



When God Speaks

Dear friends, how many times have we heard the ‘voice of God’, no, I mean really heard! Let’s go to some examples from the Bible.

Jonah 1:1,2 “Now the word of the Lord came unto Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me.”

So, Jonah ‘heard’ God’s voice. But did he obey?

Jonah 1:3 “But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord...”

So in short, no, he didn’t obey and after some uncomfortable nights Jonah again hears God’s voice.

Jonah 3:1,2 “And the word of the Lord came unto Jonah the second time, saying, Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee.”

This time Jonah heeds the call.

Jonah 3:4 “And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.”

So he (Jonah) preaches the word of God.

Jonah 3:10 “And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not.”

But what is Jonah’s response to God’s repentance, “...and destroyed them not?”

Jonah 4:1 “But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry.”

He’s angry, but why?

Jonah 4:2 “And he prayed unto the Lord, and said, I pray thee, O Lord, was not this my saying, when I was yet in my country? Therefore I fled before unto Tarshish: for I

knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil.”

Jonah ‘heard’ the word of the Lord, he was a prophet of God so he was familiar with the Lord’s voice, he also knew that “...God was a gracious God, slow to anger and of great kindness...”, he was a reluctant prophet. But what friends, would have happened if he hadn’t gone? Would Nineveh have repented? No, of course not. Nineveh hadn’t even realised the extent of their sin let alone thought about repenting from it. No, they would have continued to sin until death swept them away. To save them Jesus sent Jonah, regardless of his (Jonah’s) reluctance.

Who else in the Bible can we draw an example from. Well, there’s Elijah.

1st Kings 18:1 “And it came to pass after many days, that the word of the Lord came to Elijah in the third year...”

The story we are looking at is in 1st Kings chapter 18. It is when Elijah challenged the prophets of Baal. We know the story, if not we can read it in the Bible. But Jesus proved Himself to be the true God of Israel and answered by fire. Now it was by the lack of rain that the country had come into this crisis and it would be by rain that the country would be released from the curse of sin. Elijah had said the rain will come and he had said this by the direction of God.

1st Kings 18:1 “...Go, shew thyself unto Ahab; and I will send rain upon the earth.”

1st Kings 18:41 “And Elijah said unto Ahab, Get thee up, eat and drink; for there is a sound of abundance of rain.”

Now Elijah, once again, was a prophet of God and knew God’s voice but what a test of faith for Elijah when:-

1st Kings 18:43 “And said to his servant, Go up now, look toward the sea. And he went up, and looked, and said, There is nothing. And he said, Go again seven times.”

Seven times, nothing, but:-

1st Kings 18:44 “And it came to pass at the seventh time, that he said, Behold, there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand. And he said, Go up, say unto Ahab, Prepare thy chariot, and get thee down, that the rain stop thee not.”

Now that’s faith! How many of us would still be pleading with the Lord after seven times and also make a statement to the king that a lot of rain is coming when only a small token of this is visible.

So what can we gain out of these examples? On one hand a reluctant prophet and on the other a prophet of immense faith. Well friends, Jesus is talking to us also, we may not be prophets but Jesus has promised:-

Isaiah 30:21 “And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it...”

That means us. Friends, we may not be prophets but we can still hear the voice of God. Jesus promised the disciples when He left earth that they would not be left alone, He would leave them ‘The Comforter’.

John 14:16 “And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;”

So what exactly is this ‘Comforter’ that Jesus is referring to and how is this beneficial to us?

John 14:26 “But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.”

