

PARABLES

Bringing Hidden Things to Light



Psalms 78:2-4

I will open my mouth in a parable, I will utter dark sayings of old... We will not conceal them.

Parables Bookshelf - Series 2.16.1

Series 2 of the Parables Bookshelf contains a variety of writings covering a wide range of topics related to the Kingdom of God. These writings originally appeared as posts on the Heart4God website, or the Parables Blog, both of which are the websites of Bible teacher Joseph Herrin.

The Hearing Ear



The Hearing Ear - Part 1

Joseph Herrin (08-05-2012)

Proverbs 20:12

The hearing ear and the seeing eye, Yahweh has made them both.

I have recently shared that Yahweh entrusted me with an abandoned puppy to care for and to raise as my

that they are born with their sense of smell already functioning, while being both blind and deaf at birth. On average a puppy's eyes will be opened about two weeks after they are born, and their ears will open a week later.

In contrast, humans are born with their eyes and ears already functioning. That does not mean they function perfectly, however. At birth babies see all things in black and white and they can only focus on objects about 8-12 inches away. By the age of four months a baby's vision has

own. Dogs are renowned for their sense of smell. Dogs can detect scents that are undetectable to man. Being the primary sense with which dogs relate to the world around them, it is not surprising

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developed enough to see things in full color.

The human sense of hearing actually develops before the sense of sight. Perhaps this is due to the darkness inside the womb. There is not a whole lot to view there. However, in the womb there are many sounds, and a baby is able to hear before he is born. The baby has been listening to his mother's heartbeat, and the gurgle of her indoor plumbing. Babies in the womb can hear voices, and many people play music for their pre-born children.

We instinctively recognize the acuity of a newborn baby's sense of hearing. Consider how many times you have heard someone say, "Quiet, or you will wake the baby." We can rouse a puppy with his sense of smell, but newborn babes are startled, or aroused, by their sense of hearing. You can cook cabbage and sauerkraut, or burn the dinner on the stove and the human baby will not notice. However, make a sharp noise and they will be wakened from a sound sleep.

The natural realm has been designed by our heavenly Father to show us truths about the kingdom of God. All Christians are born with the ability to hear the voice of God. A Christian can also see at birth, but his spiritual vision must grow and develop until he is seeing things as a mature believer.

When Christ spoke of His followers, He specifically made reference to their sense of hearing.

John 10:27

"My sheep **hear** My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me..."

Sheep, like humans, are sound and sight oriented. Their sense of hearing is particularly predominant. I have shared before an illustration I heard years ago that was quite illuminating. A man from a nation where sheep raising is uncommon took a vacation to a locale where it was quite common. One day as he was out for a drive he stopped and got out to admire a pastoral scene. There were hills and lush grass and a small lake before him. As he was admiring the view he saw a shepherd coming down to the water leading a flock of sheep. The shepherd let his sheep drink, and as they were being watered two other shepherds emerged from different places also leading their individual flocks. They all headed down to the water.

The visitor watching this became concerned. He worried that all the sheep would become mixed together into one large flock and he wondered how the shepherds would ever get them separated again. He thought that perhaps the shepherds could tell the sheep apart, even if he could not. Yet, even by identifying their own flocks, this man could only expect it to be a chaotic chore to separate the sheep.

The visitor waited and after the sheep had drank freely he witnessed a marvelous thing. Each one of the shepherds began to walk off in different directions singing as they went. The sheep immediately began to follow the voice of their shepherd. There was no chaos, no confusion. The sheep sorted themselves out quickly as each one followed the voice of their master.

Christ was familiar with shepherding, as were those to whom He spoke. They understood what was indicated when He stated:

John 10:2-5

"But he who enters by the door is a shepherd of

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the sheep. To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he puts forth all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. A stranger they simply will not follow, but will flee from him, because they do not know the voice of strangers."

People of God, it should give us comfort that Christ has declared that those who belong to His flock have the ability to discern His voice. This ability is innate. All who are born of the Spirit of Christ are able to hear the voice of Yahshua, and to recognize who it is that is speaking. The apostle Paul has written in detail about this ability that belongs to the saints.

I Corinthians 2:11-13

For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God, which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words.

The apostle Paul writes about God's thoughts being conveyed to the saints through spiritual speech and words. Speech and words are things that are heard. Those who belong to Christ have their spiritual sense of hearing active and functioning from the very moment of their Spirit birth.

Christ makes a clear distinction between those who belong to the Father and those who are children of the devil. Yahshua states that those

who belong to God the Father hear His voice. Those who belong to the devil cannot hear His voice. They are incapable of doing so.

John 8:43-47

"Why do you not understand what I am saying? It is because you cannot hear My word. You are of your father the devil... He who is of God hears the words of God; for this reason you do not hear them, because you are not of God."

It is plain from these words that spiritual hearing is the normal state of those who are God's people. If we belong to Yahweh we should hear His voice and the voice of His Son. This is true of both Jew and Gentile.

