

Pay more attention to Jesus - Prophet, Priest and King

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 22 November 2015

Preacher: Daniel Ralph

[0 : 00] I have two readings for you. One reading, one is, verse 2, Hebrews 1, we'll turn back to chapter 3.

So Hebrews 1, verse 1, I'll hear God's word. Many times in him spoke the prophets. His last days he and his son pointed the arrow through whom all the world, the appearance of the glory and the exact his nature, holds the universe of his power.

After making pure hands, the hand of the magic have a superior to, as the name did, is than. Now I'm going to do Luke 9. If you want to, so in verse 8, but we are focusing through section.

Reading the Luke 9, it's what's more than once. So Luke chapter 8, verse 28, God's word. Now about eight of these sayings, that's Jesus.

Peter and John went up onto the mountain, and at the appearance of his face, his clothing white, the men were talking, and Elijah stood in glory at his departure, which he watched at Jerusalem.

[1 : 12] Now Peter and those who were heavy, they became fully aware of glory, who stood with him. As these men were parting to Jesus, master, good that we are here. Be tense, one loses, one for Elijah, not knowing what.

As he sings, a cloud shadowed and overshadowed them. They were afraid. To the cloud of, out of the cloud says, this is my son, my chosen one. The voice had spoken, and told them in those days they had to hear.

Before we do, we'll stand to one. As you're making your way, the proverb says that the one who speaks seems right, another comes, speaks.

A bit about teach children, and children, adults, they are years put up. But the statement for anyone in any situation seems right, another comes, speaks.

And so the proof is, there have been many, throughout the voices by God, there are voices that have been seen, and how drastic self is in Isaiah.

[2 : 18] The question is, should we listen the most? That she says, long and in many ways, God, our fathers, by the first two says, last days, he has his son.

And the voices, there's been a lot of speaking, and that, point, after everything that is done, someone must have the, on any key, matters of faith, gospel, and what, someone, the final, and the final songs to God.

So the question that, reckoning is this, Jesus be listened, listen to Jesus. Why should you, to Jesus? Here's something that's really obvious, bear with it, and that is the reason why you know, in other words, our students, when we take, it's a very simple question, that is, is it possible, saved, and not know, who are bare basics in Christ, to take away the, do they, all gospel is, that we can all, ourselves a little bit serious, some of us know, but it is, and no very, reason why we know we are, because the gospel, what has happened, is spoken.

Those words have created faith in us, they are words that do that, we hear the word of God, and the word of God produces faith, but at the same time, it gives explanation, it gives reasons, it gives examples, it gives the answer to the question, why am I saved?

So the gospel explains to me things I could not know if God did not speak. Jesus died on the cross to take away my sin, and that doesn't require any words.

[3 : 53] It's an action of God, even though God explains it, it's, it's the very accomplishment that saves me, but I actually get to find out about it through words. God speaks to me, God speaks to you.

So we know we are saved because we've heard the gospel. The gospel, hearing the gospel leads to our salvation, but we know that we're saved because we've heard the gospel as well.

It explains to us what happens when a person comes to faith in Christ Jesus. It's, it explains everything else that that person is to know and to understand and to believe in order to live a Christian life.

In other words, so much of our life is actually wrapped around the word of God. And if we drift from those words, we drift from the God who speaks those words.

And so we know the things that we know because God speaks. And he speaks to us. And he wants us to understand what he is saying. And we couldn't know half the things that we actually know about the Christian life and faith if God didn't speak, but just gave his son to the cross to take away our sin.

[5 : 08] That's what saves us. And we come to faith in that through listening to the words of God. In fact, you might even want to stop and ask yourself the question of why Paul wrote to the church at Rome.

We read it at the first part of this evening service. Why is Paul explaining the gospel to a church that's been saved by the gospel? Why does Paul go into a lengthy discussion in quite depth of detail explaining the gospel which they have been saved by?

Well, because as we saw in Romans 15, there are still some things that they're not clear on. So we can be saved by the accomplishment of Christ.

And yet we still need to know the gospel and to fully appreciate and fully fall in love, I guess, with God who's actually saved us. But why should we listen to Jesus?