Friends, we cannot deny it, we have all heard the impressions of the Holy Spirit, guiding us and helping us along, friends we have all heard the ‘voice of God’. (Please friends we are discussing the spirit world openly here and if you don't understand or just don't know about it please read about it in some of the other documents on this website.) So friends, what does this mean for us? How do these examples I have chosen (as there are many to choose from) relate to us today? Friends, what is common in these examples? Yes, the ‘people’ have gone astray and Jesus is attempting to bring them back into a knowledge of Him and in both examples the people repented, turned from their evil ways and turned back to our God of love. But friends the prophets are vastly different. Jonah was reluctant and angry while Elijah was obedient and faithful. Friends, in this world we are living in, the violence, the struggles for life, the pain and suffering, I believe are many ‘prophets’ for God. No, I’m not talking about the ones that draw attention to themselves and ‘preach’ loud pompous sermons, no friends, I’m talking about the quiet ones, the ones you would pass on the street and never know they were working for God. Friends, I am talking about you and me, yes, we have all heard God’s voice and we have at some time or another responded to it. I believe in this day and age, these times we are living in are harder than ever before and Jesus needs ‘prophets’ to help His people out. People are suffering friends, the times we are living in have many a person down on their knees pleading with heaven for respite. So friends, what kind of a ‘prophet’ are you? Are you a Jonah (reluctant) or a Elijah (faithful). Now don't get me wrong here Jonah did come round and preached the word of the Lord but he took his time about it and friends time is a commodity that we just don't have right now, when we hear the Holy Spirit prompting us we need to be Elijahs. Now I’m not saying here that we all need to straighten up and march around doing good deeds and announcing it to

everyone, no that's not God's style and I'm also not saying that everyone has to stand and help, Jesus understands, not everyone is in a position to help but friends, if you hear that voice please don't ignore it, please be a Elijah and step up to the plate. The violence in the world today friends is going to be rapidly checked, heaven is keeping a record of it all for the judgment day but as Christians we have to walk in the devil's playground and friends more than ever before Jesus needs help, people who are willing and able to step up to the plate and go into bat for Him and help these suffering and struggling people out. So please friends when or if you 'hear God speak' friends please, listen and answer.

There is, friends, another side of this letter that I want to touch on today and it doesn't involve God's 'prophets' so to speak, but it does involve God 'talking' to us. Let's go to a hypothetical allegory to explain, well hypothetical in theory but really true examples that are happening to many people today.

"Let's call her Sally, we have used that name before in other allegories so let's stick with it.

Sally was in what we would call a 'bad space'. Let's hear it from her but just to 'put you in the picture' we will need her background history and just what led to her ending up here. Sally was a Christian (friends, as I said before this document is targeted to the fully believing Christian but I pray it reaches everyone) and she loved her Saviour dearly. She was fully 'versed' in the concept of the Holy Spirit always ready to guide you and she 'thought' she was well grounded in her Saviour's love, but her faith was about to be severely put to the test. See friends, Sally was a 'lounge chair Christian', very comfortable, never had any 'problems' so to speak and as a result her faith had never been tested and when trial came she wasn't prepared.

Friends, let's digress here for a moment. I have mentioned in other documents on this website just how this 'faith' muscle works. You cannot strengthen it unless you use it and friends, you cannot use it if trial never comes. Now I'm not saying that Jesus 'creates' trials to test our faith, no, that is the devil's tactic but Jesus lets the devil play his games so we can build muscle (faith). I have mentioned how this works in other documents so we won't repeat it here, please, if you don't know or understand go to another of my documents and it will give you peace and understanding, (I recommend either 'How Can I Believe' or 'Learning To Trust Jesus').

So back to Sally. Sally was a teacher, kindergarten. She was dearly loved by her students and she loved her job. That is till one day when little Johnny walked into her classroom. Now little Johnny wasn't necessarily bad but his life so far hadn't been a 'bed of roses', oh no, far from it. See little Johnny's father was a alcoholic and often came home drunk and little Johnny, though he was supposed to be in bed, often witnessed his father's treatment to his mother. So understandably little Johnny was bitter and angry underneath his cheerful outward appearance. Now this was all something that Sally didn't know and when little Johnny often did come to school at times a little smelly and dishevelled Sally just put it down to the fact that his lot in life was a bit misfortunate, maybe bordering on poverty and

