

# How to Hear From God

“How to Hear God’s Voice” (The **Heart** of God to Speak) (Judges 6:1-18)

You, the Church, God’s people, you have blessed me (and Jenn) with such a mighty gift. Time away. Focused time away to be quiet before God. In the hills valleys countryside of France I was able to walk, jog, and pray and sense the Lord’s goodness and His presence in my life. You gave me the gift of solitude and silence - no emails, phone calls, meetings, or visits - all which I love (time and ministry with you) - but your great gift to me was a season of rest, reflection, a time to be hungry for God most - undistracted, unhurried, focused and intentionally alone to seek more of His presence and peace in my life. Thank you from the bottom of my heart. Thank you from Jennifer. I return to you - God’s church - This local church in Argyle to give away my life and ministry to you as long as God has me here. But for the next ten years, I feel a strong desire to lead you, love you, and learn from you. To be *your* senior pastor! I’m energized, refreshed, refocused, and hungry to spend time with you all! While I’ve been gone, we’ve be so blessed to have been led by such capable pastors and elders. I’m so grateful for the leadership and love of our elders and pastoral staff! If you need time with me for any reason at all, I look forward to spending time with you as soon as possible- please just email Kathy@thewellargyle and she will get you on the schedule in a couple of weeks as I re-enter into my new ministry schedule with refocused purpose and passion to be a more faithful, godly, humble, and holy leader for God’s church - that I may continue to become a man who God will anoint and use for the advancement of His Kingdom both here in your lives and around the world - that God would be glorified!!

Now let me pray for us - over us - and let’s get into our text this morning:

**How to Hear from God** – a series for the next month in August:

- Aug 6<sup>th</sup> How to Hear God’s Voice (The **Heart** of God to Speak)
- Aug 13<sup>th</sup> How to Discern It’s really God’s Voice (How God Affirms His **Voice**)
- Aug 20<sup>th</sup> When God Seems Silent (God’s **Loving** Leadership in Trials)
- Aug 27<sup>th</sup> Discerning God’s Will for My life (God’s Calling to us in His **Word**)

**We all would want X.. a new car/new house/lavish vacation/better grades/an upgrade on our boyfriend/girlfriend....the REAL question is – are you prepared to pay the price?**

**Main Point:** If we expect God to speak to our lives, are we *truly* ready to hear, listen, & respond to His voice? – Eccl. 5:1-2 “Guard your steps when you go to the house of God. Go near to **listen** rather than to offer the sacrifice of fools, who do not know that they do wrong. Do not be quick with your mouth, do not be hasty in your heart to utter anything before God. For God is in heaven and you are on earth, so let your words be few.”

**\*\*What are you doing daily to position yourself** as one truly ready to enjoy His presence and hear His voice more clearly in your life?

- Ps. 32:8-10 “I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you should go; I will counsel you with My eye upon you. <sup>9</sup> Do not be as the horse or as the mule who have no understanding, Whose trappings include bit and bridle to hold them in check, *Otherwise* they will never obey or come to you. <sup>10</sup> Many are the sorrows of the wicked, **But he who trusts in the Lord, lovingkindness shall surround him.**”

**\*If we do not know how to discern God’s Voice and Instruction in our life, we are in trouble at the very heart of our Christian Walk (Journey).**

- **God is more concerned that we get more of His PRESENCE in our life, than a simple (word/direction/will) for our lives** – How can you better position your heart/mind to seek the Lord?? Are you listening with your heart? What questions are you asking the Lord? Are you being patient and still to wait for His response? His answers?

-Most of us want answers to our questions NOW!!!!!! We want what we want and when we ask God (and He doesn't seem to give it to us IN our timeframe...we pout, we huff, we walk away!!!

-James 4:3-4 “You ask and do not receive, because you ask <sup>[d]</sup>with the wrong motives, so that you may spend *what you request* <sup>[e]</sup>on your pleasures. <sup>4</sup>You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.”

