

# When God Quits Speaking

by Chuck Smith

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of listening to God's voice and the consequences of rejecting it, warning of the dangers of drifting away from God and the urgency of responding to His call.*

**Duration:** 38:14

**Scripture:** Psalm 10:1

**Topics:** "Silence Of God"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of listening to God's voice and obeying His commands. He warns that there may come a time when God stops speaking to us if we continually ignore His instructions. The preacher uses the example of Saul, who had presumed upon God's mercy and went too far in his disobedience, resulting in God no longer speaking to him. The sermon concludes with an invitation for the listeners to respond to God's voice, make peace with Him, and commit their lives to serving and obeying Him.

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## Transcript

Let's turn now in our Bibles to the 10th Psalm. I'll read the first, the unnumbered verses, and Pastor Brian will lead the congregation in the even-numbered verses as we read the 10th Psalm. Shall we stand as we read? Why standest thou afar off, O Lord? Why hidest thou thyself in times of trouble? The wicked in his pride doth persecute the poor.

Let them be taken in the devices that they have imagined. For the wicked boasteth of his heart's desire, and blesses the covetous, whom the Lord abhorreth. The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God.

God is not in all his thoughts. His ways are always grievous. Thy judgments are far above out of his sight.

As for all of his enemies, he puffeth at them. He hath said in his heart, I shall not be moved, for I shall never be in adversity. His mouth is full of cursing and deceit and fraud, and under his tongue is mischief and vanity.

He sitteth in the lurking places of the villages, in the secret places doth he murder the innocent. His eyes are privily set against the poor. He lieth in wait secretly as a lion in his den.

He lieth in wait to catch the poor. He doth catch the poor when he draweth him into his net. He croucheth and humbleth himself that the poor may fall by his strong arms.

He hath said in his heart, God is forgotten. He hides his face. He will never see it.

Arise, O Lord, O God, lift up thine hand, forget not the humble. And wherefore doth the wicked contemn God? He hath said in his heart, thou wilt not require it. Thou hast seen it, for thou beholdest mischief and spite.

To requit it with thy hand, the poor committeth himself unto thee. Thou art the helper of the fatherless. Break thou the arm of the wicked and the evil man.

Seek out his wickedness until you find none. The Lord is king forever and ever. The heathen are perished out of his land.

Lord, thou hast heard the desire of the humble. Thou wilt prepare their heart. Thou wilt cause thine ear to hear.

To judge the fatherless and the oppressed, that the man of the earth may no more oppress. Let's pray. Father, sometimes we wonder why you stand afar off and do not hear us when we call unto you in the time of trouble.

And we look around, Lord, and we don't always understand the things that we see. How that the wicked so often seem to prosper, while we, Lord, seeking to do your will, seem to have problems and difficulties just sort of overwhelming us. Lord, we thank you that we can come and that you do hear and that you do answer our cries of distress.

We pray, Father, that we might walk in such a way to always be aware of your closeness and your nearness so that when we do call, we can have that confidence that you do hear. Speak to us, Lord, today through the word. Let our hearts be open to hear and to receive.

In Jesus' name we pray, amen. You may be seated. Our reading this week covers chapters 26 through 29.

Tonight we'll be studying 1 Samuel 26 through 29. This morning we'd like to draw your attention to the 28th chapter, verse 6 and verse 15. Samuel has died.

Saul has gone his own self-willed way. Turning against the voice of the Lord, refusing to obey the commands of God and seeking to destroy David. Now Samuel has come to the critical hour of his life.

The last day of his life. And he is in big trouble. The Philistines have once again invaded the land.

And once again in trouble, Saul calls unto the Lord for guidance, for direction. But Saul has gone too far. He has gone so far that God is no longer speaking to him.

And so we read in verse 6. When Saul inquired of the Lord, the Lord answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by the Urim, nor by the prophets. God was not speaking to Saul any longer. But Saul was desperate.

He realized that this was a critical time in his life. He needed help. He needed guidance.

And so he went to the witch in Endor to conjure up for him the spirit of Samuel. And Samuel said to him in verse 15, Why have you disquieted me to bring me up? And Saul answered, I am so distressed, for the

Philistines make war against me, and God is departed from me. And he answers me no more, neither by the prophets nor by dreams, and therefore I have called thee, that you might make me know what I should do.

