

## Ears to Hear

by  
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When we examined the amazing promise of John 14:12-14 in “Asking in His Name” we saw and understood that merely saying with our mouths, “in the name of Jesus Christ”, is not asking in His name, as though our responsibility is to offer up our requests to the Father and let Him sort out whether or not He will respond. (The “if it be thy will...” prayer.)

Nor does the petitioning of the Father by the body of Christ on the basis of our intellectual understanding of the promises of God, claimed by us on the basis of our needs, qualify as asking in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

The promise of John 14:12-14 is for those who ask by faith, having clearly heard and understood the voice of the Lord, concerning His truth, promises, and commands in the circumstance just as the Lord, in His earthly ministry, heard and understood the voice of the Father in the Son’s circumstances.

We see a corollary promise in James saying that the prayer of a “righteous” man can accomplish much.

***The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much. James 5:16***  
**NASB**

Therefore, we need to examine what James means when he is talking about a “righteous” man.

We are all the righteousness of God in Christ as our imputed position or standing in Christ at the moment we are born again, but we may or may not be “righteous” in response to the revelation of the truth, promises, and commands of God in Christ, which is our “fellowship” with Him, at any given moment or in any given circumstance.

This is why we are commanded to pray for one another. Though we have cast out demons or seen instantaneous healing through our prayers for another there are always times and circumstances where we, ourselves, do not clearly hear His voice or know His will in a specific circumstance, especially when it is accompanied by great need and emotional disturbance, or when we are momentarily dull of hearing, spiritually blind, and dull of understanding for one reason or another.

That’s when we call on the elders (those who are mature in the faith) to pray for us, even when we have effectively prayed for others by faith in their circumstances at other times.

James’s use of “righteous” in this passage indicates a believer who is currently in close fellowship with the Lord, “hearing” and “obeying” the truth, promises, and commands of the Lord. Such a one whose hearing, seeing, and understanding, is “tuned in” to the voice of the Lord (i.e. he/she has “ears to hear”), and he/she is able to petition the Father with the heart knowledge of the Lord’s revealed will, His promises, and His commands. Thus in the particular

circumstance this “righteous” one is praying by faith, not by formula and not simply from emotion or need.

We need to clarify this further by thinking again in terms of authority. We may have the heart knowledge that it is the Lord’s will to cast out demons, to heal the sick, to protect the weak, and to provide for those in need, but we also need to have ears to hear His voice in the specific circumstance so that we do not presumptively attempt to apply the faith we have in our hearts without hearing or knowing His specific command in the circumstance.

I call this, allowing the Lord to pull the trigger on our faith. It is one thing to have heart faith that the Lord will heal the sick, cast out demons, and provide for those in need. It is another to know His specific will in a particular circumstance.

Thus there are two aspects to a “righteous” man’s prayer of faith. The first is having heart knowledge of the truth and promises of God in Christ. The second is the ability to discern His specific will and His specific command(s) in the circumstance.

Consider the Lord’s actions in John 9:5-7 when he spit in the clay and then daubed a blind man’s eyes with the mud after saying, “I am the light of the world.”

Are we to make this a formula for healing blind eyes?

Certainly not. But what we learn from this is that the Lord “heard” the Father’s words and “saw” the Father’s actions in this circumstance, and He did what the Father was commanding Him to do in the circumstance, which resulted in blind eyes being healed and a demonstration of the truth of the Lord’s words when He said, “I am the light of the world.”

In the prayer of faith and in acts of faith we are to do likewise, but if we are dull of “hearing”, if we do not have light for “seeing”, and we do not clearly “understand” the truth, promises, and commands of the Lord, the acts of faith and the manifestation of answered prayer, will be lacking in our lives.

What we frequently do in our prayer meetings is to pray for the healing of someone in need (as an example) with the heart knowledge that the Lord can heal the sick but without the specific knowledge of the Lord’s will in the circumstance or the possibility that a season of prayer and fasting is needed for reasons we know nothing about.

We pray for the healing, and then we shrug our shoulders and try to hide the questions we have when those who are being prayed for are not healed. “Was it not the Lord’s will that they be healed? Should we have anointed them with oil? Do we just need to keep on praying and hope for the best?”

On one occasion I was in prayer for a beloved elder brother in the faith who had heart problems. This brother had been healed in the past through the prayer of faith, but in spite of the fact that I entered into a season of prayer and fasting, anointing him with oil, and reading scripture to him, he showed no sign of progress.

