

The Always God

Joke: A man, down on his luck, went into a church which catered to the “uppity.” Spotting the man’s dirty clothes a deacon, worried about the churches image, went to the man and asked him if he needed help, the man said, “I was praying and the Lord told me to come to this church.”

The deacon suggested that the man go pray some more and possibly he might get a different answer. The next Sunday the man returned. The deacon asked, “Did you get a different answer?”

The man replied, “Yes I did. I told the Lord they don’t want me in that church and the Lord said, “Don’t worry about it son; I’ve been trying to get into that church for years and haven’t made it yet.”

This week, we are beginning a new series called *God is*.

There’s a lot in just that title. You could say, God is in love with His kids, God is good, God is. . .and the list can go on and on.

My goal over the next few weeks is to show you that just as God moved in the past, he is moving in the present as well.

After all Scripture does tell us that God is the same, yesterday, today, and forever.

With that being said, I believe that just as we have seen God in Scripture: Pursuing people, He is still pursuing people today to come after Him and all he has for them. And we will take about that in a few weeks.

In Scripture we have seen God restoring people, restoring people into right standing with God, restoring people into fellowship, restoring people in health, so many ways God has restored folks,

and we will in a couple weeks see how he is still in the restoring business today.

Just as we have seen God in Scripture: Provide for people in the past, he is still providing for his people today.

God has not changed over time. And the one who revealed himself as the Great “I AM”. . .the eternal, all-powerful, all-knowing God. . .still is. . . “I AM.”

And today, I want us to learn how God is: Still Speaking

Let me start with this. . .

Video: Are we listening.

Now, we know from scripture how God spoke the very world into existence.

In Genesis chapter one, we discover ten times the phrase “And God said” and whatever he spoke either came into being, was obeyed or fulfilled.

We read the Old Testament and see God speaking to his people, Israel, God at that time was speaking to and through different prophets, priests and kings that He he raised up.

We’ll look at one of these prophets today, maybe you’ve heard of him, his name was Moses, and we are going to learn how God spoke to him.

Before I do that I need you to understand that in the New Testament, God spoke through his son.

The first few verses in the book of Hebrews put it like this:

Hebrews 1:1–3 (NIV): In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, 2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he

appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe. 3 The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.

Hebrews 1:1–3 (TPT): Throughout our history God has spoken to our ancestors by his prophets in many different ways. The revelation he gave them was only a fragment at a time, building one truth upon another. 2 But to us living in these last days, God now speaks to us openly in the language of a Son, the appointed Heir of everything, for through him God created the panorama of all things and all time. 3 The Son is the dazzling radiance of God's splendor, the exact expression of God's true nature—his mirror image! He holds the universe together and expands it by the mighty power of his spoken word. He accomplished for us the complete cleansing of sins, and then took his seat on the highest throne at the right hand of the majestic One.

All throughout the pages of scripture we read about God speaking and the purpose of today's message is to remind you that He is still speaking today.

So, I want to begin by asking you all a couple questions:

1. Do you believe that is true, that God is still speaking?
2. Do you believe God can. . .will. . .and wants to speak?

And if God is still speaking, how can we know it's really him? What does his voice sound like? Is his voice always audible?

I think those are good questions for each of us.

But let me ask them in a more personal way: Is God speaking to you? When was the last time he did and how confident were you it was him?

How do you know how to discern His voice? Do you believe God is still speaking today?

Turn with me to Exodus 3 and let's get started.

Exodus 3:1–6 (NIV): Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. 2 There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. 3 So Moses thought, “I will go over and see this strange sight—why the bush does not burn up.” 4 When the Lord saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, “Moses! Moses!” And Moses said, “Here I am.” 5 “Do not come any closer,” God said. “Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground.” 6 Then he said, “I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.” At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God.

Henry Blackaby and Claude King wrote a best-selling book called, *Experiencing God*.

Taking this passage right here in Exodus 3, they write of four distinguishing marks of God speaking. Let me share them with you.

1. When God spoke, it was usually unique to the individual.

Moses had a Burning bush – it was different from how God spoke to Abraham, Elijah or Samuel. And it will most likely be different for you.

