



How to Hear God
Women's Discipleship Class – October 26, 2017

Verses Covered This Week

Daniel 9:20 – 22

Acts 8:26 – 29

Genesis 37:5 – 6

Matthew 2:12 – 14

Acts 16:9

Acts 11:27 – 28

Acts 9:15 – 17

Mark 6:49

1 Kings 19:9 – 14

Romans 10:17

Luke 24

There are different ways that God speaks in scripture. I want us to walk through some of those and then we'll come back to how to hear the Spirit on a personal level. When He's loud and when He's not. First place we're going to look. God does speak through angels. Look at Daniel 9.2. We're just going to look at a few examples and then I will address some issues with those examples that are a little concerning, particularly when we come to the next thing. Look up Daniel. We'll come back to this when we come to talk about angels and demons. He says:

²⁰Now while I was speaking and praying, confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the Lord my God in behalf of the holy mountain of God, ²¹while I was still speaking in prayer, then the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision previously, came to me in my extreme weariness about the time of the evening offering. ²²He gave me instruction and talked with me,

So obviously you have this reference point where you have the angel, Gabriel. Who are the only two angels named in the Bible? Michael and Gabriel.

Angels
Daniel 9:20-23 Gabriel

What's Michael's job according to the Old Testament? Protect Israel. He probably, as best we can understand, took Satan's place. But that's for another day. Then I want you to go to Acts.

Now there's a tendency to think that what happened with Daniel is simply an Old Testament thing because the Bible's not been written; which is what a lot of people will say. But I want you to notice something. Acts 8:26 – 29.

Angels
Daniel 9:20-23 Gabriel
Acts 8:26-29 Angel/H.S.

I want you to remember, we're not going to go there, but there's a verse in Hebrews 13:2 that says:

².....we have entertained sometimes angels unawares.

So it's interesting to me because I think that may have bearing here. But look at Acts 8. Now remember this is when Philip is told to leave the revival, go to the middle of nowhere, and he's really not told what's coming, he winds up talking to the Ethiopian eunuch who was reading Isaiah 53, and leading him to Christ. But look in chapter 8, verse 26:

²⁶But an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip saying.....

But then look in verse 29:

²⁹Then the Spirit said to Philip, "God up and join this chariot."

So you have an interesting thing here. You have an angel and you have the Holy Spirit both in the same moment. So you have in the very same thing, it's not a different story, they're both relating Philip going out into the middle of nowhere, but you have an angel saying something to him. So you have two things here. You have in the same experience an angel and the Holy Spirit. My question is; I wonder, it's so innocuous the way it's written, I wonder if it's written for us? I wonder if Philip knew an angel had spoken to him. I think there maybe times for us when we have an impression or a thought and the Holy Spirit may be speaking, it may also be an angel. So they may actually work in our lives when we don't see that. But obviously in the same experience inside the New Testament era of the Holy Spirit, it's weird to me that you have an angel and the Holy Spirit in the very same experience speaking. So obviously you can hear from God via an angel.

Number two; go to Genesis 37. Now we want to be careful here. Dreams. We're going to look at a couple things again that play out. We have the brat.

⁵Then Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him even more.

⁶He said to them, "Please listen to this dream which I have had;

So he has this dream. Now the dream, and here's the key for me, it has clarity.

Dreams
Gen 37 - Clarity

It has such clarity that he gets it immediately, they get it, and he says to them, "Hey! You're going to bow down to me." So there's great understanding. There's no need for interpretation here. He gets it.

Now look at Matthew 2:12 – 14. We're obviously in the birth of Christ issue. Now this is Joseph, father of Jesus, he will obviously die before Jesus after Jesus hits twelve and before he hits 30. He doesn't live the entire time of Christ's life. It says:

¹²And having been warned by God in a dream not to return to Herod, the magi left for their own country by another way. ¹³Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream

So we have two things here. We have a dream, then we have an angel in the dream.

Dreams
Gen 37 - Clarity
Mt 2:12-14 Dream / Angel dream

So He has this dream similar to Joseph. It's very clear. He doesn't have to have it interpreted, it's clear, here's the deal. Now look at Acts 16. Because some smart person is going to say, "Well, Jesus has just come, the Bible hasn't been written, so really this no longer has legitimacy." Look at Acts 16:9. This is in the section where God moves the Gospel toward us, away from the Middle East.

⁸and passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas. ⁹A vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Macedonia was standing and appealing to him, and saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." ¹⁰When he had seen the vision, immediately they head out.

