

It took too long to realize 3 – His Voice

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Welcome everyone to Redemption Church in Plano TX. We are in our new location at the corner of Custer & W Parker Rd and we are excited to share the Word of God together. Greetings to everyone meeting in person and everyone joining us online.

It took too long to realize

We are in the 3rd week of our series “It took too long to realize,” where I am sharing some things that I am so glad I learned, but I really should have learned a lot sooner. In week 1 we talked about how Jesus is both God and the Son of

God. In week 2 we talked about what God expects and a faith that works. Today, I want to share a very helpful message.

It took too long to realize His voice.

I am going to share with you something that took too long for me to realize, but once I understood, it really helped me. It took me too long to realize His voice.

I want you to ask yourself, “Have I ever heard God’s voice?” And by voice I mean direct communication straight from God.

He spoke to Adam & Eve in the Garden.

He spoke to Noah instruction.

He spoke to Abraham in a face to face encounter.

He spoke to Joseph in dreams.

He spoke to Moses from a burning bush.

He spoke to His children in prophecies.

He spoke to Ezekiel, Daniel, the apostles Peter and John the Revelator in visions.

You are not going to get much out of this message if you don't believe God speaks.

God Speaks

Speaking is something God did throughout Scripture.

There are those who believe God no longer speaks. They would say that God has given us the Bible and that the preaching of the Bible is the only communication we can receive from God today. I strongly disagree with this thought.

The God who spoke to men & women & children still speaks today.

It is not enough to believe God spoke.

We must believe that He still speaks.

He called a young child named Samuel in the middle of the night, and He can still call a young child's name in the night.

He whispered in a still small voice to a frightened prophet named Elijah, the same God can still whisper to you in your fear.

We serve a God who spoke to world leaders directly, or through a prophet.

Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, & Cyrus are kings who heard the voice of God. Does anyone believe God can still speak to presidents, prime ministers, dictators, senators...? God speaks!

And He will speak to you. Before we go a step further, let's pray that God would speak to us today. Lord let us hear you speak today. Help us to listen, obey, and realize your voice.

We are going to be looking at John 10. As you turn in the Word of God, I want you to know that God speaks to believers & unbelievers, the righteous and the unrighteous, the Jew and the gentile. DO NOT think God will not speak to you. HE WILL SPEAK!

John 10:1-6 (NIV) "Very truly I tell you Pharisees, anyone who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber. The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of

the sheep. The gatekeeper 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 the Pharisees did not understand what he was telling them.

God spoke to the Pharisees about the Shepherd and His sheep. God is the

shepherd and the sheep are those that listen to the voice of the shepherd.

The Pharisees did not understand Jesus. The conversation continues...

John 10:24-27 (NIV) The Jews who were there gathered around him, saying, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly." Jesus answered, "I did tell you, but you do not believe. The works I do in my Father's name testify about me, but you do not believe because you are not my sheep. My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.

The Jews say, “Tell us.” Jesus says “I did, but you did not believe because you are not my sheep.”

Then Jesus tells how His sheep are easily identified;s...

His sheep listen to His voice, He knows them, & they follow him.

Jesus says that the sheep can recognize the voice of the shepherd and also recognize voices that are not the shepherd's. These strangers' voices they do not trust.

The other day I picked up the phone and I heard a voice ask me for my social security number. What should I have done? Should I have given that voice my private information?

What if I reveal that the voice was my wife's voice? What should I do now?

Recognizing the voice makes a huge difference. I trust the voice of my wife. I recognize the voice of my wife. I have a relationship with the person attached to that voice.

Would you recognize your spouse's voice? Would you recognize your mom's voice? Would you recognize your best friend's voice?

If you didn't recognize their voice, I would question your relationship.

We should recognize God's voice

If we don't recognize God's voice, then what does that say about our relationship?

As a newborn baby you learn the voice of your mom & dad. You can witness parents speaking to their baby, and child just lights up. They learned their voices and they know who they are.

In the same way we need to learn God's voice.

This is what took me too long to realize...
His voice.

In my experience, God was talking to me long before I realized... long before I recognized His voice.

Let me share some of my personal experiences upon hearing the voice of God.

A personal God

I need you to know that God is a personal God. His communication with us is as unique as we are. Just like you communicate with certain people differently, God communicates with us in different ways.

You are not needing to duplicate my experience with God's voice, you need to

have your own experience and learn the unique ways He communicates with you.