2. When God spoke, the person was sure it was God speaking. When Moses had his burning bush encounter and God introduced himself, Moses didn't question if it was truly God speaking. When the woman at the well had her encounter with Jesus she left knowing God had spoken.

3. When God spoke, the person knew what God said. They may have doubted they were up for the job, but they didn't doubt what the job was.

Look what God spoke to Moses. . .

Exodus 3:10–14 (NIV): So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt.” 11 But Moses said to God, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?” 12 And God said, “I will be with you. And this will be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship God on this mountain.” 13 Moses said to God, “Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ Then what shall I tell them?” 14 God said to Moses, “I am who I am. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘I am has sent me to you.’ ”

4. When God spoke, it was a God encounter. There was no looking behind another door. This was the experience – God speaking.

Now, maybe your thinking, “But pastor, Moses was different...that was to specific people in the Bible. He doesn’t speak like that to me. And he doesn’t speak like that to people I know living in the here and now!”

And listen, I get it! I wish it could be said of me and I bet you wish it could be said of you as it was said of Moses in Exodus 33 look at it in verse 11.

Exodus 33:11 (NIV): The Lord would speak to Moses face to face, as one speaks to a friend. Then Moses would return to the camp, but his young aide Joshua son of Nun did not leave the tent.

That would be awesome wouldn’t it. . .and terrifying all at the same time. Face to face with Jesus.

I mean for God to show up in my office tomorrow and speak to me face to face. But he’s never done that for me! I I’m not going to say He will never do that, but as of today He hasn’t.

I wish God spoke face to face. . .that would be some kind of an experience! I mean if it came and sat down and joined you for your morning coffee and told you what he planned out for your day there would be no question as to what He wanted for you that day. Amen.

But just because He doesn't speak face to face at least not that I've experienced doesn't mean he does not speak.

God is still speaking today and:

- You can be sure He is speaking. . .
- You can be certain of what He is saying. . .
- You can have an encounter. . .an experience with the living God.

How can I be so certain?

Jesus put it like this:

John 10:27 (NIV): My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.

The "I AM" is still speaking. . .let me share a few ways God speaks to us today. This is not an exhaustive list by no means and I have no intention of putting God in a box of how he has to speak.

He can choose to speak however He wants to whomever He wants, whenever He wants. But I truly believe that God desires to speak to each one of us.

Here are a few ways that I have heard Him speak to me. And I believe if you are willing to allow Him too, He can speak to each of us in these same ways as well.

1. **Creation** – God speaks to us through His creation.

Sometimes people think, I sure wish God would write it in the skies, so when I look up I know what He is saying.

Truth is church He does. . .every single day.

Listen closely. . .

Psalm 19:1–4 (NIV): The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. 2 Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they reveal knowledge. 3 They have no speech, they use no words; no sound is heard from them. 4 Yet their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world. In the heavens God has pitched a tent for the sun.

I find it interesting, I have not yet met a person who has stood before a mountain range or looked upon a starry sky or on the shore of the ocean watching the sun rise and thought wow I am so awesome.

But rather, it's in that moment, each one of us know there is something greater. . .something more. . .we are put in our place and who is it that is speaking to us. . .it's God.

That is why Paul wrote in Romans chapter one. . .

Romans 1:20 (NIV): 20 For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.

I have had people ask me what about all those people that have never heard the gospel what's going to happen to them when their life ends.

And honestly, all I say is that God knows the heart, but just look at His creation and you can see God.

God speaks to us through His creation. In creation, He shows us what He values in diversity and order in beauty.

Rebecca Barlow Jordan writes: “By observing an ant’s strength to store up food all summer long, we learn God’s wisdom and work. By planting and growing a garden, we see the cycle of death and rebirth.”

Church, understand that just by placing our finger on our beating pulse and our lungs taking in oxygen – neither of which we control or command, we know that we are not the ruler of our own domain. . .there is a Creator and He is speaking to us. . .trying to get our attention through His creation.

Acts 17:28 (NIV): For in him we live and move and have our being.’ As some of your own poets have said, ‘We are his offspring.’

The second way God speaks to us is through our conscience.

2. **Conscience** - All of us have a conscience. We may have met some people who you don’t think do, but they do

Paul wrote in Romans 2 verses 13 thru 15. . .

