

Introduction: Pg. _____

“He Will Speak” John 16:12-15

God wants to speak to you today. God wants to speak to you EVERYDAY!

I want to begin our time in God’s word with two questions. I want you to carefully consider these two questions and give the most honest answer you can muster (not the answer you wish you could give, not the answer you would like others to hear, just an honest answer). Just to provide an evaluative tool, answer these questions on a scale of 1-10 with 1 meaning absolutely NOT & 10 meaning ABSOLUTELY, no doubt about it!

1. I believe God speaks to people personally today, beyond the words of Scripture but never in contradiction to the words of Scripture.
2. I expect God to speak to me throughout the day.

The words of Jesus from John 16:12-15 are going to help raise our faith that we will hear God’s voice and expectation that he wants to lead us day by day, BY HIS SPIRIT.

John 16:12-15 (Text Displayed)

The Point: Learn to listen to the Spirit’s voice as you follow Jesus.

1. Jesus promised to speak to us by his Spirit (16:12-15).

Verse 12: “I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.

- Here’s a question for you? Does Jesus mean they are not intellectually ready? Or emotionally ready? I believe the answer is . . . BOTH!
- Intellectually...
 - There were so many truths they were still learning about Jesus. Their expectations of the Messiah were being reordered in real time. Their understanding of the OT promises being fulfilled in Christ continued to develop before their eyes. There were other messages Jesus wanted to share with them personally and for all of his disciples through them.
 - For every follower of Jesus, our knowledge of God grows over time. Our knowledge of the truth, both intellectually (understanding with our minds) and experientially (experiencing in our lives) is a life long pursuit!
 - But they could also not bear more words at this point...
- Emotionally...
 - They were overwhelmed with sorrow. In verse 6, Jesus just said in verse 6 that “sorrow had filled their hearts.”
 - God knows our frame... he deals with us compassionately and tenderly. (Psalm 103:13-14 says, “As a father shows compassion to his children, so the Lord shows compassion to those who fear him. For he knows our frame; he remembers that we are dust.”)
 - God considers our weaknesses. He works within our limitations, so as to not overwhelm us.
 - He does this because he loves us!

Verse 13: “When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth...”

- Jesus is our Good Shepherd (John 10). He promised to go before us. He does so by the Holy Spirit.
- Just as the pillar of cloud by day and fire by night led the people of Israel, now the Holy Spirit guides us on the path of life moment by moment, hour by hour, day by day.
- Romans 8:14 says, “For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God.”

- Some of his leadership will include prophetic revelation.
 - Look at the end of verse 13: “he will declare to you the things that are to come.”
 - This has implications for all prophetic ministry in the church from the 1st century until today, as well as the prophecies contained in the NT, particularly the Book of Revelation.

I also want you to notice how three different times Jesus emphasizes that the Spirit will always speak consistent with the truth he has already revealed, which was consistent with all of God’s revelation from Genesis 1.

- Verse 13: “for he will not speak on his own authority, *but whatever he hears he will speak*, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.”
- Verse 14: “He will glorify me, for *he will take what is mine and declare it to you*.”
- Verse 15: All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that *he will take what is mine and declare it to you*.”

This shows us the unity of our Triune God, Father, Son & Spirit. Just as Jesus did not speak on his own initiative or authority, but what the Father gave him to speak (John 5:19, 39; 8:28; 12:49), so the Spirit speaks in complete unity with Jesus.

God Speaking in Scripture

Some only see implications for the completion of the canon, or writing of all 66 books of the Bible. Does it include that? Most certainly!! These words from Jesus elevate our confidence that all of the words of the Bible are inspired and inerrant.

- **“All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.” - 2 Timothy 3:16-17**
- -----
- **“And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone’s own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.” - 2 Peter 1:19-21**

That said, we should expect, based on these words, that...

God Continues to Speak to us Personally outside of the words of Scripture but never in Contradiction to Scripture.

