

Hearing God: Are You Ready?

Scott Kramer

Introduction:

Sermon Spice Video: *Waiting on God*

- Most people would say that it is important for them to hear from God.
 - Direction in Decisions, Relationships, Answered Prayer, Healing, Purpose in Life...

We all want to hear from God on these huge life decisions!!!

Series Theme: *Eph. 5:15-17*

¹⁵Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, ¹⁶making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. ¹⁷Therefore do not be foolish, *but understand what the Lord's will is.*

**The desire to hear from God is motivated by wanting to know what His will is for our lives!*

Series Summary:

Week 2: *The Different Voices of God*

Week 3: *Sorting Through the Other Voices*

Week 4: *From Hearing to Responding*

Tonight's Theme Text: *Matt. 13:10-17* (this is in response to the Parable of the Sower)

Why the Parable as a teaching tool?

¹⁰The disciples came to him and asked, "Why do you speak to the people in parables?"

¹¹He replied, "The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them. ¹²Whoever has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. ¹³This is why I speak to them in parables:

"Though seeing, they do not see; though hearing, they do not hear or understand. ¹⁴In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah: (6:9-10)

" 'You will be ever hearing but never understanding;
you will be ever seeing but never perceiving.

¹⁵For this people's heart has become calloused;

they hardly hear with their ears,

and they have closed their eyes.

Otherwise they might see with their eyes,

hear with their ears, understand with their hearts

and turn, and I would heal them.'

¹⁶But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear. ¹⁷For I tell you the truth, many prophets and righteous men longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to *hear* what you *hear* but did not *hear* it.

**Tonight, we are going to compare two different dispositions toward Hearing God. (temperaments, situations, postures)*

ILL. Man #1: 'Seed sown among thorns' – the worries of this life choke it out

1. The Person who Does not Hear God: The Disposition of Unreceptiveness

- *Can our heart condition and/or our lifestyle affect our ability to hear from God?* (Begin drawing on Dry Erase Board a person with 'God messages' trying to get through)

"For this people's heart has become *calloused*; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes."

- KJV says “their ears are **dull** of hearing.”

Who Is Hard of Hearing?

An older couple had an ongoing semi-serious discussion about which one of them was losing their hearing. As time went on this became quite a source of contention between them. The husband decided he would settle the issue once and for all. While his wife was enjoying a book in the living room he said in a loud voice, "Dear, would you like a cup of tea?" Upon hearing no response he progressed to the next room and said again in a firm voice, "Dear, would you like a cup of tea?" Still there was no reply from his wife. Lastly he went into the living room and stood directly behind the chair in which his wife was sitting. In an even louder voice he repeated, "Dear, would you like a cup of tea?" She turned to him with a slightly annoyed expression on her face and replied, "For the third time ... yes!"

Four Hindrances to Hearing (What keeps us from Hearing God?)

- 1 **Jer. 22:21** “I spoke to you in your prosperity (*false security, abundance*), but you said, ‘I will not hear.’ This has been your manner from your youth, that you did not obey my voice.” (NKJV)
 - a. **Prosperity may distract you from hearing God.** (b/c you likely aren’t even listening)
 - There are many things in our lives that can distract us from hearing the voice of God.
 - Wealth, Materialism, Greed, Success, Fame, Popularity, Other People...
- 2 **Deut. 30:17** ¹⁷But if your heart turns away so that you do not *hear*, and are *drawn away*, and worship other gods and serve them, ¹⁸I announce to you today that you shall surely perish; (NKJV)

-We will perish without the voice of the Lord in our lives!!!

James 4:8 “Draw near to God and He will draw near to you...” (NKJV)

 - b. **A Turned Heart will draw you away from hearing the Lord speak.**
- 3 **2 Kings 17:13-14** ¹³Yet the LORD testified against Israel and against Judah, by all of His prophets, every seer, saying, “Turn from your evil ways, and keep My commandments and My statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by My servants the prophets.” ¹⁴Nevertheless, they *would not hear*, but stiffened their necks, like the necks of their fathers, who did not believe in the LORD their God.
 - c. **Stiff-Neckedness (Stubbornness) prevents hearing and leads to disbelief.**
- 4 **1 Sam. 15:22-23** ²²So Samuel said: “Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed better than the fat of rams. ²³For *rebellion* is as the sin of *witchcraft*, and *stubbornness* is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have *rejected* the word of the LORD, He also has rejected you from being king.”

Is. 30:9 ⁸Now go, write it before them on a tablet, and note it on a scroll, that it may be for a time to come, forever and ever: ⁹That this is a *rebellious* people, lying children, children who will not hear the law of the LORD;

 - d. **Rebellion will ultimately lead to reciprocal rejection between you and God, and of course will not make one *inclined* to hear the voice of the Lord.**
 - ILL. Rebellion results in a calloused heart (as we read earlier). ie. weightlifting

ILL. Man #2: ‘Seed sown among good soil’ – ripe for hearing the Lord speak

2. The Person Who Hears God: The Disposition of Receptiveness

Is. 66:1-4 (3-4, then 1-3)

³But whoever sacrifices a bull is like one who kills a man, and whoever offers a lamb, like one who breaks a dog's neck; whoever makes a grain offering is like one who presents pig's blood, and whoever burns memorial incense, like one who worships an idol. (these are all people in Matt. 15:8 of whom Jesus says "These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.") They have chosen their own ways, and their souls delight in their abominations;

⁴so I also will choose harsh treatment for them and will bring upon them what they dread. For when I called, no one answered, when I spoke, no one listened. They did evil in my sight and chose what displeases me."

¹This is what the LORD says: "Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. Where is the house you will build for me? Where will my resting place be?

²Has not my hand made all these things, and so they came into being?" declares the LORD. "This is the one I esteem: he who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word.

Three Attitudes of Openness

- a. **Humble** - **1** : not proud or haughty : not arrogant or assertive
2 : reflecting, expressing, or offered in a spirit of deference or submission
Expectation, but not selfishness
- b. **Contrite** – **1** : grieving and penitent for sin or shortcoming
- c. **Fear of the Lord** - **3** : to have a reverential awe

Conclusion:

- **Hearing God's sometimes includes Waiting on God, like in the video**

8835 If we knew how to listen to God, we should hear him speaking to us, for God does speak. He speaks in his gospel; he speaks also through life—that new gospel to which we ourselves add a page each day.

8935 Prayer is not to hear oneself speak, but to arrive at silence and continue being silent; to wait till one hears God speak.
SØREN AABYE KIERKEGAARD (1813–1855)

8981 The immediate person thinks and imagines that when he prays, the important thing, the thing he must concentrate upon, is that God should hear what he is praying for. And yet in the true, eternal sense it is just the reverse: the true relation in prayer is not when God hears what is prayed for, but when the person praying continues to pray until he is the one who hears, who hears what God wills. The immediate person uses many words and makes demands in his prayer; the true man of prayer only attends.
Søren Aabye Kierkegaard (1813–1855)

Discussion Questions:

What do you feel is keeping you from hearing God? What do you think God is speaking to you?