

Tuning-In: Care to Tune-In

Psalm 19:14, "*May these words of my mouth and the thoughts of my heart be acceptable to You, O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer.*"

Today, we continue our Lenten sermon series, "**Tuning-in.**" A series to help us better hear God as we prepare for Easter. **The big question through this sermon series is, "How can we hear from God?"** Today we're looking at a question that goes with it, **"Do we really care what God has to say to us and, will we be Good stewards of what God says to us?"**

When we talk about **being a good steward of what God tells us, it starts with God's written word!** God's word is to be honored because it is infallible, inerrant and fully authoritative. No matter what culture says, reading and memorizing, meditate and honor God's written word is crucial!

Of course, as we listen to God, remember, what we hear from God will never contradict what is in the written **Word** of God – The Bible. We need to care about what's in the Bible! But do we care, are we good stewards of God's spoken word?

- **In other words, when God says something to you, what do you do with it?**
- **Are you familiar with the concept of stewardship?** Stewardship means to properly manage someone else's property or resources. As Christians, our lives are not our own. God explained in 1 Corinthians 3:23 that we belong to Jesus! That means our time, treasure, abilities, and even our future is not our own! It's important that we live as good stewards of what belongs to God.

So, how do we be a good steward to what God says to you?

1) We are good stewards when God talks to us and we really listen! Have you ever heard a song, and maybe you sang it for years, only to learn you were singing the wrong words? We really have a listening problem in our world! We hear so much in the world around us! Information from commercials on TV, the radio or other electronic devices. We hear music, movies, the internet... and the

list goes on. **We hear so much, it's hard to figure out what's really important and what to really listen to.**

But when someone important speaks... we need to listen.

God talks to people who seek to hear Him with humble hearts, and **God talks to people who will faithfully act when God speaks!**

- **This week's Lent Experience challenge is Almsgiving!**

Almsgiving is an act of love by which we meet someone else's practical or felt needs! Almsgiving is acting on a word God shared with you. At the heart of this word is compassion and mercy. When we actively and sacrificially work to give and meet the needs of others, that is when we're in the rhythm of God's heart!

It starts when God speaks and we listen! When God directs us to do something and we do it! There are so many ways God talks to us, but today I'm going to share with you **the short list** of how God spoke to people in the Bible and us today.

In order for us to listen and be good stewards of God's spoken word, in order for us to be effective at Almsgiving... its important that we not only see **that** God speaks, but also **HOW** God speaks!

- A) **God speaks through circumstances.** God spoke to Jonah, but Jonah didn't listen to God's voice. So God spoke through circumstances! In Jonah 1-4, 1st – Jonah was swallowed by a great fish. 2nd – when a vine grew up to give Jonah shade. 3rd – then the vine withered. We need to pay attention to our circumstances. To ask, "Am I hearing God through this circumstance." So... what is the Lord telling me through these circumstances!
- B) **God speaks through wise counsel.** This is all over the Book of Proverbs. When we seek God's council, we can hear the voice of God.

Wise council always supplements the Bible. When we ask God's council from a wise believer, we are not asking them to hear God for us! We are prayerfully asking them to confirm, what we heard from God, is it correct?

- C) **God can speak through peace.** God told us in Colossians 3:15 that God's peace can rule in our hearts. The word "RULE" doesn't just mean to merely

exist. It means to reign or be a deciding factor. If we don't have peace about a decision, then it isn't from the Lord. Don't do anymore til you have peace.

D) **God can speak through dreams and visions.** If you look at the lives of Joseph, Solomon, Jacob, Peter, John and Paul, they all had God speak to them with dreams and visions. In the Book of Acts, it was on Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came to all people, Peter quoted Joel 2:28, promising that God would speak through dreams and visions, and it is available today.

E) **God can also speak through our thoughts.** Amos 4:13 explained, God makes His ways known to us *though our thoughts*. In Matthew 1:19-21, *while Joseph thought* about things, God spoke to him. There are times when God speaks to us in a voice that sometimes sounds like when we talk to ourselves in our thoughts.

We need to be careful. NOT everything we think comes from God. Thoughts can also be placed in our minds from the Devil. Plus, we can think up things on our own. So every time we think something, we need to judge – is this from God, “does it align with scripture and match the character of God?”

