

“Hearing God’s Voice” part 2

Acts 2:17-21

Intro

As we continue our series on “hearing God’s voice”, I am reminded that this topic is oh so relevant for Moms today. If ever you needed something as a Mom, you need to learn to hear God’s voice and be led by His Holy Spirit. You need to hear His voice for your marriage For your parenting For your identity for your use of time.

Pers. I remember a time in our parenting when we were really having trouble with one of our kids and Dede asked God for insight and He showed her exactly what the problem was.

On this Mother’s day, I think of

- **Hannah** who was barren and cried out to God and God answered her prayer.
- **Mary** the mother of Jesus, who upon hearing from God about the birth of Christ ‘pondered these things in her heart.’
- **Mary**, the sister of Martha, who was seated at the Lord’s feet, listening to His word.

Chall. How many of us, not just mothers today, sit regularly at the feet of Jesus and listen to His Word?

Regarding hearing God’s voice, the bible says:

Luke 11:27-28 “Blessed are those who hear the word of God and obey it”

John 18:37 everyone who is of the truth heareth my voice

John 10 my sheep will hear my voice

16x **Jesus** said “He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”

Rev. 2-3 to him who has ears to hear, let him hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches.

Gen 5:22 Enoch walked with God 300 years

Rom 8:14 because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.

As we look today at part 2 of Hearing God, once again our central truth is:

Central Truth: Learning to hear and obey God’s voice is one of the most important things in all of life.

This is for all of us, men and women. Fathers and Mothers. Young and old. Nothing is more important than this, because if we hear and obey God’s voice, then we will be in the center of His will; we will make the right decisions. We will be in the career He wants us in. We will marry the right person. We will be and do what He wants us to, and in the end we will hear “Well done, my good and faithful servant” and is anything more important than that?!

I was so encourage as I read what many of you sensed God saying in our service last week:

Yellow cards ... I can tell that many of you really heard God's voice last week and I just want to encourage you to continue to sharpen your spiritual ears to hear God. What a privilege we have to hear from the God of the universe.

Review: 2 weeks ago we learned (get the tape if not here):

1. God is a talking God.

He is interested in telling us things. The bible is proof positive that He is a talking, communicating God. Aren't you glad?

2. God has "wired" His people for sound.

God has given us the ability to hear His voice through the Holy Spirit that comes to indwell us the moment we receive Christ. As long as you have the HS living in you, you are wired for sound, whether a brand new Christian or been walking with God for years.

Prop: antenna

TS So, how do we hear God?

3. The Bible is the most certain voice of God.

Here it is plain and clear. This is God's most certain Word.

2 Tim. 3:16 all scripture is inspired by God

Ps. 119 thy word is a lamp unto my feet

Hebr. 4:12 Word is living and active, sharper than any 2-edged sword.

Pers. This week I was at LWBC with my kids and they have built a model of the **Tabernacle** that you can walk through In the Holy of Holies is the ark of the covenant and in that were the 10 Commandments – the written word of God! This shows how central the word is to the presence of God.

And this is why we must spend quality time every day reading and studying and meditating on God's precious Word. We must read it in context and allow it to speak to our lives. I encourage you to always be in a book of the bible. I am in Acts right now. I also encourage **meditation** on the word, where you take a small portion of the bible and you dwell on it and pray it and allow God's Spirit to personalize it to you.

Proverbs challenge – when faced with a major decision, read through the entire book of Proverbs and ask God to give you a verse showing you what to do.

You can be certain that the enemy, Satan, will do everything he can to mislead you and have you think that his voice is God's voice and all the more reason we need to be well grounded in this book, the Bible, the most certain word of God, so as to be able to know God's voice and clearly distinguish between God's and Satan's voice!

TS So, we must be clear on this: This book is the most certain voice of God and God will never contradict His written word. At the same time, He also speaks on other ways and that is our 4th point where I said we would pick up with:

4. God speaks in many ways.

Never contrary to the bible but certainly in ways other than just the passages in the bible. Even in His Word we see Him speaking in ways other than just His Word.

Acts: Do a study of Acts and look at all the ways God spoke to people.

Ex. Nowhere in the bible does it tell you who to marry or what profession to go into or how many children to have or which college to attend ... but I think He wants to tell us these things

By the way, all of the resources listed on your sermon notes, from very solid scholars would agree with this point. Bible first and foremost but not only through the bible.

Now as I give these you are going to see first hand some of what we mean when we say we are seeking to be a **Word and Spirit church**, which is one of our all church goals this year – to grow in being a Word and Spirit church. A Word and Spirit church is a church that is totally committed to God’s inerrant and infallible Word, and always goes back to the Bible to determine what is of God, while at the same time is hungry for and open to the spontaneous and fresh work of the HS.

TS What are some of these “other ways” that God speaks?

a. In our spirit.