John 10:16

"I have other sheep, which are not of this fold (not Jewish); I must bring them also, and **they will hear My voice**; and they will become one flock with one shepherd."

Even as it is the natural state of a human baby to be able to see and hear when they are born, so too is this the proper condition of those who are born of the Spirit of Christ. Nevertheless, we find that there are multitudes that do not hear and who do not see. The saying is true:

Isaiah 42:18-20

Hear, you deaf! And look, you blind, that you may see. Who is blind but My servant, or so deaf as My messenger whom I send? Who is so blind as he that is at peace with Me, or so blind as the servant of Yahweh? You have seen many things, but you do not observe them; Your ears are open, but none hears.

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Pay especial attention to the last sentence above. "Your ears are open, but none hears." What this is stating is that there is nothing physically wrong with the sense of hearing, but the people of God are still not receiving the words of Yahweh.

Hearing the voice of God is essential for all who would walk as disciples of Yahshua. Yahweh determined that He would have sons and these sons would live their lives directed and empowered by the indwelling Spirit of Christ. The life of a disciple of Yahshua is a Spirit led life.

Romans 8:14

For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

From the beginning of creation God has been looking for mature sons to come forth after His image, and after His likeness. This thought was expressed in the opening chapter of Genesis.

Genesis 1:26-27

Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." God created man in His own

image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

We are told that God's original communication with Adam was face to face. In the book of Genesis we read that God came walking in the Garden in the cool of the evening, and that He called out to Adam. Yet God desired a much

fuller and intimate form of communication with man. He desired to dwell within man. Man was designed to be a container of the Spirit of God, a temple in which Yahweh's Spirit could dwell.

Adam's communication with God was not unlike the disciples' relationship to Yahshua when He was ministering in bodily form. The disciples walked with Yahshua for three years. They heard His voice and saw His works, yet this was not the ideal relationship between God and man. It was limited in very crucial ways. Yahshua could not be with every disciple at all times. In His earthly body, Yahshua was limited by time and space. But more importantly, in His physical and bodily relationship with the disciples, Yahshua could only relate to them externally. He could not transform them internally. He could not be formed within them. For this reason He spoke the following words:

John 16:5-14

"But now I am going to Him who sent Me; and none of you asks Me, 'Where are You going?' But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you... I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose it to you."

Yahshua told His disciples that it was to their advantage that He go away in order that the

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Helper, the Spirit of truth, might be sent to them. The Spirit would dwell within each of them and disclose to them the words of Christ. The Spirit would cause each of them to be born again spiritually, and then the Spirit would brood over this new spiritual man and labor to bring it to maturity. We have many scriptures that reveal Yahweh's intent that man should be a temple wherein His Spirit should dwell.

I Corinthians 3:16

Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?

II Corinthians 6:16

For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, "I will dwell in them and walk among them; and I will be their God, and they will be My people."

Ezekiel 36:27

"I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances."

Romans 8:11

But if the Spirit of Him who raised Yahshua from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Yahshua the Messiah from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

The disciples did not discern how much better it would be for Yahshua to go away. They did not understand the full benefit of the Spirit being given and dwelling within them. It was far better to have the indwelling Spirit of God: the Spirit that never sleeps, that is always present, that would lead them into all truth, that would

bring life to their mortal bodies, than it was to have an external Christ that had to relate to man through their flesh.

Many saints today have bought into the false doctrine that says they are to be led by the Scriptures. Those who adopt this view fall into the same errors as the Israelites who were guided by the Law (Torah).

The Law was engraved on stones and recorded by prophets in the numerous books that make up the Old Testament. This caused the Law to be external to man. It had to enter man through his flesh (via his natural senses and the faculties of his Adamic mind). This is problematic, for the flesh is corrupt and wicked and all that passes through it is tainted by the weakness of the flesh.

In contrast, the Spirit of God speaks directly to the inner man, the new creature in Christ, and the communication is pure and undefiled. It is therefore better to have the Spirit dwelling within man and making known to man the mind of the Father, than it is to have an external body of rules that speaks to man's flesh. This is Paul's message in the following verses:

Romans 8:3-4

For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

From the time of Adam's creation God has desired to dwell within man and to commune

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with each individual saint. He has yearned for each person to come to Him directly to learn of His ways and His will for them. It was not His desire that men should have some intermediary, such as a priest or prophet, who would declare God's mind to them. Though priests and prophets were ordained for a time, they were to no longer be necessary when mankind should reach maturity. Yahweh has desired to teach each one of His children Himself.

John 6:45

“It is written in the prophets, ‘and they shall all be taught of God.’”

I John 2:27

As for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you; but as His anointing teaches you all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him.

Isaiah 30:19-21

O people in Zion, inhabitant in Jerusalem, you will weep no longer. He will surely be gracious to you at the sound of your cry; when He hears it, He will answer you. Although Yahweh has given you bread of privation and water of oppression, He, your Teacher will no longer hide Himself, but your eyes will behold your Teacher. Your ears will hear a word behind you, "This is the way, walk in it," whenever you turn to the right or to the left.

