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C: Christmas 2
John 1:1-14

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Salem, Bridgeport

“Words about the Word”

*“In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God...
And the Word became flesh and lived among us, full of grace and truth....
From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace....”*

How can Jesus be the Word of God?

It’s a question that one of our members raised when we looked at this passage in Bible Study as John’s version of the Christmas story –

a story that not only talks about God becoming flesh and dwelling among us,
but a story that traces Jesus’ birth back not only to his physical birth as a human on this earth
but back farther to before the beginning of all creation.

John calls Jesus the Word of God. But what does that mean? How can a person be a Word?

Well to answer that question we need to think about what words are
and about the power that words have.

**Words are the visual or audible signs
that empower us to conceptualize, create and communicate ideas.**

Words also have power – a 3-fold power – they conceptualize, they create, & they communicate.

They conceptualize by enabling us to think, to dream, to imagine, to envision.

They create by enabling us to take those thoughts, concepts, dreams, imaginings and visions
that exist simply within our own minds and bring them into being in the physical world.

And they communicate –

by enabling us to share our thoughts with others & enabling others to share their thoughts with us.

Words conceptualize, create, and communicate.

**As powerful as words are, however, they always fall short,
for words are not the ideas themselves that we attempt to convey,
but simply symbols that point to those ideas.**

When I say a word like “table”, for instance, and you have learned what that word means,
you get a picture in your mind of some piece of furniture similar to the picture I have in my mind.

Now it probably won’t be the same picture –

as our tables could be different sizes, different shapes, different styles,
made of different materials, with different numbers of legs –

but it will likely be a similar picture –

a flat surface somewhere from knee to waist in height with space under the edges.

So words convey some of what we desire, but can never convey all of what we intend.

**So let me begin by saying that there are no words
to adequately explain to you in 10 minutes how it is that Jesus is the Word of God!**

All I can do is use words to point out 7 different things about the Word of God.

1. God speaks through Creation.

“In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. “

In the beginning there was nothing – no thing – just God –
just the Divine Energy that has always been and will always be,
the Divine Energy that can never be created or destroyed,
the Divine Energy that is the force behind all creation.

That Divine Energy had within it the power of the Word –
the power to think, to conceptualize, to dream, to imagine, to envision.

And that Divine Energy not only had the power to think words but to speak them.

“And God said, ‘Let there be light, and there was light’. “

God's Word brought not only light but all of creation into being – not as a static thing,
but as a dynamic, ongoing, never ending, creative process resulting in an ever changing universe.

Not only did God's Word bring the universe into creation at some point in history
but that same Word continues to sound and continues to create even to this very moment.

2. God speaks through Scripture.

God not only created the Universe,
but God created humans in the Divine image, with the power to understand words.

And then God spoke to humans through the Words of Scripture –
through the Law and the Prophets and the Writings.

God did this in order to communicate to us human beings who God is
and how creation is designed, and how we are designed to live in that creation.

And just as God's Word in creation was not a one and done action,

God's Word in Scripture is not a fixed, static, non-living thing,
but a living, breathing, dynamic Word that is also imbued with creative power
so that every word is prophetic and pregnant with possibility until pledge and promises are fulfilled.

3. God speaks through Jesus.

Part of the power of words is that they bring the thing to which they point into being.

Sometimes words aren't enough to adequately convey an idea – sometimes we just don't get the message.

If I were to try to explain to you how to live-stream our worship service on Facebook,
it might be so far out of your experience that my words sound like a foreign language.

But if I SHOW you, then all of the sudden it may make sense as the audible words are acted out.

In the same way, when God speaking through Creation and Scripture didn't get us to live the way God intended,
God realized we would have to be SHOWN how to live –

and so the audible word spoken in Creation and in Scripture became that Word that was acted out in Jesus.

And in Jesus, we SEE the Word of Creation continuing

as he creates out of 5 loaves and 2 fish enough to feed 5000,
and creates wine out of water, health out of illness, wholeness out of brokenness,
peace out of a storm, community out of division, life out of death.

And in Jesus, we SEE the Word of Scripture continuing as he fulfills the prophecies & promises
and as he SHOWS us how the Words of Scripture are meant to guide our lives.

