

Imperatives - Sensitivity to the Voice of the Lord

by Devern Fromke

The imperative need for hearing and understanding the voice of the Lord is essential for living a life that is pleasing to God.

Duration: 1:02:57

Scripture: Genesis 12:1, 1 Chronicles 12:32

Topics: "Voice Of God"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the tendency of believers to live as though God does not exist. He compares this behavior to the prodigal son who squandered his inheritance and went his own way. The speaker emphasizes the need for believers to have an alive and vibrant relationship with God, rather than just going through the motions. He also highlights the importance of hearing and understanding the voice of the Lord amidst the many voices in the world. The speaker references biblical figures like David and Abraham who went through suffering and waiting for God's timing in their lives.

Transcript

Last evening we began by sharing what we called the imperative need of the hour. We dealt with the first imperative, which we called the need for an enlarged vision, living in the largest framework of what God is doing. And then, of course, allowing him to expand the inner, that what we see might become inward reality.

I want to go on this morning with another of the imperative needs that I sense among the Lord's people. I call it the imperative need for hearing and understanding the voice of the Lord. There's so many voices in the world today.

Everybody's talking. And our promise is to keep our ear tuned to the different voices, but to often miss the voice of the Lord. It has seemed ever since I was on the East working up from Florida last January up through the States, the Lord has kept ringing just one simple verse to my heart, found in Hebrews, Today, if ye will hear his voice.

Now, for a long time I've made that today the holy dispensation of grace, and it is that. But there is a sense in which the Lord seems to say today, today, today, if ye will hear his voice. I think it's interesting, as we

were saying last evening, that to really know the Lord, to really know him, and to come into more intimate understanding of him and his ways, is to realize that he has a different voice for different people or for different occasions.

He doesn't always speak the same. There's a different voice. You sense that when you realize that various of his servants speak with a different voice.

Remember Paul, writing to the Corinthians, said, when I come to you, what voice shall I use? You go back and listen to the various prophets as they're speaking, and sometimes it's a pleading voice. Sometimes it's like the voice of a clerk in the court who is saying, Isaiah is saying, Hear ye, hear ye, hear ye the word of the Lord. You see, our home is to somehow adapt ourselves or our ears to a particular voice.

We say of a certain servant, my, I like the way he speaks. He just gets through to me. The chances are he isn't.

He's just synchronizing with your temperament. He may not be getting through. I mean the real thing that God wants to say.

I better back up. He may be getting through. But we're so prone.

We're so prone to adapt ourselves to certain voices. And this is why people in Christendom today are gathered into little camps. One says, oh, I like the voice of Apollo.

My, the words flow. How oratorical. Another says, I like Peter.

He's so down to earth and practical. He's been through all that I've been through. Peter's my man.

And others gather because they like a teacher. He speaks with that voice. Well, I've been doing just a little background and going into some of the Old Testament expressions.

And I'm interested this morning for a little while in the different ways that the Lord speaks to get our ears or whatever is necessary to awaken. Yes, I think I will. It's interesting when you look in the New Testament as well as the New.

Remember that God speaks to individuals according to where they are, what their condition is. I'm thinking first this morning of what the Scripture calls the ungodly. Then I'm thinking of those depicted as the sinner.

Then you have what is pictured in the Scripture as the scorner. God has a way. He has a way of speaking.

And we'll take one more. I think we could add others, but for our purposes we'll just speak of the winter. Turn to the first psalm for a moment.

You know it so well. Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly. The term ungodly is used many places, in the Old Testament especially.

We ask, who are the ungodly? I think the ungodly represent just those who say there is no God by either their manner of life or by their words. Remember the psalmist said, Psalm 14 and verse 1, The fool hath said in his heart there is no God. So the fool and the ungodly are the same thing.

There's no God. The whole manner, the whole course of their life is that of the fact there's no God. They're not awakened, they're not sensitive, they move on that basis.

What is God's voice? How does he speak? What is his way with the ungodly? Well, I'm not dogmatic in this, but I think he does, I think I've seen him doing this over and over again. The ungodly, the fool who says there is no God, he just said, alright, if I don't exist, I'll ignore you. He doesn't say anything.

