

Unveiling Glory and Unleashing Hostility
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John 8:45-59
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Amen. Wonderful music today, thank you so much. I invite with you to turn with me in your Bibles now to John 8. We are continuing to work through the eighth chapter of this glorious Gospel. Last week we saw Jesus' assessment of His hearers. His assessment of the lostness of the lost was striking. The focus had really been on the crowd for the last 15 verses. From Verse 30-44, the text focused on the crowd. Remember we were told that many placed their faith, many believed in Jesus, and so He began to say to those who believed in Him, in Verse 31:

John 8:31 ~ ...“If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine;

The issue is true discipleship, and so He was shepherding those initial, apparent converts, and finding out, as He continued to search their hearts, that there were not really many converts in front of Him. Most of the people in front of Him were rejecting Him. What happens from that point all the way to the end of the chapter is that the Lord Jesus is unveiling His glory and unmasking spiritual hypocrisy. We called a couple of the messages that, ‘Unmasking Spiritual Hypocrisy’. Last week we looked at Verse 44 where He says:

John 8:44 ~ You are of your father the devil,...

That is a stark statement that is shocking, and frightful, and Jesus expresses it because it is true that when you are not born again that is your state, and to really make clear the depth of the illness that sin is. We are dead in trespasses and sins. We are in such a state that we need a great Savior, that's the point. God's Word and its truth are always given with the invitation attached to it. ***“You are of your father the devil... but good news, I am One who is greater than the devil.”*** That's what happens in Verse 45, the focus shifts. If you think about it, the spotlight shifts from the crowd to Jesus Himself. For 15 verses, from Verse 30-44, we've been looking at the crowd. Jesus is searching the hearts of the crowd now in Verse 45 to the end of the chapter. In Verse 59, in this encounter the spotlight focuses on Jesus Himself. If you think about it, in the previous 15 verses, I said the spotlight was on the crowd. We were asking the questions about the crowd. Who are they? What is their true character? What is the essence of who they are? And who is their father?

In which we were really seeing ourselves. The focus was on who we are. What is our true character? Who is our father?

Then in Verse 45 the shift changes and it is about who He is. What is His character? Who is His father? That is the way that the passage unfolds, and what we see really is Jesus unveiling His glory, not unlike what happened on the Mount of Transfiguration. It's not visible in the sense of this overpowering light that was there, but there is something of overpowering light of God's truth that comes out. You see it building through these verses. We're going to read them in a minute, and watch it as it builds, as Jesus is revealing who He is. It comes to a climax in Verse 58 with His glorious statement of who He is. The title of the message is 'Unveiling Glory and Unleashing Hostility'. I said the main focus is on Jesus, and it is, but like when you watch a movie and the camera goes back and forth between the people, there is a little bit of that. The focus is mainly on Christ Himself in these verses, but with brief turns to look at the crowd and how they're responding to what He says. What you see is that as Jesus unveils His glory. The unveiling of His glory brings about an unleashing of hostility in those who said they believed, but who did not truly believe. So the title is 'Unveiling Glory and Unleashing Hostility.' Look with me at John 8:45-59.

John 8:

But because I speak the truth, you do not believe Me. 46 Which one of you convicts Me of sin? If I speak truth, why do you not believe Me? 47 He who is of God hears the words of God; for this reason you do not hear them, because you are not of God."

48 The Jews answered and said to Him, "Do we not say rightly that You are a Samaritan and have a demon?" 49 Jesus answered, "I do not have a demon; but I honor My Father, and you dishonor Me. 50 But I do not seek My glory; there is One who seeks and judges. 51 Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he will never see death." 52 The Jews said to Him, "Now we know that You have a demon. Abraham died, and the prophets also; and You say, 'If anyone keeps My word, he will never taste of death.' 53 Surely You are not greater than our father Abraham, who died? The prophets died too; whom do You make Yourself out to be?" 54 Jesus answered, "If I glorify Myself, My glory is nothing; it is My Father who glorifies Me, of whom you say, 'He is our God'; 55 and you have not come to know Him, but I know Him; and if I say that I do not know Him, I will be a liar like you, but I do know Him and keep His

word. 56 Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad.” 57 So the Jews said to Him, “You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?” 58 Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am.” 59 Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him, but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple.

Let's pray together.

