

## **“Tools for Hearing God’s Voice” John 10:1-11**

“The hearing ear and the seeing eye, the Lord has made them both.” (Proverbs 20:12)

### **John 15:1-11 (Read)**

#### **The Point: Jesus goes before us and leads us with his voice.**

John 10 gives us a picture of how Jesus relates to his people. It is rooted in OT texts like Jeremiah 23 & Ezekiel 34 where God calls his leaders to serve his people like shepherds. BUT most of all, it is rooted in the heart of God. God is the ultimate shepherd of his people, as David penned in Psalm 23: “The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside...”

And if I can go ahead and give you a major spoiler alert... by Jesus saying: “I AM the GOOD SHEPHERD,” he provides two, not one, but two allusions to his divine nature. “I AM” (Exodus 3:14) God’s divine name, YHWH, (which is recorded 7 times in the Gospel of John, twice here in John 10) and GOOD SHEPHERD (Psalm 23). There is so much we could look at in John chapter 10, but today I want to draw our attention to how Jesus, as our Good Shepherd, goes before us and leads us with his voice.

#### **1. The voice of Jesus calls us to follow him (10:1-3).**

- Jesus contrasts his leadership with the religious leaders of his day in verses 1-2. Yes, Jesus is calling the Pharisees and scribes who refused to believe in him and led the people astray by their man-made teaching “thieves and robbers.” Chapter 9 provides a prime example of their blindness to the truth of God.
- Jesus says, “Those who are God’s sheep, his true people, hear my voice.” Look at verse 3.
- What a beautiful statement of God’s personal, intimate love that we see and receive when we place our faith in Jesus Christ.
  - Effectual Calling: The reason a person follows Jesus is because they hear God calling them to follow in a personal way that responds by saying: “That’s for ME! God loves ME! Jesus died for ME!” The general call of salvation goes to all people, but the Holy Spirit has to make that call come alive in the hearts of people, help them see who Jesus is, what he’s done, and why that matters for them. That’s the effectual calling of the Spirit. “No one can come to me unless the Father draws him” (John 6:44)
  - Personal: “he calls his own sheep by name.” God’s love for you is not generic. It’s personal. It’s intimate. He knows your name! Revelation 2:17 says Jesus will give us a new name that no one else knows except the one who receives it.” It does not get any more intimate than that!
- The voice of Jesus call us to follow him!

T: But Jesus does not call us to follow him and say, “You’re on your own. Good luck!” No...

#### **2. The voice of Jesus leads us into life every day (10:4-11).**

- Look at verse 4: “When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice.”

- This is the essence of Christianity. This is the essence of discipleship. “Follow me...” “Follow me...” “Follow me...” Jesus blazes the trail. We follow behind. He ascends the mountain. We follow behind. Jesus finds green pastures and still waters. We get to enjoy by following him.

Three truths from this text we can't miss.

- 1) Jesus has a distinct, familiar voice.
  - Colin Kruse says, “In fact, when a sheep is bought from one owner and placed with different sheep in its new owner’s courtyard, it experiences great trauma for the first few days. It hears the voice of a shepherd calling out the sheep in the mornings, but it is not the voice to which it is accustomed, and it runs from him, even though it is desperate to get out to the countryside to graze.”
  - God’s voice is recognizable, and it is personal. He knows her name. If my dad call me right now from an unknown number, I would recognize his voice if my mom call me for 109 number, I would recognize her voice if my sister called me from a new number, I would recognize her voice if my wife called me from another number I would recognize her voice. Sheep do not follow a strangers voice.
    - Satan’s Voice... Deceives. (Where is this going to take me?)
    - Discourages. (Does this encourage or discourage me?)
    - Doubts (Does this increase or decrease my faith?)
    - Destroys (Does the build me up or tear me down?)
  - He goes before us. God leads us personally, intimately.
  - How do we follow? We know his voice. Jesus emphasizes this in verses 3, 4, 5, & 16 & 27. (Read)
- 2) Jesus leads us by going before us every day.
  - The implication of this picture is that it is constant, ongoing leadership. Sheep need a shepherd, not one day, but every day. Let’s take a closer look at the text.
    - In verse 3, “he leads them.” Present Active Indicative. He leads them and continues to lead them.
    - In verse 4, “the sheep follow him.” Present Active Indicative. The sheep follow him and continue to follow him.
    - In verse 27, “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.” It does not say, “My sheep hear my voice, and they know me, and they follow me.”
      - What is more important: your knowledge of Jesus or his knowledge of you?
      - When it comes to following Jesus, what’s more important: His knowledge of you or your knowledge of him?
      - My dad was my HS basketball coach. No one knew me better than he knew me. He knows you! He knows you! He knows everything about you. He knows your strengths and your weaknesses. Your gifts and your limitations. He knows what you love and and what you hate. He knows you completely.
      - We are not just seeking God. God is seeking us. We are not just speaking to God. God is speaking to us! We are not just loving God. God is loving us.
      - “And they follow me...” This is in the present tense and communicates a continual, habitual, day by day following.
- 3) Jesus leads us into life.
  - John 10:10 is one of my favorite verses in the Bible. Not just eternal life, abundant life, now and forever!!

