

## The LORD Who Speaks

[Announce Text] Please Open your Bibles to Psalm 29. Page 460 blue.

[Scripture Introduction] Good morning, my name is Brett Sweet and I'm one of the pastors here at Grace Christian Fellowship where we exist to glorify God through gospel-centered worship, evangelism, discipleship, and community. Summer series in the Psalms.

[Prayer for illumination] Please pray with me...

[Illustration] Your boss is late to her meeting with you, but her assistant lets you into her office. Amid family photos, degrees, and awards you see a statue. And a statue of Buddha, in your loneliness and anxiety, you start talking to Buddha. Asking questions and advice from your upcoming meeting but the Buddha, who is honored, and often worshipped, doesn't speak.

You travel to India. You love the food. You visit the tourist attractions. And that includes the Hindu shrines. You see people praying to and worshipping different gods in different places. They lay down food offerings to them. Beautiful statues all around. Ganesh with his elephant head, Hanuman with the face of a monkey. And for all the talking around going on around you, you notice that the gods never speak. They never speak.

In our hearts. We look for meaning and comfort. We look for things to give us an identity. It's our bank account. It's our imaginary Prince Charming. It's our fentanyl, alcohol, or entertainment. But when we worship them by offering up our time and money, when we ask them for help. When we make them the rulers of our lives. They don't speak.

According to Romans 1, this is the story of humanity. We create gods in the image of created things. We worship them. We plead to them, but they never speak. And the Bible acknowledges this. Fake gods don't speak, and they don't deserve our worship. And Psalm 29 is a correction to reorient us. Psalm 29 tells us

**[Proposition] Worship the LORD who speaks.**

There is a God who speaks. He speaks today through His Word and by His Spirit. And if that's true, then He's unlike all the false gods ever created. He speaks. And we should worship Him. Specifically, we'll see three ways of how we worship the

Lord who speaks- by imitating the angels. By knowing the power of His voice. And by rejoicing in His reign.

**[Way to Worship #1] Worship the LORD who speaks by imitating the angels.**

Angels exist. They are mentioned time and again in the Bible. They were affirmed by Jesus. And they are always worshipping the LORD. Let's look at them and learn from them. Let's imitate them. We'll notice that angels are those

[Subpoint 1] Who seek His glory

Look at vv. 1-2 with me

*Ascribe to the LORD, O heavenly beings, ascribe to the LORD glory and strength. Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; worship the LORD in the splendor of holiness.*

The word that the ESV uses as "ascribe" basically means "give." The sinless heavenly beings are always seeking to worship the LORD. They do this by giving all credit and glory to God. By working to make His name famous. To draw attention to Him. And that's what we as image-bearers were made for. People are meant to look at us and immediately be pointed to the glory of God. But we are often vortexes. A bit of attention comes our way, we suck it in, and we cling to it for ourselves. And this is the opposite of worship.

[Application] To imitate the angels we must seek His glory in everything. When you are praised for something going well, you acknowledge verbally or at least mentally, that God deserves the glory because He made anything good possible. When the day ends, and your head is on the pillow, you humble yourself and tell God that anything good that happened that day came from Him. That's a way we worship the LORD. But there's another way we worship the Lord by imitating the angels. We notice that these are angels

[Subpoint 2] Who reflect His holiness

Look at v. 2 with me.

*Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; worship the LORD in the splendor of holiness.*

The note in the ESV mentions that the meaning could be “holy attire.” Like they’ve put on and are wearing holiness. We often don’t think about this, but the more we grow in holiness, the more we’re worshipping the LORD. In fact, the Bible speaks of this as a primary way we worship the LORD.

[Illustration] So you’re looking for a new church. And you find one you really like when you gather on Sundays. People have giant smiles when they hold the door open for you. You come in and the singing from stage flat-out rocks. Your God-given emotions just lift you up in joy. That’s awesome. The preacher is smart and funny and articulate. He’s brought tears to your eyes more than once. But as you get to know the people, they’re just like the world. Becoming more holy isn’t a priority. Obeying God isn’t a priority. They seem to look and act just like everyone else in Spokane. They complain about the same things. What we really care about are careers. And parties. And sports. And houses. And having the best Christian education for our kids. But man do we worship on Sundays.

