

This week I was reading and meditating on the subject of How God speaks to us:

Some of the ways God Speaks to us:

1. He speaks to us through His Written word – The Logos

John Wycliffe said: "The Bible is God's voice speaking to us, just as truly as if we heard it audibly"

"The Word of God well understood and religiously obeyed is the shortest route to spiritual maturity. And we must not select a few favorite passages to the exclusion of others. Nothing less than a whole Bible can make a whole Christian." - **A. W. Tozer**

Timothy said this about the Bible: 1 Timothy 3:16-17

"All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work"

Now a legitimate question is: How did God speak to people before there was a written word?

2. God speaks to people: Rhema - In the moment - A living Word

Spoken Word: A word from God...

There are thousands of references in History of God speaking to people: in their hearts and in their minds, in their dreams, in visions...

God Spoke to Adam and Eve, to the prophets and the Apostles, God spoke to Moses as a man speaks to His friend, and God speaks to all of us...even those who don't believe in Him

God speaks to people?: How does that work?

Ah Ha moments, illuminated thoughts

Ideas, Impulses, Intuition: I just knew that God was telling me!

God still speaks to people in this way

3. God speaks to us through other people: Sermons: Sermons, Teaching, Exhortations, Words of Encouragement, Rebukes, Kindnesses

4. God speaks to us through circumstances:

Not just bad circumstances but also good ones

Romans 2:4 God's kindness is intended to lead you to repentance?

5. God speaks to us through answered prayer

This was a big one in my life

I prayed, God answered and "I knew"

God, if you are there! Help me...

6. God speaks through the testimony of believers

Countless numbers have come to believe through the testimony of believers

This is how the gospel spread throughout the known world in the time of Jesus

And during the many revivals around the world

7. God speaks to us through this thing called “A conscience”

We all have one of those, if we are willing to listen to it

8. God speaks to those who will set themselves apart and listen

But my sermon today is not about whether or not God is speaking and not even whether or not we are hearing -- It's about something more challenging

It's about OBEDIENCE

I want to shoot high this morning
I don't to just inspire us to obey
I want to inspire us to LOVE TO OBEY

Look at what Jesus says about Obedience

John 14:15, 21-24

- 15 “If you love me, you will obey what I command . . .
- 21 Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him.”
- 22 Then Judas (not Judas Iscariot) said, “But, Lord, why do you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world?”
- 23 Jesus replied, “If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.
- 24 He who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me.” (NIV)

Why will you show yourself to us and not to the world? Answer?

Because you love me And you are willing to obey my teaching

And Your reward? Is Intimacy with Me and My Father

The true test of Discipleship is obedience

The true test that we have embraced the Lordship of Jesus in our lives is: Obedience

If you love me, you will obey me?

If you love me: It won't be difficult for you to obey me
You'll want to obey me because you'll love me and trust me
You'll know that what I say is best for you
You'll recognize that obeying my word is the pathway to an abundant life

Now I have been around long enough to know that we have a problem with this word:
OBEDIENCE - We hated it from the time we were 2 years old

ILLUSTRATION:

There's an upside down Bowl on the table and we say:
Now kids! I will be gone for a while
You can eat anything you want
But I forbid you to look under this bowl

Don't you hate these kinds of tests?

Please say "No" to that question!

Please Say "I'm ready" Say "I love it when my obedience is tested!"
Because my obedience becomes stronger!

AN INTERESTING THING IS SAID IN THE BIBLE ABOUT OBEYING YOUR PARENTS

Ephesians 6:1-3

- 1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.
- 2 "Honor your father and mother"—which is the first commandment with a promise—
- 3 "so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth."

The first commandment with a promise?

How many kids have you ever known that have ever said:

"You know, one of the most important things in my life is to be obedient to my parents. I know if I do that I will have a great life"

Now you may say "I wish I could do that one over again" But listen: You can
By having a heart to hear and obeying the Lord of your life!