I was on my face in tears in prayer when the Lord sent me a vision. In the vision my elder brother was layed out on an exam table as a bright, white light passed through him from the bottom of his feet to the top of his head so that his entire body glowed with light.

Then I saw a black insect, a cockroach about twelve inches tall, whispering into his left ear.

When I asked the Lord to reveal the meaning of the vision, He caused me to understand by the Spirit that it was His will that my elder brother be healed completely, but that Satan was speaking “death” into this brother’s spiritual ears.

In the end, in spite of my urgent pleading, this beloved elder brother believed the lie, rejected the truth, and he passed away.

He is now in the presence of the Lord, and for that I am deeply grateful. But what the Lord revealed to me and comforted me with through this vision, was that the Lord required this

brother's own faith in this healing. And, when he failed the testing of his faith, he was called into the presence of the Lord.

Yet, at the same time, He comforted me and confirmed me by explaining why my fervant prayers did not result in this brother's healing.

Each of us would likely have to confess that the "works" of the Lord are not being manifested in our lives to the full extent of the promise of John 14:12-15. We are, therefore, not glorifying (revealing or manifesting) the Lord in our own lives or in the world to the degree expected of us or prophesied about concerning us in the Lord's own prayer, as found in John 17:22,23:

***The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one; I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity,...(unity with Him in our thoughts, words, and actions and unity with one another in the truth, promises, and commands of the Lord)... so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me.***

Since we are not, therefore, glorifying the Lord in the way He glorified the Father through the manifestation of the "works" of the Father, though John 14:12-15 is a PROMISE that we will not only produce the same "works" that He produced, but even greater "works", there must be a problem.

That problem is in our "hearing" and "seeing" and our obeying, ....and in our Phariseical dependency on religious traditions, authorities, and priests to tell us what to believe and what to do.

The communication between the Holy Spirit (who is the Lord) and our conscious mind and will is through our spirits. The state of our mind-spirit connection with the Holy Spirit, then, is key to how well we "hear" what the Spirit is saying or "see" with the eyes of our hearts (our unique spirit-mind connection). Biblically this is referred to as "having ears to hear" and "seeing with the eyes of our heart."

The Bible is not, as many presume, a religious rule book imposed on those who have been included in the New Covenant by faith in Jesus Christ, but a holy God cannot freely commune (or communicate) with those whose "hearing" and "seeing" is inhibited by gross sin (which includes religiosity). Therefore, it is His desire to transform us (sanctify us through and through) by grace through faith so that we may freely commune (communicate) with Him and experience the fullness of our covenant relationship with Him in Christ, fulfilling the promise of John 14:12.

As a quick review, we "hear" the voice of the Lord through the still small voice of the Holy Spirit, our spiritual conscience, through scripture as we are "guided" by the Holy Spirit, through the spiritual gifts of others, through our own spiritual gifts, through spiritual dreams and visions, through certain circumstances like answered prayer or the Lord's specific discipline, and even through angelic visitation.

The most common means whereby we "hear" His voice is through our spiritual conscience which can be trained through obedient faith responses to be in agreement with His will without having to hear His specific will in every circumstance. The next most common way we "hear" His voice and "see" the truth, promises, and commands of the Lord is through our examination

of scripture prompted by inspired preaching and teaching and by personal study as the Spirit of truth “guides” us into all truth, even revealing things to come.

All of the other means whereby we “hear” His voice or “see” His truth, promises, and commands are related to these first two most common means.

But “hearing” and “seeing” is not automatic. There are also many ways in which our hearing and our vision can become dulled.

The following passages illustrate the primary reasons a believer may be dull of (spiritual) hearing and have scales over our spiritual eyes.

#### Staying in the “milk” of the word of God

***Concerning him we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing.*** Hebrews 5:11 NASB (emphasis is the author’s)

Paul’s word to them was that they were stuck on repetitiously reinforcing the foundational and elementary truths about the nature of God and their initial salvation (the infant “milk” of the word), and they were not, therefore, receiving the “meat” of the word that produces the manifestations of His life in us and through us.

This sounds very familiar to me, and I am reminded of the many, many basic evangelical messages I have heard in corporate worship services (the milk of the word) as though there is nothing else to be taught to those who have already believed. Or that the basic evangelical message must be preached each Sunday in the event that some non-believer is going to walk in off the street and be saved.