He lets them go their own way. You read in the second psalm, Why do the heathen rage and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against his anointed. Well, the great majority of those who in their initial stage begin to just live a life as though there's no God.

He doesn't exist. This is a matter of the heart. They're going their own way.

God is largely silent towards them. And I'm sure that this is our problem when we're trying to fellowship or we're trying to speak to our next door neighbor. In his ungodly, foolish condition, we can come with various experiences, various things, and he just sort of smiles back.

You poor fool. He doesn't believe in God. It takes something to awaken him.

But in that category, God is very largely silent. I think before we get through, you'll see why I say that. He's silent.

You've all heard of the atheist who stood on his little pedestal downtown Chicago. If there's a God, let him strike me dead and prove that he's real right now. And he kept on railing for many minutes.

We wondered sometimes, why doesn't God strike a man like that dead? Well, he cannot be moved by our silly, simple, our attitude. I'm so glad of that. And I suppose he looks down at that raving little fool and says, I will not condescend to even recognize him.

Silence. The counsel of the ungodly, that is, those who by their manner of life, by their words are saying, there's no God. Who are the sinners? Nor standeth in the way of sinners.

I think we can realize through the Old Testament that when God is speaking of the sinner, and this term is used, it is an individual who acknowledges that there is a God. Acknowledges that there is a creator. One who has made all things, but who does not know his power.

His delivering work does not know him in any personal way, so far as his life is concerned. He just knows that there's one who's created. But there's something about his whole private thing.

Oh, I wish I could know his delivering work. I wish I could know him in my life. The sinner.

You notice now when you read the Old Testament especially, how often this comes up. He knows there's a God. He's aware of it.

He's seen his handiwork, some of his ways. But he does not know any personal relationship, any acquaintance in the living way. The Lord has a voice to that individual.

He has a way of speaking. It's a way of compassion. And I believe that when someone is awakened, I've seen on different occasions, people in their ungodliness, their foolish heart going their own way, and God moves into a community, and he begins to awaken some people.

Something happens. Suddenly, as sinners, they begin to acknowledge, oh, there's a creator. God has a compassionate voice to that individual.

I think we see it manifest in the Lord Jesus. It says, he was the friend of sinners. Well, who is the scorner? Who are the scornful? The way of sinners? Nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

I think, I'm open for correction. But I think that the scorners, those who are sitting in a certain place or position, are those who are religious. Those who have arrived at some outward knowledge about God.

And yet, in their scorning, they have not really allowed him to invade and to work out his purpose or anything he has for their life. They just know all about him. They use the terminology.

They sit in the seat. The seat. In positions.

The scornful. I think when Jesus moved on the scene, and he saw the religious scribes and the Pharisees of that day, his whole voice and attitude toward them was one of derision. They were scorning.

Couldn't recognize his voice. That he was the one he claimed to be. And the scathing words with which he spoke to those who were in positions, religious positions, and yet had no real knowledge of God.

The scornful. We have a religious world around us, so to speak. Lots of people who are both sinners and scornful.

But they've gone a little further than just being sinners. They're scorning those who really want to go on. So Jesus spoke with a denouncing, a scathing word.

Gee, why did sepulchers? Beloved, I don't know. But I'm inclined to believe that the closer we move into an intimate knowledge of the Lord and his mind, the more we share of his spirit and his ways. The same spirit that was in him will begin to work in us in various situations like that.

I am hesitant to be this personal, but I've noticed for, I think, the last 10 or 12 years, I didn't understand for quite a while, why it was that I could go along in a series of meetings, you know, the midweek crowd, those who have hunger, crying out, wanting to know more of the Lord. And it seemed like there was something of a flow of his voice and his word to that group, and Sunday morning would come, and I would have myself prepared with what I thought would be a message for the same group. They were back, but added to that was a whole congregation, Sunday morning crowd.

And I could not understand for the life of me why invariably on a Sunday morning my whole spirit would seem to change, and there would come a whole different note and a whole different tone to that Sunday morning crowd. I'd try to accommodate and fit the front rows. Excuse me, but that's about what it amounts to.

And yet there was something of a sensitivity of the spirit that kept warning, speaking that which the others needed. And after a few situations like that, I began to cry out at my bedside, Lord, this is not me. I came with another burden I don't understand.

