 14:1 says, "There is no God!" But whole verse says a fool says in his heart there is no God.

Be certain to identify Who's speaking to whom.

Bible says, "All that a man has will he give for his life." Now read your Bible and you'll discover that God never said that. The devil was speaking!

Commands to individuals are not will of God to us.

God told Abraham to offer his Son - Doesn't tell us that.

Not all the promises in the Bible are for everyone.

Some promises are universal.

"Whosoever believeth."

Some are personal.

God promised to protect Paul in his journey from Athens. He doesn't promise that to all missionaries.

God told Hezekiah that he heard his prayer and extended his life for fifteen years. Didn't say that to you!

Some promises are conditional.

Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.

The Bible is not a book of divination.

Can get into trouble by taking verse out of context. Man trying to find God's will. Going to open Bible and place finger on verse and do whatever God tells me to do. Shut eyes. Opened Bible and placed finger and read this verse: "Judas went out and hanged himself." Wondered about that. Decided to try again. Shut eyes, etc. Opened Bible and ready, "Go and do thou likewise."

Try to get a blessing out of 1 Chronicles 26:18.

Use your cross references.

After feeding 5,000 Matthew tells us that Jesus made disciples get into boat and leave! Why? Matthew doesn't tell us. But look at John 6. John tells us why. They were trying to make Him King.

Background Principle says: Be sure you understand the background and the setting before you interpret.

Scientist studying fruit flies. "Jump", fruit fly jumped. Pulled off leg, Jump, jumped. Pulled off another leg. Jump. Jumped. Continued pulling off legs until only one left. Jump. Struggled and struggled, and jumped into the air. Pulled off last leg. Jump. Struggled and tried and wiggled and squiggled but could not jump into the air.

Scientist concluded: "When all the legs of a fruit fly are removed, the fruit fly loses its hearing."

► SLIDE #: C: COMMON SENSE PRINCIPLE:

► USE YOUR SANCTIFIED COMMON SENSE WHEN YOU READ THE BIBLE.

Bible is piece of literature - read prose as prose; poetry as poetry.

Psalm 60:8: "Moab is my washpot; over Edom will I cast out my shoe." Mean that God washes his face and has shoes? No! Figurative language. Just as slave cares for shoes and washes pots, so will Edom be reduced to menial tasks.

Psalm 91:4 - "He shall cover thee with his feathers and under his wings you will trust." Does God have feathers and wings? No—mother hen protecting chicks = picture of care.

When Jesus says, "I am the Door," use your good sense. He's not made out of wood.

Matthew 5:29-30: "If hand causes you to sin, Cut off hand, pluck out eye."
People who do that aren't spiritual, they're foolhardy: hyperbole

We are all familiar with figures of speech: "I could have died of embarrassment;" "I guess I'll just have to face the music;" "Don't let the cat out of the bag."

These are called idioms.

- ▶ SLIDE #: Accuracy
- ▶ Background
- ▶ Common sense

Story of Preacher who could preach on any text with no preparation.

"And eight did Milkah bear."

Eight - Christian cooperation - Not one or two - Had eight all working together.

Bear - Christian courage - Not goat, not cow, not Bossy the cow! a bear.

Milk - Christian consecration - Go all out' not just lead bear - milk it.

If Accurate - Know Milkah was a woman, not a verb.

If Background - Know this passage was about a mother giving birth to her children.

If Common Sense - Know no one would milk a bear.

Don't let difficult passages deter you!

Mark Twain said, "It's not what I don't understand about the Bible that bothers me, but what I do understand."

- ▶ SLIDE #: Luke 24:32: "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?"

The proof that we have handled the Bible correctly is not a big head but a burning heart.