

**Can you hear God Speaking? You Can If You're listening? Psalm 123:1-2**

**Have you ever talked to someone and can't seem to get their attention? They are unfocused, non attentive, distracted it seems.**

**ADD - Attention Deficit Disorder. AD/HD is characterized by the inability to sustain focused attention. This checklist rates the following behaviors which are present in most people with ADHD:**

**1. Distractibility 2. Inattention**

**3. Free flight of ideas (free associations to any other idea)**

**4. Impulsivity - Moodiness 5. Insatiability**

**6. Bursts of hot temper 7. Hyperactivity**

**I believe that many Christians suffer from a kind of spiritual AD/HD. No, I'm not joking. One of the main reasons that many Christians do not hear from God as clearly as they should or could, is because we are distracted, inattentive, and hyperactive.**

**I hear God's voice so much more clearly when I am on retreat, at a conference where life's distractions are minimal, or on vacation from the demands of the Pastorate.**

**I constantly have to sharpen my ability to focus, to discipline myself to reject the diversions that surround me so I can give full attention to people and situations that require it and to hearing from the Lord concerning what He would have me preach.**

I am not alone in this failure of focus. Our lives are full of distractions, opportunities, and demands. Phones ring at all hours. Cell phones keep us constantly plugged in. Internet connections can be made at any time. Email and IM allow real time written and visual communications. As a result of being offered a smorgasbord of information, most of us have an attention span of about 30 seconds. If one thing bores us, we simply switch channels, pick up a different magazine, surf the 'net, turn on the stereo, or a myriad of other ways to get distracted.

**• One consequence is our inability to hear God's voice over all the background 'noise' of our life.**

Increasingly we yearn for the meaning and stability that hearing His voice brings to our lives, YET we attempt to satisfy our longing with more stimulation of an earthly nature. **NOTHING in this world will satisfy our longing to hear the voice of God, other than truly hearing His voice.**

To hear that voice, we must learn to focus, and to wait on the Lord.

Our text today contains a beautiful metaphor for this focused listening....**TEXT:**

**Psalm 123:1-2 Unto thee lift I up mine eyes, O thou that dwellest in the heavens.**

**<sup>2</sup> Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a**

**maiden unto the hand of her mistress; so our eyes wait upon the LORD our God, until that he have mercy upon us.**

This passage is saying to us today:

**We look to you, heaven-dwelling God for help.**

**We're watching and waiting, holding our breath,  
awaiting your word of mercy.**

**How does He speak?**

**1. God speaks to us through the Bible.** His will, His purposes and plans, His nature – all are clearly revealed to us through the pages of the Holy Scripture. Paul wrote that **2 Timothy 3:16-17.**

**16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17 so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.**

Having said that, let me hasten to add this note. Apart from the work of the Holy Spirit in our minds, the Bible is just another collection of ancient stories. We may read it, know the content from cover to cover, and even be able to have theological discussions about the Bible without being spoken to by the words on its pages. **Millions of people have owned and read Bibles without hearing God's voice.**

Deion Sanders, the famous athlete was one of those who owned and even read a Bible occasionally without hearing from God. As he tells it, it was a different woman every night. But every morning he'd read the Bible, taught to him by a devout grandmother who helped raise Deion and his sister in Ft. Myers, Fla. "I read a Scripture a day, but it was more like brushing my teeth," he says. "If you asked me five minutes later what I read and what it meant, I couldn't tell you. I did it out of repetition, but I didn't live it." – Deion Sanders

- You are wrong if you think you can discover God in the Bible through your own intelligence alone.
- You are wrong if you believe that God's truth can be gained from the text through study alone.
- You are wrong if you conclude that the voice of God is heard through your church's traditional interpretations of the Scripture.

Intelligence, discipline, and tradition failed the leaders of Israel at the time of Jesus. The scribes and Pharisees had all of those AND still they missed the Messiah in their midst., Jesus spoke to these religious leaders and challenged their ritual of reading the Bible: He said In John 5:39-40: **You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess**

**eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, 40 yet you refuse to come to me to have life.**

I am not belittling intellect, careful study, or even the traditions of the Church. They have their place in helping us to know God and His will. **But IF you want to hear from God as you read the Word, you MUST faithfully invite the Author to send His Holy Spirit to be your guide and interpreter.** The 2nd chapter of 1st Corinthians speaks at length about the necessity of the Spirit's work in revealing truth to us. In the interest of time, let me just read one small part of the passage. **1 Corinthians 2:11-13 11 No one can know what anyone else is really thinking except that person alone, and no one can know God's thoughts except God's own Spirit. 12 And God has actually given us his Spirit (not the world's spirit) so we can know the wonderful things God has freely given us. 13 When we tell you this, we do not use words of human wisdom. We speak words given to us by the Spirit, using the Spirit's words to explain spiritual truths. NLT**  
**2. God speaks to us through EXPERIENCES.**

Many times God is shouting to us in our experiences, but we are so intent on just one option, one answer, **"OUR WAY"** SO that we fail to hear Him. We can be so fixed in our point of view that we cannot see what He is doing, or wanted to do, in and through us.

- How many of our marriages would be much improved IF we stopped demanding that God change our mate and let Him refine us through the circumstances of our lives?
- How much pain might we spare ourselves IF we were willing to consider that constant source of irritation might be a messenger of God sent to grab our attention?
- How much more quickly might we mature spiritually IF we actually applied the Bible to our experience instead of cutting it off from 'real' life?

