

“ADJ - Hearing the voice of God Part 3” (5-22-22)

Introduction: Today - Listening & responding to the Holy Spirit

Last week: People of Word & Spirit who cultivate an attitude of responsive watching, listening, & waiting!

Main Text Today: Acts 10 - Peter’s responsiveness to the Holy Spirit leads to salvation for the Gentiles

1) Awareness - Listening to the Holy Spirit

God is always (and already!) at work - before God speaks to Peter . . .

Acts 10:1-3 (ESV)

(1) At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion of what was known as the Italian Cohort, (2) a devout man who feared God with all his household, gave alms generously to the people, and prayed continually to God. (3) About the ninth hour of the day he saw clearly in a vision an angel of God come in and say to him, “Cornelius.”

Note: God is at work in the life of this good man - God is pursuing him and gives clear/specific instructions - send men to bring Peter. And as soon as the angel finishes, he immediately obeys.

Now consider this from Peter’s perspective - he knows nothing. He is going about his life as “normal” . . .

Acts 10:9-10 (ESV)

(9) The next day, as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the housetop about the sixth hour to pray. (10) And he became hungry and wanted something to eat, but while they were preparing it, he fell into a trance

Note: Daily quiet-time / prayer. He’s waiting on the mid-day meal and getting hungry.

Peter’s vision (vs. 11-16) - A great sheet with all kinds of animals (picnic blanket!)

Acts 10:13-15 (ESV)

(13) And there came a voice to him: “Rise, Peter; kill and eat.” (14) But Peter said, “By no means, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean.” (15) And the voice came to him again a second time, “What God has made clean, do not call common.”

This vision repeats 3 times, then he wakes up!

Acts 10:17a (ESV)

Now while Peter was inwardly perplexed as to what the vision that he had seen might mean . . .

Note: What was that? Am I just hungry & having weird food dreams?

Acts 10:17-19 (ESV)

(17) Now while Peter was inwardly perplexed as to what the vision that he had seen might mean, behold, the men who were sent by Cornelius, having made inquiry for Simon's house, stood at the gate (18) and called out to ask whether Simon who was called Peter was lodging there. (19) And while Peter was pondering the vision, the Spirit said to him . . .

Note: Peter is practicing listening to God . . .

- Set aside time to pray
- Received a message he didn’t understand (and could have brushed off!)
- Didn’t ignore the vision or force a meaning
- He pondered, waited, considered - In the waiting the Holy Spirit speaks at just the right moment!

Acts 10:19-21 (ESV)

(19) And while Peter was pondering the vision, the Spirit said to him, “Behold, three men are looking for you. (20) Rise and go down and accompany them without hesitation, for I have sent them.” (21) And Peter went down to the men and said, “I am the one you are looking for. What is the reason for your coming?”

Note: Peter upon receiving this clear direction is immediately responsive

2) Obedience - Responding to the Holy Spirit**Take note of how Peter interacts with God:**

- Peter listens for the Holy Spirit,
- Then Peter waits & listens to the Holy Spirit,
- And finally when God speaks Peter obeys!

The next few verses - Peter hears about Cornelius and his own vision, invites the men to stay and accompanies them to Cornelius’ house the next day . . .

Acts 10:25-29 (ESV)

(25) When Peter entered, Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet and worshiped him. (26) But Peter lifted him up, saying, “Stand up; I too am a man.” (27) And as he talked with him, he went in and found many persons gathered. (28) And he said to them, “You yourselves know how unlawful it is for a Jew to associate with or to visit anyone of another nation, but God has shown me that I should not call any person common or unclean. (29) So when I was sent for, I came without objection. I ask then why you sent for me.”

Note: Peter is being obedient, yet it’s rocking his world!

This seems to contradict all he knows about Jews & Gentiles - Does it actually?

- Jesus ministered to Gentiles.
- Prior to the establishment of Jewish nation, there was no distinction.
- God’s repeated OT promise - through Abraham the whole world would be blessed.

Listen - There is a difference between contradicting Scripture (which God won’t do), and God contradicting us or our personal understanding of Scripture!

- **You want to Hear God? Then, Obedience is Key!**
- **Are you correctable? Can God speak to you and find a person willing to obey & change?**

In answer to Peter’s question - “why did you send for me?” Cornelius tells the story of his vision and says . . .

Acts 10:33 (ESV)

So I sent for you at once, and you have been kind enough to come. Now therefore we are all here in the presence of God to hear all that you have been commanded by the Lord.

Now Peter has an open invitation to share the Gospel (the whole “sermon” vs. 34-43). A couple observations:

Acts 10:34-35 (ESV)

(34) So Peter opened his mouth and said: “Truly I understand that God shows no partiality, (35) but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him.

Note: Peter fully gets it - Even as he is there to preach, he is being taught!

He goes on to connect what they know (they’ve heard of John the Baptist & Jesus’ exploits) and brings full clarity to the gospel message - Jesus death & resurrection, and the application for any who will hear it . . .

Acts 10:42-44 (ESV)

(42) And he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead. (43) To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.” (44) While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word.

Note: Peter was faithful to present the Gospel, and the Holy Spirit was faithful to work along with him!

3) Fruit - Results of a responsive life**Acts 10:45-48 (ESV)**

(45) And the believers from among the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles. (46) For they were hearing them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter declared, (47) “Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?” (48) And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to remain for some days.

Note: Believers were amazed! New believers were added! Jesus was glorified & the Holy Spirit spread!

Now this experience challenged many believers . . .

Acts 11:1-4 (ESV)

(1) Now the apostles and the brothers who were throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. (2) So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcision party criticized him, saying, (3) “You went to uncircumcised men and ate with them.” (4) But Peter began and explained it to them in order:

Note: The fruit of obeying when God speaks will not always be easy! It will meet resistance - first in our own hearts (will I obey), and then in others (when I obey)!

But Peter doesn't write them off - he invites them in . . .

Acts 11:17-18 (ESV)

(17) If then God gave the same gift to them as he gave to us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God's way?” (18) When they heard these things they fell silent. And they glorified God, saying, “Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance that leads to life.”

Note: Discuss grieving & quenching the Holy Spirit - let's be careful not to stand in God's Way. Even better let's develop listening & responsive lives that co-operate with what He's up to!

Conclusion: Will I purpose to Listen & Obey?

2 choices:

- A responsive life - produces fruit in my life & others
- An unresponsive heart - grieves & quenches the Spirit