

COMMUNING WITH GOD TOGETHER IN HIS WORD

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Equipping Class: How To Study The Bible. The Voice of God In The Individual And Corporate Setting (Longing To Really Know Him Through His Word/Listening To The Voice Of God In The Read and Sung Word)

Grace Reformed Baptist Church

Week 5

SPEAK, O LORD

Speak, O Lord, as we come to You
To receive the food of Your Holy Word.
Take Your truth, plant it deep in us;
Shape and fashion us in Your likeness,
That the light of Christ might be seen today
In our acts of love and our deeds of faith.
Speak, O Lord, and fulfill in us
All Your purposes for Your glory.

Teach us, Lord, full obedience,
Holy reverence, true humility;
Test our thoughts and our attitudes
In the radiance of Your purity.
Cause our faith to rise; cause our eyes to see
Your majestic love and authority.
Words of pow'r that can never fail—
Let their truth prevail over unbelief.

Speak, O Lord, and renew our minds;
Help us grasp the heights of Your plans for us—
Truths unchanged from the dawn of time
That will echo down through eternity.
And by grace we'll stand on Your promises,
And by faith we'll walk as You walk with us.
Speak, O Lord, till Your church is built
And the earth is filled with Your glory

Fellow Disciples ("Learners')

It is my prayer that as a result of this study we will be motivated, challenged, and inspired not only to go forward in mastering the Scriptures but also in letting the Scriptures master us. But foremost, that our relationship with our Father through the reading, meditating, memorizing, studying and hearing of our Lord's Word will grow deeper and deeper as the Holy Spirit progressively matures us for the work of the ministry and to the majesty and glory of our Triune God. Oh, that we may come to KNOW Him.

ANCIENT WORDS

Holy words long preserved
for our walk in this world
They resound with God's own heart
Oh, let the ancient words impart

Words of life, words of hope
Give us strength, help us cope
In this world, wherever we roam
Ancient words will guide us home

Ancient words, ever true
Changing me and changing you
We have come with open hearts
Oh, let the ancient words impart

Holy words of our faith
Handed down to this age
Came to us through sacrifice
Oh, heed the faithful words of Christ

Holy words long preserved
for our walk in this world
They resound with God's own heart
Oh, let the ancient words impart

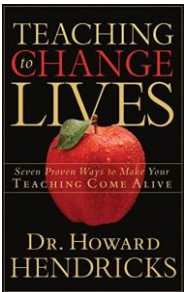


It is my joy to share with you the overflow of what I learn as I continue to be a good and faithful student of the Holy Spirit as He leads me into the Word and to gifted men of aged past and present with such great knowledge, insight and wisdom. I take no credit for original thoughts.

CLASS GENERAL ROADMAP.

This class answers **first** the questions: Why is the Bible so critical for the believer's life? We should make mastering the Scriptures one of the top priorities in our lives and as we do this with sanctification as the end product, we will let the Scriptures master us. That is why we are asked to let the word dwell in us richly (Col. 3: 16) and without the word dwelling in us richly we cannot see the transforming power of God's Word. But what does that require of us in simple terms? We'll answer that question together.

Secondly, this class will answer as we sit under faithful reading of the Word in corporate worship: (1) "Why Public Scripture Reading Consist As An Essential Element of Worship In Our Service?" and (2) "What Is The Purpose and Benefits of The Benediction at the End of Our Service? Time permitting, we examine "The Sung Word". We should have the same posture as David, who says in Psalm 19, "More to be desired are they [the Scriptures] than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb."



TEACHING STYLE AND PRACTICES.

THE LAW OF THE TEACHER – If you stop growing today, you stop teaching tomorrow. If I am to be an effective teacher I must teach from the overflow of a full life.

THE LAW OF THE HEART – Teaching that imparts is not head-to-head, but heart to heart. To the Hebrews, heart embraced the totality of human personality – one's intellect, one's emotions, one's will. The Teaching-Learning Process: teaching is causing people to learn; learning is change. Learning means a change the way you think, feel and behave.

