

SLIDE 1

Listening to God

Our Shepherd's Voice: thunder, whisper, and life.

- *Talking to God - Garrett*
- *Talking with God - Caleb*
- *Listening to God - Adam*
- *And being with God*

Prayer: Speak to us today Lord.

This week we are diving into listening to God. The past two weeks specifically Garrett and Caleb have challenged us as a church family to experience prayer together. Last week there was specifically times of prayer together as a church family that brought freedom, encouragement and hope. Powerful times during the 40 days of prayer, today's theme of surrender.

It has been said that hearing the voice of God is the most dignifying thing the human soul can experience.

The most common reason believers say they don't hear God is that they've made an agreement out of their experience or lack of instead of trusting Scripture to be true. We as the family of God need to examine the scriptures together, recognizing that our King Jesus can speak to us today and wants us to listen to Him. We can seek Him and He promises If we seek Him we will find Him.

Author A. W. Tozer emphasized how central this is in the life of anyone who wants to pursue God seriously: "The whole Bible supports the idea. God is speaking. Not God spoke, but God is speaking. He is by His nature continuously articulate. He fills the world with His speaking Voice. One of the great realities with which we have to deal is the Voice of God in His world."

God is speaking. We can listen. We can respond and live differently by what He says.

- 1. OUR GOD SPEAKS WORDS OF LIFE**
- 2. WE CAN LISTEN TO OUR FATHERS VOICE**
- 3. OUR RESPONSE TO OUR FATHERS VOICE**

Think with me. If you could hear your heavenly Father say one thing today, what would you want Him to say? What do you think you need to hear?

SLIDE 2

1. OUR GOD SPEAKS WORDS OF LIFE

Before there was time our God spoke, in His speaking He revealed His character. In Genesis 1-2 we get the account of speaking all things into being. Since the garden we have desired communion with the Father. We will return into His presence one day. Face to face.

God speaks through His written word, Amen? We believe His words give us life. Peter declares that Jesus words are the words of life. Jesus words are words of love and truth!

SLIDE 3 John 6:68 “Simon Peter answered him, *“Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, 69 and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God.”*

To whom shall we go? We go to everything and everyone but Jesus to try and find life don't we?!

SLIDE 4 Matthew 4:4 “But he answered, “It is written, “Man shall not live by bread alone, *but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.”*

SLIDE 5

OT: The Character of Who is speaking changes everything. Peals of thunder, a mighty Rushing Wind! A Pillar of Fire!

- Burning bush
- The Law
- His scriptures
- Jonah, a reluctant prophet
- Fleece with Gideon
- Prophetic words
- Finger on a wall
- Star in the sky
- Dreams and visions
- Even a Donkey

* Eli and Samuel. Story of God calling Samuel and Eli's teaching. Hannah had dedicated Samuel to the houser of the Lord. 4 Times the Lord called Samuel. His response - “Lord here I am”

NT

- Jesus himself

- To His sheep through His shepherd(s) foreshadowing etc.
- The Holy Spirit
- The Acts of the Apostles

SLIDE 6

Hebrews 1:1-2 ESV

“Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, 2 **but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son**, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.”

Truth to be experienced:

1. JESUS is the fulfillment
2. JESUS is the Son
3. JESUS is the messenger

SLIDE 7 THE WORD OF GOD

Hebrews 4:12-13

12 “**For the word of God is living and active**, *sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.* 13 And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.”

The word of God informs our experiences not the 3

SLIDE 8

- To His sheep through His shepherd Jesus
- How God speaks
- Through His word
- Answered prayer
- Through others
- Through nature
- Circumstances
- Wisdom
- Prophecy

In John 10 Jesus is teaching that He is the good shepherd that will lay down His life for His sheep. There is a connection between hearing our shepherds voice and our salvation. Our God gives words of life through His son.

SLIDE 9

John 10:2-6

2 **“But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. 3 To him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. 4 When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. 5 A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.”** 6 This figure of speech Jesus used with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.”

Jesus is saying that all those who are truly his “sheep” – a word picture for his disciples – will “know his voice” and “follow” it. When we are talking about listening to Jesus' voice He gives security in who He is AND who are in relation to Him.

