

Sermon Notes
March 03, 2024
Hearing God
Week 1

- Are you a good listener?
- Would people say that you really hear them when they come to you?
- Do you honestly care about hearing what others say to you?
- How much of what you hear do you actually hear?
- What percentage of what people say to you do you capture, remember or act on?
- What is an acceptable percentage of hearing in your relationships?
- What is a successful amount of hearing in your different relationships?
- How long would your relationships last if people heard you as much as you heard them?
- How much does your listening demonstrate how much you care about your relationships?
- What percentage of ignoring, not acting on or forgetting what you hear is acceptable in your different relationships? (Spouse, Dating Relationship, Parents, Kids, Siblings, Coworker, Boss, Best Friend, Acquaintance, Strangers)
- Do you seek out hearing God's voice as much as you do with people?
- If a stranger asked you about hearing God, what would you say?

It's funny to ask so many questions about something that seems so basic. You might be tempted to discard or gloss over these questions as silly or unimportant, but if you stop to think about how fundamental the act of hearing is, we might find that there are few things as important to understand.

This week we start a sermon series to discover that hearing God's voice is perhaps the most foundational lesson throughout the entire Biblical narrative. If God is a relational god, how do Him people hear Him? How does God teach Him people to hear Him voice?

We are going to spend 8 weeks learning how hearing God is not an added perk, a life hack or even a self-contained activity reserved for specific times in the day. Instead we'll present a biblical worldview where hearing God's voice becomes essential and life-giving to those who belong to God. Hearing God is a posture that is birthed out of relationship because... You Listen To Those You Love. This is the big idea of our whole sermon series. Christians are people who long to hear God because we listen to who we love. How can we be called Him if we never learn or long to hear from Him?

This series will take a look at how central hearing God's voice is throughout the biblical narrative. Hearing God is not just a task to complete and then move on from. Hearing God's voice includes our whole heart and we'll see what the Bible says about it.

Our Big Idea→ You Listen To Those You Love.

Our Definition→ Hearing God is...

- Tuning our Attention towards God so that we are ready at all times to Capture, Remember and Act on what God is saying.

- Attention
 - A satellite is useless until some type of receiver is linked to it. No message is ever received until a receiver is positioned to receive it. We will never hear God if we don't learn that we need to turn our attention towards Him. If we want to hear what God is saying, we need to give him our sincere attention.
- Capture
 - How does God speak to us? If God talks, how does He do that? How does the Bible describe Him speaking and how do I know that I'm supposed to be receiving? How can I capture what God is saying? If God is so big, how does he speak with such little creatures? How do I know it's Him?
- Remember
 - If we are constantly forgetting what someone says,
 - How does the relationship stay fresh over time?
 - How are we demonstrating love for the relationship?
 - If we forget what God has promised, how do we live out what He said? If God defines the worldview of a believer, how do we know how to live out this different New Human identity?
- Act
 - How long does a relationship stay healthy and loving if there is never action? Our relationship to God is not like a normal human to human relationship. How is it possible to have a real relationship with God if we never hear what he is saying in order to obey Him? How much of what God says to us can we not act on?

After I shared our definition I moved on and made the first claim of the series...

- We can hear God because He is a God who Speaks & Hears.
 - If the God of the Bible, Yahweh, was an agnostic God and did not speak, we could not claim to hear him. The Bible presents us with a God who speaks and who speaks in ways we can hear.

A God who Speaks

- We see Him speaking in the act of Creation
 - Everything in creation originally comes into existence through God's ability to speak.
 - Genesis 1:1-4
 - 1 In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. 2 The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.3 **And God said**, "Let there be light," and there was light. 4 And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness.
 - Everything is made through God speaking it into existence.