Romans 2:13–15 (NIV): For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God’s sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous. 14 (Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law.

15 They show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts sometimes accusing them and at other times even defending them.)

Now, to be honest the conscience can’t be fully trusted. . .because of sin and some other things that we’ll discuss in a little bit, our consciences can be deceived.

You've heard the old adage of just "follow your gut," or that other similar one that says, "follow your heart," or I know you have heard this one, just do what "feels right." You need to be careful with those because. . .that can get you in trouble.

The Bible tells us,

Jeremiah 17:9 (NIV): The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?

So, we need to be extremely careful in following our conscience.

In fact, the Bible says we can go so far as to searing our consciences by giving ourselves over to sin and the demonic influences that come to us.

1 Timothy 4:1–10 (NIV): The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. 2 Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron. 3 They forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and who know the truth. 4 For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, 5 because it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer. 6 If you point these things out to the brothers and sisters, you will be a good minister of Christ Jesus, nourished on the truths of the faith and of the good teaching that you have followed. 7 Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives' tales; rather, train yourself to be godly. 8 For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come. 9 This is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance. 10 That is why we labor and strive, because we have put our hope in the living God, who is the Savior of all people, and especially of those who believe.

So, we have to be wise and exercise discernment when it comes to listening to and obeying our conscience.

However, there is no doubt though that written on every one of our souls is eternity.

Ecclesiastes 3:11 (NIV): He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart; yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end.

If we will sit still long enough. . . be quiet long enough your conscience will bear witness that in fact you know:

- The difference between right and wrong
- Desire for justice to take place and wrongs to be made right
- Have desires this world just can't fill

And you KNOW these things NOT just because you were taught them as a child, but because someone wrote them on your heart.

That's God speaking.

The third way is by our circumstances

3. **Circumstances** - God speaks to us through our own circumstances and sometimes even the circumstances of others.

Now, again it takes some spiritual discernment to know what He is saying through our circumstances.

And just like with our consciences, we have to be careful in how we interpret it, but I believe God speaks to us through circumstances.

How do I know? One of the ways God works is through opportunities.

Romans 8:28 (NIV): And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

Now I need you to listen close. I don't believe for a moment that God is sending you a sickness to teach you a lesson, or a pandemic because the world has rejected Him.

But God can use our circumstances none the less to speak to us.

When an earthquake hits it can show us we don't have control over everything. . .

When 9/11 happened people came from all over to help with the attack. It showed that people still do care. 20 years later and we still haven't forgotten all the sacrifice.

God uses circumstances and crisis. It's not that He caused it, but He can use it. And if we will listen we can learn from them.

C.S Lewis – "God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our consciences, but shouts in our pains. It is his megaphone to rouse a deaf world."

In creation, conscience and in circumstances – I'll call them general revelation. And God often speaks in this way to every person that walks around this place we call earth.

But let's take a turn and see how God speaks specifically to us.

The first is through. . .

4. Christ

John 1:1 (NIV): In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Skip down to verse 14. . .

John 1:14 (NIV): The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Jesus is the final and full revelation of God.

Remember verse three of Hebrews 1

Hebrews 1:3 - The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being,

He's speaking and he's saying, I'm right here! How can we recognize the voice of God? Get to know the voice of Jesus! He told his disciples in John 14, if you have seen me, you have seen the Father.

Bottom line is this: If you want to hear God speak, read the Word.

And that is my next point. . .

5. Through the Scripture

It's simple, God speaks through the Bible. You need to hear what God said.

And the "measuring stick" of divine revelation of God speaking to us is set and established in the Scriptures. It is complete, nothing will be added to it, it's authoritative. Where the Bible speaks, God speaks.

A few passages I love concerning the word of God:

Is. 40:8 – "The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever."

Matt. 24:35 – "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away."

Hebrews 4:12 – "For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart."

2 Timothy 3:16-17 – “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.”

1 Peter 1:21 – “For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.”

God is still speaking today and he speaks through his word. That is why when we gather, we teach the word. We need to hear from God.

This is why your time alone is so important. Because when you open up your Bible and spend time alone with the Lord, he WILL speak to you THROUGH his word by his Holy Spirit.

