

THE GREATEST PULPIT, PREACHER AND SERMON

Matthew 3:17 *And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*

Matthew 17:5 *While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.*

All God-fearing and God-seeking people had made their way to the river Jordan that day. A spirit of repentance and humility had seized them, and they knew that they had to go and hear the words of righteous John and be baptized in preparation for the coming of the Messiah. Only when people prepare to repent and make their way to the preacher (church) to make things right with God, will they hear a voice from heaven. What an amazing thing happened that day – humans heard a voice from heaven! This was the greatest pulpit in the history of preaching and the Father himself was the preacher. And this was the greatest sermon in the history of preaching – “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased”. Once again, on the Mount of Transfiguration, Peter spoke but was cut off by the voice from heaven. Why would God cut off the words of his leading Apostle? What message was greater than that of the man with the keys of heaven? What did it say? It said: “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him”. May God always cut us off when we stray away from this message! I would be very happy for this voice to cut me off right now in the middle of sermon and declare to everyone hearing, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him”.

This man, Jesus, who emerged wet and dripping from the river Jordan suddenly became the object and subject of the greatest preaching from heaven itself. God was saying, “Look at this man! He is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased”. The Father created the entire universe – there were countless things he could have drawn our attention to, but he was interested in only one person – the Lord Jesus Christ. Should we also not stop and pay attention to that which the Father wishes to draw attention to? In contrast, Satan has always drawn attention to everything and anything except Jesus. He told Adam and Eve, behold the tree of the knowledge of good and evil! He told the three Hebrew children, behold the statue of Nebuchadnezzar, and bow down to it! He even told the Lord himself, behold all the kingdoms of this world – bow down to me and I will give them to you! Nowadays, the enemy uses seemingly innocent and harmless things such as sports, entertainment, smartphones and social media, among others, but the result is another message that contradicts that of the

Father. I thank God for all of you who go to church regularly, pray and come to this room, among others – you obey the voice from heaven which says, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him”.

“But I receive not testimony from man: but these things I say, that ye might be saved” (John 5:34). “But I have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me” (John 5:36). I am glad today that Jesus does not depend on my testimony of him. He has the greatest pulpit and sermon to testify of his Godhead – the voice of the Father. Let us all take heart from this especially when we feel inadequate and weak in our attempts to witness to the Godhead of our Lord Jesus. Then a voice will boom from heaven into the hearts of the hearers – “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him”. Why is the Father pleased in the Son? Simply because the Son is the Father’s own word made flesh. “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth” (John 1:14).

The word of the father is not like our word. How often have we been ashamed of our words? How often have we kept silent because we knew our words are imperfect? But the Father’s word is perfect, it can never say or do wrong. It creates perfectly, it heals perfectly, it comforts perfectly, it saves perfectly, and it reveals the Father perfectly. So the Father is well pleased in the Son. The Father is not separate from the Son, but dwells in him, which is why the Son will always manifest the Father perfectly. Hallelujah! To see me or you is to actually see Adam – but to see Jesus was to see the Father.

***John 14:9** Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?*

There have been many great and good prophets of God, but even they disappointed God often and he was not well pleased with them. The Father, however, is well pleased with the Son. There are ambassadors who do such a terrible job of representing their Prime Ministers and Presidents that they are recalled back home for consultations. Not so with the Lord Jesus! He is the Father himself in that the Son is the identical with the everlasting Father – so the Father cannot be misrepresented in the Son.

Isaiah 9:6 *For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.*

God now has a place where he has appointed to meet the world – this meeting point is called Jesus Christ. Let us delight ourselves in the one in whom the Father is well pleased and he will answer our prayers. “Then shalt thou delight thyself in the LORD; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it” (Isaiah 58:14). Saints of God, are you well pleased with that which the Father is well pleased? Where is your attention today? Which pulpit has been preaching to you? What is your heart well pleased with? If it is earthly things, they will pass away soon. Husbands, wives, children, jobs, health, strength and security – all will pass away at some point. “For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you” (I Peter 1:24,25).

Let me conclude where I started. Only those who seek to repent and get right with God will come to the Jordan and hear the voice of the Father from heaven. Those who stayed at home did not hear the greatest preacher preach the greatest sermon. God is not well pleased in our sinful nature – but will with his great love help us by bringing conviction to our hearts. “So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God” (Romans 8:8). To please God, we must come to the Jordan. Jordan means “descent” and represents the descent down into death with the Lord Jesus Christ in the waters of baptism in his name. We don’t need to be afraid of this death because Jesus escorts and guides us in this watery baptism. “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?” (Rom 6:3). Death will never again terrify or conquer us because we have conquered it through baptism in Jesus’ name. Hallelujah! Once the grave loses its legitimate claim on our souls after baptism, heaven comes through the Holy Spirit to claim our souls for Jesus. The voice of the Father commanded us to hear Jesus, and Jesus spoke often about the Holy Spirit. “If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?” (Luke 11:13). God is on a mission! He is only well pleased with those who put on the body of his Son in baptism and are filled with his Spirit.

Rom 8:29 *For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.*

Rom 8:30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.