Sadly, Satan has done such a work of obscuring God's design for the saints to be Spirit led that there are groups of believers today that deny that God speaks individually to His sons and daughters. They declare that God quit speaking when the Bible was completely written, and

that all that is necessary is to seek the mind and will of God in the pages of scripture. These are blind guides leading the blind. It is a vital necessity that all of God's children should hear the voice of the Spirit within the temple of their body.

Yahshua is the pattern for our own lives as children of God. He was the firstborn among many brethren. His life was a life in the Spirit. He did not begin His ministry until the Spirit descended upon Him, and from that moment forward His life was guided and empowered by the same Spirit. He discerned the mind of the Father by the Spirit. This is also to be our pattern. We are not to be led by the letter of the Law, but by the Spirit that was freely given to us.

II Corinthians 3:6

It is He Who has qualified us, making us to be fit and worthy and sufficient, as ministers and dispensers of a new covenant of salvation through Christ, not ministers of the letter (of legally written code) but of the Spirit; for the code of the Law kills, but the Holy Spirit makes alive.

[Amplified Bible]

We have been given the Spirit so that we might be guided by the Spirit into all truth. The Spirit teaches the saints all things, even the deep things of God. The thoughts of God are made known to the saints by the Spirit. It was in this way that Yahshua performed His ministry. He was always beholding the Father through the eyes of the Spirit, and He did only those things He saw the Father doing. The very words He spoke were those which the Father gave Him to speak.

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John 5:19-20

Therefore Yahshua answered and was saying to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner. For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself is doing; and the Father will show Him greater works than these, so that you will marvel."

Yahshua demonstrated by His life the way that each of His disciples is also to walk before God. Many saints have noted that Yahshua said, "As the Father has sent Me, so send I you," but they have failed to consider how the Father sent Christ. Did the Father give Yahshua a mandate to go and be the Messiah to humanity, to go and perform miracles and cast out demons and prophesy? No, He did not. The Father determined that Christ should be led of the Spirit in all things. The Son of God was to let the Spirit guide Him into all of His activities and in all of His words.

Some saints mistakenly believe that they are just to go and do the same type of works that Christ did; preach the gospel, cast out demons, heal the sick, make disciples, etc.. They have not discerned that Yahshua did none of these things of His own initiative. He was led of the Spirit in every word, every miracle, every moment of His day. We can see this desire of Yahshua, that all of His disciples be Spirit led, as we look at the scriptures.

John 20:21-22

So Yahshua said to them again, "Peace be with you; **as the Father has sent Me, I also send you.**" And **when He had said this, He breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit."**

If the disciples did not receive the Holy Spirit, they could not walk as Christ did in this world. For this reason they were strictly commanded to "tarry in Jerusalem until you be endued with power from on high." They had to await the day of Pentecost and the giving of the Spirit. By receiving the Spirit, they were then equipped and empowered to walk in the same manner as their Savior. They would be prepared to walk as Christ walked in this world.

I John 4:17

By this, love is perfected with us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment; **because as He is, so also are we in this world.**

Life in Christ is by necessity a life in the Spirit. We are to walk as Yahshua walked, and He was Spirit led from the moment of His baptism at the Jordan River. As soon as the Spirit came upon Him we have these words:

Matthew 3:16-4:1

After being baptized, Yahshua came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and lighting on Him, and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased." **Then Yahshua was led up by the Spirit** into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

Yahshua could not begin His ministry until He received the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit. As soon as the Spirit came upon Him we see Yahshua being led by the Spirit. This leading continued, and eventually the day would come when the Spirit would lead Him to the cross.

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If you have discerned that you too are called to follow in the steps of Christ by living a Spirit directed life, you will understand the vital necessity of hearing God's voice. Without spiritual hearing, how will you ever know the Father's will for you? How will you discover that specific path Yahweh has appointed unto you for your perfecting as a son or daughter?

I want to lay a foundation demonstrating the absolute necessity of Christians hearing the voice of God before advancing on to speak of the causes of spiritual deafness and how to improve one's spiritual hearing. In the next post I will further explain the necessity of hearing the voice of God for yourself if you are to attain to that "perfect" man Yahweh has determined you should arrive at.

The Hearing Ear - Part 2

Joseph Herrin (08-06-2012)

Proverbs 20:12

The hearing ear and the seeing eye, Yahweh has made them both.

Spiritual hearing is absolutely essential to those who are disciples of Christ. It is impossible to walk as a disciple apart from being led of God's voice. This testimony is seen profusely throughout the New Testament.

John 10:27

"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me..."

Romans 8:14

For all who are being led by the Spirit of God,

these are sons of God.

Galatians 5:25

If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.

It is significant to note that Paul did not adjure the saints to "walk by the Bible," nor to "walk according to Torah." The most basic premise upon which all Christian life is based is that the saints are indwelt, empowered, and guided by the Spirit of Christ within them.

Philippians 2:13

For it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.