#### Our adoption of the religious rules and traditions of men

***“Neglecting the commandment of God, you hold to the tradition of men.” He was also saying to them, “You are experts at setting aside the commandment of God in order to keep your tradition.”*** Mark 7:8,9 NASB (emphasis is the author’s)

This is sometimes referred to as “Phariseeism”, because the Pharisees constructed elaborate traditions and rules based on their intellectual understanding of the written word of God. This intellectualism naturally led to numerous denominational variations and schools of thought as Jewish believers followed this rabbi or that rabbi.

Today we do exactly the same thing even though all born again believers have a direct line to the Teacher, and the resulting tendency to lean on denominational authorities and the traditions of belief and practice we have grown up with, causes us to turn a deaf ear to the Spirit of truth who was sent to “guide” us by revelation into all the truth.

***But you are not to be called rabbi ... (teacher)..., for you have one teacher, and you are all brothers. And call no man your father on earth, for you have one Father, who is in heaven. Neither be called instructors, for you have one instructor, the Christ.*** Matthew 23:8-11 ESV (inserts and emphasis are the author’s)

Hardening our hearts through yielding to temptation (i.e. failing the testing of our faith)

***For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end, while it is said,  
"TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE,  
DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS, AS WHEN THEY PROVOKED ME." Hebrews 3:14,15 NASB*** (emphasis is the author's)

I am reminded of the numerous times that I have clearly heard His voice, even as the still, small voice of the Spirit, my spiritual conscience, saying, "NO" or "GO", and I have hardened my heart against His clear command. Thus I have provoked Him and offended His Holy Spirit, which, if I continue in my decision to disobey, will ultimately result in spiritual deafness and an absence of revelatory "light."

When it comes to some habitual sin of the flesh that is causing us to be deaf to the revelation of His will we are told to "crucify" the flesh. This internal crucifixion is a process that takes place in all believers. It typically begins with gross moral sin, but, as we grow in the faith (learning to "hear" and "see" better and better) it eventually becomes a process of fine tuning our obedience.

We need to be aware, though, that, because God loves us, he will discipline us in the process where we are unwilling to discipline ourselves.

Failure to respond to the discipline of the Lord

***All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness. Hebrews 12:11 NASB***

If we want to "hear" the voice of the Lord we need to pray as David prayed: ***Examine me, O LORD, and try me; Test my mind and my heart.*** (Psalm 26:2) But, when we do, we need to respond to His testing appropriately.

A large majority of the spiritual dreams I have received were disciplinary, as the Lord graphically revealed the nature of my sin in a way that I was unable to deny after I had prayed David's prayer. And, because He broke my heart, I was willing to repent.

The Lord has also used spiritual dreams and the gifts of the Spirit in other believers to reveal the "doors" I have left open for habitual sin, like the time I was approached by a much older woman in a Christian bookstore. As I searched through the books she handed me a book and said, "The Lord says this is the book you're looking for."

It was exactly the teaching I needed at the time, and the Lord demonstrated both His love for me and His discipline through the "hearing" and obedience of another believer.

Wavering in our faith when the promises and commands of the Lord have been given to us

The Lord will also discipline our double mindedness or wavering between faith and doubt or between trust in what we are "hearing" from the Lord and trust in what we are hearing from our own flesh.

***But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind.***

***For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.*** James 1:5-8  
NASB

Early in my Christian life I felt the need to find a different way to make a living, and I found what I thought was a perfect franchise for me. I prayed about it, sought wise counsel from close, Spirit-filled friends, all of whom agreed that it seemed a sound investment.

On the way to Arizona with a bank check in my pocket I had a two hour layover in the DFW airport. As I was reading my Bible I was prompted to pray.

“Lord, I don’t feel that I have had your specific will revealed to me in regard to this business decision. Give me a sign, Lord, that this is either your specific will or that I should abandon this course of action.”

I do not recommend casting fleeces or asking for signs or the closed door, opened door prayer, but, as a new believer, the Lord apparently allowed it.

Later, when I looked up at the clock it was five minutes after my flight was supposed to leave, but the speakers had never announced the boarding of my flight.

I rushed up to the attendant at the gate and asked about my flight.

“Your flight left the gate five minutes ago.”

“Why wasn’t it announced,” I asked in outrage.

“The entire DFW audio system went down thirty minutes ago and didn’t come back up until a couple of minutes ago, sir. We couldn’t announce the boarding of your flight.”

