

Mondovi: Our Savior's & Gilmanton United Methodist Churches
5.11.2025, 4th Sunday of Easter, Rev. Hyuntae Kim, Ph.D.
My Sheep Hear My Voice

John 10:22-30

Let us pray: Lord, pour out upon us here the gentle, warm presence of Your Spirit, like that of a mother. Restore to us the spirit of communion with You. Renew us. We pray in the name of our Lord Jesus. Amen.

A child who brings joy to a mother is one who obeys. Likewise, the child who brings joy to God is also one who is obedient. God is our Father, but He also has characteristics of a mother. In particular, the Holy Spirit is like a mother. When we are infants, we may follow anyone without knowing who they are. But as the bond with our mother grows, we begin to recognize her voice. As we live with her more, we come to understand her intentions not just through words, but also through her expressions and gestures.

In the same way, hearing God's voice works like that. Sometimes it comes as a direct sentence in our thoughts, but often it comes as an impression. A thought might come to mind unexpectedly, or God's heart may suddenly be poured into ours. The reason we lack power and fail to reveal the living God is that we do not pay close attention to His voice. I earnestly hope that we will recover the power of the early church.

Jesus said to the Jews who did not believe in Him as the Christ, "You do not believe because you are not among my sheep." He then went on to describe the characteristics of His sheep: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me." In other words, these Jews were not His sheep from the beginning—therefore, they did not hear His voice, and as a result, did not follow Him.

If you believe that Jesus died for your sins and rose again, then at the most basic level, you are someone whose spirit has come alive by hearing the voice of the Holy Spirit. This is because no one can confess Jesus as Lord apart from the Holy Spirit.

What happens after we become believers? You and I know that the Holy Spirit—the Spirit of Christ—dwells in us, but are we truly listening to His voice and following Him? We must admit that we are often weak in this area of hearing God's voice. This "hearing" is not about physical ears but a spiritual sensitivity.

When Jesus says, "I know them," He doesn't just mean He knows their personal information. He's talking about a deep knowing that comes from shared life experiences—walking together, struggling together, and creating memories together.

When He says, "they follow me," it's not like casually tagging along to McDonald's. It means following Him with your whole life—denying yourself and walking in the path of discipleship.

If this sermon is truly to benefit us, we must believe that God still speaks and that we can hear and follow His voice. Faith in living a life that hears God's voice is crucial—so crucial that it can determine

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the course of our entire life. If we are not currently hearing and following God's voice, we must be deeply alert and concerned, and begin training ourselves in this way of life immediately.

In the book of Acts, we see that after the Holy Spirit came on the day of Pentecost, the era of the universal outpouring of the Spirit began. Before that, the Holy Spirit was only temporarily given to kings, prophets, and priests chosen by God. But now, anyone who repents and believes in the Lord Jesus can receive the Holy Spirit. This is the fulfillment of Joel 2:28–29: “And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. Even on the male and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit.”

The body of a believer is the temple of God, and within that temple—specifically, the inner sanctuary—God speaks. So, how can we hear the voice of the Holy Spirit? The most important channel is the written Word of God. When we read Scripture by ourselves or hear it during worship, we may experience it becoming *rhema*—a personal, living word to us. Sometimes, during prayer, a specific verse may come to mind. In addition to the Word, God may also speak through impressions, dreams or visions, or through patterns and repeated circumstances in our lives. The Holy Spirit, with a mother-like nature, speaks to us persistently and from various angles—often like loving nagging—because He does not give up on us. This is because we often fail to understand Him correctly. He longs to bring healing to children who are going down the wrong path or who are hurting.

However, if we grieve His heart, He may choose to remain silent. It is crucial that we always discern these other forms of guidance by the standard of Scripture. This is how we avoid being misled by our own thoughts or by the voice of the enemy.

Why does God speak to us? First, it is so that we may repent and turn back to Him, and thus avoid the judgment of His righteous justice. When God sent Jonah to the city of Nineveh to proclaim its destruction, His true intention was that the people would repent and live.

The second reason God speaks is related to calling. God not only grants us salvation, but He also desires to give us a mission for His kingdom. If the first type of calling is a salvific calling, the second is a redemptive-historical calling. It is important that each of us frequently reexamine what role we are being called to play in God's redemptive story, because that calling can grow, expand, or even change over time.

Third, God speaks because He wants to lead us into His blessing and success. When we obey the voice of God, even if the path is difficult and full of suffering, we can endure it—and in the end, we will see the fulfillment of His word. His Word goes before us and accomplishes what He has promised.