And this brings me to the next way God communicates and speaks to us.

6. The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit's role is to enable us to understand and he empowers us to obey what the Scripture has spoken to us, or any other way that God has spoken to us for that matter.

This is why He is called the “Spirit of truth” in the Bible. He is also called our “Counselor.”

John 16:13-14 – “When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. ¹⁴ He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you.”

God speaks to us by the Holy Spirit and THIS is important, what He is speaking by His Holy Spirit will NEVER contradict His word.

So, if you ever sense God prompting you toward an action – to do something or to say something to someone, and we'll give some examples in just a moment, just know The Holy Spirit and the holy word will act in accord...they will line up.

A final way God is still speaking to us today is through his:

7. Church

And certainly this means through the teaching and preaching of God's word. . .like what we are doing right now. God has established preaching as a means of how he communicates his truth today.

Romans 10:14–15 (NIV): How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? 15 And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"

Skip to verse 17. . .

Romans 10:17 (NIV): Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ.

And so in the wisdom of God, it is the Church that proclaims the word of God and in the proclamation of his word we can declare that He is speaking.

God is speaking when His word is being declared honestly and with clarity. The Church also means gathered saints. ..so he speaks through fellow believers.

This is why there is wisdom in an abundance of counselors. And this is why there is wisdom in not skipping out on church. And I'm not just saying that because I'm the pastor.

God speaks through His church and why someone would not make a habit of showing up where God speaks, I'll never understand!

Together – IN the word of God – FILLED with the Spirit of God, we can discern rightly the voice of God.

And this really helps in the grey areas of life.

There are some things God clearly speaks to. . .it's laid out for us in his word in black and white, maybe even in red:

- Love your neighbor
- Freely you have received so freely give. In other words, be generous.
- Love justice.
- There was even those things called the 10 Commandments. . .why is it so many think they are the ten suggestions.
- We don't have to wonder whether or not we should share the gospel we are told to do so in what has been called the great commission.

There are some things God speaks VERY clearly to. . .BUT, what about the grey areas?

- Should I make that move?
- Is it the right time for a career change?
- Do we move forward with that adoption?
- Do I take the next step in this relationship?
- After church today, do I go to El Rancho or Applebee's

Let me help you out with that one. . .God's alright with both of those! I have prophesied over people in both of those places.

This is where God will use his Holy Spirit and His church to really help clarify if and how he is speaking. He'll use his people and in the process will usually grant his peace as a right decision is being made.

Although it may take a step of faith first – Scripture tells us that, “when Moses turned aside, God spoke.”

Sometimes we need to turn aside our agenda, our will, our busyness so that God can speak.

I’m telling you. . . I have no doubt that God is STILL in the speaking business! And we can know what God is speaking, that it truly is God speaking and through His speaking have a legitimate encounter with him. Or help others encounter Him as we share with them what we sense God spoke to us concerning them.

There is NOTHING like hearing the voice of God and it may NOT be audible, but it’s sometimes much louder! There’s NOTHING like it. It may not be face to face, but it’s just as strong!

Here’s the problem though. . . there are reasons why many of us are not hearing God speak.

1. **Sin** – sin can hinder us from hearing the voice of God.

1 Corinthians 2:14 (NIV): The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit.

There are some here today hearing this, but you don’t hear the voice of God through his word and it’s not making sense to you because you have not trusted in Christ.

Spiritually, the enemy has you blind-folded. Have you ever wondered about a person you love that doesn’t know Jesus, “Why don’t they get it?”

That’s it right there! In the words of Paul. . .

2 Corinthians 4:4 – “In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.”

And so, what do we do? We keep praying for them. We keep loving on them. We keep sharing with them. And one thing I can assure you of is that God is pursuing them as well. And we will be looking at that in a few weeks.

But sin will keep us from hearing the voice of God it's not that God is not speaking it's just that the enemy's voice appears to be louder.

2. Stubbornness – This is another reason we don't hear God speaking.

Hebrews 3:7–8 (NIV): So, as the Holy Spirit says: “Today, if you hear his voice, 8 do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion, during the time of testing in the wilderness,

Skip down to verse 13. . .