The vision in verse 9 is probably just a metaphor for a dream.

Dreams
Gen 37 - Clarity
Mt 2:12-14 Dream / Angel dream
Acts 16:9 - Dream

In verse 10 when Paul had seen the vision, this is where Luke joins Paul. So we have a vision in the night which is basically, again, a metaphor for a dream. So obviously you have Old Testament before Christ, during Christ, and post-Christ that God uses a dream to speak. I really don't have any problem with that. I think you have to be really, really careful with this. For me, I think the answer really hangs on clarity. If you have to try to interpret your dream, then it's probably

something to ignore. I had a lady telling me the other day, as a matter of fact, I was talking to her about her daughter who had come in to see me and her daughter had shared with me what we had talked about and she was telling me that her daughter had a dream. In the dream Jesus said, “You need to go to this particular person.” She went to that person in response to the dream and it healed an issue that we had been discussing in the office. So I still think that God can speak through dreams. But, again, I think you’ve got to be very, very, very careful. I do know another young girl, she’s moved to another state now, but she used to come into my office virtually once a month with a couple of dreams she had and how to interpret those dreams. Now when you start having to interpret a dream, seriously, I want you to think “bad pizza”. That’s going to be your explanation for the dream.

I dream every night. I don’t sleep well, I never have, I go through dreams. As a matter of fact, I actually have the ability to restart the dream. So I am beyond bizarre. But God has never spoken to me this way. But obviously you have New Testament and Biblical basis, so if God speaks to you in a dream, that’s certainly legitimate, but I think you need to be careful. It is, by the way, the means by which He’s doing mission work in the 10/40 window with Iran, Iraq, North Korea, some of the countries we just can’t get into. There are numerous stories now of people having a dream where they see Jesus and He says, “Find my word.” And we’re bringing Bibles in and people are being impacted. So He is still doing this in evangelism and obviously there is some direction in your life that may occur through this. But seriously, don’t call me to interpret the dream. I can’t and if I do interpret it, it will mean you need to give more money to the church.

Sometimes He’s going to speak to you through other people. Look at Acts 11:27 – 28.

²⁷Now in these days prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. ²⁸One of them named Agabus stood up and foretold by the Spirit there would be a great famine all over the world.

And so sure enough, that happens. Now look at Acts 9:15 – 17. Listen to what he says. God comes to Ananias, He has blinded Paul, and he says:

¹⁵But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to carry My name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel; ¹⁶I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of My name.” ¹⁷So Ananias departed and entered the house, laying his hands on him, he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road by which you came, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and you may be filled with the Holy Spirit.”

We won’t go here, but if you read the last verse of the book of James, chapter 5, it talks about the fact that those that pull people back from sin cover a multitude of sins. So obviously God can send other people.

This is another place where I would be really careful.

Other people
Acts 11:22-28, 9:15-17, James 5

There are people that really believe they should speak into your life because that's what they like to do. I'm always concerned when somebody tells me they have the gift of discernment and they start telling me what I should and shouldn't do as a pastor. This is particularly difficult for pastors because everybody grew up under a certain pastor and they want you to reflect the pastor they grew up under. They want you to dress that way and preach that way and act that way. And so you have to be really careful. But God can send other people into your life at different moments to speak. When someone does come to you and says, "Hey, God sent me. I really felt impressed."

I had been here about, I guess a month, and it's a great church, but I'd been here about a month and I had this eerie feeling after I preached the 11 o'clock worship, that I wasn't supposed to be here. So I went back home, I didn't tell my wife, I went up to the office and I began to pray and felt God tell me that I needed to go to Midland and talk to my best friend in the ministry at that time, Dennis Defano, about something; I didn't know what it was. So I went home and told my wife. I knew she wouldn't buy it, because Dennis and I played a lot of golf together and I knew she figured, "Yeah, we have no money and this guy wants to go to Midland and play golf with his friend." So I went home and told her and she said, "You know, I really think you need to go." And so I wound up going up there. On the way there, God told me that Dennis was in love with another woman besides his wife and that I was going to be his Nathan. Those are the two things He told me on the way on the plane. So I flew up on a Wednesday and I called Dennis and I said, "Hey man, I'm in town. Can I see you after church tonight?" And he said, "Yeah." That was the extent of the conversation right there. That was the whole thing. And so his wife came in after I got off the phone and she said, "Who was that?" And he said, "It was Chris." And she said, "So is he coming up to encourage you?" And he said, "No. He's coming to be my Nathan." So I stepped into his office that night, shared with him, I said, "Look, God told me you're in love with another woman, not your wife. We've got to make a phone call to her and you've got to fix this with your wife." So we did that; but it's rare. I don't generally have that even in my own life. But there will be times when God will speak to you through other people. So I don't think you ever take someone and just ignore them. I do think you always govern it with Scripture and govern it with legitimacy in your life. I think there are times that He does that.