Let's consider for a moment Origin of all the evil on earth:

It was an act of disobedience

God created Adam and Eve placed them in a lovely Garden Called Eden He spoke to them and gave them instructions for life: Then

Gen 2:16-17 tells us

- 16 And the Lord God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden;
- 17 but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die."

We all know from experience that humans are like
When something is forbidden it begins to glow
We can't help but cast our glance over there, everyday

We all know what happened

The devil made Adam and Eve believe that doing what God told them not to do was a way to happiness and fulfillment

A short time later Adam and Eve stood over the body of their dead son Able and witnessed first hand the consequences of Disobedience

And came to realize, the hard way, that God gives us commands for our good and not because He is a selfish authoritarian who likes to be in command.

Adam and Eve's Problem:

Was Not that they did not HEAR the word - They did not HEED the word

This is a problem as old as creation
You heard God, but you didn't obey God

James's Exhortation to OBEDIENCE

James 1:21-25

- 21 Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.
- 22 Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.
- 23 Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror
- 24 and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like.
- 25 But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do.

Verse 22 warns us not to deceive ourselves

We can actually come to deceive yourself into thinking that hearing is good enough! I know some things so I am fine!

NOW I KNOW THERE ARE HEARERS HERE THIS MORNING

Or we wouldn't be in here. But this afternoon we'll have the opportunity to be doers

THERE A GAP: There is a gap between, what I know and what I do.....

We all have this gap But let us not accept it as the status quo for our lives
Let us not just sit around and feel bad about it

IT'S THE SEASON OF LENT

It started on Feb 14th and it will end on March 28th

There are different ideas about what Lent is all about

But most agree that Lent commemorates Jesus's 40 days of trial in the wilderness in preparation for his ministry and it is a time for reflection and repentance

The issue for Jesus in the wilderness was obedience

Not just Obedience, but Obedience under pressure!

Each time the Devil tested Him he responded with the Words: "It is written"

I hear what you are saying devil: But I know what is written!

I hear what you are saying BUT I know what God has said
And I am not biting. Now shut up and go away!

The issue of Obedience is a redundant theme throughout the old testament and the New

The reason God kept the Children of Israel in the wilderness for 40 years was to teach them Obedience

Deuteronomy 8: 2-3 (I can't quote this scripture enough)

- 2 Remember how the Lord your God led you all the way in the wilderness these forty years, to humble and test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands.
- 3 He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your ancestors had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.

This is: THE GREAT DILEMA OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

Why do I call Him Lord and have no heart to obey to His word

These were the words of Jesus in Luke 6

In Luke 6:46

“Why do you call Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I say?”

This is an honest question that needs an honest answer

Many would answer this question like a 10 year old child:

“I don’t know!”

That was the favorite response of my kids!

I think, if we are honest, we do know!

The answer this question is really simple, but it’s hard to admit

You can say:

I didn’t obey because I didn’t have the courage to

I didn’t obey because I was lazy

I didn’t obey because I was busy with other things

But it comes down to one thing:

I didn’t obey because I didn’t want to

- Obviously I do not understand the consequences of disobedience and I’m taking my chances and see how it turns out (I saw that movie)
- Obviously I do not understand to rewards of Obedience or I would relish the thought of doing it your way Lord!

LET’S NOT JUST SIT AROUND AND FEEL BAD ABOUT THIS QUESTION....LET’S DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT.

Help Me Lord! Please Help me!

I want God ...That is to say, I want His blessings

I want His provision, His protection, His healing and His love

But....there’s something else is in me

I want to run my own life - I want to be in control, call the shots

To Do what I want, when I want

YOU ALL LOOK SO ANGELIC BUT

This is the way we all are.....We all have to face this

And we Start facing it by admitting it

There's something in me that doesn't like the thought of "Obeying" anyone-----Even God

In the lukewarm Christian world -- We can actually study God's word
Without a view toward "Obedience"

We can listen to sermons, without a view toward Obedience
Without a predisposition toward obedience

We can go into our prayer closets without an obedient heart

How many are sitting here this morning
Taking notes and thinking
"O Lord grace me to obey this word!"
Grace me to live this stuff
Empower me, enable me, anoint me
I want to, I must obey!