From the very beginning of Yahweh calling me into ministry He has stressed this fact. ***The only life that is pleasing to Him is a life yielded, submitted, directed, and empowered by His Spirit.*** This is a pattern we see in all who are pleasing to the Father. Yahshua could not begin His ministry until the Holy Spirit came upon Him at His baptism and remained upon Him. From that moment forward Christ was guided by the Spirit in all He said and did.

John 5:19

"Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing..."

As we examine the lives of each of the apostles we find that they embarked upon their ministries in the very same way. They received command from Christ to go and make disciples. However, this work could only begin AFTER

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Pentecost when the Spirit came upon them.

Luke 24:49

“Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.”

The Promise spoken of by Christ and His Father was none other than the Holy Spirit who was to indwell mankind. Prior to Pentecost the Spirit had been WITH many men, including the prophets of old, yet He had not yet been given to indwell mankind. Christ was the first to receive the indwelling Spirit. Afterwards, those who were born of the Spirit of Christ became temples of the Holy Spirit as well.

John 14:16-17

“I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because **He abides with you and will be in you.**”

These words of Christ were spoken prior to Pentecost. The Spirit was abiding with the disciples. By the power of the Spirit abiding WITH them, Christ had sent out the twelve and the seventy and they were able to cast out demons, heal the sick and perform miracles. Yet they were to experience something far better. The Spirit would indwell them. From their innermost beings would spring up rivers of living water. The very thoughts of God would be revealed in them as they took on substance and became spiritual words communicated to them by the Holy Spirit. Christ’s sheep would hear His voice, a voice no longer external to them, but a voice that arose from their innermost being.

Christ and the original twelve apostles were all sent forth in the same way. The Father commissioned them, but they could not begin their ministry until the Spirit came upon them. Later we find that the apostle Paul was also chosen by God to fulfill an apostolic ministry. This same pattern was revealed in His life. All ministry must be initiated by the Spirit and performed in the power of the Spirit.

Acts 13:1-4

Now there were at Antioch, in the church that was there, prophets and teachers: Barnabas, and Simeon who was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. While they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, **the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."** Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. So, **being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went** down to Seleucia and from there they sailed to Cyprus.

People of God, how different is this experience from that of most ministers today? The majority of men (and women) who enter into ministry pursue it as if it were a career to be chosen at the whim of their own soul. This is presumption, and God will not honor it. One of the prerequisites for ministry is an end of personal initiative. Christ did not come to earth of His own will. The Father initiated His being sent forth.

John 8:42

Yahshua said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and have come from God, for **I have not**

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even come on My own initiative, but He sent Me.”

The twelve apostles did not proceed forth on their own initiative. They were sent by Christ. Paul and Barnabas did not choose to enter into ministry of their own initiative. They too went forth only as the Spirit commanded them to do so.

Many today have adopted the Bible as a substitute for the Spirit. The Bible did not send Christ forth. It was not the Torah that initiated the ministry of the original twelve apostles. It was not the Scriptures that sent forth Paul and Barnabas. In every instance it was the Spirit of God who was the initiator. Each one heard the voice of God and obeyed the heavenly command.

Lest one argue that this is a pattern for apostles or ministers only, I urge you to go back and read the Scriptures already cited in these posts. Christ and the apostles were speaking to all who would be disciples. “All those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.” “If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.” “My sheep hear My voice and they follow Me.” The life of a disciple of Christ is a life lived in the Spirit, guided by the Spirit, empowered by the Spirit.

The second book the Spirit of Christ directed me to write, and one that I consider the most foundational, is titled *Sabbath*. This book, written over a decade ago, reveals the spiritual substance of all of the types and shadows of Sabbath rest in the Old Testament. Paul summed up the substance of Sabbath rest for the Christian when he wrote the following words:

Hebrews 4:9-10

So there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God. For ***the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works***, as God did from His.

On the Sabbath Yahweh ceased working, for all of His works were complete. We are also called to cease from OUR WORKS. We are to do nothing of our own initiative. The Christian is called to cease being led by their own soul and enter into a Spirit directed life. ONLY then can they cease from striving and enter into rest.

This is such a critical matter that Paul said, “Let us FEAR lest, while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you may seem to have come short of it” (Hebrews 4:1). One unavoidable truth becomes evident when the Christian discerns the call to cease their own works. They MUST be able to hear God’s voice, and they MUST be able to discern the difference from the counsel that arises from their own soul and that which arises from the Spirit of Christ within them.

Understanding the vital need to divide between soul and spirit in order to enter into the substance of Sabbath rest, the apostle Paul concluded his treatise on this subject with the following words.

Hebrews 4:12

For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and ***piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit***, of both joints and marrow, and ***able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart***.

Are you able to discern where your thoughts arise from? Is it your own soul, or the Spirit of

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Christ that is leading you to pursue a particular career? Is it your soul, or the Spirit that initiated the decision to purchase the home you live in, the car you drive, the clothes you wear, the food you eat? Was it your soul, or the Spirit of Christ that led you to marry the man or woman who is your spouse, to engage in the hobbies or leisure activities that fill your life?