- His spoken words produce all there is...
 - Day 1 God speaks light and then it exists.
 - Day 2 God speaks and the sky is made.
 - Day 3 God speaks and dry land is made.
 - Day 4 God speaks and the Sun, Moon and Stars are made to make light.
 - Day 5 God speaks and Birds and Fish come into existence to fill the new sky.
 - Day 6 God speaks and Land Animals & Adam are made to fill the new land.
 - God speaks, and in His speaking things come into existence. We can trust that He can speak to us because His speaking is powerful. His voice can gap the long distance between us and Him.
- Another reason why we can trust God to speak to us is because in Genesis 1-4 we see that God is able to speak to every “character” in the story.
 - God Speaks to the Void/Nothingness and it is able to hear Him.
 - Before Creation there was nothing but God. God spoke to the nothingness and out of nothingness, God made everything with his Words.
 - God can speak with us because His words ordered all the nothingness.
 - God speaks to Creation Itself and it is able to hear Him.
 - When nothingness made way, He begins to tell his newly formed creation what to do and everything that He speaks into being fills the right place it’s supposed to be in. On day 1 He speaks light into existence and then on day 4 He creates the light itself to go into place.
 - God can speak with us because His words are powerful enough to create everything we know.
 - God speaks with Himself and He is able to hear Himself (weird to think about I know).
 - When He decided to make Adam, He speaks to His Trinity. Genesis 1:26-27- Let **us** make man in our image, after **our** likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth. God is always in perfect unity within Himself. Father, Son and Holy Spirit communicating with each other.
 - God can speak with us because He speaks with Himself.
 - God speaks with Adam & Eve both before and after the Fall and they are able to hear Him.
 - God blesses them.
 - God Gives them their boundaries in Genesis 2:16- And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, 17 but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”

- Then after they sin God is still able to communicate with them. In Genesis 3:9 He asks them, “Where are you?” and though they have sinned they are still able to hear His voice.
 - God also gives them their punishment in Genesis 3:16-24.
 - God can speak with us because He could speak with Adam & Eve.
- God speaks with the Serpent and he is able to hear Him.
 - In Genesis 3:14-15 he curses the deceiver. (Interesting and foundational that Satan caused Adam and Eve to sin by challenging what God had said to them. He makes them question God’s words).
 - God can speak with us because He spoke with our Enemy.
- The point of this whole section is this: We can trust God to speak because He is a God who demonstrates His ability and effectiveness to do so. He is a speaking God! He is not unwilling or unable to speak. Yahweh is a God who talks!

A God Who Hears Us

- Here are passages throughout the Old Testament. Throughout all the different stages in Israel’s history people became convinced that Yahweh heard them when they spoke to Him.
 - Adam & Eve Speaks directly with God.
 - Genesis 30:17- And **God listened to Leah**, and she conceived and bore Jacob a fifth son.
 - Exodus 2:23-24- 23 During those many days the king of Egypt died, and the people of Israel groaned because of their slavery and cried out for help. Their cry for rescue from slavery came up to God. 24 And **God heard their groaning**,...
 - Numbers 11:1- And the people complained in the hearing of the LORD about their misfortunes, **and when the LORD heard it**, his anger was kindled, and the fire of the LORD burned among them and consumed some outlying parts of the camp.
 - 2 Samuel 22:7- In my distress I called upon the LORD; to my God I called. From his temple **he heard my voice**, and my cry came to his ears.
 - Psalm 34:15- The eyes of the LORD are toward the righteous and **his ears toward their cry**.
 - Psalm 66:19- But **truly God has listened**; he has attended to the voice of my prayer.
 - Ezra 8:23- So we fasted and implored our God for this, and **he listened to our entreaty**.
 - Isaiah 65:24- Before they call I will answer; while they are yet speaking **I will hear**.
- God doesn’t just care about speaking because He is perfect in relationship. He is perfect in speaking and He is perfect in hearing because **You Listen To Those You Love**.
 - There has never been a moment where God has not heard you. It might seem as though that has not been the case. You might have had experiences where you prayed to Him in excruciating times and yet those times continued. I pray that in this series we begin to process those times so that we can learn where He was in those moments and what He was doing. God hears us because He loves us.

