

Introduction -

In middle is discovered the radio. It changed my life forever. In sixth grade I remember listening to Crash by Dave Matthews Band. (How it changed me -> As a result I have fallen in love with music -> learned three instruments, seen Dave Matthews in concert twice, and bought about 9 of their albums.)

I know this kind of affect is not isolated: 8th grade remember being haunted by a song, My Heart Will Go On by Celine Dion. (3 different singers at 8th grade talent show plus one clarinetist rendition.)

But these songs captivate you and capture your imagination.

I'm listening to Dave Matthews and I'm thinking: I want to listen to these guys all the time, I want be able to play their songs, I want to see them in concert, and know about them like what do they stand for.

For these last 7 weeks we've been in our series called Frequency. We're talking about tuning in to God's voice. This has been a great series. I'm loving it.

We started by talking about why God speaks to us. Then we've talked about 2) Tuning In cutting through distractions, 3) being dedicated to God's voice, 4) hearing his voice in the Bible, 5) developing our heart to receive him, and 6) recognizing or discerning that it is God's voice speaking to us.

To conclude our series today, I want us all to go back in time and remember what it is like being a middle schooler exploring the radio for the first time to be able to remember the wonder it is to be able to hear God's voice.

I'd like to title this sermon: **3 things my Middle School Self Has Taught Me About Listening to God's Voice.**

So let's dive into some Biblical wisdom from a 13 year old.

**#1 - God Speaks!!!!!!**

Because of God's generosity, we often overlook this fact that the God is the universe, the one above all speaks! He is not silent and he speaks to us! That is so crazy!

I'd like you to think about that. God is a God who speaks. Many people throughout history have prayed to the sun, the wind, something they carve, or an idol they create.

The God we serve is known for speaking.

The Bible begins with the God speaking -

**Genesis 1:3 - *And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.* (ESV)**

In fact, the world was created through God's speaking.

Then later, God spoke to set aside for himself a people:

**Genesis 12:1-3: Now the Lord *said* to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." (ESV)**

God spoke through his prophets to guide his people:

**Exodus 3:4-7 - When the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." Then he said, "Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." And he said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God. (ESV)**

**Isaiah 1:18-20 - "Come now, let us reason together, says the Lord: though your sins are like scarlet,**

**they shall be as white as snow;  
though they are red like crimson,  
they shall become like wool.  
If you are willing and obedient,  
you shall eat the good of the land;  
but if you refuse and rebel,  
you shall be eaten by the sword;  
for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.” (ESV)**

God as Jesus came and dwelt among people and taught them. (His followers wrote down the words that he spoke to them and still speaks to us.)

And God still speaks to us to today through his Holy Spirit. When Jesus was about to be crucified he said that he was going to go to his Father and he said:

**John 14:25-26 - “These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you. (ESV)**

God speaks. His words have shaped history. He is not silent, and not only that Jesus says that we can count on God continuing to speak to us through the Holy Spirit. He speaks and he wants to speak to us.

Actually, I would like to know if you would say you’ve heard God speak to you somehow, whether in your prayers, spoke to you through a person or the Bible, but you are confident God has spoken to you. Could you raise your hand?

God still speaks. ->A challenge for you, if you didn’t raise your hand would be to ask someone in this room who has about a story about a time they heard from God. Because God wants to speak to you too.

Now my middle school self hears this and says “Whoa!”

Imagine being 13, your favorite band. You get an invitation in the mail to go backstage. Connect to God of the universe.

If we really could comprehend the one who wants to spend time with us would we really want to spend time with anybody else?

It's not uncommon for me to struggle to get excited about my prayer time. I get distracted so easy. But if we knew the one who is offering to meet with us and speak to us, we should feel honored, privileged, chosen to speak to Him.

## **#2 God speaks to us out of his love - not our merit.**

Even as a 13 year old middle schooler I was not so deluded to think that I was able to listen to the awesome music of Dave Matthews because I am so awesome. (Flush out)

In a similar way, God does not speak to us because of our worthiness. He speaks to us because of his love towards us.