Father, we ask as we open Your Word, and as we begin to consider the picture that we have here of the unveiling of the glory of Your Son, we pray that You might truly shine the light of the glory of Christ into our hearts. That those who are still in darkness might even today experience what we sung about a little bit ago, that You might send a quickening ray of your light and cause their chains to fall off their hearts. Set them free and let them follow Jesus. For those who have already begun to follow, Lord, send forth more light, that we might follow more enthusiastically, more joyfully, our glorious Savior. We pray in His Name, amen.

Have you ever wondered why sometimes it seems as you read the Gospels that there is this tendency on the part of Jesus, as He is ministering, to answer in ways that don't seem as clear as we might like them? Questions are asked, “Are you the Messiah?” and rather than just a simple yes or no, He might say, “It is as you say.” Or even something more unveiled, He might not even answer the question, but ask a question. I don't know about you, but there have been times where I've thought, “I wish God had been more clear. I wish that He had made Himself more plain.” Underlying that, please understand that is completely wrong thinking. This is 180 degrees out of phase with what is reality. We're going to see that as we look at this, but have you ever thought that yourself? “If I could just make this clear to this friend and if they could just see the truth of who Jesus is, they would believe,” or, “If they could just see that six-day creation, young earth, is clearly what is reality. If they could see that they would embrace it, and then they would follow God too.” Why hasn't God been more clear? Then you look at the Gospels and you do see something of what is called by theologians ‘The Messianic Secret’.

I was reading to you from Matthew 17 earlier, and as we read that remember when Peter, and James, and John fall on their faces and they're scared to death. They think they're going to die when they've seen the glory of Christ, and they heard the voice come out of Heaven. They look up finally and they're still alive, and they see only Jesus. What was it Jesus said to them? He said, “Don't tell anybody about this. I charge you, I command you.” Jesus commanded them to not tell anyone until after His resurrection what they had seen. Why was that? You find this other

places, He will heal somebody and say, “Don’t tell anybody.” Not all of the time, but you see this consistently throughout the Gospels. “I’m going to suffer and die. Don’t tell anyone. Don’t tell anyone what I’ve revealed to you.” Why is that? I often wondered that, and sometimes in witnessing to people, you wish you could point to a verse where He just says, “I am God.” We feel like that. Why is it not so clear? I mean, I’ve even mentioned before that I’ve thought to myself, you may remember me mentioning this in a previous message, that if God really wanted to show that Jesus was God’s Son, why didn’t He come down and do such incredible miracles that no one could doubt? Like I said, I think I mentioned, spin the moon on His finger like a basketball. Would that have been too hard for Jesus? He upholds all by the Word of His power. Why did God not do this? Why did He choose to reveal Himself the way He did? I think we have the answer in this passage, and it is a shocking answer.

The answer of why God has not spoken what we might think more clearly, well there are two answers. First of all, the first answer is: He has spoken incredibly clearly. It’s like a blind man saying, “You need to turn up the lights.” You keep turning up the lights and the blind man says, “You need to turn up the lights.” You and I are blind men telling God He needs to be more clear. But not only that, the more shocking part of it is this: The clearer God is the more man rebels against Him. If Jesus had come down and spun the moon on His finger, what would have happened is all the people on the earth would have gathered together against Him to try to kill Him immediately. That is what you see in this passage. I submit to you that as we unpack this passage you’ll see that. What’s happening is like a dimmer switch is being turned on, and as it gets brighter, and brighter, and brighter. What happens is you see increasing hostility. It’s like a little more light brings a little more hostility.

Let me show you how this happens. I said ‘Unveiling Glory and Unleashing Hostility’. There are kind of three different groupings in the passage. We’re going to try to look at the first today, but let me show you the overview. What you have here is Jesus unveiling His attributes, some of His essential character. This is self-disclosure. He is disclosing Himself that He is God, that He is the unique Son of God. What happens is, the more He discloses, the more the opposition intensifies. In Verses 45 and 46, we looked at that a little bit ago, in Verses 45-47 you have Him disclose two attributes of His, that He is truth, and that He is holy. As He unveils that, you see the response of the Jews in Verse 48.

John 8:48 ~ The Jews answered and said to Him, “Do we not say rightly that You are a Samaritan and have a demon?”