Fire on my hands:

In my early 20s I was in Waco Texas at a Taco Cabana. It was a Sunday night and I was sitting with some church friends. We were having a good time. I wouldn't say that we were doing anything very spiritual... we were talking & scarfing tacos.

Then I felt this strong sensation that caused me to shut up and freeze. I felt this sensation all over my hands. It was like they were on fire, but not burning or hurting. It felt powerful. I knew this was God...

I had felt this before, but only at church. I remember years before I was singing

(Awesome God, btw) in a church and out of nowhere, I felt this exact same feeling. It was so unexpected my eyes started to tear up and my hand began to shake... I remember the people in the church being worried about me... like I was acting this way because I had stage fright. They weren't feeling what I was feeling... but I just thought they must be right.

Now I am feeling this same manifestation at Taco Cabana. I am not at Church and this is definitely not stage fright.

AND HERE IS THE MISTAKE WE ALL MAKE; We look to other people for confirmation of His voice.

We wrongly look to other people for confirmation of His voice.

I did this when others told me that I must have had stage fright. As I felt what I felt at Taco Cabana, I very awkwardly looked around the table and asked... “Guys, do you’ll feel anything?”

How do you ask...? “Dear fellow Christians, do any of you, perchance, feel the God of all eternity revealing Himself and your entire future to you by a supernatural act upon your person?”

There is no real way to ask that... so I said, “Guys, do you’ll feel anything.”

My friends stopped talking, looked at me and said “What are you talking about?” I said, “Never mind.”

But, God did not stop interacting with me. No one else felt what I felt, but what I felt was real.

I need to tell you that what you feel from God, though no one else feels it or understands it... Do not doubt the Lord.

My friends all left that blessed Taco Cabana and I walked to my car still feeling the presence of the Lord. I got in my car and started to pray. “God I do not understand what this is all about. Why are you doing this? What are you trying to tell me?”

This is one of the most important moments in my life. On this night the

Lord revealed to me that He would have me work in His Church. God also revealed to me that this was more than a feeling... this was his calling card. This was His way of getting my attention.

Still today, if the Lord wants to get my attention, this is one of the ways He will do it.

One night I was playing a worship service under a tent and it was raining like crazy. Looking back I can't believe they still held that service... but under that tent, I felt the Lord set my hands on fire and God's presence ministered so strongly as I sang. I felt like the Lord was communicating that He was pleased with me; whatever my hands found to do, I was to do it with all my might, and He

would bless it! He would empower me. It was not long after this moment the Lord opened a door for me to hold my first staff position in a church as a worship pastor.

Once at a Double Dave's Pizza in Denton, Texas in 2005 the Lord stopped me in my tracks... There was the same feeling. I asked the Lord what going on? "God are you needing me to do something? Are you calling me into something else?" But God was silent and I kind of got frustrated. I tried to FAITH harder so as to somehow understand what God was trying to say... but nothing. Finally I gave up and I felt the Lord speak right to my heart and say "You are the first thing on my mind. You are all I ever think about."

God will operate in the supernatural just to tell you that He loves you.

His sheep hear His voice. His sheep learn His voice.

Now, do you need to have my exact experience? I am not saying you do. I am saying this is a way the Lord has spoken to me and I have learned to hear His communication. I KNOW that the Lord wants to speak (relate) His voice to you as well.

We have to learn His voice... In 1 Samuel 3 the young child named Samuel heard the voice of God call his name, but did not realize it was God's voice. The Lord

said Samuel, and Samuel ran into the next room and asked Eli, the high priest, did you call me? This repeated 3 times before Eli realized it was the Lord calling Samuel... the next time Samuel heard the voice he said... “SPEAK FOR YOUR SERVANT IS LISTENING.” Samuel’s life was changed forever.

Sometimes you hear the voice, but don’t understand the voice is God’s voice.

In the spring of 1997, I experienced God speak to my heart in the clearest way. I say, “speak to my heart” because it was not audible. I have never heard the audible voice of God. I believe God can definitely speak to you audibly, but I have experienced it differently.

I don't feel any deficiency because God has not spoken to me audibly. I am just thrilled He speaks.

The spring of my junior year I was sitting in a high school theater at an awards ceremony. I was not doing anything spiritual, but something spiritual happened anyway.

I turned around to see a classmate walk in the door to the theater. When this guy walked in I felt the Lord say to my heart "Be his friend and I will save him."

