

Views from the Pews – God’s voice

Recently, many Sunday sermons have had a recurring theme of God speaking to people and their subsequent responses. Overall responses were: negative, positive or hesitant.

Jonah fled to the ‘ends of the earth’ (Tarshish). Mary the mother of Jesus responded to God’s call on her life and another Mary, chose to sit at Jesus’s feet and listen rather than be distracted with being the perfect hostess. The Good Samaritan heard and acted on the “inner voice “of compassion, an illustration of responding in our spirit without understanding why we did not instinctively default to ingrained religious tradition, custom or culture. Peter heard the direct call to leave his nets and fish for men, responding without fully understanding the implications. Samuel failed to recognise God’s voice three times until the older, Eli, pointed out, that it was indeed God’s voice and advised Samuel to listen more closely (1 Samuel:3).

All of these examples illustrate differing responses to God’s varied means of communication. In the modern liturgy, we see a corporate example of the Holy Spirit using his voice to ‘guide, warn and revive his church’. Posturing is an overused word. However, its 16th century origins, convey important dimensions, denoting the relative position of one thing to another, and a sense of alertness or attentiveness. These enlightening aspects validate its use when hearing God’s voice.

Isaiah 6:8; Exodus 3:4 (Moses) or Psalm 88:9 (David) reflect attributes of waiting in God’s presence, and hence enhancing the ability to respond instinctively with words such as “Here I am, Lord, use me, or “I call to you every day and I spread my hands out to you”. Such responses are devoid of hesitation or negativity. Why is that? Perhaps those speakers did not lead lives sucked into some vortex of activity, draining them of energy. Isaiah spent his days in the temple waiting and listening. We cannot spend our days in church; however, we can reside in the temple of a quiet spirit, attentively alert to God’s voice.

God cannot be heard through frenetic activity (1Kings 19:11-13), nor does he wait until we slow down sometime in the future, but longs to come now. He should find us waiting in the throne room of daily praise and worship. PS 40:7 How then is our waiting before God going? ...do we tell God to hurry up, or do we expectantly sit, responsive to hearing what is of more importance to Him and His plans for us, than our busyness.

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