

GOSPEL COMMUNITY CHURCH

PULPIT SERIES

Gospel Community Church, 54 Atlantic Ave. West Sayville, NY 11796

#3

JESUS DRIVEN CHURCH

HEARING GOD

The basics for a Jesus Driven Church are as follows:

- It comes under the Authority of the Father
- It is led by the Word of God – Jesus
- It is enlightened and empowered by the Holy Spirit

To that end we first discussed that the God of the Bible is a TRIUNE GOD. (Pulpit Series #1) In Pulpit Series #2 we looked at the VOICE of GOD as He speaks through; Creation, Control, Comfort, Confidence, Cleansing, Correction, and Condemnation. Let us now answer the question, “If God speaks, and he does, do I hear Him?” There are basically three voices that speak to us:

- God
- Devil/demons
- Ourselves

The primary and I believe most beneficial way to discern God’s voice is to saturate your mind and heart with the Word of God. Another way to say this is to engraft the Word of God into your very spirit and soul. This is accomplished by:

- Reading the Bible

- Memorization of Scripture
- Bible studies
- Going to Church

All of these strengthen our ability to recognize God’s voice. Although there are many voices coming at you, when situations arise that are not addressed in scripture, you need to analyze the “character” of what you are hearing. I’m not talking about a particular person I’m talking about the character of what is being said, it’s content. Is it, God-like, Devil-like or Me-like. That’s why it’s so important to know the Word, which brings understanding to the very nature of God – what He is like.

We hear so many people describing God as love to us whose own life style leaves a lot to be desired. The reason for this is that they have conjured in their own mind and heart a God which they have manufactured – a man made God, or as God calls it an idol. Yes it’s true God is love, but he is also righteous, and truthful, a God of Justice. Now in view of these attributes, we can understand why He hates sin and it’s consequences.

Yet so many continue to manufacture a God who will justify their own sinful lifestyle.

How does God speak to us?

1. A still small voice, an inner whisper. This voice is not audible. Some describe it as an inner “urging.” It can be an answer to pray, a request to do something
2. When our thoughts focusing on a section of scripture which brings clarity to a situation. We see it in His Word.
3. A confirmation from an outside source. Some would call it a “coincidence”
4. A settled peace
5. When we literally hear nothing and yet we receive “a calm” in a situation. “Be still and know that I am God.
6. He shouts through things we see, and hear.

I believe that many people still believe that God speaks today. The problem with hearing Him is not our doubting He speaks, but rather we close ourselves off to hearing him. This usually occurs in three ways.

WE CLOSE OUR MIND

Let's first examine the example of what we will describe as the *ordinary* – Gideon.

Judg 6:12-16 And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him, and said unto him, The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour. And Gideon said unto him, Oh my Lord, if the LORD be with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where be all his miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt? but now the LORD hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites. And the LORD looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee? And he said unto him, Oh my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house. And the LORD said unto him, Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man.

Like Gideon we believe that God speaks to Kings, Prophets, Apostles, but not to little old us. Why would God take the time away from the entire universe to talk to ordinary me? And in

Gideon's case why would He chose him to defeat a mighty army – “as one man.” So we close our mind down to the possibility that God wants to talk to us, The truth is that He is extremely interested in talking to little old, normal, ordinary, everyday person → you! God doesn't view you as unworthy, deficient in character, without courage and fearful. He continues to remind us, He's all we need. With Him we are an overcoming army.

Let's examine another example which we describe as the *spectacular* – the people (during Jesus time)

John 12:27-29 Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again. The people therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him.

It's obvious from these scriptures that when God the Father spoke from heaven, Jesus clearly heard, But the people who were with him only heard a thunderous sound. Since they didn't expect God to speak in an audible voice, their minds were not opened to receive this sound as God talking. Consequently all they heard was “noise.” There is a flip side to this also. If we only expect God to speak in some spectacular form of revelation, then we might miss the still small quiet voice

because we are not expecting God to speak that way. Let's look at the prophet Elijah's live.

IKing 19:11-13 And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the LORD. And, behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the LORD; but the LORD was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the LORD was not in the earthquake: And after the earthquake a fire; but the LORD was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice. And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering in of the cave. And, behold, there came a voice unto him, and said, What doest thou here, Elijah?

Let's examine a final example which we will describe as the *ridiculous* – religious cults and unbalanced people.

One of the most used phrases by those in religious cults, and often people who are unbalanced is “God told me.” God told me to strap on this dynamite/C4 and go into that crowd and explode myself. Now if there are three voices speaking to us let me equivocally state that this is not the voice of God. Therefore there are only two other possibilities. I will leave it to your imagination.

