

Receiving Divine Revelation

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- [0 : 00] Our text this evening is verse 8 of John chapter 17. For I have given unto them the words which thou hast given me, and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.
- These words have been called the fountain of Christian theology. The fountain of Christian theology.
- And on the truth of this saying, there stands the whole fabric of a creed and a doctrine.
- The whole system of a theology concerning God and his decrees. The person and work of God of the Son.
- The person and work of God of the Holy Spirit. The whole scheme and outworking of redemption. We have it all here in epitome.
- [1 : 22] What marvelous statements these are addressed by the Lord Jesus to God his Father. Concerning his disciples, I have given unto them the words which thou hast given me.
- And they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee. And they have believed that thou didst send me.
- In these words, my dear friends, we have the whole scope, the sum and the substance of the gospel of the grace of God.
- We have the summary of the totality of a Christian theology. So you'll see that within the compass of these words, what a marvelous message this is.
- Canon Bernard has said of it, that this text is the ground of the authority of the preacher. Of assurance to the believer.
- [2 : 34] Of existence to the church of Christ. It is the source from which the perpetual stream of Christian teaching flows.
- All our testimonies, instructions, education, derive their first origin and continuous power from the fact that the Father has given to the Son, the Son has given to his servants the words of truth and life.
- Listen to this once again. For I have given unto them the words which thou hast given me. And they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee.
- And they have believed that thou didst send me. Once again, the Savior here is speaking words of commendation to the Father containing his company of disciples.
- He is commending them to God that they have received the revelation. They have believed. They have known surely the advent of Christ into this world from the glory of heaven.
- [4 : 05] Now this text divides itself very neatly, very naturally into four divisions. There is, first of all, Christ relaying the Father's words to his disciples.
- For I have given unto them the words which thou hast given me. Secondly, there is the reception of the Father's words by the disciples.

Jesus said, And they have received them. Thirdly, there is the revelation contained in the Father's words and taught by Christ to his disciples.

And they have known surely that I came out from thee. That is the revelation. And fourthly, there is the response in the disciples of faith.

And they have believed that thou didst send me. So our first consideration, then, is Christ relaying the Father's words to the disciples.

[5 : 28] When you read through the Gospels, particularly the Gospel according to St. John, you find the Lord Jesus using expressions such as these.

Jesus taught his disciples the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's of which sent me.

My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God.

For God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him. The words that I speak unto you, they are Spirit and they are life.

And when the Lord gave such testimonies as these to his disciples, it evoked, at least in the heart of Peter, a degree of emotion which was expressed by him in this testimony, Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go?

[6 : 38] Lord, hath the words of eternal life. And these words of eternal life had been given by God the Father to God the Son to be communicated, to be relayed to his disciples.

Through the prophet Isaiah, the pre-incarnate Christ spoke this, The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary.

Again, I say to you, go through the Gospels. Pick up the words, the sayings, the discourses of the Christ of God. And then remember that what he said, or what he taught, what he discoursed, was that which was given him by God the Father to speak.

They are the words of eternal life. Again, he said to his disciples, I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.

And if any man hear my words and believe not, I judge him not. For I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth me and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him.

[8 : 17] The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken of myself, but the Father which sent me.

He gave me a commandment, what I should say and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting. Whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.

Now all of this, my dear friends, accords with God's testimony to Moses in the book of Deuteronomy chapter 18. God revealed to Moses this prophecy concerning his people Israel.

He said to Moses, I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.

Now this was fulfilled in the Lord Jesus. He was the prophet that was raised up. He was given words from his heavenly father who put them in his mouth with the commandment to speak that.

[9 : 54] And it shall come to pass that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name I will require it of him.

from this can you not see clearly what a tremendous responsibility it is not only to preach the word of God but also to hear the word of God.

For whosoever will not hearken unto the words of God he will require it of that person.

A couple of weddings ago we considered the child Samuel when he was raised up of God established to be a prophet of the Lord was said concerning him that the Lord let none of his words fall to the ground.