Again, God’s Spirit lives in our spirit, therefore, it shouldn’t surprise us that we would have a “sense in our spirit” at times that is God speaking to us. I realize this can be subjective which is why it should be weighed carefully.

Isa. 30:21 “your ears will hear a voice behind you saying this is the way, walk in it.”

“When I say the Holy Spirit ...” quote from p. 16 of Charles Stanley’s book

Acts 15:28 “seemed good to the HS and to us”

Let me give you a verse that I think supports this point:

Col 3:15-17

15 Let the peace of Christ **rule in your hearts**, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. 16 Let the **word of Christ dwell in you richly** as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.

Col. 3:15 “**peace factor**” .. rule in our hearts = umpire our hearts ...

NT:1018

brabeuo (brab-yoo'-o); from the same as NT:1017; to **arbitrate**, i.e. (genitive case) to govern (figuratively, prevail):
KJV - rule.

NT:1017

brabeion (brab-i'-on); from brabeus (an **umpire** of uncertain derivation); an award (of arbitration), i.e. (specially) a prize in the public games:

Peace is to be like an umpire in our spirit. An umpire calls balls and strikes in a baseball game. He says “strike” – over the plate – where it is supposed to be. Ball = off the mark and not where it should be. You are going in a direction that is not of God, and you have this “check in your spirit” or “lack of peace”, that can be God umpiring your life and speaking to you through that lack of peace.

Pers. This week I was writing something and just didn't feel right about something and realize it was due to one word the Lord wanted me to change.

Of course, you have to be careful here, because sometimes what we call a “lack of peace” is simply our feeling what we want to feel so that we can claim it is of God. Our emotions can play tricks on it and we should not be lead by our feelings, and this is again why the written word is so important, which may be why Col. 3:16 says to “let the Word of God dwell in you richly.”

Perfect balance here.

Col 3:15-17

15 Let the peace of Christ **rule in your hearts**, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. 16 Let the **word of Christ dwell in you richly** as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.

The more the Word dwells in your richly, the more you can trust that sense in your spirit! This does not mean that we are to be driven by our feelings. I call this **sanctified feelings**.

Again we come back to the importance of the written Word, the bible. The bible is our screen:

Prop: screen

This screen allows the fresh air in and filters out the things we don't want in. The bible is our filter or screen, by which we filter every thing through that we think is God but we aren't sure.

Another point here: You can experience God speaking to your spirit, regardless of how long you have been saved or how old you are.

Ex. Recently in my bible time with **my kids**, we did John 10 and then I said, “now kids, today I want you to listen to God's voice and tell me tonight what you sensed from the Lord.... One of my children said “God told me to give something to another kid at youth group...this week at LWBC: get dad a cup of coffee.” Wow

TS Another way God speaks is:

b. In prayer.

For too many of us prayer is a one-way conversation, simply us talking to God. But in **Jer. 33:3** call upon me and I will tell you great and mighty things which you do not know.

That is God talking in prayer. As we spend time in prayer we need to allow for times of quiet and silence where we are listening to God. I suggest you have a **journal** in which you write down what you sense God saying. I have been doing this and it has been a big blessing.

In addition, seek to make prayer a way of life whereby throughout the day as you are in fellowship with God, you sense His still small voice and you are led by His spirit.

TS 3rd way:

c. Through others.

God loves community and calls us into community. He greatly values relationships and will speak to us through other people. God may speak to us through a sermon or a message on the radio or through the counsel of another or just through a note we receive or a statement someone makes or a prophetic word or a book we read. We can hear God's voice through other people.

Proverbs 13:10 are filled with verses like: in the abundance of counsel there is wisdom. Blessed is he who heeds counsel and the input of others.

God speaks through people. Yes, weigh it all through the Word, weigh the peace factor, etc. but do get counsel from others.

Oh, **one other thing**: realizing this should cause us all to be very **prayerful** and **careful what we say to others**. Let us seek to be vessels through which God might speak to others.

TS Another way is:

d. Through situations.

Yes, God speaks through the situations of life. You have to be very careful here, again weigh it with the Word, get counsel, but sometimes God uses situations to speak to us.

Rev. 3:7-8 I have placed before you an open door ... circumstance.

Col. 4:3 He prayed that God would open a door for the message. This sounds like the circumstance of an open door to show him that he was to minister there.

1 Cor. 16:8 Paul said he would stay on at Ephesus because a great door for effective work has opened there for me.

2 Cor. 2:12-13 a door was opened, but no peace ... this is interesting. This shows that the open door deal is not always a sign.

This begs the question? **What about a fleece?** Fleece comes from **Judges 6:36-40** where

I would not rule it out completely but I would be very careful not to rely on it alone. Beware of making too much of something like this – like the person who says “if the light is green that means I am to marry so and so.”

If you do cast a fleece I would make sure it is something that could only be done by God.

