

HOW TO HEAR GOD SPEAK

Luke 8:4-15

April 6, 2008 Sunday a.m.

INTRODUCTION

- A. We must tune our ears to hear God's voice. It's like the child who was told by his father during a symphony orchestra concert, "Listen for the flutes in this song. Don't they sound beautiful?" The child, unable to distinguish the flutes, looks up at his father with a puzzled look, "What flutes, father?"

The child first needs to learn what flutes sound like on their own, separate from the whole orchestra, before he is able to hear them in a symphony. So it is with us as children of God. Unless we take the time to hear his voice in the quiet moments of life, we will not be able to hear him in the symphony sounds of life.

Stephen Macchia, Becoming a Healthy Church (Baker Books, 1999), p.63

- B. Today, we're beginning a four part series I'm calling, "Learning to Hear God's Voice".
1. This morning we will find out what we should do to hear God speak to us.
 2. We're using Jesus' parable of the Sower or the Seed as our guide-Luke 8:4-15
(READ VV 4-9)
 3. In the Parable, God is the farmer, His Word (His speaking to us) is the seed, and we are the field or soil.
 4. Let's notice four things we must do if we want to hear God speaking to us.

I. FIRST, WE MUST BE OPEN TO THE POSSIBILITY THAT GOD WANTS TO SPEAK TO US.

- A. Most of us would probably admit that we have never heard God speak directly to us.
1. Why is that?
 2. One reason is that we don't expect him to. We are closed to the possibility of that ever happening.
 3. Why should God try to speak to us then?
- B. This closed attitude about God speaking to us describes the first soil in Jesus' parable -**vv 5 & 12.**
1. First century farmers had no John Deere's available for plowing and planting. They used the "broadcast" system of sowing seed.
 2. In every field there would be a footpath the farmer walked on between planted rows.
 3. These footpaths were hard due to constant traffic.
 4. This hardened path describes some human hearts today. Even if God wanted to speak to us, our hardened heart would prevent it.
- C. Why would anyone not be open to God speaking to them?
1. Pride-"I don't need God".
 2. Fear-"What if God asks me to do something I don't want to do?"
 3. Bitterness-God has allowed hurts in my life and I've cut myself off from him.
 4. The real tragedy of a harden footpath is that its barren. Nothing grows there. It's a bitter, wasted life-**James 1:21.**

II. SECOND, WE MUST SET ASIDE TIME FOR GOD TO SPEAK TO US.

- A. Many of us never hear God speak because we are in too much of a hurry.
- B. This describes the second soil in Jesus' parable—**vv 6 & 13**.
 - 1. This shallow soil represents a “shallow or superficial” mind.
 - 2. The U.S. Air Force did a study and found that we forget 90-95% of everything we hear within 72 hours. (Wives, however, never forget!).
 - 3. This means, sometimes when God speaks to us through His Word or perhaps through another person, we just don't retain or remember it.
 - 4. How can we stop this? How can we be sure God's Word takes root in our lives? One way is to set aside time for Him to speak to us. Consider giving God the same amount of time we spend reading our newspaper, watching television, surfing the net, or texting our friends.

III. THIRD, WE MUST CUT OUT DISTRACTIONS IF GOD IS TO SPEAK TO US.

- A. If God wanted to speak to many of us He would just get a busy signal.
- B. This describes the third soil type in Jesus' parable—**vv. 7 & 14**.
 - 1. This is a preoccupied mind or person.
 - 2. It's a distracted mind.
- C. Jesus says distractions are like weeds. He offers three examples of things that distract us.
 - 1. “Worries” distract us. Can't worry and pray at the same time.
 - 2. “Riches” distract us—living to make money instead of living.
 - 3. “Pleasure” can distract us.
 - 4. Weeds are a sign of neglect. We neglect to give God our undistracted attention so He can speak to us.

IV. FOURTH, WE MUST SAY YES TO GOD'S WILL FOR HIM TO SPEAK TO US.

- A. God talks to people who decide in advance to do what he asks.
 - 1. Most of us want God to tell us what He wants us to do then we will decide whether we will do it or not.
 - 2. God doesn't play this kind of game.
- B. The fourth soil in Jesus' parable describes a person with a willing heart—willing to do whatever God asks, before God asks—**vv 8 & 15 & James 1:22..**

CONCLUSION

- A. Our son is a OKC Fireman and he drives to work pretty early. He lives in Edmond but is stationed in south OKC. Driving south on HWY 235 two weeks ago he found himself following a pickup pulling a 16' trailer. As he passed the I44 exit he heard God say to him change lanes right now. Without even checking to see if there was a car in the other lane, he immediately moved over into the right hand lane. Just then, one of the heavy four foot ramps tucked under the trailer in front of him came loose and flew head high past his pickup. Prior to telling me this story, he said he had a “God Moment”. I understand now what he meant.
- B. Do you want to have a “God Moment”? Do you want God to speak to you? Then follow Jesus' advice in this parable....
 - 1. Be open to the fact that God wants to speak to you.
 - 2. Set aside time for God to speak to you.
 - 3. Cut out the distractions in your life that hinder God's voice.
 - 4. Say yes to God's will before He speaks.