

“Are You Hearing Voices?”—John 10:27-30

The text for this sermon, the theme of which is, “Are You Hearing Voices?”, is John 10:27-30 → Jesus says: *My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of My hand. My Father, Who has given them to Me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand. I and the Father are one.* This is the text.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus:

*Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord* (cf. 1Timothy 1:2). Amen.

It has been said, “When you talk to God it’s called prayer, but if God talks to you’re called schizophrenic.” The concept of “hearing voices” when no one is with you in the midst of silence is usually cause for grave concern by your family and friends. They may think that you’ve finally “lost it,” feel uncomfortable around you and conclude that you need to see a psychiatrist. Some may try to protect you by encouraging you not to tell anyone you’re hearing voices so they don’t think you’re “one fry short of a Happy Meal” and consider you incompetent to function properly in your job or other responsibilities. Many think that hearing

voices removed from the presence of someone or something generating them is a strange, if not dangerous and “unhealthy” phenomenon.

Ironically these same people may not be as concerned about all the voices which you hear on a regular basis everyday. The voices to which you listen in conversations and through the information highway of the internet, social media, television, newspapers and talk radio can be dangerous and “unhealthy” as well. Many of these voices foster anger and are filled with self-righteous judgments which feed a contempt and despise for others. Much of this information is negative, filled with tragedy, murder and immorality of all kinds, accompanied *by words without knowledge* (cf. Job 38:2) which only darkens understanding further. When people listen only to such voices on a daily basis is it any wonder that so many are living in negativity, despair and hopelessness?

There are many voices in the world which beckon you to follow various ideals, beliefs and behaviors. Many of these voices can mislead you into spiritual destruction. Sometimes the voices are subtle, making something which is wrong appear very right at the moment. Such subtlety was used by satan when he appeared as a serpent to deceive Adam & Eve in the Garden of Eden. Think of the subtlety: Eve had the first satanic experience and didn't even know she was having it.

Sometimes the voices are more obvious, calling you into blatant sin in disobedience to God's written Word. 2 Timothy 4:3-4 says *the time is*

*coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.* Brothers and sisters, that time has come. Mainline Christian denominations have listened to the voices of teachers who avoid talk about sin and the need to repent, trusting in the atoning work of Jesus for the forgiveness of your sins. They have listened to voices which actually encourage turning away from the *sound teaching* of God's written Word to live and act immorally. When what was once inconceivable according to the voice of God has been so debatable by sinners, it will become acceptable.

It is obvious you're hearing voices. The more pertinent question is: What voice are you following? As Jesus used the picture of the relationship between the shepherd and his sheep, He spoke about us as His sheep who are characterized by being led, not driven, by **His** voice. He says in verse 27 of our text: *My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.* Thus, when you know to Whom you belong you can recognize His voice in the midst of all the other voices in the world and experience His protection as you follow Him. The voices which strive to lead you away from Jesus, your Good Shepherd, are the voices of *the devil who prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour* (cf. 1 Peter 5:8). Through such voices he preys on people by

tempting them to believe the lies of being unwanted, unloved, alone in the world grasping for identity somehow. Such voices actually drive people down a path of destruction, both temporally and eternally.

The voice of your Good Shepherd, Jesus, is not a voice which drives you into despair with an ongoing guilt, but rather a voice which leads you because He truly knows you and cares for you. How does He show this care for you? He says in John 10:11 → *I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.* Jesus knows your sinful condition. However, instead of taking advantage of your sinful condition by manipulating you and driving you to despair He meets you in your sin, taking it upon Himself so you can be led out of that sin. He cares for you so much that He willing laid down His life for you (cf. John 10:18) so that you can be freed from the guilt and punishment of your sin to follow Him!

I have heard the statement that “people are sheep,” usually made in reference to their being so easily led astray. However, Jesus focuses on **His work** in the lives of His sheep. His sheep are confident in their identity because He knows each one of them by name (cf. John 10:3-4). His sheep are secure in His love for them because He has done all that is necessary to protect them from the power of the devil to drag them into eternal destruction in hell. Thus, Jesus can confidently say about you in verse 28 of our text: *I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of My hand.* This is your comfort as you

live *as lambs in the midst of wolves* (cf. Luke 10:3), hearing the voices of *false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves* (cf. Matthew 7:15).

As you live your identity as Christ's lamb, you have a voice you can completely trust because your Good Shepherd is also God Himself in the flesh. Jesus gives you a solid reason for following Him in verses 29-30 of our text: *My Father, Who has given them to Me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. I and the Father are one.* Make no mistake about it, Jesus was clearly stating that He is the all-powerful Lord of heaven and earth. The people to whom Jesus was speaking these words most probably confessed confidently in worship the words of Psalm 100:3 → *Know that Yahweh, He is God! It is He Who made us, and we are His; we are His people, and the sheep of His pasture.* Yet, when they heard Jesus claim that He was Yahweh they *picked up stones again to stone Him* for blasphemy (i.e. claiming for Himself attributes which belong solely to God) (cf. John 10:31).

However, because *He is Lord of lords and King of kings* (cf. Revelation 17:14), you can always trust His voice! You hear His voice speak to you in this written Word, the Bible. This is why it is so important to do as Colossians 3:16 says: *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.*

Thankfulness? It's very difficult to be thankful in the midst of so many voices in the world which highlight sin, immorality, satanic activity, tragedies and so forth. However, Christ's sheep can be thankful in the midst of this world because they know Who is Lord over it all—their Good Shepherd, Jesus. They are able to discern through those voices the voice of their Good Shepherd and follow Him. His Word is your filter through which the messages of all the other voices flow so you can follow Jesus.

Following the voice of Jesus as he **leads** you is so important because *He is the same yesterday and today and forever* (cf. Hebrews 13:8). This means He will continue to **lead you** even if you stray by giving in to sin into which those voices strive to drive you. By His Holy Spirit He will convict you of that sin, both while being tempted to empower you to avoid sinning and while in the sin to empower you to repent and follow His voice again. **He leads you** to His cross where He dealt with your sins once and for all. **He leads you** to His empty tomb where you see that He *came that you may have life and have it abundantly* (cf. John 10:10) in heaven!

There may be times when Jesus' voice seems "faint" as you desire to follow Him. Following Him you will naturally seek His will for you as you make decisions in your life. If those decisions have to do with His

revealed Word in the Bible then you strive to listen to His voice and follow that written Word. However, Scripture does not give you specific directions for many decisions you make in life (e.g. careers; marriage; purchases; etc.). How do you listen to His voice in those situations as you desire to follow your Good Shepherd?

Again, **He leads you** to His righteousness as you *walk by faith, not by sight* (cf. 2 Corinthians 5:7) when His Word does not clearly direct you where to go on your path in life. Thus, your faith decision is right because of His righteousness. It also means that you will meet the challenges which those decisions bring by following Jesus, depending upon the power of the Holy Spirit to sustain and strengthen you in the palm of His hand. You follow Him as **He continues to lead you** to His Word, to His body and blood, to His body of believers to dispense and receive the means of His grace for your life.

You are hearing voices. Yet, in the midst of those voices is the voice of your Good Shepherd, forgiving, strengthening, helping, guiding and encouraging you as He leads you day by day. Your confidence for who you are on your path in life is sure because you know Whose voice you follow. It is a voice which has the tone of constant invitation, calling you to Himself daily in His self-sacrificing love and forgiveness! Amen.

*Now may the God of peace*

*Who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus,  
the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant,  
equip you with everything good that you may do His will,  
working in us that which is pleasing in His sight,  
through Jesus Christ, to Whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.*

(Hebrews 13:20-21)

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