

Hearing God: He is Speaking

John 10:27; James 4:8; Jeremiah 33:3; Psalm 5:3

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When someone says that they heard God speak to them, people get skeptical. Even Christians are uncertain when they hear the words God speaking to someone. If someone says they are hearing voices the assumption is a mental health problem. When a person shares that the voices in their head made them do something, then there is real concern.

Scripture is filled with conversations between God and various different people. These encounters are conversations. They are in a dialogue with God. A true back and forth. Sometimes God speaks to through a person in scripture such as one of the prophets. We all need to hear God. Christians need to hear God speak words of comfort. We need God to speak words of encouragement. We need for God to share words that guide our path. We need God to speak words of discernment.

I have never heard the audible voice of God. I'm certain many others have. In my life there been many occasions when God spoke. It was very clear that God was communicating to me. Throughout the Bible God makes a connection with people as their shepherd. The Lord draws an image of His people as sheep and He is their shepherd. Jesus does this also.

John 10:27 (ESV) My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.

Jesus is speaking to us and we can hear Him speaking. Jesus is sharing about an intimate relationship with His followers. I say this often that we weren't saved to merely escape Hell. We are saved to be closer to God.

Our salvation through faith in Jesus atoning death and resurrection makes us right with God. There is no longer a conflict between us and God. Jesus was right with God. Jesus' righteousness makes us right with God. We are in a relationship with God. Our relationship with God can be continually growing. We can know God better and better. We can draw closer to God. We can be intimate with God, telling Him anything. Our intimacy with God can result in us hearing God speak.

God, who is our Father, Jesus who is our Savior and Lord want to comfort, encourage, guide, and help us know the truth. They want us to hear their love for us. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit want us to hear their mercy and grace. God wants us to hear what direction to go, what to do and what to say.

Our relationship with the God of creation, time, and salvation is completely different than other relationship. It is a different relationship than we have with our boss, our neighbors, and even our family. One of the differences is our Father already knows all about us. We have no secrets from Him.

As I've said earlier He wants us to hear Him. But this isn't so that we can be His puppet. He wants to impart to us His love, mercy, grace, and power. He wants to give us wisdom and understanding. His desire for us is to know the things of heaven are more valuable than the things of earth.

Those who hear His voice most clearly are those who want to follow Him. Of all the people on earth Noah heard God's voice most clearly. Noah and His family were saved from the flood because they

followed God. Abraham heard God's voice and followed His command to go into a new land. Moses heard the Lord speak and lead God's people out of slavery. Joshua heard the voice of the Lord taking the people into the Promised Land. Jonah heard God's voice and tried to run away. Then He meet the consequences of His sin and listened to God's voice. He isn't a very good example, but He does demonstrate that God speaks to all of us. Paul didn't want to hear God's voice until Jesus confronted him with a blinding light. John heard Jesus speak and told us about Jesus' second coming.

These are dramatic voices of God. In each one of these encounters with God, His voice is clearly heard. There are many times in scripture when God spoke quietly. There are moments in the Bible when the Holy Spirit of God speaks. God has not stopped speaking. God is still offering comfort, encouragement, guidance and the truth. Do you hear God speaking to you? Are you following God's voice?

James 4:8 (ESV) Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

We expect to hear from God without being willing to remove the sin from our lives. Is your relationship with Jesus about hearing only what you want to hear? I know many people who only want a relationship with Jesus so they can get out of hell. In the same way there are many people whose relationship with Jesus is based upon having their desires fulfilled.

People treat Jesus like they treat other relationships, to get what they want. This means that they only come to Jesus when they are in need. If Jesus doesn't meet that need, then they are quick to move on. You see the sin in all of this, right?

God is not going to be used. He is not our puppet, our magic wand, our wishing well. We do not exist and we have not be saved to merely for our own pleasure. Did I not say that Jesus saved us to be in a relationship with Him? Our relationship is built on praising God, giving thanks to Jesus, and bringing glory to God. This only happens if we are listening for God to speak.

Nearly everything else in the world will tell you what want to hear. You can build relationships with people who will tell you what makes you feel good. You can take walks in the woods or around your neighborhood and feel good about yourself. You can tune out God calling you to turn away from your sin. You can find yourself in a place where you can't hear from God because your sin is refusing to draw near to God.

You might be saved, redeemed, and delivered by the blood of Jesus Christ but you still want to go your own way. This means you need to let Jesus cleanse you of that sin. You need Jesus to wash away your sin of refusing to listen; of not paying attention; of being too busy to hear His voice.

If we only seek out God when we want something then we're being double-minded. Your mind is set on what you want and not on following Jesus, listening for God's voice, paying attention to the Holy Spirit. This demonstrates the grace of God, and the love of Jesus. If I ignore you, you'll stop speaking to me. But not our Father, not our Savior, not the Lord of our lives. He keeps talking to you.

