

April 9, 2020
Maundy Thursday

The Three Word Quotes

There are three phenomenal, three-word quotes that we find in the Bible. We will be looking at them over the course of the next four days. We're going to begin with the first, and we find it right in Genesis, right at the very beginning: **“And God said.”** What a powerful quote. What follows “and God said”? Well, and God said, ‘let there be light,’ and there was light. With light we also got time; for there was evening and there was morning, the first day. And God said, ‘let there be a heaven and separate the heaven;’ He creates the sky. And God said, ‘let there be land and sea under the heavens;’ we've got the land and sea of the earth. And God said, ‘let there be plants’ and there's plants on the earth. And God said, ‘let there be sun moon and stars in that sky,’ and there was sun, moon and stars in the sky. And then God said, ‘let there be living creatures on the face of the earth;’ and there were living creatures on the face of the earth. And then God said, ‘let there be man.’ And then God said, ‘it is not good for man to be alone,’ and so he created woman. And then God said, ‘be fruitful and multiply.’ The whole beginning of the universe rests on three words: “and God said.”

And we know that when it was all finished, God looked and saw that it was very good; so good that He even gave mankind freedom. What did mankind do with that freedom? Well he went against God's word. Where again we hear, ‘and God said,’ ‘I will put enmity between you (that is the serpent or Satan) and the woman and between your offspring and her offspring. He shall bruise or crush your head and you shall bruise his heel. God also follows that up with, “and God said.” ‘Behold the man has become like one of us.’ What is the result? Man is held accountable for his sin. He is kicked out of the garden of Eden.

It's not much longer after that we find Adam and Eve have children and there is a little bit of a problem between two of the boys. Between Able and Cain. Abel is offering sacrifices to the Lord and the Lord accepts them because they are the best that Able can bring. Cain, on the other hand, brings what's left over to God, and God doesn't accept his sacrifices, his offerings. Cain kills his brother and we have the first murder. What does God do? He confronts Cain. ‘And God said,’ what have you done? God knew full well, but He was forcing Cain to look at himself and realize he was the first murderer.

That wasn't the end of sin in this world. It continued to grow, and grow, and grow until we come to a man by the name of Noah. And we read “and God said” ‘I am determined to make an end of all flesh.’ ‘Therefore, make yourself an ark for you and your family and for the animals all those that have breath of life in them.’ God brought everything to Noah. Noah built the ark and God saved Noah and his family and the animals and it was a new start for the creation. What did God say after the flood? “And God said” ‘I will never again curse the ground because of man while the earth remains. He gave the rainbow as a sign.

So as long as the earth remains, God is not going to curse the ground again as He did at the flood.

Did mankind learn lesson after Noah? No, we read a little further on; “and God said” ‘behold they are one people and they all have one language.’ It was at the tower of Babel and man was again using his unity, his mind, the gifts of God given him, to go against God, to build the tower up into heaven. Basically, the thought was; if we build this tower all the way up to heaven, if God tries to flood us again, well He's going to have to flood Himself right out. So, He confused our languages they split up and they finally did what God had told them way, way back and that was to go and inhabit the earth.

Then along comes Abraham, we talked a little bit about him this past Sunday with the Covenant. We read “and God said” ‘go from your country and your kindred, and your father's house to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation. I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you; and him who dishonors you, I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed. What a wonderful thing, God says to Abraham! But sin continues to grow, and He goes and he talks to Abraham because of.... Well, let's take it from the way God says it. “And God says,” ‘because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and their sin is very grave, I will go down to see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry that has come to me.’ And this is where we see Abraham bargaining with God. Oh Lord, what if you find 50 people who are following you, and love you? “And God said” ‘for the sake of 50 I will save them.’ What if it's 45? “And God said” for the sake of 45 he would save them. Well what about 40? And God said, ‘for 40 I will save.’ 30? “And God said” for 30 I will save them. 20? “And God said” for the sake of 20, I will save. 10? “And God said” for the sake of 10. What happened? There were only three and God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. But those three He still saved. Then God comes to Abraham and what does He say? Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love and go to the land of Moriah and offer him there as a burnt offering. Abraham does exactly what He says. He goes to that mountain in Moriah, he is ready to offer his son Isaac as a sacrifice. He literally has him on the altar, knife in his hand ready to strike when... “and God said,” Abraham, Abraham, do not lay your hand on the boy. Abraham had shown his faith in God that even if he were to kill his son, since God had promised that Isaac would be the heir; God would raise him from the dead.

“And God said” to Isaac ‘and then your offspring all the nations of the earth shall be blessed.’ Isaac had a son named Jacob, “and God said” to Jacob ‘and in your offspring all the nations of the earth shall be blessed.’ But we also read “and God said” ‘your name shall no longer be Jacob, but Israel.’ And a famine came up into the land and Jacob and his family were hungry; “and God said,” ‘do not be afraid to go down to Egypt.’ Why? Because God had already worked good for those who loved Him and were called according to His purpose. Jacob's son Joseph was there. He was second in command. So, Jacob (Israel) and his boys all moved to Egypt and the land of Goshen.

We fast forward about 400 years and what do we read? God speaks to Moses “and God said,” ‘I will send you to pharaoh so that you may bring my people, the children of Israel out of Egypt.’ When Moses tried to talk his way out of it, and his first argument was ‘I can't go God because I don't know your name.’ We read, “and God said” ‘I am who I am. Say this to the people of Israel. I am has sent you.’ “And God said” ‘go down to pharaoh and say let my people go.’ And after 9 plagues, God said ‘this day shall be a Memorial Day and you shall keep it as a feast to the Lord.’ From that we get the Passover and plague number 10.

