

Lesson 3: Listening to God's Word

Resources Needed: miniature pulpit, pastor's robe, pastor's stole

Vocabulary

Preacher – An appointed herald of God's Kingdom Message

Pastor – One appointed to shepherd/care for God's people

Vestments – The uniform a pastor wears when performing the duty of preaching

pulpit – the place from which God's appointed teacher speaks

Introduction

We are going to start our time today listening to a true story from God's Word. This story has a lot of words and even some really strange words, but I want you to work hard at listening carefully because at the end of the story, I'm going to have some questions for you. Listening is hard work! Do you think you can do it? Ok, are you ready?

(Read the story of the building of the Tabernacle. Read Exodus 25: 1-9 then skip to 26:1-???. Read as far as you can or even skip through several chapters reading parts of the instructions about the many different things without losing the children's interest.)

Now, I have some questions. Let's see how carefully you listened.

1. **Who was God speaking to when he gave these instructions?** (*Moses*)
2. **What did God tell Moses to do?** (*collect things and build things*)
3. **Did God want Moses to do all this work by himself?** (*No. All the people were supposed to help.*)
4. **Did God talk to the other workers?** (*No*)
5. **Was God specific (that means did he say exactly what he wanted) with his instructions?** (*Yes! Very specific!*) (Let the children give examples if they want.)
6. **How did the other builders know what God wanted them to do if he didn't speak to them?** (Moses, God's appointed leader had to tell them what God said.)

This story helps us understand the part of worship that I want to talk about today. It is the part of Worship called "Listening to God's Word."

So far we have talked about "Entering God's Presence" (pause here and ask if anyone remembers the parts.)

- Hearing God's Call
- Entering with awe
- speaking words of thanks in prayer & singing
- confessing our sin
- accepting the peace God has offered us and extending it to one another.

And last time we were together, we talked about "Committing to God's Kingdom." Do you remember the things we do in worship that are part of Committing to God's Kingdom?

- confess our faith in God
- Listen to His Kingdom Proclamations
- Speak to God in prayer about the things going on in the Kingdom
- Give to God's Kingdom
- Sing thanks and praise to God since He is such a good King!

The Sermon

So let me ask you, when we get to the part that comes next, called the sermon, how do we know that what the preacher is saying is from God's Word? (Let the children think about this for a few seconds and offer a few possible answers.) Remember that when we want to know something about God we should always look in his Word for answers. In the story we heard from the Bible, God wanted something to be built right? And so he gave those instructions to one person and told that one person to share the instructions with the rest of the people. How do you think knowing this story from the Bible might be helpful in answering our question? Moses heard from God and shared God's words with the people similar to the way PREACHERS do today. But there are some differences.

(THE PREACHER)

The PASTORS at our church are Pastor Brandon and Pastor Monty and PREACHING God's Word is just one of their many jobs as PASTORS. When they PREACH, they aren't telling us something brand new that God just spoke to them the way he did to Moses. Rather, they are telling us what God has already said in the Bible and with His mouth when he became a man, Jesus. You see, Moses lived before God became human. But once Jesus lived as a human, God told us everything he ever wanted us to know in Jesus. So let me ask you this: what part of Moses' body did he use to hear God's Word? (*his ears*) What part of the body do PREACHERS use today to hear God's Word? (*their eyes as they read and study the Bible*).

You may have noticed that the PREACHER is the only one who ever stands behind the PULPIT to speak. That is because a PULPIT is the place from which God's appointed teacher speaks. When the PREACHER stands behind the PULPIT, there are a few ways that we know they are *teaching* God's Word and that we are *hearing* God's Word:

1. They read the Words they are teaching us straight from The Bible. Because the Bible is God's Word, it is important that we hear it before they start talking about it. But then they do also start talking about it. It is the job of the PREACHER to help us understand what all of God's Word means. Do you think that's a hard job? That is a really big job and just like listening took a lot of work for you and me, it takes PREACHERS a lot of work too! They have to read and study God's Word all the time. They pray and talk to God about the Scriptures they will be teaching each week. They talk to other PREACHERS and read things that PREACHERS from long ago wrote down about God's Word. And they do a whole lot of listening to what God teaches them about how to share His word with us. So, they read the words straight from the Bible before they start talking about those words, but what else? Can just *anyone* stand up and preach after they have studied? How do we know who the PREACHER is?
2. The PREACHER wears a uniform. If you were really sick and you needed help, you would go to a hospital right? When you walked in to the hospital, would you walk up to the first person you saw and ask them to tell you what was wrong with you? No. How would you know who to ask for help? (Let the kids describe the look of a doctor.) What if you were lost or hurt and you couldn't find your mom or dad. Would you just walk up to any person on the street and ask for help? How would you know who was safe to ask for help? (let the kids describe a police officer. You can repeat this discussion with a few different occupations who wear uniforms if you want.) In all of these cases, you knew who could help you because of the uniform the person was wearing. Their clothes told you that they were someone skilled and trained to deal with exactly what you needed right? Well, PREACHERS are trained and skilled as well. Listen to this verse from God's Word about a PREACHER'S job (Read 1 Timothy 1:3-7 and/or