T: Verse 11 explains how all this is possible... but we need to ask and answer some questions...

## **Does God Still Speak? (Closer look)**

Concerns:

- Subjective: Bible = objective truth. What I believe God said to me, not written in Scripture, inherently subjective. We'll cover this concern with a tool on how to discern God's voice.
- Dangerous: "God told me to..."
- Theological: Canon is closed. Undermines sufficiency of Scripture. We believe in the absolute authority, inerrancy, truthfulness, trustworthiness, clarity, and sufficiency of the Bible.

Dallas Willard puts it like this: "The close of the scriptural canon marks the point in the (still ongoing) divine-human conversation where the principles and doctrines that form the substance of the Christian faith and practice are so adequately stated in human language that nothing more needs to be said in general. Biblical Christians believe that nothing further will be said by God to extend or contradict those principles. But biblical Christians are not just people who hold certain beliefs *about* the Bible. They are also people who *lead the kind of life demonstrated in the Bible: a life of personal, intelligent interaction with God*. Anything less than this makes a mockery of the priesthood of the believer."

Arguments for God speaking to us personally now, today.

- **Theological: Father, Son, Spirit**
  - God is Father. Fathers speak words of instruction & encouragement for specific situations. Fathers sing over their children. How much of a relationship do you have with someone who never talks to you?
  - Jesus is our Good Shepherd. When I counsel people about decisions or through trials, I almost always quote or pray John 10 & Romans 8:14.
  - The Holy Spirit:
    - "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, 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. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you." (John 16:12-15)
    - Acts 13:1-3 - The Spirit said, "Set apart Paul and Barnabas for the work to which I have called them." (Moving to Boston...)
- **Relational: Friendship with God**
  - "The friendship of the Lord is with those who fear him." (Psalm 25:14)
  - "God spoke to Moses as a friend speaks with a friend." (Exodus 33:11)
  - "Enoch walked with God and was no more, for God took him." (Genesis 5:24)
- **Salvation: Justification & Sanctification** - We need to hear God's voice to begin a relationship with Jesus, and we need God's guidance to follow him daily.
- **Wisdom: Navigating our Broken World.** - Does the Bible tell you everything you need to do in every situation? Yes it gives us commands. Yes, it gives us wisdom principles, but the application of that wisdom and direction for the specific decisions we need to make often come from hearing God's still small voice.
- **Scripture: Story of the Bible** - Adam in the garden to new creation with him forever.
- **Prayer: Conversational Guidance** - When you pray, do you expect answers. How do those come?
- **Spiritual Warfare: Lies of Satan vs. Truth of God** - If the devil can lie to us, can God not speak the truth to us. If the devil can deceive us, can God not lead us?

## How God Speaks

Random Verse Method... Open the Bible, point,  
Open Door Method (if the door opens, it's God!)  
Fleece Method (Gideon - God, if you do this, I'll do that).

