

# ***HEARING HIS VOICE***



***....And behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and broke 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 earth-quake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice. And when Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave.***

***I Kings 19:11-13***

It was probably the most discouraged and troubled hour of Elijah's life. But Elijah nevertheless was able to distinguish between hearing noise and hearing the voice of God. God was not in the wind. God was not in the earthquake. God was not in the fire. But when Elijah's heart began to hear the voice of a gentle stillness, he knew he was hearing God. The most important gift on this earth, and it is a gift imparted to every follower of the Lamb, is the ability to know the voice of God, to distinguish it from all other voices.

***"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of my hand."***

***John 10:27-28***

Books are coming off the press by the carload, teachings are being given – often almost in a whisper, that claim to show you how to hear the voice of the Lord, as if it were a skill to be developed. But the more you read those books and the more you expose yourself to those teachings, the more confused you will become: the more vulnerable you will be to every weird spirit that comes drifting down the road. Because you're making a science out of a faculty you already have. You're complicating something that must be kept simple.

***"My sheep hear my voice and I know them, and they follow me....."***

## **Hearing with The Heart**

How do I hear the voice of the Shepherd? With these ears? Sometimes I hear with these ears words that I know are coming straight from the lips of the Son of God, uttered perhaps by a friend or a stranger. I don't need to wait for a voice of thunder to waken these ears. They can hear, if my heart is right.

Do I hear with my mind? At times, a thought comes into my mind which is pure Christ, I know it came from him, but if I start playing games in my mind, asking questions and waiting for answers, I will soon get strange answers.

Much deeper than my ears or my mind, I hear the voice of the Shepherd with my heart, my will. If my heart is fixed on the Lamb of God in thanksgiving and worship and praise for his great kindness, for who he is, for his death on the cross, then somehow in any one of a million ways – in whatever way he chooses – Jesus makes me to know the next step.

If my heart is fixed on Jesus, I don't have to hear a voice telling me to forgive, I know that is his will. I don't have to hear a voice telling me to pay my bills and make certain wrongs right. Or to stop making a pig of myself at the table, or to be thoughtful of those people I have often taken for granted.

But if there is something I don't know which I need to know, some change I haven't understood that needs to be made, somehow the Shepherd will make me to know. I will hear his voice. And, it will almost never be an audible voice. Rarely will it be one of -those many voices that rise and fall in our minds. When he speaks, the Shepherd's voice will be as different from those "mental noises" as the voice of a gentle stillness differed from the wind, earthquake, and fire.



*I give you my heart. Deborah Nell*

### **The Idolatry of The Means**

The means by which the Shepherd speaks will continuously change, remaining a mystery, so that we can never develop a system of hearing the Lord like dialing the weather or conducting a séance.

So many believers start out following the Lord with great joy. Wisdom from heaven visits their minds; they understand the things of 'God; they minister; they help others to find the Lord. Then comes a testing time, a dry period, when they seem to experience confusion. They long for that clear-cut re-relationship they had before.

A voice is heard which claims to be the voice of the Lord. It promises blessing, asks some innocent act of obedience to itself. As they respond to this voice things seem to "click". The voice demands another act of obedience. Again the response seems to bring blessing. Then imperceptibly the demands this voice makes start becoming strange. The voice divides and becomes two. Then five. Now the believer is on a fast for some grandiose cause. Or locked in a room refusing to see people, or in the jungle trying to figure out what to do next, or flying to Jerusalem to be one of the two witnesses of Revelation, or simply part of some "prayer group" that operates more like a séance than the kingdom.

"How can such things happen?" we ask. "How can it be that people can start out in all sincerity, following Jesus, listening to his voice, practicing his mercy, and end up so far in left field? Doesn't the living God promise to instruct us and teach us in the way that we should go? Doesn't he promise to guide us with his eye? Doesn't Jesus assure us that if we ask our Father for bread we won't get a stone?"

How can it be that people who start out presumably hearing the voice of the Shepherd end up hearing a cacophony of voices that literally drives them out of their minds?

The same Jesus who promises to make his voice known to his sheep warns us to beware of false prophets who come to us in sheep's clothing, who claim to be fellow sheep following the same Shepherd listening to the Shepherd's voice, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves who devour and destroy. Jesus makes us responsible for knowing the difference between a false prophet and a true one. And the same Spirit who spoke through the Son of God and who has guided and directed the church down through twenty centuries also counsels us to test the spirits that speak to us, through men or in our heads or through the air itself. He makes us responsible for knowing the difference between the Spirit of God and spirits that purport to be of God but are from the Pit. And what do these false prophets and lying spirits do? Time and again they lead us into the trap where we are more taken up with hearing a voice than we are with doing the will of the Lord that we already know.

So instead of doing the will of God, which is mercy, instead of going forth and proclaiming the word which is Jesus crucified and risen, we sit around waiting for some spiritual voice to tell us what shirt to put on. People are being taught, "Don't get out of bed unless the Lord tells you to get up." "Don't shop at The Superstore unless the Lord shows you to." "Don't do anything until the Lord tells you." The Lord has already called them to rise up and follow him in the doing of the good and merciful will of God, to think with sanctified brains, to labor with sanctified hands, to speak words that reflect his grace. But instead, these troubled souls sit around waiting for some hollow voice to say, "Now, my child, get up." "Not the Superstore, my child, Farmer Jack's." And before long a voice indeed is heard that will even tell you what socks to put on. But is it the voice of God?

***Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are of God; for many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit which confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God.....***

***I John 4:1-2***

### **The Word Was Made Flesh**

What does it mean that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh?

It means that Jesus came into this real world of flesh and blood, won the victory in this realm of flesh and blood, and so he never leads you into a realm of sheer spirit – not in this life. When you start hearing spiritual voices that offer to lift you into spiritual heights – look out!

Jesus didn't call us to listen for voices. He has already made us to hear his voice, called us to follow him in the doing of the Father's gracious will. He has already told us exactly what God's will is:

***".... go and learn what this means,  
'I desire mercy and not sacrifice'...."***  
***Matthew 9:13***

Mercy..... Goodness.....Forgiveness..... God's peace.

And if we should have problems translating his mercy into day-by-day living, Jesus will help us. Through the Spirit he will make his specific will known in the voice of a gentle stillness as we faithfully do what lies in front of us.



*Do Kindness Hanna Varghese*

*"oh, but I don't know what Jesus wants me to do today!"*

What do you mean you don't know what Jesus wants you to do today?

You know that Jesus wants you to love God with all your soul, strength and mind.

You know that Jesus wants you to pray and not to faint, to trust the heavenly Father.

You know he wants you to forgive, to love your neighbor, to give to him who is in need, to humble yourself, to do good to those who give you a hard time, to proclaim the kingdom.



Your word is a Lamp to My Feet Signe Flink

To hear the Shepherd's voice is not to hear voices but to acknowledge that the words of God which have already come to us, through Jesus' gracious lips ... are true, by *believing them*, by *doing them*.

***"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of my hand."***

***John 10:27-28***

If your heart is drawn to the Jesus of the gospels, you will hear his voice and you will be known by him and you will follow him, and he will give to you eternal life and no one will snatch you out of his hand.

*Prayer- Dear Loving Shepherd, we desire to hear you, to be known by you and to live our lives safely in your hands. May we hear your gentle, loving voice calling us. Lead us to a place where our hearts are fixed on you, bowed in awe of your goodness, loving you with all that we have, and ready to follow. Shut our ears to any voice that misleads us from following your will. Tune our hearts to hear your still, small voice above all the other noise around us. Keep us practicing your will of mercy, goodness, and forgiveness... reflecting your grace, and proclaiming your Kingdom in both word and deed because we believe the words from your lips are truth and life.*

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THE LAMB  
WHO WAS SLAIN  
HAS BEGUN HIS REIGN

