

Sermon

Grace Street Fellowship, Dr. Jim Burgin, pastor

March 24th, 2019

Faith worth Holding Series #7

Lost in Translation

Hebrews 4: 14-5:10; Focal Verses 4: 14-16

Lost in Translation

1. This week, I asked Siri, the virtual assistant for my iPhone to call “my wife.” Her reply? “You have seven wives. Which one do you want me to call? *Sometimes things just get lost in translation.*
2. Matt Hart, a former associate pastor of this church, and now the pastor of Iglesias Heritage in central Arlington, was teaching his children this week how different biblical times were compared to now, especially when it comes to technology. You know kids, the people in biblical times didn’t have the internet or computers or iPhones. Attempting to be helpful, one of the kids said, “that’s right, they had flip phones back then.” Matt gently said, No, they didn’t have phones of any kind, or video games, or anything. Puzzled, one of the children looked earnestly at Matt, “They didn’t have video games? What did they do – just sit there?” *Sometime things get lost in translation.*
3. In Korea, my brother and I attended the army church on the military base in Daejeon, S. Korea. The Methodist preacher asked a new attender if he would say the offertory prayer – In most churches, they pass an offering plate, and someone prays before the ushers go into the aisles. The pastor asked his friend if he would say the offertory prayer. The friend replied, “You want me to say the offertory prayer.” Yes, the pastor affirmed, “I want you to say the offertory prayer.” When the time came, and the pastor gave the nod to his friend, the man literally stood to his feet, and in a loud, clear voice said “the offertory prayer” and sat down. *Sometimes things get lost in translation.*
4. Mexico City years ago, I preached to a congregation at Iglesias Bautista Mexico. My friend, evangelist Isaac Torres, was my interpreter. He followed me line by line until the invitation. My invitation lasted 3 minutes, and his translation went 20 minutes. People poured down the aisle in response. Many were saved. *A good translation brings worlds together.*
5. The older we get the more we realize there is a gulf between God and us. The biblical understanding of a true priest is one who brings two worlds together. A priest reaches out to God with one hand, and with the other, to a friend, and brings them together. We need a priest.

A Faith worth Holding (Review) - Last week, (chapter 3) the author of Hebrews gently reminded/warned his readers about the dangers/consequences of unbelief

1. What does unbelief look like? – (Last week’s message).
 - a. *Failure to trust God when tested, and*
 - b. *Failure to obey God when ordered.*
2. What are the consequences of unbelief?
 - a. **YOU MISS GOD’S PEACE FOR YOUR LIFE.** When you are tested, you feel alone. Instead of standing on the solid rock, you sink in shifting sand. JAMES 1:6-8 says it like this: without faith, the “**double minded person is unstable in all their ways.**” “**Like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind.**”
 - b. **YOU MISS THE BLESSING GOD WANTED TO PROVIDE.** Don’t make the same mistake that God’s people made in Egypt. They knew God’s truth. They understood God’s truth, but they didn’t obey God’s truth, so they failed to enter the place of blessing Hebrews 4:1, 11, writer says don’t make the same mistake and fall short of God’s rest. The same passage in James tells us that the disobedient Christian shouldn’t expect blessings from the Lord.

3. What happens when we repent?
 - a. We receive God's Grace. We can start over again.
 - i. In one of the most beautiful passages of Scripture, Hebrews 4:9, we read – "*There remains then a Sabbath-rest for the people of God;*"
 - ii. Romans 5:20 says "*Where sin increased, grace increased all the more . . .*"
 - iii. 1 John 4:4 – "*Greater is he who is in you than he who is in the world.*"
 - iv. Ephesians 3:18 – Paul prays that believers would have "*power to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ.*"
 - v. Isaiah 1:18 – "*though your sins were as scarlet, they will be as white as snow.*"
 - b. Heaven is still our home – God's grace is greater than all our sin.
 - c. God's Blessings will come again – the Hebrews eventually received the Promised Land.
4. Does it really matter if I sin? If God forgives and restores me when I sin, does it really matter? Paul asks this question in Romans 6:1 – "Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase?" The answer is no, for two reasons:
 - a. When you sin, you become a slave to that sin. (Romans 6:4); the longer you stay, the harder it is to get up.
 - b. If you take sin so lightly, then you are likely not a believer. When you become a believer in Christ, you died to sin. Christ was crucified to pay for our sins. If his pain doesn't matter to us, then we do not belong to Him.
5. How do I do stay "on track"? How do you keep from missing God's best and God's rest right now? Verses 12-13 tell us – the Word of God.