**That was for you.**

**Examples...**

- **Scripture**

- #1! This is why last week was so important, and why this week follows last week. The Spirit never speaks in contradiction to the Scripture. He inspired it after all.
- BUT... I need the Spirit to speak to me about the Spirit-inspired Word. Otherwise, they are little more than words on a page. I need the Spirit to illumine my understanding and bring conviction over how I put what I understand into practice.
- Over and over again the Scripture quotes the Scripture.
- God also brings specific Scripture to mind in a particular situation for a particular person, including ourselves. "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 that I have said to you." (John 14:26)
- Do you ever read the Scripture and someone pops into your mind, with the thought... this is for them...?
  - 3 people in the past 4 months have pointed me to a fairly obscure statement in John 1 (2 directly, 1 indirectly - deeply personal each time). I'm not that smart. I may not have the greatest gift of discernment, but I'm pretty sure God wanted me to hear that! His word, coming through his people to build me up.

- **People (Through Others)**

- Ananias. (Acts 9)
- Prayers. Songs.
  - Kevin Dunlap. Sunday morning...
- Prophetic words. RI Story...

- **Impressions**

- "Talk to somebody. Pray for somebody." "Linger longer."
- "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. If we were able to immediately recognize his voice, the Christian walk would only be a matter of obedience. Discernment and wisdom would not play such an important role in our lives. However, the fact is that we refine our senses by focusing on them. That is how a blind person refines the senses of touch and hearing far beyond the level of those of us who see. He focuses on them." - Seth Barnes
- Some people call these God whispers. Or nudges, promptings
- Sometimes we use this kind of language: "I felt God lead me to..." "God put it on my heart to..." "God gripped my soul..." "That one word. That one sentence." (E.G. Heaven Taken by Storm: "Glory renders us intensely zealous.")

- **Words**

- "Pray 2x more." (Marsha, last month - 5/5/21)
- "Tanner, you are driven, but not desperate." (March of 2015ish)
- Rhode Island story...

- Sometimes he just needs to say a word. Maybe two...“Rest.” “You’re loved.” “I’m here.” “I AM.” “Ask.”
- **Visions & Pictures**
  - **Picture.**
  - **Rare for me. Frequent for a good friend of mine.**
- **Dreams**
  - Is every dream a message from God? No.
  - Are some? Probably. Ask the question. “God, is there anything for me to hear in that dream?”
- **Circumstances**
  - 2 Corinthians 2:12-14

Other ways...

- Angels
- Signs & Wonders
- Physical Sensation

We have no indication in Scripture God would stop speaking in these ways, but we have great reasons to believe he will continue speaking to us.

What does God speak to us about? Anything! Truth, holiness, direction, decision-making, those matters of wisdom, about other people/4 other people, Ministry assignments mission, personal words of love counsel

T: But help me practically, Tanner...

## **Tools for Hearing God’s Voice**

### **Develop an EAR to Hear**

- **Expect**
  - Posture - Humility, Availability (Heart)
    - “Here I am, Lord”
    - Abraham (Genesis 22), Jacob (Genesis 31:11, 46:2), Moses (Exodus 3:4), Samuel (1 Samuel 3:4-8), Isaiah (6:8), Ananias (9:10)
    - God is really interested in availability.
    - “Availability is an indicator of the depth of your friendship.” - Justin Kendrick
    - “Speak, for your servant listens.”
      - I’m going to sit here until I hear from you.
  - Surrender...
    - When we come with an agenda, it will always distort our ability to hear his voice.
    - God, do you want me to have that job? Of course, the pay is better, the hours are better, the boss is better, the location is better, the company is better. God, I HEARRR your voice!”
    - God, I want what you want.
    - [[A.T Pierson says this about surrender: “Where this holy habit of the mind exists, the whole being becomes so open to an impression, that without any outward outward sign or token there’s an inward recognition and choice of the will of God. In other words, my heart becomes postured in a place where I can hear him.”]]
  - Place: Silence.
  - Time. \*\*1M minutes with God. This week builds on last week.
    - Linger in his presence.

