

## Part 2 - How Sheep Learn to Listen

Thursday, April 9, 2026 9:42 PM

# PART 2 - How the Sheep Learn to Listen

[Slide 1 - Title Slide]



**Main Text:** John 10:1-16, 27

**Other Scriptures:** Hebrews 3:7-8; Ephesians 4:30; 1 Thessalonians 5:19-21

## Hearing the Spirit is a Relational Reality

Hearing the Spirit is not some mystical technique or magical formula. It is **relational, Scriptural, discerning, and obedient**. Believers learn to hear by ...

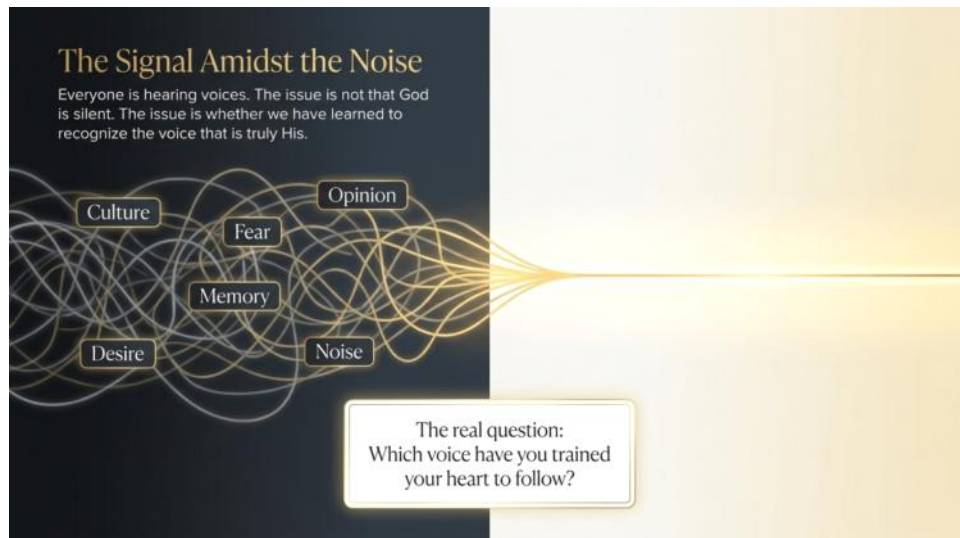
- belonging to Christ,
- staying near His Word,
- Softened hearts,
- testing voices, and
- Obeying what the Shepherd says.
- Part 1 talked about what the Spirit says and How He says it.

Today we will look at how believers become the **kind of people** who **can** hear Him. Jesus says His sheep hear His voice, **He knows them**, and they follow Him. That means hearing is not a trick to master; it's a way of life to live.

**The Spirit trains Christ's people to hear → hearing is proven**

by following

[Slide 2]



## The Signal Amidst the Noise

Everyone is hearing “voices”: culture, fear, opinions, memories, desires, and just noise in general. The question is not **whether** a voice is shaping you. The question is **which voice** you have trained your heart to follow.

We all want clarity from God, but often we want it while living at a far off distance from the Shepherd Himself. Sometimes even attending church, volunteering on teams, and being all-around good people ... but we might not really know what His voice even “sounds” like.

The issue isn't that God is silent (He is constantly speaking). The issue is whether or not we've learned to recognize the Shepherd's Voice.

But is it an audible voice? I mean ... it *could be*, as we see God speaking audibly in scripture (Garden, Sinai, Jesus' Baptism, Mt of Transfiguration), but it's not something we see much of, if at all. We should avoid the line of thinking that says “this way” or “that way” is THE way he ALWAYS speaks.

[Slide 3]

### 1 Kings 19:12

*After the earthquake there was a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire there was a voice, a soft whisper. 13 When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave.*

## [Slide 4]

**John 10:14, 27**

*14 "I am the good shepherd. I know my own, and my own know me,  
27 My sheep hear my voice, I know them, and they follow me.*

## [Slide 5]



### **Hearing the Spirit is a Relational Reality**

Many believers want instant clarity from God while living at a distance from the Shepherd. But discernment is not a trick to master.