He unveils, “I am uniquely the truth and I am uniquely holiness,” and they ask a question, “Aren’t we right in saying that You’re possessed by a demon?” That’s astounding. I mean, to say that to somebody is to impugn them in the most horrific way. “Not only are you not mistaken, You are evil. You’re the essence of evil.” That’s hostility. Well what happens then? Then Jesus presents two more of His attributes. He continues to pull back the veil after that attack in Verse 48, and from Verses 49-51, He presents two more of His attributes. Basically, you have there His meekness which is presented clearly before us, and in response after they see His meekness, and His power. He says, “I don’t seek My own glory,” that’s His meekness, and, “If anyone keeps My Word he will never see death.” So you have Jesus’ incredible, majestic power and His meekness. What happens in Verse 52 is their question becomes a statement. “Now we know that You have a demon. We’re not asking, we’re telling. You have a demon.” They continue to taunt Him in Verse 52 and 53, and then from Verses 54-58, Jesus gives three more attributes of His deity, climaxing with this statement in Verse 58. The veil keeps pulling back until finally He says:

John 8:58 ~ ...“Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am.”

He’s saying, “I am Yahweh. I am Jehovah. I was there with Abraham. I have always been the same yesterday, today and forever. I was Abraham’s hope. I’m what he rejoiced in. Not as a future hope, a present reality in his life.” And what do they do?

John 8:59 ~ Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him,...

Do you see that? They hurled words of murderous rage at Him. “We think You have a demon.” “You have a demon,” and now they’ve picked up stones to kill Him. That gives us a window into why the Lord speaks the way He does in His ministry, why there was a Messianic Secret in the first place. The people could not handle more of the truth.

You remember a couple of years ago, there was a really neat story about those Chilean miners. Remember that? There were 34 men trapped, I forgot how far down it was, it was a long way down, for over two months. They found out they were alive and then they had to figure out how to rescue them. It took an incredible process and they were able to bring one man up at a time. It took like 12 minutes for them to pull them up. I think it was 12 minutes per person. They send it down, it takes a while to send it down, but once he gets on it it takes him 12 minutes to

get up. So it's like a 20-minute process per person. They bring the first guy up, they bring the second guy up, they bring all the way up to the 34th guy, and all 34 had survived. It was cold, it was like our summer time, their winter. Where the guys were it was 90 degrees and 90% humidity in the mine shaft. That's miserable and they were there for two months. I mean they had been working there every day, but then they spent day and night there for two months. One of the things they did was they would send down on the rescue vehicle, whatever it was, the rope thing to crank them back up, they would send down some things to help them assimilate to the surface. They sent down a big, heavy coat. These guys are down there with no shirts on, a t-shirt, whatever, just trying to stay alive. So they sent them a coat and they don't put the coat on right away, but as they get closer to the surface they start feeling that cold and they put that coat on. They gave them dark glasses, really dark glasses to cover their eyes because they had not been out in the sun for two months. In fact, I couldn't find anything that talked about what happened. Doctors were concerned as to what it would do to the human eye to be away from the light of the sun for over 60 days. They knew that their pupils would not be able to dilate properly. They're going to have to be careful and, "So put these heavy glasses on." Well there's a sense in which we lived before we came before Christ, we lived under the earth under a dark mine. What's happening is God is bringing us up out into His light, and the light is overwhelming. And like you might do if somebody shined a bright light in your eyes, you'd push them away, or try to cover up. That's the response of sinful men. The light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not comprehend it.

So what we see in the Scriptures, and particularly in the ministry of Jesus, is this sense in which there is like a dimmer switch. He is helping us to, by His grace, accommodate ourselves to a little more light, and a little more light, and a little more light until conversion happens. Well obviously His Spirit is working all along the way in those who believe because the nature of man as soon as he sees truth is to push it away.

So I said earlier, I have wished God had been more clear. The reality is, He has been abundantly clear, the problem is not in Him, the problem is in us. So the question, the light, the essential truth that is before us is the question: Who is Jesus? And that's the light that's being turned on. It's emphatic in this passage. We have that question on their lips in Verse 53:

John 8:53 ~ ...whom do You make Yourself out to be?"

That echoes actually what we saw earlier in this chapter, Verse 25 of Chapter 8, the Jews in response to the teaching of Jesus earlier in this same time frame said:

John 8:25 ~ So they were saying to Him, “Who are You?”...

