

“Hearing God’s Voice”

1 Kings 3:5-14

Intro

Today I want to talk to you about a very important topic: Hearing God’s voice. Do you believe that God is still speaking today? Do you believe that you can hear Him in your daily life? Now I am not talking about an audible voice, necessarily, but rather being in a relationship with God that is so close and connected that on a regular basis you sense the voice of God. Well, I believe it is possible and that God wants this for you and me, and that is why I want to take this Sun. and next to talk about it.

Luke 11:27-28 “Blessed are those who hear the word of God and obey it”

John 18:37 everyone who is of the truth heareth my voice

John 10 my sheep will hear my voice

16x **Jesus** said “He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”

This was so important to Jesus that in

John 5:30

30 By myself I can do nothing; I judge only as I hear, and my judgment is just, for I seek not to please myself but him who sent me.

And this should be so important to us as well. Therefore, the passage I want us to look at today is

1 Kings 3:5f (what would you ask for if given this opportunity?)

There is a very important part of this passage and it is:

The word “discerning” in v. 9 is the Hebrew word “shama”. I want to show you what you will get when you do a study of this word on a Bible software program that any of you can buy:

OT:8085

shama` (shaw-mah'); a primitive root; to hear intelligently (often with implication of attention, obedience, etc.; causatively, to tell, etc.):

What Solomon was asking for was a **hearing heart**. And what we should ask God for is a hearing heart. Because I don’t know of a topic more **important** than this, for us to be able to hear the voice of the Lord in our lives, in our church, in our families, in our relationships. I also don’t know a topic more **practical** and needed than this. And I also don’t know of a topic more **controversial** about than this. There is a lot of weird stuff out there going on where people thought they heard from God and didn’t.

Central Truth: Learning to hear and obey God’s voice is one of the most important things in all of life.

I think many of us are like Samuel in 1 Sam. 3

1 Sam. 3 didn't recognize God's voice. We are much like that today. I believe God is speaking far more than we are listening.

I think another big issue is that the voice of the Lord is often more quiet than we realize. In **1 Kings 19:10-12** Elijah (a man just like us we are told in James 5) is told to stand on the mountain and the Lord will pass by Not in wind, not in earthquake, not in fire, but rather in a "Gentle whisper". The literal Hebr. Is
3 words: voice/sound + still/quiet + small/thin = still small voice. The KJV does say "still small voice." We learn from this that:

God speaks to those who are still enough to listen.

David: give them a hunger for more of God! See books on this

We desperately need to learn to hear God's voice. We need to hear His voice for:

Direction: who to marry, job, etc.

Encouragement when down

Wisdom when we don't know what to do

How to minister to others

We need to know who God is

We need to hear His voice in our Marriages ... families ... jobs

Very important to understand that when God speaks to us it is not always or even often about something to do, project, etc. It is often about who He is, what He wants to show us about ourselves, encouragement, etc.

Ex. As a **parent** when I speak to my children it is not always about something to do.

(PAUSE -----)

Now before I get to the main points, let me offer a big **Caution**: it is very important how we approach this. We should be very careful that we do not expect everyone to hear God in the same way we do, nor should we expect everyone to sense the same thing we sense from God. Some are more objective while others are more subjective. Neither should judge the other!

You will save yourself and others a lot of grief if you just concentrate on hearing from God and leave others to the Lord. The biggest ditches I see people fall into is when they judge others if they are not seeing things the way they are seeing things or conclude that that person is not as spiritual and we begin to see in the church this "we/they" deal that can become very divisive.

TS The first point I want to make is this:

1. God is a talking God.

From the very beginning of the Bible we see God speaking to people:

Gen. 3 They heard the voice of the Lord in the Garden

Ex. God speaking to Moses and then God speaking to the people through Moses

God giving the **10 commandments** and other written instructions
God speaking to the **prophets** and then the prophets speaking for God to the people.
And then **Jesus** coming as the very incarnation of God.

The Bible is filled with “*Thus saith the Lord*”. Aren’t you glad He saiths? Aren’t you glad He speaks. Aren’t you glad He talks. He is and He is not silent.
Even through creation God is speaking. **Rom. 1** says that creation speaks of His invisible attributes and His divine nature.

Jer. 33:3 call upon me and I will **answer you** and show you great and mighty things.

Ps 17:6 I call on you, O God, for **you will answer me**;

Ps 65:5 **You answer us** with awesome deeds of righteousness,

Ps 86:7 In the day of my trouble I will call to you, for **you will answer me**.

Aren’t you glad that God is a talking God? He is and He is not silent!

