

Tradition or Truth? (Part 5)

Our traditions have often led us to listen to the voice of man and not the voice of God. In fact, the Hebrew word often translated "tradition" means "the prescriptions of man" and leans more toward religious education than spiritual revelation. (Think "second-hand" versus "first-hand" faith - see the past 3 or 4 newsletters for the consequences of such a grave error!)

When are we most likely to hear Truth? To perceive the voice of God and receive direct communication from Him (through the means and modes He chooses... scriptures, others, phenomena, our own human spirits)? Let's start by restating the obvious: We are most likely to hear God when we make a choice to listen! (I Sam 3:10; Hab 2:1) Because ours is a union of lovers - a oneness of love - the freedom to choose to listen, or not, is inherent. We are to freely "invite Him in" in every life event (Lk 24:29) -lest He remain a "stranger" to us. Into every conflict, joy, surprise, routine moment we "open wide our mouth" so He may fill it (Ps 81:10).

Secondly, those daring to believe God is always loving them are sensitively tuned to His voice. We readily listen for and to those we believe always have our best interest in mind (Deut 6:24; I Jo 4:8,19). I don't know a quicker way to grow dull of hearing than to "leave our first love" (Rev 2:4) - God's perfect love for us! Doubt the passionate love of God for us and become vulnerable to the lie that we have to take care of ourselves - and the only voice we are likely to hear is the devil's.

Thirdly, we are most likely to hear God when we listen with a single heart, a single mind (Matt 6:22-23; Ja 1:7-8). He is not only Love, He is also Lord (Acts 2:36). We cannot push God to the margins, stand Him on the periphery of our lives, make His voice one of many options and expect to have a keenness of hearing. When we present ourselves in a non-selective readiness to God to hear and obey - "whatever He says do it" (Jo 2:5) - we are confessing "You are Lord" and step out of a mere enchantment with the idea of hearing God and step into the "obedience of faith" (Ro 1:5; 16:26) where all the "action" is! Objective truth calls for a subjective response.

And finally, we are best prepared to hear God when we intend to be used by God for His purposes (Is 6:8; II Cor 12:15). When we want to hear God for our own purposes - to impress or for success - we will soon loose our hearing! Revelation is for lovers - they can be trusted with secrets and will not use them for self-serving purposes. When we are ready to take what God says and put it in the service of others we are fine-tuning our capacity to hear God and honor Him with what He graces to us. When we accept the sacramental nature of our new creationness in Christ it is amazing how much better we are able to hear!

How do we know for sure it is God? We don't! That's why we call it faith. We won't know until we choose to respond. But, in the next storm of life, you'll find out! (See Matt 7:24-27)

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 **GREETINGS** 

One of the “perks” of my job is to see with my own eyes the living, present tense reality of Psalm 84:1, “How lovely are your dwelling places, O Lord!” From Texas to Kentucky, from New York to North Carolina, and all the places in between, the uniqueness and the diversity of the Body of Christ is, indeed, amazing!

The church, of all places, must be the proclamation and the guardian of that which is personal and free. We are not a confirmative but rather a transformative community. None of us pressured to be like the other, yet each of us empowered by the same Source. Accepting one another as God in Christ has accepted us without condoning what is inconsistent with the Nature we share in common.

Easier said than done? Perhaps. But, an “on earth as it is in heaven” community is possible when the One seated on the throne of heaven sits at the seat of our hearts on earth. So let’s not give up. Let’s not give up on God, give up on ourselves, give up on one another. We share a life in common that is far from common!

See through with the eyes of love, speak to the new man with the voice of faith, walk alongside the dis-spirited in the spirit of hope - and join God in calling His lovely dwelling places into their own. (Ro 8:19)

July

7,9,23 CCF
11 Alachua Study
28-30 Waldorf, MD (301-751-4408)

AUGUST

8 Alachua Study
11-13 Fruitland Park, FL (352-431-3935)
22 Land Harbor, NC (828-291-0657)


SEPTEMBER


24-30 Glenwood Springs, CO

OCTOBER


6-8 Binghamton, NY
20-22 Hardin, KY (270-437-4172)

 **PRAISE and PRAYER** 

 Thanks for the body of Christ

 Thanks for ears to hear

 To see each other as God sees us

 To boldly speak to the “new man” in others