

Rooted: How Does God Speak to Me?

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- **“How Does god Speak to us?”**
 - Seems like that assumes a lot of things:
 - We believe God *Does* speak to us
 - We believe God *Wants* to speak to us
 - We believe God speaks to us personally
 - If we do not believe these things, we certainly do not have an answer to “how does God speak to us”.
 - God is:
 - Powerful
 - All knowing
 - Loving
 - Faithful
 - Mighty
 - Able
 - True
 - Strong
 - Etc.
 - If I were like God and I was all of these things, I probably wouldn't want to talk to people like you and me.
- This morning we will change the question from “How does God speak to us” to “Does God want to speak with us”
 - Before we can know *how* God speaks to us, we need to make sure we believe that He speaks to us at all.
- Does God want to speak to me?
 - Short answer: Yes. - But let's go back to the beginning:
 - In the beginning there was God and creation
 - Adam and Eve
 - In the perfect harmony of life, God was in relationship with His creation and dwelled among them.

- **Genesis 3:10-13**
 - He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so, I hid." And he said, "who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?" The man said, "The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it." Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."
- Because of the sin that Adam and Eve committed they realized they were naked, they realized that they stood before God as sinners, who are indecent and broken.
- **Genesis 3:21-23:**
 - The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them. And the LORD God said, "The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever." So, the LORD God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken.
- So, when Adam and Eve sinned, they separated themselves and all creation from the presence and community where God dwelled
 - **God cannot dwell where sin is, and sin cannot dwell where God is.**
 - So, when Adam and Eve sinned, they separated themselves and all creation from the presence and community where God dwelled
 - From this point on, in order to be in the presence and community of God, we had to have Atonement for our Sins.
 - Punishment

- Sacrifice
 - Purity
 - Notice how immediately after the sin, when Adam and Eve realized they were naked, **Genesis 3:21** says:
 - **“The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them.”**
 - Immediately after the sin, the sacrifice of an animal, of God's creation, had to be given in order for them to be covered before God. Something that was not needed before sin entered the narrative.
- Atonement and punishment for sins was a theme that extended far past Genesis
 - Exodus and the Tabernacle
 - God instructed Moses to construct a tent (church) for the Israelites where God could once again dwell.
 - In the tabernacle there were different “Layers” of rooms, and the farther into the tabernacle you went, the more holy and divine the room was.
 - There was the outer room, which priests could go in and out of, but then there was another room known as the Holy of Holies.
 - Not just anyone could enter the Holy of Holies
 - The Holy of Holies was guarded by this Giant Veil.
 - Not like a bride's veil
 - The veil was 30ft by 30ft, the thickness of a grown mans hand, so like 4 inches thick. Made from the finest and strongest materials they had at the time.
 - If two horses ran full speed in opposite directions then this veil still wouldn't tear.

- The veil is meant to separate the divine from humanity. It was the barrier that separated God and us.

- To enter the Holy of holies:
 - Only the High Priest once a year
 - Had to sacrifice a Bull for their sins
 - Had to sacrifice 2 goats or more for the sins of their tribe and people.
 - Had to clean themselves thoroughly multiple times.
 - Had to follow the exact rules and order perfectly, or they would die from being in the presence of God.

- *Walk Back Stage*
 - I would make my sacrifices
 - I would clean
 - I would pray
 - I would be the most Holy I could be
 - And then MAYBE I could be in God's presence.

- All of the sacrifices and works I would have to do, or priests would have to do, was so they could atone for their sins and be in the presence of God. Because remember: **God cannot dwell where sin is, and sin cannot dwell where God is.**
 - See, when I am back here, sure, I am in the presence of God but I am also:
 - Separated from my true self
 - Had to kill God's creation
 - Am separated from other people in my community.

- To be with God always costs something. To be in the presence of God, we have to be made righteous before him.
- I know the original Question is “How does God Speak to us?”
 - Maybe you have always wondered if He wants to speak with you at all.
 - Maybe you have been unsure if He is ever even listening when you pray.
- Another thing I think a lot of us struggle with is the idea that God speaks to Me at all.
 - For a long time it was taught in Church history and the Roman Catholic Church that God doesn’t speak to us, instead God speaks to the church, and the church speaks to us.
 - This is not what scripture says.
- History Tangent: Martin Luther
 - 1517 Read **Romans 1:17:**
 - **For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last,^[a] just as it is written: “The righteous will live by faith.”**
 - This is NOT what the church was teaching and practicing throughout history.
 - In fact, your standing with God, was always determined by the church.
 - The church would even go as far as to sell you your salvation –Venmo me?
 - Martin Luther could see, from scripture, that this was not right. Faith is how we hear from God and know God. Faith is not
 - Your parents
 - The church
 - Your political party
 - Faith is a gift you have, where you put that faith is up to you.

