

Lent Two- Wednesday, February 28 – Looking/Listening

In this second week of Lent we've been focusing on hearing God's voice, and looking for signs (to use John's ongoing phrase) of God's work. In worship this evening we'll learn about the voices we ought to listen to and those we should be wary of. We'll also learn about how important it is to act upon what we hear:

“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits . . . Everyone who hears these words of *mine* and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock” (Matthew 7:15-29).

Our recent Sunday-morning reading on John 13 emphasized the act following listening. Jesus reminds his disciples they are blessed not only for knowing how to serve, but by actually doing it (John 13:17). That was the focus of this past Friday's devotional too; developing resilience through action. The listening becomes easier when we act upon what we hear. It attunes us to listen in the future. Listening is a habit, and it takes practice.

Perhaps this is why Jesus' followers are a motley crew, as Saturday's devotional highlighted. They have a need for Jesus and have come to him time and again. They've practiced listening. Think about it -- those who assembled to hear Jesus' Sermon on the Mount were economically and spiritually impoverished (Matthew 5:3), grief-stricken (5:4), lowly (5:5), those seeking but denied justice (5:6), and those persecuted for following Jesus (5:10-11). They had great need of Christ and called upon him, and called upon him in truth (Psalm 145:18). I wonder, how might our listening lead to our calling? What do we need to hear about ourselves to call upon God?

We can easily focus on techniques to become better listeners. However, as the Sermon on the Mount and our devotional this week highlight, what is needed most is a heart for God. When our heart is curved not unto itself, or wrongfully attached to something that will never satisfy, but oriented rather to God then it can listen and receive.

And so our weekly devotion concluded yesterday with a guiding prayer, reminding us to ask, seek, and knock on Christ's door. God *does* listen. God *does* promise to be ever-near. And it pleases God when we ask for what we need, what we want, and for God to illuminate what we need when we're unable to see it. So as we move into our third week of Lent, a week focused on choices and challenges, how might you more consistently and intentionally seek God in prayer, expecting to hear from God in return?