[Application] But Psalm 29 seems to say, if we aren’t imitating the angels by growing in holiness- we’re probably not worshipping Him at all. Sure, we claim to know the One true LORD who speaks. Who’s different than the silent idols. But if we aren’t reflecting His holiness, we aren’t worshipping Him. No matter what Sunday morning looks like.

[Illustration] Have you ever filled up an ice tray for the freezer? You pour water into one cube and it fills up and overflows and fills the next one and so on. That’s the way holiness often grows in our lives.

While refusing to go headlong into sin in any area, it’s often best to simultaneously focus on one specific area. We preach the gospel to ourselves about the fact that that sin is so horrible that it caused Jesus to need to be crucified in our place. But we also preach God’s free grace and acceptance of us through our holy Savior, we pray, we get accountability, and we grow in holiness. And then the Holy Spirit has holiness trickle over into other areas too. So, you focus on loving your spouse more the way Jesus loves the church and God grows you. And you find that you are also more patient with your co-workers or you’re more generous with your money. Or you focus on not being so envious of your classmates. You get prayer from your parents, and you remember that Jesus loves the outcast and brings them in by dying for them, even when you’re not in the

popular clique. And you find joy welling up. And it spills over in your ability to put lust to death or exercise self-control on your phone.

And all the while you're doing this. You may not even realize it. You're worshipping the LORD who speaks! The real God! The One who loves you.

Worship the LORD who speaks. We do that first by imitating the angels- who seek His glory and reflect His holiness. Now

**[Way to worship #2]** Worship the LORD who speaks **by knowing the power of His voice**

Sometimes we forget that simply knowing things comes with built-in application. If I tell you: Stock in leather will rise by 600% this decade. You intuitively know that leather is valuable and that you should buy it. You are drawn to it. Even though I never told you to buy it. Or me simply telling you that *Bluey* is the best show on TV means that you should watch it. You are drawn to it. Even though I never told you to watch it.

Likewise, when we know the power of the voice of the LORD who speaks, it makes us want to know Him and worship Him. So that's what Psalm 29 does. It helps us to know the power of His voice, so that we are drawn to Him.

So what do we need to know about the power of His voice?

[Subpoint 1] it's greater than the oceans

Read vv. 3-4 with me

*The voice of the LORD is over the waters; the God of glory thunders, the LORD, over many waters. The voice of the LORD is powerful; the voice of the LORD is full of majesty.*

The Psalmist is giving us a picture of the mighty waves over the Mediterranean Sea. And the Sea is in torment because of the power of the LORD's voice. He speaks, and the oceans must move. These verses are likely an attack on the false and silent god Yamm in Canaanite religion who is the god of the sea. Someone the surrounding people were afraid of and viewed as a source of chaos. And think about this: Tsunamis that could wipe out millions of people are not as powerful as the voice of the LORD who speaks. Seawater that could drown the whole earth is

not as great as the power of the LORD's voice. Blue whales are nothing compared to the power of His voice. Don't you want to know Him? Don't you want to listen to Him?

But that's not all, we should know that the power of His voice is greater than the oceans, but it's also

[Subpoint 2] greater than the mountains

Read vv. 5-6 with me

*The voice of the LORD breaks the cedars; the LORD breaks the cedars of Lebanon. He makes Lebanon to skip like a calf, and Sirion like a young wild ox.*

Mountains in Lebanon and Sirion would be in the north of Israel. So, in this Psalm we're in a sort of flyover that moved east from the Mediterranean and we find ourselves in the north. And these mountains, including Mt. Hermon, can reach to 10,000 feet. That's twice the height of Mt. Spokane. And God's voice is so great that when He just speaks, the massive trees on the mountains break. All He must do is speak, and the massive mountains can skip like an energized calf. Hopping and skipping. Other gods can't speak. But our God- He has a voice with power greater than the mountains! Don't you want to know Him? Don't you want to listen to Him?