Reasons Why We May Not Hear Him

- Sometimes He chooses Silence.
 - In God's wisdom, He knows when it is time for Him to be silent. Silence in God's hand is a life-giving tool in our development (though it drives us crazy when we're in those seasons). He is not silent all the time but we cannot ignore that at times He chooses silence.
- Inexperience
 - Like Samuel, we first need to learn that He speaks. You might not hear God because you've never been taught that you can or that you should be hearing Him. Let me start this series by saying that you can hear Him and it's the best thing you could ever be doing. There is no formula to hearing God. He speaks according to His timing and wisdom. But hearing Him is normal.
- Expectation
 - You might not hear God speaking to you because you've never been told that it should be normal for Christians to hear Him. Hearing God's voice is always special and divine but it should also be normal in our Christian walk.
- Sin
 - You might not hear God speaking to you because Sin might have you trapped. Like 1 Samuel 3, Eli was going blind at the end of his life and his blindness was a physical representation of what his sin was doing in his heart. Sin blinds us. Keeps us inwardly focused/trapped and the confession of sin is often the first thing to do in order to hear God's voice. Luckily, if you know you need to confess sin you can do it immediately. Confess your sin to God (He already knows and is gracious to forgive us → 1 John 1:9) and then call a trusted brother or sister in Christ and confess so that there is no blockage.
- Unwillingness
 - Whether through stubbornness or fear, you might not hear God speaking because you are unwilling to. Each of us knows whether or not we are truly willing to do what God says is best. And if we are not, how do we expect the God of the Universe to freely speak to you? Unwillingness is a strong reason why we don't hear God and it is my hope that throughout this series you learn that there is A- no legitimate reason to not hear what God has to say and B- when God speaks to His people He is always loving. He might be saying a hard thing but in the end love is the motivation for all He does.

Application

- Here is an exercise to train yourself to be attentive to God throughout your day.
 - Everytime you enter a new room, I really mean EVERY TIME, say to yourself...
 - God are you saying anything to me in here?
 - God do you have anything for me to do in this room?

- This helps you tune your attention to Him in our most basic routine. You go into a new room, you turn your attention to what He may be doing in that room.

The Tentative Sermon Series Master Plan

1. A God Who Speaks & Hears, A Creation that Speaks & Hears
 - a. We begin by making the claim that humanity can hear God because He is a God who both Speaks to us and Hears us. We hear Him because He makes it possible.
2. The Template: Abraham
 - a. I believe that the most consistent lesson to learn about Abraham's story is that God uses Abraham to teach us the template of hearing God's voice.
3. To Hear is to Obey
 - a. In the Old Testament there is only one word for Hearing & Obeying. Do you hear God if you are not obeying Him? Can you obey Him without hearing Him?
4. Yahweh, The Only God Who Hears
 - a. In the Old Testament God is always challenging Israel's idols and one of His most consistent criticisms is that He is the only God who can hear our prayers. God is the only God who hears.
5. Jesus, The Word That Restores Our Hearing
 - a. The Logos (word of God) becomes human and we now see what that word does in the world. Jesus is the one who restores our ability to hear God's voice and gives us back our closeness to God.
6. Jesus, The Shepherd To Listen To
 - a. Jesus calls Himself the Good Shepherd and says that His sheep know His voice. Are we His if we don't know what he sounds like?
7. Jesus' New Humanity, Saved Through Hearing
 - a. We'll explore the unique activity of becoming saved through hearing Jesus' Gospel. How is it that hearing the story of Jesus produces such an amazing outcome?
8. Jesus' New Humanity, Unified Through Hearing
 - a. We'll explore how unity in humanity is preserved in the Church through hearing God and hearing one another. We have a special participation in creation that comes through hearing God & one another.