Hearing the Spirit is relational, Scriptural, discerning, and obedient.

## [Slide 6]

# Recognition Requires Belonging

Jesus does not say random spiritual consumers hear His voice. He says, "My sheep hear My voice, I know them" (John 10:14, 27). Discernment begins with nearness.

**Key Word Insight:**  
Hear (akouo) – More than sound entering the ear. It is listening with recognition and response.



**The Application:**  
If your hearing feels unclear, do not begin with technique. Begin with nearness (repentance, prayer, worship).

No belonging, no recognition.

## Recognition Requires Belonging

**Hear** (*akouō*) means more than sound entering the ear. It carries the sense of listening with recognition and response.

We cannot expect voice recognition if we lack belonging. If hearing is unclear, the solution is not a new method, but a return to nearness.

***Hearing starts with relationship, not technique.***

Jesus does not say random, part time spiritual consumers hear His voice. He says **My sheep** hear My voice. Recognition grows from **belonging**. That means **discernment** is not **primarily** about mastering a method or honing a skill, it's about staying near the Shepherd.

If our hearing feels unclear, we don't need to start with some fancy spiritual technique. We begin with nearness to God .

***No belonging, no recognition.***

[Slide 7]

**Romans 8:14:** Those led by the Spirit are God's children.

**Romans 8:16:** The Spirit testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.

Draw near to Jesus in **repentance, prayer, worship, study** and **trust**.

If hearing begins with belonging, once we **DO** belong, how are the sheep supposed to grow **more able** to recognize the Shepherd's voice?

[Slide 8]

**Familiarity Builds Clarity**

You do not learn God's voice by chasing new voices. You learn it by knowing His revealed voice. The reason sheep recognize the shepherd is that they have heard him before.

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. (Psalm 119:105)

**Application:** Open the Bible before you open your phone. Ask what the text says before asking how you feel.

Closed Bible, unclear hearing.

**Familiarity Builds Clarity**

The reason sheep recognize the shepherd is that they have heard him before. In the Christian life, that familiarity grows through **repeated exposure to God's Word.** (Personal and Corporate saturation in the Word)

We don't learn God's voice by chasing the *different* voices around us. We learn it by knowing His voice by listening to what He has **already revealed.**

**[Slide 9]**

**Acts 17:11:** The Bereans **examined** the Scriptures daily.

**[Slide 10]**

**Psalm 119:105:** God's Word gives **light** for the path.

**[Slide 11]**

**John 17:17:** God **sanctifies** His people through truth.

***Again, Familiarity builds clarity.***

Like Mike is always saying "**Open the Bible before you open your phone.**" Read the Word daily. **Meditate** slowly. Don't rush it. Bible reading isn't a task to complete, it's a **lifeline** to the Voice of God!

Ask what the text **says** before asking how you **feel**. Recognition is built through **repeated exposure to truth.** (Yes, the counterfeit money example is real! I asked my Econ professor in college whether or not this was just something preachers made up ... nope. Real deal.)

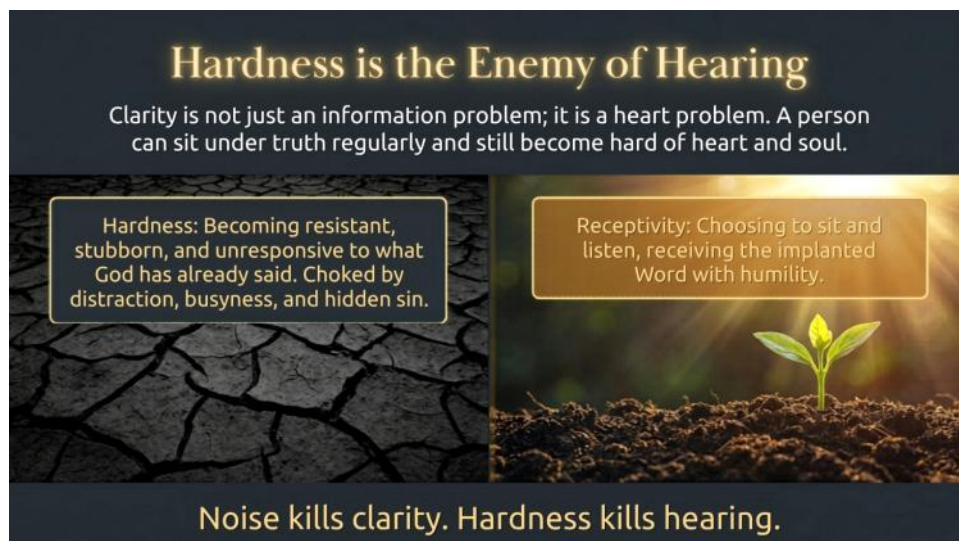
But hearing isn't **only** about what enters the mind through hearing or reading. It's also about the **condition** of the heart it enters.