¹²For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to the dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart." ¹³Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account."

- a. A Sword that cuts away the wrong thinking, wrong actions, and to sin. Verse 13 – God's word isn't just like a sword, but
- b. A Surgeon's Scalpel – cuts us, convicts us, and reveals our motivations - to us and to God. No one enjoys surgery, but the pain is necessary for healing to happen.
- c. "You can't run!" When God's word speaks to us, some people get off the operating table and run away from God. Jonah did. Psalm 139 – where can I go from your presence?
- d. "You can't hide!" Other people try to cover over their guilt – to rationalize it, to earn their forgiveness – Adam and Eve – fig leaves. It wasn't sufficient. If we can't run from him or hide from him, we need a priest.

Who Needs a Priest?

1. If you grew up as a Protestant? If you've grown up as a non-Catholic, then the priesthood may seem like a strange idea. Why would you need someone to help you speak to God? We're all equal. No one has a better insight into God than anyone else, so why would I need to go to someone else to get to God.
2. If you grew up as a Catholic? Then the idea of having a priest might be familiar/comforting to you, but you recognize that these priests are human and didn't always understand your journey well, nor represent the Lord, as they should.
3. If you grew up in modern times, then all your life you've heard God spoken of in terms of a Christian Personalism. He is abba Father, our daddy. We sing songs like "I am a friend of God, so we lose the sense of

God's holiness and majesty. In our attempt to make God more accessible to people, we have forgotten that there is a great gulf between us and God.

- a. The Hebrew people believed that they couldn't see God and live. They had such reverence for the holiness that they wouldn't even speak his name. They removed the vowels from his name, so that they wouldn't disrespect God, and they would bless "the name of God," instead of saying God.
- b. When Martin Luther was supposed to be confirmed as a priest, all he had to say was a sentence about God, but he couldn't do it, because he didn't see himself worthy of speaking God's name.

We Need a Priest!

1. When sin entered the world, we lost the direct contact with God we had in the Garden of Eden.
2. Someone has to cover our debt - Sin creates a debt which someone has to pay, in order for forgiveness to happen. When Adam and Eve sinned, they realized they were naked, no longer covered by God's glory, so they covered themselves with fig leaves. God provided them clothing to cover themselves. Where did that clothing come from? From an animal. Death entered the world when God killed the animal. The animal
3. Job asks the right question – "How can a mortal be righteous before God?" (9:2). Verse 32 "He is not a man like me that I might answer him, that we might confront each other in court. There is no umpire between us that could lay his hand on us both. If only, there was someone to arbitrate between us.
4. Job said, "I need a referee – someone to settle the difference between God and himself. He needed a priest.
5. Perhaps you don't think you need a priest today. Things are going well. You have a "good bead" on things, etc., but there are no atheists in fox holes, right?
6. Perhaps you are thinking you need a human priest – after all, as much as I love being a minister, the one thing I can't do is make a sacrifice. You've never seen me make a sacrifice. Yet, Catholic Priests don't make sacrifices either. If you think, "Well, I'll go back to Judaism, then you need to know that Rabbi's don't make sacrifices anymore, because the Temple was destroyed.

Jesus is a Superior Priest

1. Human Priests are Limited – We know that human priests have "feet of clay." The high priest
 - a. was sinful – had to make an offering for his own sin first; Jesus was sinless.
 - b. had Limited Access to God – could only go once a year. Had to do his business with God and get out of there; Jesus had unlimited access to God the Father.
 - c. Was Mortal – subject to death? He had to have a rope tied around his leg and bells on his garment. If the bells ever stopped ringing, he died. The rope pulled the body out of there. After the high priest died, there was another high priest and so on.
 - d. Had work which was never finished – year after year, century after century. Jesus' sacrifice was once for all.
 - e. In 70 AD, Titus destroyed the Temple. There has never been another sacrifice made, because there isn't a temple anymore. Almost as if the Lord was saying Jesus is the perfect, once for all sacrifice. This is the message of the gospel.
2. Jesus is Mighty to Save
 - a. Who has gone through the heavens – (verse 14) left earth to return to heaven, currently sitting at the right hand of God. Jesus entered the true holy of holies, the throne room of God;
 - b. Jesus is the Son of God – verse 15.
 - c. Jesus tore the veil. - The Bible says that when Jesus died on the cross, there was a veil in the temple that separated the Holy of Holies, where God's Spirit was, from where man was. Only priests could

go behind that veil once a year. When Jesus died on the cross, God ripped that veil — about 70 feet — from top to bottom, symbolizing that there no longer was a barrier between God and people.