As we go through our lives there are a million decisions we have to make. We will either yield to the will and desire of our own soul, or the will of the Spirit of Christ in all that we say and do. To be led of the soul is the broad path that ends in destruction. "There is a way that seems right unto a man, but the end thereof is death." To be led of the Spirit is the narrow and afflicted path, "and few there be that find it."

I ask you, "How can you know the path of life apart from hearing God's voice? How can you discover the specific walk Yahweh has determined for you unless you are hearing from His Spirit?"

Now we begin to see why so many Christians are dull of hearing. To hear God's voice is to know His will. When Yahweh's will is known the saint must decide to obey, or disobey. The will of God will ALWAYS lead the disciple of Christ to an afflicted path. To hear God's voice is to be led into suffering. Christ gave, and continues to give, only one invitation. "Come, take up your cross, and follow Me."

If you are led by the voice of God, you may hear Christ speak to you as He did to the young man who had much property.

Mark 10:21-22

"One thing you lack: go and sell all you possess

and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." But at these words he was saddened, and he went away grieving, for he was one who owned much property.

Have you counted the cost of discipleship and accepted it? Are you willing to give up home, and lands, and possessions, your job, and even your family in order to follow Christ and do His will? Yahshua said the cost is exceedingly high for all who would walk as He walked, becoming His disciples.

Luke 14:33

"So then, none of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his possessions."

Luke 14:26-27

"If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple."

The apostles continued to speak forth this same message.

I Peter 2:21

For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps...

If you and I are to follow "in His steps" we must yield our lives wholly to be guided by the Father into those experiences He has chosen for us. I speak from experience when I say that

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it is a fearful thing to yield one's life to the Father. If we say "Father, I will go wherever You direct me, and do whatever You ask me to do," then the Father may literally ask us to go anywhere and do anything. There are many things our souls do not wish to do. There are many experiences from which our flesh recoils.

For many years I hesitated to embrace the cost of discipleship. I crept up to Christ cautiously. I would ask Him to guide me in decisions that I carefully framed so that nothing too painful or unpleasant would be required of me. My own soul set the criteria. My mind determined how much would be offered to God, and what would be held back. Never did I give the Spirit carte blanche by surrendering myself wholly to the Father's guidance. Not surprisingly, I did not hear God's voice very much in those days. Neither will your spiritual sense of hearing function properly as long as you have come short of a complete surrender of your life to Christ.

It is one thing to ask Christ whether you should own a particular house, or rent; whether you should attend a specific university, or work at a trade. It is something altogether different to say, "My life is not my own. You have bought me with a great price. What do you want me to do? Where do you want me to live?"

If you are not willing to hear anything and everything God would speak to you, you will cause yourself to be spiritually deaf to His voice. We will refuse to have those conversations with God that He desires to have.

Most people who are reading my blog have been raised in spiritual Babylon. Yahweh knows that the churches and her ministers in

this hour have led His sheep astray. He is patient and merciful, yet He will not diminish the cost of being a disciple of His Son. There is a cross for you and I to bear. Christ said "no man can be My disciple unless he hates... even his own life." God will lead us where we would not choose to go ourselves. He will direct us to speak and to act in ways that our soul would not choose.

I believe the chief cause of spiritual deafness among saints is that they have not begun their Christian life by counting the cost of fully yielding their lives to Christ. Failing to begin at this point, the saints have never made the commitment to lay down their lives and take up whatever life Christ would choose for them. It logically follows that those who have not surrendered to follow Christ down an afflicted path will not hear His voice when He would speak to them of that path appointed for them for their perfecting as sons and daughters.

If you would have your spiritual hearing fully opened, you must be willing to hear anything and everything Christ would speak to you. Are you willing? I challenge you to test this matter. Examine your heart. Ask God to reveal if you are holding back in any area.

I know the response my words will be met with, for I know my own shrinking heart. Fear will raise its terrible head, and the passions and desires of the flesh will also make their objections known. Let me comfort you with this truth. Having surrendered to follow Christ wherever He would lead me back in 1999 I have since found that He is very tender and compassionate toward our weaknesses. He will surely make us face the giants that we dread, but He will lead us with wisdom and grace. He will take us through the smaller skirmishes before He leads us to engage in greater combat.

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He will equip us and fit us for the things He wishes us to do. He will never leave you or I to our own strength, wisdom, or devices. He fully intends to supply everything you will need to walk that path He has appointed to you.

Satan would make the surrender of your life to Christ to appear more dreadful than it actually is. Remember, you are surrendering your life to One who loves you with a perfect love. Yahshua will never choose any course for you that will lead to eternal harm or loss. All is chosen and appointed for the welfare of the sons of God. He has also promised to never leave us or forsake us. I can attest to this truth. In all the afflictions I have passed through, Yahshua has walked through every one of them with me. I have known His precious fellowship in the midst of my suffering.