## [Slide 12]

### Hebrews 3:7-8

*Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says: Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, on the day of testing in the wilderness,*

## [Slide 13]



## Hardness is the Enemy of Hearing

Clarity is not just an information problem; it is a **heart** problem. A person can sit under truth regularly and still become hard of heart and soul.

**Hardness** carries the idea of becoming resistant, stubborn, unresponsive. Think you read / know what He wants, but just refuse to actually do it, or worse, make justification excuses of why you don't need to

**Receptivity:** Choosing to sit and listen, receiving the implanted Word with humility.

In Hebrews 3:7-8

The verb here also indicates the **subject** (the reader) as the one performing the action. In other words ... hardening of the heart is something **WE** have power to do or not do ... and He commands us here **NOT to do it.**

***Clarity is not simply an information problem. It is a heart problem.***

**Noise kills clarity. Hardness kills hearing.**

**[Slide 14]**

**The Chokeholds of the World**  
Why would we keep asking for more guidance while resisting what God has already made plain?  
Ask honestly what is dulling your hearing.

**Self-Diagnostic**

- Algorithms and Media Saturation
- Overbooked Schedules
- Tolerated Bitterness
- Delayed Obedience

Worries & Riches (Mark 4)

Distraction & Busyness (Luke 10)

Hearing without Doing (James 1)

## The Chokeholds of the World

A person can sit under truthful teaching regularly and still develop a hardened heart. That's why Scripture warns not only about **ignorance**, but about **resistance**.

**Mark 4:18-19:** Worries, riches, and desires **choke** the Word.

**Luke 10:41-42:** Martha is **distracted**, while Mary sits and listens.

**James 1:22-25:** Hearing **without doing** becomes **self-deception**.

Ask honestly what is dulling your hearing:

- **Distraction** - algorithms, news, family, work, hobbies
- **Busyness** - too much going on
- Bitterness -
- hidden sin
- media saturation
- **selective obedience** (or as I told my kids, *delayed obedience*)

Why would we keep asking for **more guidance** while resisting what God has **already made plain**.

My pet saying: *The last thing many Christians need is yet another Bible Study to learn more about Jesus they don't intend to obey.*

The New Testament gives two especially important words for this resistance: **Grieving** and **Quenching**

**[Slide 15]**



## Diagnosing Resistance to the Spirit

The Spirit is not silent; He is often being resisted.

Grieving the Spirit (Ephesians 4:30)	Quenching the Spirit (1 Thess 5:19)
Causing sorrow through sinful living.	Extinguishing or suppressing the fire.
Tolerating sin (bitterness, pride, impurity).	Ignoring conviction, resisting correction, choosing numbness.
Sin dulls the connection.	Resistance suppresses His work.

## Diagnosing Resistance to the Spirit

### Two Opposing Paths

**Grieve** points to **causing sorrow** through **sinful living**.

**Quench** (**Stifle**) pictures **extinguishing** or **suppressing** a fire.

The Spirit is not silent. He speaks all the time!! But, He **IS** often resisted or simply tuned out and ignored.

**Grieving** the Spirit happens when **sin is tolerated**.

**Quenching** the Spirit happens when **His work** is **suppressed**, His truth is **resisted**, or His **conviction** is **smothered**.