God has departed from me. He's not speaking to me anymore. What a tragic day in the life of Saul and of any person who comes to that place in life where God stops speaking to them, where God has nothing more to say to them.

There is a time, we know not when, a point, we know not where, that marks the destiny of men to glory or despair. There is a line by us unseen that crosses every path, the hidden boundary between God's mercy and His wrath. To pass that limit is to die, to die as if by stealth.

It does not quench the beaming eye or repel the glow of health. The conscience may still be at ease, the spirits light and gay, that which pleases still may please and care be thrust away. But on that forehead God has set indelibly a mark, unseen by man, for man is yet blind and in the dark.

And yet the doomed man's path below may bloom as Eden bloomed. He did not, does not, will not know or feel that he is doomed. He knows, he feels that all is well and every fear is calmed.

He lives, he dies, he wakes in hell, not only doomed, but damned. Oh, where is that mysterious bourne by which our path is crossed, beyond which God Himself has sworn that he who goes is lost? How far may we go on in sin? How long will God forbear? When does hope end and where begin the confines of despair? An answer from the skies is sent. Ye that from God depart, while it is called today, repent and harden not your heart.

It's a tragic day when God quits speaking to a man. Saul had come to that day. God had departed from him and was no longer speaking to him.

God had been very patient with Saul and Saul thought that he could just call upon God at his own whim or pleasure. That God would always be there. That he could live as he wished, he could do as he wished, but that God would always be there and when in trouble he could just always call upon God and God would respond and answer and this had been the case.

But he went too far. And now in trouble, now facing death, he calls upon God, but God isn't speaking to him anymore. The Spirit of God had departed from his life.

He had presumed upon God's mercy once too often. In Hebrews, we are warned in chapter 2, Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word that was spoken by angels was steadfast and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation which was first spoken to us by the Lord and then was confirmed unto us by those that heard him.

The words, let them slip. Let us take the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest we should let them slip. The Greek there has been translated by most of the modern versions.

Lest we should drift away. God has spoken. We need to pay earnest heed to what God has said, lest we should drift away from the voice of God.

Drifting is almost an imperceptible process. Because you are moving with the tide, everything is moving with you. Unless you have a stationary object by which to discern, you can drift until you are far at sea beyond the hearing of God, where God no longer speaks.

So we should take the more earnest heed to what God has spoken, lest we should drift away from the truth. For if God's word spoken by the angels was steadfast, the messengers of the Old Testament, and God had declared that every transgression and disobedience would receive a just recompensive reward, how do you think you will escape the judgment of God and the wrath of God if you neglect the great salvation which our Lord first of all spoke about and then was confirmed by those that heard Him? God is under no obligation to save you. It is by God's grace that the offer of salvation is made to man.

God didn't have to offer salvation to you. He is gracious. And He has given you the invitation to come and to receive His gift of eternal life.

His invitation to spend eternity with Him in the glories of His kingdom. Some people sort of act like they are doing God a favor when they respond to God and give their lives to Jesus Christ. You're not doing God a favor.

You're doing yourself a favor when you do that. People think that they can come to God at their own time and at their own choosing. That because God has been patient with them, God will always be there.

And they can play their games, they can do their thing and when they come to the end where they are really facing danger, then they can cry upon the Lord and the Lord will surely answer them and deliver them because, you know, He has helped them so often. But that was the mistake that Saul made. He had not been listening to God.

He used God as a convenience. Whenever he got into trouble, he would seek the Lord. But he did that once too often.

And now as he is in major trouble, as he is facing his last day on earth, he seeks to hear the voice of God. But God is no longer speaking. God has written him off.

God isn't responding. The Lord has departed from him. God said to Jeremiah, Pray not for the people, for their good.

For when they fast, I will not hear their cry. When they offer their burnt offerings and their prayers, I will not accept them, but I will consume them by the sword and by the famine and by the pestilence. You see, they had come to the place where God was no longer speaking to them.

God no longer was dealing with them. And he said to Jeremiah, Don't pray for them anymore, Jeremiah. They've gone too far.

If they try to come back now, I'm not going to receive them. They've stepped over the line. God said to Noah, My spirit will not always strive with man.

Now, that God's spirit does strive with man is a wonderful thing. That God doesn't just give up immediately upon an individual, but that God will strive with a man to turn his life over unto Jesus Christ, to forsake his sinful ways and to walk with the Lord. That God strives to bring you to that life that he has for you is a wonderful thing.