- **We serve a God who always speaks: Our God is a RELATIONAL God who seeks a relationship with you! He is seeking YOU. He is communicating IF you know where to listen.**

-Isaiah 55:6-7 “Seek the Lord while He may be found; Call upon Him while He is near. <sup>7</sup>Let the wicked abandon his way, And the unrighteous person his thoughts; And let him return to the Lord, And He will have compassion on him, And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon.”

-Jeremiah 29:13 “And you will seek me and find me when you search for me with ALL your heart.”

-Matthew 7:7-11 “Ask, and it will be given to you; <sup>[d]</sup>seek, and you will find; <sup>[i]</sup>knock, and it will be opened to you. <sup>8</sup>For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. <sup>9</sup>Or what person is there among you <sup>[j]</sup>who, when his son asks for a loaf of bread, <sup>[k]</sup>will give him a stone? <sup>10</sup>Or <sup>[l]</sup>if he asks for a fish, he will not give him a snake, will he? <sup>11</sup>So if you, *despite* being <sup>[m]</sup>evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!”

**A. God is always speaking to us: (The Lord is constantly proclaiming His truth all around us) \*\*Radio waves How did God speak to people in the O.T.?**

-Job 33:14 **For God does speak**—now one way, now another—though no one perceives it. <sup>15</sup>In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falls on people as they slumber in their beds, <sup>16</sup>he may speak in their ears and terrify them with warnings, <sup>17</sup>to turn them from wrongdoing and keep them from pride, <sup>18</sup>to preserve them from the pit (from death), their lives from perishing by the sword.<sup>[b]</sup> <sup>19</sup>“Or someone may be chastened on a bed of pain with constant distress in their bones . . .

**In the Old Testament we see that God spoke to mankind in various ways to get their attention: -God spoke audibly, Theophanies (An Angel of the Lord), Angels, Prophets, Dreams, Visions, Miracles**

**B. But Today, When God speaks:**

1- He speaks to us as **Children** (we are HIS Children and He our Father/**Abba**=daddy). Fathers know how and when to communicate to their children. Mother's nurture. *Fathers are strength, providers, fun.* Fathers are our center – *they show us how to align to this world.* **God speaks to us in a way we clearly know it is HIM!!**

2- He speaks to us in **Relationship** (He desires covenant relationship) = we know and abide by His boundaries and expectations [He is God, we are not. He is Holy, we are not. He is in charge, we r not]

3- He speaks to communicate **His heart for us**. God wants the very best for us and whatever that means . . . (**good/blessing or pain & suffering**), God wants to communicate to **help us learn to trust HIM most in this life, get His PRESENCE, and become daily more like the Son!**

-Jer. 29: 10-14 “This is what the Lord says: “When seventy years are completed for Babylon, [punishment, pain, destruction] . . .then I will come to you and fulfill my **good** promise to bring you back to this place.<sup>11</sup> For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. . . and I will bring you back from captivity.<sup>12</sup> I will gather you from all the nations and places where I have banished you,” declares the Lord, “and will bring you back to the place from which I carried you into exile.” = God wants us to trust Him **first and most** in our life

2 Thess. 2:14 “It was for this He called you through our gospel, that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

**\*\*God wants us to be molded into the image of the Son Jesus . . .That’s why you are on earth!**  
This is His plan for your life. This is what He wants to communicate to you. You **Listening??**

**\*\*\*“God’s single desire for you is to mold you into the likeness of His Son! If God cannot do that through life’s delights, then He’ll use your defeats, disasters, and diseases (suffering) = **Be a quick Learner for God is not finished with you yet!****

**Context of This passage: Book of Judges      READ Judges 6:1-10:**

“The Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord, and for seven years he gave them into the hands of the Midianites. <sup>2</sup> Because the power of Midian was so oppressive, the Israelites prepared shelters for themselves in mountain clefts, caves and strongholds. <sup>3</sup> Whenever the Israelites planted their crops, the Midianites, Amalekites and other eastern peoples invaded the country. <sup>4</sup> They camped on the land and ruined the crops all the way to Gaza and did not spare a living thing for Israel, neither sheep nor cattle nor donkeys. <sup>5</sup> They came up with their livestock and their tents like swarms of locusts. It was impossible to count them or their camels; they invaded the land to ravage it. <sup>6</sup> Midian so impoverished the Israelites that they cried out to the Lord for help.

