

Hebrews 1:1-4
 Jesus is Greater
 20170730

Open your eyes to the supremacy of Christ

Introduction: Many of you know that my parents have a bed and breakfast. Now, living at a bed and breakfast doesn't particularly mean that you get a special bed. But, I'll tell you from firsthand experience that you do get wonderful, tasty, delicious breakfasts. With this type of exposure, you tend to develop a certain appreciation for good ingredients and homemade cooking. God has given us the wonderful ability to taste and enjoy foods of all types. When it is possible, we even like to partake in the best food, those made with the finest ingredients, the purest. Illustration of pure maple syrup harvested and made from local maples **or** some maple flavored high fructose corn syrup. Which would you like? Or similarly, to go with your fresh berries, I can provide you with raw honey extracted from the comb this morning, or artificial honey made from synthetic sweeteners, coloring agents, and artificial flavors? The choice is easy, right? If it is not costing you any extra, you know what your choices are you are going to select the purest, the best, that which is supreme. The substitute will not do when the real thing is readily available.

Now with that image of imitation, or substitute vs pure in your mind. I want you to realize this concept relates to us as spiritual beings. **FCF:** *God has provided everything necessary for us to be fully satisfied in him and yet we seek substitutes, we even crave what is fake, those things that are only representative of the One True God. This of course leaves us unsatisfied and lacking.* What needs to happen in order to not seek substitutes? We need to realize that God has provided one way to know and be satisfied in him fully, that church - is through his Son Jesus Christ. This is the truth we will be growing in today as we study God's word: **Having our eyes opened to the supremacy of Christ.**

After spending over half a year studying from Deuteronomy together, this morning we launch into our next study beginning in chapter one we will spend our time focused on the first four verses. This is the introduction to the book of Hebrews, and the writer is drawing the audience in to the truth that Christ is greater, that the supremacy of Christ is established, so any and all substitutes will not do. Once the Son of God is known nothing else will satisfy. He wants to relate to us, his most precious creation, us – humans: men, women, and, children. Let's open our eyes together and see the supremacy of Christ as God wants to relate himself to us through the Son.

God Relates Through Speaking To Us vv1-2a

1. **v1** *"Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets,"*
 - a. God spoke to our fathers.
 - i. Speaking is active, speaking requires give and take. It requires a receptive ear to be able to take in what the speaker is presenting.
 - ii. God has related long ago at many times and in many ways by speaking.
 1. God would speak through visions, through dreams, through burning bushes, plainly, as it says in **Numbers 12:8** He spoke to Moses mouth to mouth, or even oddly to us - through a donkey.
 2. God relates to his people by speaking. That is why as a church we study what has been recorded as God's word because we want to be Grounded in God's Word, knowing God wants to speak to us as well, it is his established pattern. During the church age, the time we are in presently, God speaks to us through his Word.

- a. Dear brothers and sisters that is why over and over again you will be encouraged to spend time daily in reading God's word, because that is how God will speak most definitively to us during this time. It is something that can be shared in here amongst the fellowship of believers.
 - b. The God that we serve hasn't changed in his desire to be known by speaking. We represent him well to one another when we engage in Biblical Fellowship, central to that fellowship is speaking with one another the truths of scripture. Sharing what God is teaching us, growing us in, and chiseling away to make us more like him as we walk faithfully by his revealed truth.
2. **v2a** "...but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son,..."
- a. As opposed to long ago the author quickly brings the attention to the current age of his audience, which also happens to be the age that we are still in.
 - b. In this age, being these last days the church age, the final stage before Christ's return, God has spoken.
 - i. This rendering, of the verb "to speak" in the Greek is not just a snapshot as it was in **v1**, but an active form, God is still doing this, He is still speaking, speaking to us by his Son.
 - c. We have been blessed as a congregation to work through the book of Deuteronomy, and to get to know Moses more intimately, but even he attested that another would come. **Deuteronomy 18:15-19**
 - d. Peter boldly testified in Jerusalem to the fulfillment of this prophecy coming true in the life of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. **Acts 3:19-26**
 - e. Peter was one of the witnesses of the truth and it is upon the witness of him and the other faithful followers of Christ that the church was catapulted forward into existence by God's design. Those early adherents to the Christian faith had their eyes opened, we also want to have **our eyes opened to the supremacy of Christ**
 - f. **v2a** "...but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son,..." God relates by speaking to us by his Son, where before it was many times and in many ways, now he speaks by his Son. Just consider those early witnesses of Christ, they became devoted beyond what our common understanding of devotion is today.
 - i. *Maybe you come here today and think you don't even come close to the devotion exhibited by the earlier followers, but I have observed many of you and have been greatly encouraged in my faith by you. Let me ask you have you given up a livelihood, or at least a more lucrative one? Have you broken up long established family bonds? Have you moved away from what you knew to be as home? Have you ever been subjected to persecution to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ?* The early believers did these things and more, because **their eyes were opened to the supremacy of Christ**. Church, what they knew to be true was that God was speaking through Christ, and no substitute would do. The word had to be proclaimed and they would do just that, proclaim the Gospel of Christ to any who would listen. (examples: Paul going back into Lystra and Moses going up the mountain as discussed last week)

Transition: In this first portion of the text we have seen that God relates to us by speaking to us through Christ, and that is over and above the speaking by the prophets, but we will also see next that God relates through becoming one of us.