Then it seemed as though the Lord began to say, Look, if you're sensitive to my mind and my voice, the more you understand what it is to be identified with me and my burden, you can expect that there'll be a change of voice depending on who's there. Maybe I'm wrong, but I don't think so. We sat one evening, about 35, maybe 40, in a fellowship in a home, and the Lord verified this sort of thing in a way that I had

not recognized.

A missionary returned from Africa, home on furlough, sat in the midst of a service, fellowshipping with us. And strangely, there came into the midst of that a great oppressing, confusing force. And you sensed that the enemy was making a real invasion.

And I saw this missionary sensitive to the situation, suddenly shift from the theme that was then in progress, and right in the midst of it began to tell about a situation they had been in just a few months before in Africa, in which a spirit had been cast out of one of their own congregations. And to my amazement, as we were sitting there, I saw something rise in that missionary. The spirit of the Lord that was rising to stand against.

And she told the story. And I bowed, as I looked at the expression, and I sensed that something in that spirit, in that missionary, and the Lord seemed to say to me, you never deal with the enemy in sympathetic, quiet tones. There came a great peace.

I was looking at the outward and just observing, and then I realized as the missionary went along and began to deal with the one who was in the room, there was a real clash, and God's voice for each situation may be different. Now, we have the ungodly, and he is largely silent. They ignore.

He says, go on your own way and rage. There'll come a day. The sinner, oh yes, there's the acknowledging, but knowing not the power of God, or his delivering work.

The scorner, religious, denying the power of God. Who are the wicked? Well, they're all wicked, you say. God doesn't use the term that way.

He's quite precise. If I understand the wicked, it is those who are maliciously and deliberately aligned with the enemy against God. Now, that may be true of the whole group, but I'm saying that there's something more of the deliberate alignment, really imbibing the spirit of the enemy in an all-out thrust to dethrone or to get rid of God.

And it's this kind of wickedness that you see the Lord dealing with in the Old Testament in various places, and he deals with it very severely. He doesn't speak to it so much. What does he say? Well, one day he turned to Jonah.

He said, Jonah, the wickedness of Nineveh has come before me. The wickedness of Nineveh has come before me. Was Nineveh the only city worthy of being destroyed? What about the other cities? I don't know, but there comes a ripeness.

There comes a time when the ungodly or the sinners move on beyond scorn and come into a real alignment against God. That is, they are joining with the spirits of this world, the spirits of darkness against God. Now, I know there's a lot of that in the other, but wickedness comes to full fruitage and harvest, and he says of the Ninevites, their wickedness has come before me.

Jonah, you go down and warn, and he represents the warning voice. Isn't it interesting how Jonah turns to go his own way, finds occasion for a boat going the other direction. One chapter later when he comes, after his whale, after his fish experience, he says, what was it you said, Lord? Well, my directions haven't changed.

Go to Nineveh. And I've pondered it so many times. I wonder if they would have listened to Jonah, the first chapter.

First chapter, Jonah. But here was a man who comes into their midst half digested. I think there were marks all over him.

And a man whose skin and his whole, you know, plus a spirit and an emergency, something deep within that begins to cry, and he's beginning to say to them, God's going to send judgment. So they began to listen. They began to listen.

The wickedness of Nineveh has come before me. You remember when he was about to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah? And all of the dialogue that goes on between Abraham and the Lord? What is it? If there are so many righteous among the wicked, so many righteous, so many righteous, so many righteous, strange as it may seem, but it is the mercy and the goodness of the Lord that deals with men when their cup has become full and wickedness has reached its place, it is the mercy of the Lord that says, we'll destroy. It may not seem to you, but I'll tell you when lives become aligned with the enemy against God.

Well, I'm more interested in the next category over here, which we will just call the righteous. Seems to be the Old Testament word, or we'll say the just, as Paul puts it, the just shall live by faith. What is the Lord's word to those who are his own? Well, he calls them my sheep.

Old Testament, New Testament. My sheep, no. My sheep, hear my voice.

But even among the sheep, we have the tragic realization that there are those who while they come into a covenant standing with the Lord, as his Old Testament people did, he had separated them under his purpose, or whether we through the new birth have been brought into a living relationship with him and declared righteous, the just. God speaks even to those in their various needs. We have, I think we'll say, two categories this morning.