You and I can be double-minded. We can be more concerned about the daily activities of our lives, more than about loving Jesus. We do get caught up in the moment by moment pressures put upon us. We are often times busy with work or the work we create. Our minds are not fully on Jesus and His Kingdom. Our eyes get caught up with what is right in front of us, and what's in our peripheral

vision. This double-mindedness keeps us from hearing the comfort of the Lord, the encouragement of the Holy Spirit, the guidance of our Father, and the truth of Jesus.

With all of this don't give up on God. Don't quit listening, paying attention, and seeking our your Savior. He hasn't given up on you. Instead confess your weaknesses and find His strength. Admit your human traits and discover His grace. Draw near to the your Father, embracing His love. He is speaking to you.

Jeremiah 33:3 (ESV) Call to me and I will answer you, and will tell you great and hidden things that you have not known.

Be prepared to hear God reveal the wonders of His Kingdom. God is ready to reveal to us more than we can think or imagine. God will speak to us about the things of this life. He will give you clarity about what is against His will. He will make known to you the things that He despises. He will talk with you about the direction you need to be going.

When you are listening for the voice of God you will hear Him speak about your life. You will hear God talk about what sin you cling to. You will hear the Holy Spirit guiding you in a different direction. You will hear the challenge to trust God.

As you listen for the voice of God you will hear Him speak about what is right and what is good. He talk to about His will, His plans, His purposes. He will tell you the path that is right and the one that is wrong. He will tell what is good and what is bad.

While you listen for the voice of God you will understand how to respond to people who disagree with you. He talk about enduring in the relationship. He will tell you about how to be kind and gentle. He will share with you about when to stay and when to walk away. He will give you the words you need to say. God will make clear to you what you can trust and what you can fear. God will say to do not be afraid of Him. He will tell what work is from Him and what work is from the devil. The Lord will speak to you about what He will use for His good. God will tell you when the devil is trying to get into your life.

When you are listening for the voice of God you will hear how much He loves you. Day after day God will remain you that you are loved. When you stop listen to God, He will speak to you that He still loves you. When tragedy and hardship come into your life God's voice will speak to you. When anxiety and fear seem to grow God will speak words of comfort and encouragement. When apathy and complacency have set into your life, God will speak words of challenge.

This life is not all that there is. This world is not all that there is. While we live this life, on this earth God speaks to us about His Kingdom. He tells us about the hope of eternity. He speaks of His wonders and His glory. We are distracted by the horrors of life on earth. God is speaking to those who are listen about trusting Him.

We pay higher prices for everything. God's voice says "I knew this would happen. I will provide for you." We hear about the wars. God's voice says, "I am the peace that you need." We hear about the terrible things people do to one another. God's voice says, "I can redeem them." We hear about things we don't understand and can't comprehend. God's voice says, "I am God, I have a plan. I am working out my plan."

Psalm 5:3 (ESV) O Lord, in the morning you hear my voice; in the morning I prepare a sacrifice for you and watch.

Every person who desires to hear God's voice needs to sacrifice your own voice. Although we talk to God all the time we need to give up our own desires. I confess that too often my prayers are filled with my thoughts and my plans. There are days I begin to notice that I'm not listening. That's when I hear God tell me His desire. I follow Him for a while, but then I start talking about me and my wishes. God calls me back from myself and toward Him again.

I am challenged by the voice of God to wake up, to get out of bed, to talk to Jesus. I am compelled to take action and not be passive. I am urged to follow in His footsteps and not create my own. This is a sacrifice. I have to give up something that I want for myself. I have to lay it at the feet of Jesus. I have to let go of it. I can longer be in control of it but hand it over to Jesus for His plans and purposes. This is not always easy. That's why I call it a sacrifice. Sacrifices wouldn't be sacrifices if they were easy to give up.

When I give to God my desires I am actually becoming the sacrifice. It is my life I am giving up. I'm laying down my life, because I have heard Jesus say to me, "I love you." I will sacrifice my thoughts to Him. I will sacrifice my desires to Him. I will sacrifice my plans to Him.

I make this sacrifice because Jesus sacrificed His life for mine. Jesus knew that on my own power I would always go back to my desires. Jesus took my desires, my selfishness, my sin upon Himself. He died from the burden and for the punishment of my sin. He was nailed to the cross because you and I are sinners. Jesus rose from the dead free of sin, overcoming sin, defeating sin's punishment, which is death. Jesus offered new life to every person who trusts Him as their Savior and Lord. Jesus comes and dwells within every believer speaking to them. He is speaking to me and He will speak to you.

We need to be ready and willing to not only hear God but to follow Him anywhere. This is our challenge. That when God speaks we follow. When God says don't be afraid, we give up our fear and anxiety. When God says turn away from that temptation, we do 180 degree turn. When God says get up and get going, we rise up and we go without hesitation. When God says declare my truth, we open our lips. When God tells you stop what you are doing and go help a friend, a strangers, we go. God is speaking to you.

Have you given yourself to Jesus? Have you made your life a sacrifice to Jesus? Today is that moment. Listen to God and respond to Him by saying yes.