

The 7th Sunday of Easter ~ Sunday, May 13, 2018

“Hearing God ~ How God Speaks Part 4”

1 Samuel 3:1-10

“Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the Lord before Eli. And word from the Lord was rare in those days, visions were infrequent. At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see, was lying down in his room; the lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was. Then the Lord called, ‘Samuel! Samuel!’ and he said, ‘Here I am!’” (1 Samuel 3:1)

When God is said to speak in the Bible, we can’t always tell whether His voice is _____ or “heard” by some other means.

God spoke to Samuel in such a way that he _____ heard his voice and thought it was _____ calling him.

Eli had never heard the _____ of the Lord himself; nor had God revealed Himself to people in this way for a long time. Yet, Eli had come to know God and was _____ of the Lord’s ways.

“Now the Lord came and stood there, calling as before, ‘Samuel! Samuel!’ And Samuel said, ‘Speak, for your servant is listening.’...” (1 Samuel 3:10)

We can’t put God in a box; nor should we be too selective about the _____ He uses to speak us. Instead, we need to be open for God to speak in whatever way He _____.

2 WAYS GOD SPEAKS TO US

#1. God speaks to us through _____.

Worship is the _____ act of the community of faith—it’s what we’re all about as Christian people. We were made for _____ with God, and our _____ will never be satisfied without it. The only antidote for this restless heart syndrom is _____ with God.

“The Lord is pleased with those who worship him and trust his love.” (Psalm 147:11)

True worship, as described in this story isn’t what we think it is. So often, we make worship about _____—our _____. However, worship isn’t about us—it’s all about _____. When we make worship about ourselves—it is _____!

Although the _____ of worship are important, they are not an _____

themselves. Given the wrong _____, these externals can not only hinder true worship, but can also _____ and destroy Christian communities.

“You hypocrites! Isaiah prophesied rightly about you when he said, ‘This people honours me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching human precepts as doctrines.’” (Matthew 15:7-10)

No matter what we think about worship—no matter what externals we employ—we need to make sure that we enter into it with the right _____. And the heart of worship is _____.

“...Give yourselves to God...surrender your whole being to him to be used for righteous purposes.” (Romans 6:13)

Worship is a lifelong _____ and love affair between us and God, as we _____ our lives to Him.

Surrender evokes the unpleasant images of admitting _____ in battle, forfeiting a game, or yielding to a stronger opponent; and is almost always exclusively used in a _____ context.

In our _____ world we’re taught to never quit trying, never give up, and never give in—so we don’t hear much about surrendering. If winning is everything, surrendering is _____. However, when we surrender, we enter into the _____ of worship. Surrendering is best demonstrated in _____, _____ with our Creator.

“So whatever you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.” (1 Corinthians 10:31)

There are no _____ for worship because worship is a function of the _____. If we do everything as if we’re doing it for Jesus, even the most _____ things can be an act of worship. It’s not the externals that matter when it comes to worship, but the _____—what’s in our heart.

When we focus on God and give Him our _____ attention and love, we’re better _____ to hear what He’s saying to us.

An important part of hearing God in worship is learning to be _____.

“...give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit” (1 Thessalonians 5:18-19)

Thankfulness keeps our ears, heart, and mind _____ to God's voice; no matter what's going on in our lives. In contrast, _____, whining, and complaining about our circumstances _____ the Holy Spirit.

Worship has the ability to take our eyes off our _____ or our problems, and put them onto _____.

Giving thanks is the _____ of God for us; and we need to _____ to worship every day.

**Are you living a life of worship or is it just something you do on Sunday?
How has God spoken to you through worship?**

#2. God speaks to us through _____.

Fasting is a _____ of intercession that carries the potential for _____ prayer and spiritual _____.

Fasting involves _____ from daily nourishment for a period of time. It's "starving" our bodies _____ in order to feed our _____. The essence of fasting is _____, in order to turn our hearts and thoughts to _____.

We can hear God's voice more clearly when we fast because we find in God _____ beyond food. And when prayer and fasting are combined _____ things can happen.

"When he had entered the house, his disciples asked him privately, 'Why could we not cast it out?' He said to them, 'This kind can come out only through prayer and fasting.'" (Mark 9:28-29)

Jesus was challenging His disciples and us to _____ a life of prayer and fasting so that their faith remained _____. In doing so, He's identifying a very important principle: Where there is _____ faith, there is _____ prayer. Where there is _____ prayer and fasting, founded on true commitment to God and His Word, there is _____ faith.

"When you fast..." (Matthew 6:16)

Jesus knew that fasting would open up a whole new realm of _____ for believers and make it _____ for them to hear the voice of the Holy Spirit.

In addition to increasing our capacity to _____ from the Lord, fasting has a way of _____ all the background noises and distractions around

us, so we can better _____ on God and _____ His voice.

The most _____ thing for us to do everyday is to eat. However, when we give up eating, we deliberately turn away from the _____ to the _____; from the natural to the _____. Throughout the Scriptures, God attaches tremendous _____ to fasting, as the appointed way for His people to humble themselves before Him; and the Bible is filled with examples of godly men and women receiving _____ from the Lord as a result of fasting.

Fasting brings _____ and _____ to the Christian life. It's God's appointed way to bring our carnal nature into _____. Our bodies make a wonderful _____, but a terrible _____. If we want to be _____ in our Christian walk, we need to ensure that our body doesn't dictate or _____ us. Instead, we need to be controlled by God's plan for our lives.

Although I believe we're all called to fast at certain times, we need to avoid a _____ approach. God gives _____ for some individuals to fast for longer periods of time, and others for shorter times.

Like any _____, our fasting muscle doesn't grow overnight—we need to _____ it over time.

"And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you." (Matthew 6:16-18)

What has been your experience of prayer and fasting?

What might you need to give up in order to hear God's voice more clearly?

The Bible is the _____ by which we judge everything else in our life. It's the standard we use to ensure that what we're hearing is in line with God's perfect _____. God's written word never changes—we can trust it as the final _____ in all things—and we need to reject anything that _____ the written Bible.

Do you long to hear God's voice?

Have you heard Him speaking to you this morning?

What are you going to do about it?

**"Today, if you hear God's voice, do not harden your hearts..."
(Hebrews 3:15)**