But God is warning, My spirit will not always strive with man. There can come a time when God no longer speaks to you. Where God no longer strives with you.

Where God says to those, Pray not for their good anymore. For if you do, I'll not hear your prayer. The Lord said to the prophet Hosea, Concerning the northern kingdom of Israel, Ephraim is joined to his idols.

Let him alone. Ephraim had crossed the line. God will no longer plead with Ephraim.

Like King Saul, God is no longer speaking. Let him alone. I'm not gonna deal with them anymore.

They've gone too far. Some of you might be in danger this day of God saying, Let them alone. Don't pray anymore for their good.

They've gone too far. Paul, writing to the Romans, speaks of those that God has given up. What a tragedy when God says of a person, I've given up on them.

Paul said, The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and the unrighteousness of men who hold the truth of God in unrighteousness. Because that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God and neither were they thankful. And they became vain in their imaginations and their foolish hearts were darkened and professing themselves to be wise.

They actually were fools for they changed the truth of God into a lie and they worshiped and served the creature more than the creator. Wherefore God gave them up to the uncleanness through the lust of their own hearts to dishonor their bodies between themselves. And for this cause God gave them up to vile affections.

Twice God gave them up. And that is possible. That God gives up on an individual.

That his spirit no longer strives. That God no longer speaks to that person. But what remains for that person that God has given up? In Hebrews 10.27 it says, A certain fearful looking for the judgment and fiery indignation which shall devour his enemies.

For he that despised Moses' law died without mercy with two or three witnesses. But how much worse do you suppose the punishment will be to those who have trodden underfoot the Son of God. Have counted the blood of his covenant an unholy thing and have done despite to the spirit of grace.

You see, when God speaks to you and you reject, you won't listen to God. You are doing despite to his spirit of grace that is calling you to repent from your sin and to surrender your life and to follow Jesus Christ. For we know, the author said, Him who has said vengeance belongs to me and I will repay, saith the Lord.

And again, the Lord will judge his people and it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. Why is God not speaking to Saul any longer? Because Saul had turned a deaf ear to God one too many times. God had spoken to Saul over and over again.

Saul recognized. Over and over, Saul would say, I have sinned. But then he would go right back and do the same thing over again.

Finally, God just had it with him. He had rejected the voice of God one too many times. And now when he seeks the Lord, now when he wants to hear from God, God's no longer speaking to him.

God is finished with him. In Proverbs chapter 1, it describes why God quits speaking to a person. God said, because I have called and you refused to respond.

I have stretched out my hand and you did not regard it. But you have ignored all my counsel and you would not obey my reproof. So I will laugh at your calamity and I will mock when your fear comes.

And when your fear comes as desolation and your destruction comes as a whirlwind, when distress and anguish comes upon you, then you will call upon me, but I will not answer. You will seek me early, but you will not find me, for that you hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the Lord. You would not obey my counsel.

You despised all my reproof. That's exactly the case that Saul was in. It describes exactly where Saul was.

He was self-willed. He was not willing to allow God to rule over his life as the Prophet said to him, because you have not allowed God to rule over you. God is taking away from you the rule over the people.

Self-willed. He will do it his way. He will ignore the warnings of God.

He will follow his own self-willed path. The Prophet Isaiah said, Behold, the Lord's hand is not short, that he cannot save. Neither is his ear heavy, that he cannot hear.

But your sins have separated you from God. The problem isn't on God's side. It's not that God can't hear.

It's that God won't hear. And God won't speak. He has heard.

He has spoken. You've ignored him. And now he will ignore you.

Jeremiah chapter 7 verse 9, The Lord said, Will you steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods, and then come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, I am free to do all of these abominations. Is this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, I have seen it, saith the Lord. And now, because you have done all of these works, saith the Lord, and I have spoken to you, rising up early and speaking, but you would not hear me.

And I called you, but you would not answer. Therefore, I will cast you out of my sight, as I have cast out all of your brothers, even the whole seed of Ephraim. Therefore, Jeremiah, do not pray for this people, neither lift up prayer for them, neither make intercession to me, for I will not hear thee.

Jeremiah, they've gone too far. I've called, they won't answer. They've gone too far.

Don't pray for them anymore. Because if you do, I'm not gonna hear you. Like Saul, they had crossed the line.

