

Part 2 of 3: HEARING GOD'S VOICE

Ways the Eternal speaks to us

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by Philip Shields

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Abstract: Yahweh, the living and true God, regularly speaks to each of His children. He has not gone silent. If we're not hearing His voice, we're the ones at fault. This sermon explains how we miss hearing God's voice. We mention specific methods the Eternal uses to communicate with His family once we have the gift of the Spirit. This 3 part sermon shows how to sharpen our spiritual hearing by recognizing the ways and means God uses to communicate to us.

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(TRACK 1: Introduction)

Greetings again, brethren. How often do you wished God would just speak to you, personally? Yes, we do wish that. Brethren, in this 3 part series that started as a personal study for me, I've come to see that God *is* often speaking and communicating with each of us. The problem is, we're not tuned in and ready to hear, or don't know what to expect. So many times, the Christ exhorts us to listen, to hear what He is saying: "He who has an ear to hear, let him hear."

But most of us – if we're honest – feel God has been mostly silent to us. Nothing tries our faith more than having prayed and prayed, but to feel like He is remaining silent to our petitions and pleas. If I've described you, then please listen carefully to this sermon.

Also let me quickly mention that Passover is coming soon and please use the sermons already on the website – even going back to 2004, 2005 and so on – to be focusing on Passover type messages. I'll try to give more this year also. For that matter, hearing God is a good topic for this season too.

We are not saying you'll hear voices or see beings who appear and disappear before your eyes. But, on the other hand, Moses, Abraham, David, the disciples, and many people did literally hear God's voice and see angelic beings who appeared and disappeared before them – even in New Covenant times.

Hearing a voice? All Israel heard the literal voice of God thunder the 10 Words (10 Commandments) from Mt. Sinai. Certainly both the old and new covenants are replete with stories of people seeing and dealing with angelic beings. God doesn't change. But I'll be primarily talking about other ways of communicating other than by literal voices and sightings.

So don't worry, I've not gone off the deep end here. But God is not silent, He is speaking, and He may even send visions and angels, so don't totally discount that method of communicating either.

Key point: There are times God chooses to be silent, but most of the time, His perceived silence is not His lack of speaking to us, but our lack of hearing Him, or knowing **HOW** to hear Him, when He does speak. He is a loving Father and Jesus is a devoted husband-to-be – both very happy to speak to us and Yahweh loves knowing we are eager to hear His voice.

Last Sabbath our personal phone line rang. It was our 3-year old grandson thousands of miles away. His sweet young voice went straight to the task at hand: "Poppy, get on the computer... hurry Poppy" – then he hung up the phone, his message was done. He wanted Poppy (me) to get on Skype – a computer screen sharing technology that uses a digital camera on the computer to allow both sides to see and hear the other. But my point is: I enjoyed the fact he took the initiative to call me and wanted to hear Poppy's voice as much as he wanted to talk to us. I grabbed my wife, and of course we enjoyed hearing our grandson speak, sing, laugh, and giggle. We even watched him dance. It was wonderful.

Is this something that Almighty Father enjoys when we pray or talk to Him?

But I also enjoyed watching Grey's reaction when I would say something to him. I would make faces at him, or say funny things, and he would giggle – and I just loved every second of it. It's the same way with Juliana, our granddaughter, as we interact with her. I love watching her giggle or laugh or respond some how to what we're doing and saying.

In the same way, Almighty Father, our Heavenly Abba or Daddy, *enjoys* watching our reaction when we hear His voice. I now He wants us to get real good at hearing Him. I think it frustrates God when the connection isn't good. Frequently. Sometimes with Greyson, the Skype connection gets garbled or there's some static on the line. I get frustrated because my grandson doesn't understand me, or I can't hear or see him well either. So we have to stop, fine tune the signal and connections – and then we're good to go again.

