

THE BIG IDEA: We hear God's voice by loving God's Word.The Take-Off

Last week, we started a series called SIGNS OF LIFE that focuses on proofs, evidences - signs - that we've passed from death to life.

These are not things you'll do to GET saved; these are things you'll do BECAUSE you're saved.

Last week we learned that AGAPE LOVE is one of the signs - that the way we love God and others with "God's kind of love" proves that we have passed from death to life.

To introduce today's sign, watch this:

[Video of woman hearing for the first time]

We find the second sign of life in John 8:47 - people who belong to God HEAR God.

Hearing after not hearing isn't something you can fake, just like it was obvious when that 29 year old heard herself for the first time.

Our ability to hear what God says should elicit the same response in us - and when believers are as excited about hearing God's voice as that woman was about hearing her own, trust me - the world will notice!

I'm sure that God has spoken to people audibly - and can again - but I've never heard His voice that way.

While that would be amazing, I would submit that it is the exception, and the most common way that believers hear God is through the Word, and that's what I want to focus on today.

Our Big Idea says **we hear God's voice by loving God's word.**

Hearing God's voice is CRITICAL to living for God - and it's a naturally supernatural part of the faith.

It's also one that many people struggle with, so let's divide this into 2 parts: reasons we don't hear God's voice and ways to start hearing His voice.

1. Reasons we may not hear God

- a. There are more reasons, but these 3 cover a lot of the factors that keep us from hearing God's voice.
- b. One, DISTANCE
 - This seems obvious, but often we just aren't near God to hear God
 - I know we can go through seasons when His voice is clearer than other times, but I mean distance more in the salvation state than a tough season.
 - If you are far from God because you've never accepted what Jesus did on your behalf to bring you near God, then you are experiencing the last half of our verse: **the reason you do not hear is because you are not near** - you don't belong to God
 - The good news is that Jesus made a way to close that gap (Eph, 2:13)
- c. Two, DISTRACTIONS
 - We just did an entire message recently about distractions
 - We had cell phones ringing while I was teaching and even I got distracted!
 - In short, we can WANT to hear God's voice, but if our lives are full of stuff, it can get lost in the noise
 - [VIDEO - White Noise]
- d. Three, DENIAL
 - Bottom line, sometimes we don't hear God because we simply DO NOT WANT TO
 - Like a child who doesn't want to hear and puts his fingers in his ear, we turn away from Him
 - We don't pick up the Bible because we don't really want to hear what it has to say
- e. If I had to sum this up, I'd say that if you can't hear God's voice, you need to start by examining your faith (2 Cor. 13:5), because John 8:47 is clear that if we're in the faith, we WILL hear Him.
- f. If you are sure of your salvation, but still struggling to hear His voice, you need to examine your frequency.
- g. The next section will help with that.

2. Ways to begin hearing God

- a. So we KNOW that we belong to God, and we KNOW that hearing His voice is a sign in our lives of that.
- b. So what do we do if we're struggling with it? Here are 4 steps you can take to help hear His voice:
- c. First, PURPOSE
 - We've got to purpose in our hearts that God is speaking
 - Hebrews 11:6 / we must believe that He exists and can be found and heard!

- When we purpose in our hearts to hear Him, we'll value the word even when things aren't good
- Job 23:12 / Job was in a bad place but still believed that God's word was good
- d. Second, PREPARE
 - God speaks best to those hearts that are prepared to listen
 - Can you imagine how today would have been if we hadn't prepared?
 - No greeters? No chairs? No music? No sermon? No coffee????!?!??
 - We prepared because we expect to HEAR from God!
- e. Third, POSITION
 - Psalm 46:10
 - Put yourself in a places to hear God
 - Worship, prayer, church, community
- f. Finally, PRACTICE
 - It takes time to learn how to communicate with others, even God!
 - Everyone wants to be an expert in novice time!
 - But spending time day in and day out, we get better at hearing His voice
 - The supernatural becomes natural

The Landing

As we land this, let me show you what it looks like when we hear God's voice.

[VIDEO / Sheep hear their shepherd's voice]

John 10:2-4

2 The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. 3 The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. 4 When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice.

How will we hear God's voice? By loving God's word.

The more we do, the easier it will be to hear and follow wherever He leads, and that will be a sign that gets the attention of a city just like it got the attention of the people filming that video.

We hear God's voice by loving God's word.

Let's pray.