There are those who are righteous. The just shall live by faith. They walk, they hear his voice each day.

Then we have those whom the Scripture speaks of as backsliders. Who is the backslider? The Scripture tells us the backslider in heart is filled with his own ways. Filled with his own ways.

One who has come into covenant standing as it were. One who has come into a birth relationship as we speak now. God is wanting to lead them on into his full thought and purpose.

But their heart is filled going their own way. There's something deliberate about the backslider. He goes his own way.

He said in Jeremiah of the backslider, he looked down upon them, he says, I am married. I am married to Israel. I am married to them.

Well, what is his voice to the backslider? Backsliding can take on sort of different caricatures. Sometimes our backsliding can almost get to the place of the fool who says, there's no God. I've met lots of individuals who have come into a living relationship.

Something happened. They wanted to go their own way. A good job.

A mate came along. They got married. And you watch a period of time in their life in which like the prodigal who asks for what he can get.

The inheritance that's his. And he goes out to squander. He goes out his own way.

The Lord just seems to have to say to them, alright, go. There's no word to you. There's a silence to those who want to live as though there's no God even though they had known initially a relationship.

May I say it kindly? There's a lot more than we might realize of that going on. Maybe right here. This going on from day to day without an aliveness.

An aliveness to what God really desires as though he doesn't exist. Old Sunday rolls around. Prayer meeting night.

But the rest of the time off in the far country. And the prodigal came to himself and coming to repentance or coming to himself he comes running back. What's the voice? What is the voice of the father to the backslider? It's that wonderful voice that says, oh my son who has been dead.

Dead to who? Dead to who? But you say, I haven't been dead. That's because you live in that little box I was talking about last night. Lord, I say I just haven't been there.

Well, we'll get to that in a minute. I'm not dead. I'm not lost.

But you see, it's a matter of our interpreting things in fundamentalism and our whole scope today. We only think of things as related to man. Man's own security.

Man's own relationship to God for what he can get. But all when the father speaks, it's my son who has been dead. Who's been lost.

Lost to who? Lost to God. Off in a far country. Well, his voice is the same.

Sometimes there's warning. Sometimes there is a real attempt to get his ear. But to the one who's in a far country he has to come to himself.

I've spent hours pleading, begging, warning with some who are in a far country until the Lord just seems to say that's enough. Let him go. And had to wait ten years for them to come to themselves.

Somebody says this morning, Brother Byrne, God does seem a long way. Seems far away. Don't you get some issues confused this morning.

You may need an enlarged vision as we were speaking last night. But while God's enlarging the vision, his first word to the backslider, the one who's been off on his own private binge, living his life up for himself. God's first word when he comes to himself is come back home.

Come back. Come back. There's a place where the father receives.

My speaking, the Lord speaking to someone this morning. He's drawing you back. All these wasted months and years you've tried that little thing.

But the emptiness of it all. But I'm more concerned for that which will include the greater portion of us. And that's the third this morning.

Maybe not so much deliberate backsliding filled with his own ways. But I think that the Scripture speaks of a more refined sort of backsliding. We use another term.

We say one who is out of fellowship. One who is out of fellowship. We love this term in the New Testament picture that John gives us.

Walking in the light is his in the light. We have fellowship. Brothers, sisters, there is a fellowship that we are called to that's very wonderful.

First Corinthians says, we are called into the fellowship of his dear son. When does that happen? When this first calling into fellowship dawns on us and we awaken to a new relationship. He's my father.

I have an elder brother who goes alongside. One who is very close. We are called into fellowship with him.

And I say to us this morning that's a very precious and wonderful thing. When we realize that God has called us to an intimacy in which we have a sharing, a mutuality, the blood cleanses, a conscience that we might really enjoy a sharing life with the Lord. And you know when that fellowship has been broken, something has come in.

We confess our sins. He is faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. But that first fellowship I'm talking about fits into that little box I was referring to last night.

For years, that's the only fellowship I preached about. The only fellowship I was alive to. It's all I realized.

Well, thank God, it's wonderful. I'm not minimizing it. But don't stop at the gate.

Don't sit down where you started. That fellowship that we are invited into in which the Lord in his initial stages speaks with such blessedness. My little children, he says.