As I felt my own frustration, it made me realize my dear Abba also dearly wants me to hear and understand Him as well – and we need to be sure the signal is correctly tuned in and we're on the right wavelength, just like a receiver, or phone call. Yahweh is talking, and He wants us to have a strong connection, a good signal. If we're not hearing Him, we're not dialed in right!

That's what this sermon is about. Part 2 – We'll cover today and next time How to hear God's Voice.

Communing with God is interactive. I'll cover that in depth in this sermon later. Its 2- way experience. The more we take time to seek Him out and talk to Him, the more we will actually become aware of the many ways He talks to us. In these historic times as we come to the last of the last days before the return of the Messiah, we must hone this skill of hearing the voice of God. Just don't listen to the Devil's thoughts and temptations that we don't somehow don't deserve to hear the Almighty's word for us. Satan will make us question how we would dare to think we could possibly hear God's voice. It's from the Adversary. Abba wants you to get real good at hearing Him.

So as you walk with me down this exhilarating journey of discovering the voice of God more and more in our lives – don't get sidetracked. Don't get discouraged. It's a lifelong journey. We never perfectly learn it – we just keep getting better and better at it.

Let me take a few minutes review in a quick summary what we covered last time, to set the stage for this part 2 of the sermon:

- As times become ever more perilous the closer we get to the return of Messiah, the more we will have to be sure we are hearing His voice.
- Beware of those who claim to have heard God and who have a message for you – if their message, or your message for that matter, doesn't square with Scripture or God's way. God warns us about false ministers claiming to speak for Him
- God has to gift us with the ability to spiritually hear Him. It's not something we're born with or can do on our own. We also covered how God speaks *directly* to us. He does not require that we hear from him only through prophets or ordained ministers.
- *We spoke of 5 reasons WHY we need to get very proficient at hearing God's voice* – including the fact He tells us to hear Him and we need His guidance. Those who hear Him have passed from death into life; It identifies us as being “of God” and being sheep of His pasture; It brings Yahweh great, great joy to talk to us and to see us enjoying hearing from Him; And we are going to be judged by what we have the opportunity to hear. I also covered how we either use our gift of spiritual hearing, or we lose it (Luke 8:18).
- We also covered how Yahweh speaks to us today through His Son, Jesus the Christ, or Yahshua the Messiah through His Spirit that dwells in us (Heb 1:1-2). Today and next time, we'll get into the many ways how this happens.
- We defined that “hearing God” is more than just hearing the words and the sound of the words. To “hear God” is to understand His message and then to obediently act and obey it. If we don't act on it, it's no different – even worse in fact – than not ever having heard at all. God is speaking to us all the time. The more we don't act on what He tells us He wants us to do in every day situations, the fainter and fainter His voice becomes.

(TRACK 2) Some Reasons We Don't Hear God's Voice strongly

Last time I ended by giving you an assignment to think through and write down various things we do which keep us from hearing God. How did you do with that assignment?

There are actually dozens of things we do that keeps God voice from being heard. Your list could be very valid and may have better and more points than mine. Here are a few summary points I came up with. I'm sure there are many more.

- Remember **John 8:47** – we need to be “of God” to hear God. We're his family, led by His spirit. *Without the Holy Spirit, you will never hear God* unless God is directly dealing with you like He did Balaam, or Belshazzar in the book of Daniel, or Saul on the way to Damascus. Normally, we need God's spirit either in us or with us, to see, hear and understand spiritual things. Unbaptized persons responding to God's call do have the spirit with them, and upon baptism, it will be in them. A good verse that says this is **John 14:17**.
- *We're too far from the One speaking.* Volume decreases with distance. (Taking a tour... loud noises, unless got up close, could not hear the tour guide). In spiritual terms, unrepented sin and pride distance Yahweh from us. distances us from Yahweh? Sin does (Isaiah 59:1-2). Our

sins will withhold good from us (Jer. 5:25) and put a distance between us. Repent, seek God, come close to Him – and He will draw near to you – and you'll hear Him better (James 4:8).