- Think about it: if these words in John 16:12-15, along with John 14 & 15, were only relevant for the completion of the canon, then they only have relevance for Matthew, John, & Peter.
- Additionally, we would have to assume that Jesus did not intend for the Spirit to function in as the kind of Counselor who would give his disciples specific guidance for specific situations.
- We would also have to ignore many other biblical arguments, which I shared in my sermon on “Tools for Hearing God’s Voice” on June 27th, 2021, where I provided arguments around the Trinity, how God made us for relationship as our Father and friend, the nature of salvation, our need for wisdom, prayer, spiritual warfare, and other Scripture, many of which I will share momentarily.

To be clear, I believe Jesus is telling his disciples that he is going to continue speaking to them personally and provide personal guidance in a way that is always consistent with Scripture, which is “the truth as it is in Jesus” (to quote Ephesians 4:21).

Day after day, the Spirit leads us deeper and deeper into the life of Christ.

BUT HOW does he speak to us? And WHY? And how can we LEARN TO LISTEN to his voice?

That's what I want to cover with the remainder of our time.

How does God speak to us?

- **Scripture** The Spirit speaks through Scripture and reminds us of truth.
 - We need the Spirit to speak to us about what he has already spoken! Theological terms (illumination for our understanding, conviction for our daily living or application!)
 - Think about it the 3 questions we ask of every text: 1) What do we learn about God? 2) What do we learn about people? 3) How does God want me to respond? Do we not think his guiding presence, his still small voice is present as we discern how to respond to his Word?
- **People:** We hear God's voice through the voice of others.
 - How many times has someone shared a word of wisdom, a word of encouragement, or simply a verse from Scripture, and you walk away saying: "That was for me."?
 - Or even when you hear a sermon: "God really spoke to me today, Pastor."
 - I would add songs to this as well.
- **Impressions (Prompts, Whispers)** God nudges, prompts, whispers (God put it on my heart; I felt God lead me to...)
 - **"I'm discovering that most of the time the power of the Spirit is subtle, not showy. The Spirit is present in our subtle inclinations to serve our spouses, do what's right, read the Bible, love the marginalized, make disciples, and commune with God. . . . If you are in Christ, you have the Spirit, and he prompts you all the time. We simply need to surrender to his prompting!" - Jonathan Dodson, *Gospel-Centered Discipleship*.**
 - The Spirit may simply say: "Them. Now. Her. Tomorrow."
 - "Impressions often seem very much like our own thoughts. The Holy Spirit may speak to us in an impression—a voice so still and small that it is easy to dismiss as being our own thought. Indeed, most American Christians probably do dismiss this voice, and so never sharpen their spiritual hearing. - Seth Barnes
- **Prophecy:** to speak words of life from God given spontaneously by the Spirit
- **Direct words (Inaudible or Audible):** I've never heard an audible word from God. Probably good because I might not survive it. :) On the other hand, I have heard inaudible words many times. Apart from the impression and clarity of the Spirit (as Barnes said), I could mistake them for my own thoughts.
 - In thinking about this more deeply again this week, I wonder if many Christians are thrown off a bit by the idea of God's voice or God speaking, but we only associate that with "audible words." Now, I'm not going to move away from phrases: "Hearing God's voice" or "God speaking," because that is exactly what Jesus says. However, I wonder if it would be helpful by talking about God communicating with us.
 - Non-verbal - Point... Wave over... Stop... Victory arms... Smile...
 - (Story of Texas Don: You remember how he prayed God would show you one specific lesson to take away from the week? That's it. A word that runs deep. That I've already applied about 5 times in specific contexts.)
- **Visions & Pictures:** Super rare for me. Very common for some of my friends.
- **Dreams:** Has anyone ever had a dark dream, dare we say, "demonic"? Those are dreams sent by the evil one to intimidate us with discouragement or fear. There are normal dreams, demonic dreams, and heavenly dreams! God speaks through dreams.
- **Circumstances:** (2 Corinthians 2:12-14)
- **And More...** (physical sensations; signs & wonders, angelic messengers - you may have thought it was a person! Ha. That's what the writer of Hebrews says in 13:2)

Why does God speak to us?