I was blown away. God had just spoken to me, but as I sat there doubt started to creep in. "Was that really God? Maybe you just thought it. Maybe you just want to act spiritual." The inner dialogue started becoming more and more

negative... “You are fraud and just want to act like God has spoken to you.”

When God speaks. it ALWAYS works just like this. We hear God. We are excited. But, if we hesitate responding to His voice, doubt and unbelief start to creep in.

I sat there and I thought for a little bit. I used some logic.

#1 Did God say it? That did feel like God. That is something God would say... “Be his friend I will save him.”

#2 Did satan say it? That is definitely not something Satan would say. Satan would not want me to be a friend to anyone.

#3 Did I say it? That is really not my style to say such a thing. That kid is actually one of the few people I can with

certainly declare to be a bigger nerd than I am. I have tried to avoid that kid for a long time... This is not something I would say...

So it must be God. Logic for the win.

So I thought to myself... God just spoke to you and you need to act right now. To not act is disobedience... to not act will send me down the path of negative doubt & disbelief... and then another soul is involved in my obedience as well, so I best do right.

Determined, I turned to my dad to tell him what the Lord had said to me... and before I could say anything my dad grabbed my arm like lightening and he said "Christopher, that boy back there...

God says ‘if you will be his friend God will save him.’”

I looked dumbfounded and said “yes sir.” I went and invited the boy to sit with us. I became his close friend and God did save him and his family, as well.

Praise God for that... but for weeks I thought about how God spoke to me and then spoke to my dad. I told the Lord “God, I was going to do what you told me to do, you did not have to tell my dad. There must be a reason why you did it this way.” ...and then God unfolded my understanding.

He spoke to me and then spoke to my dad to confirm His voice to me.

God wants to do more than speak to you... He wants you to KNOW HIS VOICE.

I thought I heard the voice of God, but then, because he confirmed it, I knew absolutely the voice of God.

Why is this important? The Lord spoke this right to my mind... The next time I talk to you... because this is not the only time I want to talk to you... the next time I talk to you I want you to need nothing else to confirm my voice. You don't need your father to grab your arm every time I speak to you, but you will hear, listen, and obey my voice!

God doesn't just speak. God establishes; he confirms His Word to us.

Listen to me Christians. God has spoken to us, yet we have not learned his voice.

Do you know your mom's voice? If she called right now, how would you know

her voice?

You know the things she would say.

You know her sound, tone, delivery...

In learning God's voice...

You must know the things God would and would not say. **STUDY HIS WORD TO KNOW THIS!**

You must learn the sound, tone, delivery, and weight of his voice... His voice feels different from every other voice.

There is love in His voice. There is peace in His voice. There is power in His voice. Darkness runs from His voice. His voice chases away darkness with light, and calms your stormy seas.

Do you know His voice?

Musician

We are going to pray together very soon... before we come forward, I want to ask you.

Are you hearing God's voice?

Do you know His voice?

If God has ever spoken to you, you need to remember how that felt. Remember what He said. Remember, because it is not the only time He will speak to you. The next time He speaks you will be more aware and more able to immediately obey.

The Lord said, "Be his friend and I will save him." 3 years later I heard God say the same words.

I was at the McLennan Community College walking into a student government meeting with a bunch of

students who were also Christians.

When I walked into the meeting room there was a young guy sitting in the corner and the Lord said “Be his friend and I will save him.”

After the meeting I hurriedly went over and met the new guy. Then, after the meeting, I remembered my boldness when I told all my Christian friends...

“Hey, you know the new guy? God told me He was going to save him.” My Christian friends looked at me like they had seen a ghost...

Turns out that guy was an atheist. He did not believe in God. That did not stop me, nor deter me even a little. I became his great friend. I fed him pizza. I gave him rides to small group Bible studies. He

eventually came to church... and kept coming back...

I can take you to the street in Waco, TX where we arrived at a house to go play board games, and just before we went in, this friend stopped me and said...

“Chris, I have never believed in God, but when we are worshipping I feel like it would be IMPOSSIBLE for there to NOT be a God.”

I told him, not only is God real, He sent Jesus to die on the cross for you. God loves you. That young man gave his heart to the Lord...

His sheep HEAR his voice. His sheep LISTEN to His voice. His sheep OBEY.

Let's pray! Let's seek His voice today. If you believe that God has spoken to you

today... I want you to come forward and let me pray for you. God wants to confirm His Word.