O.K. I know, I've gone over the edge.....

Not just hearing the word, but eager to obey it
God make me a doer of the word

So that I can experience what the Lord meant when he Said:
If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him."

Isaiah 1:19-20 NLT

"If you will only obey Me and let me help you, then you will have plenty to eat, But if you keep turning away and refusing to listen, you will be destroyed by your enemies. I, the Lord have spoken."

"I the Lord have spoken: I mean it!

GOD'S VOICE IS SOMETHING TO BE OBEYED

The Bible is something to be obeyed
Say it with me: The Bible is Something to Be Obeyed

The trouble with God, is He thinks he is God!

God's Commandants are just that: Commandments

Not suggestions:

This is my commandment that you love one another"

THESE THINGS ARE NOT OPTIONAL – Get used to it

AND OBEDIENCE LEADS TO BLESSING

Luke 11:28

He replied, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it."

GOD WANTS TO GIVE US A HEART FOR OBEDIENCE

Deuteronomy 5:28-29

- 28 “The Lord heard the voice of your words when you spoke to me, and the Lord said to me, ‘I have heard the voice of the words of this people which they have spoken to you. They have done well in all that they have spoken.
- 29 ‘Oh that they had such a heart in them, that they would fear Me and keep all My commandments always, that it may be well with them and with their sons forever!

LORD, GIVE ME A HEART TO OBEY YOU...

TODAY YOUR OBEDIENCE WILL BE TESTED

It may be something as simple as saying your sorry
The Lord’s prompting to Make a phone call
Talking to someone on the street
Showing some love
Spending time with your kids
Rearranging your priorities
Making some things right

Let’s Cross the obedience bridge before we come to it
Make up your mind before you are tested
I know I’ll be tested and I am ready...

A FEW CLOSING WORDS

1 SET YOUR HEART ON OBEDIENCE

A HEART SET ON GOD IS A HEART SET ON OBEDIENCE

STOP SAYING OR THINKING THAT IT’S TOO HARD! That’s Unbelief talking

1 John 5:3-4 NLT

“Loving God means keeping His commandments, and really, that isn’t difficult. For every child of God defeats this evil world by trusting Christ to give the victory.”

I’m going to pray with my heart set on obedience
I’m going read my bible with a heart set on obedience
I am going to church with my heart set on obedience

When God says “Go” I will go”
When God says “No” I’ll be fine with that.
When God says “Not now” I will relax and wait for Him”

LET US LISTEN AND LOOK FOR GOD’S GENTLE PROMPTINGS

There are times when we sense His prompting to do things:
MOSTLY SMALL THINGS BUT ALSO SOME BIG THINGS
Respond to an Altar call
Get baptized
Volunteer for service
Give financially
Get some counselling

Heed the Lord's Warning from

Hebrews 3:7-9

7 So, as the Holy Spirit says: "Today, if you hear his voice,
8 do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion, during the time of testing in the wilderness,
9 where your ancestors tested and tried me, though for forty years they saw what I did.

This critical warning

Today, if you hear his voice Do not harden your heart
Do not ignore His voice

PRACTICE: LOOKING GOD'S WAY

God wants to teach us to "Look His way"

Like a player keeps looking to the bench for the coaches instruction

Looking His way with a predisposition to obedience

Not only gives us a yes or a no
It results in the impartation of Grace
It results in the impartation of wisdom
It results in the impartation of joy

Obedience is not about the rules....

Obedience all about Relationship

If you love me you will obey

Make up your mind: What's it going to be?

NOW I KNOW THAT WHEN IT COMES TO OBEDIENCE
IT CAN'T BE RESOLVED IN ONE ALTAR CALL IN A CHURCH

BUT I know breakthrough's can happen here

Today! If you hear his voice: Respond

Ask you to respond with me

If God is convicting you of a lack of obedience

If His is putting his finger on your resistance

Stand with me, as we pray

And ask God for His forgiveness

And receive his Grace