- **Intimacy**
 - At Jesus baptism: "This is my Beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased." This in the word God speaks over his children.
 - "Let me hear in the morning of your steadfast love, for in you I trust." (Psalm 143:8)
 - Ultimately, every word God speaks, whether through Scripture or another way, is a word that helps us know him. Every word reveals his love.
- **Direction**
 - **We need wisdom!**
 - "Make me know the way I should go, for to you I lift up my soul." (Psalm 143:8)
 - James 1:5 - God tells us we should ask for wisdom and expect that he will give us wisdom. Wait? How does he give it? By his Spirit.
 - We need wisdom to live like Jesus in our pursuit of holiness, and we need wisdom as we live his...
- **Mission**
 - Moses (Exodus 3)
 - Philip (Acts 8:26-40)
 - Paul (Acts 16:6-10)

You are probably asking: how can we learn to listen? Let me be clear. There is no formula. This is all about relationship. The more you walk with Jesus, the more you will grow in hearing his voice.

Develop an EAR to Hear

Expect: Expect God to speak to you regularly.

- Be an active listener. Consider all of the ways he speaks, especially the Bible, and listen for his personal voice.
- His heart speaking to your heart, what a beautiful reality!
- Do you expect God to speak to you day by day?

Ask: Ask God to speak to you about specific things.

- Simply ask God a question. "God, what do you want to share with me today?" "God, what area of my heart do you want to commend? (Not condemn!) "God, what area of my heart do you want to correct?"
- Seth Barnes calls this: "Listening Prayer." He gives a simple process that I find helpful (from *The Art of Listening Prayer*):
 1. When you are ready, quiet yourself and examine your heart (pray for a humble heart that wants to receive anything the Lord wants to share).
 2. Then ask God to speak to you clearly. It's often good to begin by reading Scripture. Ask the Lord to speak to you through it.
 3. Next, write down your questions for prayer: "What do you want to say to me today? How can I live these words more carefully? Who can I share this with?"
 4. Then pause, wait and listen. He may direct you to another passage of Scripture. He may share a tender word. Whatever you feel he may be saying to you, write it down.

Don't be frustrated if you don't hear anything specific. It may that God will speak to you later in the day or the week. Again, there is no formula, just a Father who wants to love his daughters and sons!

Revere: Commit to live before God with reverence. "God, I am available and ready to obey."

- We think we want God to speak, until he gives us an uncomfortable instruction! That can be a barrier.
- Here's another: So many times we want God to speak to us, but we look back and realize we didn't take the last step he told us to take!

As we LEARN TO LISTEN, we want to weigh each word. (Whether it comes to us personally or through another person. As Paul says in 1 Thessalonians 5:19-21 says, "Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies, but test everything; hold fast what is good." & 1 Corinthians 14:29 also instructs us: "Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others weigh what is said.")

Let me give you another tool for weighing each word.

Five Filters for Discerning God's Voice

- **God's Word: Does this align with Scripture? (Psalm 119:105)**
- **God's Son: Does this bring me/others closer to Jesus? (Mark 8:34)**
- **God's People: What do wise Christians say about this? (Prov. 13:20)**
- **God's Spirit: Does God's Spirit affirm this in my spirit? (Romans 8:16)**
- **God's Glory: Would this bring God glory? (1 Cor. 10:31)**

2. The Spirit's purpose is to point us to Jesus (16:14).

The work of the Spirit is Christocentric. He will draw attention not to himself, but to Christ.

The glory goes to Jesus. The Spirit wants to draw us closer and closer to Jesus.

Every word... HIM
 Every comfort... him
 Every direction... him

HE WILL speak. As we hear his voice, WE WILL point others to glory of Jesus. This is the Spirit-filled life!

Conclusion:

I want to conclude our time by giving you some space to learn to listen...

INVITE BAND.

This may feel a little awkward... that's okay. Two questions.

- What area of my life do you want to strengthen, heal, and renew through the good news?
- Who is one person I can invite for Easter Sunday (in person or online)?