**1 Samuel 3:3-10 - The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was.**

**Then the Lord called Samuel, and he said, "Here I am!" and ran to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call; lie down again." So he went and lay down.**

**And the Lord called again, "Samuel!" and Samuel arose and went to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call, my son; lie down again." Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord, and the word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him.**

**And the Lord called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called me." Then Eli perceived that the Lord was calling the boy. Therefore Eli said to Samuel, "Go, lie down, and if he calls you, you shall say, 'Speak, Lord, for your servant hears.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place.**

**And the Lord came and stood, calling as at other times, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant hears." (ESV)**

Samuel, a young boy, not anyone of any significance or power. Clearly wasn't a product of an excellent education, he didn't even know to answer the God who called to him. But God spoke to him. A young inconsequential boy.

God even speaks to us regardless of the wrong that we do.

Summarize about context of Peter - Followed Jesus 3 years and denied knowing him. Jesus was crucified and alone.

**John 20:15-19- When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "Feed my lambs." He said to him a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "Tend my sheep." He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" and he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep. Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were young, you used to dress yourself and walk wherever you wanted, but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will dress you and carry you where you do not want to go." (This he said to show by what kind of death he was to glorify God.) And after saying this he said to him, "Follow me." (ESV)**

Jesus comes to a man who swore that he would never forsake him. Peter said that he would die first, and at the sign of danger, Peter fled from Jesus. He was a fair weather friend.

God speaks to us even though we are not powerful or worthy. He speaks to us because he loves us. He made us for the purpose of loving us.

Reference Pastor Frank's talk about God walking and talking with Adam and Eve in the Garden.

This is kind of life with God is beyond you. It is accessible to you to me. All of us, no matter if we are young or old, if we feel powerful, or even based on what we've done. God wants to talk to you, the question is are you willing to listen.

*Right now, we're going to take a few moments to hear from God as a community. (Explain Spirit sharing exercise) (have 2-3 of the preselected people share what they hear they Lord wanting to share with the community.)*

### **3) Hearing God's word will change us.**

As a 13 year old listening to the radio, those songs weren't just so enjoyable that I remembered them. Hearing them altered me. It changed my imagination and help me see something I hadn't seen before.

In a similar way, when we hear God speak to us through the Bible, in prayer, or through others, we are changed. We can't remain the same.

Consider Samuel and Peter

**Isaiah 55:10-11 - "For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven  
and do not return there but water the earth,  
making it bring forth and sprout,  
giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater,  
so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth;  
it shall not return to me empty,  
but it shall accomplish that which I purpose,  
and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it. (ESV)**

When God speaks it will be successful. It is wise for us to obey God's voice, but his word will be accomplished with or without us. His words are an invitation to us to see his transformation or it is an invitation to go further away from Jesus and into our fallenness and our evil. (Peter vs Judas, Moses vs. Pharaoh)

God's word, is an invitation that will change where we are.

Ex. Hearing God's speak to us in our adoption or our ministry/family - the big and the small - the initial and the on-going. (still deciding)

God's words, his voice, don't just speak to us and give us a nice experience, they move us or someone else further down the road. God's word will accomplish what he sent it to do.

God is today. God is speaking to somebody here. Maybe God is asking you to rekindle that love of hearing his voice. To remember the gift it is to talk to the creator of all. Maybe God is reminding you that it doesn't matter what you've done or how insignificant you feel, he wants to talk to you. He loves you.

I'm going to pray for you both to dedicate and receive God's healing words. But there are some here to today that the Lord is inviting to be transformed and changed by this invitation, these words he has given today. There's no greater change than the offer to come back to God and enter into relationship with him as your Lord and savior.

I am going to pray right now and give you a chance to accept this invitation. Don't let this invitation pass you by. God is speaking to you.

Pray. Ask people to receive the Lord to raise their hand and pray for them.