- Prayer meetings. Worship nights. Sunday services. (“Worship your way to revival.” (2018))
- “The person that does not expect to hear God, won’t. Because every single time God speaks, they will just discount it as their own idea.” A.W. Tozer
- **Ask**
  - Specific questions...
    - Who?
      - Shoulder Tap.
      - Story of “Recent Guest at RHC” - pray for him...
    - What?
    - When?
      - Mark Killoren - Him. Now.
    - How?
    - Where?
  - The Listening Prayer Process
    - 1. When you are ready, quiet yourself and examine your heart. It’s often good to begin by reading Scripture. Ask the Lord to speak to you through it.
    - 2. Ask the Lord to protect you in Jesus’ name from deception.
    - 3. Ask him to speak clearly in a way that you can understand, and to confirm anything he shared with you in Scripture.
    - 4. Next, write down your questions for prayer.
    - 5. Then pause. This is where you wait and listen. The Lord has much to say to you. 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. (Seth Barnes) *The Art of Listening Prayer*
  - Grab a journal...
    - Write down ...
- **Revere**
  - God, my life is yours. I’m available.
  - God, what you say goes. I’m obedient.
  - As you walk with him daily, let his Word dwell in you, and listen to his voice, you will discover that God delights to speak to you anywhere at anytime!
  - Are you living for self or God? Are you listening to his voice first or the voice of others?

Our limited communication with God has absolutely nothing to do with his willingness to speak, [but] has everything to do with our pursuit of an EAR to hear.

### **Five Filters for Discerning God’s Voice**

- **God’s Word: Does this align with Scripture? (Psalm 119:105)**
  - **“Your word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path.” (Psalm 119:105)**
  - As we know the Bible, we can discern the voice of the Spirit.
  - It is impossible for God to contradict himself.
    - God’s twitter feed has never been hacked.
    - God has never said: “whoops! I didn’t mean to say that.” God has never backtracked. God always speaks truth.
  - Is this affirmed in Scripture? (You’re praying for someone in your Group, and you see a picture of you washing their car.)

- Is it contrary to Scripture? (I can't believe what she said about me. I'm never going to talk to her again. Probably NOT from God. God is a God of mercy, love, relationship, forgiveness! Is God speaking to anyone right now? Did someone just pop into your mind? You might have just heard the voice of God. He might be saying: Call them this week.)
- Does this word strengthen, encourage, and comfort me? (1 Cor. 14:3)
- **God's Son: Does this bring me/others closer to Jesus? (Mark 8:34)**
  - "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me." (Mark 8:34)
  - "I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing." (John 15:5)
  - Discipleship...
- **God's People: What do wise Christians say about this? (Prov. 13:20)**
  - **"Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise." (Proverbs 13:20)**
  - "Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others weigh what is said." (1 Corinthians 14:29)
  - "Do not despise prophecies, but test everything; hold fast what is good." (1 Thess 5:20-21)
  - Notice, this does not say: "Talk to people who think just like you think." or "Talk to your best friend who always agrees with everything you say." Find people who know God's word, walk with God, live a life of prayer.
  - Do you know what is going to happen often in those conversations? "Let's pray about this together." Sure, sometimes it's a clear green light or a clear red light, but oftentimes, it's going to be a process of discerning in community, walking together.
- **God's Spirit: Does God's Spirit affirm this in my spirit? (Romans 8:16)**
  - God dwells within us to help us discern truth from error, right from wrong, good from evil, God's will from our will, God's voice from other voices.
  - **"For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. So you have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God's Spirit when he adopted you as his own children. Now we call him, "Abba, Father." For his Spirit joins with our spirit to affirm that we are God's children." (Romans 8:14-16, NLT)**
  - Does the Holy Spirit ever touch you in a clear, unmistakable way? Enoch... Tears! "Like that. Walk with me like that!"
- **God's Glory: Would this bring God glory? (1 Cor. 10:31)**
  - **"So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." (1 Corinthians 10:31)**
  - Ultimate mic drop verse.

Conclusion:

This is for everyone. If you follow Jesus, you should be thinking to yourself: "That's me!"

"God, may your voice be the clearest and the loudest (even when it's the softest voice)."

INVITE BAND UP!

Fight for Vision. "The whole earth IS full of his glory."

Fight to Listen. "My sheep hear my voice."

**The Point: Jesus goes before us and leads us with his voice.**

**And the Lord came and called as before, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel replied, "Speak, your servant is listening." (1 Samuel 3:10)**

Will you pray: "I'm available." Will you follow the promptings, pushes, nudges, impressions of the Holy Spirit?

"If you want to say this week, I'm available, would you just raise your hand..."

Use me. Speak to me. Speak through me.

PRAY...