The Passover, that's why we're here tonight. We continue on, “and God said” to Moses when they got to the edge of the Red Sea, and the Egyptians were right there behind them. “God said” ‘lift up your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it.’ The sea was divided the Israelites went through on dry ground. Pharaoh's army got bogged down in the mud, and the water collapsed on them, and killed them all. “And God said” to Moses ‘I am the Lord your God who has brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the House of slavery, therefore you shall love the Lord your God and Him only shall you serve. Nine more commandments followed right behind it.

After 40 years in the wilderness, we read about God coming to Joshua. “And God said,” ‘today I will begin to exalt you in the sight of all Israel. It was Joshua who took the people down to the Jordan River; and God stopped the Jordan River so that the children of Israel could walk through. They went from there up to Jericho, “and God said” ‘see I have given Jericho into your hand and the walls of Jericho fell.

After Joshua, we entered the time of the judges “and God said” to Gideon, ‘the people with you are too many for me to give the Midianites into your hand. Oh, I love that one! The Midianites were terrible, God called Gideon and told him go do battle with the Midianites. So, Gideon faithfully summons all of Israel to come and fight with him and what's the Lords response? That army is too large, I need a smaller army. This one ranks right up there for me with God telling Abraham, leave your family and everybody and go to the place that I'll show you. What faith Gideon had!

Then we come to the time of the prophets, to Samuel. The people start griping with Samuel, they start griping about the judges and they say, ‘give us a king.’ “And God said, ‘obey their voice and make them a king. Samuel gave them Saul; but Saul did not turn out to be the kind of king that the people really wanted. He was not faithful to God, so God decided will now give them a little bit of a better king. He sent Samuel to the house of Jesse and there stood all of Jesse's sons. Eliab was the oldest, he was tall, he was strong, he was smart, he was devoted. Samuel thought, certainly this is the future king. “And God said,” ‘do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature because I have rejected him.’ The Lord looks on the heart and Samuel anointed David.

To the Prophet Elijah, after having had a contest with the prophets of Baal, being chased around the country because of King Ahab and Queen Jezebel, he hides in a cave and he's mourning that he's the only one who is faithful to God. God causes there to be a great wind but God's not in the wind. There's a great earthquake, Gods not in the earthquake. A fire comes up and it burns past this cave that Elijah is in, and God's not in the fire. But then in a whisper, "God said" 'what are you doing here Elijah? There's 7000 of not bended the knee. Get up, get back to work.

To King Nebuchadnezzar "God said" 'Oh King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken, the Kingdom has departed from you. Nebuchadnezzar went mad, he lost his mind until he repented. The Kingdom was restored when he turned to God. There's a quick walk through the Old Testament "and God said," but when we look at the New Testament, we see a whole new impact of those words.

It starts at Jesus's baptism that God said, "You are my beloved Son, with you I am well pleased." And when Jesus was in the temple, He prayed; "Father glorify Your name. And God said, "I have glorified it and I will glorify it again." On the Mount of transfiguration when Jesus is speaking with Moses and Elijah and Peter speaks out and says it's good Lord to be here. Let me make three tents or three abodes for you for Elijah and for Moses; the cloud comes over "and God says" 'this is my beloved son listen to him.'

You know at a point in time in our history right now, like we are experiencing; time with coronavirus, people dying, great uncertainty an economy that appears to have collapsed, a country on edge; maybe the greatest lesson that we can get this Maundy Thursday is when God speaks we should listen. After all Maundy Thursday, that word Maundy in the Latin it means mandate. This is the day where God in His son, Jesus Christ has given us some mandates. We know because of a mandate from heaven; God said, "this is My beloved Son." We know that God said, in him He is well pleased. We know that God the Father Almighty has said, 'listen to Him.' So, what did Jesus say on the Thursday night when He was betrayed? Or, if we go back to our gospel from John chapter 13:1-15 we see that He gets down and He washes His disciples feet and He tells them, 'if I, your Lord and master have gotten down humbled myself, made myself a servant and washed your feet; then you must wash one another's feet.

We also see that it was on this night that Jesus said, 'Love one another as I have loved you.' And how much did He love us? He spread His arms out wide and died on the cross for us. He also told His disciples when they seemed very concerned, to believe in God and to believe also in Him. Because in His house, there are many rooms and He was going to prepare a place for us, so that where He is, we might be also. It was on this night that He said to His disciples, 'if you love me keep my commandments. It was also on this night that Jesus said, 'do this in remembrance of me.' He gave us the Lord's supper, it was the Passover meal. He took just two components; the bread part the Afikomen is what it was called; which meant 'the one that is yet to come.' It was a reference in the Passover of the Messiah who would come. And that is the bread that Jesus broke, like He would be broken

He gave it to His disciples and said, 'take eat this is My body given for you.' And then He took the Cup after giving thanks, which was at the end of the meal. That Cup was known as the Cup of Redemption, it's that cup, the Cup of Redemption. It already had that name. Jesus took it, He gave it to His disciples saying, 'drink of it all of you. This cup is a new Covenant in my blood, which is shed for you, for the forgiveness of sins. Do this as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

Just as we look at the Old Testament and we see those powerful words "and God said," tonight we add one word to that phrase; "and Gods' Son said." And when we think of what He said, it's exactly what our country, it's exactly what the church needs right now. People who are willing to get down and wash one another's feet, people who will love one another as Christ has loved us. People who put all their faith hope and trust in God because it is God who created this world, and it is God who said, "this is my beloved Son listen to Him." We need people who will keep the commandments; because if we love Jesus, we will keep those commandments.

Finally, God's Son says, 'do this in remembrance of me.' And so we continue to practice The Lord's supper, we continue to follow what He says and on Easter morning when we look at three more great words, "He is risen," we celebrate that Lord's Supper knowing more than Jesus' death, but knowing His resurrection as well.

In our Savior's name Amen