For Jesus, discipleship to him is not just about the learning of doctrine or following a Rule of Life – it’s an interactive, dynamic, living relationship. As Andy McQuitty called prayer a few weeks back, prayer is a conversion with our God.

It was said of Jesus’ disciple, Mary, that she “sat at the Lord’s feet listening to what he said.” (Luke 10v39) To “sit at the feet” was an idiom for discipleship in the first century. And what is Mary doing at Jesus’ feet? **Listening.** A disciple of Jesus is one who is regularly found sitting at his feet, listening... But this idea of prayer as listening to God is not original to Jesus; it’s a central theme running all the way through the library of Scripture.

We are His sheep and He knows us by name. Salvation. **John 6:44, "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day."**

Reference John 10 verses 11-15. The Father drew you to Jesus.

SLIDE 10

2. WE CAN LISTEN TO HIS VOICE:

1. He reveals His Character to His Children!
2. Our communicates so differently than any other religion. He has come to us!
3. Still our hearts and give us hope to anticipate your voice father.

SLIDE 11

John 10:27-28

27 **“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. 28 I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.”**

When he speaks we recognize His voice. We are His children. He meets us where we are.

SLIDE 12

The Attitude of our Hearts Matter.

1. We must listen humbly
 - a. Humility
 - b. Do not be afraid
 - c. We should not expect to hear what we want, rather the truth of His character
2. We must know our need for Jesus!
3. Approach listening to God with anticipation of good
 - a. Rest - BE STILL and know that I am God Psalm 46:10
 - b. Quiet your heart. Give your cares and anxiety to Him
 - c. Anticipation of His voice, the Truth, over your flesh and earthly desires. He is God and we are not. Amen.
4. We get to know His character:
 - a. The key to knowing Jesus' voice better is knowing Jesus better. You know his voice by knowing him. In fact you don't want his voice without wanting Him.
 - b. I trust God's ability to lead me more than my ability to listen. Even in my desire to be still and listen I know God will be faithful to lead and guide and speak even despite weaknesses.
 - c. Often our insecurity and our sin keeps us not only from taking the time to listen to God but also to misinterpret His voice.
 - d. We must know our fathers voice to be able to follow Him.
5. Regular and consistent listening: Listening Prayer. Is exactly what it sounds like.

How do we do this? How do we listen we we pray?

SLIDE 13 60 minutes interview “I don't say anything I listen”, Mother Teresa

1. The primary way God speaks to me is through my daily and consistent intake of his word. ALMOST always my daily routine is through God's word, and walking through it book by book aligns perfectly with how God is forming me, training me, directing me, and teaching me. Without a dedicated daily dose of scripture working book by book don't expect to repeatedly hear God's word or know the signs when he is prompting you because you are too scattered and sporadic to know or notice them. Nothing quite tunes your ears to God's voice then daily manna of God's word.

2. Jesus says the spirit will “bring to your remembrance all that I have said.” One of the primary ways God speaks to me is I sit in silence in the morning in his presence and I let him bring to my mind the people and scriptures he would have me pray to. After I meditate and indulge on God's word I sit and wait in silence. Anyone he brings to my remembrance I pray for them and even ask for scriptures for them. I do this throughout the day.

I have the mind of Christ so as I renew my mind the scriptures say that I can know and discern God's good and pleasing and perfect will. God will bring to my remembrance people and scriptures all day long. Then I act on it when he does either calling, texting, voice memoing those folks.

I ask God to bring to my mind a word, phrase or scripture to edify them (1 Corinthians 14:3) God gives words that edify, consult, and build up! I ask for something to do that to enter my mind and I don't overthink it

3. God will use men who have walked with him longer and heard his voice longer to help me continue to hear his voice.

Remember the example of Samuel and Eli - Samuel couldn't distinguish God's voice, it took Eli to teach him to know it and wait on it and listen. God always confirms his word with circumstances. Signs or random things to show me his paths and directions.