They were asking the right question in a sense, “Who is Jesus Christ? Who are You?” All through His ministry He has really been answering that question, “Who am I?” There is a sense in which His self-revelation has become increasingly clear. Earlier a little less clarity. Why is that? Because it was necessary to accommodate the eyes of those who dwell in darkness. But there are moments where the light breaks through with force like on the Mount of Transfiguration and like in this passage. I mean, there are some stark presentations. First of all, He said in this passage directly, “My Father is the One you call God.” He claimed to be the Son of God clearly in this passage. Not only that, that’s leading up to the climax where He says, ***...before Abraham was born, I am.*** But as He unveils His glory it unleashes man’s hostility, and as we look at this what we need to do is look at the glory of God and ask God for grace. Some of you who have not yet been born again, as you look at the truth of who Jesus Christ is, and His claims on your life, you find in yourself that resistance. If you do, what are you to do? You are to cry out to Him for mercy. Accept His assessment of us. “Yes, Lord, You’re right. Clearly I hate the truth because I am the begotten of Satan and sin. I want to be my own God. So I look to You, Lord. Save. Only You can save.”

That song I mentioned in my prayer a minute ago. I was so blessed by ‘How Can It Be?’, that song. The second or third verse said He sends forth a quickening ray. Lord, send forth a quickening ray. You sent forth a quickening ray, he says. There was one ray of light and it quickened me, and suddenly the chains fell off and my heart was free. And then getting up I followed You. Ask Him for that. Depend upon Him, He delights in shining His light. He came so that we might have life. But to have life you have to first of all see your great need.

So we’ve seen Him unfold that, now let’s look how we see in this the unveiling of His glory. I want us to really look at these seven attributes of Jesus’ unique character. I think we’re going to look at maybe two, probably two today. I want us to see how this turns up the light and makes clear that Jesus is everything that we need.

1) Jesus is Truth:

Now the first attribute, the first two I mentioned are in Verses 45 and 46. The first attribute that shows that Jesus is God is this: Jesus is truth. Now I said that

advisedly. It's not that He speaks truth, He talks about speaking truth here. He does speak truth, yes He does, but the fuller picture in John is that He not only speaks truth, He *is* truth. He is the truth. Now look at Verse 45, He says:

John 8:45-46 ~ But because I speak the truth, you do not believe Me. 46 Which one of you convicts Me of sin? If I speak truth, why do you not believe Me?

In the passage twice we have that formula. It's almost a refrain in the Gospel, "Truly, truly, I say to you." Verse 51 and Verse 58. The NIV translates that, "I tell you the truth." For Jesus to speak is to speak truth because He *is* truth. He said in Verse 40 earlier, when we looked at this passage, when He was talking about Abraham, He says in Verse 39:

John 8:39-40 ~ ..."If you are Abraham's children, do the deeds of Abraham. 40 But as it is, you are seeking to kill Me, a man who has told you the truth,..."

Now God speaks truth and God speaks truth liberally, and Jesus Himself is the apex of God speaking truth. I mentioned earlier if God had been more clear. Let's look at that biblically for a moment because I think that's something that a lot of people struggle with. I know I've had conversations with unbelievers who basically have said that. "God should have made it more clear. Why are there so many other religions in the world, so many other voices? Why hasn't God made it more clear?" Well the message of the Bible is that God has made it abundantly clear, and the indignation is misplaced. This is part of the essence of sin, this is proof that we were begotten of Satan because we always impute blame to God naturally. In our unregenerate state, all the blame is with Him. After you get saved you see, "I was wrong about that," but you still struggle with that old man who continues to want to blame God. Don't you find yourself doing that from time to time? "Lord, why did you let this happen to that person too?" We automatically assume He has done something wrong. He does nothing wrong. So here you had this sense that the indignation tends to be with man. We're indignant at Him, and Scripture clearly says that God is indignant with us, and He is the One who is right. We are the problem. He has spoken with great clarity, with great generosity, and the people who say that He hasn't are demonstrating their willful blindness.

Look with me at Romans 1. I want us to go around to some different passages and show this to you. Look with me at Romans 1:19-20. Jesus is the truth. He's the apex. He is the climax of God speaking to us, and what God is speaking to us has

been so incredibly generous. There's a liberality about it. There's an overflowing, just infusing of truth from God that has continued from the beginning. You see this in Romans 1:19. It says:

Romans 1:19 ~ because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them.

