

He speaks with us

Introduction

Do you think that God loves you so much that He would rescue you for Himself, but then not talk to you? Would He send His only dearly-loved Son to bring you into eternal life at enormous cost to Himself, and then not say anything to you? Would He do miracles in your life and in response to your prayers, but never speak to you? Would He promise to be in every detail - even the hairs of your head are numbered - and then never in your life say a word to you? That's nonsensical.

God speaks! In fact, Psalm 50:3 says, "Our God comes and will not be silent." I believe this because it is consistent with everything I see in the Old and New Testaments and my own experience.

Scripture-based exploration: there's a lot on this topic!

What is God's voice like? How do we hear God? Look at the Scriptures below and draw out similarities and conclusions. For example: *His voice is often associated with His glory.*

PSALM 50:3

Our God comes and will not be silent.

EZEKIEL 43:2

His voice was like the roar of rushing waters, and the land was radiant with His glory.

PSALM 29:3-4, 7-8

The voice of the LORD is over the waters; the God of glory thunders. The voice of the LORD is powerful; the voice of the LORD is majestic. The voice of the LORD strikes with flashes of lightning. The voice of the LORD shakes the desert.

MATTHEW 17:5

While [Peter] was still speaking, a bright cloud enveloped them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is My Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased. Listen to Him!"

JOHN 12:28,29

Then a voice came from heaven. "I have glorified [My Name], and I will glorify it again." The crowd that was there and heard it said it had thundered.

REVELATION 1:12,15

I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me. His voice was like the sound of rushing waters.

HEBREWS 11:25-29

See to it that you do not refuse Him who speaks [**God**, identified in verse 23, and **Jesus**, identified in verse 24]. If they did not escape when they refused Him who warned them on earth, how much less will

we, if we turn away from Him who warns us from heaven? At that time His voice shook the earth, but now He has promised, “Once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens.” The words “once more” indicate the removing of what can be shaken—that is, created things—so that what cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our “God is a consuming fire.”

How else does God speak? He speaks through creation: pray for eyes to see!

ROMANS 1:20

For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.

PSALM 19:1-4

The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.

Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they reveal knowledge.

They have no speech, they use no words; no sound is heard from them.

Yet their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.

He speaks through Jesus. Jesus is the **Word** of God.

JOHN 1:1,2,14

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

God spoke Jesus into mankind to walk with us, experience life with us, be with us, and rescue us from our sin and death. What’s the best way to get acquainted? Speak together. Be together. Hence Jesus became the Word of God, spoken into the story of salvation as the Rescuer, the Lover of our souls, the Hope of mankind, the holy Friend of sinners. Do you know Jesus like that? **He is God translated into humankind.** He came to speak into your destiny and rescue you from the pit of hell. You may have heard His voice at some point, and that’s why you’re reading this. I can guarantee you, He wants to take you deeper into relationship.

HEBREWS 1:1-3

In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of His being, sustaining all things by His powerful word.

So do you want to get to know God’s voice? Read every word Jesus says in the Bible. Know His words. Rehearse His words. Practice His words. Memorize His words.

God is speaking to you directly through Jesus. Listen! Create space and time in your life to hear Him. What does that look like for you?

To whom did He directly speak? A sample:

Genesis: Adam, the woman (Eve), Cain; Abraham (I give you this land.)

Exodus: Moses (Go free My people and lead them out to the Promised Land. Now train them. Through you I will provide water, food, direction for them, and I will speak to you, respond to your prayers, and to Joshua, your successor. The Ten Commandments.)

Exodus: He spoke through a cloud in the day and a pillar of fire at night, warming and protecting them, bringing them shade in the desert.

(The Israelites got to the point that they did not want to speak with Him directly - waaaaay too scary!)

Leviticus: He gave the Law, the details of how He wanted to be worshipped, all of which point to Jesus. Sacrifice a lamb for your sin? Think of Jesus. Build the temple with a Holy of Holies? Think of Jesus.

Numbers-Ruth: God speaks to us through the journeys of life, the ups and downs of the sin cycle, always calling us back to Himself through judges, prophets, friends, and family.

Samuel, Kings, Chronicles: God speaks through prophets and to kings, caring for His people and calling out to them with instruction and affection, with rebuke and parental care

Psalms: We speak to God - and let it all out.

Ecclesiastes: God intentionally put eternity in the hearts of men: "He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart; yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end" (Ecclesiastes 3:11). This is language of the heart, unspoken yet heard.

The prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, the lesser known, the famous like Elijah and Elisha): Get right with God and stay close to Him. Repent of your sin! Don't play with it like it's a toy, because it will utterly destroy you! Warnings given from a heart of love.

John the Baptist: "Look for this One," God explaining how to identify Jesus.