Chall. Do you long to know Him and hear His voice for your life? Do you recognize how desperately you need to hear His voice? Oh, I hope so.

TS And the good news is that if you are His child, you can hear His voice, because:

2. God has “wired” His people for sound.

Notice I said His people. We are talking here about those who have received Christ. Last week I made the important distinction concerning the blessings of salvation. Things that are true of those who have Christ in their life. I want to make that distinction again today. When someone receives Christ, as we learned last week, they receive the HS and let’s see from John what the HS will do when He comes:

Jn. 14:16-17 (in you!)

Jn. 16:7, 12-15

The HS basically replaced Jesus on earth and thus put God’s presence in all believers and one of His jobs is to help us hear God. He shall “lead you into all truth” .. take what is of Jesus and make it known to you. This means speak to us, show us things.

It is so important that you and I believe that we can hear from God. I had a person this week tell them that she often feels that she is not good enough or mature enough to hear from God. Wrong. All believers can hear from God! He wants you to and thus equipped you to hear from Him.

Ex. Think of it this way: if someone told you that there is a Christian radio station out there on **91.9** from but you had never heard it before, you might find this hard to believe. Finally, you tune in and hear it and then you know that that station is out there.

Today, I want to help you to start tuning in. Here is an illustration that might help. The HS comes inside of us to live and do His work and when He comes He is like an **antenna**

Prop: TV antenna

This spiritual antenna in each of us allows us to tune in to God and hear and His voice.

Now, some people's antenna is

broken (*pull out the deal*), - why? Perhaps sin or unbelief ...
not hooked up good, - wrong wire in the wrong hole. others it is
not high enough and they only get local stationsget that baby on the roof of
the house ... go deeper with God.

Tuned into the wrong stations You have so many others messages coming in that you don't hear God very well. Their tuned into rock stations and 3 hours of TV each day and so busy with all kinds of other voices and then they wonder why they don't hear God or feel very close with God? Turn the TV off; turn the radio off; and listen to God more and you will hear Him more! The problem is not with God speaking, the problem is with us being tuned in!

Ex. Married couple ... who moved? God hasn't moved. He is trying to speak far more than we are listening.

The main point here is this: all Christians have the HS and thus all Christians are wired for sound. This is why:

Rev. 3:20 come in and eat = to eat the main meal together. In that culture this would have meant being together, talking, listening, interacting....

Jn. 10 my sheep hear my voice

Isa 30:21

21 Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, "This is the way; walk in it."

Isa 50:4-5

4 The Sovereign LORD has given me an instructed tongue,
to know the word that sustains the weary.

He wakens me morning by morning,
wakens my ear to listen like one being taught.

5 The Sovereign LORD has opened my ears,

The book of **Acts** is filled with verses like:

Acts 8:26 angel said to Philip

10:19 Spirit said to Peter...

11:12 Spirit told me (Peter) to go without misgivings

13:2 HS said, "Set apart for Me Saul and Barnabas"

15:28 "it seemed good to the HS and to us"

16:6 "forbidden by the HS to speak the Word in Asia"

20:23 HS testifies to me that bonds and afflictions await me

23:11 the Lord stood at his side and said "take courage.."

Be encouraged today that one of the many blessings of salvation is that you can hear the voice of God. The HS speaks to our spirit. I hope these examples from Acts shows you that God does want to speak to us and we can hear His voice. He wants to speak and lead us on a moment by moment basis. Look up the verses in your sermon notes.

Charles Stanley quote p. 8 of his book

TS Now, big time evidence that God is a talking God and that He wants us to hear His voice is in this next point. Look what He took a lot of time and effort to bring about (hold up bible) to speak to us:

3. The Bible is the most certain voice of God.

I do not believe this is the only way He speaks (and we will get into that under point 4), but there is no question that this is the most certain way He speaks.

Now, this point is so important so don't miss it. When we talk about hearing God, let's be sure we start and stay rock solid on the fact that the Bible is the most certain Word of God. There is no doubt that this is God's Word.

You may have a sense in your spirit that God is telling you something but you aren't totally sure. Well, what is here is totally sure.

Ex. Don't come to me and say "*Pastor, I think God is telling me to sleep with this woman and divorce my wife and marry this other woman because I feel in love with her.*" That isn't God. For He said "I hate divorce" and "Thou shalt not commit adultery." No doubt about that being God's Word. It is plain and clear right here. Trash your feelings. God hasn't said that to you. Your flesh is speaking. The enemy might be speaking, but it isn't God!!!!

