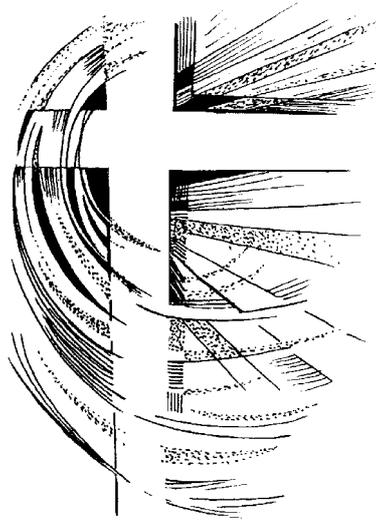


THE VOICE OF GOD



A brief exploration of the ways in which God speaks to us.
The voice of the Lord is powerful. (*Psalm 29.4*)

- **God is not silent. He communicates with us. When we listen we hear His words.**
- **He has spoken throughout the centuries** – *“In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways”* (Heb 1:1)
- **He speaks to us in Christ.** *“The **word** became flesh and made His dwelling among us”* (Jn 1:14)
- **When God speaks to us we recognise His voice.** *Jesus says “I am the good shepherd”* (Jn 10:14) and *“my sheep will **listen to my voice**”*. (Jn 10:27)
- **The words spoken by God are our spiritual food.** Jesus (Matt 4:4) quotes scripture to confirm this. *“Man does not live by bread alone but on every **word** that comes from the mouth of the Lord”*. (Deut 8:3)
- **Jesus takes the initiative in coming to us and speaks to us** – *“Here I stand knocking at the door; if anyone **hears** my voice and opens the door, I will come in and sit down with him and he with me.”* (Rev 3:20,21)
- **Jesus, the Son, speaks for God the Father** – *“these **words** you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me”* (Jn 14:24)
- **Jesus declared that His words of life will remain for ever** – *“Heaven and earth will pass away but my words will never pass away”* (Matt 24:35)
- **The words of God are for His own people.** *“Come my children, **listen to me**”*. (Ps 34:11) Those who formed His church heard His voice. Ananias told Paul after his conversion experience on the road to Damascus – *“The God of our Fathers has chosen you to know His will and to see the Righteous One **and to hear words from His mouth**”* (Acts 22:14) *“He who has an ear, let him **hear** what the spirit says to the churches”* (Rev 2:7)
- **In our praying we need to give God the opportunity to speak to us.** In a world of distraction, noise and confusion, the Lord wants us to wait upon Him – *“**Listen, listen to me**” “give ear and come to me. **Hear me** that your soul may live”* (Is 55:2,3)
- **God has given us the freedom to ignore Him.** We may choose to dismiss Him from our lives and not listen to the one who made and loves us. The early church was aware of this – *“They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths”* (2 Tim 4:4)

- **The voice of God is heard through the fierce words of the prophets.** Jeremiah spoke to people with stubborn and rebellious hearts – *“Hear this, you foolish and senseless people, who have eyes but do not see, who have ears but do not hear”* (Jer 5:21) The Psalmist sadly observes *“they have ears but cannot hear”* (Ps 115:6) Significantly the reason for this is that they had idols of silver and gold made by the hands of men. Idolatry and love of wealth prevent us from hearing God.
- **God speaks to us in many different ways and in many places.** He spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai in a **thunderous voice**. He spoke to Elijah in a **still small voice**. He spoke to Samuel in the temple at **night**. He is constantly speaking to us and He calls us to listen to Him with our whole being.

Hearing God Speaking

- **Christ's invitation**

Jesus says *“He who has ears, let him hear”* (Mat 11:15). He speaks to us in our praying and meditation, through scripture, through the words of others and through what we see and feel. He speaks to us through events and through history. He speaks in a way we can understand.

- **No distraction**

The condition of prayer is that we should be able to communicate with God without hindrance and distraction. This is why in Matthew 6.6 we read *“when you pray enter into your room, close the door and pray to your Father who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.”*

- **Quietness and His Peace**

“Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you, not as the world gives, give I to you.” (Jn 14:27)

“Be still and know that I am God” - Psalm 46:10

“He leads me beside the still waters” - Psalm 23:2

“You, Lord, give perfect peace to those who keep their purpose firm and put their trust in you” (Is 26:3)

“I will hear what God the Lord will speak; for he will speak peace to his people” (Ps 85:8)

"Earth and sky hear my words, listen closely to what I say. My teaching will fall like drops of rain and form on the earth like dew. My words will fall like showers on young plants, like gentle rain on tender grass" (Deut. 32.1-3)

● **Alone with Him**

It is this aloneness with God, which we see in the life of Jesus - *"in the morning rising up a great while before day, he went out and departed into a solitary place and then prayed"*. (Mark 1:35). It is important that we should recognize the moment when Jesus was led to pray and also the location.

● **Praying in the Spirit**

We pray in the power of the Holy Spirit. Our desires are brought to us by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit lays things on our hearts in prayer. It is the prayer of the one who has a right relationship with God, which is powerful. A righteous person receives the power and the love of Jesus Christ because of the presence of the Holy Spirit in his life. This is why we may confidently assert *"the prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective"* (James 5:16). When we pray in the power of the Holy Spirit we are given a new confidence *"and this is the confidence we have in him that if we ask anything according to his will **he hears us**"*. (1 Jn 5:14).

"Silence is the simple stillness of the individual under the Word of God ... We are silent at the beginning of the day because God should have the first word, and we are silent before going to sleep because the last word also belongs to God." ***Dietrich Bonhoeffer***

"You must turn to him, the Lord, with all your heart.....if your soul is to find rest. Christ is ready to come to you, with what kindness in his glance! But you must make room, deep in your heart, to entertain him as he deserves. Where he finds someone whose thoughts go deep, he is a frequent visitor; such pleasant converse, such welcome words of comfort, such deep repose, such intimate friendship, are well-nigh past belief." ***Thomas a Kempis***.