God Relates Through Becoming One of Us **vv2b-3a**

1. **vv2b-3a** "...by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world...."
 - a. Our aim in studying this passage is to know Christ more fully in our pursuit of **having our eyes opened to the supremacy of Christ**.
 - b. Jesus Christ is God incarnate, fully God and yet fully man, without sin he came to dwell amongst men, not as a spirit hovering above the earth remaining aloof, but to be born of a virgin woman. The Apostle John wrote of Jesus in **John 1:14** "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth."
 - c. This one and only Son of God came to relate to us, to be tempted in every way that you or I have ever been tempted. *Children you are not the only ones who are tempted, your parents are tempted, your elders are tempted, your school teachers are tempted, and Jesus was tempted too.*

- i. The difference of course is that where all others have failed to resist those temptations; becoming ensnared by the sins that follow – Christ did not, tempted He did not sin in order to become the perfect sacrifice to atone for your sins and my sins. **He can relate to us in our temptations because he became one of us.**
 - 1. **Gal 4:4** says, “*But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law,*”
 - ii. **If he wasn’t fully man, he couldn’t be our substitute. If he wasn’t fully man he couldn’t suffer death as required by the law of God for all who have sinned, not that he sinned but he, by God’s design, stepped into the place where I belonged, and where any who place their faith in him belonged, directly in the path of God’s perfect wrath. Romans 5:12–21**
- d. This all powerful, almighty Son of God came into the world to save the lost, not from afar, no, He came in such a way that He might relate to us. He came as a baby! **In our home, right now we have a baby, a son. He is favored by all in the home and by visitors who come to see us, he is held, talked to, played with, and cared for by all. Christ came as a baby, think about that! He wanted to be known intimately as a child. He grew into a perfect sinless man and gathered friends around himself, he wanted to be known as a man who walked the earth, he wanted to be known as a friend, and a companion.**
 - i. Church, Christ is the perfect, the supreme individual to have a relationship with. He is always upright and just, yet humble and approachable. Christ went to the cross to take the place of the sinner, so that he might know us more perfectly through his death, burial, and resurrection from the dead. Christ ascended into heaven and the Holy Spirit was sent to believers, to be known. **He wants to be known as our helper.**
- e. I just mentioned my baby son, but he being born of the flesh has inherited the sin nature that has been pervasive since the time of Adam. Vanessa and I regularly pray that God would save our children from that heritage, that he would adopt them into his family, to be heirs with Christ. Not to be led by the flesh, but to be led by the Spirit as Paul writes in **Romans 8:14–17** “*For all who are led by the Spirit....*”
- f. Do you believe that? God wants us to be called his children, literally adopted into the heavenly household!

Transition: As we have seen how God relates through speaking to us and by becoming one of us, these two wonderful ways God relates are manifested as God Relates Through Purifying us from Sin.

God Relates Through Purifying Us from Sin vv3b-4

- 1. **vv3b-4** “*...After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high....*”
 - a. Faith in Christ alone brings about the salvation that we need. He purified us, something angels could not do, something the works of man could not do. **Titus 2:14**
 - i. Purification for sins has been made. Past tense. The redeeming work of the Lord was accomplished. It is a truth that we are to live in and when we pray we pray to God and Jesus is sitting at his right hand making intercession on our behalf.
 - b. We have already looked at many amazing aspects of **the supremacy of Christ, our eyes have been opened further**. But I want you to consider something we don’t often think about when thinking about God, that is how terrifying it would be to encounter God apart from the covering of Christ’s purification for sin. We have enjoyed looking at how God speaks through his Son relating to us in that way, and how God relates to us by being like us as Jesus adorned himself with humanity.
 - i. It is the point we are considering now that absolutely shatters the mold in my mind. That is that God would want to relate to us so intensely, that he purified us, purified us by the blood of his Son. Purified us from our sins.
 - ii. Even though we have seen amazing things Christ has done, this seems to be the high point of his work. He, with the approval of the Father, sits down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. Proving his supremacy. More so than any other, Christ is greater. The terror of approaching God in our sinful state is removed by placing our faith in Jesus Christ and his completed work upon the cross. **No substitute exists**, nothing could be made to do what Christ has done.

