

Scripture Reference: John 10:22-30

Date: August 3, 2014

Title: "My Sheep Hear My Voice"

Focus: Knowing God's voice (Hearing God Series 2 of 10)

Jesus was walking in the temple one day when he was approached by "the Jews" who wanted to know *plainly* if He was Messiah. These people were probably a mix of religious leaders and everyday folks. Some wanted an answer that they might argue with Jesus. Others were uncertain and asked out of genuine curiosity.

Jesus' answer reveals the position every person is in when it comes to His identity. Each person has to decide for him or herself if Jesus is the One promised to provide a relationship with God. This decision will be made on the basis of His actions and words.

Ultimately, Jesus says, it will be "His sheep" who will "hear [His voice" and "follow [Him. Those who refuse to believe prove they have no connection to with Him.

"His Sheep" Have a Different Understanding of God

The religious leaders and others of Jesus' day relied on being descendants of Abraham for a relationship with God. Nothing else mattered (John 8:32-49).

There are several problems to hearing God and having an interactive relationship:

a. Since we are in a special place, there is no need for ongoing communion with God.

b. People in general are ill equipped for interpersonal relationships, human and therefore, divine. Human relationships impair one's capacity to relate to God

NOTE: "We must make it our primary goal not just to hear the voice of God but to be mature people in a loving relationship with Him. Only in this way will we hear Him rightly."

His sheep love God and seek to interact with Him in all the affairs of life, just as they would with any other individual.

"His Sheep" View the Revelation of God, the Bible, Different

The Bible is not seen as a technical manual or an ancient document. Instead, His sheep understand it to be God's revelation of Himself in the context of relationship with people.

Therefore, they read the Bible in a realistic manner. The people encountered there are just like you and I. Had we been in their place, their experiences could have been ours.

Can we identify with them, that their experiences might be a means for God to speak to us?

NOTE: "[The] relationship of our personal experiences to the content of the Bible and, by extension, to the lives of the saints and heroes of the faith throughout the ages." needs to change.

How did they experience God's communication? How was it for them to hear God?

"His Sheep" Understand the Consequences of Hearing God Differently

When a person considers hearing from God there are at least two possible responses:

a. God would never speak to me.

As is evidenced in the Bible, our humanity is not an obstacle to knowing and interacting with God.

God has said He will speak with His sheep and they will hear His voice and respond to Him (v. 27). To declare God will not speak to you is to call God a liar at worst or to put your opinion above His at best.

Supposed humility with God impedes hearing God.

b. God spoke to me. Therefore, I must be someone special.

People are important for God. He loves humanity. However, because God speaks to us doesn't make us important.

NOTE: "When God speaks to us, it does not prove that we are righteous or even right."

God speaks for any numbers of reasons, at the very least there are two:

a. He is making Himself known.

b. As with any relationship, self-disclosure, communication, is a part.

The Last 18 Inches

Jesus made clear that a relationship with God is possible. He lived it in full view of everyone and promised it those who would trust Him (John 17:20-21).

"My Sheep"; This relationship is premised upon an ongoing self-revelation of God to us and us to Him. This happens through communication.

Those who see no need for this fail to have a relationship with God.