Jesus:

- Mt 3:17 His baptism: And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."
- Mark 9:7 The transfiguration: Then a cloud appeared and covered them, and a voice came from the cloud: "This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!"
- John 11:41-43 Lazarus; resurrection: So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me." When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!"
- John 12:27-33 Before the cross: "Now my soul is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name!" Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it, and will glorify it again." The crowd that was there and heard it said it had thundered; others said an angel had spoken to him. Jesus said, "This voice was for your benefit, not mine. Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be

driven out. And I, when I am lifted up[g] from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die.

Acts: Ananias and Saul/Paul and Peter and too many others to name

The book of **Revelation**, revealed by the risen, victorious Christ and angels, to John on Patmos.

He speaks daily, moment by moment, **through the Holy Spirit.**

Anything He says will be consistent with what you read about His character in the Bible. Therefore we learn His voice and character and truth through the Bible. The Holy Spirit will be consistent as the Spirit of Truth with all you read in the Bible.

LUKE 12:11,12

When you are brought before synagogues, rulers and authorities, do not worry about how you will defend yourselves or what you will say, for the Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what you should say.

JOHN 14:15-17, 25-27

“If you love me, keep my commands. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever—the Spirit of truth.” All this I have spoken while still with you. **But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.** Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

2 PETER 1:21

For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is the One who helps you with the particulars of your life: where to live, who your roomies should be, who to marry, what job to take, what to wear, what city to live in.

He’s the One who whispers to you who God is, how dear you are to Him, how holy and good He is.

He is the One to add up everything in your life for your good, to take every experience and bring it all together for the well-being and healing of others.

He’s the One who helps you forgive rather than live in offense.

He’s the One who gives you joy in the middle of your pain.

He’s the One who reminds you of hymns and spiritual songs in the night or while you’re standing in line at the grocery store.

He’s the One who whispers to get your attention and train you to be like Jesus.

He’s the One who helps you dance in the kitchen while you’re cooking and cleaning,

who strengthens you with patience when your two-year-old says NO MAMA!,

who reminds you of your value and worth when someone treats you poorly,

who brings a new song into your soul,

who defies logic with love,

who brings hope as the tears dry up,

who colors your life with pinks and greens and blues and purples and you see them and you hit your knees in prayerful thanks! :-D

He speaks through His people and angels and visions (spiritual seeing).

People: We are a body, meant for each other's good. Some have the gift of knowledge and wisdom. Find those people for your *sensus fidelium*.

Angels: Gabriel spoke with Mary and Joseph and Elizabeth.

Dreams and visions: Ananias in Acts 9 (Saul/Paul too); Daniel (There is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries. Daniel 2:28); Joseph, Jesus' earthly dad.

Non-scripture readings

The Insanity of God by Nik Ripken; provocative title but excellent book to encourage your faith. Modern day stories of Jesus appearing to persecuted Christians and Muslims N-O-W. Several of these can be found on Isik Abla's Facebook page.

Hearing God, Dallas Willard

Practicing the Presence of God, Brother Lawrence

Artwork for the creatives

Take one of the scriptural accounts in the first part of the lesson and illustrate that. How do people respond to hearing God? What shows in their faces?

Movies

"The Ten Commandments"

Partnerships

This month, pray with another person in your group and listen for God's voice together. Talk to them: how have they heard and perceived God's voice in their life? Listen to their story, and share your own.

Questions to ponder:

How has God been speaking into your soul lately?

How did you feel about the introduction to this subject?

How is He speaking into your life? (I do not think all people hear God the same. He is so expansive. and He has made us perceptive and intuitive in a variety of ways. I do not think we need to fit into a mold or box, but His voice **must** align with Scripture.)

What is your experience with God's voice? Have you ever experienced a "knowing" without a "speaking" that you felt or knew was directly from God?

Who are your people, your *sensus fidelium*, who can help you discern God's voice or speak when you can't seem to hear Him?

Respond to this quote from this lesson:

God spoke Jesus into mankind to walk with us, experience life with us, be with us, and rescue us from our sin and death. What's the best way to get acquainted? Speak together. Be together. Hence Jesus became the Word of God, spoken into the story of salvation as the Rescuer, the Lover of our souls, the Hope of mankind, the holy Friend of sinners. Do you know Jesus like that? **He is God translated into humankind.** He came to speak into your destiny and rescue you from the pit of hell. You may have heard His voice at some point, and that's why you're reading this. I can guarantee you, He wants to take you deeper into relationship.

How do you know when another person really does hear God? How do you trust or evaluate or dismiss when they say, "But God said ____."

Is this an uneasy subject for you? Where are you on this spectrum of 1-"I have no clue what you are talking about" to 10-"We talk all the time!"?