THE LAW OF COMMUNICATION – To truly impart information requires the building of bridges.

All communications have three essential components: intellect, emotions, and volition – in other words, thought, feeling, and action. So, whatever it is to communicate to another individual, it involves: (1) something I know, (2) something I feel, and (3) something I'm doing.

THE LAW OF ACTIVITY – Maximum learning is always the result of maximum involvement. Activity in learning is never an end in itself; it's always a means to an end. Never forget your purpose. Your objective determines your outcome. You achieve that for which you aim. Task is not to impress people, but to impact them; not just to convince them, but to change them. Romans 8 informs the believer that every believer is predestined to be conformed to the image of Christ. If true, then how much change should we rightfully expect?

THE LAW OF ENCOURAGEMENT – Teaching tends to be most effective when the learner is properly motivated. Motivation – two sources: internal and external. Motivated people become change agents – path finders for others.

THE LAW OF READINESS – The teaching-learning process will be most effective when both student and teacher are adequately prepared. There is a value of giving "homework" – you don't come in cold to class.

Notes:

“NOT FEELING LIKE IT”

None who read Psalm 119 would diagnose its author as dry; none who take up his psalm can sing it in hushed tones. The man sounds as alive as a spring sparrow, as exuberant as the exclamations in so many of his sentences. He isn't always joyful, but oh, how he *feels*, freely and spontaneously. The whole psalm is a living pulse.


“Blessed are you, O Lord!” he shouts (verse 12). His soul, like his song, “is consumed with longing for your rules at all times” (verse 20). Both midnight and early morning may find him awake (verses 62, 147), too ecstatic to sleep, for “your testimonies are my delight” (verse 24). His hates and his loves burn too bright to be hidden (verses 104, 119)

We might imagine such spontaneous affection lives beyond our reach, the possession of a super-spiritual personality. Pay attention to the psalm, however, and you may notice something that rivals the intensity of his feelings: the consistency of his **routine**. Scripture poured out of the man's heart only because he had previously, even fastidiously, “stored” it there (verse 11). “I set your rules before me” was the watchword of his life, no matter the day (verse 30). With a devotion that might make us uncomfortable, he declares, “Seven times a day I praise you for your righteous rules” (verse 164). [Hubbard]

So, Brothers and Sisters, “Do you possess a heart bent to knowing your God through His Word?”


...we should make mastering the Scriptures one of the top priorities in our lives and as we do this with sanctification as the end product, we will let the Scriptures master us. That is why we are asked to let the word dwell in us richly (Col. 3: 16) and without the word dwelling in us richly we cannot see the transforming power of God's word. Jesus affirmed that the Jews studied or searched the Scriptures diligently and then pointed out that they did not let the Scriptures master them, because they missed the truth about Him that the Scriptures were testifying to (John 5: 31-40). It is quite possible that we too can focus on mastering the Scriptures and fail to let the Scriptures master us – determine how we live and conduct ourselves in every area of our lives.


An Invitation To Intimacy

 **Does he want to know you or me?** Like David asked in Psalm 8:4, “What is man that you are mindful of him?” Like David, I have wondered why He bothers with me. It is normally at this point when my intellect fails me, BUT it is also at the point I believe God is most magnificent.

David's life was marked by his relentless pursuit of God. *One thing I have asked from the Lord, that I shall seek: That I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, To behold the beauty of the Lord And to meditate in His temple. (Psalm 27:4)* Everything David ever wanted was wrapped up, tied up, and tangled up in his longing to be in the presence of God. So, too, should all our longings be shaped and colored by a desire to see God. And where we will see Him is most clearly in His Word.