- d. There is no other name – Jesus is the way, the truth, the life.
3. Jesus Understands Us - I am told that in a room where would be a harp, if you strike the strings of the harp and there is another harp in the same room, that when you strike the strings of this harp – this harp here will gently and quietly in unison respond. And the same note that is struck on this harp will be gently, softly reverberated in the other harp.
- a. *This is true physically* - When He hungered in the wilderness [Luke 4:1-2], when He thirsted on the cross [John 19:28], when He was weary and sat thus by the well [John 4:6], when He mixed His tears with the stifled sobs in Bethany [John 11:35], when He was betrayed [Matthew 26:14-16], and slandered [Matthew 27:29-31, 39-43], when He was disowned and dishonored [John 1:11], and finally crucified [Matthew 27:32-50], He had the response that all of us have: He was human in all of His responses, and recognitions. He was like we are: tried, tempted, hurt, wept, cried, bowed down, sobbed, agonized, was disappointed.
- b. *This is true mentally/emotionally - Empathizes* -
- i. He experienced love, rejection, betrayal, isolation, discouragement, pain, death.
 - ii. Therefore, he loves:
 1. He is the friend, encourager of the wretched, the undone, and the brokenhearted.
 2. Out there in the hospital ward, you will find Him.
 3. By a new made grave, you'll find Him.
 4. When the people of a family bow down their heads in tears and sorrow, there you will find Him. In some wretched room tonight in this city, there is a girl weeping, alone, there you will find Him.
 5. Wherever there is wretchedness, and broken heartedness, and sorrow, and disappointment, there you will find Him, for He is moved by our infirmities
 - c. *This is true spiritually* – he was tempted in every way like we were (but didn't sin)
 - i. His temptations were more intense – A pebble in the water being pushed around by the waves doesn't take much pressure. But a huge boulder – has to resist tremendous force before it will move.
 - ii. On the cross, he experienced every heartache from sin's sick consequences.
 - iii. Hebrews 5:7 – when Jesus was on earth he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears – This is a reference to Jesus at Gethsemane. The word he uses for cry is very significant. The British commentator Barclay says this is a cry which one does not choose to utter, but is wrung from him in the stress of some tremendous tension or searing pain.
 - iv. The result is that Jesus knows you, and he knows what you are going through, and he cares very much.
4. Result – we run to him and find grace to help in our time of need- Luca Cesternino, 9, got the shock of his life Monday night during Taekwondo in Tennessee. His father, U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Rob Cesternino, surprised him, as WSMV reported — home from a 10-month deployment in Jordan as part of Operation Enduring Freedom Spartan Shield and southern Syria as part of Operation Inherent Resolve.

Conclusion

Samuel Zwemer was challenged to give his life in service to Christ while a student at Hope College in his hometown of Holland, Michigan. Zwemer set his compass for one of the hardest, most neglected places on the planet: Arabia, the epicenter of Islam, a hostile place both physically and spiritually. In 1896, Zwemer married Amy Wilkes. The two made Bahrain, an island on the eastern shores of Arabia, their mission base and home.

They were a force for the gospel – speaking of Christ at every opportunity, distributing Bibles, starting the first school for girls, providing orphan care, and, with a growing team, opening the island's first hospital.

But Bahrain was also where Samuel and Amy suffered the deepest loss of their lives. In July 1904, dysentery swept through the community. In the space of a week, they buried their firstborn, a 7-year-old daughter named Amy, and their youngest daughter, 3-year-old Ruth. The epitaph for their daughters said simply: “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive riches.” When Zwemer was in his 80s, the old veteran returned here for the last time. In looking at his daughter’s graves he said, “If we should hold our peace, these very stones would cry out for the evangelization of Arabia.

Because of the cross and empty tomb, their sorrow upon sorrow was hope upon hope, for in Christ there is grace upon grace. If I looked at those grave stones, I would feel a tinge of sadness, wondering about those little girls, but when their dad looked on those tombs, there was nothing lost in translation.

What I want you to know today is that when you are with Jesus, our great God speaks the language of your heart. There is nothing lost in translation.

Invitation