- *Not being ready to hear God's voice.* In John 16:12, Jesus said to his disciples: "I have many things to say to you, *but you cannot bear them now*". Just like our own children, some things they don't hear from us, or we know they can't grasp some things until they mature. So we need to grow up more in Him, to hear more of what He wants to share with us.
- This one's awful, but true: Some don't hear God because they really don't care to that much; they're not that interested. Someone could be speaking, but if we're not interested, we don't hear the message though we may be aware of sound.
- Not asking. The Bible says "you have not for you ask not". Matthew 7:7 tells us to be sure to ask. Have you actually asked God to speak to you and asked Him to give you spiritual hearing?
- We will hear God's voice more as we also seek to talk to Him more. Isn't it true that you are more likely to call, write, or email a person who shows some interest, desire and effort to call, write or email you? The more we pray and seek spiritual things, the more we'll hear God.
- *We won't hear Someone, anyone, if we're dead or asleep.* The Sardis types are almost dead or dying (Rev 3). All 10 virgins in the last days sleep (Matt 25:1-8).
- *We won't hear God's voice if He is turned off of us – by our pride, for example.* There are so many verses which warn us that pride separates us from God. If you're not hearing God, have you turned *Him* off!? That's much like saying we can't hear the radio, but someone looks at it and says, "You've turned it off, that's why". I think this is a deeper point than many will grasp at first. We simply have turned God off. We did it.
- *We can't hear someone, anyone, well if there is too much noise and distraction.* When you really, really want to hear someone, what do we say to people loudly talking? "Shhhh! I can't hear him". God tells us so often to be still, to be quiet, in order to be able to hear God. Another way of saying it: We're too busy, sometimes even doing the Master's work. My father told me when I was a young minister, "Don't get so busy serving the Lord that you forget to stop and listen to the Lord". That's what a lot of the parable of sower was about – the cares of this life, worries, distractions, the busy-ness of life. Don't be a "Martha" in this case.

Everyone around the world walks around with an Ipod or a cell phone plugged into their ear. Non-stop noise, talk shows, music, blogs – and noise is one of Satan's tools. Stop, slow down, quiet down, turn the TV off a lot more often, turn the radio off a lot more often – and you might be surprised how many times you will hear God communicating with you. Jesus, John the baptizer, Moses, Elijah – and so many find God in the wilderness, away from the hustle bustle of cities.

Sometimes I just step outside on to the porch or the back deck of our home and in the darkness of the evening, I look up to the stars and ... listen. Proof of God is all around us. In the trees, when the geese fly overhead – I feel the presence of their creator, and I'm in tune to that, and I listen, and I feel for Him. In such times like those, as we'll see as we get further along, you may hear the voice of God.

- How about this one? *We don't hear God because we don't understand how to hear God.* God's talking, I assure you. Many simply haven't learned how to dial him in, how to tune the receiver, as it were. A friend of mine in Australia sent me an email about the importance of checking the dials and how we've tuned in or if the frequency has gotten bumped off a bit. We need to be sure we're dialed in to God's wavelength. We'll talk all about that shortly.
- Fear of this whole subject has kept many from learning about it. Some of us were raised to fear being quiet, to fear clearing our head, to fear meditation. Too bad.
- Refusing God's voice – by refusing the various ways God is talking to you. That comes later in this sermon.
- This last point I'll use is very important: ***We don't hear God well when we're not being responsive to the times when God has already spoken to us.*** Would you keep talking to someone who won't respond to what you're saying? God says He does keep trying, but at some point, if we're not hearing God, it's our fault. Just like the air waves are constantly full of sound, music and voices – we won't hear any of it if we don't turn our receiver (radio) on.

