

- Year of lessons
 - Forgiveness
 - Self-examination
 - Preparation
 - Sorrow
 - Priorities

- “I’m speaking to myself, and letting you listen in.”

Listening to God

Listening to God

I. Hearing

I. Hearing

- Sight is important, but hearing is equally vital
- Auditory cues
 - Can locate objects by sound, can distinguish separate sounds
 - Helps orient things around us
- Sounds with meaning
 - Sirens and alarms communicate messages
 - Language is a series of sounds we ascribe meaning to
- Auditory learning (learning by listening)
 - We learn by sound as well as sight
 - Some learn better through reading aloud, hearing lectures, etc.

I. Hearing

- God recognizes the importance of hearing and speaking
 - Speaking in the beginning
 - “Then God said” – Genesis 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26
 - ¹ In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. ² The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. ³ Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light.
 - Psalm 33:6-9
 - ⁶ By the word of the Lord the heavens were made,
And all the host of them by the breath of His mouth.
 - ⁷ He gathers the waters of the sea together as a heap;
He lays up the deep in storehouses.
 - ⁸ Let all the earth fear the Lord;
Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him.
 - ⁹ For He spoke, and it was done;
He commanded, and it stood fast.

I. Hearing

- God recognizes the importance of hearing and speaking
 - Speaking in the beginning
 - Deuteronomy
 - Hebrew title of book means “the words”
 - Deuteronomy 6:4-9
 - ⁴ “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one! ⁵ You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. ⁶ And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. ⁷ You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. ⁸ You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. ⁹ You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.”

I. Hearing

- God recognizes the importance of hearing and speaking
 - Speaking in the beginning
 - Deuteronomy
 - Jesus as the Word
 - John 1:1-3
 - ¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.
 - 1 John 1:1-3
 - ¹ That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life— ² the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us— ³ that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

I. Hearing

- God recognizes the importance of hearing and speaking
 - Speaking in the beginning
 - Deuteronomy
 - Jesus as the Word
 - Key steps in salvation
 - Romans 10:13-17
 - ¹³ For “whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”
¹⁴ How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? ¹⁵ And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written:
“How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!”
¹⁶ But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed our report?” ¹⁷ So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.
 - Hearing is an important part, but so is responding!

I. Hearing

- God's Word has been spoken!
 - Joshua 24:14-15
 - ¹⁴ “Now therefore, fear the Lord, serve Him in sincerity and in truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the River and in Egypt. Serve the Lord! ¹⁵ And if it seems evil to you to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”
 - God states what He expects: “Serve the Lord!”
 - Choice 1: choose to serve the Lord
 - Choice 2: choose to *not* serve the Lord
 - No other options!
 - Can't pretend we didn't hear
 - Can't wait for another offer to come along
 - Can't take the 'middle ground'

Listening to God

I. Hearing

II. Deaf to God

II. Deaf to God

- Stopped-up ears
 - Stephen addresses the council
 - Acts 7:51-58
 - ⁵¹ “You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you. ⁵² Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One, of whom you now have become the betrayers and murderers, ⁵³ who have received the law by the direction of angels and have not kept it.”
 - ⁵⁴ When they heard these things they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed at him with their teeth. ⁵⁵ But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, ⁵⁶ and said, “Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!”
 - ⁵⁷ Then they cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and ran at him with one accord; ⁵⁸ and they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul.

II. Deaf to God

- Stopped-up ears
 - Stephen addresses the council
 - The Jews continue the pattern
 - Acts 13:44-45
 - ³ As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing them to prison.
 - ⁴ Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word.
 - Acts 14:19
 - Then Jews from Antioch and Iconium came there; and having persuaded the multitudes, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing him to be dead.
 - Silencing the messenger doesn't stop the message!

II. Deaf to God

- Hearing but not obeying
 - Jesus speaks out against those who don't obey
 - Matthew 7:21-23
 - ²¹ “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. ²² Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ ²³ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’”
 - Matthew 7:26-27
 - ²⁶ “But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: ²⁷ and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall.”
 - These are *not* people who would claim to be enemies of God!
 - Jesus is clear that *inaction* is the same as acting *against* Him

II. Deaf to God

- Hearing but not obeying
 - James's letter of obedience
 - James 1:22-26
 - ²² But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. ²³ For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; ²⁴ for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. ²⁵ But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does. ²⁶ If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless.
 - Those who only hear the Word and don't follow it are forgetful and deceive themselves.
 - James's example is one who hears (thinks himself religious) but does not do (bridle his tongue)
 - This one already thinks he is *in Christ*, like those who say 'Lord, Lord' – a dangerous position!