That's the question that I want us to focus on this evening. And why should other people listen to Jesus? I mean, as Christians, we spend our whole life in the hope that those who don't follow Jesus will actually listen to Jesus.

[6 : 29] Pastors turn up at church on a Sunday morning and perhaps a midweek Bible study or wherever else that they're going in the hope that the people that they're going to speak to will listen and want to listen to Jesus.

And so I guess it's pretty important to answer the question of, well, why should I? Why should I actually listen to Jesus?

And why should I listen to Jesus more than anybody else? Well, just turn the page in your Bible to Hebrews chapter 2, verse 1, and just read the first verse, which says this.

It begins with a therefore, and so all the reasons are found in chapter 1. So because of everything in chapter 1, therefore, we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard lest we drift away from it.

In other words, the writer of Hebrews wants us to understand that we are to pay much closer attention to Jesus lest we drift away.

[7 : 33] Well, why should I pay much closer attention to Jesus? Well, because of everything that is said in chapter 1. Chapter 1 gives me a whole bunch of reasons why I should listen to Jesus.

And then at the beginning of chapter 2, the writer says, now, bearing in mind everything that I've taught you in chapter 1, therefore, now, pay much closer attention to what we have heard lest you drift away from what you have heard.

And of course, drift away from the person who's actually said it. You see, we don't just drift from words. We drift from the speaker of those words.

That's his point. That is, we drift from the words of God. We are in the danger of drifting from God himself. Because God and his word are one.

They're not separate things. They are indeed the same thing. Now, you'll notice in chapter 2, verse 1, he doesn't tell you to pay attention. He tells you to pay much closer attention to what you have heard.

[8 : 43] And there's a big difference between the two, between paying attention and paying much closer attention. And the differences are fairly simple. And that is that believers now, as they did back then, can believe certain parts of the Bible more than others.

And so what happens when you focus on one particular part of the Bible more than others? Well, you get to this part in Hebrews chapter 2, verse 1, and you are being told, well, even though everything else has been said, now pay much closer attention to what you have heard.

What have I heard? Well, everything just said in chapter 1. You see, it's even possible for you this evening to pay attention to the words of Jesus tonight, but pay much closer attention to somebody else's words tomorrow.

And so the instruction here is not for you to sit here and pay attention, but it is actually for you to sit here and pay much closer attention than to anything else you pay attention to.

You see, it's easy for us to pay attention to Jesus tonight and then pay attention to something else tomorrow. But the instruction is to pay much closer attention to Jesus Christ.

[10 : 02] But why? We're still not answering the question of why. Why should I listen to Jesus? Well, it's re-emphasized in chapter 3, verse 7. It says that the Holy Spirit speaks.

Obviously, it's the same God, the triune God of Scripture. Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion. In other words, don't harden your hearts like the people did before.

Don't make the same mistake. In other words, the temptation not to listen is a real temptation. In fact, I don't have time to go into this.

But I want to say that whatever gets your attention gets your perspective. How many times have we heard people say, well, if only I knew that then, I would have saw things differently.

And so the truth remains that whatever has our attention shapes our world. Whatever has our attention, that's our perspective on everything that we see in the world.

[11 : 09] And so the reason why unbelievers live the way that they do is because their attention is not on Jesus. They are not fixing their eyes on the author and founder of our faith.

They're not doing that. But the Christian is actually told to do that. Why? Because attention equals perception. But why should I listen to Jesus?

Well, we'll go back to chapter one because this is where the reasons are found. In chapter one, God wants to make absolutely clear who Jesus is.

And he has three things to say about him. That Jesus is a prophet. That Jesus is a priest. And that Jesus is a king.

Jesus is a prophet because God speaks through him. A prophet is someone appointed by God to speak God's words on God's behalf to God's people. That's what a prophet is.

[12 : 10] Someone who speaks God's words to God's people on God's behalf. Well, we're told here in verse two that God has spoken through Jesus, the son, in these last days.

He is a prophet. But then it goes on to say that he is also a priest. Because this same Jesus, verse three, makes the purification of sins.

