

40 Days of Prayer and Fasting

October 20th

Daily Devotional #20

We Are in the Season of Listening

As We Ask, "What Is GOD Preparing Us/for Us to Do?"

An introduction to "Listening" (part 1 of 3)...

⁵ *While he was still speaking, a bright cloud enveloped them, and a voice from the cloud said,*

*"This is My Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased. **Listen to Him!**"*

Matthew 17:5 (NIV84)

Can you imagine? Have you ever gone someplace very quiet where you were completely alone and in silence, and imagined and engaged in the transfiguration with Peter, James, and John? (Matthew 17:1-8)

I wonder if the earth itself shook under the weight and intensity of the Voice of GOD booming the corrective, focusing declarative, "This is My Son, whom I love, in Him I am well pleased. **Listen to HIM!**"

It must have been overwhelming. Peter, James, and John dove for the ground, assuming a position of ultimate submission. The Greek (vs. 6) literally says they were "exceedingly terrified."

Sometimes, I'm afraid, we are too comfortable with GOD. These three men had given up everything to follow Jesus, and had been doing so for about three years! They heard Jesus' incredible teachings. They saw Jesus' incredible miracles. They had been empowered by Jesus and executed incredible miracles through the power of Jesus within them! They had spent day and night, month after month, year upon year with Him, learning from Him, studying Him. They knew He was the Messiah, the Anointed One. They knew He was the Greatest Teacher and Giver of the Law. They knew He was the Presence of GOD.

And yet, in their familiarity with Him, they forgot how mysterious, how perfect, how overwhelmingly powerful the GOD Jesus served, represented, and was, Is.

So on that mountain, when GOD's Voice thundered, "**Listen to HIM!**" they were reminded. And to their credit, they responded the only way humanly appropriate – they dove to the ground, on their faces, exceedingly terrified at the Great Power enveloping them.

And in that terrifying moment, one of GOD's greatest Truth's was announced. This Truth is what we hunger for in this ten day period, this Season of Listening. We

desperately hunger for His Truth, His Wisdom, His Teaching, His Guidance... we hunger to ***Listen to Him!***

This idea of “Listening” is sacred and beautiful and holy. It is listening to, paying attention to GOD with the idea and commitment to conform to what is taught, and/or advised, and/or commanded.

Let that sink in...

Listening to GOD in prayer is saying “YES!” to GOD – whatever He says, wherever He leads – before we sit down (or hit the ground facedown) to pray. ***Listening*** to GOD in prayer is quieting all the noises of life and listening for, and listening to GOD and GOD alone. This is not at all easy. Henry Nouwen in “Moving from Solitude” put it this way:

The trouble is, as soon as you sit and become quiet, you think, *oh, I forgot this. I should call my friend. Later on I'm going to see him.* Your inner life is like a banana tree filled with monkeys jumping up and down. It's not easy to sit and trust that in solitude God will speak to you – **not as a magical voice but that He will let you know something gradually over the years.**

So, Western Hills Family and Friends, our challenge the next ten days (and beyond), is to being to, and learn to ***make time to Listen to Jesus, to GOD.*** Purposefully plan to go someplace very quiet where you are completely alone and in silence, and begin your time of Listening with this simple, worshipful phrase, “GOD, for the next hour I say YES to You, whatever you say or teach or command. I will allow no other sound to reach my ears or mind or heart. I will wait on You and You alone.”

If an hour short-circuits your mental idea of possibility, start with 15 minutes and increase it by 10 – 15 minutes a day. By the end of our Season of Listening, perhaps some of us can be still and listening for even more than an hour.

And perhaps, as we learn to Listen, GOD will begin to reveal to us what He is preparing us, and for us, to do in His Name and for His Honor...

*“Be still, and know that I am GOD”
Psalm 46:10a*