Instead of recognizing this obvious, miraculous sign from the Lord, I immediately said, “What time does the next flight leave?”

That franchise became a black hole, and I learned a valuable lesson about double-mindedness through the Lord’s discipline, a lesson that would help me overcome the temptation in the future to trust my own understanding even though the Lord has clearly revealed His will.

In that sense His discipline, though painful at the time, was a demonstration of His love, as it always is.

The word sown among the thorns

***“And the one on whom seed was sown among the thorns, this is the man who hears the word, and the worry of the world and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.”*** Matthew 13:22 NASB

The hardening of our hearts (a seared conscience) occurs when we clearly “hear” the voice of the Lord, but, because of various sources of temptation, we choose to disobey.

This happens in stages, and when we recognize that this “testing” of our faith is taking place we need to quickly pray as David prayed, “Test my heart....,” because our unwillingness to

respond in repentance and obedience to the testing of our faith literally chokes out the voice of the Lord.

Likewise, when we substitute outward obedience to religious rules and the traditions of men, which is a loud voice of the flesh, we hinder our true obedience to the voice of the Lord, which comes through the still, small voice of the Spirit.

The voice of the Lord is not easily heard or received by those whose focus is on the world and in whom the voice of the flesh is like a spoiled child screaming for attention.

Satan, too, has “familiar spirits” who watch our lives and gather intelligence about our circumstances in order set traps and snares for us and to buffet us (with the Lord’s permission).

And it came to me by the Lord that these traps and snares are not on the path illuminated for us by the Lord. They are in the darkness and shadows just off the pathway chosen for us by the Lord.

***Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path. Psalm 119:105***  
**KJV**

The light that reveals the specific will (path) of the Lord for us and reveals the traps and snares of the enemy to the left and the right of the path is revelatory light, not intellectual light.

I was given a dream one night in which I opened the door into my house and turned on the light switch. The light came on, but it was very dim. I was somewhat fearful as I crossed the room, because there were dark shadows and shapes moving around in the room. As I reached the next room, the dining room, I flipped on that light switch with the same experience, except that the light in the living room had become bright and without shadows or dark spots. As I continued to move through the entire house my fear and dread ceased and the entire house was filled with light.

As I was awakened at the end of the dream I knew instantly what it meant. Each born again believer is somewhere in that house. We have opened the door (having received Jesus by faith), and we are inside the house. But, because we have only received the “milk” of the word the house (our own soul) is still dark and without light until we deliberately begin to flip on the light switches in each room.

Flipping on the light switches is to deliberately, with all our heart, soul, and might, seeking His voice, the source of light, the source of truth, the source of His promises and His commands, so that we are enabled by grace through faith to walk the path He has chosen for us.

It follows, then, that the more light that we have the more we are able to truly ask “anything” in His name, and if He ever commands any of us who clearly “hear” His voice, to say to “this” mountain, “be removed and cast into the sea,” this mountain will surely be removed and cast into the sea.

In the meantime, we have another promise when we, ourselves, are struck by circumstances that are overwhelming us.

***Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Phillipians 4:6,7 NASB***

What we need to notice here is that the promise is the peace of God in the circumstances when the circumstances themselves have caused us to be fearful, disturbed, and emotionally distraught.

In this we are told that our petition to the Father is to be made with thanksgiving as we remember all the ways the Father has shielded, protected, and provided for us in the past. And, in our remembrance, the Father will comfort us with a sense of protection and well-being even though we still do not, yet, have the answer to our prayers.

And we have the promise that those who are “righteous” in their fellowship with the Lord, those who clearly hear, see, and understand the voice of the Lord will be effective in their prayers for us.

We should long, therefore, to always be found among the “righteous” whose fellowship with the Lord gives them “ears to hear” the voice of the Lord and whose prayers of faith are effective, by grace through faith, in manifesting the love and the life of the Lord in the world, which glorifies (reveals) Him.

May the spirit of Isaiah come upon each and every believer who reads this message, and may he open our ears to “hear” so that we may manifest His love and His grace as a witness to the world.

***The Lord GOD has given Me the tongue of disciples,  
That I may know how to sustain the weary one with a word  
He awakens Me morning by morning,  
He awakens My ear to listen as a disciple.  
The Lord GOD has opened My ear;  
And I was not disobedient  
Nor did I turn back. Isaiah 50:4,5 NASB***