

Sermon: I'm Listening

Text: 1 Samuel 3

Introduction:

The sermon series that we are beginning today is entitled “Vox Dei.” These two words are Latin, and they mean “Voice of God.” They imply a very important underlying truth—and that is the fact that God actually speaks!

When I mention the voice of God—what do you think of? Do you believe that God has a voice? What does He sound like? How does He speak. Perhaps better said—what are the many different ways that God speaks?

- Take some time right now to discuss or contemplate the different ways that you believe that God actually speaks to us.
- Has there ever been a time when you believe that God was actually speaking to you?
 - How did He do it?
 - What did He sound like?
 - How did you know that it was God who was speaking?
 - What did He tell you?
 - Thinking back on that event or that time, are you certain that it was God? How was that confirmed?

The subtitle for this sermon series is: “Hearing God in a world of noise.” This introduces many other thoughts and concepts to be sure. As you think about the world that we are currently living in—would you describe it at a “noisy world”?

- What is it about our world that makes it “noisy”?
- When you think about the world today, versus the world of your childhood (or the world of, say, 50 years ago)—how would you compare them? Why is there a difference?
- Who or what has the loudest voice in our noisy world?
- What factors make it difficult to NOT listen to the noise of this world?
- How would you rate yourself on a scale of 1-10 in terms of listening to this world—or not listening to the noise of this world?

The Old Testament has a great deal to say to us in terms of how God speaks, and what He says to us. It begins all the way back in Genesis 1. The first three words of Genesis 1:3 are, “And God said...” This phrase is repeated in verses 6, 9, 14, 20, 24 and 29. This world that we live in EXISTS because God spoke! God’s voice literally has the power to create everything that we see—including our very selves.

And as we continue through the Old Testament—we read about Moses and birth of the Jewish people; we read about Saul and David and the establishment of the nation of Israel in the promised land; we read about the prophets whom God raised up to speak to the Israelites (and surrounding nations) as they went astray. In every season—and during the reign of every king—God was always speaking. He was never without a voice. I pray that we listen very closely throughout this series, as there is no question that God is also speaking to us!

Examination:

- Read **Jeremiah 29:11-13 & Jeremiah 33:2-3**
 - These two passages from the Book of Jeremiah speak to the fact that God is sovereign, that He is good, and that He knows the plans He has—not just for the nation of Israel, but for each and every one of us. What does it mean to you today to know that God has plans to prosper you, and to give you hope and a future?
 - The reference in Jeremiah 29:12 is to the fact that after 70 years of being in exile are over, God will open the door for Israel to return to Jerusalem. At that point, God states that two things will happen. What are those two things?
 - Jeremiah 29:13 is very clear about the fact that God will reveal Himself to us. However, we aren't just instructed to "seek the Lord". We are told that we must seek God "with all our heart." What do you think this means? How are we to seek God with all our heart?
 - In Jeremiah 33:2, God is speaking to Jeremiah, and He is clear to identify Himself: "I am He who made the earth, the LORD who formed it and established it—the LORD is my name." Why do you think God reminds Jeremiah (and us!) who He is?
 - What is the incredible invitation that the LORD God Almighty offers us? (v. 3)
 - How does God "tell" us great and unsearchable things we don't yet know?

- Read **John 10:14-30**
 - In this passage, Jesus is speaking with the Pharisees and religious Jewish leaders. These are people who don't believe in Jesus—and have completely hard hearts towards Him. They don't KNOW Jesus—unlike the "sheep" that Jesus describes here. According to verse 27, what is the distinguishing mark of one of Jesus' sheep?
 - The "other sheep" that Jesus references in verse 16 is a likely reference to the many Gentile believers (including you and me!) who will come to faith over time. What is the distinguishing mark of these "other sheep"? (v. 16)
 - What is the blessing of being counted as one of Jesus' sheep? (v. 28)
 - What are some ways in which Jesus' sheep listen to His voice? How do you?

- Read **1 Samuel 3**
 - What does v. 1 say about the fact that there are "times" or "seasons" when God is silent? Do you think we are in such a time as this right now?
 - Young Samuel was being raised in the temple by an older priest named Eli. God speaks directly to Samuel in such a way that Samuel thinks it's Eli talking. How do you imagine this happening? Does God still do this?
 - Why do you think we're told in v. 7 that Samuel didn't yet know the Lord?
 - What advice does Eli finally give to Samuel? Paraphrase it in your own words.

Application:

What are some ways that you can apply Eli's advice to your own life today? What might happen in your life if you began every day saying, "Speak Lord, your servant is listening?"