<sup>7</sup> When the Israelites cried out to the Lord because of Midian, <sup>8</sup> he sent them a prophet, who said, “This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: I brought you up out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. <sup>9</sup> I rescued you from the hand of the Egyptians. And I delivered you from the hand of all your oppressors; I drove them out before you and gave you their land. <sup>10</sup> I said to you, ‘I am the Lord your God; do not worship the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you live.’ But you have not listened to me.”

**Context of Israel during the period of the judges: = Israel is in a bad place. Disobedient & Rebellious!!**

A. If you choose to disobey the Lord and run your own life, then inevitably Satan will end up running your life for you! There is NO neutrality in choosing sides (Obedience OR Disobedience to God)! Vs. 1: “The Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord, and for seven years he gave them into the hands of the Midianites.”

- B. The end result of fleeing from God's presence, protection, and commands – is a desperate attempt to hide and exist in fear. = NO peace!!  
Vs. 2: “Because the power of Midian was so oppressive, the Israelites prepared shelters for themselves in mountain clefts, caves and strongholds.”
- C. There comes a breaking point in every person's life when all they can do is either call on God and repent or curse God and die.  
Vs. 6: “Midian so impoverished the Israelites that they cried out to the Lord for help.”
- D. Notice, in-spite of Israel's rebellion against God and their embracing Idolatry, rejecting God's commands and presence . . . GOD still pursues their hearts for salvation!  
“For if, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!” Romans 5:10

**So God pursues lives for His Glory and their benefit and He does so by speaking to us!**

### **HOW Can YOU Hear . . . Discern the Lord's Voice in your life??**

**1) in 2023 God speaks to us in NORMAL and Ordinary ways – *sometimes even in the mundane.* = TODAY...God uses Normal People, Words, and Circumstances to speak to our lives: ALL THE TIME!!!!**

**We keep looking and expecting the EXTRAORDINARY – but God doesn't have to use the paranormal! God wants to speak to us in the still moments of our lives = focused/listening**  
**\*\*Right in front of us, obvious, but didn't notice it (“Schotoma” = Mental Blind spot) – Went looking for scissors/car keys**

1 Kings 19:11-13 “Then the LORD said, “Go out and stand on the mountain before the LORD. Behold, the LORD is about to pass by.” And a great and mighty wind tore into the mountains and shattered the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake came a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. **And after the fire came a gentle whisper** (a still, hushed voice). When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his cloak and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave.” – God speaks to us in the ordinary (inaudible voices) – from within!

**\*\*\*\*How God speaks to us today? He uses Ordinary (common) means:**

**A. The Bible** (Hebrews 1:1-2; 4:12; 2 Tim. 3:16-17)

“In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, <sup>2</sup>but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son,” Hebrews 1<sup>1</sup>-2 – **NO New REVELATION** (sufficiency of Scripture) . . . **No need for Mohammed! No need for Joseph Smith. For Mary Baker Eddy, C.T. Russel** – NO need for NEW prophet/New gospel/Addition to the Bible.

**B. The Holy Spirit** (John 14:26; 15:26; Ro. 8:14; 2 Pet. 1:21) – **The VOICE inside of us (louder than vox)**

- John 14:26 “But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.”

- John 16:13 "But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come."