He's saying that God has made Himself evident to every creature. Every human being knows about God, because God has written it on their conscience, on their soul. Verse 20:

Romans 1:20 ~ For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.

He's saying that within us there is a testimony that God *is*. All around us is the testimony *God is*, and the problem is, we didn't read this verse, but the last part of Verse 18 says that men suppress the truth in unrighteousness. That's the problem. Men hold down the truth because they don't want the truth. God speaks the truth. God put the truth in us, and yet we by nature, in our fallenness, suppress it.

Now, let's turn back to Psalm 19:1.

Psalm 19:1-4

***1 The heavens are telling of the glory of God;
And their expanse is declaring the work of His hands.***

***2 Day to day pours forth speech,
And night to night reveals knowledge.***

***3 There is no speech, nor are there words;
Their voice is not heard.***

***4 Their line has gone out through all the earth,
And their utterances to the end of the world.***

He's saying you don't really hear a voice audibly, but in reality, this message is going out day after day, night after night. It's pouring out. Do you see that? It's not like it's trickling out. It's not like it's hidden and you've got to go look under a rock to find it. No, God's truth is pouring out of Heaven every day. That's the

message. That's what Scripture says. The indignation with the prophets and with Jesus Himself is always on not, "Hey, we could have really been a little clearer on that." That's never what God says. He says, "How can you not see? Don't marvel or be indignant about any deficiency in Me." God says, "Marvel, mourn over the deficiency in you. So great is the sickness, so great is the darkness of sin that this is pouring out every day and man suppresses it." I mean, you have to work to suppress this. You have to work at ignoring the testimony of God that is pouring out every day, everywhere you look.

He goes on down to talk about the sun in Verses 4 to 6, and then in Verse 7, he turns to the other way God speaks. The first passages we looked at how God speaks in nature. That was natural revelation, general revelation. It goes out to everyone. It's general in that sense. It's natural and it's in nature. God is speaking in nature. But then you have a second kind of revelation. Natural or general is one kind. Those are two names for one thing, and a second is special revelation. It's called special, because God gives it to a special people. Through His people, He speaks, and it's called special, or supernatural would be another name for it. There are two names for this revelation: special or supernatural.

Look at Psalm 19:7.

Psalm 19:7-8 ~ The law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul; The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. 8 The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.

You see all these different synonyms for the Word of God, and so Psalm 19 is about really God's Word: His Word in nature, and His Word in Scripture, and what you see is the amazing generosity of God in speaking. Aren't we glad that we have a God who speaks? He's not a watchmaker God that's just made the world and gone off to do other things. He is a God who speaks. He was speaking to us from the moment He created us.

I was blessed by that video we watched a few weeks ago. I mentioned it last week, too, that sermon by Paul Tripp we watched on Wednesday nights a couple weeks back. Let me just mention that this Wednesday night we're going to watch the next in that series. I'm kind of punctuating our study of Old Testament books. We just finished Zephaniah last Wednesday. We're going to watch the second in the video series by Paul Tripp about our need for personal ministry, kind of counseling one another.

Well, the first message was helpful in a number of ways, and now I've forgotten what was so helpful about it that relates to my sermon. It was very helpful, though. Maybe the Lord will bring that back to mind. Anyway, I guess you just needed to know that Wednesday night we're having another video by Paul Tripp. It's even more emphatic now in God's providence that you will remember that. Okay, excellent. Praise the Lord. Let's move on.

The idea, though, is that God has spoken so clearly. Oh yeah, I remember what it is now. Genesis 1. He points out that when God created man in the Garden of Eden, before man had ever fallen, the first thing God does in Genesis 1:26 and 27 is He makes man in His image, and then what does He do? He speaks to man immediately. That's the first thing! And what Tripp points out is that you and I need the counsel of God not because we're fallen creatures, but we were made to need the Word of God, to need the counsel of God. It's a part of the very fabric of our soul and Jesus is teaching this when He says, "I AM the Bread of Life." He harkens back to the manna. Remember the manna that came from Heaven. Deuteronomy 8:3 says the reason God led them through the wilderness and fed them with manna from Heaven is there was a Spiritual purpose to that. It wasn't just to show the mighty power of God. It was to teach them in the most basic, fundamental way that you need the Word of God, that man does not live by bread alone, but by every Word that proceeds from the mouth of God, that you and I need the Word of God more than we need our food.