My dear friends let us learn of this lesson well that when the Lord Jesus said I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me he held nothing back there was not anything superfluous in what he said and there was no diminution in what he said he gave it out word for word as God the father gave it to him and every word was precious and will be accounted for even as the Lord said in his teaching that every idle word that man shall speak the same shall he give account thereof in the day of judgment over against that the hearing of

[12 : 15] God's word every single word will be accounted for by the hearer account must be given as to the manner in which the word is heard and this is important because the words of God the father are the foundation of faith there is a revelation from God faith must have something to lay hold of and therefore God reveals himself to faith and he has done that in the handiwork of his creation in his written word in providence in history but preeminently in his son

Jesus Christ who is called the word of God therefore the scripture the word of the gospel spoken out by God the father relayed through Jesus Christ his son is that which is the foundation for faith to build upon when the Lord speaks of the words which the father gave him he refers through the testimony concerning himself which is now written for us in the scriptures as Paul said these things are written for our learning and Jesus himself directed his enemies the

Jews to the scriptures he said search the scriptures they are they which testify of me Christ himself reprimanded his disciples those two disciples who walked the road to Emmaus he said to them oh fools and slow apart to believe all that the prophets have spoken ought not Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into his glory and beginning at Moses and all the prophets he expounded unto them in all of the scriptures the things concerning himself and he said unto them these are the words which I speak unto you while I was yet with you that all the things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses and in the prophets and in the Psalms concerning me then opened he their understanding that they might understand the scriptures the scriptures are the revelation of

God the father's heart they are the revelation of Christ the son they originated with God the father he gave them to his son who gave them to his disciples and who by the inspiration of the holy spirit not only remembered them but recorded them and preached to them and we have them in this holy bible the word of god the scriptures that are able to make us wise unto salvation how marvelous then that god the father should sovereignly convey his communication of truth through such a channel consider the disciples whom Jesus chose consider them in the light of first Corinthians chapter one and at verse twenty six here is what the word of god says concerning that for ye see your calling brethren how that not many wise men after the flesh not many mighty not many noble are called but god hath chosen the foolish things of this world to confound the wise and god hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty and base things of the world and things which are despised hath god chosen yea and things which are not to bring to naught things that are that no flesh should glory in his presence such were the fishermen of

Galilee whom Jesus called whom he chose to be his disciples to be his learners consider the meanness of their persons they were poor they were humble they were relatively unknown they had no influence nevertheless they were chosen of God chosen by Christ to be the channels of divine revelation and to these Jesus said I have given unto them thy word consider not only the meanness of their persons but the meagerness of their education it seems to come through in the gospel narratives that these men were not brought up in the rabbinical schools they were not trained technically in the religion of the

[18 : 17] Jews in the Acts of the Apostles we are told that their enemies observed them and saw them perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men the meagerness of their education yet the Lord Jesus took them up and despite their ignorance and their lack of learning he caused them to be the channels of divine revelation through whom the very words of God are communicated to the world of lost sinners and consider thirdly their mindfulness of the Lord's teaching that is why I read to you John chapter 16 this evening because in that chapter the Lord Jesus assured his disciples that with the advent of the Holy Spirit the

Comforter the Paraclete the Holy Spirit would bring to their remembrance all the things that he had taught them through his disciples he has brought to us this marvelous revelation of divine truth regard also the faithfulness of Christ himself in his ministry he said to God his father I have given unto them the words which thou hast given me he was faithful to his trust he gave the revelation he relayed it to his disciples in its entirety not one word was lost Christ was faithful he was not only faithful but he was fruitful in his ministry for he said

I have given unto them the words which thou hast given me and they have received them oh how the heart of the Savior was gladdened by the faithful response of his disciples to the truth which he communicated to them I shall never forget the thrill that passed through my heart when I first saw a soul responding to the gospel which I preached there is nothing so exciting as to see a soul responding to the truth of the gospel how the heart of the Savior would have been overjoyed when these humble Galileans received in faith the words which God the Father had given to Christ to convey it to them

Christ was thus fruitful in his ministry to them in this day preachers of the word of God may well take up the dirgeful reflection and complaint of the prophet Isaiah who hath believed our report and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed which brings me to consider in the second place the reception of the Father's words by the disciples when I sit down to take a hand to read the theological works of Thomas Boston or of Ralph Erskine or of Ebenezer Erskine I marvel at the profound truths the truths of theology which these men set before their humble hearers the peasants in the country paired them gladly they greedily drank in their preaching yet what was that preaching it was theological to the core they set before them the profundities of the