But the flyover continues. We're being called to worship the LORD by know the power of His voice. Which is greater than the oceans and greater than the mountains. But the Psalmist goes on. His voice is

[Subpoint 3] greater than the storms

Let's read v. 7

*The voice of the LORD flashes forth flames of fire.*

In our flyover we see that God is greater than any weather. Just as He's greater than the Canaanite god Yamm of the sea, the LORD who speaks is greater than silent Baal the god who is in the storm. Our God is over the storm. You think a hurricane is powerful? You think a tornado is powerful? Nothing, compared to the LORD when He speaks. He spoke and the universe was created. His voice is

greater than anything in creation, even the lightning and thunder. Don't you want to know Him? Don't you want to listen to Him?

Worship the LORD who speaks by knowing the power of His voice which is greater than the oceans, greater than the mountains, greater than the storms, and lastly, [Subpoint 4] greater than the deserts

Read vv. 8-9 with me

*The voice of the LORD shakes the wilderness; the LORD shakes the wilderness of Kadesh. The voice of the LORD makes the deer give birth and strips the forests bare, and in his temple all cry, "Glory!"*

In our flyover, we've moved from the mountains in the north in Lebanon to the deserts in the south in Kadesh. God can make the rocks in the desert shake. He can strip the trees away and turn a place into a desert. And deserts can kill anything and everything- and do it quickly. So, we might say, the deserts are more powerful than anything alive that enters there. But God's voice is more powerful than the deserts. Many scholars think the footnote about oaks makes more sense than the deer giving birth, and they're probably right. But certainly, God's voice is so powerful that all these statements are true.

[Illustration] You've got a big project around the house. You do some research and learn that you need a special tool. Maybe it's as small as a new drill or as big as a giant excavator. So you do some research online and you figure out the best one to buy or to rent. You watch videos on how to operate it. You see it pulverizing or transforming the material in front of it. Then the day comes, everything is set up, you've done everything right according to the manual. But you pull the trigger or push the button. Nothing. You turn the ignition, but silence. Something that should be powerful isn't. You may not be an expert, but you're smart enough to know that there's a lack of power. Something is wrong.

[Application] And yet, many of us are content with seeking no real power from the voice of God's Word. We read that the power of His voice is greater than anything on earth. But we read the Bible or listen to preaching and, nothing. No power. And then we just go about our day.

We worship the LORD who speaks by knowing the power of His voice AND pursuing that power. So, let's get real right now. Here's this preacher standing in front of you doing His best to stumble this church forward in knowing and experiencing the power of the LORD's voice. But for you, nothing. No power. What do you do? You should know right away, something is wrong. What do you do? Just give up and hope things are different next week? Or at the next church? But what happens then? No, what you do is you pray, right now- silently to yourself. "LORD, I've heard of the power of your voice. I want to experience it and worship you. Please speak in power now. If there's a problem with the preacher or with me, please overpower those problems! Please empower me to come back to your WORD again and again believing something will happen again!"

So come to your Bibles with expectation! Come to church with expectation! Pray for this church to be One who really knows the power of the LORD's voice. Pray that we would be a people who believe God speaks. And believe that He deserves worship for it.

If you're here and you doubt the power of the LORD who speaks, let me tell you how much I respect you for being here. You are brave. But let me help you doubt your doubts: explain to me how a tiny group of people in a backwater of the Roman Empire has grown to be the largest and most diverse movement in world history? And it has only ever claimed to properly spread by words that come from people speaking. There must be power in His voice.

Worship the LORD who speaks by imitating the angels and by knowing the power of His voice. Now let's notice another way we worship Him

**[Main Point 3] Worship the LORD who speaks by rejoicing in His reign.**

In the west, it's being noticed that if there is a single overarching virtue that's celebrated, it's freedom. Freedom is a good thing, but it's not an ultimate thing. But we often resist anything that we think might inhibit our freedom. And this often makes us merely tolerate that the LORD instead of rejoicing in Him. But Psalm 29 shows us two reasons of God's reign that should make us rejoice.

[Reason 1] His reign never ends

Let's read v. 10

*The LORD sits enthroned over the flood; the LORD sits enthroned as king forever.*

The first phrase in v. 10 points back to Genesis in two ways. In the Creation account we hear of the Holy Spirit hovering over the face of the waters. And the word used for “flood” here is only used elsewhere in one place- in Noah’s flood in Genesis 6-9. Thus, God has been enthroned for centuries and David states the implication- He’s enthroned as king forever. His reign never ends. We don’t need to fear what the next king will be like. We have the One and only. And since His reign never ends we should rejoice in the King. And the King is the LORD who speaks, not some mute idol or impersonal force of physics in the universe that somehow, against its own explanations, created itself.

