

## V.O.C. – September 2017

### September 3, 2017: The Word of God – a word of life

Dear Listeners,

In the Voice of the Church you hear the Bible speak. The Bible is the Word of God. It is the Word that was written by many different people, with many different styles and genres, but they were all inspired by God, by the Holy Spirit of God. Men spoke from God as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. Although each author of the books of the Bible had his own gifts and talents, his own style and focus, yet God the Holy Spirit spoke through them. All Scripture is breathed out by God, the Bible says: breathed out that means that they spoke the very Words of God! Hence we may say: the Bible is the Word of God! God speaks to us in the Bible! God speaks to us when the Word of God is proclaimed in the Church. In the Voice of the Church, therefore, as well as in the worship services through the preaching, God still speaks; yes, He speaks to you too!

During this month of September, dear listeners, I would like to draw your attention to the gospel according to John (i.e. the fourth gospel). It's known as the gospel of God's glory. John shows in his account the glory of God as it was manifested and displayed by the Son of God, Jesus Christ, when He came into the flesh. We have seen His glory, John also tells us in his epistles. John shares the stories about Jesus showing the glory of God so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name. The Bible as the Word of God, John intimates, has words of life. John shows this in the words and deeds of Jesus when He was on earth. In fact, John starts out his account of the gospel by saying that Jesus, as the Son of God, is the Word incarnate, the Word who came into the flesh. He was the Word already in the beginning of the world, at the beginning of history, and in the beginning when God created everything. That's when He, the Son of God, was the Word of life already!

Let's listen, dear listeners, to those very deep and special words with which John starts out his account of the gospel: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was life..." If you know the Bible a little bit, dear listener, you will recognize in these opening statements of John's account the beginning of the Bible as well. In Genesis 1:1 we read, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." On the first page of the Bible God gives us His revelation of the work of creation He performed in the beginning. That's how everything began. It's a powerful proclamation: this is the beginning of the world in which we are now living and working.

When you read that first chapter in Genesis 1 you will hear these words repeatedly: "And God said." That's a very special and powerful account as well; yes, the Psalmist of Psalm 33 starts singing about it even where he writes, "By the word of the LORD the heavens were made...." "He spoke and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm." And when God had made man He right away started speaking to him too: "And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth

and subdue it..." That's God's Word to man; His blessing! That's a word of life! Indeed, God created life in the birds and the fish, the livestock and creeping things, and all other living creatures according to their kind. He spoke and they were there. He spoke His word of life and they lived. Yet, when God blessed man and spoke to him and gave His word to him, that's what true and full life was all about: God and man communicating; God and man speaking together; that's life - the word of life!

When God created heaven and earth, dear listeners, the Word was there already. In his account John is speaking about the Son of God. He was there before the creation of the world already. He was with God, John says, because the Son Himself is God too. This Son of God, who was and is true God, came into the flesh, John says in verse 14. Then He came as well to bring life; to restore life, after man had fallen into sin and had become dead in sin. That's why the Son of God came into the flesh, became man, to deliver mankind from death and restore life to him! He still does so, namely *by His Word* (just as in the beginning: He created life *by His Word*)! God created life by His Word, His Son! So just as in the beginning, when God created through His Son, the Word, so He *re*creates through His Son, the Word! That's the Word that we read in the Bible, the Word that is preached in the church, and the Word that is coming to you through the Voice of the Church! So that you may believe, as John said, and have life!

So Jesus Christ, dear listeners, is the Word of God in the flesh. Jesus Christ is the Son of God who was already there in the beginning. God the Father, the Creator, and God the Son, the Word, had life together. They spoke with each other, they showed their love for one another, and they shared their love and life with the Holy Spirit, the third Person of the Trinity, the Triune God. They had life; they spoke words of life; they communicated together, which is what true life is all about. Then at one point in their eternal life they decided to speak and create the world. Yes, as John puts it, "All things were made through Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was life!" All true life began with God! All true life came into this world through the Word, when God the Father created through God the Son, the Word, and God the Holy Spirit gave life, brought life, through the Word, i.e. the Son of God!

Are you starting to see, dear listeners, how important the Word of God is? It is a word of life, in God the Son; a word of life, in Jesus Christ, the Son of God in whom there is life and through whom this life came into the world in the beginning of the world! It's the living Word that gives life! It's the proclamation of the living Word in the church that restores life, recreates life, in you and me, people who are dead in themselves, dead through sin! That's what makes the Word of God so special! That's what makes the preaching and the Voice of the Church so special, because the Word that it brings is a word of life! It restores life with God, so that God is speaking to us again and we can speak to Him again, which is true life indeed! God and man speaking together, living together, and working together, serving God in this world! That's what I wish to elaborate on next week as well, dear listener, when we see that the Word of God, the Son, Jesus Christ, is the life *and light* of man! So please, tune in again next week and hear the Voice of the Church speaking the Word of God as *a word of life and light*! Thank you for listening today to this Voice of the Church!