

“Speak, for your servant is listening.” 1 Samuel chapter 3 verse 10

Hearing from God sometimes seems very easy for some people. God said this to them, and they said that to God, and you get the impression of two people just having a chat over a cup of tea. And who am I to say that some people don't have such easy, natural, conversations with God? I myself, on plenty of occasions, have told people what I believed God was saying to me, and have wondered afterwards if I had given the impression that he and I were just having a friendly conversation.

I'm fully prepared to believe that there are people who have, and do, sometimes hear God speaking to them in a voice which is audible at least to them. I wouldn't want to limit God. But in my experience it's not always that easy.

The young Samuel is sleeping in the temple of the Lord, and hears a voice calling to him. He thinks it is Eli, the old priest, so goes to him. Eventually Eli cottons on, and tells Samuel that the next time he hears the voice, he is to reply “Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.” How well we would all do to do the same – taking some time to hear from God instead of rushing into situations on our own initiative and getting into a mess.

But how do we hear from him? In many ways, of course. We may read the Bible and find something there which speaks to our hearts in a special way, or we may have an unaccountable sense of being led, or thoughts and images may come into our minds which may seem strange, compelling or meaningful and any or all of these things may be confirmed in our spirits when we come to prayer, or when we speak to others.

In the Bible, God communicates with people in many ways, from directly spoken words, to visions, to dreams and more. We can seek God for his will, but we need to remember that we cannot demand that he respond at a particular time or in a particular way. The prophet Elijah had a powerful encounter with God. He heard a great and mighty wind, an earthquake and a fire, but God was not in any of these. Then he heard a voice, soft whisper, and it was in this that God spoke to him.

Our part is to be alert and expectant that God can and will speak into our lives. We just need to be listening.

Prayer

Father, thank you that you are not a God who is aloof and silent, but one who wants to make himself known to people. Thank you that your voice is heard through your creation, through your word and ultimately in Jesus, who is the image of the invisible God. But I know that you also want to communicate with me as an individual. Please help me to be ready to hear from you In Jesus' name, amen.

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