So the Lord is so good to speak to us to give us His Word. He made a people who need it, and then He speaks to us. Special revelation is Him speaking to us, and He's not been stingy with that. I mean, He did give it through a particular people, the nation of Israel, but He made them a kingdom of priests, and they were to shepherd His Word, and to hold His Word, and to be a picture to the nations around them of, "Look at this people and look at what God is doing in their midst," and all along the way, people would come from the surrounding nations to worship Yahweh. God would work in their hearts. When the Israelites left Egypt, there were Egyptians that said, "We want to go and follow your God." There were Moabites like Ruth that would come and say, "I want your God to be my God." All along the way, the Lord was doing that, and you see His continued generosity in speaking in some profound ways as you watch the unfolding of the Old Testament.

We saw this when we were looking at the book of Jonah awhile back. The first prophet that is called a prophet when we think about the Law, the historical books and the prophets, Isaiah is the first prophet in line in the Bible, but the first one historically to have a book written down was the prophet Jonah. He prophesied

well before Isaiah, and he was the first prophet God sent with a message, and then told him to write it down and it became a book in the Bible, in the sense of a prophet that went out to give His Word. Where did he go? God sent him to Nineveh. Is God stingy with His Word? No, Jonah's problem is that God is not stingy with His Word. Jonah said, "Please, God, don't speak to them. No, don't speak to them. If You're going to send me to speak to them, I'm going to go the opposite direction." God said, "Go to Nineveh," and Jonah went in a completely different direction. He got on a boat, took off across the Mediterranean Sea, thinking, "I'm going to go as far as I can from Nineveh, so there's no way I can stumble into Nineveh, because if there are any people on the face of the earth who do not need to hear from God, it is those wicked Assyrians."

Well, God found Jonah, didn't He? And remember what happened, though? Jonah didn't want to go so badly that remember He caused a storm to come up on the sea? The sailors are fearing for their lives, and all these pagans are saying, "Pray to your God," because there's this sudden, supernatural storm that's come. Something's wrong, and there Jonah is just kind of twiddling his thumbs, knowing what's going on. Finally, they come to him and say, "Hey, is it you? What's going on here?" Jonah says, "Yes, my God is angry because He told me to do something and I'm doing the opposite." They were terrified and they were like, "Hey, let's get this worked out. We're collateral damage in what's happening here." Jonah says, "Well, I've got a solution for you." Now, you would think he'd say, "Turn the boat around. I'm going to go do what God told me to do." His solution was, "Throw me overboard. I need assisted suicide."

So they throw him overboard and he thinks he's going to die. God appoints a fish to come and swallow him, keep him in his belly for three days, and the fish comes up. He'd gone this way across the Mediterranean, and the fish goes like a straight line like an arrow toward Nineveh. He gets as far as a fish can go which is the seashore there, north of Israel, and he spits him out on the ground. There must have been some kind of need for a bath after that, wouldn't you think? Jonah got up and reluctantly he walks to Nineveh. He goes and he begins to preach the Word of God to Nineveh. Do you remember what he said? His message is simple. *Forty days and Nineveh is no more.* There were no extra points. There were no illustrations. *Forty days and Nineveh is no more.* The whole city repented. The king declared a fast. He said, "Let not man or beast eat or drink anything, and maybe the Lord of Heaven will have mercy." That was the most successful preaching campaign in history. Jonah has that happen.

He makes it a third of the way through the city. He doesn't get all the way through the city. *Forty days and Nineveh is no more.* He's going to have to do this for a couple of days to get all the way through the city, and the message like a wild fire burns ahead of him so that the whole city is repenting, and he hasn't even had to cross the city. So he stops, and he turns around, and he goes back out of the city. He sits down beside the city and frets over the fact that God is showing mercy to those wicked Assyrians. The whole point of Jonah, the prophet given to Israel, is: *Do you not see I'm going to speak to the whole world to bring them to Myself? I'm appointing you to be a prophet like Jonah.*

Not only that, but later you see God's liberality, His generosity in speech in Daniel. We preached through Daniel a couple years ago. Do you remember when we were going through Daniel? The thing that struck me is here he is now with the next wicked kingdom, the Babylonians. Daniel's taken captive, probably made a eunuch, and he lives before God faithfully. He ministers with Nebuchadnezzar, and then when he writes down his book, the Lord has him write half of the book in the language of the Babylonians. The Old Testament is mostly in Hebrew. It's 99% Hebrew. Maybe it's not quite 99%. Maybe it's 98%. It's almost 100% Hebrew, but what God adds in is some Aramaic. There are portions in Daniel, six whole chapters, where the heart of the book is in Aramaic. It is the language of those wicked Babylonians.

