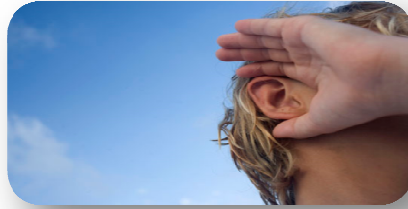


Devotional: Day 15:

Author: Everett

Reading: Revelation chapter 2, (esp. verses 7, 11, 17, 29; chapter 3, verses 6, 13, and 22)



Revelation 1:11 holds very clear directions for the apostle John: "*write in a book (or scroll) what you see and send it to the seven churches.*" The names of the seven churches are then given to John.

As we read through chapter two, we can see there is one repeated thread found in each of the seven letters to the seven churches. Seven times, Jesus says: "*He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches.*" It is interesting to note: in the first three instances, this is followed by the words, "*To him who overcomes...*" The Word to each church is absolutely clear; the letters are Jesus' own words – words direct from the Father. Yet Jesus concludes each letter with the clear, stated command: "*Let him who has ears hear what the Spirit is saying...*" WHY?

Of course Jesus is speaking of the ears of the heart, the inner person of the heart. He had used similar expressions during His earthly ministry (See Matt 11:15; 13:9 & 43), as the does the Old Testament.

But, as we read through the Bible, we find a small but significant diversion found in Romans 10:17: "So, faith **comes** by hearing, and hearing the word of God (or Christ)." If we are to hear, obviously we are not hearing ourselves speaking out loud. So, who are we hearing, or better still, who is speaking?

The command to hear what the Spirit is saying goes beyond the words written in each letter, it is important, even crucial, to understanding the heart and voice of God. For instance the text: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God." Note the word **PROCEED** is in the present tense.

This means, God has spoken in His Word, and He is speaking **now** in His Word, by and through the Holy Spirit. Only those who have ears to hear will hear what the Spirit is saying. The Spirit alone has been given the sole right to speak to us from and on behalf of Almighty God. As He Himself hears, so He speaks. Jesus said He, the Spirit will not speak on His own initiative, much like Jesus Himself. No wonder He, the Spirit, is another comforter / Paracletos / Intercessor or Helper, one exactly like Jesus.

Who then is this Spirit? Is He equal to the written Word, or the same as the Word? Is He the Lord of and over the Word?

2 Peter 1: 21 says it like this: "*For no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved (upon) by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.*" This verse is similar to John 11 vs. 13: "*...born not of blood, nor of the will of flesh, nor of the will of man, but (born) of God.*"

The Holy Spirit is the sovereign Lord and Author of the Word of God, the new birth and the believer's life. Outside of Him and His life-imparting ministry to and in the believer, there is nothing but the empty form of religion and human vanity.

Jesus' command to have ears to hear, poses a challenge:-

*As Pentecostals and Charismatic's, we are a word-centered people. In John 5 vs. 39-40, Jesus spoke to the scribes and the Pharisees saying: "You search the scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is these that bear witness of Me; and you are unwilling to come to Me that you may have life." Jesus is the centre-piece of all the scriptures. He also said when the Holy Spirit comes, He will glorify Him, Jesus - so those who hear what the Spirit is saying centre their lives in and on the person of Jesus, being led and directed by the Spirit of God.

*Is all my life under the rulership of God the Spirit? How is my fellowship with Him?

*The Spirit came upon Jesus and remained upon Him simply because of His Lamb-like nature! Is the Spirit of God comfortable in my life?

*Is my life separated, as a Nazarene, to the Lord, away from the contamination of the world we live in?

*Are all my disciplines, routines and formats for doing Christianity under subjection to the Holy Spirit - or are these good things, so rigid and bound around my life, they prevent me from hearing Him, calling me away - to freedom.

And lastly, did Jesus Himself live His life apart from the Spirit of God?

He was dependent completely on the Father. How? By living His life, hearing what the Spirit was saying...

Here is a picture of Jesus: Isaiah 50:4-5: "The Lord God has given Me the tongue of disciples, that I may know how to sustain the weary one with a word. He awakens Me morning by morning, He awakens My ear to listen as a disciple. The Lord has opened My ear, and I was not disobedient.

Once again The Lord has "joined" two things together in this text:

1. The Lord God has opened My ear
2. And I was not disobedient.

I cannot rigidly hold on to any pattern for living and worshipping. The Holy Spirit must be LORD over all our patterns and forms that we personally and corporately use for God.

He does not desire sacrifice, but obedience (more of this in the future).

*For behold, the winter is past,
The rain is over and gone.
The flowers have already appeared in the land
The time has arrived for pruning the vines,*

*AND THE VOICE OF THE TURTLEDOVE HAS BEEN HEARD IN OUR LAND.
May we too begin to hear the voice of the turtle dove in our lives?*

O Lord, raise up men and women, who are men and women of the Spirit in our generation! And make me one too!