



HEARING THE SHEPHERD

Jesus stated to Pilate: "Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice" (18:37). The message to us is clear: If you have God's Spirit in you, then you will hear and know His voice!

Yet we live in a day when many voices clamor for our attention. Paul warned: "There are...so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without signification [meaning]" (1 Corinthians 14:10).

Perhaps you have had the experience of many other Christians: When you pray, seeking to hear and know God's voice, your mind is flooded with all kinds of voices, You may wonder, "How can I distinguish the voice of God from my own flesh? How can I be sure it is God speaking, and not the voice of a tempting spirit?"

Let me share with you one principle on this matter of hearing and knowing His voice: **If You Are Living in Sin, You Will Never Hear God's Voice!**

If you are indulging in some secret sin, you can be sure you really not hearing God's voice. That is because you already know what He will say to you – and you don't want to hear it!



VERSE

"The sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger they will not follow, but will flee from him:

*for they know not
the voice of
strangers"
(John 10:3-5).*

When Adam and Eve sinned, it brought shame. And with that shame came guilt, fear and condemnation. This shame is called "nakedness" in the Old Testament – and being naked meant standing in God's presence clothed only with guilt. "And the Lord called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself" (Genesis 3:9-10). Adam hid from God's voice, because of the guilt and shame of his sin. And that is exactly where many of God's people are today - hiding, afraid to hear God speak!

Beloved, if you want to hear God's voice you have to be ready for a total cleansing. You must be willing to have every sin exposed and cast away! The prophet Isaiah had an awesome vision of the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up. Seraphim covered themselves with their wings because of the holy presence of God. They cried out: "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory" (Isaiah 6:3).

God's voice was so mighty it shook the temple. And at the sound of it, the righteous prophet Isaiah fell on his face, crying: "Woe is me for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts" (verse 5). Isaiah was stricken with a sense of sin and uncleanness - because God's voice is a purging voice! "Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: and he laid it upon my mouth, and

said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged" (verses 6-7).

Isaiah could not hear God's "directing voice" until he had first heard His "purging voice."

You see, direction and guidance come only after purging because if you haven't been purged, you can't go any farther with the Lord. Yet thousands upon thousands of God's people

today flock to meetings to get a quick, "cure-all" word from God. They want a prophet to lay hands on them - to tell them what to do and what the future holds. Most of what they hear, however, is flattery: "Thou shalt be mightily used of God!" "Thou shalt be a witness to the nations!" "Thou shalt be blessed and prosperous!"

How many of these people do you think would flock to meetings if the "star preacher" pointed a finger at their heart and gave them the purging Word of God? "You're still unclean - you never have let go of your secret sin! You have no vision of Jesus' holiness. Hear His voice - repent!

If you want to hear God's voice of direction, you must first be ready to have your soul purged and cleansed. His Word comes to pierce our conscience and expose wickedness - so He can use us!

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