Let me end this post with a parable. How well would your natural hearing be if you had a fold of flesh that had grown over your ears completely covering them? Everything would be muffled and muted. In the same way, it is the flesh that stands in the way of the Christian's spiritual hearing. We must settle the matter by committing to the crucifixion of our flesh if we are to have our ears opened. As long as there are things that our flesh is preventing us from receiving from the Father, we will remain diminished in our capacity to hear His voice. Make up your mind that you will accept all that the Father may speak to you, choosing to obey before He even discloses what His will is, and you will find that your ears will be opened.

May you be blessed with peace and understanding in these days.

The Hearing Ear - Part 3

Joseph Herrin (08-07-2012)

Proverbs 20:12

The hearing ear and the seeing eye, Yahweh has made them both.

That there are so many Christians who do not hear the voice of God today reveals that there are fundamental problems among the body of Christ. One has to go back to the root and address the foundational issues that have led to an absence of spiritual hearing rather than trying to treat symptoms.

As the last post in this series pointed out, a great many believers today have skipped over Christ's admonition to count the cost of discipleship before they began self-identifying themselves as His followers. To many people today Christianity means little more than receiving forgiveness for their sins and gaining some assurance that they will go to heaven, rather than hell, when they die. Their main responsibility in their relationship to God is maintaining a confession of belief in Jesus/Yahshua as their Savior, the One who paid the penalty for their sins. Beyond this they usually adopt some moral code that is set forth by their denomination, or church leaders. They may pay tithes to their local church, attend functions at a local fellowship on Sunday and Wednesday. If they are sincere they may seek to share their faith with others, yet all of this falls woefully short of the high calling of God for their lives.

Christ Yahshua did not come merely to pay the penalty of mankind's sin. He came to accomplish the foremost desire of His Father. Since the beginning of this present creation Yahweh has desired to have sons. Nor does He want

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just any sons. He wants full stature sons in His image and likeness. It was to accomplish this desire of the Father that Christ was sent into the world.

Hebrews 2:10

For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, **in bringing many sons to glory**, to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings.

Romans 8:29-30

For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, **so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren**; and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.

One of the most common titles used in reference to Yahweh is "Father." We use this word so frequently that we have failed to perceive how remarkable it is that the Spirit within us teaches us to cry out "Abba, Father!" To be sons of the living God, the Creator of all things, the omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent One whom no man has ever seen, is something that staggers the mind. One day the sons of God will receive heavenly bodies. They will be glorified like unto the firstborn Son of God. Paul declares that Christians will judge angels. The overcoming sons of God will be fully endued with the powers of the age to come.

The apostle John stated:

I John 3:2-3

Beloved, now we are children of God, and it

has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

It is not possible for me to cover this subject in depth here. I have written further on the subject in the book *Christ in You - The Hope of Glory*.

The apostle John, knowing the purpose of Christ's appearing to man, to bring forth glorified sons in God's image, taught that there was much more to being a Christian than confessing certain things about the Son of God. John said, "everyone who has this hope," the hope of sharing in the glory of Christ in the ages to come, "purifies himself, just as He is pure." Let me ask you, "How pure is Christ?"

The Scriptures state that there is no unrighteousness in Christ. He was tempted in all ways as we are, yet without sinning. To see Christ is to see the Father. This is Yahweh's desire for you and I. When people look at us Yahweh wants them to see His character. He does not want a bunch of people driving around with bumper stickers on their cars that say, "Christians aren't perfect, they're just forgiven." What an abomination. What a tragic distortion and absolute failure to grasp the purpose for which Christ came. It IS the will of God that we come forth in His image and likeness. It IS His will that we be perfect. Christ ended the Sermon on the Mount with the following words:

Matthew 5:48

"Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."

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Christ declared in this same sermon that man must be perfect not only in action, but in thought. It is not enough to abstain from adultery with the wife of one's neighbor, a man must be faithful in his thoughts as well. It is not enough to refrain from committing murder, a man cannot harbor hatred in his heart for another. Love is the sum of the Law. Love does no harm to its neighbor.

When Christ enters into the life of a man or woman at the moment of their spiritual birth, they are unwashed, unsanctified, and fleshly. Their minds have been corrupted by the deceit of sin. Their soul is intrinsically selfish in its desires. There are many enemies dwelling in the land of their flesh; lust, fear, covetousness, anger, selfishness, pride, impatience, perversions, strife, and the list goes on and on. The Spirit birth is merely the beginning of the work of Christ in the life of a man or woman, yet tragically, the church today has made conversion the goal.

When Christ was preparing to return to the Father He gave final instructions to His followers. He did not tell them to make confessors of Christ out of the unwashed masses. He said:

Matthew 28:19-20

"Go therefore and **make disciples** of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, **teaching them to observe all that I commanded you**; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

In the previous post we looked at some of the requirements of becoming a disciple. Christ stated that no man could be His disciple unless He forsook all possessions and all relationships in this earth. Everything has to be secon-

dary to one's commitment to Christ. A man cannot be a disciple unless He hates his own life. Is it not obvious that the church is NOT making disciples today. Those who are brought into the church in great numbers are told that they may keep their lives. They are even assured that Yahweh wishes to satisfy every material desire in their covetous hearts. This is the message of prosperity proclaimed today.