[TRACK 3] Holy Spirit, being “the right kind of soil”, and humility coupled with desire

We covered in Part 1, how 1 Cor. 2:11, 14 is clear that spiritual understanding comes only by God's spirit. Remember also that to each of the 7 churches of Revelation 2-3, the scripture says to hear “what the Spirit has to say to the churches”.

God speaks to us through His Son (Hebrews 1:1-2), through the Spirit. Keep that in mind. Remember Jesus had said earlier – John 8:47 – that “you *can't* hear me because you're not of God”. Paul puts it another way: “Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ is none of His” (Romans 8:9). In Romans 8:14, he defines “sons (or children) of God” as those who “are led by the Spirit” and verses in 1 John say those “of God” obey Him and walk as He walked. So to be “of God” we must have God's spirit, and let the Spirit lead and direct us, as we obediently follow.

So be sure you have the Holy Spirit. It is the key that unlocks the puzzle. It is the vehicle Yahweh uses to communicate to our hearts and mind.

Once that's in place, we have to have to want to hear God, want to be receptive, we don't want to miss a single word, nuance or gesture.

Our effectiveness in hearing God is described in Scripture as being somewhat akin to the effectiveness of seed taking root in various kinds of settings. Remember the Parable of the Sower in Matthew 13? The seed is the word of God. Jesus (Yahshua) is also the Word of God. Remember the stony ground, the ground covered with thorns, and the wayside areas – these did not produce fruit because the seed could not be deeply planted. The people represented by those types of “soils” represent mind sets that could not properly receive the seed, protect it and cover it with enough good soil, to let it germinate and grow into a plant producing its fruit. Only the seed in the good soil produced much fruit.

What kind of SOIL are we – in this analogy? Receptive soil is a humble heart, a teachable spirit. Before starting the day, ask God to help you be receptive to Him, like good soil receiving fertile seed. James 1:21 says to receive with meekness the implanted word. Nor should we deceive ourselves and be hearers only – but doers of the word, as we discussed in part 1. If we don't do, we are hearers only, deceiving ourselves, and we didn't really hear Him at all.

So before Bible study, ask Him to speak to you. Before hearing a sermon, ask Yahweh to inspire your hearing. The man who asked the opening prayer for services the other day did that very thing. As you hear the opening prayer, in your heart be in agreement, saying "Yes, Master, open my heart to you today..." Don't be daydreaming during the prayer. You participate in it with active agreement if it is a right prayer.

To hear God we have to want to hear Him, have to be humble enough to be teachable by Him – by whatever method or by what sort of person Yahweh chooses to use to tell us something. Remember this, as we'll develop it a lot as we go through the sermon.

Can you think of good examples of a teachable attitude?

- **Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8:30-32.** A high ranking member of the government was humble enough to invite someone into his ride to help him understand the book of Isaiah. Be honest. Would you and I have done that? I know some days I wouldn't have . . . and so have had to repent.

- Over a dozen times, David and the other writers of the Psalms plead with God to teach them. Let me read one or two. Just jot down Ps. 25:4-5; Ps 27:11; 86:11.

Psalm 25:4-5

*"Show me Your ways, O LORD; Teach me Your paths. ⁵ Lead me in Your truth and teach me, For You *are* the God of my salvation; On You I wait all the day."*

Ps. 143:5-10 is another great passage. V 8- "Cause me to hear you"...v. 10- Teach me to do your will.... Lead me..."

Here's where pride will keep God from talking to us. I think all of us would say we are willing to hear God, if we knew that Yahweh in fact was the one speaking to us. But God often talks to us through His body, through "other" people, and that's where our pride comes in. We could think – and God hears our hearts -- "Why I've been in the church for 40 years, and he's only 31, so what could he possibly teach me?"

Now admit it! You've thought that at times, and I've thought that many times – and those times have kept you and me from being humble enough to receive seed of God's word! We became like a wayside ground, or stony ground with a stony heart!