Now one last thing before we move on. He also speaks through circumstances. Look at Mark 6:49.

⁴⁹When they saw Him walking on the sea, they thought it was a ghost, and cried out;

So there's this circumstance in their life. At that point the circumstance is used to reach them and to speak to them.

There will be circumstances that I think will guide your life at times.

Angels

Daniel 9:20-23 Gabriel

Acts 8:26-29 Angel/H.S.

Dreams

Gen 37 - Clarity

Mt 2:12-14 Dream / Angel dream

Acts 16:9 - Dream

Mark 6

Circumstance

Exodus 3
Acts 9

I had a young couple in Midland. He was making an enormous amount of money in the oilfield. He was a young guy. He and his wife had this really nice home, no children, and if you know anything, it's not your wife that takes your money, it's your children. They're the black hole of finances. And for those of you that still have them at home and think one day they'll go away and they don't cost anything, I'm so sorry that's just not true. But this kid and his wife were making a lot of money. He comes to me in the office one day and he sits down and he says, "Look, I'm really struggling." He sold chemicals in the oilfield and he said, "All my competitors are bringing in cases of scotch and all this stuff to kind of grease the rails. I just don't think as a Christian that I can do that." So he wound up, because of that circumstance, leaving the oilfield, but wound up teaching in school. He became a phenomenal minister through his teaching ministry. And so I think that circumstance that occurred in his life, obviously no dream came to him, no other people came to him, no angel came to him, but God did use a particular circumstance that kind of pushed him out and put him in another setting. So I think sometimes circumstances are real key. So I think God can speak to you through all these different ways. For me, though, it's not the main method of speaking.

But there is a different method and I think it's the main way He speaks to you. John Bisagno used to call it a holy hunch. I think you're going to get spoken to mainly, and again these are options, but these are probably, to me, the exceptions. I think the main way He is going to speak to you is through the Holy Spirit's, for me it's three ways. You're going to have days you pick this up and you read it and you go, "OK. That is right. I need to go home and forgive my husband's who's wonderful and perfect and I'm a wicked evil person and I need to go home and forgive him." You're going to read the Bible. It's going to speak to you. There are going to be times when the Holy Spirit speaks to you personally. Then there are going to be times when there's a combination. Now I want you to go, I want you to understand because what everybody wants is Exodus 3 and Acts 9. What's Exodus 3? What happens there? Burning bush. Moses sees the bush burning, he turns aside, God says, "Take your shoes off. You're on holy ground." At which point God utters a call to him. You have Paul, in Acts 9, with this loud vision. He's walking along, he's got papers to bring Christians back from Damascus to Jerusalem to kill. And God just breaks him. He looks up, he has this blinding light. It's interesting in the Greek in Acts it indicates that everybody there heard a voice, but he's the only one that understood it. And so he hears this call, he goes home, he's blind for three days. These are loud. Most people want a loud message from God. They want an angel, a big dream, they want something loud.

These are the only two loud moments in Scripture. They're not good. Where is Moses in Exodus 3? He's in Midian. What has he done? He killed somebody. He is outside of where God wants him. What's Paul doing? Bringing Christians back to kill them. I don't think God is ever loud until you're in a place where you can't hear Him unless He's loud. My call was extremely loud, but again, it was because I'd been saved a year before, we'd moved from Louisiana to Alabama, didn't get involved in church, did no discipleship except through the Billy Graham program. I walked away, fell away from Christ and so my calling was extremely loud because I was outside the will of God. If you have a loud statement from God, it's probably because there's something in your life that isn't right. This is not the way He's going to speak to you. Now go with me to 1 Kings 19:9 - 14. We'll go to the Old Testament. This is how he's going to do it. This is one of his best prophets. He has fled Jezebel because he's just killed the 450 prophets on Mt Carmel. He's running away from the queen because she is crazy.

⁹Then he came Old Testament a cave and lodged in it; and behold, the word of the Lord came to him, and He said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" ¹⁰He said, "I have been very zealous for the Lord, the God of hosts; for the sons of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars and killed Your prophets with the sword. And I alone am left; and they seek my life, to take it away." ¹¹So He said, "Go forth and stand on the mountain before the Lord." And behold, the Lord was passing by! And a great and strong wind was rending the mountains and breaking in pieces the rocks before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind. And after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. ¹²After the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a sound of a low whisper. ¹³When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood in the entrance of the cave.