Christ said that no man could be His disciple unless they took up THEIR cross daily and followed Him. Christ came to transform men from fleshly, selfish, sin enslaved creatures into spiritual, selfless, sons of God who share the Father's righteousness and holiness.

This brings us to a critical point. God alone sees all that needs to be transformed in the lives of His sons and daughters. He sees the strongholds, the giants, the idols that exist in your life and mine. He alone can devise a path for us to walk that will lead us to discover and confront each of these enemies in the land of our flesh that we might rise up in spirit and crucify the flesh.

The first duty of a disciple of Christ is to yield their life to follow Yahshua wherever He would lead them. They are to count their old self-directed life as loss. They are to take up their cross and begin to follow the Shepherd of their soul wherever He would lead them. Christ will lead every son and daughter down an afflicted path. This path is perfectly designed to expose the sin in our flesh. At each new discovery we are encouraged to mortify the flesh and put on the new man formed in Christ's image.

Only by embracing a life of surrender to Christ will any man or woman arrive at that spiritual

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maturity seen in the life of God's firstborn Son. This truth is revealed in the following encounter between a young man and Christ.

Matthew 19:16-21

Someone came to Yahshua with this question: "Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?" "Why ask me about what is good?" Yahshua replied. "There is only One who is good. But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments." "Which ones?" the man asked. And Yahshua replied: "You must not murder. You must not commit adultery. You must not steal. You must not testify falsely. Honor your father and mother. Love your neighbor as yourself." "I've obeyed all these commandments," the young man replied. "What else must I do?" Yahshua told him, **"If you want to be perfect,** go and sell all your possessions and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."

The six highlighted words in the passage above reveal the true goal of discipleship and the purpose for which Christ came. The Son of God came to make men perfect as their heavenly Father is perfect. A person can conform to a moral code and be considered good in the eyes of other men, but to attain to the desire of the Father the saint must set their aim much higher. Conformity to Yahweh, and to the life of His Son, must become the goal of their life.

We are told that Yahshua loved this young man who came up to Him. He was an earnest and sincere young man. He truly wanted to enter into that divine life that comes from God the Father. This young man was moral. He was courteous. He honored his father and mother. He did not mistreat others. If he appeared in any church throughout America today he would be considered a model Christian.

Hear my words. This young man was NOT a disciple of Christ. He was unwilling to forsake all and to accept whatever life Christ chose for him. This

young man's soul was attached to a materially comfortable life. He went away grieved when he heard Christ declare what would be required for him to be "perfect."

People of God, Christ came to make men perfect. He came to destroy the works of the devil and to transform darkened humanity into light. You do not become light by confessing Christ. You are not spiritually mature at the moment of your spiritual birth. You have only entered by the gate when you are born again and confess Yahshua as the atoning sacrifice for your sins. At the moment of conversion there is set before you a path that must be walked.

Matthew 7:13-14

"Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. For the gate is small and **the way is afflicted that leads to life, and there are few who find it.**"

You cannot remain on the broad path that the soul of man chooses and arrive at "life." You must walk the path God has chosen for you. You must accept the invitation that Christ set before the rich, young ruler. Dispossess yourself of all you have, surrender all to Christ to be disposed of as He directs. "The come, and follow Me."

Discipleship is embraced by following Christ. I do not mean that you are to embrace doctrines relating to the person of Christ. You must adopt Christ as your head, permitting Him to rule in place of your own soul. When the book of Revelations speaks of the overcomers in Christ being "beheaded" (Revelation 20:4), it is not speaking of literal decapitation. Revelations is a book where truths are conveyed through types and symbols. It is a book of parables. Those who have been beheaded are those who have removed their own head that they might take Christ as head of their lives.

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I Corinthians 11:3

But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man...

While Christ was in bodily form He could lead a small number of disciples about. When He ascended He sent forth His Spirit. The Spirit of Christ is now engaged in directing the lives of a great many disciples from locations all around the world. You cannot walk as a disciple unless you hear the voice of God. You must understand that the essence of discipleship is to go wherever Christ's Spirit directs you, and to do whatever the Spirit instructs you to do.

The Spirit will guide each son and daughter of God down a path perfectly designed for their spiritual maturation. If they will follow this path, crucifying the flesh and letting the life of Christ be manifest in them, at the end of the journey they will find that Christ has been formed in them.

We can only make the transformation from fleshly beings to spiritual as we are placed in situations where our character is tried. We must be brought into a variety of circumstances where the natural man will automatically respond with lust, fear, anger, and a host of other unrighteous thoughts and actions. In each instance our Father, by His Holy Spirit, urges us to arise as spiritual beings in His own image and put down the flesh in order to manifest the glory of God's character within us.