**C. Pastors & Preaching, Teaching, Small Groups** (1 Peter 5:1-4; James 3:1)

- "Let not many of you be teachers, for as such you will incur stricter judgment" James 3:1

**D. Godly Friends and Family -Biblical Counsel** (Proverbs 11:14; 15:22; 1 Thess. 5:11)

**E. Circumstances: Dreams, Opportunities, Challenges, Trials, Suffering, Pain & even death!** -Jn 5:17 "My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I too am working."

**TODAY, God uses Ordinary (common) means to speak to our lives . . . ARE YOU LISTENING? Are you in tune to hear HIM? Have you put yourself into a position where you can't hear HIM????**

**\*\*Look at how God interacted with Gideon: Judges 6:11ff**

**God showed up to Gideon as a plain guy, a random traveler, obviously not very impressive.**

**Vs. 11:** "The angel of the Lord came and sat down under the oak tree in Ophrah that belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, where his son Gideon was threshing wheat in a winepress to keep it from the Midianites. <sup>12</sup>When the angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon, he said, "The Lord is with you, mighty warrior." <sup>13</sup>"Pardon me, my lord," Gideon replied, "but if the Lord is with us, why has all this happened to us? Where are all his wonders that our ancestors told us about when they said, 'Did not the Lord bring us up out of Egypt?' But now the Lord has abandoned us and given us into the hand of Midian."

**2) When God does speak, however, He has an Extraordinary Message:** (ordinary means – *extraordinary* message)

**Vs. 14:** "The Lord turned to him and said, "**Go in the strength you have and save Israel** out of Midian's hand. Am I not sending you?" <sup>15</sup>"Pardon me, my lord," Gideon replied, "but how can I save Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family."<sup>16</sup> The Lord answered, "I will be with you, and you will strike down all the Midianites, leaving none alive."

**- God speaks and when God speaks HE Calls us to:**

**A. Transformation** – God wants to change us into the likeness of His Son. = **Become Holy!**

**B. Restoration** – God wants to Heal the broken places and wounds & bring life to your heart!

**C. Conviction/Challenge** – God wants to REPENT, not stay the same – in our ruts and patterns of sin; to encourage us to MOVE and ACT on His calling in our life.

**D. Adventure** – God invites us to join Him into ore of His presence and follow Him where He is leading – into the unknown and unsafe places of peoples lives. To learn to Trust Him and live out your faith into what is unsure, uncomfortable, risky!

**3) When God speaks – His message is life-changing and requires response:**

**Vs. 17:** Gideon replied, "If now I have found favor in your eyes, give me a sign that it is really you talking to me. <sup>18</sup>Please do not go away until I come back and bring my offering and set it before you." And the Lord said, "I will wait until you return." **God shows such patience toward us when we deserve it least**

- God's Voice – HIS Word will always cause us to:

A. Self-examination – what am I doing? Have I been obedient or disobedient

B. Surrender

C. Deeper Understanding & Love for the Lord

D. Action and Obedience to His call on your life = crisis – AM I going to trust God with this???

**What's YOUR Response? Surrender or Rebellion (The siege & massacre at Masada)**

In our sin and obstinance, in our rebellion We can Drown out God's Voice in our life:

- We can ignore it
- We can distract ourselves with something else
- We can talk over God's voice

**How can YOU hear the Voice of God in your life? . . . .**

**APPLICATION:** God is seeking you today. He wants your Heart. He wants to give you more of Him!

**What is your response to God's VOICE in your life?** Seek Him! Surrender to Him! Listen to Him! Obey Him! Then enjoy your daily life with Him as He speaks, leads, and blesses you with His presence. =Worship Him!!

**Just ASK!!** "Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. <sup>13</sup>You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. <sup>14</sup>I will be found by you," declares the Lord." Jeremiah 29:10

You are here at church today . . . You are here & ready to listen to GOD = **what will be your response?** What is God saying to you this morning? What is the last clear thing you heard God say to you? Obedient or disobedient?

**Seek God presence**

**Listen to His Voice**

**Act in obedience**

**Change this world!**