As Christians we need to pay special attention not to fall into the same trap. If God has not said something to you, then please don't say, God told me. It could be that we might

disgrace His reputation. Keep your mind open to the possibility that God wants to speak to the ordinary, through the spectacular or even through a quiet whisper.

WE CLOSE OUR HEARTS

Let's examine the example of the Israelites on Mt. Sinai when *fear* came upon them.

Exod 20:18-20 And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off. And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die. And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not.

The people were terrified to hear God. So they told Moses, you hear and tell us what He said.

How often have Christians shut out the voice of God because they were fearful at what He might say? We might not worry about losing our lives as the Israelites, but we are fearful none the less.

Let's examine another example that of *pride*.

Isa 30:1 Woe to the rebellious children, saith the LORD, that take counsel, but not of me; and that cover with a covering, but not of my spirit, that they may add sin to sin:

Isa 30:15-16 For thus saith the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel; In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength: and ye would not. But ye said, No; for we will flee upon horses; therefore shall ye flee: and, We will ride upon the swift; therefore shall they that pursue you be swift.

Pride has a way of closing down our heart to the voice of God. We truly believe we can accomplish life by ourselves. "Don't talk to me God, I can do it on my own." Sometimes we act so stiff-necked and rebellious. We just openly rebel in defiance to a God that only has our well being in his view. Thank God for his mercies.

Isa 30:19 For the people shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem: thou shalt weep no more: he will be very gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry; when he shall hear it, he will answer thee.

When we lay aside our pride and turn to Him in sincerity and honesty, he immediately responds:

Isa 30:21 And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.

Often pride leads us into presumption, like in the life of Balaam. He went out to curse the Israelites for Moab's sake. The Lord placed an angel in his way 3 times and his donkey saw him and won't go. Balaam stroke him those three times.

Then the Lord opened the donkey's mouth and he spoke to Balaam.

Pride so often says, "I will not listen to this donkey." In Jesus day, He healed a blind beggar. When the Pharisees examined him, he told them how Jesus healed him and was a prophet sent from God. But they wouldn't receive his report. They had closed their hearts because they viewed Jesus as a trouble-maker. After all they were the religious leaders – Oh that pride.

And finally let's examine *rebellion*.

Zech 7:11-12 But they refused to hearken, and pulled away the shoulder, and stopped their ears, that they should not hear. Yea, they made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law, and the words which the LORD of hosts hath sent in his spirit by the former prophets: therefore came a great wrath from the LORD of hosts.

The cry of rebellion is, "You are not my God and I will not listen."

WE CLOSE OUR LIFE

1. Through *busyness*

Matt 22:1-5 And Jesus answered and spake unto them again by parables, and said, The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not

come. Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage. But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise:

The people described in Jesus parable were too busy to hear and obey. They weren't like Elijah who went up the mountain alone to hear that still small voice. Or Moses who went up the mountain alone to hear and receive the 10 commandments. Jesus Himself went anywhere to get alone to hear His Father speak to Him.

2. Through *too much talk*

So often when we get alone with God we come with our own agenda. Our own shopping list of what we want God to do for us. If you remember on the Mt. of Transfiguration, Jesus took His inner circle, Peter, James and John. Jesus had something SPECIAL to reveal to them. When they got there, Peter took over and did all the talking. God the Father, finally had to interrupt Peter, literally telling him to be quiet and listen.

Matt 17:5 While he(Peter) yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.

Be reminded Beloved,
Open your minds, hearts, lives
and listen to what our God
would say to you.

When I spoke to Nicodemus I
addressed the WIND.
It is irregular, invisible,
inscrutable, indispensable,
invigorating
Can you feel it?

When I spoke to the Woman at
the well I addressed the
WATER.
It is satisfying
Have you had a drink?

When I spoke to the Rich
Young Ruler I addressed
WEALTH.
Don't make it your heart's
desire.

When I spoke to Martha I
addressed WORK.
Don't get encumbered by the
world's work, rather do the
work of the Lord – believe on
HIM.

When I spoke to Thomas I
addressed WISDOM.
Ask for God's wisdom and He
will give it freely.

When I spoke with the
Disciples on the Emmaus Road
I addressed the WORD.
Are you in it.
And Have you HEARD IT?

There are many voices in the
world today – all clamoring to
be heard. The voice of
philosophy, psychology,
science, education, medicine,
religion, etc... However the
most important voice to ever be
heard is that of the living God.