

If Anyone Has Ears to Hear, Let Them Hear

Message 2 of 5 in the series: "If"

A. Hearing is of utmost importance in our relationship with God.

"If anyone has ears to hear, let them hear." Mark 4:23 (NIV)

1. God desires His people to listen and to hear Him so that we can live abundant, fruitful lives.

"Listen, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD alone. And you must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength." Deuteronomy 6:4-5 (NLT)

"Your own ears will hear him. Right behind you a voice will say, 'This is the way you should go,' whether to the right or to the left." Isaiah 30:21 (NLT)

2. Hearing God is necessary for faith.

"And how can they believe in him if they have never heard... So faith comes from hearing..."

Romans 10:14b & 17a (NLT)

"And it is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that God exists..." Hebrews 11:6 (NLT)

B. We say, "If God would only speak," but He says, "If we would only listen."

1. We complain that God doesn't speak, but it is His nature to speak.

"Long ago God spoke many times and in many ways to our ancestors through the prophets. And now in these final days, he has spoken to us through his Son..." Hebrews 1:1-2a (NLT)

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth... Then God said..." Genesis 1:1 & 3a (NLT)

2. We complain that God won't speak to us, but He speaks to everyone.

"Very truly I tell you, **whoever hears my word and believes** him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life." John 5:24 (NIV)

Whoever = nobodies – somebodies, young – old, wicked – faithful, hard-hearted - tender-hearted, cynical – seeking, forgotten – prominent, depressed – joyful, courageous - fearful, ashamed – confident, educated - uneducated...

Life Application: You must believe that God speaks "IF" you are going to hear Him.

3. God laments that we do not hear because our hearts are hard - full of doubt and fear and distracted.

"And you are even worse than your ancestors! You stubbornly follow your own evil desires and refuse to listen to me." Jeremiah 16:12 (NLT)

"The farmer plants seed by taking God's word to others. The seed that fell on the footpath represents those who hear the message, only to have Satan come at once and take it away. The seed on the rocky soil represents those who hear the message and immediately receive it with joy. But since they don't have deep roots, they don't last long. They fall away as soon as they have problems or are persecuted for believing God's word. The seed that fell among the thorns represents others who hear God's word, but all too quickly the message is crowded out by the worries of this life, the lure of wealth, and the desire for other things, so no fruit is produced." Mark 4:14-19 (NLT)

Life Application:

- We must prepare and protect our hearts "IF" we are going to hear God.

"And the seed that fell on good soil represents those who hear and accept God's word and produce a harvest of thirty, sixty, or even a hundred times as much as had been planted!" Mark 4:20 (NLT)

- We must recognize God's voice as He speaks through the Bible, His Spirit, others, and circumstances.

"...the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out... and his sheep follow him because they know his voice." John 10:3b & 4b (NIV)

- We must do what He says.

“Jesus replied, ‘But even more blessed are all who hear the word of God and put it into practice.’”
Luke 11:28 (NLT)

C. “IF...” - Realize what is at stake.

“Then he added, ‘Pay close attention to what you hear. The closer you listen, the more understanding you will be given—and you will receive even more. To those who listen to my teaching, more understanding will be given. But for those who are not listening, even what little understanding they have will be taken away from them.’” Mark 4:24-25 (NLT)

“Listen as Wisdom calls out! Hear as understanding raises her voice!...‘I call to you, to all of you! I raise my voice to all people... Listen to me! For I have important things to tell you. Everything I say is right, for I speak the truth... Choose my instruction rather than silver, and knowledge rather than pure gold. For wisdom is far more valuable than rubies. Nothing you desire can compare with it... And so, my children, listen to me, for all who follow my ways are joyful. Listen to my instruction and be wise. Don’t ignore it. Joyful are those who listen to me...For whoever finds me finds life and receives favor from the LORD. But those who miss me injure themselves.’” Proverbs 8:1, 4, 6-7a, 10-11, & 32-36a (NLT)

Life Application:

- We must decide if we want to multiply or forfeit the blessings in our lives.
- We must determine if we want to develop a heart of wisdom or foolishness.

Shane Segars • 06-04-23 • shane@centeringlives.com

Connect Group Discussion Questions:

1. Have you ever had something important to tell someone, but they wouldn’t listen? How did it make you feel?
2. Think of a time that you didn’t listen to your parents. What would have changed if you would have listened to them?
3. What are your biggest distractions or obstacles in hearing God? What do you need to do to hear Him better?
4. Share a time when you knew that God spoke to you through the Bible, His Spirit, another person, or a circumstance?
5. Why do we need to make sure that we compare what messages we hear to what God says in the Bible?
6. Discuss why hearing is not complete unless there is a resulting action.
7. Why does hearing or not hearing God have a compounding effect?
8. How can we encourage each other to listen to God more carefully?