The *best* example of wanting to hear God and be taught and to live by, and talk about, what Father in heaven wants, what He believes, what He says is the right thing – the best example is Jesus, or as I prefer, Yahshua himself. He said over and over that the words He spoke were not His words; that He spoke as He heard from Father (John 8:25-28). "I speak to the world those things I heard from Him" (v.26)

Once our attitude is teachable and receptive, and once we're asking to be able to tune in, to hear, God's words for us, we're ready to review some of the many, many ways Yahweh communicates with us.

Hearing God starts with being led by His Holy Spirit, and being "in Him" (hear my series on this), and then having a heart and mind that is like good, healthy soil ready for the seed. Now we can get somewhere when all this is first in place.

If you get one, just one good point that will help you hear God better, then hearing this message will have accomplished its purpose. I'd love to hear back if you did or not get anything useful.

[TRACK 4] GOD SPEAKS THROUGH INTERACTIVE PRAYER AND Study of Scriptures

I actually am going to cut out 2 more pages of notes on this point, because I think many of us instinctively know that surely if God were to speak to us, He would do so by His Holy Scriptures, and during and right after times of prayer. But still, let me say some important points about this.

Is your praying interactive – or a long monologue with you doing all the talking?

Do you know what I mean by interactive? As I've discussed this with various ones, I get a surprised look when I ask people if they stop many times while praying to just listen for a reply. If you're having a conversation with someone, but it turns into a monologue with you doing all the talking, how will you ever hear anything from the other person? I think too many of our prayers are like that: we do all the talking and then wonder why the Creator true God seemingly doesn't speak to us.

But prayer should have moments where you talk, and moments when Yahweh speaks. That's how I pray anyway. Prayer is a two-way conversation, not a monologue or an endless repetition of memorized words. It's not even the "Our Father" prayer said over and over. That was an outline. God wants our hearts, not our memory cards. Many of you hearing this are fathers, mothers or grandparents. And I hope you're all human! None of us would like anyone, let alone our children and grandchildren coming to us with memorized lists and words. We want a real conversation with someone's heart! Talk to your Maker. Really talk to Him. That also means really be interested to hear what HE says to you in return. And He we – if you give Him a chance.

Anytime we pray, let's ask in the beginning that we'll be attentive to Yahweh's voice, even *as* we pray. Did you get that? "Even as we pray". I'm calling this interactive prayer. It's a conversation where we speak, but where we also spend time listening. *So I pray with a notebook and pen beside me*, ready to listen, ready to heed. This way I can record the thoughts coming to me when I'm inviting God to speak, inviting Him to correct and instruct and encourage me.

If this is the one point you get from this sermon – pray with some silent pauses for a minute here and there as you pray, and always have a prayer notebook and pen with you to record what you feel God is saying to you. If this is a new concept, then this sermon will have been worthwhile for you.

HOW does He speak to us? One big, huge way is in a strong thought "out of nowhere". A strong desire, a strong feeling to do something, to say something, or to remain silent, or to call or write

someone. Remember last sermon I talked about calling the man who had robbed a Safeway, that's years ago now. Did I hear a voice? No. But I had a definite feeling to call him. When I responded and obeyed, it strengthened the channels of communication with Father. Again, always, always test the Spirit's message to be sure it is from the true God.

Sometimes the thoughts and feelings come at times when we're about to sin, or do something foolish or unkind – and God speaks to us in feelings to leave a place, to not go into a place, to be kind to someone who has been hard on you – or to tell someone, "I'm sorry". If we don't act on those, we're distancing ourselves from our Maker and His voice will get fainter and fainter.

Many times I don't even know why I have to do something – but if it's not a sin, I'm learning to follow those deep feelings and urges. For example, one day I was praying as I often do that Yahweh protect us as we traveled. I'm on the freeway, and suddenly get an urge, a strong message, to get off the freeway, now. So I did. Now it would be exciting if I could tell you that moments later there was a massive pileup that I avoided, but no- that didn't happen. But I still obeyed. The point is, perhaps by moving off the freeway when I did, God may have averted me perhaps being hit by someone who was falling asleep at the wheel. It wasn't wrong to leave the freeway, so I've learned to follow those "hunches". Many times I wish I had, when I disregard them.