Ephesians 3:7-10 from the Bible) **They wear a uniform to let us know that God has called them and trained them to teach His Word in this way. Their uniforms are called VESTMENTS. The VESTMENTS include the robe and a colorful stole which also reminds us what season of God's story we are in. Because PREACHING is only one of the PASTOR'S jobs, he doesn't wear his VESTMENTS all the time – only when he is PREACHING.**

(If anyone asks questions about why we have had some preachers who didn't wear a robe, you can say something like, "When God assigns the job of being a pastor to someone, He expects them to study and prepare to do that job well. And so he gives other men to test him and make sure he is ready to the job. Sometimes, a pastor may begin preaching as he approaches the end of that testing but before he has taken all of the tests. He doesn't start wearing the robe, however until all of the tests are complete.)

3. **The third way we know that we are hearing God's Word is when it makes sense with all the rest of God's Word.** Listen to this verse in the Bible that tells about some people who lived in a place called Berea who heard God's Word preached: "They received the Word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so." (Acts 17: 11b) **This is one way to do the work of listening – we hear the word, then we go home during the week and study what we heard. It helps us know it better and it helps us grow to trust the PREACHER God has given us when we realize that He is teaching things that make sense with all the words of God.**

(THE SERMON)

So now that we know who does the preaching, let's talk for a minute about what he is preaching. What is it that God wants the PREACHER to tell the people?

1. **The PREACHER is telling the people that God is still building something!** Just like in the Old Testament when Moses told the people God wanted them to build a Tabernacle, the PREACHER today is telling us that God is still building something. What do you think he's building? (let children answer) **He's building his Kingdom! Remember that he started building it waaaaay back at the beginning of time when he formed the world and all the stars and the trees and the animals and people. But we broke it. And God has been fixing it and rebuilding it ever since. And he wants us to get in on that work! Just like he told Moses his plans for the Tabernacle so the people could get in on the work of building, he wants us to get in on the building of His Kingdom that stretches over the whole earth. The sermon is the part of worship when the PREACHER gives us God's instructions for Kingdom building! And that's why, in this class, we place the Bible under the PULPIT. God's Word is the foundation for this building that God is doing on us through the PREACHING.**
2. **God also wants us to know what people in His Kingdom look like.** What do you think God tells us His people look like? (children may look confused) **Don't forget that the answers for all these questions are in The Bible. (let children answer) God's Kingdom people look like Jesus! They are people who have put on Jesus Christ. The sermon that we hear from the PREACHER helps us understand how God clothes us in Christ. Listen to what God says in His Word about being clothed in Christ. (Read Col. 3:12-14) So, in the sermon each week, the PREACHER is telling us, from God's Word, how to put on Christ.**

I want to teach you a song that we sing in worship sometimes just before the sermon to remind us of whose word we are hearing and what the sermon is all about. Listen as I read the words then we can practice singing it.

Speak, O Lord, as we come to You
To receive the food of Your Holy Word.
Take Your truth, plant it deep in us;
Shape and fashion us in Your likeness,
That the light of Christ might be seen today
In our acts of love and our deeds of faith.
Speak, O Lord, and fulfill in us
All Your purposes for Your glory.

Teach us, Lord, full obedience,
Holy reverence, true humility;
Test our thoughts and our attitudes
In the radiance of Your purity.
Cause our faith to rise; cause our eyes to see
Your majestic love and authority.
Words of pow'r that can never fail—
Let their truth prevail over unbelief.

Speak, O Lord, and renew our minds;
Help us grasp the heights of Your plans for us—
Truths unchanged from the dawn of time
That will echo down through eternity.
And by grace we'll stand on Your promises,
And by faith we'll walk as You walk with us.
Speak, O Lord, till Your church is built
And the earth is filled with Your glory.