

# The Many Voices of God

Hearing God – Week 2

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

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

*\*God's will motivates us to Hear!*

## Review Week 1: Hearing God: Are you Ready?

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

"Though seeing, they do not see; though hearing, they do not hear or understand. <sup>14</sup>In 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.

<sup>15</sup>For 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.'

We compared two people last week:

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

- *Our heart condition does affect our ability to hear from God!*

"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."

### Four Hindrances to Hearing

- a. Prosperity - *Jer. 22:21*
- b. A Turned Heart - *Deut. 30:17*
- c. Stiff-Neckedness - *2 Kings 17:13-14*
- 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. *1 Sam. 15:22-23 (Saul)*

ILL. Rebellion results in a calloused heart towards God – and callouses have to be cut away first

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

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

<sup>2</sup>Has 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 - not proud or haughty : not arrogant or assertive; reflecting a spirit of deference or submission
- b. Contrite – grieving and penitent for sin or shortcoming
- c. Fear of the Lord - to have a reverential awe

## Looking Ahead:

Week 3: "Sorting Through the Other Voices"

Week 4: "From Hearing to Responding"

Week 5: "Don't Make Me...!"

## Tonight: The Many Voices of God

We are going to take a journey through the Bible to explore how God has spoken to men and women of the past.

### 1. Supernatural Revelation – angels, visions, dreams, audible voice of God, whisper

#### a. Angelic Visitations - Philip and the Ethiopian

##### **Acts 8:26**

"Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, 'Go south to the road – the desert road – that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.' So he started out..."

- i. Scripture is replete with other examples – Joshua, Daniel, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Mary...
- ii. Notice he obeyed immediately – b/c he was ready to Hear the Voice of God.

#### b. Visions - Peter and Cornelius

##### **Acts 10:9-16**

<sup>9</sup>About noon the following day as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the roof to pray. <sup>10</sup>He became hungry and wanted something to eat, and while the meal was being prepared, he fell into a *trance*. <sup>11</sup>He saw heaven opened and something like a large sheet being let down to earth by its four corners. <sup>12</sup>It contained all kinds of four-footed animals, as well as reptiles of the earth and birds of the air. <sup>13</sup>Then a voice told him, "Get up, Peter. Kill and eat."

<sup>14</sup>"Surely not, Lord!" Peter replied. "I have never eaten anything impure or unclean."

<sup>15</sup>The voice spoke to him a second time, "Do not call anything impure that God has made clean."

<sup>16</sup>This happened three times, and immediately the sheet was taken back to heaven.

<sup>17</sup>While Peter was wondering about the meaning of the vision, the men sent by Cornelius found out where Simon's house was and stopped at the gate. <sup>18</sup>They called out, asking if Simon who was known as Peter was staying there.

<sup>19</sup>While Peter was still thinking about the vision, *the Spirit said to him*, "Simon, three men are looking for you. <sup>20</sup>So get up and go downstairs. Do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them."

- i. **Notice** - this vision was preempted by prayer
- ii. Conversation didn't end with the vision!! Peter still heard the voice of the Spirit

**\*Notice the common outcome of these two Sup. Revs. – salvations!!!**

#### c. Dreams - Joseph and Egypt

##### **Matt. 2:19-22**

<sup>19</sup>After Herod died, *an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream* to Joseph in Egypt <sup>20</sup>and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who were trying to take the child's life are dead."

#### d. Audibles - Moses and *Football!*

##### **Num. 12:1-8**

<sup>1</sup> Miriam and Aaron began to talk against Moses because of his Cushite wife, for he had married a Cushite. <sup>2</sup> "Has the LORD spoken only through Moses?" they asked. "Hasn't he also spoken through us?" And the LORD heard this.

<sup>3</sup> (Now Moses was a very humble man, more humble than anyone else on the face of the earth.)

<sup>4</sup> At once the LORD said to Moses, Aaron and Miriam, "Come out to the Tent of Meeting, all three of you." So the three of them came out. <sup>5</sup> Then *the LORD came down in a pillar of cloud*; he stood at the entrance to the Tent and summoned Aaron and Miriam. When both of them stepped forward, <sup>6</sup> he said, "Listen to my words:

"When a prophet of the LORD is among you,  
I reveal myself to him in visions, I speak to him in dreams.

<sup>7</sup> But this is not true of my servant Moses;  
he is faithful in all my house.

<sup>8</sup> With him I speak face to face, clearly and not in riddles;  
he sees the form of the LORD.  
Why then were you not afraid  
to speak against my servant Moses?"

Face to Face??? (KJV better translation 'mouth to mouth' as in *blowing*)

**Ex. 33:19** <sup>19</sup>And the LORD said, "I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the LORD, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. <sup>20</sup>But," he said, "you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live."