Gifts from God to understand His voice, our bodies, our emotions, our feelings, our minds, and our friends. I think the main thing I've learned on hearing God is that we hear in different ways. I use this grid of 4:

1. **Hearers-** hear with their head, heart, ears, often a still small internal voice
2. **Knowers-** know what they wouldn't know about others. Often a gift of wisdom. Knowers have inspired thoughts but often don't recognize it. These are most prone to think then don't hear from God because it's not sensational.
3. **Feelers-** feel often in their body's the presence/leading of God. Sometimes it's an internal nudge, sometimes it's a physical feeling. I've realized that feelers are most moved to dramatic responses to the presence of God and impartation. The reaction and the impact are obviously different and not always related.
4. **Seers-** see into the spiritual realm, sometimes in their imagination and other times with their eyes they also are more prone to spiritual dreams. The imagination is meant to be a projector screen for the prophetic but is often distorted and perverted by what we entertain. Our senses are meant to be sensitized to God but are often corrupted by sensuality.

SLIDE 14 A simple tool that might allow you to begin listening prayer is creating and giving time in your schedule. **Lets call it The 4:15 TOOL. 4 Spiritual disciplines for 15 minutes each. This is an opportunity to practice what God has allowed you learn of Him.**

- Pray
- Read

- Listen
- Share

Whatever practice you should choose to be listening to Jesus your response is a opportunity to worship your King and your Shepherd.

SLIDE 15

3. OUR RESPONSE TO OUR FATHERS VOICE:

John: My sheep hear my voice V. 5

SLIDE 16

- Obedience
- Discernment
- Worship

SLIDE 17

Obedience:

Love me, you'll obey me. - Jesus. **The Love of God leads our hearts to action.**

For Jesus, to listen and obey is the single most important thing in all of the spiritual. It's one way of summarizing all of Christian discipleship. Now, many of you likely have mixed feelings about the word "obey." It goes against the dogma of our "be true to yourself" culture.

But a disciple is one who is listening for Jesus' voice, in order to go out and obey it. Jesus' final words to his disciples in Matthew 28(v19-20) were: "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you."

Learning to hear Jesus' voice is one of the great tasks of a disciple; learning to obey his voice is an even greater task. To do this, we must come to believe, come to trust, that obedience is not an obstacle on the path to a happy life, it is the path.

1. **LUKE 11:28 "But he said, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!"**
2. **JAMES 1:22 "But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves."**
3. **John 8:47 "Whoever is of God hears the words of God. The reason why you do not hear them is that you are not of God."**

If God has spoken, act on it. Confident and full of faith.

** Story of Indian Sikh Leader coming to faith. Our obedience blesses others.*

SLIDE 18

Discernment:

- Scripture - Bereans, check your pastors, whatever I say or any other pastor check it with the scriptures. All Scripture is God breathed.
2 Timothy 3:16-17 “**All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.**”
- Wisdom of Community: Saying No! Trusting His word. It’s always his word, circumstances, and his people that confirm it for me. When people ask me how God speaks to me it is most often through confirming words from believers in Christ.
 - STORY of Helen at FBC two months ago. Often when God speaks to me He speaks through people and circumstances that
- Trusting His Holy Spirit *will not* contradict His word.

SLIDE 19

Romans 8:14 “For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.”

We are unified in the Holy Spirit.

SLIDE 20

WORSHIP: Wonder, affection, reverence, honor, and joy in our security of salvation. ***no one will snatch them out of my hand. The SECURITY of the FATHERS hand.***

John 10:27-28 “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. 28 I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.”

SLIDE 21

4. OUR GOD SPEAKS WORDS OF LIFE
5. WE CAN LISTEN TO OUR FATHERS VOICE
6. OUR RESPONSE TO OUR FATHERS VOICE

ASK Him to speak to you. As we have the last two weeks we have prayed together in the service.

Week 3 Experiential Prayer Close:

- *Listening Prayer via Lectio Divina.*
- *Walk Congregation through Listening Prayer ALL together.*

SLIDE 22

CLOSING VERSE:

John 10:27-28 “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. 28 I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch

them out of my hand.”

Listen to you Shepherd’s voice.

BENEDICTION: *NOAH SOFT CLOSE INTO SONG*