

God's Talking, but Are You Listening?

Are you listening?

Thanks to billions of voices across many social platforms trying to get our attention, the background noise in our lives can be deafening and overwhelming. In the midst of the clamor, I must ask, is anyone doing any listening? Are you?

Doug Larson said, "Wisdom is the reward you get for a lifetime of listening when you'd have preferred to talk." This is a spiritual principle. Every spiritual leader's greatest gift is his or her ability to listen. I would even say one of the most overlooked gifts of the Holy Spirit is the power to listen, both to those we commune with here on earth and to God.

God is speaking to us all the time. God speaks to us through His Word; God speaks to us through His Spirit; and at times God speaks to us through other believers by the Holy Spirit. It is up to us as believers, however, to listen if we are to hear. When you ask people, "Does someone have a word from God?" the question that must be asked instead is, "Is anyone really listening to God?"

John 16:12–14 casts away any doubt that our Creator is communicating with us:

I have yet many things to tell you, but you cannot bear them now. But when the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all truth. For He will not speak on His own authority. But He will speak whatever He hears, and He will tell you things that are to come. He will glorify Me, for He will receive from Me and will declare it to you (emphasis added).

The same disciple who recorded these words from Jesus penned

the book of Revelation, where we see the awesome, beautiful love story between Christ and the church. There He is portrayed as the groom who wars for us, His bride. Chapter 1 reveals Him as this groom whose “eyes were like a flame of fire” (v. 1:14b), full of passion for His beloved. Over and over as He speaks to the church, He implores, “He who has an ear, let him hear *what the Spirit says to the churches*” (Rev. 2:7a, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 21, emphasis added).

And yet Chapters 2 and 3 illuminate the immaturity of His bride. We see first the first church at Ephesus, who has left her first love. And we see the seventh church, which is the bride that is neither cold nor hot but lukewarm. Now I don’t know about you, but is a bride who has lost her first love or a lukewarm bride someone you would want to marry? Imagine loving someone who never listened to you. Most of us would pass. Nonetheless, the groom’s love is steadfast. It “bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things” (1 Cor. 13:7).

This love is transformative, and in the end, Revelation gives us a picture of what it looks like for the bride to fall so deeply in love with the voice of her beloved that she cannot wait to hear His voice. She eagerly waits and burns the midnight oil for the chance of even just hearing her beloved. This is real love from the bride for her groom—a love that listens and delights in what it hears.

Our nation needs the voice of the Holy Spirit now. Let our churches be the ones who are listening and filled with His voice. Let us as leaders be the ones to lead our people in the example of Christ’s bride, listening and anxious for His return. Let us remind and model for those around us that we do not listen for nothing. We listen with great expectancy and excitement to hear the voice of our God, our Savior, and the one whom we love more than any other desire in our lives. We listen so that when He comes—and I believe Christ will be coming for His faithful bride the church once again soon—we

may be with Christ at His side in heaven.

“I heard behind me a great voice like a trumpet. ... His voice [was] as the sound of many waters. ... and out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword” (Rev. 1:10, 15-16).

It is never too late to listen. It is never too late simply to be quiet and cultivate a longing to hear the voice of God. He will not fail you. God loves you passionately, and He is speaking to you now, not words to fear but words of love, peace and wisdom.

Will you listen to Him today?

You're beautiful! I see Jesus in you. {eoa}

Mikel French has challenged spiritual awakening all across America, where many celebrations extended into multiple weeks, and has conducted celebrations in France, Sweden, Russia, Romania, Poland, Ukraine, Moldova, Serbia, Germany, South Africa, Malawi, the Philippines, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Haiti, Japan, Singapore, India and Thailand. He conducted an outreach celebration in Manila, Philippines, reaching 200,000 teenagers with the Book of Hope. Through the generous support of partners, he has presented the message of Jesus Christ to millions of people in the nation of Russia through televised citywide soul-winning celebrations. Mikel considers it an honor to assist in conducting the annual pastor's conference, where thousands of pastors from Russia's 11 time zones come for training, teaching and equipping. Mikel and his wife, Marsha, reside in Tulsa, Oklahoma.