

Does God really speak?

Part three: "A known voice"

Reflection and study notes

John 10:1-6

The Shepherd and His Flock

"I tell you the truth, the man who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber. The man who enters by the gate is the shepherd of his sheep. The watchman opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger's voice." Jesus used this figure of speech, but they did not understand what he was telling them.

Introduction:

But how do you really know it is God's voice speaking to you?

Isn't it possible to make it up, or worse still, be deceived?

It is possible to get it wrong?

What has been your experience of getting it wrong?

Test it

Test everything. Hold on to the good.

1 Thessalonians 5:21

Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Romans 12:2

Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

1 John 4:1

The ultimate test: A known voice

*The watchman opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. **He calls his own sheep by name** and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because **they know his voice**.*

John 10:3 - 4

At the end of each day all the local shepherds would gather their flocks together and put them in one sheep pen. The following day each shepherd would call by name his sheep from the pen, one by one. The sheep would hear their name and the sound of the shepherd's voice and then follow.

1. Recognise the sound of your own name

God knows your name and calls you by name.

Do you hear your name?

Just think for a moment of the number of occasions in the bible where the first word God spoke to a person was their name.

2. Recognise the invitation to follow

God never forces, pushes or coerces. It is always an invitation to follow.

Do you respond to the call / invitation to follow willingly and freely?

NOTES	Does God really speak? Part three: "A known voice"
<p>John 10:7-13</p> <p>Therefore Jesus said again, "I tell you the truth, I am the gate for the sheep. All who ever came before me were thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. He will come in and go out, and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."</p> <p>"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand is not the shepherd who owns the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep."</p> <p>"The (written) Word is the wire along which the voice of God will certainly come to you if the heart is hushed and the attention fixed."</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Frederick B. Meyer</p>	<p>3. Recognise the sound of the shepherds voice</p> <p>The voice of the shepherd is recognised as a familiar voice because the sheep and the shepherd have spent time together and know one another intimately.</p> <p>How well do you know the good shepherd?</p> <p>How to get to know Jesus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In the bible: read it, study it and pray it ▪ With his friends. You get to know people by spending time with their friends <p>Some people say that they believe in Jesus but don't want anything to do with church.</p> <p>What do you think?</p> <p>Is it possible to love me and not my friends?</p> <p>A friend of mine often says, "that sounds like something that Jesus would say".</p> <p>"Perhaps the rough distinction is this: the voice of the subconscious argues with you, tries to convince you; but the inner voice of God does not argue, does not try to convince you. It just speaks, and it is self authentication. It has a feel of the voice of God within it."</p> <p style="text-align: right;">E Stanley Jones</p> <p>4. Recognise the character of the shepherd</p> <p>The voice of the shepherd is also known by his character.</p> <p>The best way to know a person is to watch for their character and then match their words. Do the words and actions fit?</p> <p>What can you know of the character of the shepherd from Psalm 23?</p> <p>5. Recognise that which leads to life or death</p> <p>What is the outcome; life or death?</p> <p>This is a very good test to apply to discerning if the voice is God's or not.</p> <p>Does it bear the marks of a robber or of one who is life giving?</p> <p>Why would you willingly want to listen to a thief?</p> <p>There is a path that leads to life and one that leads to death.</p> <p>Choose life.</p> <p>"The voice of God will never tell us to engage in any activity or relationship that is inconsistent with the Holy Scriptures."</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Charles Stanley</p>