

Monthly memory verse: “Let this be recorded for a generation to come, so that a people yet to be created may praise the LORD: that He looked down from His holy height; from heaven the LORD looked at the earth, to hear the groans of the prisoners, to set free those who were doomed to die” (Ps 102:18-20).

Dearly beloved saints of Covenant of Grace,

It was a joy to spend the Lord’s Day with you this past Sunday. What a blessing to hear those glorious words from the lips of our Savior, “It is finished” (Jn 19:30). What could be more assuring and comforting than the voice of the Lord of glory Himself announcing that everything required for our salvation is already complete, done, finished? There is nothing so immovable and unshakeable as the Word of our God, and nothing so soothing to the souls of His people as to hear His mighty voice declaring the certainty of our salvation. Indeed, there is nothing in all the world as powerful as the voice of our God. He speaks and it is done. He speaks and the believer finds his or her rest. He speaks and the unbeliever trembles at the fearful sound of the voice of his or her Maker and Judge. I was powerfully reminded of this as I sat in my study this past week. I was reading and lost in thought, when suddenly I was snapped out of it and made to sit up straight by one of those ear and window-shaking cracks of thunder. As I caught my breath I was reminded of that awesome description of the voice of the Lord found in Scripture, as being like the sound of loud thunder, like the sound of mighty peals of thunder (cf. Rev. 14:2; 19:6).

This fact, that our God’s voice is like the sound of loud thunder, reminds us that our God is a God greatly to be feared. There is no one in heaven above or in the earth beneath who can successfully oppose our God or ultimately resist His sovereign will. When once He has spoken, there is no one who can turn it back or thwart His perfect, powerful purpose. If we can’t even stop the thunder from sounding forth from the skies above, then how much less can we silence the voice of the Lord who makes the skies to thunder? And, if mere thunder can roar so as to make our spines tingle, then how much more does the voice of the living God have the capacity to leave us shaking and undone in the very depths of our souls? Who will dare to talk back to Him or question His sovereign will? Who but the most brazen and senseless person will dare to challenge His justice in everything that He does? So, as Job complained that he was being wronged and wanted an audience to clear Himself before the Lord, the Lord answered and said, “Will you put Me in the wrong? Will you condemn Me that you may be in the right? Have you an arm like God, and can you thunder with a voice like His?” (Job 40:8-9). How glorious and fearful is the voice of the living God? He spoke amidst the thunder and lightning at Sinai and Israel cried out for relief (cf. Exod 20:18-19). He thunders and who can stand before Him or dare to question Him? So comes the reply through His apostle, in the event that His righteousness might be challenged, saying, “Who are you, O man, to answer back to God?” (Rom 9:20). He speaks, and every dust particle, along with every creature in heaven and earth, willingly or not, bends to His will as His desire is brought to pass, and none may reserve any right to contradict or refute Him, nor can any make His voice of no effect. It is a reason for all to greatly revere Him, and for the soul who has no share in His salvation to quake with terror before Him. At His appointed hour, His voice will sound forth from heaven, calling everyone who has ever lived to stand before His throne. There, He will sound forth His judgment, filling many who refused Him in this life with terror at the realization that their judgment has been announced, and that there is nothing they can do to turn it back. It will be a perfectly just judgment, the sound of which will buckle the strongest knees and make faint the stoutest heart. “The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken to pieces; against them He will thunder in heaven” (1 Sam 2:10). *Thus, when we hear the sound of the thunder, we ought to take care to think of the voice of our God and remember that He is a God greatly to be feared.*

At the same time, the fact that our God’s voice is like the sound of loud thunder reminds us that our God is a God greatly to be praised. This, of course, for many of the same reasons listed above, which cause the unbeliever to tremble. While the unbeliever shakes for fear at the thought of the voice of God, the believer ought to fall down and give Him praise. Our God, whose voice will surely make the loudest thunder seem like a whisper in the night, is the One who has spoken wonderful things concerning our salvation - things that no one in the heavens or earth can nullify or reverse. Satan may try to accuse, but his mouth will be shut and his voice drowned out by the thundering voice of the Lord, declaring that we are His and welcoming us into His presence forever. Even now, the Lord speaks -

effecting His perfect plan for His people in the world - and all creation bows to His will. His enemies, who thought to harm His people in countless ways, along with all their plans, are brought to nothing. He speaks and His people, who have no strength in themselves, are strengthened. He speaks and kings and presidents are raised up. He speaks again and they're thrown down. He speaks and the most stubborn, rebellious heart is melted like wax and brought to repentance and faith. He speaks and the faithful saint is called home to be with Him forever. None can refuse Him. None can crush or condemn the One He has determined to save - whose name He has called. What then does the believer have to fear, when a God with a voice like this has spoken and called us His children? Why be afraid of the rantings of evil people when our God speaks in our defense and against their vile scheming? Yes, the same voice that makes the wicked to quake and cower puts steel in the bones of His saints - assuring us that He is mightier than all our foes, that all is well with us and ever will be, and that nothing will ever come to pass but that which our Lord has brought about by His sovereign decree. *Truly then, when we hear the sound of the thunder, we ought to think of the mighty voice of our God and remember that He is greatly to be praised.*

The Psalmist reminds us that the heavens declare the glory of God (cf. Ps 19:1). Let us not fail to see it, or to praise Him for it. In this way, we will be appropriately humbled and encouraged, and the God of glory will receive from us the praise He is due. When the skies darken, the lightning flashes, and the thunder seems to shake the walls around us, let us think of the voice of our God sounding forth from His throne, and pause to give glory to Him who is greatly to be feared and ever to be praised.

In Christ,
Pastor Eric

P.S.

Join us for the prayer meeting each Wednesday in the Fellowship Hall - bring your own dinner at 6:00pm, followed by a brief lesson and a time of prayer at 6:30. Or, join us for prayer each Thursday at 10:30am in the adult Sunday School room.