

Tuning-In: Tune-In with the Word

Today, we finish our Lenten sermon series, “Tuning-in.” For the past 5 weeks, we looked at how to Tune-In and hear God as we have been preparing for Easter. This is important, because as a believer in Jesus Christ, and hearing God is a very important part of our relationship with the Lord!

God is always trying to talk with us because of His great love for us, and the big question we have asked through this sermon series is, “How can we better hear from God?” Today we’ll look at one last question that goes with it, “Can God’s Word, the Bible, help us hear the Lord better? Answer - YES!

Go to Psalm 119:97-105

“Oh, how I love your law! I meditate on it all day long. Your commands are always with me and make me wiser than my enemies. I have more insight than all my teachers, for I meditate on your statutes. I have more understanding than the elders, for I obey your precepts. I have kept my feet from every evil path so that I might obey your word. I have not departed from your laws, for you yourself have taught me. How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth! I gain understanding from your precepts; therefore I hate every wrong path. Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path.

This is God’s Word for God’s people

The reality is, we live in a dark world, and we will stumble around unless we regularly switch on the bright light of God’s Word, the Bible. Here are some ways that God’s Word acts as a lamp and sheds light on our journey and adventure of life:

- It shows us how we are to live and walk in life.
- It shows us which directions to take so we avoid pitfalls in life.
- It provides a road map of wisdom, a continual flow of hope, and a limitless foundation of the assurance of His love.

- God’s Word shows us that God is a person.
- Through the Bible, God reveals His identity and His love for us, His grace and mercy toward us.
- Throughout the Bible, God tells us of His overall purpose and plan for our lives and our future.

- It tells us about God's character, intentions, and actions as well as how God walks, talks, and breaths.
- **Holy Spirit uses the words of Scripture to gently impress upon us the promises and truths we need to learn and apply to live the abundant life God created for us.**
- If we want to know God, then we need to get into God's Word. God's word illuminates our way.
- **If you want to hear God's voice, start by reading His Word, the Bible.**
- ***So, how do we get to a place where God can reveal His way to us? Here are 2 scriptures to help you get started:***

First: Look at Daniel 12:3, "Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like stars forever and ever."

Second: How do you get wise – go to with James 1:5, "*If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who give generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.*"

God is inviting us to read His word, and to read it consistently, diligently, prayerfully, and passionately! We need to read the Bible with our heart wide-open in prayer and in communion with God.

While you read scripture, pray these questions:

- Lord Jesus, what are you saying in these verses about Yourself?
- How does this scripture teach me about loving You and others more?
- How does this scripture apply to me and what actions and attitudes must I start to practice?
- What actions and attitudes are You showing me to stay away from?
- **When seeking God's voice, run scripture through your mind and heart regularly! That's why memorizing scripture is so important!**
- **Now, expect God to talk to you, to give you a personal word from His Word. That is called a Rhema Word**

A common question asked is, “I can read my Bible, but how do I know God is speaking to me about my particular situation in this scripture?”

Do I just close my eyes, open the Bible and place my finger a page of the Bible, believing that is God’s voice?

- **I would never say no and limit what God can do, but that method is pretty risky.**
- For example, what if you picked out the scripture, “*Judas went out and hanged himself.*” And then you flip a few pages and find the scripture, “*Go and do likewise!*” Next, you close your Bible, reopen it and pick the scripture, “*What you are about to do, do quickly.*”

Seriously, the “Open and Pick” method happens a lot.

- But you can read a verse in the Bible, one written a thousand years ago, and it is still the Word of God today, and it is still God speaking to humanity today.
- Holy Spirit can take that ancient scripture and use it to speak to you about a particular personal matter that you are wrestling with today.
- As Christians, we can have confidence that God is timeless, His Word is eternal, and the Lord wants to talk to us about our situation!

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>A Rhema Word from the Bible is</u> when Holy Spirit speaks through a scripture, and it could be a scripture that you read 5, 10, 15 times before. It never really meant much to you before, but you read it this one time and it jumps out of the Bible at you and speaks directly into your heart. That is a Rhema Word! |
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Certainly, solid principles are needed to interpret and apply scripture correctly. And we never want to undermine those principles in our effort to hear God’s voice.

