Morning Prayer 20th November 2022

Power of the spoken Word

I’ve been given the privilege of sharing God’s Word with you this morning.

I’s like to share small pieces of the Bible to form a picture for the talk.

Have you ever given a thought to the power of the spoken word? Recently I was drawn to look again at this amazing ability that God gave us.

May I begin with a prayer:

*May the words in my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer.* Psalm 19:14

Why is this prayer said quite often before a sermon or talk?

The speaker is asking what comes out of their mouth has God’s covering and blessing.

So important, that what is said, is of God. ‘THE POWER OF THE SPOKEN WORD’

Can I take you back to the beginning, ‘a very good place to start’. When was the last time you read this part of the Bible?

Genesis 1v3. *And God said,* “*Let there be light…* v6 *And God said,* “*Let there be an expanse between the waters to separate*…v9 *“Let the waters under the sky…* and so on.

Merely by speaking God brought all things into being. He didn’t press a button, use a lever or machinery. He used the ‘power of the spoken word’ AND IT WAS SO!

He spoke. In the words of the chorus, *Ah Lord God, Thou hast made the heavens and the Earth by Thy great power*.

In Genesis 11v1 the Tower of Babel; These people, who were the survivors of the flood, and their descendants decided to build a city with a tower. Gen 11v 4*Then they said, “Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves; otherwise we will be scattered over the face of the whole earth.”*

Already they were going their own way!

V5,6 *But the Lord came down to see the city and the tower the people were building. The Lord said, “If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them.* *Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other*.”

Why did God do this? He could see their rebellious pride to build their own city, the stairway to their own heaven. Already man was doing his own thing, going his own way.

v8 & 9*So the Lord scattered them from there over all the earth, and they stopped building the city.* *That is why it was called Babel- because there the Lord confused the language of the whole world. From there the Lord scattered them over the face of the whole earth.*

If you compare this with the last line of v4 -*not to be scattered* to *so the Lord scattered them*, opposite to v4 and confused their spoken language. He took their common language away. Took that power away. They couldn’t communicate.

So we see here, early on, the power of the spoken word.

So from this word Babel, the origin of the English word to babble, meaning voices, noises, confusion.

What a difference it was with Moses. God wanted Moses to go to Pharaoh to bring the Israelites out of Egypt, for Moses to speak to Pharaoh. Even after 3 amazing signs from God; staff to a snake; leprous hand; Nile water turned into blood, Moses was still reluctant, Exodus 4:10*Moses said to the Lord, “Pardon your servant, Lord. I have never been eloquent, neither in the past nor since you have spoken to your servant. I am slow of speech and tongue.*

v12 God said, “*Now go! I will help you speak, I will teach you what to say.”*

THE POWER OF THE SPOKEN WORD.

*Moses replied,” Oh Lord, please send someone else please send someone else to do it.”*

*So God gave Moses help through his brother Aaron.* And they both went to Pharaoh with ‘God’s Spoken Word’.

(To this day missionaries go out in twos as Jesus also sent his disciples. Exodus chapter 4 is an amazing story of how God enables people to speak on his behalf.)

As God transmits His Word through his prophets to his people, so Moses will transmit God’s message through Aaron to Pharaoh. The prophet’s task was to speak God’s Word on God’s behalf. He was God’s mouth.

You remember how the Word of the Lord came to Jonah to go to the city of Nineveh with God’s Word? He was reluctant and ran away and got swallowed by a big fish. But Jonah didn’t give up on the Lord who heard his cry for help. Jonah 2:1-2*From inside the fish Jonah prayed to the Lord his God.**He said:“In my distress I called to the Lord, and he answered me. From deep in the realm of the dead I called for help, and you listened to my cry.”*

In Jonah chapter 3, God’s Word came to Jonah a second time. Jonah spoke to the people of Nineveh through the Power of the Spoken Word and 120,000 were saved because the king and his nobles and people heard the Spoken Word. People today, can be saved by hearing the Power of the Spoken Word.

Just a quick mention of Balak and Balaam Numbers 22:21 Balak wanted Balaam to put a curse on the Israelites. God said, “Do not go, because these people are blessed”. Then (later) God said to Balaam go, “But only do what I tell you.” God knew Balaam’s real intentions of his heart. The angel of the Lord confronted Balaam three times to no avail. Balaam beat his donkey three times. The donkey saw the angel of the Lord and tried to stop Balaam. In numbers 22:28 -*Then the Lord opened the donkey’s mouth, and it said to Balaam, “What have I done to you to make you beat me these three times?” Balaam answered the donkey, “You have made a fool of me! If only I had a sword in my hand, I would kill you right now.”**The donkey said to Balaam, “Am I not your own donkey, which you have always ridden, to this day? Have I been in the habit of doing this to you?”*

‘THE POWER OF THE SPOKEN WORD’ If God can speak through a donkey, how much more can you speak through us, made in God’s image! What does God use to bring our attention to him? Who or what is your donkey? How does God speak to you? What does he put in your way to get your attention?

The power of the Spoken Word was spoken through Jesus. In Mark 4:39 we read how Jesus calms the storm. as Jesus and the disciples were crossing lake Galilee, Jesus was asleep in the boat. *A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped.**Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, “Teacher, don’t you care if we drown?” He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, “Quiet! Be still!” Then the wind died down and it was completely calm.*

Can you imagine how amazed they must’ve been? But that same God, who created creation and spoke everything into being is Lord over all he has made, not only the elements, but life and death.

In John 11:43, Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead. *Jesus called in a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!”* Jesus didn’t go in, or lay hands on Lazarus, He didn’t help him out. Jesus just spoke -the Power of the Spoken Word again. Can you imagine how amazed they must have been? The Spoken Word! God’s glory seen by all.

That same power of the Holy Spirit, enabled Peter, John and Paul and others to speak boldly and do miracles. God spoke to the hearts and minds of the people that wrote the Bible. Not only is it the written word but the Spoken Word and still speaks today.

God wanted to speak to us from the beginning of time. For us to converse with Him. He came to speak to us in the form of Jesus, God with us and then through the Holy Spirit. Evangelists use the spoken word of God. God’s word has been passed on to us through time by the way of the Bible and continues to speak to us today.

When I record number of sermons talks or reflections I have heard, they have inspired me, corrected me, given me hope and direction. How blessed I have been through God speaking the POWER OF THE SPOKEN WORD through these people.

We too can bless people impress people by sharing our faith on those occasions when it seems right to mention God or Jesus to non-believers. We tend to hesitate perhaps through fear, embarrassment, reaction or thinking ‘it’s not for us, leave it to the evangelists’. Do we need to trust more in the power of the spoken word? and that God will give us the words to speak?

Paul encourages us in Romans 10:14 *How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?*

The spoken word can be used for good or bad. It can cause wars or bring peace, knockdown or lift up.

Dictators like Hitler, Mussolini and Stalin gave powerful speeches inciting people to follow their evil desires the Power of the Spoken Word.

Or peacemakers like Martin Luther King Jr., Gandhi,Nelson Mandela and John Hume, (who helped to bring peace to the troubles Northern Ireland and received a Nobel peace prize in 1988) were given the power of the spoken word

And of course, our Lord Jesus, who said Matthew 5:9 *Blessed are the peacemakers they will be called sons of God*.

So what about us? Do we have the Power of the Spoken Word? Yes, we do! It is God given. Think of the mother in childbirth. When the baby is delivered it’s first gasp of air -that cry –it’s first voice.

We can use our speech to build up or to knock down.

Do you remember the old playground saying ‘sticks and stones can break my bones but words will never hurt me’? Can there ever be a more untrue saying?

Have you ever had cross words with your spouse? your neighbour? a friend? a member of your family? or said something in haste? Made a reply that you regret and want to retract it and say sorry but don’t know how? The Power of the Spoken Word.

Have we been quick to speak and slow to listen? jumped in with a coarse and hurtful reply? is there an occasion or occasions in our lives that linger in our memories that bother us? where we need to forgive and ask for forgiveness?

As Christians we are encouraged to put relationships right.

There may be something we have said to someone years ago that has dragged on and spoilt a relationship that needs to be put right.

James 3:9 *With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings.*

What we say can be very powerful. We can use the power of the spoken word to build up, encourage, knockdown, be positive or negative.

James 1:19 *Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry.*

Like Moses and Jonah and others who are reluctant to speak, I too, was nervous and reluctant to give the talk this morning. I am not learned or a great speaker, however I felt God’s prompting to share what I have said this morning. There may be one person here this morning that God has spoken to by what I have shared. Then it would’ve been what God wanted.

A prayer: Lord and Heavenly Father, we thank you that you have enabled us to share in the Power of the Spoken Word. Thank you for those gone before us, who brought your Word and for the spoken Word through the Bible that gives us ‘a lamp to our feet and a light to our paths.’ Help us, Lord, to put right those things we have said in haste, relationship scarred or broken and to be able to forgive. Fill our hearts with your love, so that what comes out of our mouth is of you.

May the words of *our mouths* and the meditation of *our hearts* be pleasing in your sight, Oh Lord, our Rock and Redeemer.