

Sermon Guide: Covenant | Samuel Voo | Oct 22, 2023

In this sermon, Sam discusses the role of the word of God in the lives of believers. Sam shares how he and his wife began a relationship through letter writing as an illustration of how words play a critical role in every relationship. In this message, Sam emphasizes two aspects of the word of God, the written word and the spoken word, and closes with by addressing the question: when does God speak to us?

1. The Written Word of God (Scripture): The Bible is described as the written word of God, a divine revelation to humanity. Sam stresses the importance of recognizing the Bible as more than just a religious document but as God's communication to us. He encourages believers to rekindle their appreciation for the Bible's holiness and otherness and to appreciate it anew as God's very word.

2. The Spoken Word of God: However, the word of God is not limited to the written text but is also a living, active, and powerful word that continues to speak to believers. This word of God, in the context of Hebrews, points first of all to Jesus Christ and is most effectively heard when individuals align their lives with Jesus through faith and obedience.

Sam answers the last question, When does God speak to us? By first of all observing that there are times in biblical history when God refrains from speaking to his people, as evidenced in the time of the Judges and in the prophets. The reason for God's silence is their spiritual disobedience, specifically in the form of idolatry.

Although there are few physical idols today, Sam encourages listeners to examine their lives, identify distractions and potential spiritual idols, and refocus on aligning our lives with Jesus' will. For it is God's character to speak to his people. He loves to speak to his people, words of affirmation and protection and guidance and blessing as we are aligned in obedience with his son Jesus.

Discussion Guide:

Bible Reading:

1. Hebrews 4:12: "For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart."
2. Amos 7:2: "When they had stripped the land clean, I said, 'Sovereign Lord, forgive! How can Jacob survive? He is so small!'"
3. 1 Samuel 3:1: "The boy Samuel ministered before the Lord under Eli. In those days the word of the Lord was rare; there were not many visions."

Observation Questions:

1. What does Hebrews 4:12 reveal about the nature and power of God's word?
2. In Amos 7:2, what is the condition of the land and what does this imply about the people's relationship with God?
3. In 1 Samuel 3:1, what is the state of God's communication with His people and what might this suggest about their spiritual condition?

Interpretation Questions:

1. How does the description of God's word in Hebrews 4:12 relate to the concept of discerning our thoughts and intentions towards Jesus Christ?
2. How can familiarity with the Bible lead to underestimating its significance as the Word of God?
3. How is the situation described in 1 Samuel 3:1 similar to that described in Amos 7:2?

Going Deeper:

1. Reflect on the idea that God's silence can be due to disobedience. Are there times in your life when you felt distant from God due to disobedience or distractions?
2. In the context of 1 Samuel 3:1, have you experienced a period of spiritual dryness where God's word seemed rare? How did you seek to hear His voice during this time?
3. Can you think of a distraction in your life that hinders you from focusing on what God is saying? What is one action you can take to strip this distraction away?

Prayer:

Lead the group in a closing prayer, asking God to help them recognize and respond to His voice, align their lives with His will, and grow in faith and obedience.