- Understand, the Bible can be literal and metaphorical at the same time! For example, think about John 2:1-11 where Jesus turned water into wine! The situation was literal, but metaphorically – it also gives us a picture of how God works! The principle that Jesus can take something that was a dead, religious ceremony and fill it with His fresh, vibrant, new wine of life! **That is something we all need to hear.**

- **So, how do we hear God's voice through the pages of scripture, considering both the historical and cultural contexts and the reality of Holy Spirit moving in our lives?**

1. FIND A GOOD PLACE TO READ, PRAY, PRAISE AND WORSHIP!

Somewhere you can read and focus without a lot of distractions, but not so comfy you fall asleep. Turn off the alarms on your electronics!

2. A common question is, "Where do I start reading in the Bible?" A good place to start with a Bible Reading Plan that is available through the Church Office Lobby or one you can get one from a Bible App, or any other number of places.

3. Enter God's Presence

Entering into God's presence means to cultivate a deliberate awareness of the reality and nearness of God.

- **Start by singing or praying in praise.** Sing or talk to God, recognizing God's love, God's gracious and merciful character. Recognize God's power over all you struggle with, how God wants to and is able to heal you of all of your hurts – physical and emotional
- **Then worship through singing or praying to God.** This is talking to God about your love for Him and continue until you feel God's presence. When we want to hear God's voice, it is crucial to spend time praising and then worshipping God first. In worship, we open the lines of communication with the Lord.

Somewhere in the process of praising and worshipping God, proclaiming God's goodness and promises, you will begin to sense Holy Spirit.

4. One of the best practices - write down prayers, scriptures that speak to you, and thoughts that cross your mind. It helps keep your mind focused, your thoughts untangle through your finger tips, and it gives you a record for future reference of the conversations you had with the Lord.

5. Then ask God, where should you read. Maybe a topical index, a Bible Concordance or a Bible Promise Book.

6. At this point of being in God's presence, after you spend time drawing near to God in worship. **Let scripture run through your mind.** Remember to pay attention to the context of scripture while you are inviting God to speak to you from His Word. You find context by reading the paragraph before and after.
7. **Most importantly, ask God, "What do You want me to see from this passage of scripture?"**
8. **Ask, "What is Your Word for me here, Lord?" Don't rush!** When you need to hear God about a specific decision or direction you need, **spend time with God so you can really hear God!** This is NOT about being rigid about a time requirement. Meeting with Jesus isn't about crossing an item off your list. Don't look at it as a specified amount of time you need to fulfill like you would a project list.
9. **The point is to deliberately choose to seek the presence of God and the voice of God.**

**When you get into God's Word,
that is when we're in the rhythm of God's heart!**

- **This week's Lent Experience challenge is Bible Reading!**

This is practicing the principles we discussed. If you need to review these principles, there are sheets available in the back of the sanctuary with these principles. You can go back and re-watch this video on Facebook page or website.

The Lent Experience Challenge this week is allowing God to speak through his written Word and for us to listen. So this week is Holy Week, the week between Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday. You have the perfect scripture to read! It's following Jesus on his last week on earth.

The scriptures are on the sheets in the back of the Sanctuary.

1. Monday – Luke 19:28-48
2. Tuesday – Luke 20
3. Wednesday – Luke 21
4. Thursday – Luke 22
5. Friday – Luke 23
6. Saturday – Luke 24

In order for us to listen and be good stewards of God's word, and for us to be live the powerful, abundant life God created us for; it's important that we not only know **that** God speaks, but also **HOW** God speaks through His written Word!

Let's pray:

- Pray about each of us taking the step of faith and taking the time to let the Lord talk to us through the scriptures – the Bible.
- Take time and pray to God about our needs, and hurts and struggles
- Talk to the Lord about how God has helped us, protected us, and answered our prayers.
- For God to speak to us through this Holy Week, the week before Easter. That the Lord bless our Easter.

Benediction:

Now raise your hands for the blessing.

- May God bless you and keep you.
- May the Lord smile upon you and be gracious to you.
- May the Lord look you full in the face and fill you with His presence and the assurance that He speaks to you. In Jesus name! Amen!