II. Deaf to God

- Hearing but not obeying
 - James's letter of obedience
 - James 1:22-26
 - James 2:14-17
 - ¹⁴ What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? ¹⁵ If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, ¹⁶ and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? ¹⁷ Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.
 - James says that those who hear the Word but don't obey it have a dead faith

II. Deaf to God

- Hearing but not obeying
 - James's letter of obedience
 - James 1:22-26
 - James 2:14-17
 - James 4:17
 - Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.
 - James emphasizes the sin of inaction, not *doing* the good they know they *should* do
 - They 'forget' what to do when it becomes time to work!

Listening to God

I. Hearing

II. Deaf to God

III. True Listening

III. True Listening

- Hearers *and* doers

- Matthew 7:24-25

- ²⁴ “Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: ²⁵ and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.”

- Luke 8:19-21

- ¹⁹ Then His mother and brothers came to Him, and could not approach Him because of the crowd. ²⁰ And it was told Him by some, who said, “Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, desiring to see You.” ²¹ But He answered and said to them, “My mother and My brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it.”

- John 14:23-24

- ²³ Jesus answered and said to him, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. ²⁴ He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father’s who sent Me.”

III. True Listening

- Enhancing our 'listening skills'
 - Immersing ourselves in the Word
 - 1 Timothy 4:7-8
 - ⁷ But reject profane and old wives' fables, and exercise yourself toward godliness. ⁸ For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come.
 - Paul's language is that of an athlete, exercising and training constantly to stay in shape
 - We listen to others daily: TV shows, online news, radio and podcasts...why wouldn't we daily listen to God?
 - 1 Timothy 4:15-16
 - ¹⁵ Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all. ¹⁶ Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.
 - We must first *know* before we can *do*

III. True Listening

- Enhancing our ‘listening skills’
 - Improving our prayer lives
 - Daniel 6:10-14
 - ¹⁰ Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went home. And in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days. ¹¹ Then these men assembled and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God. ¹² And they went before the king, and spoke concerning the king’s decree: “Have you not signed a decree that every man who petitions any god or man within thirty days, except you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions?”
 - The king answered and said, “The thing is true, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which does not alter.” ¹³ So they answered and said before the king, “That Daniel, who is one of the captives from Judah, does not show due regard for you, O king, or for the decree that you have signed, but makes his petition three times a day.” ¹⁴ And the king, when he heard these words, was greatly displeased with himself, and set his heart on Daniel to deliver him; and he labored till the going down of the sun to deliver him.
 - Even the *king* couldn’t find a way out for Daniel!

III. True Listening

- Enhancing our 'listening skills'
 - Improving our prayer lives
 - Daniel 6:10-14
 - When can we build prayer into our lives?
 - Before meals – Luke 9:16
 - Then He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed and broke them, and gave them to the disciples to set before the multitude.

III. True Listening

- Enhancing our 'listening skills'
 - Improving our prayer lives
 - Daniel 6:10-14
 - When can we build prayer into our lives?
 - Before meals – Luke 9:16
 - After waking up – Mark 1:35
 - Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed.

III. True Listening

- Enhancing our 'listening skills'
 - Improving our prayer lives
 - Daniel 6:10-14
 - When can we build prayer into our lives?
 - Before meals – Luke 9:16
 - After waking up – Mark 1:35
 - Before critical decisions – Luke 6:12-13
 - ¹² Now it came to pass in those days that He went out to the mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.
 - ¹³ And when it was day, He called His disciples to Himself; and from them He chose twelve whom He also named apostles

III. True Listening

- Enhancing our 'listening skills'
 - Improving our prayer lives
 - Daniel 6:10-14
 - When can we build prayer into our lives?
 - Before meals – Luke 9:16
 - After waking up – Mark 1:35
 - Before critical decisions – Luke 6:12-13
 - During times of stress – Matthew 26:38-39
 - ³⁸ Then He said to them, “My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me.” ³⁹ He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, “O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.”

III. True Listening

- Enhancing our 'listening skills'
 - Improving our prayer lives
 - Daniel 6:10-14
 - When can we build prayer into our lives?
 - Before meals – Luke 9:16
 - After waking up – Mark 1:35
 - Before critical decisions – Luke 6:12-13
 - During times of stress – Matthew 26:38-39
 - Christians should be a 'praying people'
 - As we build study and prayer into our lives, we'll be better-positioned to do *more!*

III. True Listening

- Enhancing our ‘listening skills’
 - Helping and being helped
 - Hebrews 10:24-25
 - ²⁴ And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, ²⁵ not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.
 - Hebrews 3:12-15
 - ¹² Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; ¹³ but exhort one another daily, while it is called “Today,” lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. ¹⁴ For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end, ¹⁵ while it is said:
“Today, if you will hear His voice,
Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.”
 - We can exhort and encourage each other to keep working
 - We also need to be prepared to *accept* help when offered