Hebrews 3:13 (NIV): But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called “Today,” so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness.

Imagine calloused skin – this is what our heart looks like when we say no to God. Our hearts get hard. And it's NOT that God isn't speaking, it's that we haven't obeyed what He has spoken and when we don't surrender, but instead get stubborn and prideful, we often times miss hearing him speak.

Think about this with Moses. . .for 40 years he was in the desert on the backside of nowhere! One of the reasons God could speak to him is because he was finally ready to listen!

Read his story. . .he had been through the ringier and was finally at a point in his life where his heart was soft enough to hear God!

Some of us are not hearing God speak because of our stubbornness and pride! And we're wondering why isn't God speaking?

But hear this church, He is still speaking. . .

My challenge to you is to go back to the last time you heard him. . .did you do what he said to do?

- Did you go to that person and seek their forgiveness or forgive them if that was necessary?
- Did you share Jesus with that person that God prompted you to?
- Did you surrender to God with the things He has asked of you?
- Did you pray for that person to be healed like he asked you to?
- Did you share that prophetic word God gave you for them in proper season?

Don't let stubbornness and pride keep you from hearing from the Great "I AM." Allow your heart to be soft by your willingness to live in obedience and surrender to Jesus.

A third reason we don't hear God speak:

3. **Self** – We are too busy listening to ourselves. . .we're too busy wrapped up in ourselves. . .we're too busy living for ourselves. And as a result we don't hear God speaking.

Our wants are drowning his voice out. Our dreams for ourselves seem to be louder than his dreams for our life are. Sometimes, we want to hear from God because of how it will make us look. . .

And when “self” is the driving force behind anything we do, you can bet God is not the voice behind it.

When God speaks, “self” and all aspects of “self” are crucified.

God speaks the language of getting out of our comfort zone and more often than not that is a danger to “self”. . .to self’s reputation.

What will people think? Who cares. It’s time to start asking what does Papa think?

Living for and protecting ourselves will hinder and hamper God speaking to us in an effective way. God had to rid Moses of his “self,” before he revealed HIMSELF and spoke to Moses. And the same goes for us.

John the Baptist put it like this, “I must decrease, and He must increase.”

In other words less of me, and more of Him.

But what do we do when. . .

4. **Silence** – What do we do when God seems silent?

We’re living for Christ. . .we’re seeking him. . .we’re reading his word. . .to the best of our knowledge we are living a repentant lifestyle and living in obedience to Him.

But, regarding our situation today, He seems silent. What do we do when He is silent?

Well, I can tell you from scripture, that good things come to those who wait. . .the trouble is, it’s our nature as humans to not want to enjoy the waiting.

- I need something, Amazon Prime it.
- I want an app, download it.

- I want that song, push a button. Or you could ask Alexa or Siri.
- Don't want to wait on dinner, order the appetizer.

Talk about conversation before dinner last night.

We hate waiting. But in God's economy, waiting on Him produces something in us that nothing else can produce.

Isaiah 40:31 (KJV): But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings as eagles; They shall run, and not be weary; And they shall walk, and not faint.

Psalm 27:14 (NIV): Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord.

Psalm 37:7 (NIV): Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him;

Habakkuk 2:3 (NIV): For the revelation awaits an appointed time; it speaks of the end and will not prove false. Though it linger, wait for it; it will certainly come and will not delay.

Back to Moses. . .let's learn from him. He was waiting in a desert-wilderness for 40 years before God spoke.

"Thanks, pastor!" That's encouraging isn't it? 40 years. And what was he doing in those 40 years?

Exodus 3:1 (NIV): Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God.

He was going about his daily routine. . .and one day God showed up and spoke. It changed the whole trajectory of his life.

He had one encounter with God and it changed everything.

If you are in a period of time where God seems silent. . .keep doing what you are doing.

- Keep waking up and reading the Bible.
- Keep coming to church and getting wise counsel.
- Keep walking in truth.
- Keep surrendering to what God spoke to your heart the last time you heard from Him.

Keep doing what you are doing and God will come through. . .He will speak.

If we listen closely enough, we can hear him saying, "I'm still speaking. . .I STILL AM. I AM
Let's pray.

Join us next week for God is always hearing.