How wonderful. And then the scripture says we are invited into the fellowship of the gospel. The Lord doesn't stop.

He's doing everything he can in your life to crowd you into an enlarged way. The fellowship of the gospel. What does it mean? That which I have experienced.

That fellowship that I have with the Father and with the Son. I have to what? Say it louder. I have to share it.

I have to tell others. And so we begin to mouth it. We begin to gossip it.

Or we begin to fellowship with others. Not only the fellowship that we have, the living relationship, but the fellowship with others. And it's the fellowship of the gospel.

The good news. Something has happened. That's a blessed day when the Lord enlarges and we begin to share.

And we know. We know when there begins to be that flow. That enlarging flow and we sense the Spirit of God who is working within.

We call it the fellowship of the Spirit. You meet someone else who has just been awakened and immediately you have a mutuality of fellowship because the same Spirit in you fellowships with them. And

this fellowship of the gospel can be an enlarging thing because it's good news.

Not just the good news of being saved. But I'm always amazed someone comes up saying, I have heard some more good news. This is where you find fellowship in your various experiences.

Whatever they are. I don't try to take them away. Just get them aligned.

You can't take a man's experiences away. You just say, praise the Lord. Let's go on.

Because there's more fellowship ahead. There's more fellowship ahead. I used to spend quite a little time trying to take the experience away because I hadn't been in it myself.

But you can. Just well save your breath. There's the fellowship of good news, whatever it is.

The fellowship of the good news. Then there comes a time when somehow all that we've been sharing, all the fellowship we've been enjoying, God seems to take us through a whole different period. There's a real cry within that says, Oh Lord, if I just had more power to share what I know.

We've all prayed that way. Oh Lord, for greater utterance. For greater power to share that which I already know.

And of course we thought He was going to send a package of power. Or plug us in in a new way to some great resource or supply. But in our praying now for an enlargement, He begins to send the fellowship of His suffering.

No wonder Paul is saying that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His suffering. May I say it kindly? It's awful easy at this point. For the individual who has been accustomed to the voice of the Lord in a certain way and a father sharing in a certain way.

Suddenly we wonder where he is. The fellowship of His suffering. And the Lord still speaking.

Isn't that wonderful? But He's changed His voice and He's changed His way. The fellowship of His suffering. I can see Joe now.

As he finally finishes his mission to Nineveh. With great expectancy. My! The man who has just had success.

Goes off on the hillside now to watch the Lord send judgment. There he sits waiting. Waiting.

Has Jonah been in fellowship with God? Yes, he's known the fellowship in the whale in which he cried out as a repentant. He came back. Then it says, the voice of the Lord came unto me.

Then he went to Nineveh. He shared the good news. Well, it was good.

Didn't sound so good to them. But there comes a time when you've shared the fellowship of the gospel. You may be sitting where Jonah sits now.

You know where he is? He's waiting. Now, Lord. Reign judgment.

But he doesn't. He doesn't. And Jonah has difficulty understanding.

Jonah's going through the fellowship now which is some real suffering. Murmuring, pouting, complaining Jonah. Beginning to see an area within him he's never realized before.

Now, let's just be very open about it. Jonah's sitting there looking. Is he a backslider? No, I don't think so.

Not really. Is he in fellowship with the Lord? Well, it depends on what you mean. What fellowship? What fellowship? God's pressing us to an enlarged fellowship.

We're going to get to the next phase. What fellowship are you going through? What's your fellowship? What's the measure of your fellowship with him? And I've always loved this. Hear the pouting, complaining, murmuring prophet.

Lord, I wish you'd kill me. Until you've been through that stage, I wonder. I used to really be hard on Jonah.

But I can't anymore. There's been too much of it in my own inner spirit that God has had to drag right out into the open. I couldn't understand Elijah when he wanted to die.

The fellowship of his suffering. You see, our problem is we get all confused with what we think God is going to do. And we may see what he's doing.

We may see the what. We may see the what of God's doing. But he always has a how that requires the day-by-day voice of the Lord.

Today, if you will hear his voice. May I go on just a bit in an enlargement? I was awakened with this a couple mornings ago. It has been something that has seemed to just press me in a whole new way.

I was reading. I copied down the very verse that our brother started with in 1 Chronicles chapter 12. There were men of Issachar who had understanding of the times of what Israel ought to do.