It's interesting to me. He doesn't come out for anything loud. He hears a low whisper. He comes out, why? Because he recognized the whisper. This is primarily the way He is going to speak to you. He is going to speak to you in a low, quiet whisper. Look at Philippians 4:6 - 7. We should be familiar with this verse. He says:

⁶Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

This has been the main key in my life. He says His peace will guard, that's the Greek word that's used for guarding a prison. Will guard, it will protect, your heart and your mind. It will protect your emotion and your intellect from making the wrong decision.

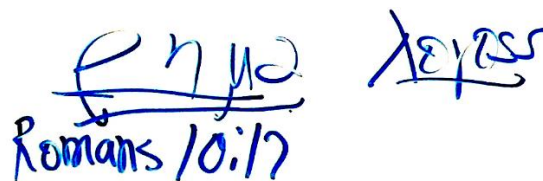
1 Kings 19:9-14
Phil 4:6-7
peace guard
heart mind
emotion intellect

God's peace, virtually every decision in my life has been rooted out of, I either had a peace or I had a terrible unrest. It was interesting for me when God spoke to me to go see Dennis, I had a terrible unrest when I got home. When I got home and discovered what I should do, this overwhelming peace came on me, "That is what I want you to do." And that has been my experience. He'll start me with an unrest and then all of a sudden, what winds up happening is I go through, "Do you want me to do this, this, this, this, this?" And

then once I hit on it, there's this peace that comes in and then I realize, OK. And so that peace guards. This has been the key point for me. And I think this is the deal.

When I came here 31 years ago, we were in a church in Midland, we'd been there 4 ½ years; just an outstanding church. Phenomenal church. The last year, I'm sitting on the rostrum, and this is the old days when you had to sit on stage. And I'm sitting on the stage in Midland, looking out at these people I absolutely love. I know grandkids names. I mean it's an idyllic situation. And all of a sudden I have this feeling; this is not my church anymore. I have this tremendous unrest as I sit in the pulpit. This is no longer my church. So we go to Korea, one other guy from Midland with me, and 86 pastors were with me in South Korea trying to start churches. We were there for three weeks. So my wife calls me one night and she goes, "Hey, some church from Bryan called Central; they want to talk to you." I said, "Well, OK, tell them I'll talk to them when I get back." But I began to talk to a couple of the guys on the trip. I said, "Does anybody know about this church?" And I talked to four or five guys that knew about it and every single one of them said the same two things. They said, "Yeah, we know about it. It's dead and it's a preacher-killer." Every guy that goes there winds up hating it. I said, "Well, praise God." So at this point I'm like, "Yeah, I shouldn't have told them I'd talk to them." We get down here and sure enough I mean it really is, I don't know how to say this other than say it really was pretty dead. The people were very nice, but I remember they brought us down and we're walking up the stairs in the Hilton after meeting with them, and my wife looks at me on the way up and she says, "Well this was fun. When are we going home?" But we prayed about it and had this tremendous peace, even though the church, on paper it looked like it was going to be a nightmare, had this tremendous peace that this was where we were supposed to be and it turns out to be the purpose of my life based on Jeremiah 1. So this is, for me, the key. I think you'll have an unrest and a peace. He'll vacillate you between those two. So that when the peace comes you go, "OK." It's what Bisagno would call a holy hunch.

So I said there were three ways to get Him to speak to you, right. He's going to speak to you through the Word, He's going to speak to you through this peace, the other thing that's going to happen is He's going to combine them. Now there are two Greek words. There is *rhéma* and there is *logos*.



The image shows two handwritten Greek words in blue ink. The word on the left is 'ῥῆμα' (Rhema) and the word on the right is 'λόγος' (Logos). Below the 'ῥῆμα' word, the text 'Romans 10:17' is written in blue ink.

Now they're synonyms and a lot of times synonyms bleed into each other. But there is a pretty clear distinction. *Rhéma* is generally the word that is spoken, uttered loud, out loud. *Logos* is generally the written word or the expressed idea in the word. That's why Jesus is called *Logos*. He's going to, at times, combine these two. This is the Scripture. This is His Spirit speaking to you, but there will be times when these two things will combine and they will create in your life what you will determine are called life verses. There's the old phrase where, and I think we've all had this happen, where I read something and instead of just reading it, it jumps off the page at me. I think that's when *logos* and *rhéma* come together.