For example:

- We read in the Bible that God heals sick people. Most of us believe that.

So, when was the last time that you prayed for a sick friend out loud in that friend's presence?

Suddenly, the possibility of hearing God's voice and seeing God's power is introduced into the situation. **By bringing God into that experience, you have opened your ears!**

- Are you struggling financially? Have you asked God IF He is trying to talk to you about your values, or your work habits, or your present occupation?
- Are you prospering, enjoying a time of abundance? Have you considered that God is pouring out His blessings on you OR have you just congratulated yourself on your cleverness?
- Is sickness plaguing you? The Bible teaches us that God can use sickness to call attention to sin in our lives. Remember that Communion passage we read? **"For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself. 30 That is why**

**many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep.” – 1 Cor. 12. 29-30**

Understanding the right messages that God may be sending to us through our day to day experiences requires discernment and prayer. Some of us are too quick to judge another's circumstances. We think we know exactly what God is doing and we judge. Careful about that! It can lead to some awfully embarrassing moments.

**KEEP your experience informed by the Scripture.** If you are violating God's principles as revealed in the Bible, I don't care how you argue from experience, you can't make it right!

**Ex:** If you're involved in unethical business and you're enjoying prosperity, don't take that as a message from the Lord approving your dishonesty! A higher principle takes precedence over your experience. **IF you persist in dishonesty, you'll ultimately pay the price of judgement.**

Paul, the apostle, helps us to see how God works through the experiences of our lives to accomplish HIS purposes. **2 Cor 12:7-10. To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. 8 Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. 9 But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. 10 That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.**

Humbly open your mind to the fact that God may be sending you a message through the experiences of your life.

### **3. God speaks to us supernaturally- by His Spirit to our spirit.**

Young Samuel heard an audible voice while in his bed at night. Finally his spiritual mentor discerned that God was speaking and Samuel received his life commission to service that night. Throughout the Scriptures, there is abundant evidence of God speaking to men and women, showing them His will, directing their lives, and equipping them for spiritual service.

His promise to the church is: Acts 2:17-18 **'In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. 18 Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.**

**God still speaks to us supernaturally.** It may be an audible voice. It may be an impression in our mind that won't fade away. It may be through a dream or a vision. Are you open to such a visitation?

We 'hear' His voice in our inner person, in our spirit, as we live increasingly intimate lives with Him. One of the blessings of the Spirit-lived life is the closeness we can have with the Lord.

Are you open to His voice in a supernatural means?

If you have a particularly compelling dream that seemed to be carrying a message for you, would you even consider that God might be speaking, or would you in our thoroughly modern manner, dismiss the dream as the overflow of your sub-conscious mind?

Let me talk to you for a few moments about the biggest hindrance to hearing the voice of God. I want to quote Jack Deere for he says it just fine....

**Of all people, the proud have the most difficulty hearing the voice of God. They seldom seriously ask God's opinion because they are convinced they already know what God thinks. There is also a divine hindrance. God is repulsed by pride, and normally you don't talk to those who repulse you. One of the most sobering statements in the Bible is found in Psalm 138:6 "Though the LORD is on high, he looks upon the lowly, but the proud he knows from afar." In other words, God is intimate with the humble, but distant with the proud.**

On one occasion the disciples told Jesus they were worried he had offended the Pharisees. They thought he'd been careless in his treatment of the religious leaders, but Jesus said -Mt 15:14 **"Leave them; they are blind guides. If a blind man leads a blind man, both will fall into a pit."** This doesn't seem to be very kind since he had come to heal the blind.

Yet if we look carefully, it's not the fact that they are spiritually blind that causes Jesus to reject them. It's that they are blind guides. It's one thing to be blind and groping for the truth. It's quite another to put yourself in the position of being a guide who has found the truth but who is in reality blind.

**Religious pride blinds our eyes and stops our ears like no other sin.** Neither her bad theology nor her immorality kept Jesus from extending a hand to the Samaritan woman at the well. Not even being presented with a woman taken in the act of adultery repulsed or embarrassed him. But, he was content to leave the Pharisees with their prejudice and blindness intact.

**The Lord seldom violates our prejudices.** The man who thinks he knows something is left alone in his ignorance. Paul wrote this warning to the Corinthians, 1 Cor 8:1 **Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up.** Seven hundred years before, Isaiah said, Isaiah 5:21 **Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes and clever in their own sight.** ... The ultimate torment of hell is **not** the intensity of its flame, but the **absence of God's presence**. The proud drive God's presence away.

When we exhibit religious pride, God leaves us alone and we rarely hear His voice.

**May we have ears to hear! Be careful of thinking that one experience of God's voice makes you an expert.**

**He is an awfully big God and this is an awfully complex world. We need a fresh word, a new vision daily.**

**Listen for His voice, friend.**

- Read your Bible prayerfully allowing God to speak to YOU, to inform your mind and change your heart.**

- Pay attention to your experiences and ask God to help you to discern His voice in the ordinary moments of your days.**

- Be open to the blessing of a supernatural visitation that will prepare you for a moment of extraordinary achievement or that will carry you through a season of tremendous testing or trial.**

**Let me ask you again now! Can you hear God Speaking? You Can If You're listening?**