

Giving God A Chance To Speak

Series: Sustainable Faith: The Word

Exodus 33:7-11 NIV (0933)

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October 25, 2009

Exodus 33:11 NIV ¹¹*The LORD would speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks with his friend.*

WILLIAM LAW *Without the present illumination of the Holy Spirit, the Word of God must remain a dead letter to every man, no matter how intelligent or well-educated he may be. . . . It is just as essential for the Holy Spirit to reveal the truth of Scripture to the reader today as it was necessary for him to inspire the writers in their day.*

Exodus 33:7-11 NIV ⁷*Now Moses used to take a tent and pitch it outside the camp some distance away, calling it the "tent of meeting." Anyone inquiring of the LORD would go to the tent of meeting outside the camp. ⁸And whenever Moses went out to the tent, all the people rose and stood at the entrances to their tents, watching Moses until he entered the tent. ⁹As Moses went into the tent, the pillar of cloud would come down and stay at the entrance, while the LORD spoke with Moses. ¹⁰Whenever the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance to the tent, they all stood and worshiped, each at the entrance to his tent. ¹¹The LORD would speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks with his friend.*

I. The importance of having a regular practice of listening to God

a. Lessons from those who have gone before us

Job 1:1, 5 NIV *[Job] was blameless and upright; he feared God and shunned evil. . . . Early in the morning he would sacrifice a burnt offering for each of [his children], thinking, "Perhaps my children have sinned and cursed God in their hearts." This was Job's regular custom.*

Daniel 6:10 NLT ¹⁰*But when Daniel learned that the law had been signed, he went home and knelt down as usual in his upstairs room, with its windows open toward Jerusalem. He prayed three times a day, just as he had always done, giving thanks to his God.*

Luke 4:16 NIV ¹⁶*[Jesus] went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. And he stood up to read.*

Mark 1:10 NIV *Again crowds of people came to [Jesus], and as was his custom, he taught them.*

Acts 17:2 NIV ²*As his custom was, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures*

b. The primary reason for a regular practice of listening is the same

Mark 1:35 NIV ³⁵*Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.*

Matthew 14:13 NIV ¹³*When Jesus heard what had happened, he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place.*

Mark 6:32 NIV ³²*So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place.*

II. The danger of our regular practice

a. We must consistently guard against the pitfalls of regular practice

Mark 7:6 NIV ⁶[Jesus] replied, *“Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites; as it is written: “These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.*

Mark 7:7-13 NIV ⁷*They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men.’* ⁸*You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to the traditions of men.”... ¹³Thus you nullify the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And you do many things like that.”*

Galatians 2:14 NIV ¹⁴*When I saw that they were not acting in line with the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter in front of them all, “You are a Jew, yet you live like a Gentile and not like a Jew. How is it, then, that you force Gentiles to follow Jewish customs?*

Acts 15:1-2 NIV ¹*Some men came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the brothers: “Unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved.”* ²*This brought Paul and Barnabas into sharp dispute and debate with them.*

b. But don't fool yourself, having no regular practice isn't an option

III. The power of our regular practice

a. Pressing through the deafening silence

Psalms 22:1-2 NLT ¹*My God, my God! Why have you forsaken me? Why do you remain so distant? Why do you ignore my cries for help?* ²*Every day I call to you, my God, but you do not answer. Every night you hear my voice, but I find no relief.*

RICHARD J. FOSTER *One reason we can hardly bear to remain silent is that it makes us feel so helpless. We are so accustomed to relying upon words to manage and control others. If we are silent, who will take control? God will take control; but we will never let him take control until we trust him. Silence is intimately related to trust.*

b. Giving God a chance to speak

Anonymous *If I make decisions simply based simply on the amount of money I have, I'm letting money direct my life, not God.*

Matthew 22:1-5 TM *Jesus responded by telling still more stories. “God's kingdom,” he said, “is like a king who threw a wedding banquet for his son. He sent out servants to call in all the invited guests. And they wouldn't come! “He sent out another round of servants, instructing them to tell the guests, ‘Look, everything is on the table, the prime rib is ready for carving. Come to the feast!’ “They only shrugged their shoulders and went off, one to weed his garden, another to work in his shop.*

Luke 22:31 NIV ³¹*“Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you as wheat. ³²But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.”*

FREDERICK WILLIAM FABER *There is hardly ever a complete silence in our soul. God is whispering to us well-nigh incessantly. Whenever the sounds of the world die out in the soul, or sink low, then we hear these whisperings of God. He is always whispering to us, only we do not always hear because of the noise, hurry, and the distraction that life causes as it rushes on.*