- If you want to hear from God, and you want to lean into the God who wants to lean into you, you have to put your faith in Jesus.
 - Back from my tangent
- Surrounding the main question: How does God speak to us, we have now determined
 - God Wants to be in community with you
 - God wants to Speak and be in relationship with YOU specifically.
 - But we still have this one problem. This one barrier that keeps us from knowing God and being able to listen to what he wants for us.
 - Sin.
- I believe with everything that I am that in order to Understand how desperately God wants to be in community with us, we have to understand what Jesus did on the cross. So, we are going to switch gears right now and talk about Jesus.
 - For an incredibly long amount of time, people were relying on works, sacrifices, things we had to do to be in community with God... then Jesus.
 - In order to be in the presence of God, we have to be made Righteous.
 - What does that mean?
 - “The ability to stand before God without guilt.”
- Here is the bad news:
 - **Psalms 14:2-3**
 - **The LORD looks down from heaven on all mankind to see if there are any who understand, any who seek God. All have turned away, all have become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one.**
 - Not one person is righteous
 - Not one person out of all of us, all the people you know and I know, not a single one of them is able to stand before God without guilt.

- All of us deserve to die for our sin and brokenness
- Here is the good news:
 - Pulled over analogy:
 - **Justice: Getting what we deserve** (get Ticket)
 - **Mercy: Not getting what we deserve** (Don't get a ticket)
 - **Grace: Getting what we don't deserve.** (Get a Ticket and \$ to pay it)
 - God is just as picky as He has always been, He cannot be with sin. The difference now is He made the ultimate sacrifice instead of us having to make temporary ones.
 - God wanted to be in community with you so badly, that when He knew he couldn't be with us because God cannot be with Sin, He sent himself, through his son, to give us atonement for our sins once and for all.
 - Jesus was hung on the cross and killed. This man who was 100% man and 100% God, was made the ultimate sacrifice for you and me so that we could be in relationship with God.
 - Remember the veil? The one that was 30 ft long and 30 ft tall and indestructible? Listen to what Scripture says happened when Jesus died on the Cross: **Matthew 27:45-51a**
 - **From noon until three in the afternoon darkness came over all the land. About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?". When some of those standing there heard this, they said, "He's calling Elijah." Immediately one of them ran and got a sponge. He filled it with wine vinegar, put it on a staff, and offered it to Jesus to drink. The rest said, "Now leave him alone. Let's see if Elijah comes to save him." And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit. At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.**
 - The barrier that separated God and Man, the division between God's dwelling place and our own, was torn in two. As if the hands of God came

down in that moment and ripped it like a sheet of paper. That veil that horses could tear even a little, gone forever.

- No more:
 - Sacrifices
 - Things you have to do
 - Places you have to go
 - Perfection you have to achieve
 - You have been given a punishment, and it has been paid by the very same god who gave us that punishment. That is Grace. That is Love. That is a God who desires to be in community with you and me.
 - The only thing we have to do, the you have to do, is accept that Grace.
 - The temptation, when we hear that and accept Jesus is that the only gift is eternal life, which is a fantastic gift by the way.
 - But one of the main gifts that we receive when we accept the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus, is the ability to, without work, be in community with God.
 - You have a debt. You owe a punishment.
 - But it has been paid for. You just need to accept it. That it.
 - Be baptized and the Holy Spirit is placed within you. That place where God dwells, that Holy of Holies, the place where people would DIE trying to get into, it is now within you. The most Holy place, is within us when we accept Christ.
- So, let's go all the way back to the original question:
- How does God speak to us?

- We know He wants to, it's clear from the beginning of creation. He has always made some way for us to be with Him, until He sent Jesus and made it so we had to do nothing.
- It is clear that God loves us enough to make a way to be with him and know him... so why then do we feel like He isn't speaking to us?
 - Why do we feel God isn't answering our prayers?
 - I prayed that my family member wouldn't die, but they did
 - I prayed that the money would show up, and it didn't.
 - I prayed that I would feel comfort, and I am still uncomfortable
 - I prayed that I would feel the love of God and I don't.
- 2 things:
 - God is listening, and He is hearing your prayers, but His answer and ways are not always our answers and ways.
 - **Isaiah 55:8-9: "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the LORD. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.**
 - This is the answer scripture gives that most of us hate.
 - Being told: You do not understand or you wouldn't understand hurts.
 - **God does not change based off of our circumstances. (2x)**
 - Secondly: some of us have the practice of prayer down, and we wonder why we don't know how God speaks... and it's because we are not understanding or aware of how God's Power and Prayer work.
 - We have learned this morning that people have died trying to be in community with God, and here

we are with prayer as a resource in the palm of our hands. The word of God in the palm of our hands, and yet we treat it like it isn't among the greatest gifts we have.