Christian faith those peasant people gladly received such preaching but what comparison does that hold with the disciples of the Christ of God the teacher come from God think of the truths which he set before them which he taught them what were those truths why he gave to them the knowledge of the distinctive personalities of the Godhead the unity of the undivided Godhead the Father the Son and the Holy Spirit read of this in the chapters 13 through 16 of John's Gospel what profound teaching he gave he let them in on the transaction and counsel of the eternal three these things are contained in the words which

[24 : 00] Jesus relayed to his disciples Paul spoke to Timothy advising him to ensure that his ministry would have the form of sound words certainly the ministry of Christ had the form of sound words it was plain gospel theological teaching and he taught his disciples the whole plan of the grace of God in redemption how Christ himself was called and commanded to fulfill it he taught them the mystery of his person that he was the God man he was transfigured before them by which they realized that he was a king and that he would set up his kingdom he taught them about his incarnation and mediation that he was the fore appointed lamb of

God to be slain for sinners he taught them the father's love to him and his pleasure in him he taught them in summary the gospel that was to be preached the whole scheme of christian theology christ gave to his disciples and he comes to his father commending them for this telling his father i have given unto them the words which thou hast given me and they have received them as a mere reflection of all this my dear friends week by week i seek to preach the truths of the gospel and surely it is an open secret to us revealed in the word of god that heaven waits for the response of those who hear the word of god they wait to see if they will receive the word preached this is god's method in his saving grace paul went into thessalonica he preached the gospel they believed it a church was established paul wrote congratulating them on the spiritual progress they were making he reminded them that when we preach the word of god unto you you received it not as the word of men but as it is in truth the word of god heaven waits to see if the hearers of the word of god will receive it and believe it and give prompt obedience to it for in that word preached and taught there is the revelation of the father's words the communication of a divine knowledge the core of which is this that

Christ was come from God the father he was sent by God to be the savior of the world only to mention these facts very quickly very briefly God having sent his son into this world to be the savior of sinners you will see then that Christ himself is the immediate object of a saving faith the immediate object you have to do with him concerning the salvation of your soul but in this Christ is the mediator between God and men and if he is the immediate object of faith his purpose is to bring you to God who is the ultimate object of faith therefore you see the supreme mission of the son of

God he said that the son of man is come not to be ministered unto but to minister and to give his life a ransom for sin there are many things I must pass by and come to our last point which is the response of the disciples faith they have believed that thou didst send me the expectation of the Jews was relative to a coming messiah they knew the scriptures they knew the prophets they had the knowledge chapter and verse concerning the advent of him who was to come you remember when Herod made inquiry about him that was to come as king of the Jews the scribes and the

Pharisees were able to acquaint him of the very chapters and verses in the books of the prophets they gave him the details but did they believe when Christ came far from it filled with envy and unbelief they rejected him he came unto his own and his own received him not but he mingled with the humble of this world and he revealed himself to this company of disciples they believed in him they expressed their faith to him now we know and believe that thou art the son of God who came into this world believing that stupendous fact they believed to the saving of their souls and

[30 : 55] God commends them Christ commends them for their faith to God his father their faith had the word of God as their warrant and foundation and it is the warrant of God's word that points everywhere to Christ as the object of saving faith and what is saving faith and how does it say saving faith is that by which the mind the intellect is instructed by the facts of the gospel it is that by which the heart is illuminated it is irradiated by the light of the gospel and it is that by which the will is impelled to come to

Christ to close with Christ as he is offered in the gospel he is a complete savior he was sent by God the father to save the lost sinners he comes to God in prayer he says in these words I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me they have received them and have known surely that I came out from thee and they have believed that thou didst send me that is the gospel and oh what a model this is for the preacher of God's word to get his message from God and having got his message from God to give it fearlessly and unflinchingly and unhesitatingly in its entirety holding nothing back declaring the whole counsel of

God and having discharged thus his responsibility that responsibility is shifted from the preacher to the hearer and the hearer is to exercise faith and receive the word that is communicated and when that is done that is what is called believing to the saving of the soul may God bless our meditation for his glory let us pray we ask of thee O God that thou wilt follow with thy blessing our meditation upon thy holy word of the truth grant that this may spring into faith in the Savior that faith may edify and grow that thereby Christ may be honored and God glorified we ask it for thy name's sake

Amen