**Pastor Tim’s Message Notes from 8-16-2020 – Can You Hear Me Now?**

It was Monday evening about 9’oclock when I walked out of our kitchen and into our living room. My daughter Leah had a few friends over for a sleepover to celebrate her birthday. And we were all gathered in the kitchen. It was getting a little crowded and loud with 7 girls and Kara and I in there, so I walked into the next room and suddenly heard a sound that I had been wanting to hear for several days. I wasn’t sure if it was her at first, because I thought one of the girls may have had a cat sound come from one of their electronic devices.

As I shared last Sunday, Calvina had not been home for several days. I quickly told Kara and what I thought I heard and she hurried out the door with me close behind her. And then I heard her say “She’s back!”

And for the rest of that day, as fun as the birthday party has been, we just couldn’t stop smiling after a part of our family returned home.

Now Calvina has kind of a distinctive meow. But hearing and responding to her voice led to great joy and celebration.

Brothers and Sisters, as excited as I was to share this news with you today, it also reminded me of one of the key foundations of God’s kingdom – which is all about hearing.

So far we have looked at several foundations of God’s kingdom. Some of these foundations are **being grounded in the goodness of God, of Christ being our daily bread and the One who sustains us, of allowing God’s Word to transform our thinking to think from the mind of Christ, and of the church truly living as a spiritual family.**

Each of these foundations is critically important if the kingdom of God is to grow within us like a mustard seed can grow so big.

Today’s foundation in God’s kingdom is all about listening. I believe that the Lord is constantly speaking to us in all different ways. The key is learning to hear his voice and respond in faith.

Jesus said many times, he who has ears to hear, let them hear. Now how many of you know that you can hear with perfect hearing and yet not have ears to hear?

Having ears to hear speaks of a condition of the heart.

\*Before we dive into a few ways that we can hear from God, I would like to speak briefly about something can block or hinder our hearing from God – which is having an idol in our heart.

**Psalm 115 states “why do the nations say, ‘Where is their God?” Our God is in heaven; He does whatever pleases Him. But their idols are silver and gold, made by human hands. They have mouths, but cannot speak, eyes, but cannot see. They have ears, but cannot hear, noses, but cannot smell. They have hands, but cannot feel, feet, but cannot walk, nor can they utter a sound with their throats. Those who make them will be like them, and so will all who trust in them.**

People like gods that they can try to control or manipulate for their purposes, rather than living in submission to a God whom they cannot control.

Through history and still in many places today, people make and buy physical idols and call them a god. These idols have a mouth and ears and eyes and hands, but they are lifeless. They do not speak. They cannot hear. They’re just statues. But the psalmist writes, who make them or trust in them will be like them.

What does that mean? It means that they will be unable to hear. It means that they will not be able to easily hear the truth, because their ears are being closed. They are becoming like their idols.

But the reality friends, is that anything that people put above God in their lives becomes an idol. People may not call it a god, but the effects are the same. ONLY OUR TRIUNE GOD IS MEANT TO HAVE SUPREMECY IN PEOPLE’S LIVES.

And the effects of putting anything before God, whether a job or a relationship or a show or whatever, it makes it harder to hear from God and to grow in your relationship with God.

I remember back in college I got into a television show called Survivor. I think they still may be making that today.

Even though I was a Christian then, it slowly became an idol for me, in that I felt like I needed to watch every episode and I taped the shows. I could re-watch them and I brought them to my grandparents home to watch a few seasons of the show there as well. So I could justify my actions in my own mind.

But not only was the show not really morally inspiring, it became an addiction. It just felt so good to eventually throw away several seasons of those tapes. I probably couldn’t watch them now anyway, since VCR’s are not around so much anymore.

Perhaps that story resonates with some of you in your journey with the Lord.

So as we think about hearing the Lord and all the ways that the Lord can speak to us, one of the best places to start is Psalm 19.

Let us hear God’s Word today through this psalm that the Lord inspired King David to write.

Ps. 19

**1The heavens declare the glory of God;
    the skies proclaim the work of his hands.
2Day after day they pour forth speech;
    night after night they reveal knowledge.
3They have no speech, they use no words;
    no sound is heard from them.
4Yet their voice[**[**b**](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+19&version=NIV#fen-NIV-14173b)**] goes out into all the earth,
    their words to the ends of the world.
 In the heavens God has pitched a tent for the sun.
5It is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber,
    like a champion rejoicing to run his course.
6It rises at one end of the heavens
    and makes its circuit to the other;
    nothing is deprived of its warmth.**