Let me show you what I'm talking about. Go to Romans 10:17. Let me show you something. We all know this, right.

¹⁷So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

He uses *rhéma* here. He doesn't use *logos*. It comes through the spoken utterance about Christ. In other words, you're not saved unless.... Here's the deal. You can read the *logos* about Christ by picking up the New Testament. But until the Holy Spirit brings *rhéma* to you, until He speaks that word into your heart, which is what is being said in Romans 10:17, you can't be saved. This is what Jesus meant in Matthew 16 when He said, "Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father in heaven." Jesus was the *logos*, Peter understood what He was saying, but it was the *rhéma* of God that made Peter understand in Matthew 16, "You're the Christ, the Son of the Living God." There will be times when these two things combine and they create a life verse for you.

Look at Luke 24 and I think when they do combine, it's because something unique, I would even, if I were you, journal, particularly these. Because obviously when He combines both, there's something significant in your life. Now look at Luke 24. Now this is after the resurrection, He's got two guys who don't know who Jesus is, they said, "Oh, man, we've had all these bad things happen to us. We thought Jesus was a guy and He's not, and we don't know what to do." Look in Luke 24:25. I love this.

²⁵And He said to them, "O foolish ones and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken!

Now is that *logos* or *rhéma*? *Logos*. It's the written word. All that the prophets have spoken. That's all the Old Testament. So He says, "OK. We've got the *logos*."

²⁶Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into His glory?"

²⁷Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.

So He walks them through the *logos*, right. Now look at verse 32.

³²They said to each other, "Did not our hearts burn within us while He talked to us on the road, while He opened to us the Scriptures?"

I think that burning is the *rhéma*. I think Jesus walked them through the *logos* and the Holy Spirit took that *logos* and burned it into their hearts. And I think if you ask those guys, here's a set of their life verses for them.

So I think there are different ways God going to speak to you. You need to be open to those. But I think primarily this is going to be your key. I think it's the still, small voice.

Life Verses
 Angels
 Daniel 9:20-23 Gabriel
 Acts 8:26-29 Angel/H.S.
 I Kings 19:9-14 Dreams
 Gen 37 - Clarity
 Phil 4:6-7
 Mt 2:12-14 Dream / Angel dream
 Acts 16:9 - Dream
 peace, glad, heart, mind, emotion, intellect
 Other people
 Acts 11:27-28, 9:15-17, James 5
 Romans 10:17
 Mark 6
 Circumstance
 Exodus 3
 Acts 9
 loud

So there are certain things you need to do to enhance the ability to sense His peace and His unrest. Next Thursday morning we're going to look at the things we need to do to enhance that. Because there are certain things you need to do. Most of you in this society don't experience this anymore. The peace is not guarding your heart because of this. So we're going to look next week at some methods we can employ to enhance our ability for God's peace to reign on us so that we can hear His voice. These are going to be to me the exceptions. This is the rule. That's what Philippians 4 is. I think it's got to be a gentle, quiet, and there will be times when *rhéma* and *logos* hit together.

I was preaching my third sermon in Mississippi as a kid and I went into my first sermon terrified, and God really blessed, so I went into my second sermon cocky. And God doesn't bless when you're cocky. So I went in, completely failed, so at this point, I'm young, I'm trying to figure it out, I figure "Oh man, I missed the call." I mean you just get into these stupid moments. And so I'm preaching, as a matter of fact this is, not this moment, but this is how I met my wife. But at my college, Mississippi College, they had BSU preaching teams and we would take over a church for a Sunday. They'd send us out and we'd have a preacher, a music guy, testimony person, and pianist. So I get away from them and I get alone and I start praying. And I pray all afternoon and finally about two hours before the evening service, God gives me this verse out of Joshua 1 and He did a *rhéma* and a *logos* because it's still today, for me, a Joshua 1 verse. When I'm still scared on Sunday mornings it's one of the verses I go to. But it was I will never leave you or forsake you. And so I could have read it, if you'd asked me, I probably maybe knew where it was, but it became an intense part of my life when this occurred. And I think these two things occurring are what create this. And these are the verses that you will generally peg your life around.

So I think this is the prime way He speaks to you. I think it's got to be a still, quiet voice. I think you've got to learn to listen. And we're going to talk next week about the things that enhance your ability to hear that voice. He can speak these other ways, but I think they're the exception. And again, if you have a dream and it's not clear, flush it.

No questions this week.