I bet there were some people like Jonah that were kind of irritated about that, too. "Why are You speaking to them?" "Because I am a God who is so kind and generous that I invite all the world to be saved. I'm speaking in the Babylonian language, the language that's controlling the whole Mediterranean world (at that time). I'm speaking to them. Come to Me and be saved." It's not God's nature to withhold truth. That's why Hebrews 1 tells us that this building of God's generosity and truth comes to a climax when God sends forth His Son. Hebrews 1:1 says in the past times:

Hebrews 1:1 ~ God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways,...

You see, God spoke in the past and He spoke in many portions and in many ways. Look how generous He was in the past, but He's done something more wonderful in the present.

Hebrews 1:2-3 ~ in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. 3 And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,...

He said God spoke through the prophets. God was so good to speak and to talk to us, and tell us the way of life, to convict us of sin with His Law, to show us the way of salvation through the sacrificial system, but now He has spoken to us in greater clarity. It wasn't that what He said before wasn't true, but what He said before was a shadow, and now the reality is here. He has spoken to us in His Son, and when Jesus comes, we have God speaking with the amazing, amazing generosity that He Himself left the glory of Heaven and came down and lived among us.

That's what John is talking about in his whole epistle. What's the name he gives to Jesus? *In the beginning was the Word*. Jesus is God's speech. Jesus is the perfect revelation. What does a word do? A word reveals what's in the heart. You don't know what somebody's thinking til they speak. You might have some idea, but you don't really know til they speak. We had some idea what was in the heart of God. God had spoken wonderfully in the prophets, but now we know what's in His heart, because He's given us His Word, not just one who has the Word. He put the words in the mouth of the prophet, and now He sends One who *is* the Word. That's why I said Jesus doesn't speak truth, but He IS the Truth.

John 1:14 ~ And the Word became flesh, and (pitched His tent among us) dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

In John 1:18, look at the significance of the coming of the Son of God:

John 1:18 ~ No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.

No one has ever seen God, really the essence of who God is, but the only begotten who came down, He has explained Him. *Explained Him* is literally the term *exegeted Him*. It means to lead out the meaning. You exegete Scripture. You lead out the meaning of the Scripture. That's exegeting it. Jesus has exegeted God. He has let it out and made it plain for everyone to see this is who God is. If you wonder what God is like, look at Jesus Christ. That's why He says to His own

apostles in John 14, when Philip says to Him, “Lord, show us the Father,” Jesus says, “Have I been so long with you, Philip, and you don’t understand that to see Me is to see the Father? I and the Father are One. If you see Me, you have seen the Father.” In that same context just a couple of verses before that, He had said, “I AM.” That’s another one of those *I AM* statements. “I AM the way, and the truth, and the life. I AM the truth.”

Jesus is the supreme, maximum turning on of the light of the glory of God. He is the zenith. Everybody that spoke before Him is eclipsed. It’s like if we were all sitting here in the dark at night, and all of us were like prophets, okay? Just go with me on this image here. You all had a lighter. We were at a concert, I guess, right? In the old days, they used to do the lighter. Now they do the cell phones. I don’t know. I’m not up-to-date on this kind of stuff, but anyway, we all had a lighter. It’s pitch dark in here, and you have a light. It’s like the candle light services. We all have our candle, and people are providing some light. You’d be giving a service. You’d be giving real, true light, but if the roof was peeled off, and it was twelve noon, and the sun was shining in its strength, nobody would be looking at anything based on the light that you had.