In other words, he takes away the sin that is found in the lives of people. A priest was someone appointed by God to intercede on the people's behalf before God, to offer up sacrifice, to make atonement.

And what we're told here is that Christ is that atonement. He is the one who makes the purification of sins. He is not only the prophet who speaks, but the priest who takes away the sin of the world.

And then, of course, we're told in the same verse, chapter three, sorry, chapter one, verse three, that he sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high, leading us to believe that Jesus is that appointed king, that ruler over the whole universe.

[13 : 25] So Jesus is prophet, priest, and king, a prophet who speaks, a priest who takes away the sin, and a king who rules from a throne.

Why should I listen to Jesus? Well, there's three very good reasons of why I should listen to Jesus. But I've got another question, and that is, well, the Bible's full of prophets.

The Bible's full of priests. The Bible's full of kings. So why should I listen to Jesus any more than them? Right? What if Jesus is just another prophet, just like we've had a dozen of them?

What if he's just another priest, like we've had a load? What if he's just another king, like we've had another? Why should I listen any more to Jesus than I did to any other prophet, priest, and king that came before him?

Well, quite simply, that Jesus is all three in the same person. And that cannot be said of anyone else. Secondly, Jesus is the son.

[14 : 25] You see, every other prophet, every other priest, and every other king was a servant of God. But they were not the son of God. Jesus served like they served.

But he served as God the son. They simply served as servants. And so Jesus here is the final and better prophet.

Jesus here is the final and better priest. And Jesus here is the final and better king. To put it in the words of somebody else.

That in the Old Testament, every time you had a good judge, the people were good. And every time you had a bad judge, the people were bad. So what do you need? You need a good and perfect judge who lasts forever.

Who do you think that is? And every time you have a good king, the people are good. And every time you have a bad king, the people are bad. So what do you need? You need a good and perfect king who lasts forever.

[15 : 32] Who do you think Jesus is? And so why should we listen to Jesus? Well, because he is the final and better eternal king, prophet, priest, and king.

There is nothing more to come. There is no one better. And so Moses was a servant as a prophet of God. But he was not God's son.

Aaron was a priest, but he was not God's son. David was a king, even a king after God's own heart. But he was not God's son. And not without sin.

In fact, none of these men were without sin. Jesus, however, is God the son. Our concern this evening is not to concentrate on all three, the prophet, the priest, and the king, but simply to concentrate on one, and that's the prophet.

But all of these three give us reason for why we should listen to Jesus. But why should we listen to Jesus is our question. Now, when God speaks throughout the Old Testament, one of the things that you need to know is that God continues to speak until he gets to Jesus.

[16 : 45] So what God has to say is that he says something to, let's say, Adam, and then he says something more to Noah. Now, what he says to Noah is not truer.

It's more truth, but it's not truer. Okay? It's more truth, but it's not truer. And so this happens all the way through Scripture, all the way up to the Lord Jesus Christ.

There's more told by God to God's people throughout the generations. It's not more truer. It's more truth. There's greater extent of revelation until you get to Jesus where God says everything that he needs to say finally in Jesus.

And so David knew more than Moses because God continued to speak. Moses knew more than Abraham because God continued to speak. Abraham knew more than Noah because God continued to speak.

And Noah knew more than Adam because God continued to speak. The point is, is that all the way through the Old Testament, you have this wonderful picture of a God who speaks and continues to speak.

[17 : 52] And continues to speak. Not truer truths, but more truth, more revelation. So in the same way, you know more today than people did 400 years ago of the world.

Simply comes down to one thing that more has happened. There's more to know. So a person who lived 400 years ago, if they studied the whole history of the world, could only know enough, all that up to 400 years ago.

Well, we could know all of that up to then and all of this up to now. The point is, is that as history progresses, there is more to know. But in terms of revelation, and what God has to say is that he continued to speak different things, but he decided to make his final revelation, the Lord Jesus Christ.

And this is how he puts it. Long ago, verse 1, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets. But in these last days, he has spoken to us by his son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom he also created the world.

