

The Ear for the Lord Alone

by T. Austin-Sparks

The sermon emphasizes the importance of having an ear to hear what the Spirit says, and using it to achieve spiritual life and history.

Scripture: Exodus 21:5-6, Leviticus 8:22-24, Leviticus 14:28, Deuteronomy 15:12-18, Isaiah 1:4-5, Romans 12:1, Revelation 3:20-22

Topics: "Obedience to God", "Spiritual Hearing"

Description

T. Austin-Sparks emphasizes the critical role of the ear in spiritual life, illustrating how the act of listening can lead to either spiritual downfall or redemption. He discusses various biblical references to the ear, highlighting the importance of hearing God's voice over the adversary's temptations, as seen in the stories of Eve and Jesus. The sermon underscores that true spiritual hearing goes beyond mere auditory reception; it requires an inward transformation that leads to a life of obedience and worship. Sparks calls for believers to present themselves as living sacrifices, fully attentive to what the Spirit is saying. Ultimately, the message is a reminder that our spiritual vitality hinges on our willingness to listen to God alone.

Transcript

Reading: Rom. 12:1; Ex. 21:5-6; Deut. 15:12-18; Lev. 8:22-24,30; 14:28; Isa. 1:4-5; Rev. 3:20-22.

You will have noticed that, in all these passages, reference is made to the ear. There is the bored ear of the servant, the consecrated ear of the priest, the anointed ear of the leper, the opened ear for instruction in Isa. 1, and the attentive ear of Rev. 3. It is impressive to realise what a large place the Lord gives to the ear, and how much Scripture is occupied with hearing; and, as we put the various Scriptures together, we come to find that the matter of hearing, or of the ear, goes right to the root of the spiritual life. It was by capturing the ear of Eve that all sin was introduced into the human race. She consented to listen, she lent her ear when the adversary, Satan, said, "Hath God said...?". That was the beginning of all spiritual evil among men, and since then Satan has ever sought to propagate his kingdom by getting the ear, by securing a consent to listen. It was in exactly the same way that he went to the Lord Jesus in the days of His fast in the wilderness, saying, "If thou be the Son of God..." There is something in that very much akin to "Hath God said...?", because it was only a short time previously that God had said, "This is my beloved Son". But the last Adam refused to listen; He closed His ear. He would not consent to entertain the suggestion or the insinuation, and, by His persistent refusal to give ear to the adversary, redemption was

accomplished. All the mischief of the first failure in that very respect was overcome.

When we come to the book of the Revelation, we find that it is to the ear that the appeal is made. It is the time of consummations. The first chapters have to do with things that must be listened to as from the Lord; the last chapters see the result of that work of the Spirit-life in fulness; the same principles as in Genesis. It is the question of life in fulness, lost by lending an ear to Satan, gained by listening to what the Spirit saith.

So we are right in saying that there is a sense in which the whole spiritual life and spiritual history hang upon spiritual hearing. Between the two extremes of death and life, between listening to Satan and having an ear only for the Lord, there are many aspects of spiritual hearing, as we have seen in the above passages. We will not touch upon them now in detail, but be content for the moment to emphasize the necessity of having an ear to hear what the Spirit saith, and of using it - "He that hath an ear, let him hear". We must be sure that we are not only hearing outwardly, but that the thing is going deep inside, that it is making a difference. You can say things again and again to some people, and they know what you say, and will retort, 'I have heard you say that before'. But it makes no difference - they have not heard with the inward ear. Life depends upon that kind of hearing inside - using the ear that we have for what the Spirit saith. So it is all summed up in "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service (worship, R.V.M)" (Rom. 12:1).

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