she made it her mission to ‘correct’ little Johnny not realising just how much pain little Johnny was actually bearing. So when Sally carelessly chided little Johnny, when other classmates could hear, and told him gently, or so she thought, that a bath would be in order little Johnny’s resentment meter started to rise. Oh dear, then came the morning of the all important test, important people were in the room monitoring just how well Sally had been doing as a teacher and as you can imagine Sally was nervous, she wanted them to have a good impression. Little Johnny had had a rather bad night, dad had come home late and well, we’ll draw the curtain on what exactly took place there, but little Johnny was tired and had done no study. Well as you can imagine when the test questions came to him he didn’t stand a chance, he was also more dishevelled than normal and became a ‘embarrassment’ to Sally. Once again in front of the whole class this time little Johnny was chastised and sent in shame to the ‘naughty corner’. As far as little Johnny was concerned it was now all out war and he set his sights to make Sally’s life miserable. Sally on the other hand didn’t understand what could have possibly gotten into little Johnny, after all wasn’t she giving him all the possible care and attention she could? often going out of her way to spend extra time with him? what could she have possibly done? no, it wasn’t her, something was wrong with little Johnny. Sally’s faith muscle was in for real testing and over the next few weeks it became more and more difficult to control her class as little Johnny was making life hell and disrupting the entire class. Sally dropped more and more into despair. She did try and reach out to Jesus but as she was a ‘lounge chair’ Christian and had never had any experience in putting her faith in Jesus she was having trouble ‘hearing Him’ (that’s Jesus) and Sally found herself in one of those vicious circles.

Let’s digress here again and explain just what these ‘circles’ are. They are the circle of circumstance that many people find themselves in for various reasons and seemingly have no way to break the cycle. These ‘circles’ my friends are very dangerous indeed and do have the power to make the mind break, literally. Many a person has lost their sanity because of these ‘circles of circumstance’, the mind just cannot cope with the level of pressure and it really does just break, but we will get deeper into this later in the letter, for now we just need to understand what these circles are and how they work. You’ve heard the expression ‘bound by circumstance’, let’s look it up. Firstly the definition of the word ‘bound’.

“Compelled or obliged to act, behave, or think in a particular way, as by duty, circumstance, or convention.”

And the definition of circumstance.

“A fact or event that makes a situation the way it is.”

So Sally is ‘bound’ by ‘circumstance’. These ‘circles’ are the situations surrounding us that we cannot control and have a ‘binding’ effect on us, we are ‘bound’ to traverse this path because of the situations surrounding us. Friends, these circles can be vicious, but let’s go back to Sally.

The circle begins. Sally's going round in a circle, you know - bad day, (thanks to little Johnny) broken down, (crying in despair) expecting change (after praying to Jesus) - didn't happen, broken again, (in despair) don't want to do it all again, (can't face tomorrow) don't know why or what Jesus is doing, (why hasn't He (Jesus) made little Johnny good). Gets some reassurance, a solution maybe, hope, peace for a season, (doesn't work, little Johnny is worse than ever) then straight back to the start and she does it all over again, just like a circle - it doesn't end - round and round she goes.

Well friends, there are two ways this can end and the circle gets broken, one - Sally breaks, her spirit is crushed and her will power and desire to carry on is broken beyond repair (I mean how many times can she raise her hope for tomorrow, believing, only to have them crushed, despair), her mind finally telling her not to hope at all. Or two - heaven breaks the circle, and faith becomes sight.

Sally is despondent, she feels alone and she tells herself that she has worked so hard and for what? The pain runs deep and Sally sinks further into despair and the circle tightens around her like a noose. She questions "where is her Saviour now?" Unbeknownst to Sally Jesus is right beside her, she just needs to turn to Him in prayer and cast herself upon His mercy, compassion and guidance, she also needs to realise that the devil is in the room and is pushing Sally deeper and deeper into despair in a circle she cannot control - or can she? Sally's mind is in a turmoil and tears are threatening to take control again, she can't hope anything is going to change, and her pain just runs deep, she has failed - or so the devil is telling her.