- iii. That means when the time appointed to stand before the judgment seat comes, our Lord and Savior is there. He has related to us by speaking into our hearts, He has related to us by becoming like us in every way, except for sharing our affinity for sin, he gladly tells the Father, "Welcome him into paradise, I know him." "Welcome her into paradise, I know her." And the pronouncement is made, well done good and faithful servant enter into the joy of your master. (Mt 25)
- c. The deity of Christ, **superior** to angels, because as stated earlier God made all things through him (v2), but listen also to **Colossians 1:16-17** "*For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth,.....*"
 - i. His very being, his substance is worthy to be praised.
- d. Christ supremacy is established in his being, in addition to the power of his word, which we looked at earlier, but we also see the excellence, the superiority - of his name! **Ephesians 1:17-23** "*that the God of our Lord Jesus...*"
- e. We are to worship none other than God, and God alone. Christ is one with the Father, and even though fully man, it is right to worship the Son because he is fully God. I admit this doctrine boggles the mind, and can be difficult to grasp, actually impossible apart for the work of the Holy Spirit. That being said, when you wrestle with it you are in good company. **John 14:8-11**, saying "...*Lord, show us the Father...*"
- f. Not everyone sees this, our eyes, even as believers, are not fully adjusted, not fully open to the supremacy of Christ. Spiritual blindness is very real. Paul speaks of this in **2 Corinthians 4:3-4** "*And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. In their case the god of this world...*"
 - i. Some in this room are blinded in this way. One of our dear sisters has requested that we pray for this blindness to be removed from a loved one. This is what we are learning about this morning so that our confidence is not placed in a substitute, but in the supremacy of Christ.
 - ii. The words of Paul continue in this line, just a little down from where I was reading about blindness in **2 Corinthians 4:6-7** "*For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness,".....*"

Transition: Not everyone has this treasure, not everyone has their eyes opened, and I'll conclude this morning by saying.

Conclusion: Our passage today is an anvil for those who try to hold to a belief that would say Christ was something other than God in the flesh. The statement being made in these four verses is that God made the world through his Son, God made purification for sin through his Son, and God has entrusted all things into the care of his Son. Not to be some distant lord watching subjects from a far, but to speak and to be known by us. God wants to walk with you, he wants to talk with you.

Do you ever get overwhelmed by that reality? Walking along in the cool of the morning, maybe on your morning run, or sitting on your back steps in the evening when all is quieting down. Does it ever just hit you? God wants to be known by you, to have a relationship with you. I have, I have had the overwhelming weight of those experiences hit me hard, and I admit when they come they are too much for me, I break down, I break down in the stark reality of my failure to walk faithfully with Him, and yet I want more of those deeply exposing and honest interactions with Him!

It is amazing that this God has worked to relate to us through speaking, through becoming like us, literally taking on our flesh, and by purifying us from sin by suffering and dying, by absorbing the wrath of God, experiencing the separation from God that we each deserve. All these ways that he has related most intimately to us has been by the Son.

Open your eyes to the supremacy of Christ. He is not a fraud or a fake, no substitute exists for him. He was not an afterthought to accommodate our fallenness, no (**1 Peter 1:20**) "*He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you.*" He is who are eyes are fixed firmly upon. He is who we live for.

Family

Table Talk



July 30, 2017

Family Discussion

1. In order to see how magnificent it is that God would relate to us by speaking, I want you to try something - an experiment. There in your home try to relate what you are thinking about to someone else in the room without saying a word, without gesturing, with no extra communication. How did it go? Doesn't talking make communicating so much easier? How do you talk with God? Hear from Him?
2. As wonderful as it is to know that God has spoken to us, he has done so in a very personal and intimate way. When God spoke to the Israelites at Mt. Sinai it was scary, but when Jesus called the little children to himself, they came to him. Do you go to God in prayer, knowing that he is listening to you?
3. God has sent Jesus so that we might relate to him for an eternal purpose. Christ made purification for sin by living a perfect sinless life and taking on the sins of all of us, you included, so that he might make purification for us. We need to respond to what Christ has done, in faith, so that we might be saved.

GOD'S TRUTH

Open your eyes to the supremacy of Christ

Key Verse



"...He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs." Hebrews 1:3-4

Scripture Memory: Hebrews 1:1-2

TABLE READING

Lead your kids into God's Word...

1. Hebrews 1:1-2, 2 Peter 1:20-21, John 1:14, Matthew 17:5
2. Exodus 19:16-20, Galatians 4:4, Luke 2:8-14, Luke 18:15-17, Matthew 12:15-21
3. Hebrews 1:3-4, Titus 2:14, Acts 4:11-12, Ephesians 1:17-23

"AND THESE WORDS THAT I COMMAND YOU TODAY SHALL BE ON YOUR HEART. YOU SHALL TEACH THEM DILIGENTLY TO YOUR CHILDREN, AND SHALL TALK OF THEM WHEN YOU SIT IN YOUR HOUSE, AND WHEN YOU WALK BY THE WAY, AND WHEN YOU LIE DOWN, AND WHEN YOU RISE. YOU SHALL BIND THEM AS A SIGN ON YOUR HAND, AND THEY SHALL BE AS FRONTLETS BETWEEN YOUR EYES. YOU SHALL WRITE THEM ON THE DOORPOSTS OF YOUR HOUSE AND ON YOUR GATES." - DEUTERONOMY 6:6-9 (ESV)