They had gone too far. Some of you may be getting close to that line today. You've heard the call of God many times.

God has spoken to your heart, but you continue to put Him off. You're determined to live your own life on your terms, and you've rejected God's rule over your life. There will come a day, a day of crisis, a great emergency, and you will call upon God, but you have no guarantee that God will hear you at that time.

He may say of you as He did of Ephraim, they will call, but I will not answer, because I called to them and they wouldn't answer me. In that desperate day of trouble, when you call upon Him, you better hope that He does not say to you as He did to Israel, you have forsaken me and served other gods, therefore, I will deliver you no more. Go and cry to the gods which you have chosen.

Let them deliver you in the time of your troubles. There comes that time, when God sort of washes His hands of an individual, and said, I've given up. I'll not speak to them any further.

They have cast the die. The prophet Isaiah wrote to the people, seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near. The Bible says, today is the day of salvation.

And we're encouraged to take advantage of the fact that God is speaking to us today. God is speaking again to many of you. He has spoken before.

And once again this morning, God is speaking to your heart. And you don't know but what this might be the last time that God will speak to you. The last time that God will invite you to share in His kingdom.

And if you don't hearken to the voice of God today, you have no guarantee that God will ever speak to you again. But there only awaits that fearful looking forward to the fiery indignation of God's wrath, whereby He will devour His adversaries. Today we are living in perilous times.

We are at a war against almost an invisible enemy. We are facing terrorist attacks. We are being warned by our government to be alert, to be on guard, that the enemy is within our borders and could attack at any time in a variety of ways.

These are indeed troublous times. And you never know. Just when it might be that you're going to have to cry into God for help.

You want to make sure that when you cry, He's listening. And that He's still speaking to you. But if you don't listen to Him, you see, He's under no obligation to listen to you.

And that's exactly what He is warning. And Saul had come to that point. He was at that desperate point of life.

This is his last day on earth as the Prophet Samuel, who finally came to him, said, Today, you're going to be with me and your sons. This is your last day, Saul. God's not speaking to you anymore.

It's over. I trust that today, if you will hear His voice, harden not your heart, but respond to God as He speaks to you now. To make your peace with God.

To receive the offer of salvation that He has made to each of you. To receive His Son. For he who has the Son has life.

Listen to God. Hearken to God. And in that day of trouble, He will hearken to you.

So we pray, Father, we realize what a serious thing it is to reject You when You speak to us. To not listen or hearken to what You say. To go on in our own stubborn, rebellious ways, like Saul, self-will.

We realize, Lord, that for each of us, sooner or later we're going to be facing that crisis moment of life. Standing at the door of eternity, calling on You, seeking Your guidance, seeking Your help and Your

strength. Lord, we want to be on speaking terms at that time.

We want You, Lord, to speak to us the words of strength and comfort and help. The words of guidance and direction. Show us the ways in which we should go that we might walk in them, dear Lord.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Shall we stand? Right now, God is speaking to many of you.

He's giving you another opportunity to turn from your sin and from your falling and to live a life that is pleasing to Him. A life of dedication and commitment to Jesus Christ. If you won't listen, if you won't respond, you have no guarantee that God will ever speak to you on the issue again.

Remember with Moses, when he was asking God for a certain thing, God said, don't speak to me about this anymore, Moses. It's a closed issue. And you never know when God might say concerning, look, don't talk to me about this.

It's a closed issue. It's over. Seek ye the Lord while He may be found.

Call upon Him while He is near. Lest the wicked days come in which you say, I have no pleasure in them. Now is the time.

Now is the opportunity. I would encourage you. Obey the voice of God.

Now. Today. The pastors are down here at the front to pray with you.

And if you want to respond to that voice of God speaking to your heart, perhaps He's dealing with a sin in your life. Once again, and you keep turning a deaf ear. It's time you start listening.

Time you start obeying. Because there's going to come a time when you'll want God to hear you. And you'll want God to speak to you.

But it's possible to go beyond the limits of God. Where He will no longer speak. As soon as we're dismissed, I would encourage you.

Make your way forward. Come on down here and listen. Hearken.

Respond to God's voice. And make your peace with God today. Settle the issues.

And go forth from this place with a renewed commitment of your life. To serve Him. To follow Him.

To obey Him. Lord, lift up His countenance upon thee and give thee peace.

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