Please notice the difference between the plural and the singular. And that's why I read from Luke 9. That through many times and in many ways, compared to last days, and through many prophets, compared to the son, God spoke.

[19 : 25] So God has said everything that he needs to say, and is going to say, in the Lord Jesus Christ. And that's why I read from Luke 9, that you have the disciples on the Mount of Transfiguration.

You have this little bit of confusion with Peter. He doesn't really know what to say. Let's just put up some tense and see if we can stay up here. And then you have this voice that comes from the cloud with, very interestingly, Moses stood on one side and Elijah stood on the other.

Now, why those two? Out of all the people in the Old Testament, why those two? Well, because Moses represented the law of God and Elijah represented the prophets.

So you've got a picture of the law and the prophets. Everything that God said in the Old Testament could be summed up in the law and the prophets. And then, very interestingly, you have God saying at that very moment where Peter sees Jesus in the center of the law and the prophets, you have God saying, this is my son.

Listen to him. For years and years and years, people have been listening to the law and the prophets, and rightly so.

[20 : 46] But now God calls the disciples of Jesus to pay the same, if not greater attention, to listening to his son.

Why? Because it's the final revelation. It's the final stage of what God has to say. Every word that could be trusted in in the Old Testament is fulfilled in Christ Jesus.

Every single promise of God. In 2 Corinthians, it says that every promise of God finds its yes and amen in Jesus Christ. Everything sort of terminates in Jesus.

Everything sort of finishes in Jesus. Jesus is the fulfillment of all those promises, of everything that God had said. Jesus is the final revelation to it all. God spoke in many ways at many times.

But then he gets to Jesus and continues to say everything that he needs to say in him. And so the joy that comes to a person who's trusted in God's word is the joy that comes to that person when they come to Christ.

[21 : 53] Jesus is the fulfillment of everything God has ever said. And so that is why we, just like these, need to pay much closer attention to Jesus.

Much closer attention to what we have heard through the son who has spoken. God spoke in many ways and in many times.

But in these last time, he speaks at one time, in one way, through one person. Okay, long ago it was many times, many ways, through many people.

But in these last days, it's in one time, in one way, through one person. And it's quite clear that God is saying, everything that I have to say now is said at one time, the last days.

Okay, in one way, through my son. In that one person, my son. And I'm done. And so if you want a reason for why we should listen to Jesus, that's it.

[23 : 02] Now I've not addressed, as you'll notice, the issues that Jesus is the reason why we can be forgiven for our sins. It says this here. That Jesus is the reason why the world is upheld.

It says that here as well. That Jesus is the ruler of all. That Jesus is the reason why we can have a relationship with God. All of that is true. But I've not concentrated on that.

I've only concentrated on why you need to know listening to Jesus is important. And so I want to conclude with paying attention.

Or rather paying a closer attention to what Jesus says more than what anybody else has said. My fear is not that we don't pay attention to Jesus.

As I look at unto the church, my fear is that we pay more attention elsewhere. We've not actually heeded to the words of Hebrews 2.1.

[24 : 01] Of everything else you have heard great. But pay much closer attention to the words of Jesus. So this is sort of a summary conclusion.

And my focus is why Jesus should be listened to more than anybody else. Just before Jesus went back to his father in heaven. He taught his disciples the following in John 16.

That God the Holy Spirit will guide them into all truth. That God the Holy Spirit will not speak of his own authority. Speak on his own authority.

He won't do that. Rather, whatever he hears, he will speak. In other words, the Holy Spirit speaks. But he doesn't say anything that Jesus hasn't already said.

He will not speak on his own authority. He will only reiterate what has already been spoken. He will declare to you the things to come. And he will glorify me.

[25 : 03] In other words, he won't have front and center stage. He'll stay in the background. In fact, it's interesting that you can't actually get to find out too much about the Holy Spirit as a person. You can find out what he does.

You can find out how you can grieve him. Not that you should. That you can quench the Spirit. Not that you should. But when you ask the sort of questions, who are you? Well, he sort of hides back in the background.

Because his aim is to glorify Jesus. Not to draw any attention to himself. In fact, you can always tell a person who's filled with the Holy Spirit.