If you don't feel good about a stranger, or feel like you should leave an area – obey those hunches. It could be the Holy Spirit talking to you, deep down in your gut.

So there will be times you don't understand why you're being told something. Some of these times may seem like mistaken communications. One time I called my Mom at 2 a.m. because I had a strong urge to call her, as if she was in trouble. She said she was OK. But I'm sure my Mom had Sleep Apnea. Perhaps my phone call awakened her and kept her from dying before her time, who knows? I'd rather respond and even appear silly – than not respond and be disobedient.

But then there are dozens of times when following the Master's leading would yield answers long afterwards. Why did I go to the UK for college? If I hadn't, I wouldn't have married Carole nor had the children or grandchildren I now have.

It's all part of trusting Father that He IS working in your life, He IS overseeing everything, and He IS telling us His will – if we but have ears to hear.

All this is just to say – when you pray and do Bible study – give God an opportunity to talk to you even as you pray. Expect Him to tell you things. Have the notebook and pen handy as you pray.

Something else: when you're done praying to Yahweh each day, don't get right up off your knees. Stay a while and let Abba (Father) speak to you now.

I don't mean in audible voices, but in strong thoughts and feelings and ideas. It's His turn, although frankly I feel God speaks to me all through a prayer session if – big if – if my heart's right, if I'm coming with a teachable heart, and if I'm asking Him to talk to me. I need to be asking Him to "teach me Master, show me, and help me to hear you, dear Abba, my dearest fondest true Daddy..." . Then take a few minutes of silence remaining on your knees, receptive to His guidance.

It's in having quiet expectancy and being finely tuned in – when we will often receive answers to our questions and requests. Have that pen and notebook ready! It's not something you can force. Some days I feel I'm getting God's thoughts flowing through me much more than other days. Some days not at all. I usually feel like that's my fault. Or perhaps I'm not ready yet for what He really wants to tell me.

I even often prepare *sermons* on my knees, including this one, with a notepad and pen, as I pray about a particular subject. I ask, I seek, I knock – and then I wait silently, as I pray. I'm waiting expectantly with pen and pad in hand. SO many times, when I have made my mind receptive, tears flow to my eyes as I'm humbled to see Almighty answer that prayer. I start to write, and write, and write – thoughts and scriptures that are being given to me while I'm on my knees.

The same principle applies to Bible study – or study of the Scriptures. Be ready to **HEAR YAHWEH AS YOU STUDY OF HIS HOLY SCRIPTURES**

Why do you study Scripture? The quick answer is everything mentioned in 2 Timothy 3.

As you turn there, let me remind you that I prefer to say “Scripture” rather than “Bible”. The word “Bible” is nowhere in the Scriptures if you look it up in English in a concordance. You will, however, find the words such as “book” or “books” and in the Greek it is “byblos” or similar.

The word “Bible” comes from the Greek word for the plural of book, or Byblos, or biblia, or biblion – depending on the tense and number of books. That Greek word traces its history back to the pagan city of **Byblos**, where books and scrolls were collected. The city had a giant library of papyrus scrolls – or books -- dedicated to the pagan god Adonis. Byblos was an ancient Phoenician port city 20 or so miles NNE of modern Beirut. From there the ancient papyrus scrolls were shipped throughout the Mediterranean.

So a scroll, or book, became associated with this city “Byblos”, and that's where we get the word “books” or “Bible” from. I don't think it is wrong to say “Bible” as some people believe, because the Greek word “Byblos” and “biblia” is all through the New Testament, and it is translated book, books, scroll, and so on. “Holy Bible” simply means “Holy Books”, but because of its association with Adonis, I often use the word “Scripture” instead. But let's keep in mind that Scripture itself uses the Greek word “byblos” to refer to books or scrolls.

