

Fresh Oil



June 2019

Dear Fellow Servants,

As we head into summer, I want to share a little bit this month on the subject of 'listening'. We live in a world that has a constant hum of noise about it, but I want to focus on what I call "soul noise". So many issues are out there competing for our attention. How does a Christian "hear" the Holy Spirit's voice when there is so much competing for the soul's attention? Jesus made it quite clear that having a 'hearing ear' for the voice of the Spirit is vital. Look at what He said in Mark 4:23-24:

"If Anyone has ears to hear, let him hear...Take heed what you hear. With the same measure you use, it will be measured to you; and to you who hear, more will be given."

I can tell you from experience that it is vital to discern the voice of the Holy Spirit because it can affect lives and the progress of the gospel. I have seen this happen time and time again in my ministry over the years. There is also a great example from the apostle Paul's ministry that changed the course of history. Dr. Luke tells about how Paul and his team were trying to push for ministry in 2 different places, Asia and Bithynia, but the Holy Spirit didn't give them the green light. God had other plans. Consider Acts 16:6-10:

"Now when they had gone through Phrygia and the region of Galatia, they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia. After they had come to Mysia, they tried to go to Bithynia, but the Spirit did not permit them. So, passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas. And a vision appeared to Paul in the night. A man of Macedonia stood and pleaded with him, saying, 'Come over to Macedonia and help us'. Now after he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go to Macedonia, concluding that the Lord had called us to preach the gospel to them".

Let me ask you something. Were there no unsaved people in Asia and Bithynia who needed the gospel? Of course there were! Did God not care about them? Of course He did! Then why, you may ask, did he turn Paul away from those places? The answer is due to timing. The gospel did get to those places but there was a reason Paul was steered off his course and on to the Holy Spirit's course. If you keep reading Acts 16 you will find that a lady by the name of Lydia, who lived in the Roman colony of Philippi in northern Greece, received Paul and got saved. She was the very first convert in Europe. Most of you reading this teaching can trace your lineage back to Europe. Now, what if Paul had decided to do what he wanted to do instead of what the Holy Spirit was telling him to do? Need I say more?

(over)

... I have been anointed with fresh oil

PSALM 92:10



I want to encourage you to spend some time this summer alone with your Bible in a quiet place. I carry a fold-up lawn chair with me in the trunk of my car. Every so often I stop by the river, or at a park, and get my Bible out to spend some time 'listening' to the Lord. I have found this to be a valuable use of my time. Sometimes it is just a matter of sitting in silence, waiting to hear what God has to say. I like to have my Bible handy, though, because often the Lord will direct me to key passages. I come away from these times refreshed and energized. I have also found that I need these times in order to find direction for the ministries in our church.

So, get your Bible and a good lawn chair, head to the nearest park, and start 'listening' to the voice of the Spirit of God. The way I figure it, if we can get the whole church doing this over the summer, we will be ready and raring to go when the fall season begins.

Have a blessed summer!

Pastor Brian