One more reason we should rejoice in His reign.

[Reason 2] His reign blesses His people

Follow along in v. 11

*May the LORD give strength to his people! May the LORD bless his people with peace!*

We’ve often heard of France’s reign of terror. But that’s not the reign of the LORD who speaks. All of this power in His voice is working for His people to bring them peace. What a wonderful King! This LORD who speaks! A reign that never ends. That is only blessing and peace.

If you are not a Christian. Then you have a different ruler. You may not know this but the Bible says that you are following a prince and that prince is an evil prince. It’s the devil. And you need rescued from him. If you will be kept from the blessing of a never-ending reign of peace. You will receive a curse of never-ending war with this God. And by doing so

[Gospel] We don’t want someone to reign over us, we say, and yet. We find ourselves torn as humans. We see it in our movies don’t we? Here is movie character, and she’s safe and secure in her bedroom in the suburbs or 18<sup>th</sup> Century English estate. Or he has his comfortable kitchen in his Hobbit hole. They have all the security and safety they could want. But something is missing. They want adventure! And suddenly someone comes along and upsets their world and



takes them on an adventure. A risk-taking friend. A handsome but mysterious man. A wizard or a dwarf. That's one of our stories.

But there's another story too. Horror films and war films. Monsters, serial killers, or the enemy are after them. And they're outmatched. People are up against horrible enemies and dangerous circumstances. They have adventure aplenty. What they want is security and safety. And usually, someone comes along and rescues them. Equips them. Trains them. And they're secure. That's another one of our stories. But the problem is that we can never seem to have adventure and security at the same time. Or can we?

Jesus Christ has come not just as priest to purify us from our sins. Nor just as prophet to reveal God to us. Nor just as sage to teach us. He has come as King. And as the King whose reign never ends and whose reign is always a blessing to His people- He gives us both adventure and security. He comes bringing His kingdom. He comes as calling us as people who have come to form a resistance to the evils of the world around us. He shakes us out of our boredom and complacency and soft comfy lives and promises to lead us on an adventure to build a kingdom, to meet heroic people, and to do significant things that will last for eternity. He calls us to use spiritual weapons, not physical violence, to restore the true kingdom. What an adventure! But since He's the LORD who speaks, He has unimaginable power and will use it only to bless His people, no matter how dangerous it may get. Even death can't harm us. Our King has died for us. Taken God's wrath for us. He knows everything about us. He knows the worst about us. And still loves us. So, we have pure and perfect security even while we're on this adventure. So don't just tolerate this reign! Rejoice in it! We get to live what every human heart is crying out for! Not just a freedom from something, but a freedom for something meaningful.

He then trains and equips us to live holy lives by sending His Spirit. And what's the Spirit's primary job- to remind us of what Jesus has said. To live up to the high calling we have- that, in some ways, will be superior to the angels. He unleashes the power of His voice in and through us. We preach the gospel and people come alive! We command demons and they scatter. And we endure ridicule and rejection at times, but we wade through the pain and we find that God has been with us and we were secure the whole time.

But also, if Jesus is King, the little things matter. You aren't just doing schoolwork, Your King is training you how to think and be prepared for the adventure ahead. You aren't just changing diapers, you are living a picture of how you are being sanctified from sin. You aren't just working a job, you are bringing the world into submission to the King. You aren't just enjoying a movie, song, or video game- you are encountering creativity that flows out from the ultimate Creator and King. You aren't just talking to your neighbor, you are a commissioned ambassador advancing the reign of the King. All of these are reasons for rejoicing in His reign.

[Conclusion] Jesus is our King. And time and again scholars have noted something that seems to point to this. Psalm 29 opens with this call for angels to give glory to God. Give Him glory the Psalm says! What amazing glory. The highest glory! And it ends with v. 11 with peace for His people. And when Jesus was born. Now just what was it that the angels shouted?

“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased.”

And He grew up and He spoke like nobody as ever spoken. And He lived sinlessly. And He died as a substitute for His people. And He rose from the dead. And the world has never been the same.