When I was invited to serve in ministry in the United States and sought to discern God's will through the counsel of others, many people around me were opposed to the idea. They said I was too old to

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start something new and that life in America would be very difficult. Because of this, I needed an even greater assurance from God. As I spent a long time praying and meditating on Scripture, the passage that the Lord gave me in response was Acts 20:17–27. This passage recounts Paul's farewell to the elders of Ephesus, and when he declared his intention to go to Jerusalem, people warned him about the hardships and persecution that awaited him there. Yet Paul said, *"But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God."* I believed this was God's answer to me—His Word making clear what I was called to do at that time.

When we finally arrived and began our ministry in the U.S., we faced many hardships. But we were able to endure them because we were confident that it was God's will to send us to this country.

I have sought to know God's will at major turning points in my life and have had many such experiences. But I still desire to recognize and follow the Holy Spirit's voice more in the everyday moments of life. A normal sheep recognizes and follows the voice of its shepherd. If we are not sheep, then it makes sense that we wouldn't hear His voice—but if we *are* His sheep, why do we sometimes struggle to hear it?

Sheep have poor eyesight but well-developed hearing; their hearing is directly tied to their survival. Yet even such sheep can become lost when they wander from the flock. Often, they lose their way simply because they become too focused on grazing. Once a sheep is lost, it cannot find its way back because it lacks a sense of direction. It is also unaware of the dangers it faces when separated from the flock.

Likewise, when we become indifferent to the work of God's kingdom or neglectful of His Word, we become so absorbed in our own affairs that we fail to hear His voice. The world is full of distractions that pull our attention away from Him.

The restoration of our soul in Psalm 23:3 happens in the green pastures and still waters where the Shepherd leads us—this represents the Word of God, and the Word is Christ Himself. It is in the place where we are feeding on the Word of the Lord that we hear the Shepherd's voice. Drawing near to the Word is drawing near to Christ.

In John 15:7, Jesus says, *"If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you."* When we hear God's voice and obey, God is glorified—because living according to His Word bears much fruit. As Jesus continues in John 15:8, *"By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples."*

When we hear and obey the voice of God, the Church regains its power. It receives the authority to proclaim God's will to the world.

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To reach this point, the most important and powerful foundational practice is reading the Bible. Set aside a regular portion to read each day, asking the Holy Spirit for help to hear the voice of the Lord through His Word. Jesus said, *"The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life,"* and since the primary author of Scripture is the Holy Spirit, consistent reading of the Word inevitably brings spiritual inspiration.

For example, reading the book of Ezra can result in the spirit of Ezra being poured into us. A word once spoken to Jeremiah can be given to us as a personal rhema word from God. Just as a sheep follows the shepherd through green pastures all its life, so too must we continually train ourselves in this basic discipline of the Word. If we want our spiritual ears to be opened more, we simply need to invest more time in the Word.

It is even more powerful when we pray with Scripture. When we commune with the Lord through His Word, our spirit opens more fully—and this awakened spirit can begin to influence our soul and even our physical body.

A young Hindu woman in India named Jasmine was given a Bible as a gift. Her legs had been paralyzed due to a car accident. One of her neighbors introduced her to Jesus and encouraged her to read the New Testament. Curious, she began reading and eventually stopped at Mark chapter 5—the story of the woman with the issue of blood who believed she would be healed if she just touched the hem of Jesus' garment. Jasmine thought, "If Jesus really is the living Son of God, then I can be healed too." She kept reading that passage again and again. After about thirty times, she finally said, "Lord, I'm going to get up now. Please help me." And she got up—healed.

The impression that she could be healed came from the Holy Spirit, and that gave birth to her faith. *Faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ,* as Romans 10:17 says.

Dear beloved sheep, draw near to the Word—for in doing so, you are drawing near to God. As the Apostle James says, *"Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you"* (James 4:8). When we do this, the ears of our spirit will be opened more fully, and we will hear His voice more clearly. Yet we must be careful to discern whether the voice we hear aligns with Scripture, serves the good of the community, and is rooted in love. This discernment also comes through practice and dependence on the Holy Spirit.

If we have hearts that are willing to listen and obey, God will open our ears even more. What we need is a deep longing—for greater intimacy with God. That longing will become the starting point for recovering the power that Christians are meant to have to save the world. May you long for, seek, and receive God's voice. Amen.