It is a Spirit directed life you have been called unto. Those who accept Christ's invitation, having counted the cost, will hear the voice of their Shepherd as He leads forth His flocks.

It may not be obvious to some why a message on hearing God's voice is focusing so much on the subject of surrender to the will of God. The reason for this emphasis is to get the saints aligned with God that they might hear the conversation of His choosing. James wrote that the saints were praying

amiss for their hearts were self-seeking.

James 4:3-4

You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures. Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

There are followers of prosperity preachers by the millions. Those who are influenced by Joel Osteen, T.D. Jakes, Creflo Dollar, Joyce Meyers, et al, are establishing the ground rules for communication with God. They come to God and ask Him to bless them, to deliver them from poverty, from sickness, from trials and distress. They ask God to enrich them that they might be comfortable and have excess to share with others. They wish to serve God and mammon, but Christ said that it is impossible to serve both. The disciples of Christ must choose whether they will pursue the life of their soul's desires, or the will and pleasure of God.

If you have adopted the mind of Christ, you will not be presumptuous in setting the ground rules for conversation. You will acknowledge Christ as head and let Him guide you. Your attitude will be "Speak Lord, your servant is listening."

It is essential that the saints settle this matter of surrender of their lives to Christ's direction if they are to have their ears fully opened. Consciously, or unconsciously, many believers have placed filters over their ears. They will not permit God to speak to them in certain areas. They do not wish to hear God instruct them to do things their soul despises. Their ears are only opened to hear him answer them according to the desires of their own hearts.

If you are having trouble discerning the voice of Christ I would encourage you to consider whether you have ever embraced the surrender of your life to Him. Many Christians maintain the rule over

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their own lives. As they follow the course their own soul has determined they come to God from time to time and ask Him for guidance and counsel. They are often perplexed when they are unable to discern clearly God's voice. They have not perceived that God wants to be the One leading.

Quite often when faced with decisions we will ask God to affirm our way. We will say "Father, should I take door number 1, or door number 2?" God is silent, for He has not chosen either one. He would say to us, "Lay down your life and follow My Son." When we accept the invitation to follow Christ, then we will hear His voice and know the way in which we should go.

Thirteen years ago I was confronted by these truths. The Spirit brought me to face them and make a decision to surrender to Him, or to continue to hold portions of my life back in reserve. I was pressed greatly by the Spirit, and Yahweh prevailed in my life. I surrendered to embrace the path He had chosen for my life.

He has shown me that He has been leading a small group of sons from among the nations to experience the afflicted path ahead of their brothers and sisters. Like Joseph of old, these ones have been rejected by brothers and sold into a life of humble servitude. They have been experiencing humility, lack, reproach, fears, and many such things while their brothers have been living self-directed lives of comfort and prosperity.

A day came, however, when famine forced Joseph's brothers to turn down the same path that he had traveled before them. Yahweh is at this time fashioning events in this world which will make it impossible for His elect to remain living the comfortable lives their own souls have chosen for them. World events, and crises, will compel them to take a path they would not freely choose themselves.

I have been testifying for a number of years that judgment is coming to the nations. The financial

systems will collapse, society will descend into chaos, and there will be great unrest. Great oppression is coming against those who belong to Christ. Yahweh has been testifying that America will fall. In 2007 and 2008 Miss USA fell on stage at the Miss Universe pageant. This began the collapse of America's vaunted financial system, ending generations of increasing ease and prosperity.

In the past few days I have had about half a dozen readers of this blog send me links to a similar testimony that occurred at the Olympics in London this week. I am encouraged that so many are discerning these parables for themselves. During the medal ceremony for women's tennis as the national anthem for America was being played, the U.S. flag came loose and fell to the ground.



The Fall is Near



Just like the Miss Universe pageant, the nations of the world were gathered together before an international audience. Once more a symbol of America fell to the ground. To make the event all the more poignant, Yahweh had the flag fall at the precise moment during the playing of the anthem when the words "our flag was still there" would have just

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been spoken.

I have shared recently of those preparations the Father has led me to make in preparation for a coming day of dislocation. He had me purchase a trailer to pull behind my bus, to stock it with grains and legumes, and to purchase a grain mill. There have been other things I have been led to do as well. I did not do these things of my own initiative. It was the Spirit who directed me to do so.

It is now nearing the end of the summer and as we head into the Fall, I anticipate that things will begin shaking among the nations. Yahweh will be rattling the cages of many of His people. He will seek to induce them to let go of the false Christian lifestyle they have adopted and enter into a life of true discipleship. A remnant will surrender to be led of the Spirit. These ones will hear God's voice and begin to follow Christ as sheep who follow a shepherd.

You do not have to wait until things fall apart to embrace a Spirit led life of discipleship. You are invited to count the cost of surrendering all to Christ now. You will surely be given great grace for having done so.

Will you enter these days of trouble with a hearing ear? It will be perilous to be spiritually deaf in an hour when following God's Spirit closely will mean the difference between life and death.

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