See friends, the devil is in the detail here and he is driving Sally to destruction, he is the one telling her "there is no hope" and "she has worked for nothing". He is also telling Sally that Jesus has left her and isn't helping, I mean why isn't He making little Johnny be good? The devil is out for the destruction of all but let's see how this pans out for Sally.

But somewhere deep inside Sally she knows Jesus wouldn't abandon her, she knows He is beside her, waiting in the wings for her to 'come round' and fall into His embrace. She knows He wouldn't let her fall completely and she knows He would save her and she seems to hear Jesus saying "My grace is sufficient for you". Sally draws peace from this and starts to look for answers.

She first looks into just what 'games' her mind is playing with her. She realises now that the devil is in this 'circle' and he is playing a major part in bringing her down, she also realises that Jesus is in the circle too and He is playing a major part in lifting her up. So just what is the mind doing in all of this with the battle raging so fiercely?

Friends, let's digress again, I have mentioned in other documents (Human Nature) just how the mind works but let's have a refresher here as it is very relevant to this document.

See this is how the mind works. When a tragedy, pain or trauma happens the mind automatically looks for something to blame it on. Take for example a broken arm, the

physical pain has been caused by the broken arm but it was the accident that caused it, therefore the mind blames the accident. More intense trauma goes deeper. Take for example a cancer survivor, their physical pain for instance was caused by the chemotherapy therefore their mind blames the cancer, this is the mind's natural defence mechanism, it needs to find something to 'pin' the trauma on, something to blame. This is for the protection of our very sanity.

Now in real time this 'protection' imbedded in human nature is for our benefit. See the human nature will blame whatever it sees as the cause, this will steady the mind and allow it to grab hold of a foundation. Then with time, the right environment, maybe counselling and sometimes medication the mind will heal and understanding and reason will be enough to stabilise the mind and return it to its natural state. So this human nature trait is a blessing.

Now in Sally's case she has worked herself up into a really distressed state and her mind has gone into 'lockdown' mode, it is desperately searching for reasons and solutions and it is blaming little Johnny, hence the next part of the cycle - tears are gone and anger takes their place. Sally is angry and it is all little Johnny's fault. Sally decides to confront little Johnny's mother too, 'lay it out straight'. But something stops her before she reaches the door, oh dear, little Johnny's father is home early and Sally can clearly hear the ruckus going on inside. Tears fill her eyes. It's not little Johnny's fault, it's hers, she realises that Jesus in His compassion and mercy has brought her to the house at the exact moment the ruckus occurred so she could witness the truth of what is going on. Sally by now is blinded by her own tears as she realises the pain and embarrassment she must have caused little Johnny with her careless words and she is filled with remorse. Suddenly, like a lightning bolt from heaven, Sally's 'circle of circumstance' is broken and for the first time in a long time Sally feels free. She wipes the tears from her eyes and there in the street Sally drops to her knees and thanks Jesus for helping her to 'see the light', the truth surrounding little Johnny. She realises that for the first time she has had her faith muscle tested, but she also feels ever the stronger for it, she feels closer to Jesus and she is more reliant on His strength and less on her own. Thanking heaven for the insight Sally arises from her knees and sets about to make things right. Tomorrow would be different Sally knew and for the first time in a long time Sally felt release and relief. She knew Jesus had walked her through the darkness of the night. She understood that the devil had been in the detail trying to destroy her but Jesus had come to the rescue and had saved her from his (Satan's) grasp. She felt closer to her Saviour than ever before and she knew the circle had been broken by Him. She slipped her hand into the hand of her Saviour Jesus Christ and ever vowed to walk by His side.

Friends, this is the end of Sally's allegory but there are many more out there and maybe, just maybe, one of them may be yours? Friends, it is vital we listen when Jesus speaks. He loves us dearly and He is ever out to save us from the devil's snare. Yes sometimes He speaks in warning but friends more often it is in love, guiding us through this path we tread, helping us to avoid the devil's pitfalls and tenderly leading us to heaven.

Friends, when God speaks please listen, let's close with that beautiful twenty third psalm and remember friends, the Lord is always our Shepherd.

Psalms 23:1-6 "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever."

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