2 Tim 3:15-17 gives us a short list of what we can receive from studying and ingesting Scripture:

2 Tim 3:15-17

“.... Know how to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the Living God. All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for *doctrine*, for *reproof*, for *correction*, for *instruction* in righteousness, **17** that the man of God may be *complete*, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

So we study – sure – for doctrinal purity. For correction and reproof. And to learn about righteousness, so we can be complete.

But it's even more. Someone who is a good student studies not just to learn the material in the book, but to get inside the Author's head, or mindset. You understand the book more, any book, the

more you learn about the author. In fact I want to know the author before I even read the book, any book. The point of life in fact, is to not just know God's book, but to truly know the Author – God Himself. Paul said that was his chief aim in life – Phil 3:9, one of my favorite scriptures – “That I may know Him...”.

This was said by Paul – a man who knew scripture inside out. No doubt he had whole books memorized. Many Pharisees did memorize entire long passages of scripture. He knew all the technical data about Scripture, for he had studied under Gamaliel. But he had never until his conversion ever begun to learn to know the Author of the Book. He knew the book – now he wanted to know its author.

John 17:3- eternal life is knowing God the Father and Jesus Christ. Read it yourself.

John 5:39-40

You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. ⁴⁰ But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.

So this is my point: now as we study the Word of God, let's study the One called “The Word of God”. Who is the Word? Jesus, Yahshua is the word of God (John 1:1-3). Study from the point of view of getting to know Yahweh and Yahshua so well that you hear them speaking to you through their Word.

“Learn of ME” He tells us in Matthew 11:29-30, “Take my yoke upon you, and learn of ME....”

Other translations: “Learn *from* me”. As you read the Scriptures, put yourself in the mind set that you are hearing directly from the Messiah. Learn from Him. Listen to Him. These aren't just words. Study from the point of view of “what can I learn from Him? What is He trying to tell me?”

Again, keep a Bible study notebook or journal as you study. Or put your notes on the computer, as I do. I've often told you that most of my sermons started out as personal studies for ME, where I felt God speaking to me, and then I thought perhaps others could use that message too. This sermon began with a quest of asking the Living God to speak to me more, to let me hear Him more... and you're hearing the result of that prayer, and that study, and that quest from long ago now.

Even try combining the two: prayer and study together. Open Scripture on to your bed, read it out to Yahweh, and ask Him, “What do you wish to tell me about this?”. Then be silent, be still for a while. At first it may seem fruitless, but as you do it more and more, thoughts will start to flow.

One half of a verse may be God telling you something. Abba chastened me the other day with Col 3:21: “Fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, lest they be discouraged.” I had in fact done something to discourage my son, whom I love dearly. But I had quenched his spirit and demoralized him. Yahweh was speaking to my heart. He brought tears to my eyes as I realized my job was to build up my son, encourage him, give him a dream, and give him hope and a desire. I realize I have often failed as a father even with my 2 daughters, and so my “Bible study” took off into a different direction: a prayer asking Father to teach me to be more of a father like He is.

Are you hearing this? I'm baring my soul to who knows who – so you can start to hear God's voice through what might have at times been lifeless Bible study. Lifeless no longer – if you listen as you study, listen as you speak to Abba, be silent, and have your notebook and pen.

Let me be blunt: are you even *studying* God's word daily – or do you just grab your Bible as you get ready for services? If you don't pick up your daily manna, the bread from heaven, every day, you're missing out on the word of God, literally. So often, as I study in the quiet times, I hear God speak to me – through His words, through the scripture, through thoughts and feelings.

OK let's move on. I've cut out 2 more pages of notes ... but there's so much to cover. I'm even wondering if even now, if Yahweh is telling me, "Slow down... this is important. Take a 3rd sermon on it if you have to."

