

Session 2
Gospel of John Class
January 19, 2020

Resurrection Lutheran Church, Cary
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Review:
“The Word”

John 1:1-18; 4: 46-54

Understanding “the Word” (λογος), Part 1

- What would “the Word” have signified about “God/the gods” to a Greco-Roman of Jesus’ day?
 - Heraclitus: λογος = principle of order and knowledge, connecting people to one another and to the universe
 - Zeno: λογος = active human reason/ability to think that animates the universe, *often equated with God*
 - Aristotle: λογος = the *meaning* of what is said

Understanding “the Word” (λογος), Part 1

- What would “the Word” have signified about God according to the Jewish Scriptures?
 - As “the Word” of God has/is truth (2 Sam 7:28, Ps 119:160) so must also the word of man be (Gen 42:20, 1 Kings 10:6)
 - “The Word” of God is revealed through prophetic oracles (any of the prophets)
 - “The Word” of God is active in creation (Genesis 1:3, Is. 40:26, etc.)

Understanding “the Word” (λογος), Part 2

- What would “the Word” have signified about God according to the context of the Gospel of John?
 - Refers usually to the spoken word (2:22, 4:37, 5:24)
 - In John’s Gospel, God communicates three ways:
 - Through the Scriptures of Israel (presupposed by the Gospel writer; compare Gen 1:1-3 with John 1:1)
 - Through Jesus of Nazareth (John 1:18; Koester: “God speaks to the world through the words Jesus utters, the actions he performs, and the death he dies” *The Word of Life*, 27.)
 - Through the Holy Spirit (cf. John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7)

Understanding “the Word” (λογος), Part 3

- Today, “God’s Word” more frequently refers to the written Word than it would have in Jesus’ day.
- What purpose do words serve for you?
Allows for communication and connections between people...establishes relationships.
How would your life be different if there were no words?
- What appears to be God’s purpose for you in sending Jesus, “the Word” (see John 1:14, 18)?
Revealing God...establishing relationship between God and humanity.

Contrast between Moses the Law-bringer and Jesus, the Word-made-flesh

- God reveals himself (Luther: his “backside”) to Moses on Mount Sinai, with Exodus 34:6... “The Lord, the Lord, abounding in grace and truth (רַב-חֶסֶד וְאֱמֶת)
- The Gospel of John appears to be correcting a misunderstanding of Jesus that sees Him as a kind of new Moses. Jesus is NOT a new Moses, conveying God’s Law/Word...Jesus is *Himself* God’s Word, “full of grace and truth” (John 1:14, 17)!

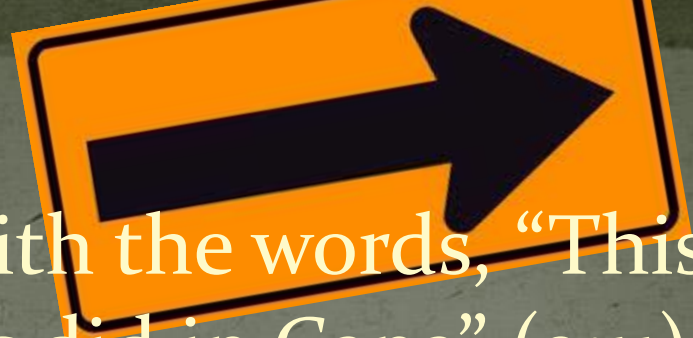
“The Word” in Action

- Did you notice how the film turned from color to black and white at John 4:53? Why do you think the filmmaker did this?
- What special quality did Jesus' Word at 4:50 have for the royal official? **The Word of Jesus literally healed the official's son (was more than merely a “prophecy”).**
- What special quality does “the Word” have for us, today? **God's Word does not just give us information about God...it brings/creates life!**

“The Bridegroom”

John 2:1-13 & 3:28-30

“Signs” (σημεια)



- The Cana miracle ends with the words, “This, the first of his signs, Jesus did in Cana” (2:11).
- Miraculous actions of Jesus in other gospel accounts are called “miracles” (δυναμεις).
- “Signs” by definition point to meaning beyond themselves; though signs in this gospel are a kind of symbolic action, they occur in the narrative of John as actual, historic events.
- Signs included in John’s Gospel are included “so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you might have life in his name” (20:30-31).