Cautionary Note

 Sin, if it is allowed to build up in our lives, will gum up the workings of every spiritual pursuit. Prayer is hindered by sin. Gifts operate without power in sin. Wisdom becomes carnal and devilish in sin. Character is destroyed by sin, and honorable efforts are thwarted by it. Vision is obscured and the path to God is obliterated by the darkness of sin. But I will say here, every believer should be in the habit of allowing the Holy Spirit to do a periodic sin check. Like David, we should cry, “Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me and know my anxious thoughts; 24 And see if there be any hurtful way in me, And lead me in the everlasting way.”

 Perhaps, herein lies God's motive for making Himself known to us. It is to invite us to know Him intimately, to see Him as ultimately approachable, reachable, touchable, and accessible. Everything David ever wanted was wrapped up, tied up, and tangled up in his longing to be in the presence of God. So, too, should all our longings be shaped and colored by a desire to see God. And we will see Him most clearly in His Word.



Both in our individual and corporate setting. So...let's turn our thoughts from an individual setting with the Word to a corporate worship setting. What does the New Testament say that churches should include when they gather in corporate worship? What are our benefits?

1. **Reading the Bible:** Paul told Timothy to “devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture” (1 Tim. 4:13). Churches should read Scripture, out loud, in their gatherings.
2. **Preaching the Bible:** Paul told Timothy, “Preach the word” (2 Tim. 4:2). Paul himself declared “the whole counsel of God” to the church in Ephesus (Acts 20:27).
3. **Praying the Bible:** Paul urges that prayers be made in the gathered church (1 Tim. 2:8, 3:14-15). The content of these prayers should be biblical in order to edify all present (1 Cor. 14:12, 26). They should be biblically rich.
4. **Singing the Bible:** Paul told the church in Colossae, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly... singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God” (Col. 3:16). This doesn't mean that churches should sing only Psalms or only the words of the Bible, but it does mean that churches should sing songs that are saturated in the language and theology of the Bible.
5. **Seeing the Bible:** We say “see the Bible” because the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper are, to use Augustine's phrase, “visible words.” In baptism and the Lord's Supper we see, smell, touch, and taste the Word. Christian churches should celebrate baptism and the Lord's Supper during their gathered, public services (1 Cor. 11:17-34).

Listening To The Voice of God Through The Read Word in Corporate Worship

There is nothing more important in worship than the reading of the Scriptures, God's holy, inspired, inerrant, authoritative Word. In 1 Timothy 4:13, Paul says to Timothy: “Until I come, give attention to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and teaching”

The public reading of Scripture is a means of grace. It not only serves as an opportunity whereby we openly and corporately sit under His word—acknowledging his authority, acknowledging our dependence upon the initiative of his self-revelation, acknowledging our glad surrender to the Lordship of his word—but it is also a God-appointed means whereby we are strengthened by and receive his favor. The Lord has designed to bless and edify His people by it.



Why should the corporate reading of Scripture consist of an essential element of worship in the service? A composite of my readings from Puritan sources suggest at least six reasons why...

1. **It Upholds the Scriptures' Supremacy (supremacy)** God's Words are sweet to the taste of His people (Ps 119:103) and to read God's Word corporately is to uphold its supremacy and sweetness.

2. **It Obeys the Biblical Command (obedience)** Until I come, give attention to the public reading of Scripture (1 Tim 4:13). This is a command, given by Paul, to Timothy and applies to the church today.

3. **It Instructs the Church Corporately (instruction)** Indeed, whatever is written in earlier times, in the Word, has been written for our instruction (Rom 15:4). Godly and God honoring is the flock that welcomes divine instruction as the Word is publicly read regularly. -

5. **It Edifies the Truly Regenerated (edification)** Strong is the church that hears God speak to it every week! The psalmist prayed for God to strengthen him according to His Word (Ps 119:28). Everything we as a local church does should promote, enhance, and foster the edification of the flock (1 Cor 14:26). True believers hear the voice of God (John 10:27) and find great comfort in it (Ps 119:50). All believers need to hear from God as frequently as a baby needs milk.

