Hearing is Believing

Throughout history God has spoken. For millennia, he has forged his children’s faith—by promising parted waters, empowering unlikely leaders, declaring world-changing prophecies—

In short, our God is a communicating God. Always has been, and always will be. And if there is one story in Scripture that goes to great lengths to prove this point, it’s the story of Elijah, the prophet described in 1 Kings as a man who was “zealous for God.”

There comes a point in Elijah’s ministry when he’s ready to call it quits. “I’ve been working my heart out, God … and for what?”

- Your people have abandoned Your covenant
- They’ve destroyed Your places of worship
- Murdered Your prophets
- Now I’m the only one left
- and they’re trying to kill me.

He felt undone, and thought the only thing that could help him was to have a firsthand encounter with God.

I Kings 19

The next day, the Lord said to Elijah,

“Go, stand on the mountain at attention before God. God will pass by.”

Enter whisper number one.

Elijah’s weariness gave way to wonder. I imagine his heart beating a little faster as he considered what it would be like to meet firsthand the One he had served all these years.

Elijah obeyed the whisper and hiked up the mountain. The Bible describes a hurricane-force wind howling past Elijah as he stood on that mountain’s face.
Strength, might, power, brute force—“That’s probably God,” Elijah must have thought. Yet the text says, “But God wasn’t to be found in the wind.”

Next up came a full-fledged, mountain-trembling earthquake. But again, God was not there.

A fire then blazed by, consuming everything on the side of the mountain but Elijah himself—yet to his sure surprise, his God was not to be found in the flames.

Finally, the text says, following the fire came a “gentle and quiet whisper.” And amazingly, that’s where Elijah found God.

The wind, the earthquake, the fire—none of these conduits of God’s company would have shocked Elijah as much as the still, small voice that emerged.

In response, he “muffled his face with his great cloak, went to the mouth of the cave, and stood there.”

“So Elijah, now tell me, what are you doing here?” God whispered. Elijah then told God all of his frustrations, unburdening himself from the emotional poundage he’d been carrying.

I envision Elijah—
- enveloped by God’s audible whisper,
- his shoulders relaxing with each syllable he spoke
- thinking, “Am I glad you’re here!”

Nothing else can ease the soul like the presence of our Holy God.

On Mount Horeb that day, Creator convened with creation, and one man’s life was forever changed.

Regardless of what else Elijah might have later told his friends about this encounter—and about God himself—undoubtedly he had been a witness to two attributes at the very core of who God is:

(1) he’s relational
(2) and he is near.
He is all-powerful, yes.
He is righteous and holy too.
He is sovereign, he is majestic, he is magnificent, he is just.

But what stunned Elijah on the side of that mountain
- and what will stun you someday if it hasn’t already
- is that the same God who is all-powerful, all-knowing, all-everything, yearns to be in
relationship with us.
The God of the Scriptures is irrepressibly communal, hopelessly familial, and his whispers are
still ours to hear.

Eras in our spiritual lives:

(1) Thinking of God in non-relational ways.

Looking for God in passing weather patterns of our life
Oblivious to the fact that He’s right beside us all along.

We view Him as a distant businessman
The CEO of the universe

Christianity is nothing more than a compilation of theoretical ideas about God.
There are beliefs to be memorized.
Doctrines to be mastered
A moral code that must be maintained.

Most religions of the world see God as an impersonal dynamic.
But a genuine relationship between God and people? No way.

That’s not biblical Christianity.
From Genesis to Revelation the constant refrain of scripture declares that our faith is relational.
God listens when we speak.
And we are to listen when He speaks.

(2) A different kind of understanding of God

Understanding that God is near.
And that a relationship with me was on His mind.
You don’t get very far in the pages of Scripture before you begin to see evidence of God’s whispering ways.

- Adam and Eve “heard the voice of the God walking in the cool of the day.”
- God spoke to Noah about the coming flood.
- Abraham heard the words of God’s promise and trusted them.
- Jacob heard from God during a vision as a young man.
- Moses heard God from a bush that wouldn’t stop burning.
- God told Moses what to say to Pharaoh.
- The Bible says that God would speak to Moses “face to face”

The Bible contains account after account.

- Isaiah
- Elijah
- Jeremiah
- Zechariah
- Mary
- Joseph
- Peter
- Paul

If there is a pattern in Scripture, it is that we serve a communicating God— a God of words.

- He created with a word,
- he healed with a word,
- he encouraged with a word,
- he rebuked with a word,
- he guided with a word,
- he prophesied with a word,
- he assured with a word,
- he loved with a word,
- he served with a word
- and he comforted with a word.

Throughout all of history, God has communicated, and he still is at it today.

The issue isn’t whether or not God is speaking; it’s whether we will have ears to hear what he says.
How do you view these encounters in Scripture?

Like a fictitious movie: Frodo on a mountain ...??

Hebrews 11:6
And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

I Samuel 3

Oh! give me Samuel’s ear,
An open ear, O Lord,
Alive and quick to hear
Each whisper of Thy Word;
Like him to answer to Thy call
And to obey Thee first of all.

Message resources can be found at www.ferndalefmc.com/resources