This is infallible and inerrant Word of God. God will never say something that contradicts this. This is the constitution, so to speak. It is the law of the land. This is why:

2 Tim 3:16-17

16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17 so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Ps 119:105

Your word is a lamp to my feet
and a light for my path.

Ps 119:9-11

How can a young man keep his way pure?
By living according to your word.
10 I seek you with all my heart;

do not let me stray from your commands.
11 I have hidden your word in my heart
that I might not sin against you.

Therefore, everything else that one thinks is God's voice, whether it be an impression or the counsel of a friend or pastor or a prophetic type word (we will get into that more later), whatever it is must be filtered through this most certain word!

Ex. Screen: screen allows the wind in (voice of God) while keeping out dust and debris. The screen is the bible. The tighter the screen is the less debris is allowed into the house. The more you read and study and meditate on the Bible, the tighter your screen will be.
Chall. How tight is your screen? If you don't know the written Word well, then you might think something is of God when it isn't. This is the most certain voice of God!!!

TS At the same time, and this will lead us to our next point. Some Christians windows have screens that are so taped up and air tight that it is more like a storm window that for fear of getting some flies and dust in, they don't even get the fresh air. They think the only way God speaks is through the bible and so they have pretty stale air in their house.

4. God speaks in many ways.

Never contrary to the bible but certainly in ways other than just the passages in the bible. Even in His Word we see Him speaking in ways other than just His Word. For example, in the OT He used His written word (Penteteuch) and He also spoke in ways that were not in writing and never became written per se.

Ex. Nowhere in the bible did it tell me to marry Dede or come to pastor this church, but I certainly believe that God spoke to my heart to marry Dede and come to pastor this church.

By the way, all of the resources listed on your sermon notes, from very solid scholars would agree with this point. Bible first and foremost but not only through the bible.

Now as I give these you are going to see first hand some of what we mean when we say we are seeking to be a **Word and Spirit church**.

Ken Gire quote in Bannister's book p. 103-104

And this is what I want to introduce you to now with this prayer that it will result in some new and fresh air from the Lord in your life.

(Due to time, I will simply give you these subpoints with not much explanation, and then this is where we will pick up next week. I very much commend to you the resources listed on the sermon notes. Excellent and balanced books.

----- end message here if necessary due to time -----

What are some of these “other ways”?

a. In our spirit.

God’s Spirit lives in our spirit, therefore, it shouldn’t surprise us that we would have a “sense in our spirit” at times that is God speaking to us. I realize this can be subjective which is why it should be weighed carefully. Let me give you a verse that I think supports this point:

Col 3:15-17

15 Let the peace of Christ **rule in your hearts**, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. 16 Let the **word of Christ dwell in you richly** as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.

Col. 3:15 “peace factor” .. rule in our hearts = umpire our hearts ...

NT:1018

brabeuo (brab-yoo'-o); from the same as NT:1017; to arbitrate, i.e. (genitive case) to govern (figuratively, prevail):

KJV - rule.

NT:1017

brabeion (brab-i'-on); from brabeus (an umpire of uncertain derivation); an award (of arbitration), i.e. (specially) a prize in the public games:

Peace is to be like an umpire in our spirit. An umpire calls balls and strikes in a baseball game. He says “strike” – over the plate – where it is supposed to be. Ball = off the mark and not where it should be. You are going in a direction that is not of God, and you have this “check in your spirit” or “lack of peace”, that can be God umpiring your life and speaking to you through that lack of peace.

Of course, you have to be careful here, because sometimes what we call a “lack of peace” is simply our feeling what we want to feel so that we can claim it is of God. Our emotions can play tricks on it and we should not be lead by our feelings, and this is again why the written word is so important, which may be why Col. 3:16 says to “let the Word of God dwell in you richly.”

Perfect balance here. **The more the Word dwells in your richly, the more you can trust that sense in your spirit!** This does not mean that we are to be driven by our feelings. I call this sanctified feelings.

“When I say the Holy Spirit ...” quote from p. 16 of Charles Stanley’s book

Now where this sense in our spirit will come is most often in **prayer**. Our formal prayer times and also when we pray without ceasing and just seeking to be in fellowship with

God throughout the day. This is why we see prayer here more and more as a way of life. Living a life of prayer whereby we are sensing His voice on a moment by moment basis.

Pers. I remember recently I was praying for someone and had an impression that I shared with them and it proved to be right on. God had spoken in my spirit

Pract. Let me give you a very helpful piece of practical info here in hearing God: Pastor Dan gave me this this week: Turn off your **car radio** more often and use that time to listen to God, or use something like this CD: drive time devotions, to direct your attention to God while driving.