The point here is that God can and does use circumstances to speak to us, sometimes unpleasant circumstances. He may bring conflict into your life to deepen you. He may allow sickness to do something. He may allow you to fall on your face to humble you.....

“God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pain. It is His megaphone to arouse a deaf world.” C.S. Lewis

You see, every trial or circumstance in life can be an occasion for God to speak to us.

TS Now, this next one is probably the most controversial, but here we go:

e. In dreams, visions and prophecies.

I realize for many of you this one is going to be the biggest stretch. I simply challenge you to go through the book of Acts and do a search on the word dreams, visions and prophecies

Acts 2:17-

Hebr. 13:8 Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever

Is there any place in the Bible that would suggest that these things have ceased?

1 Cor. 13?

That is clearly referring to what will happen when Jesus returns.

Yes, we must be very careful when it comes to these types of experiences: Let's take **dreams** first. I am referring to actual sleep dreams. The bible is loaded with examples of God speaking in this way.

Pers. The birth of Michael ... Michael and bicycle

Visions are where God actually gives you a **mental picture**, it could be where you actual see something with eyes open or with eyes closed you kind of see something in your mind.

Acts 18:9

Pers. Just this week I was praying with a couple and I had this picture of a green field

Ex. Virginia Steindorf seeing the hand of Jesus and the rose coming up

And **prophecies** are based on 1 Cor. 14:3:

1 Cor 14:3

3 But everyone who prophesies speaks to men for their strengthening, encouragement and comfort.

Pers. I had a 1 Cor. 14:3 a few weeks ago like you wouldn't believe.

“Prophecy is telling something that God has spontaneously brought to mind.”

Dr. Wayne Grudem in Systematic Theology, p. 1049

Explain what we do in our services

The difference between OT and NT prophesy is that NT prophesy does have room for human error and we do not consider it equal with the written word of God. In Dr. Grudem's systematic theology he has a good section where he shows some places in Acts where there were prophetic words that were not 100% accurate.

Acts 21:4-14

1 Thess. 5:19-22 ... don't quench but don't take it all either. Balance. Eat the meat and spit out the bones.

A few other things about prophetic words:

- Never make a major decision on a single prophecy. Give it much time and ask for confirmation. We often attach a scenerio to the word that is not necessarily of God and then we create an Ishmael in the flesh instead of waiting on the Isaac.
- Be very careful about timing if you have a word. You may have a word to guide you in prayer and not necessarily to give the person. Be sure God gives you the green light to share it.
- Use God's name sparingly. Don't say “thus saith the Lord”. Better to say “I sense/think God has shown me something” and then give it to them and leave it with them. Quote: Cochran p. 117

See our **policy on prophesy** – the bookstore

Now what I want to do is give you some very practical advice when it comes to hearing God's voice:

Practical Advice in Hearing God:

1. Have a humble heart. “Consider carefully how you listen.” Luke 8:18

This is so key. The more humble and teachable and receptive we are, the more God will speak to us. We must live in total dependence and have the attitude of “God I so desperately need to hear from you.”

2. Devote time to listening.

I think we have covered this well but there must be formal time and there must be time just in our spirit where we are still enough and open enough to hear God. This may mean turning the radio off in the car, less TV

Ex. Sabbath

Luke 10:38-42

3. Obey what He says. "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it." Luke 11:28

You must respond or else your heart becomes callous to His voice.

Give expression to your impressions or you will fail to be impressed. Let me explain:

Ex. Airport – anyone ever lived near an airport?

4. Be discerning.

By this I mean to be careful, especially about the more subjective aspects of God speaking. Always go back to the written word and wise, godly counsel, so as not to be misled.

1Thess. 5:19-22

Conclusion 2

I might add a 5th: **Have fun with this.** This is exciting and practical stuff, my friends! Enjoy God. Enjoy that He is and He is not silent. He wants to lead and guide you. He wants you to hear His voice!!!

Aren't you glad that God is a talking God. He is speaking and He wants you to hear His voice. If you have Christ, you can hear His voice. If you have never invited Christ into your life, you can do that today. His written Word is His most certain and sure way of speaking, and yet He also speaks in other ways.

Do you want to hear God? If so, tell Him now. Ask Him to help you hear His voice more clearly.

What is it that you might need to reduce in your life that you might increase your ability to hear His voice? What are some other voices you are listening to that you need to eliminate? What are some activities that are keeping you from this book or from just being still enough in your spirit to hear that still small voice?

Whatever you eliminate for God, you will never regret. The positives of hearing His voice far outweigh the little cost of giving up that which hinders you from hearing His

voice. What could be more important than hearing and obeying God on a moment by moment basis?

John 10 “My sheep will hear My voice.”

Let’s pray (allow some listening time)

End:

- a. Yellow cards (any questions from this series College students summer addresses)**
- b. ABC booth – great place to have your kids go or go as a family**