

Hear Ye the Word of the Lord

First we must hear the message of Christ through the Word of God as this creates faith in Jesus.

Romans 10:16-18:

Yet not everyone has believed the message. For example, the prophet Isaiah asked, "Lord, has anyone believed what we said?" No one can have faith without hearing the message about Christ

John 1:1-4:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.

Jesus is the Word of God, he is the Logos, that is why he came and brought light to the Word.

We need faith to please God.

Hebrews 11:6:

But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him

Faith without works is dead, we cannot sit idle we must do something with our faith or it means nothing.

James 2:14:

My friends, what good is it to say you have faith, when you don't do anything to show that you really do have faith? Can that kind of faith save you?

We must not just listen to it we must do it. So many sit in a service and hear the Word of the Lord and think it is a good thing, but never look at how it applies in their lives, never look at what changes the Word of God implicates for them.

James 1:22-25:

Obey God's message! Don't fool yourselves by just listening to it. If you hear the message and don't obey it, you are like people who stare at themselves in a mirror and forget what they look like as soon as they leave. But you must never stop

looking at the perfect law that sets you free. God will bless you in everything you do, if you listen and obey, and don't just hear and forget.

God does not want to harm his people just like those Babylonian captives that Jeremiah told us about. He says...

Jeremiah 29:11-13

For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.

The key here is that God wants to help you grow and give you a meaningful future. He has said that if we search for him with all our heart we will find him...

So what have we learned...

- We need to hear the message of Christ to have faith.
- We hear the message through the Word of God
- To please God we must have faith without it we can't please him
- God rewards those who diligently seek him by studying to discover him through his word.
- Faith is not just a feeling or believing, it requires us to commit ourselves to action. Part of faith is to discover God through reading his word and praying.
- When we read the Word and meditate on it, we see how it applies to our lives. It is at this point faith requires the action of obedience to his Word from us. You see faith is not just reading the Word and believing it but doing what it says.
- God has deemed to prosper us with growth and a future. He does not want to harm us.
- Jesus is the Word of God. He is the Logos. That is how he brought revelation to it. Before his incarnation he was with God the Father as the Logos.

What this all means is that when we make choices in our lives, and I have said this many times and in many different ways, we must either choose, Fear or Faith. When we choose faith we please God, we receive direction in our faith because we choose to read his Word and pray and seek Gods will. When we read his Word we begin to understand his Son. When we apply his Word, we begin to take on the nature of his Son.

If we say we believe in Jesus then we must believe in the Word of God and if we know that Jesus is the Logos, then we must obey the Word of God as our faith requires action of us. Our faith in Jesus saves us and we are repeatedly told to study his Word.

When we spoke about the Holy Spirit, do you remember what I said one of his Roles was? It was to pursue a work of restoration within us and bring about the likeness of Jesus in our lives. As we shed areas in our life that have not been turned over to Jesus this process is called sanctification. Now to be clear, remember I said we are positionally sanctified because of what Christ has done for us. We are wrapped up in his righteousness. This is why sanctification is both instantaneous and ongoing.

We have choices to make, we can walk in obedience and faith to the promises and principles of God's Word or we can walk in fear and choose to lean on our own experiences and choices.

Even Jesus himself prayed and walked in the will of the Father. He is our example. Obedience to God is optional... but not, if we are following after Christ and seeking him with all our hearts.

Why do I say obedience to God is optional? It is because God doesn't interfere with our choices. When we choose to trust him and surrender our will, he will bless us, we grow and become more Christ-like. When we walk in obedience to God we choose faith. When we don't walk in obedience to God we choose fear. It could be a fear of losing money, a fear of loss of friends, a fear of loss of time, whatever the key Word hear is fear.

Fear and Faith both ask us to believe in what we can't see. It comes down to the trust aspect of faith. Do we believe that God knows what's best for us and will take care of our needs or do we cower in fear and choose not to trust God.

Think about those pastors who have had great paying Jobs, Good job security and so on and suddenly decide to give up this form of worldly security for the ministry. The world does not understand this choice... But, it requires a step of faith a trust and a security in the knowledge that what God has said he will do.

I have a friend who was a 30 year veteran project manager for an engineering firm. He made over 100k per year. He has decided that he doesn't know if he is called to ministry (he is... God has shown me that he is called to pastoral missions) but that God has laid it on his heart to go to bible school. He and his wife are now enrolled for the fall. From a worldly perspective, why would you do this? If you are asking yourself that question right now... and if you are honest with yourself, and doing something like that makes you fearful. Why? Do you trust God?