4. God speaks through us and the power we've been given to create material things.

Because we have been created in the Divine image, we, too, create physical, material things.

We plant, we build, we sew, we organize, we design, we invent, we plan, we sing, we dance, we act, we write.

All the things that we use every day –

our homes, our cars, our clothes, our furniture, our computers, our tablets, our phones, our TVs,
our streets, our water supply, our sewers, our heating systems, our satellite systems, our governments –
were created by human beings.

We can use our creative powers for good, or for ill, but we all create,

And it is only because of the gift of words that allows us to conceptualize that we can create.

5. God speaks through us and the power we've been given to create things that go beyond the material.

Scripture is filled with explanations about the laws God put in place when creating the Universe.

"Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive others" is not a suggestion, but a universal law.

It's not us claiming that we have forgiven others and now we expect God to forgive us.

Rather, it just explains that it is in the process of forgiving others that we ourselves find forgiveness.

"Give and it will be given to you" is not a command and a promise, but a universal law.

In other words, if we hold onto our possessions with a firm grasp,

our hands cannot be open to receive the blessings God desires to give.

"Do unto others as you would have them do unto you" is not a suggestion, but a universal law.

If we fail to act as servants to those the world sees as less than us, we pay the price –

if not in this life, than in the next.

Because we have been created in the Divine image, we, too, have creative power not only over things but over people.

We can create good things for ourselves and others with our words, or we can create bad things.

In terms of our own lives, if we think and speak negatively, if we focus on fear, if we complain about what we don't like we will continue to attract the very things we don't want.

But if we think and speak positively, if we focus on faith, if we thank God for all God has given us, we will continue to attract all those things that bring us joy.

In terms of the lives of others, if we repeatedly tell a young boy that he will never be as good as his brother, we are basically digging a grave inside of him that unless filled in through God's grace will leave him forever struggling for love and acceptance

& acting out in ways that will only bring added shame and hatred by others and himself.

But if we repeatedly assure a young girl that her hard work and her faith in God and herself will bring success, we are filling a reservoir inside of her with enough confidence and courage to get her through every challenge along her way.

Words wield great power and contain great authority and it is our responsibility to use our words to create good.

6. God speaks through us and the power we've been given to communicate to others about God.

God's purpose in speaking to us through Creation, through Scripture, and through Jesus is to communicate to us human beings who God is, how creation is designed, and how we are designed to live in that creation.

And the primary reason God gave us words was to share what we know about these things with others.

The greatest commandment is that we love God with all our heart & mind & soul & strength – and that we love our neighbor as ourselves.

And if we truly love God, we will not be able to help but to share in word and in deed what God means to us.

And if we truly love our neighbor, then we will not be able to help but to share in word and in deed how God's power and love have changed our lives.

Reading scripture for ourselves is not enough;

Jesus came to teach us how to live out that scripture and to send us out to teach others.

Serving through deeds is not enough; words of witness are essential to our Christian call.

7. God speaks an eternal Word

Words travel only in one direction, so once a word is spoken it can never be recalled.

Think of it as a sound which begins and never ends, that moves out from the speaker and vibrates through the air and continues on and on and on to the ends of the universe. That's why God's Word can never return to God empty.

That's why God's promises are always fulfilled, why God is faithful, and why we can trust in God's Word.

And we, who were spoken into being as divine image bearers, are essentially an ongoing echo of God's Word, filled with the breath of God, and the Word of God carried by that breath, Spirit and Word inside of us, and coming out of us to continue speaking creation into being.

God not only spoke once in Creation and once in Scripture, and once in Jesus,

God continues to speak to us through Creation and Scripture and Jesus –

and God continues to speak directly to us if we are open to hearing God speak.

Whatever God is speaking to you through Creation and Scripture and Jesus and through whatever other means, know that God is faithful and will keep every promise.

It isn't just the fact that *"In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God"* and it isn't just the fact that *"the Word became flesh and lived among us"*

but the good news of the gospel is that the Word that lives among us

is *"full of grace & truth"* & *"From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace...."*

May the Word be made flesh in you, full of grace & truth, & may you receive from his fullness, grace upon grace. Amen