[Slide 16]

### Ephesians 4:30

*And don't grieve God's Holy Spirit. You were sealed by him[fn] for the day of redemption*

[Slide 17]

### 1 Thessalonians 5:19-21

*Don't stifle (quench) the Spirit. Don't despise prophecies, but test all things. Hold on to what is good.*

[Slide 18]

### Galatians 5:16-25:

*16 I say, then, walk by the Spirit and you will certainly not carry out the desire of the flesh. 17 For the flesh desires what is against the*

*Spirit, and the Spirit desires what is against the flesh; these are opposed to each other, so that you don't do what you want. 18 **But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.***

*19 Now the works of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, moral impurity, promiscuity, 20 idolatry, sorcery, hatreds, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambitions, dissensions, factions, 21 envy, drunkenness, carousing, and anything similar. I am warning you about these things—as I warned you before—that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.*

*22 But **the** fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, and self-control. The law is not against such things. 24 Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have **crucified the flesh** with its passions and desires. 25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.*

### [Slide 19]

#### James 1:19-21:

*19 My dear brothers and sisters, understand this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to anger, 20 for **human** anger does not accomplish God's righteousness. 21 Therefore, ridding yourselves of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent, humbly receive the **implanted** word, which is able to save your souls.*

### **Sin dulls our hearing. Resistance suppresses His Work.**

We **grieve** the Spirit through **sins** like bitterness, corrupt speech, dishonesty, impurity, pride, and unforgiveness.

We **quench** the Spirit when we **ignore** conviction, resist correction, or prefer spiritual numbness to surrender.

**Healthy** listening isn't blind gullibility. It is **open-hearted**, but it is also **tested and discerning**.

### **Healthy Listening Requires Discernment**

### [Slide 20]



## ***Not every voice is from God. Spiritual language by itself proves nothing.***

When discerning if the Spirit is speaking ... ask:

- Does this **align** with Scripture?
- Does this **exalt** Christ?
- Does this produce **holiness**, truth, and love?
- Am I willing to **obey**, even if it costs me?

Just as not everyone who says to Him “Lord, Lord” will enter the Kingdom, not everyone who says “God told me ...” has actually had any experience with God actually telling them anything.

And now the final PROOF we’ve heard from the Lord.

**[Slide 21]**

### **John 10:1-8**

*“Truly I tell you, anyone who doesn’t enter the sheep pen by the gate but climbs in some other way is a thief and a robber. **2 The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep.** **3** The gatekeeper opens it for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. **4** When he has brought all his own outside, he goes ahead of them. **The sheep follow him because they know his voice.** **5** They will **never** follow a stranger; instead they will run away from him, **because they don’t know the voice of strangers.**”*

The sheep must learn not only to **HEAR** the Shepherd’s voice, but also to **REJECT** voices that are foreign to Him.

**[Slide 22]**

## 1 John 4:1

*Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but **test the spirits** to see if they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.*

## 1 Thessalonians 5:19-22:

*Don't stifle the Spirit. Don't despise prophecies, but **test all things**. Hold on to what is good. Stay away from every kind of evil.*

### [Slide 23]



Hearing and following are *inseparable*.

Jesus doesn't separate spiritual recognition from practical obedience. In His words, the sheep not only hear, but they follow.

**Hearing without following is not maturity. It is self-deception.**

### [Slide 24]

## John 10:27

*My sheep hear my voice, I know them, and they follow me.*

### [Slide 25]

## James 1:22:

*But be doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.*

### [Slide 26]

### John 14:21:

*The one who has my commands **and keeps them** is the one who loves me. And the one who loves me will be loved by my Father. I also will love him and will reveal myself to him.*

## **Hearing equals following.**

We don't measure hearing by ***intensity of feeling***. We measure it by whether or not we are willing to, and actually are, obeying.

Think about what God has revealed for you to do next and **DO THAT**.