(TRACK 5) Related to this: HEAR Yahweh Through inspired sermons of His true servants

Again, the Supreme Being IS speaking to us but we've grown dull of hearing. We're missing the cues. We "go to church" more as a ritual, or for the social contact, or because it's what is expected, or because our preacher truly is interesting to listen to. He has such great stories and jokes, we say. Or we go because the minister makes us feel better. On the other hand, I'm convinced that others like getting beaten up regularly, so they go find *that* kind of preacher.

These are not really great reasons for assembling to hear God's word from a preacher. When you went, did you in fact hear *God* speaking directly to you through the sermon?

Did you go, mentally prepared to sit at Yahshua's feet, as it were, and to take heed? First of all, quit thinking about *going* to church, and start thinking about *being* the church. Quit thinking about entering the house of God in the old way of a building, and start seeing yourself and the people around you, as being the house of God, the House of Prayer, even the Holy of Holies itself where the Shekinah glory was – for indeed our bodies are now "the Father's house", for we have the Shekinah glory inside us, if we're led by the Holy Spirit.

Yahweh indwells *us*. He lives in us. We are His house (1 Tim. 3:15). He is the power and the spirit and the voice of that house. We need to cleanse the House of the Father, our very lives. We need to make it a quieter, more elegant place of worship – an orderly holy temple – so we are prepared, ready, and able to hear Yahweh when He speaks.

Ecclesiastes 5:1

"Walk prudently when you go to the house of God; and draw near to hear rather than to give the sacrifice of fools, for they do not know that they do evil."

The point: be prepared to hear, draw near – get up close and personal - - so you don't miss a word.

But the last point applies here too: *the purpose of sermons should primarily be to help us accomplish the goal of coming to know Our Father and our Redeemer better.* There's a time and place for doctrine, for prophecy, for Greek and Hebrew studies – all those are fine – as long as by the end of the sermon we feel we know Yahweh better and are closer to Him. That's the point of life: to come to know Yahweh and His Son Yahshua.

Again, let me be blunt. I've done some repenting of late about this. I can be a critical listener and sometimes I miss God's word for me because I'm over-analyzing the speaker and what he's saying. Poor man is, after all, a mere mortal – but nonetheless, if he's a true man of God, I best be careful that I don't find myself criticizing or over-analyzing God Himself. If I reject or miss his point, I'm rejecting God's word for ME that day. You want a couple scary verses?

Luke 10:16

"He who hears you hears Me, he who rejects you rejects Me, and he who rejects Me rejects Him who sent Me."

1 John 4:5-6

"They are of the world. Therefore they speak *as* of the world, and the world hears them.
6We are of God. He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us."

Ministers, please, please, on the other hand, don't waste our time with sermons you threw together on the way to services while your wife drove. That would be highly disrespectful of the body of Christ. I spend weeks preparing each sermon, even if I give 3 in a row, as in this series, this has been weeks in development and prayer. So respect the audience and give them something reflective of having thought through your subject – while asking for divine inspiration. Preachers, pray that Abba will speak directly to every single person in the audience through you. Get yourself out of the way and let Yahweh speak. And then watch the miracle happen.

I won't dwell on this point, because I think it is largely understood that we can hear God's word from men of God who have made themselves pliable in His hands and who are truly conduits of God's mind. They are not intermediaries or go-betweens, but truly God can speak to us through a true servant of His. I'm qualifying it, I hope you notice. He must be a true servant of Yahweh. If he is, hear God's voice for you.

I'm not referring to false ministers who no more teach the truth or live it. Impostors, false teachers. That's a different topic.

I'm going to end it there for now, as we're going to have to wrap this up with a third sermon.

Next time we'll go into many more very exciting ways Yahweh speaks to us. If you apply what I'll mention in this sermon and especially the final one, your spiritual hearing will become very sharp and acute. I hope you're looking forward to it, as much as I am. God be with you until then.... Your brother in Christ, Philip Shields.