TS Another way God speaks is:

b. Through others.

Here is where this wonderful thing called the body of Christ comes in. God speaks through His people into our lives. Probably most all of us have experienced that. It is a neat thing. We are not alone and should seek the counsel of others in order to hear God. Throughout the Word of God we see God speaking through people. His voice through others. Why would we think He doesn't do that any more?

Prov. Many references to seeking counsel.

Prov 13:10

10 Through presumption comes nothing but strife,
But with those who receive counsel is wisdom.
NAS

God speaks through people. Yes, weigh it all through the Word, weigh the peace factor, etc. but do get counsel from others. This is why we need to be very careful what we say to others. I will never forget hearing Peter Lord...

Quo Peter Lord: God speaks to me more through my wife than anything or anyone else other than the bible and I was often too prideful to hear it. Wow.

TS Another way is:

c. Through situations.

Yes, God speaks through the situations of life. You have to be very careful here, again weigh it with the Word, get counsel, but sometimes God uses situations to speak to us.

Rev. 3:7-8 I have placed before you an open door ... circumstance.

Col. 4:3 He prayed that God would open a door for the message. This sounds like the circumstance of an open door to show him that he was to minister there.

1 cor. 16:8 Paul said he would stay on at Ephesus because a great door for effective work has opened there for me.

2 Cor. 2:12-13 a door was opened, but no peace ... this is interesting

That is God using circumstances. No doubt about it. He may bring conflict into your life to deepen you. He may allow sickness to do something. He may allow you to fall on your face to humble you.....

Quo C.S. Lewis: God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pain. It is His megaphone to arouse a deaf world.” You see, every trial or circumstance in life can be an occasion for God to speak to us.

He speaks through circumstances.

TS Now, this next one is probably the most controversial, but here we go:

d. In dreams, visions and prophecies.

I know this one might be the most controversial, so we will save this for next week.

The bible is loaded with dreams that were of God I know you have to be careful here...

Gen. 37

Ex. Our experience

Visions – Acts 10

Prophecies

Acts 21:10-14 not 100% accurate

1 Cor 14:3

3 But everyone who prophesies speaks to men for their strengthening, encouragement and comfort.

Pers. I had a 1 Cor. 14:3 this week like you wouldn't believe.

“Prophecy is telling something that God has spontaneously brought to mind.”

Dr. Wayne Grudem in Systematic Theology, p. 1049

Explain what we do in our services

You must be very careful here because this can be very subjective. Therefore, some guidelines here:

- a. Never make a major decision on a single prophesy, dream/etc. alone
- b. Always seek confirmation
- c. Usually the timing is almost always not the time frame we think Abraham ... Isaac

Moving in the flesh can create an Ishmael

The “Word” – we often attach a scenerio to the Word where we visually how it will come to pass and it often will not be exactly what we think. More reason why we need to bath it in prayer, wait, look for confirmation...

Tips in hearing God:

Saved

This is kind of a “given” but you must be saved to truly hear God.

Seek

We must Seek God regularly in the Word, prayer and just having hearts that are open to God.

Jer. 29:

Practical: take time in your QTs to just be silent and jot down what you sense from the Lord.

Surrender

This means that you are yielded to God and obeying what He shows you. That there is a submissive spirit to the Lord.

Let me give you one more pointer here: Part of surrender is **give expressions to your impressions or you will fail to be impressed.**

Ex. Airport – anyone ever lived near an airport?

Conclusion:

Aren't you glad that God is a talking God. He is speaking and He wants you to hear His voice. If you have Christ, you can hear His voice. If you have never invited Christ into your life, you can do that today. His written Word is His most certain and sure way of speaking, and yet He also speaks in other ways.

Do you want to hear God? If so, tell Him now. Ask Him to help you hear His voice more clearly.

What is it that you might need to reduce in your life that you might increase your ability to hear His voice? What are some other voices you are listening to that you need to eliminate? What are some activities that are keeping you from this book or from just being still enough in your spirit to hear that still small voice?

Whatever you eliminate for God, you will never regret. The positives of hearing His voice far outweigh the little cost of giving up that which hinders you from hearing His voice. What could be more important than hearing and obeying God on a moment by moment basis?

“My sheep will hear My voice.”

Let's pray

Time for prayer about message To listen to the Lord and to pray for our church right now.

End:

- a. Mother's Day cards from Birthright**
- b. Men's service this Sat. – sign up on yellow cards or call the church**