### [Slide 27]

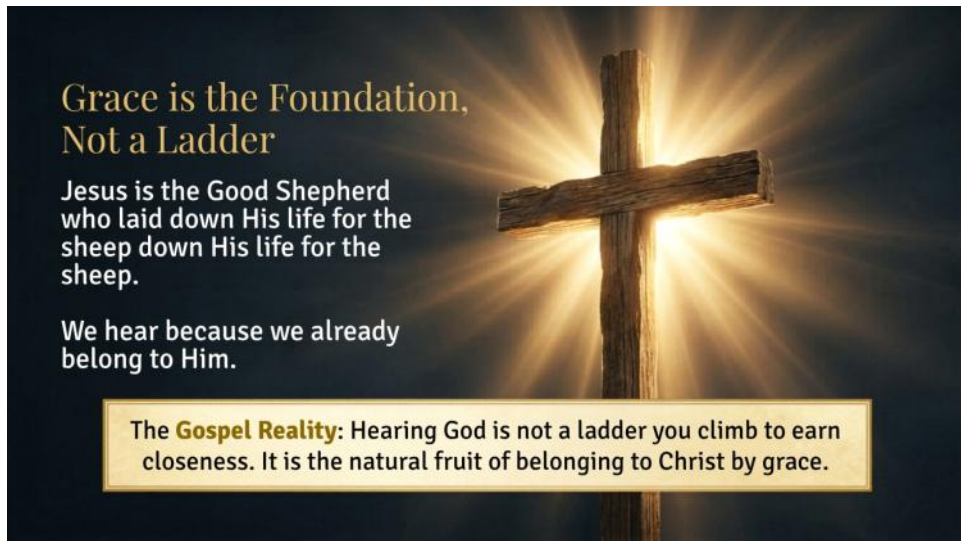


## **The Trajectory of a Listening Life**

The Spirit does not create a separate path to God. He trains us to know, trust, and follow the Shepherd who loved us and gave Himself for us.

Belonging -> Familiarity -> Softness -> Discernment -> Obedience

### [Slide 28]



## Grace is the Foundation, Not a Ladder

Jesus is the Good Shepherd who laid down His life for the sheep.

We hear because we **belong** to Him.

Hearing God isn't a **path** or **method** to experiencing closeness with Jesus. It's the **FRUIT** of **BEING** close and belonging to Him by His grace.

[Slide 29]

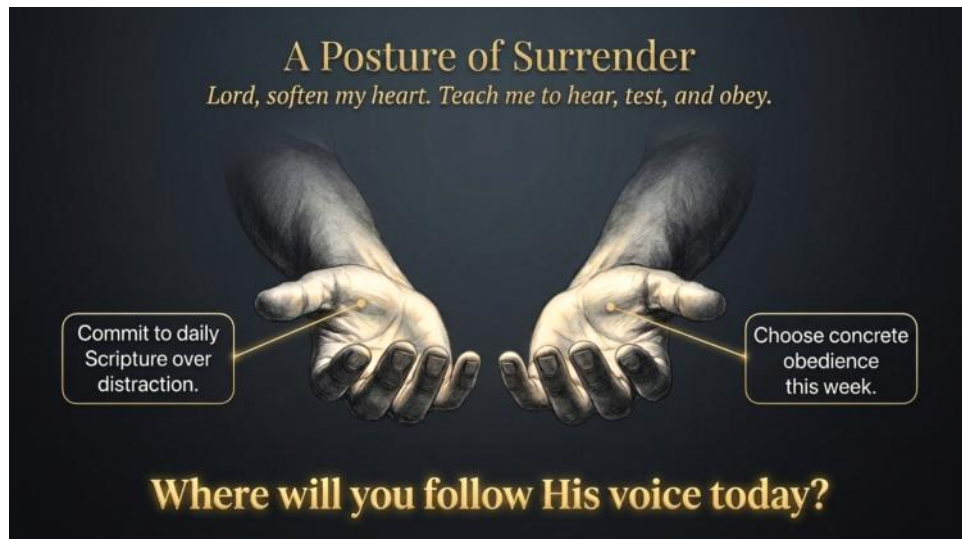


## Assess Your Spiritual Receptivity

- Are we close enough with the Shepherd to recognize His voice?
- Are we dulling our hearing with hardened hearts that tolerate our little pet sins?
- Are we letting distractions (and algorithms!) shape us more than we are Scripture?
- Are we obeying what God has already said or ignoring all that in favor

of seeking some “new” thing?

**[Slide 30]**



**Are you taking a posture of Surrender today?**

- Commit to daily Scripture instead of distraction
- Choose something to obey this week.

***The Shepherd is speaking. Are you following?***