6. **It Demonstrates the Church's Authority (authority)** The only binding authority for all believers is the written word of God, the Bible. The Bible — alone — presides in the highest place since God has magnified His Word above His Name (Ps 138:2). The Bible alone is eternally fixed in the heavens (Ps 119:89).

TRANSITION TO The Benediction in Corporate Worship



God has designed the pronouncement of a Scriptural blessing or benediction to be the conclusion or culmination of the corporate worship of his people. By it the people who have gathered together in God's name and with his presence among them depart with the assurance that God has indeed been in their midst and that he intends to bless his people.

“The last thing said in the Bible is a benediction. **‘The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.’**” So the last thing in corporate worship should be a benediction as God's people anticipate the face of God shining upon them in the new heavens and new earth. [Plummer].



TIME PERMITTING -- TRANSITION TO *The Word Sung in Corporate Worship*



The apostle Paul makes no exceptions when he says in Colossians 3, **“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.”** The only instrument referred to in New Testament worship is the human voice. That matters. It's God's design that the local church's congregation is mostly an untrained choir of blood-bought saints.

With the little time we have what is that I believe you need to carry with you to ponder... digest. **First, what roles do hymns play in our sanctification?** Let's consider three: teaching, admonishing, and provoking thanking hearts.

1. **Hymns Teach.** One, if not the primary, reason our songs should be closely tied to the Word of God is their didactic (instructive) effects. Singing for the believer is formative and responsive, and therefore must be informed by Scripture. We learn what we sing.
2. **Hymns Admonish.** Our songs ought to exhort and admonish. Our songs ought to encourage and remind. In this practice of song, God's people will be pointed to the Scriptures, reminded of truth, and rooted in the gospel of Christ.

3. **Hymns Provoke Thankful Hearts.** The aim of singing hymns is engaging both the head and the heart. The reason we read, study, and meditate on the Scriptures is not primarily so that we might amass knowledge, but so that our knowledge would lead to worship. The chief end of theology is doxology.

“Why singing matters both in our private devotion and corporate worship?”

‘7 Biblical Reasons Why Singing Matters’ [Tom Olson]

- You Obey God’s Will
- You Dig Roots Into The Word of God
- You Proclaim the Gospel To Unbelievers
- You Make War Against God’s Enemies
- You are Spiritually Strengthened For The Trails Of Life
- You Experience The Joy That Only Comes From the Holy Spirit
- You Glorify God

A Closing Thought To Carry Forward in Worship

John Calvin described reverence as the place where joy and fear are held together. Not the fear of trembling and despair, but the kind that cultivates awe and respect when contemplating God’s holiness, nearness, grace and power. This kind of reverence does not invite worshipers into what C.S Lewis has called “an obligation to feel,” but into a space where personal feelings serve only as a background to the drama of God’s being. [“Be still and know that I am God \(Psalm 46:10\).”](#)

This is the kind of fear that Scripture calls the beginning of wisdom. We were built for reverence because we were built to glorify God. We develop a capacity for deep joy in the same measure that we learn to revere God, [”Humble yourself before the Lord, and He will lift you up \(James 4:10\).”](#)



Next week the class answers first the question: “How should we approach our time in the Bible as we commune alone with Our Triune God? We’ll answer that question together.

Secondly, we will answer the questions -- as we sit under faithful preaching of the Word in corporate worship: (1) “Why should we be under the preaching of our pastor physically present in the corporate worship setting, not remotely as your first choice?” (2) “What is needed for us to be able to effectively listen to God?” “What can we do to prepare our hearts so we are in a position where we can hear what the Lord is seeking to reveal or communicate to us *through the preaching of the Word?*” and (3) “When we are ‘graced’ by the receiving of our Triune God ‘s Word, what do we receive”?

Consider praying for the class and for my preparation. Consider “chewing” on the questions above.

Additional Notes:

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Sources: Detailed Information on Sources available; not all annotated in one place.