- “Can I do anything?” ... “Just pray.”
 - “Just”?!
 - Just – tap into the dwelling place of God
 - Just- hand things and problems over to the creator of the universe
 - Just- be in community with the Lord
 - Just.

- How many people in here have a smart phone?
 - Phone analogy:
 - All resources at the palm of my hand
 - Any answers I need by asking siri to tell me
 - Communicate with all my people with three clicks, no matter where they are
 - I can learn about any subject and watch all my shows
 - But what happens when my phone dies...?
 - Its worthless
 - It's a paper weight
 - It isn't giving me answers or letting me talk to people or letting me watch my shows... its worthless.
 - Well, let me plug it in (just cable)
 - What's wrong with this?
 - No power? But I have the cable?
 - No answers? But I am praying?

- This Phone isn't going to turn on from the cable. It needs to be plugged in. It needs a power source.
 - Some of us, have the praying thing down. We send our needs and requests to God all of the time.... but we are not connecting to God in a relationship or in our lives.
 - Maybe you have tried praying, but you have never made Jesus your Lord and Savior and been baptized.
 - Have you ever tried calling someone on a dead phone?
 - It doesn't work.
 - You have to be plugged into a power source. You have to have Jesus in your life.
- Some of us have Jesus in our lives, but we do not pray. (Remove cable, just hold power block.)
 - How is this going to work? You know God but you choose not to connect with him. You choose not to dwell with Him, and your spiritual life stays dead. It stays empty.
- If you are wondering this morning the main question we started with: How does God speak to me? And you have no clue why you are not understanding Him, could it be safe to consider that the problem is on our end and not His? Do you think it is safe to assume there are things we need to do to hear God, not things He needs to do? Would you agree from all we have looked at this morning that He has done enough?
- I really dislike when people are judged for offering “basic Sunday School Answers”. Friends, they are basic Sunday school answers for a reason, the gospel is simple for us, and here is what you need to do to answer the big question “how does God speak to me?”:

1. **Actively pray.**

- a. Daily: Not just when you think you need it
 - b. *Go into how people tried for years to have what we have with God.*
 - c. Remember prayer is NOT power, prayer is the connection to power. Prayer is made powerful by God, not us.
 - d. Rhythm of Prayer
 - i. Maybe you do not know where to start in your prayer life to try to hear God speak.
 - ii. Each week of this series we have offered a different model of prayer. A model that you can begin implementing into your prayer life to experience God's presence and to be more intentional with how you connect with him.
 - iii. Would you consider, if you need to listen more actively to God, to use this scripture:
 - 1. **Isaiah 30:21 - Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, "This is the way; walk in it."**
 - a. Read this scripture as part of your daily prayer whenever you are needing to focus in on What you think God is trying to speak to you. Ask God to help you.
 - b. Allow this scripture to become a truth you turn to in times of doubt or confusion. Let it assure you at our God, no matter where you go (right or left) wants to guide your steps and be with you always.
- 2. **Actively read scripture**
 - a. **Hebrews 4:12 Says: 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.**
 - i. Discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart... That sounds to me like the word speaks answers. God speaks answers.
 - b. God often speaks through His word... but if you are only praying, and not reading scripture, why are you surprised you find no answers? He

has given them to you, just connect with His word and see for yourself. It's in here.

3. Accept Jesus as your Lord and Savior.

- a. You need to be made righteous in order to be in community with God.
 - i. **Acts 2:38 - Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."**
 1. The Gift of the presence of God in your life. The gift of having God intercede and advocate for you, if you have never heard God, having His spirit placed in your through baptism is the only place to start.
 - ii. God has offered you a bridge. A way to be made righteous, to be able to stand before him without guilt. If you don't feel connected with God, if you don't feel like He is with you, maybe it's because you need to be baptized. You need to, Today, make Jesus your Lord and Savior. Because that gift, it isn't expensive for you, it was everything to God though, and it is FOR you.
 - iii. If you need to be baptized today, which is you if you have not been baptized, then come find me or one of the other ministers after the service. The baptistry is ready and warm. Don't wait anymore. Don't push it off any longer. Make today the day you plug into the power source, and begin hearing from God. Because He desperately wants to be with you, and give you the gift of righteousness.