

Truly Knowing Jesus [Ears To Hear]

Discussion Guide

Summary

This sermon continues a series on truly knowing Jesus, focusing on what it means to hear His voice, not just know about Him intellectually. Drawing from John 10 and Isaiah 6, Jonathan explores the relationship between a shepherd and his sheep as a picture of the intimate, recognizable relationship Jesus wants with each of us. Just as sheep learn to recognize their shepherd's voice through time spent together, we learn to hear Jesus by spending time in His Word, in prayer, and in genuine relationship with Him.

Intro Prayer

Lord, we come together today asking You to quiet the noise in our minds and hearts. There are so many voices competing for our attention, and we confess that we don't always know which one is Yours. As we open Your Word and discuss what it means to truly hear You, we ask that You open our spiritual ears. Help us not just to learn information today, but to encounter You in a real and personal way. Whatever You want each of us to take from this time together, we surrender to that. Speak, Lord, for Your servants are listening. In Jesus' name, amen.

Ice Breaker

Think of someone in your life whose voice you could recognize anywhere, even in a crowded room. Who is

that person, and what makes their voice so familiar to you?

Key Verses

- Isaiah 6:9-10
- John 10:1-16
- Matthew 4:4
- Luke 9:23-25
- Mark 12:29-31
- Deuteronomy 6:4-5

Questions

- In John 10, Jesus describes His sheep as recognizing His voice because they know Him. On a scale of 1 to 10, how confident are you that you would recognize Jesus' voice speaking into your life right now, and why?
- The sermon described three voices that compete with the shepherd's voice: the thief, the stranger, and the hired hand. Which of these three feels most present or dangerous in your own life right now?
- Jonathan used the illustration of bank tellers learning to spot counterfeit money by spending time with the real thing. How does that idea challenge or encourage the way you currently approach spending time with Jesus?
- The Hebrew word 'Shema' means to hear so deeply that it changes the way you live. Can you think of a time when you heard from God and it actually changed your direction or behavior? What did that look like?
- Jesus says in John 10:10 that His purpose is to give us 'a rich and satisfying life.' How does that promise challenge or reshape the way you think about following Jesus, especially when obedience feels costly?

- The sermon pointed out that the Pharisees knew Scripture well but still missed Jesus' voice because they were defending their system rather than truly listening. In what ways might we do the same thing today, even in church settings?
- Jonathan gave six practical steps for training your ear to hear Jesus. Which of those steps feels most challenging for you personally, and what would it take to actually put it into practice this week?
- What is one voice in your life right now that you sense is pulling you away from Jesus? What would it look like to stop listening to that voice and turn your attention back to the shepherd?

Life Application

This week, pray the Shema prayer each morning before you open your phone or start your day. Make it personal:

"Let me hear You Lord... I want to know You. Not just believe in You... Really know You... And I commit to loving You with all my heart, all my soul, all my mind, and all my strength."

Then spend at least 10 minutes reading from one of the Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John), asking God to speak to you through what you read. When you sense Him prompting you toward something, whether it is a conversation to have, something to confess, or a habit to change, take one concrete step to respond. Hearing and obeying are meant to be one motion.

Key Takeaways

- Truly knowing Jesus means more than having beliefs about Him. It means recognizing His voice through an ongoing, intimate relationship, much like a sheep knows its shepherd.
- There are many competing voices in our lives (the thief, the stranger, and the hired hand) and learning to distinguish Jesus' voice requires spending consistent time with Him through Scripture, prayer, and quiet listening.
- The Hebrew concept of 'Shema' teaches us that genuine hearing always leads to a response. To truly hear Jesus is to obey, change direction, and follow Him with your whole self.
- Jesus is the Good Shepherd who literally laid down His life for His sheep. His sacrifice is what makes His voice trustworthy above all others.
- Following Jesus begins not with what you gain, but with what you are willing to surrender. The path to a rich and satisfying life runs through death to self and trust in the One who made you.

Ending Prayer

Father, thank You for this time together and for the truth that You are not hiding from us. You are speaking, and You want us to hear You. We ask that You continue to open our spiritual ears throughout this week. Help each of us to create space to listen, to return to Your Word with fresh hunger, and to respond when You speak. Where we have been following the wrong voices, give us the courage to turn back to You. Where we have been afraid to follow You into unfamiliar territory, remind us of the shepherd who laid down His life for us. That is the voice worth trusting. That is the voice worth following.

Speak to us, Lord, and help us to truly hear. In Jesus' name, amen.