



# EMPOWERED LIVING LIKE JESUS DID

## Empowered To Hear God's Voice

**Date:** Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> March

**Speaker:** Andrew and Rosie McNeil

**Key Verses:** Acts 16:1-10, John 14:23-26

### Talk Summary:

Hearing God's voice is the key experience of Christianity. The Holy Spirit wants to lead us. In fact, it really was the central prayer of Judaism:

"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one." - Deut. 6:4

"Hear, O my people, and I will warn you—if you would but listen to me, O Israel!" - Ps 81:8-9

Over and over in the scriptures we see that it's God's heart that people hear His voice. Jesus talks about it. In John 10 Jesus describes Himself as the good shepherd. God's relationship with us is like that of a good shepherd and his sheep. Over and over in John 10 Jesus talks about hearing God's voice. If you want to grow as a follower of Jesus there are 2 really good questions that you can ask yourself:

1. What has God been saying to me lately?
2. So, what am I going to do about that?

Steve Nicholson said: "The heart and soul of the Christian life is learning to hear God's voice and then developing the courage to do what He tells you to do." God wants to guide us in and through every life stage.

Have a look at Acts 16:1-10.

If God is speaking and if God desires to speak to you, do you want to hear Him?

How do we develop a willingness and an ability to listen to God?

1. Be willing to listen to Him about current issues of obedience (v 1 - 3)

What things is the Holy Spirit highlighting to you that God might want you to look at with Him? Jesus's love language is obedience. See John 14 v 23 - 26

## 2. Take time to listen to God (v 6)

Paul made time in his life to actually hear God and he had dreams about where to go next, which cities to travel to. Paul was setting aside the time to listen and God is infinitely creative in the way that He speaks. Sometimes our lives are so full we don't have time to listen to God. Everywhere we turn we have a screen, we have communication coming in, 1000 apps where we can talk to people. It's like constant bombardment - we never make time to listen. So how do we do that?

- Journaling
- Fasting
- Silence and solitude

Check out Ruth Haley Barton - Silence and Solitude and Sacred Rhythms and John Ortberg - Soul keeping

As you spend time alone with Him, the hunger to do that more will grow. Henry Nouwen said this...

“Every time you listen with great attentiveness to the voice that calls you the Beloved, you will discover within yourself a desire to hear that voice linger and more deeply. It is like discovering a well in the desert. Once you have touched wet ground, you want to dig deeper.”

## 3. Get to know what God sounds like (v 7)

Paul knew what God's voice would sound like. He was so acquainted with God that he knew His voice for sure. In v 6 it says the Holy Spirit kept them from preaching and in v 7 it says the Spirit of Jesus wouldn't allow them to go in. It's all the same thing - Father God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, they all communicate the exact same things. He speaks truth full of grace. God's voice is always consistent. So if you want to get to know God's voice, spend lots of time reading your Bible. What did He say, how did He work? And be connected. In community we discern together - if we feel like God is leading us to do something, we share it open handedly and we discern together in our family, or in the staff team or in church. Because if what you're sensing is really God, He's big enough to speak to others.

## 4. Have confidence that God is committed to speak to you (v 10)

You can have confidence - If you are asking to hear Him, you're not going to miss it. Most of the time He is way more committed to speaking to us than we often are to listening to Him! The reason I have confidence that I'm not going to miss God's will for my life isn't because I'm so good at finding it, but because He's so good at revealing Himself. If you really want to know God's will for your life, He will show you, if you stay in the scriptures and stick with other people who are following God. We can be confident in this because He leads us like a shepherd. He doesn't run on ahead of the sheep, He leads gently, making sure the sheep know where to go. No shepherd wears camouflage and expects the sheep to hunt around to find him. He's a good shepherd who will defend His flock and protect them from going the wrong way.

## 5. Have confidence you've heard from God even when times are tough (v 16 - 23)

You might feel like God's leading you and then it gets tough and you wonder if God was leading you. Because somehow we think that we shouldn't have any difficulty if we're following Him. That's not in the Bible. It says in the Bible, in John 16 v 33, “In this world you will have trouble.” Don't doubt in the dark what God told you in the light. If you're walking in the light and trying to follow God by staying close and making decisions in community and all of a sudden it gets hard, realise this is normal. Life isn't supposed to be just about our comfort. We're following a man who gave Himself to death on a cross so we could have relationship with His Father. Let's commit ourselves to hearing God's voice afresh.

## **Worship**

*Worship is not just singing, it is thanking God for who he is and what he has done and is lived out through a life of trusting obedience. Discussing this together is an act of worship.*

*(Small group worship resources can be found at [bvc.so/sgworship](http://bvc.so/sgworship))*

- What are you thankful for this week?
- Where has God been at work in your life?
- When have you taken risks in faith and obedience this week?

*If you have a time of singing you can skip the above questions but please do ask this question each week:*

- What has God been speaking to you about this week? *(Go around the group quickly don't spend a long time on it)*

### **Discussion Questions (choose some which are most relevant to your group)**

- If God desires to speak to you, do you want to hear Him?
  - If not, what are the barriers for you?
- Share a moment when you really heard God speak to you?
- How easy do you find it to believe that God really is good?
- Are you giving God full obedience right now?
  - Right now in your life is there anything God might be speaking to you about to grow?
- How are you doing with making time to listen to God?
  - What helps with that?
  - What gets in the way?
- How do you get on with journaling, fasting and silence and solitude?
  - Share your experience of these.

**Witness** - *How would you share what you have learned with a non-church friend?*

We want to be investing in authentic relationships with those who don't know Jesus yet and inviting them to anything where they might meet other Christians and Jesus. Pick one of the below each week:

- How would you share what you have learned with a non-church friend?
- What church events coming up would your friends appreciate an invitation to?
  - Upcoming Events (*go to [bvc.so/whats-on](http://bvc.so/whats-on) for details*)
    - Worship Circle – 9<sup>th</sup> April
    - Young Adults Night – 9<sup>th</sup> April