That is the difference between the prophets and Jesus. They gave light in the darkness, but when He comes, it’s as if all of the light fades into His light, and in reality, it’s all been light He gave anyway. It was His light in the first place. That’s essentially what’s happening on the Mount of Transfiguration. Remember when Peter says, as we read earlier, “Lord, it’s good for us to be here.” He’s hoping that he’s not going to die. He realizes seeing Jesus’ glory, seeing Elijah, seeing Moses beside him, he’s thinking, “This is not good, but maybe if I say it is good, maybe it will be good,” so he says, “It’s good for us to be here, and let me make three tabernacles.” And what God says to him in response, is the voice comes out of Heaven to Peter’s foolish request of, “I’ll make three tabernacles. I’ll make one tent for You, and I’m going to make one for the other two great guys, Moses and Elijah.” This is the first writing prophet of the Old Testament, who gave us the Law, Moses, and Elijah, another great prophet, who started, in a sense, the prophetic ministry to the kings of Israel, and what He does when He says, “This is My Son whom I love, with whom I’m well pleased. Listen to Him,” is He basically says, “Hush, Moses. Hold your tongue, Elijah. Peter, shut your mouth. Listen to Jesus! He’s the One. You all have nothing to say in comparison to Jesus Christ. This is My Son. This is the fullness of My revelation. Look upon Him. Listen to Him and you see My glory fully displayed. You don’t need your candle anymore. The Son is shining in His strength.”

When you look at your candles of the Old Testament, we still need the Old Testament when we read it, but we never read it without looking ahead to Jesus. See how that light is a reflection of the True Light. He is the Truth. All other voices are drowned out and lost in the glory of His Truth. I mean, when He spoke, what did we see even in this last chapter, John 7? Remember when the Pharisees wanted to arrest Him? They sent the temple guards to arrest Him, and they came back, and they said, “Why haven’t you brought Him?” What did they say? “Never did a man speak like this man speaks.” Those were His enemies. There’s no one like Jesus. The world is filled with voices. The world is filled with false religions. The world is filled with people claiming authority. The world is filled with people who claim to be some special revelation or possess special revelation. You’ve got Confucius, you’ve got Joseph Smith, you’ve got all of the voices that speak up, but if someone would just look at Jesus, the Son consumes everything around it, and there is One voice from God, and it’s Jesus Christ. There is no other.

The message of this passage for you and me who have been granted eyes to see and ears to hear, is don’t be discouraged by the nay-sayers. Don’t be undone by the fact that many, many people oppose this revelation. The Son shines brightly and they cover their eyes and say, “He’s not shining. He’s not speaking.” They cover their ears. They don’t want to hear. That’s exactly what happened when Jesus unveiled His glory then, and if you’ve not yet believed in Him, I said earlier, if you feel in your own heart a sense of revulsion as you hear these things, cry out to Him and ask Him to save you, because if you will look to Him, you will see that He is the true representation of God. God is Holy, God is just, God is pure, God cannot abide/stand with sin. You and I have sin, we’re separated from God forever, we deserve hell forever, and weeping and gnashing of teeth forever, but Jesus Christ has come not only to reveal the holiness of God, but the compassion, and mercy, and love of God, and He is the Way of salvation. He has come and shows us God is One who speaks. God speaks even to sinners. God lovingly invites you to repent and believe the Gospel. Jesus died on the cross to pay for our sins.

As we walk through John, you’re going to see that Jesus talks about that the supreme glory that God gives to Him, the supreme glory, that’s where God manifests completely His being. The supreme moment, the most bright moment where God is revealing His glory, is the cross. That is when God glorifies His Son. That’s when we see all of the attributes of God come together is in the cross. We see the holiness of God, the justice of God, we see the mercy of God, and the love of God. He is the Truth, and we all need to look to Him exclusively as our Guide, as our Savior.

Let's pray together...

Our Father, we thank You that You are a God who speaks, You are a God who is generous and kind, You're a God who speaks to wayward, unbelieving, hard-hearted people, and You're a God who not only speaks, but You heal. You send forth Your Word and You heal us. We pray that You would send forth Your Word and heal us today, and for those that have not yet repented and believed the Gospel, that You would send forth Your Word and heal them even now as they've heard the Word, that You would make it take root in their hearts and heal them.

Father, keep us anchored to You. Keep us anchored to Jesus Christ. Help us realize that in our life every day, the most important thing in the world is to feed on the glory of Christ, to see Him in the pages of Scripture, to treasure Him as our dearest Friend. Father, help us grow in our love for Him, and help us grow in the way that we are able to follow Him. Make Your people more and more holy. We pray in Jesus' Name, Amen.

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