-Nevertheless, Moses had earned a special privilege in speaking to God 'as a man speaks to another man.' - (Ex.33:11) Why? His humility!!!!

#### e. Whispers – Elijah at Mt. Sinai

This is after the roller coaster of activity – from victory over Baal on Mt. Carmel to running scared from Jezebel & King Ahab.

#### **1 Kings 19:9-14**

And the word of the LORD came to him: "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

<sup>10</sup> He replied, "I have been very zealous for the LORD God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, broken down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too."

<sup>11</sup> The LORD said, "Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the LORD, for the LORD is about to pass by."

Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. <sup>12</sup> After the earthquake came a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. <sup>13</sup> When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave.

Then a voice said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

## 2. The Word of God

**Ps. 119:105** "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."

"A new world will arise out of the religious mists when we approach our Bible with the idea that it is . . . a book which is now speaking." A. W. TOZER (1897–1963)

"A thorough knowledge of the Bible is worth more than a college education." THEODORE ROOSEVELT (1858–1919)

"All things desirable to men are contained in the Bible." ABRAHAM LINCOLN (1809–1865)

a. It is the perfectly objective and supreme standard for our lives.

"Every Christian must refer always and everywhere to the Scriptures for all his choices, becoming like a child before it, seeking in it the most effective remedy against all his various weaknesses, and not daring to take a step without being illuminated by the divine rays of those words."

POPE JOHN PAUL II (1920–)

**Next is a quite common but often overlooked Voice of God – Circumstances.**

### 3. Circumstances

#### **Acts 6:1-6**

<sup>1</sup>In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Grecian Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. <sup>2</sup>So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. <sup>3</sup>Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them <sup>4</sup>and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word."

<sup>5</sup>This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism. <sup>6</sup>They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them.

- a. Divine Providence guided the Early Church to choose seven deacons
- b. The Doors of Life – Open or Closed – **maybe the most common!!**  
**We need to learn to thank God for the closed doors!!!**
- c. Nature – or those things which are out of our control  
**ILL. Share a story of something that was completely out of your control**

### 4. The Outer Witness

- a. God may guide you through other people – Matthias chosen to replace Judas

#### **Acts 1:23-36**

<sup>23</sup>So they proposed two men: Joseph called Barsabbas (also known as Justus) and Matthias. <sup>24</sup>Then they prayed, "Lord, you know everyone's heart. Show us which of these two you have chosen <sup>25</sup>to take over this apostolic ministry, which Judas left to go where he belongs." <sup>26</sup>Then they cast lots, and the lot fell to Matthias; so he was added to the eleven apostles.

**-More on this next week!!!**

- b. God may guide you through the operation of the Gifts of the Spirit – Paul 'set apart'

#### **Acts 13:10-13**

<sup>10</sup>After we had been there a number of days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. <sup>11</sup>Coming over to us, he took Paul's belt, tied his own hands and feet with it and said, "The Holy Spirit says, 'In this way the Jews of Jerusalem will bind the owner of this belt and will hand him over to the Gentiles.' " <sup>12</sup>When we heard this, we and the people there pleaded with Paul not to go up to Jerusalem. <sup>13</sup>Then Paul answered, "Why are you weeping and breaking my heart? I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." <sup>14</sup>When he would not be dissuaded, we gave up and said, "The Lord's will be done."

**A word of warning to the prophet – avoid presumption & be very careful in giving a word, since you are speaking on behalf of God!**

### 5. The Inner Witness

- a. The Impression - Paul guided from within

#### **Acts 16:6-7**

<sup>6</sup>Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia. <sup>7</sup>When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to.

- b. The Prompting – Paul going to Jerusalem

**Acts 20:22-24**

<sup>22</sup>"And now, *compelled by the Spirit*, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there. <sup>23</sup>I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me. <sup>24</sup>However, I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace.

<sup>25</sup>"Now I know that none of you among whom I have gone about preaching the kingdom will ever see me again.

c. The Loud Thought – Acts 13:1-3

**Acts 13:1-3**

<sup>1</sup>In the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul. <sup>2</sup>While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." <sup>3</sup>So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.

**Conclusion:**

The same application applies tonight as it did last week – the person who hears clearest from God is the person who has an attitude of humility and openness, who walks in the Spirit, and who is constantly in step with the Spirit's leading.

***To live a victorious Christian life, we must learn how to recognize the Voice of the Lord!!!***

"I will seek the will of the Spirit of God through, or in connection with, the Word of God. The Spirit and the Word must be combined. If I look to the Spirit alone without the Word, I lay myself open to great delusions also. If the Holy Ghost guides us at all, He will do it according to the Scriptures and never contrary to them."

George Mueller (German preacher of the 19<sup>th</sup> Cent.)