**7The law of the Lord is perfect,
    refreshing the soul.
 The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy,
    making wise the simple.
8The precepts of the Lord are right,
    giving joy to the heart.
 The commands of the Lord are radiant,
    giving light to the eyes.
9The fear of the Lord is pure,
    enduring forever.
 The decrees of the Lord are firm,
    and all of them are righteous.**

**10They are more precious than gold,
    than much pure gold;
 they are sweeter than honey,
    than honey from the honeycomb.
11By them your servant is warned;
    in keeping them there is great reward.
12But who can discern their own errors?
    Forgive my hidden faults.
13Keep your servant also from willful sins;
    may they not rule over me.
 Then I will be blameless,
    innocent of great transgression.**

**14May these words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart
    be pleasing in your sight,
    Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer.**

I think that it is helpful to break this psalm down into 3 parts. Each of these parts holds keys to hearing God’s voice.

Jesus said that ‘**My sheep hear my voice**.’ You and I are called to be sheep. God expects us to hear His voice. He is speaking to everyone, but we need to remove any spiritual earwax and turn ourselves to the different frequencies of His voice, so to speak.

One of the ways that the Lord is speaking is described in verses 1-6.

God is speaking through his creation, through his words. The heavens declare the glory of God, the skies proclaim of the work of his hands.

Every rainbow that we see is God offering a reminder that He will not flood the earth again.

Even though this form of speaking from God is rarely audible, when we have ears to hear, this form of speaking from God should release awe within us.

As we behold the mountains and the ocean and the stars, as we consider the enormous diversity of plant and animal life – we should stand in awe of God.

The psalmist writes elsewhere, **“What is a human being that you are mindful of them?”**

And to think that you and I are the pinnacle of His creation – more beautiful to Him than the mountains or the ocean and over all that He has made.

God is speaking to us of His nature through His works. We see His beauty, His power, His sense of order and purpose. \*The key is to consider God as we look around us.

And our response hearing Him in these ways should cause us to worship Him and to thank Him for who He is.

This portion of David’s psalm reminds me that God not only speaks through His direct works, but also through His indirect works. I believe that God can choose to speak through books or movies or sporting events or through billboards.

In fact, I believe that every story told is in some way an echo of God’s story. Some echoes are very loud, such as the Chronicles of Narnia. That is why I am offering a small group on this book series. Or it may be a very faint echo and something that has been so twisted that it is certainly not worth viewing or reading.

And the Lord delights when people have ears to hear his voice through all different ways.

In the second part of this psalm, David highlights how God speaks through the written Word of God, particularly the law of the Lord. All of God’s written word is inspired and if we are reading or hearing it with a heart that is eager to receive God’s word, He will speak to us. God’s Word is sweeter than honey and more precious than pure gold.

When people delight in God’s written Word and live as it’s their most valuable possession, their ears are more able to hear from God. God’s word is sweeter than honey and more precious than pure gold. When our heart is positioned in this way, our ears will be opened to hear from Him much more clearly as we read His word.

He will teach of Himself and who are by His grace. And He will cause us to ponder a passage and allow it to get within our heart.

The more that we have ears to hear God’s written word, the more that His Word gets into our heart.

And third, David highlights hearing God through our personal prayer life. In the psalm, David invites the Lord to search his heart and to forgive any hidden sins.

Basically, David is saying, I probably have a blind spot or a growth area in my life and I am not aware of, but You are Lord. So please forgive me and help me to hear you clearly.

David connects the sun with the Lord in the poem. As nothing can be hidden from the heat of the sun, so nothing goes unknown to the Lord. The Lord knows us better than we know ourselves. David understood this.

David didn’t want any interference in his hearing of God. He didn’t want any fuzzy reception.

And this psalm reminds us that the Lord invites us to be speak with him.

You may recall the commercial that was popular a few years back, where this man walks around and keeps saying “Can You Hear Me Now? Can You Hear Me Now?”

And then sometimes you hear him say “Good.” In other words, he could be heard.

I believe that in some ways this can be another picture of God. Our Triune God is constantly speaking to us in all different languages, in all different ways. But as our spiritual ears are tuned to Him through His Words and through His Word and through prioritizing prayer, we can picture God saying “Good. Good. Good.”

His sheep hear his voice. He expects us to hear from Him.

Finally, remember that sometimes He speaks through His presence. There are times that the highest form of communication is wordless. So please know that as you recognize His presence with you and His love for you, that is rich and beautiful communication as well.

So sisters and brothers, may we live every day to be far more excited to hear the Lord’s voice than we were excited to hear Calvina’s voice on Monday evening.

The Lord loves you and He wants more than anything for you, to know Him better. May we order our lives to prioritize this as well and as we do, may the kingdom of God be established in us more than ever before.

<https://biblehub.com/psalms/115-8.htm>

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