

The Voice of God -- Our Victory

I recently saw a bumper sticker that read, "God speaks to those who listen". Although most might chuckle at this humorous quip, there is great spiritual depth in the principle. When we call out to God and we don't hear a response, our question should not be "God, why aren't You speaking to me?" but rather "What are we doing that is preventing us from hearing from God?" Our Lord Jesus said in [John 8:47], "He who belongs to God hears what God says". God desires to talk to His children -- only a contemptible Father would not answer his own children when they call him. God, the perfect and all loving Father, will answer us when we call. In [Matthew 7:7-11], Jesus again speaks of God's desire to communicate with us when He says, "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened. Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in Heaven give good gifts to those who ask Him!"

The key to hearing from God is found in two basic steps:

(1) We must realize that God's thoughts and ways are not our thoughts and ways, and that His thoughts and ways are higher than ours, as the heavens are higher than the earth [Isaiah 55:8-9].

(2) We must be willing to hear that which may be contrary to what we want to hear or expect to hear.

When we master these two steps, we will hear God when He speaks and we will know it is He that is speaking. Jesus speaks of these two basic steps in [John 10:3-5] when He tells us, "The watchman opens the gate for Him, and the sheep listen to His voice. He calls His own sheep by name and leads them out. When He has brought out all His own, He goes on ahead of them, and His sheep follow Him because they know His voice. But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger's voice."

Jesus uses sheep in this example because of two basic characteristics of sheep:

(1) They realize that the Shepherd knows what's best for them. [Isaiah 55:8-9]

(2) They obey the Shepherd, without giving it any thought, because they know who He is and they listen to His voice, trusting Him for all things. In [Isaiah 42:16] we read, "I will lead the blind by ways they have not known, along unfamiliar paths I will guide them; I will turn the darkness into light before them and make the rough places smooth. These are the things I will do; I will not forsake them."

* Gideon began with a mighty force of 32,000 and defeated the Midianites with only 300 of them *because he knew God's voice*.

* Joshua took Jericho, even when the method seemed pointless, *because he knew God's voice*.

* Paul, while in prison, was comforted and miraculously released because *he knew God's voice*.

When we know the voice of God, we live victorious even when circumstances -- by the world's standards -- seem dark and senseless. [Isaiah 30:21] tells us, "Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, "This is the way; walk in it." No matter where we turn, no matter what our circumstances, God's voice will call out to us with words that will bring us victory. Will we be listening?