I've preached from that verse for a number of years. But the other morning, I must confess something else dawned on me. The great problem throughout the generations has been people who can get a hold of the what.

Abraham saw a lot. He saw what God was going to do. He's going to have a family.

He saw what he was going to do. And that's God's larger framework. But he didn't see how he was going to do it.

He didn't see how he was going to do it. And I wonder about I wonder about David's consulting with these men who knew what God was going to do. And that was all good and proper.

The very first verse of the 13th chapter says, and David consulted with who? With these captains. He consulted with these very men who had an understanding of what needed to be done. And on the basis of that, he goes ahead.

I expect, beloved, I expect that they said Israel needs a gathering point. Israel needs the ark back in the midst. We need to be able to worship.

We need this. This is what we need. And so he goes ahead to do the thing that seemed right.

But he didn't have today's word from the Lord. He was out of fellowship. How can I bring this home to us? Yesterday's word is alright.

But God has a word for today. And if there is any difficulty in Christendom this morning, it is right at this point. How were you going to do it, Lord? Well, you know what David did.

He rushed ahead with a brand new cart. A Philistine cart to do the what? The man of understanding. And that's as far as they could go.

Don't misunderstand now. We're not drawing a different construction. We're simply saying that men could go just so far.

But David, David had to have a personal word that would take him further in the fellowship of what God was doing. That thing exploded within my heart and it caused me to cry out, Oh Lord. Oh Lord.

We've seen something of what you're going to do. What we believe you want to do. Lord, how are you going to do it? How? Don't let it run ahead.

Well, David went through some suffering. You know the story. Great suffering.

Abraham went through the suffering all those long years waiting for a son. The what? Of the Lord's working. I wonder if there isn't something of that timing is the problem in a lot of us.

Maybe this morning. Well, here we are. In fellowship, well, you can say this morning, brother Frankie, the Lord's the Lord's wonderful.

I've had a precious time this morning. I don't know how large your box is. I don't know how much the Lord's been able to take you into his fuller mind.

He's taking you through the participation, the fellowship of his sufferings that he might really make known the measure of life power, resurrection power. But I was reading last night, you remember, of another fellowship. What was that? In the third chapter, the fellowship of the mystery.

Oh, there goes some more walls and the enlargement comes. The fellowship of the mystery. This is what is the burden of my heart these days as we were trying to say all that God all that God would bring us into the knowledge of his son in such a way that the eyes of our understanding can be enlarged and we can really see that which he is working toward.

Now it's easy to stop and say it's a mystery and therefore you'll have to wait for the Lord to share it. That's a way out. But that's really what it is.

I've tried for years and the Lord keeps always shutting me up by way of saying, look son, when you get it all outlined and they can get a hold of it with their mind, that's just the trouble. They'll have the what? I want them to know him. I want them to know him.

Not only the fellowship of his suffering but the fellowship of the mystery. And our dedication our seeing will come into a whole new framework once that gets hold of it. What is the voice of the Lord? What is the voice of the Lord? It's the way God communicates to you what he wants to share whatever it is.

And I thank him this morning in a whole new way that we've I think come to sense that there's the still small voice and then there is the blasting voice. There's the time of silence. There's the time in which he takes one into the suffering.

There's the fellowship of having seen the larger thing or that which really is primary in God's heart. And then in awe just having to say, oh Lord only you can do it. Only you can do it.

Maybe we can put this in a little larger way this morning as we're saying when you're talking about being in fellowship with the Lord I guess that's true but what's the measure of it? What's the measure of it? God is moving on and as we walk with him in the new unfolding light he keeps saying this is the increase of fellowship that I want to bring you into. I'm concerned. Let me see if I can put it this way.

We had a missionary a former missionary friend visiting us last week and I heard her laughing and just sort of praising the Lord in the other room and she walked in where I was sitting and she said, read this. She stuck a book under my nose pointed to a paragraph happened to be a book by Dr. Tozer one of the editorials that he's written. And I can't remember the title of the chapter but I sure got the impact of it.