F) **God can also speak through natural manifestations.** Romans 1:19-20 explains how God makes Himself known through nature. The voice of God can be revealed through earth, wind and fire; mountains and meadows, critters and canyons. In John 12:27-30, God actually spoke from heaven, but when God spoke, some heard God and others thought they heard thunder!

G) **God can also speak through supernatural manifestations.** Think about it, God spoke through a burning bush in the Book of Exodus, a bright light on the road to Damascus in the Book of Acts, God even spoke through a donkey to Balaam in the Old Testament Book of Numbers.

H) **Most commonly, God speaks through the Bible.** Scripture is always the voice of God in the general sense that God inspired the words of scripture as explained in 2 Timothy 3:16. God can speak specifically to us by drawing our attention to a particular verse, paragraph or story. This happens because the Bible is living and active as explained in Hebrews 4:12.

- Also, the Bible speaks in other ways, in the General sense - the LOGOs word of God. I love you all – all of us.

- And the Bible speaks in a personal, direct way – the RHEMA word of God. Here you read a scripture and it speaks to you like never before. It speaks to your specific situation - personally, and directly!
- I) **God can speak through a whisper**. We have talked about this a few times in our Tuning-in Sermon Series. God often speaks through a still, small voice like when God spoke to Elijah in 1 Kings 19:12.

**Remember, the point here is this – if we are going to hear God’s voice, then we need to be listening for Him!
We need to tune-in to the frequency of Heaven and listen!**

If you’ve ever met a person who has great faith, you met a person skilled at hearing and listening to the voice of God.

I want to introduce to you a video testimony of someone who heard God. Justin Miller, he has a wonderful faith! Recently, Justin had an event happen in his life.

I am not going to say much more, the video will also present various ways God spoke to Justin and I want to you consider which ways I just mentioned, that God used to talk to Justin. **Please play the video:**

Did you hear it? I heard several ways!
When God speaks to us, when we hear from God and truly listen to His voice, then... it is time to act, it is time to move in confidence in the Lord!

Read verse 8 of 1 Peter

2) The second way we use the voice of God when He speaks to you – it’s being a good steward of what God told you!

We need to respond to God in humility! When God speaks to me and I respond in a prideful or bragging sort of way... or respond with closed ears and not do anything with what God told me because life got busy and it choked out the response, **that is not being a good steward of God’s message to me.**

God does want us to hear Him, and God wants us to do something with what we have been told. Luke 8:18 gives us a good principle, “*Therefore consider carefully how you listen. Whoever has will be given more; whoever does not have, even what they think they have will be taken from them.*” Jesus is telling us to watch how we receive God’s word and how we receive what God tells us.

This scripture comes from Luke 8 where Jesus tells us about **the parable of the sower**. The scripture talks about God’s word landing in a person’s heart and the 4 ways a person will receive God’s word – the hard soil, the rocky soil, the thorny soil, and the good ground.

- If we humbly receive God’s word, and carefully consider what we hear, **and respond to it appropriately!**
- That is being a good steward, it makes us good soil, and the good soil will yield a hundredfold. In other words, God does amazing things when we listen

3) The third way we can be a good steward when God talks to you – is to do what God tells us to do!

When God speaks to you, do you do it? Trust and obey, that is very important in the life of a believer. I’m not talking about trying harder, God gives us the power to obey through the Holy Spirit.

- That’s why Jesus explained to His disciples in John 14:15, “If you love me, keep my commands.”

Going back to Justin Miller’s Testimony. God spoke to Justin in amazing ways, but there is more to the story. Later, another member of the congregation – Lori Kirschner had been diagnosed with a brain tumor too. God led Justin to reach out to the Kirschners. With everything he had been through, Justin could give unique insights into what both Lori and Kris were about to go through.

Justin cared about what God told him and obeyed as God led him. Justin was able to be an empathetic presence to the kirschners and pass on the presence of God to them.

When God speaks to us, God wants us to be good stewards of that word we receive. As Luke 8 explains, Those who listen to God – receive His word with humble hearts and act upon it – **they will hear God again!** God is speaking all the time,

but the only ones who hear are those who tune in to the right frequency through humility and obedience.

PRAYER: