Listening

Escuchar

February 12, 2023

Scripture Reader: Sandy Tuttle

(John 10:1-10 RSV)

Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber; but he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the gatekeeper opens; the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers. This figure Jesus used with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them. So Jesus again said to them, Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and robbers; but the sheep did not heed them. I am the door; if any one enters by me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.

(Juan 10:1-10 NVI)

En verdad, en verdad os digo: el que no entra por la puerta en el redil de las ovejas, sino que sube por otra parte, ese hombre es ladrón y salteador; pero el que entra por la puerta es el pastor de las ovejas. A él abre el portero; las ovejas oyen su voz, y él llama a sus propias ovejas por nombre y las saca. Cuando ha sacado todas las suyas, va delante de ellas, y las ovejas lo siguen, porque conocen su voz. Al extraño no seguirán, sino que huirán de él, porque no conocen la voz de los extraños. Jesús usó esta figura con ellos, pero ellos no entendían lo que les decía. Jesús les dijo otra vez: De cierto, de cierto os digo: Yo soy la puerta de las ovejas. Todos los que vinieron antes de mí son ladrones y salteadores; pero las ovejas no les hicieron caso. yo soy la puerta; si alguno entra por mí, será salvo, y entrará y saldrá y hallará pastos. El ladrón no viene sino para hurtar y matar y destruir; Yo vine para que tengan vida, y la tengan en abundancia.

**Good morning**!

Welcome to Lake Erie Church.

I’m Bill Isaacs, the blessed man who gets to lead this church with an amazing staff of pastors and leaders. Our mission is honorable and worthy—Loving God, Loving People.

Introduction:

We are taking these few weeks to explore what it means to **Experience God.**

**We’ve elevated our pursuit of God from just knowing him, singing about him to a deeper more meaningful relationship with our Heavenly Father.**

Last week we said **the example is like knowing ice cream exists and actually eating it** and we shared that we experience God through **His Power and Presence**; through **His Calling and Purpose** for our lives and through **our Community with other believers**. If you didn’t get to hear that message, go to our weekly podcast and you can listen to it for yourself.

Today I’m going to suggest to you that **we experience God through learning to listen to Him**. That by developing the habit of hearing God’s voice and interacting with Him we move into a much deeper experience with God. Does this mean that you are going to hear the voice of Charleston Heston in the Ten Commandments (cool that he was both the voice of Moses and God in the same movie, did you know that)?

No, I’m not suggesting that you are going to be frightened by hearing some audible voice speaking (although it is possible), rather I’m suggesting

The many ways God speaks:

* God speaks in a still small voice
* God speaks through mental impressions
* God speaks in dreams and visions
* God speaks through the Bible
* God speaks through songs and music
* God speaks through preaching/teaching like this
* God speaks through godly friends and people we trust
* God speaks life circumstances we go through
* God speaks through nature

The more important point to note is not so much **HOW** God speaks but **ARE YOU LISTENING**?

* Before we can love God with all our hearts and souls and strength, we must learn how to listen for Him
* Learning to hear God’s voice—his word and his whisper—is the single most important thing you will ever learn to do!

In the passage Sandy read, Jesus said those people who belong to Him would possess an ability to recognize the voice of God and have a readiness to follow him (more on this next week).

So we must learn how to recognize God’s voice and how to listen when He speaks. So how does He speak to me?

**God Speaks To Us Through His Word**

**Dios nos habla a través de su Palabra**

* This is the primary way that God speaks to Christians.
* We live in an age when people are increasingly measure truth experientially.
  + What began in the 60s counterculture “if it feels good do it,” is now “if it feels true, believe it.”
* The easiest way for you to hear God speak is to read your Bible.
* Two ways to read the Bible
  + Read the Bible with our heads to understand what is being said **objectively**.
    - What is this actually saying, what does it mean?
  + Read the Bible with our hearts in order to **experience God** in the pages.
    - What is God saying to me?

**God Speaks To Us Prophetically**

**Dios nos habla proféticamente**

* The word prophetically means “*to speak in a way that correctly tells what will happen in the future*”
* In the OT, God used prophets to tell the people what was going to happen.
* When someone claims to speak prophetically, how can we know if it is from God?

1. Is there clear direction or does it confuse you?
2. Is it something God has already been saying to you in other ways?
3. Does it align with God’s Word?
4. Have you prayed about what you were told?
5. Does it lead you closer to Jesus or to some act or decision that takes you further away from Jesus?

* God has not stopped speaking prophetically.
  + Paul at Ephesus

(Acts 20:22-23)

And now, behold, bound by the Spirit, I am on my way to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there, **except that the Holy Spirit solemnly testifies to me in every city, saying that chains and afflictions await me**.

(Hechos 20:22-23)

Y ahora, he aquí, atado por el Espíritu, voy camino a Jerusalén, sin saber qué me sucederá allí, excepto que el Espíritu Santo solemnemente me da testimonio en cada ciudad, diciendo que cadenas y aflicciones me esperan.

* + Young Samuel in the Temple
    - Was only 11 years old when God spoke to him.
    - Who is 11 years old here at LEC? (Mateo Llamas)
    - What if God is speaking to an 11 year old at LEC today—where is the Eli that can teach them how to respond? (we don’t even know their names!)

**God Speaks To Us Through The Life Of Jesus**

**Dios nos habla a través de la vida de Jesús**

* There are 3 distinct accounts of people who after the Resurrection encountered Jesus and did not know at the time who He was…
  + Mary at the tomb
  + Peter at the seashore
  + Two travelers on the Emmaus Road.
* The story opens up a model for how Jesus is constantly communicating with us…
  + **Conversationally** **Conversacionalmente** —as we invite Jesus to walk and talk with us, He does and we feel the freedom in prayer to share with him our deepest thoughts, fears and needs.
  + **Exegetically** **Exegéticamente** as we read His living Word, we see the principles and precepts of faith and life opened before us—His Word is alive and burns in our hearts. His promises raise our expectations.
  + **Sacramentally** **Sacramentalmente** in communion, we feel the weight of His cross and express our worship in gratitude and thanksgiving.
  + **Prophetically** **Proféticamente** He opens our eyes to the things happening around us and speaks to our readiness to serve him on our jobs, schools and daily life.
  + **Inwardly** **Interiormente** His presence (as we spoke last week) empowers us to know He never leaves us or forsakes us but is with us always.
* The purpose of hearing God is designed to bring me closer to Jesus.

Conclusion:

It is possible that you and I encounter Jesus from time to time mysteriously and don’t recognize Him?

* We are often distracted by our busy lives and preoccupations.

It’s interesting that children find it very easy to hear God. What happens when we grow up and our life experiences build layers of doubt, self-deception and disappointment. Over time we lose the wonder of God and we become desensitized to the whisper of God.

Hearing God is not a technique we learn but a grace we are given.

God’s voice is fresh and not historically tied to past experiences…just because that was how God spoke in the past does not mean that is how He is speaking now? We must keep our relationship to Him fresh every day so that our spirits are open and receptive His voice.

What are you supposed to do with a message like this?

1. Listen for the whisper of God in your spirit

2. Pick up your Bible and allow God to speak to you

3. Pray to discern God’s voice amidst all the noise in your life

God I’m a sinner

I'm sorry for my sins

I believe Jesus died for my sins

I believe Jesus will forgive my sins

I choose Jesus

Dios soy un pecador

lo siento por mis pecados

Creo que Jesús murió por mis pecados.

Creo que Jesús perdonará mis pecados.

elijo a jesus