The place I started reading was went on like this there are so many of the Lord's children heading away out in the wildernesses these days who get together and they lament and moan and say oh if we just had a pastor who could really feed us if we just had someone who could really share a word with us you could only hear Tozer say humbug that's kind of an abrupt word but he meant it. Then he went on to say you people who have that mentality and that attitude and then you condescend and say but praise the Lord we've got a library of tapes and he used the term of Billy Graham and Dr. Reese and we can listen to these and get our food. And you know what he said? Humbug.

Now I'm after something. He said when will you wake up to realize that you can have the voice of the Lord to your own heart. Now I know that he was appreciating as much as any of us do those whom the Lord is using but the good becomes the enemy of the better.

And the better can get right in the way of keeping us from God's and it has caused me to wonder if we ought to have any tape recorded. You know why? There are times when I believe God has had a specific word for that hour and he wanted to say something to that group that was for them and it doesn't fit the general situation out here but we take it out and want to play it to everybody. I'm concerned that God will give us wisdom and good judgment.

I think I have picked up books and I've listened to tapes when something within my own spirit kept crying out that's not general. That doesn't fit the general. That belonged to a specific occasion.

Well you have to know the voice of the Lord. God has a wonderful way of speaking and of course it's all true but it finally gets around to whether it's his special specific speaking to you at the point of your fellowship. This was brought into sharp focus to my heart a number of years ago when I was laid on a bed in a hospital with an accident.

Unexpected. Well, both of us the lady missionary who had 17 fractures had given up to die and we likewise. And after I gained consciousness about a week later the daughter of this missionary who was up on another floor, the daughter came in.

She was quite disturbed and quite broken. And she shared with me she said you know poor mother has been really through it this morning. Two friends have come in and read some verses of scripture to her

and in the name of the Lord commanded that she be healed and rise up and get out of bed.

Well if you could have seen a woman with 17 fractures reading a word of the Lord. The daughter looked at me and she said but mother understand that there's a difference between God's general word and God's specific word for the situation. And she said I saw mother look back and smile and say well if the Lord wants me to get out he'll break all these casts and help me.

But in the meantime I'm not listening to you, I'm listening to him. You see our problem as we move along in the fellowship with the Lord is we're prone. We're prone.

I've been so prone to listen to someone who comes along and we're fellowshiping but their measure of fellowship and that which the Lord presently may be taking me through is far different, far different. God is crowding you into a place where every last thing outwardly that you depended upon he's bringing to know that he might teach you what it means today if you will hear his voice. I've just started this, I want to go on tomorrow with it.

But oh I'm concerned for us this morning. I'm trying to just re-echo what has been said earlier. It's so easy for us to get a hold of a lot of the things, a lot of the things that the Lord has generally said.

But he's wanting to speak in a very specific way today if you will hear his voice. What kind of fellowship do we enjoy? This is a measure of our fellowship? Praise the Lord. A clear conscience cleansed by the blood, called into fellowship of the Lord Jesus.

It's wonderful. But he's going to walk on the fellowship, the fellowship, the fellowship, the fellowship and we're only in fellowship when we're in the full light of all that he has shown us and living up to the full measure of it. Lord, we thank you for your voice down through all the generations.

Sometimes you've been silent when we've acted like a fool. You've come in compassion, you've been a friend when we didn't know the real power, the working, the delivering work of God in our lives. Sometimes we came close to scorning even after we've known you.

We've belittled others because they've gone on in a fuller measure of fellowship. Don't let us scorn anyone this morning just because we can't understand or we've not arrived. Oh Lord, don't let us get in the seat of the scornful.

We're not looking at just the religious world out here but there's so much scorn even among those who belong to you. And Lord, even sometimes in our best desires and ambitions there's been wickedness. We've gotten aligned with purposes, with things, with the enemy.

But Lord, here we are this morning. We do ask that there will be the increasing, increasing fellowship. Some of my brothers and sisters have been going through the fellowship of suffering.

And it's in these moments that it's so easy to question like John did when he was in prison. But Lord, we believe that you're raising up hearts and lives all over this country and all over the world who are being expanded into the larger thing, the fellowship of the mystery, that which you're working towards. And we thank you.

Give us each one this morning a deep inner cry that says Lord, help me to hear your voice. And help me to be your voice when I know your spirit. Sense the spirit.

Help me to be your voice. We ask this in Jesus name with thanksgiving. Amen.

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