Let me be a bit clearer here. Hear Me... God doesn't call everyone to be pastors. Not everyone makes that sacrifice. But you will never know what God is calling you to do, if you never open up his book or talk to him. When he speaks to you, will you be willing to have faith and walk in obedience to his will?

God may call you to be a great accountant and just let your light shine. He may inspire you with the gift of charity or giving. He may want you to coach a ball team... Who knows, but will you be obedient when he asks you?

Romans 12:1-2

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.

Okay so how will you know it is Him asking, if you don't know his voice?

John 10:27

My sheep hear, My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.

John 14:26

But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.

How many people know that God uses people? God tells us not to forsake getting together with other Christians. Why? We learn by sharing our faith. Sort of a: "from faith to faith" experience. When we make friendships and bonds with those who believe in Christ and walk in faith, we associate with those who have the same priorities and support us in a lifestyle of faith.

As a pastor the hardest thing I find is to get Christians to open and read their bibles. We are told to read it and reflect on it and how it applies in context to our lives. Mature Christians can help you to understand as can the Pastor if you have questions. Please here me... I want to hear your questions about God! I am never too busy to help someone understand what they are studying about Jesus. When we read his Word we begin to understand God's purposes and nature. This clarifies for us if something is "Like" God when we hear it. Does it line up with his Word?

Praying for others, takes our self-focused Christianity and turns it outwards in a Christ-like fashion. God's glory is reflected and we begin to see his priorities instead of our own.

This one is huge and I am delighted to see it starting to happen... We should seek opportunities to tell others about what we are learning in our Christian walk and in our study of his Word. When we share the Word of God, we create faith and life with our words. What was an internal thing now is focused outwards and becomes a beacon that others can follow in their walk. Our internal changes in our walk can show others how we are changing towards God's purposes.

Now in the bible God used talking animals, burning bushes, angels, visions, prophecy and a still small voice to speak to his people. If I ever need humbling, I just think of Balaam's donkey that God spoke through... In short, God can use anything even circumstances to communicate his will to his people.

Let me ask this question... Are you ready to listen? Are you ready to hear what he will say to you? Are you prepared to obey any direction you are given?

2 Timothy 3:16

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Prayer and reading are the most valuable in learning to hear the voice of God. The bible gives us real life examples of people just like us. It shows us the problems they experience and what God's priorities were for the people. When we know scripture we can see how circumstances relate to things we experience everyday. In this way, based on scripture we can understand God's will in life's situations.

Remember I talked about that still small voice. God will often speak directly into your mind if you will set aside some time for prayer, talk to him and wait for his answer. Just a note from the initiated... Sometimes the answer you get is not the one you want to hear... and sometimes God says: "No".

If you want to hear his voice you need to spend time in prayer and reading and practice listening.

Now in relation to prayer... Do not be afraid to talk to God. It is not a ritual. Speak to God like you would speak to your best friend. Jesus doesn't distance himself from the suffering of his people. He is willing to listen to your petitions and requests, but remember God is not your personal genie in a bottle. He is not there to do your whim he is God almighty. Best not to forget that... When we tell Jesus our problems and ask him to help or for advice, we should be prepared to hear what he will tell us.

Here is a tip... God will never tell you to do anything that does not line up with what he has said in his Word. How do you know if it doesn't line up? Crack the book...

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 - We need to learn to hear Gods voice
 - We need to be willing to obey it when we hear it
 - We need to Read the bible to know Gods ways to discern if it is of God
 - We need to diligently pray and get used to hearing his voice
 - We need to be patient and wait for his response
 - We need to be prepared to accept his response even if it's not what we want to hear.
1. First we hear the Word
 2. Then we acquire faith
 3. Faith requires action
 4. Action requires commitment and self-sacrifice
 5. Commitment and self-sacrifice require diligence in reading and in prayer
 6. Reading and prayer require meditation, waiting, listening
 7. Meditation, waiting and listening require reverence
 8. Reverence requires that we hear and obey the voice of God.

Are you ready to take these 8 steps to hear from God today?

* Interestingly enough and this is just a sidebar... When you study the number 8 in the Bible, it represents a new beginning, meaning a new order or creation and mans true 'born again event when he is resurrected from the dead into eternal life.