Because they'll talk a lot about Jesus. And not about the Holy Spirit. Because the main trademark. Or the identifying quality of the Holy Spirit.

Is not to draw attention to himself. But to glorify Jesus. Just as Jesus said. And so all of that, in line with the Spirit, reaffirms that everything that Jesus has said is final.

[26 : 04] That everything that we need to hear from God, we've heard from Jesus. That there's nothing that needs adding. There's no divine word that needs topping up.

Or any addition needs to be made with the words that we have in our Bible. None whatsoever. If you believe that God has communicated to us exactly what he wants to communicate to us.

Unless, of course, you think he's failed. And there is somebody out there who has knowledge that hasn't been yet collated. I think not. God's, the Spirit, doesn't do anything of his own authority.

Purposely. But he seeks to glorify Jesus. And lead the disciples, even us, into all truth. Truth that Jesus has already taught.

And so how does this help us to pay closer attention to Jesus more than anybody else? How does that truth help us to pay closer attention to Jesus?

[27 : 09] Well, the point's fairly straightforward. And it's this. That no one on earth can say anything further or anything clearer than what God has already said in his word.

Period. I am nothing more than an imitator and a copycat. I can't say anything new.

I don't want to say anything new. I just repeat what has already been said. I can't say it any clearer. I can't add any more.

I can't say anything further. Because everything that needs to be said has been said by God. And finally, in Jesus. God the Son. There are, however, some who believe that they have been told things by God.

And you can see the problem I have with that. I run into great difficulty there. For a couple of reasons. One, these things that they have been told by God are firstly self-revealed.

[28 : 16] They've been revealed to them. Secondly, they are then self-interpreted. In other words, that the person that they have been revealed to becomes the one who determines what it means.

Which, again, is quite difficult. Then they say that they're not adding to scripture. And then they're saying that what God has told them doesn't come on the same level of authority as the Bible.

Which is a dead giveaway. Because surely if God speaks anywhere, wherever he speaks, it should carry the same authority wherever it goes. But what they do expect, even though they put all those disclaimers in, is that they still expect you to listen to them.

That while they say what I've said doesn't add to anything that the Bible has said, they do expect that what they have said that you will direct your life by. And that's the danger.

They're not adding to scripture, but they're adding to the canon of life. They're adding to the canon that directs your every step. And this isn't a modern problem.

[29 : 30] This has been around ever since the beginning of the church. Through a failure, I think, to understand that Jesus is the final prophet. That every promise of God is yes and amen in him.

It's a failure to understand who Jesus is. And so this is why the writer to the Hebrews says, chapter 2, verse 1, I understand we live in a world where there's a lot to get our attention, but pay much closer attention to what you have heard, lest you drift away.

See, these words can be tested. There's not many others that can in the same way.

And so a departure from the words of Jesus is a departure from Jesus himself, lest we drift away. And so the issue is clear. It's not that we should pay attention, but rather we should pay much closer attention to Jesus than we do to any one house or to anything else.

On the subject of salvation, on the subject of God, on the subject of the gospel, on these divine matters, we should pay much closer attention to him. So the challenge this evening is not necessarily that you've got a whole load of sins to confess right here, right now.

[30 : 45] And the challenge may not be that you've not listened to Jesus, that you've listened to others more. That could be the challenge. That could actually be where you're at this evening. I'm not quite sure. That the confession that you actually make, the challenge that actually comes to you this evening, is that you have actually paid more attention to others than Jesus.

It could be that. But for others, it might just be that you've listened to Jesus, and you've even listened to Jesus here this evening. But then you're going to go away and listen to somebody else more.

Or something else more. And whatever gets your attention gets you. Gets the decisions you make.

The choices you make. Whatever gets your attention gets you. And so the challenge is, therefore, pay much closer attention.

Much closer attention to what you have heard. That Jesus Christ is the prophet, the priest, and the king. The final one.

[31 : 55] The last one. Who is not another servant, but who is the son. Who has spoken God's word. Who is God's word.

Who became flesh and dwelt amongst us. Amen.