Understanding signs and symbolic actions

- Conversations and discourses surrounding these symbolic actions help elucidate their meaning. People who see the symbolic action usually try to interpret it, and these interpretations teach us to distinguish a “wrong” understanding of the sign from the “correct” one. (Comments of Jesus are most significant)
- Actions appropriate and redefine associations with images connected with the action (e.g., water involved in a healing miracle [John chapter 9])
- Allusions to Jesus’ death and resurrection appear in each of the symbolic actions, so that Jesus’ death and resurrection disclose the significance of earlier actions, and earlier actions help readers discern the meaning of Jesus’ suffering and death.

John 2:1-12



The Bridegroom

What did/does the miraculous sign at Cana mean? (Part 1)

- **Conversations and discourses** surrounding these symbolic actions help elucidate their meaning...
- Call to mind our earlier discussion on **dramatic irony** (the readers know something hidden from people in the text or onstage). What do *we the readers* know about Jesus' sign that someone in the text does not?
- Identify **misunderstanding** in this text. Who "misunderstands" the sign? What does he misunderstand about it?

What did/does the miraculous sign at Cana mean? (Part 2)

- Symbolic actions like the signs of Jesus appropriate and redefine associations with images connected with the sign or action
- One important image from this text:
 - Bridegroom (in both Greco-Roman and Palestinian “Jewish” contexts, the bridegroom’s family paid for the wedding & its wine; see also Israel as the bride of God: Jeremiah 2:1-2; Isaiah 54:1-8, 62:5)

Excursus: John 3:28–30



The Bridegroom

Excursus:

“Friend of the Bridegroom” (3:29)

- A friend of the bridegroom was charged with the preliminaries of the marriage. He arranged the contract, acted for the bridegroom during the betrothal, and arranged for, and presided over the festivities associated with the wedding itself.
- Why do you suppose John called himself “friend of the bridegroom”?

What did/does the miraculous sign at Cana mean? (Part 3)

- **Allusions to Jesus' death and resurrection** appear in each of the symbolic actions, so that Jesus' death and resurrection disclose the significance of earlier actions, and earlier actions help readers discern the meaning of Jesus' suffering and death.
- What connects this sign with the time of Jesus' suffering, death, and resurrection (hint: read John 2:1-11 and then look up John 12:23, 27-28)?
- Ωρα = "Time"/"Hour"

John 12:23, 27-28



The Coming of Jesus' "Time/Hour"

What did/does the miraculous sign at Cana mean? (Part 3)

- **Allusions to Jesus' death and resurrection.**
- When Jesus says, “My hour/time has not yet come,” could he have been anticipating another outpouring of blood/wine at the Last Supper (John 13:1; cf. Matthew 26:27-28) more directly concerned with His status as Messiah who reveals the glory of God?
- In Ephesians 5:25–33 we see how the death of Jesus was understood later as the moment of the Bridegroom preparing His bride (the Church) for her union with God (cf. Rev. 21:1-4)

The Bridegroom/the Bride

Jesus and Women in the Gospel of John

- Jesus with Woman at the Well: Bride and Bridegroom Type Scene? (John 4:5–26; cf. Gen 24; Gen 29:1–9; Exod 2:15–22)
- Jesus with Woman Caught in Adultery (John 8: 1–10)
- Jesus with Martha, sister of Lazarus (John 10: 20–27)
- Jesus anointed by Mary, sister of Lazarus (John 12:1–8)
- Jesus with Mary Magdalene (John 20:11–18)

Discussion:

Use of the Bridegroom Image Today

- Do you think that the image of Jesus as bridegroom of the people of God still speaks to people today? Why or why not?
- My story:
 - Conversation with a non-Christian
 - Bridegroom image and topic of “faithfulness” for those preparing to marry today

For Next Sunday, Read John 4:5 - 42



Giver of Living Water