

Lenten Study 2

LISTEN...



Listening isn't something we're particularly good at.

Have you ever noticed!

Interestingly, God forever has wished we listen to Him. In order we embark on Christian journeys to find God, listening remains an integral component to that Divinely gifted voyage!

Our journeys to God don't begin with human wisdom. All too often we can chatter endlessly and speculate who God is. We then go off on tangents, where we tend to seek God whom we like...God who fits our desires.

All journeys to God essentially begin with silence, hence the reason for last week's study wherein we shared the importance that we 'stop'. Only when we resolve to cease endless activity, can we enter the period of silence, where God in Christ Spiritually, enters our lives. Amid that stillness, we listen more intently!

Worldly inspired speculation about who God was, is, and forever will be...doesn't cut it!
 God is far greater than all in creation, and always will be. This ongoing, we must confess!

Ponder again Job whom we briefly mentioned last week.

At the end of the book of Job, he said to God...

3 "I was talking about things I knew nothing about, things far too wonderful for me.

4 You said, 'Listen and I will speak! I have some questions for you, and you must answer them.'

5 I had only heard about you before, but now I have seen you with my own eyes.

6 I take back everything I said, and I sit in dust and ashes to show my repentance."

Job 42:3-6 (NLT)

If we're to gaze through the Cross in order to discern a clearer view of all God is doing...silence and stillness are a must. Then we begin to more definitively 'see'!

Will we ever know all? Assuredly, not during worldly life. But as Christians faithful, we surely get to walk towards God, thereby gaining a humbling, yet clearer view of the wondrous mystery Divine.

God calls us, to listen to Jesus and follow Him, in order we gain that ever clearer view, and the Divinely Gifted Hope founded within that journey to be with Him, forever.

Ponder how far we travel at times from that truth, when we don't listen appropriately to what He's teaching.

At the Cross, Jesus called out to God with a loud voice...

"Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?"...meaning "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?"

Mark 15:34b (NLT)

Yet at the time some present, who heard His Words,
completely misunderstood!

They...

'thought he was calling for the prophet Elijah'

Mark 15:35b (NLT)

Even at the Cross, people failed to listen to Jesus...they made
up their own minds about what He was actually saying!

Jesus at that time was crying out to God...not calling Elijah!

Ponder this...

In the 21st Century, the following thought could be proposed
within the Church, re the community surrounding it.

If the Church in Jesus name were more intent on the mission
God calls it too, surely, it'd be more loved and regarded...in
essence, listened too!

That raises the question...are we appropriately listening to God,
or are we making it up as we go!

Surely our Christian quest is to become more like God in Christ
every day. We're called to be a Holy people.
If we're not listening to God, where are we?

Humanity is a 'habitual presence'. We tend to follow habits,
rather than listen intently to Divine teaching.

What might that mean?

Daniel Darling poses the following confronting Lenten
question...

'when we listen to the church today, at least in the West, we're
often left with the impression Christianity actually has very
little to do with truth. Christianity sometimes is more about
feeling better about ourselves . . . about everything except
truth.'

Brief chat/meditation...

Now ponder this...do you enjoy **music**?

I think we all know the answer!

What then must occur, in order we actually hear the words within it!

LISTEN of course!

Is God encouraging us perhaps to consider something here? Those outside the Church enjoy music as much as we do. Interestingly, most today, either don't know, or can't relate to ours!

Should we as Church, perhaps look liturgically at ways in which people yet to come to know Christ, might be enabled to continue enjoying their musical varieties (and language styles/poetry etc), yet place the Words of the Gospel and Gods Words of Wisdom, within that particular context, that their currently listening to.

Then, they'll much more likely become enabled to hear Gods wondrous Word. This occurs, because they're enjoying the melody dispensing it!

Of course, that's already happening in many wonderful ways, but what are we currently doing about it?

Brief chat/meditation...

In order this occur, its important as Church we firstly, give more time to forming 'authentic relationships' with others...that we then get to know each other well, all the while 'listening' to 'each other's' stories!

Then, we might perhaps get to see and know each other...as God sees each of us!

Karen Bloomquist's words deepen these thoughts somewhat ...

'What's crucial for Christians, is **not speaking, but listening, being transformed by the other, and living this out through our commitments and actions**, in other words, **enacting communion, not just talking about it.**'

That leaves much to deliberate upon.

What does it mean, that we intentionally enact Communion?

Let's conclude our Lenten study 2, with the following thoughts from David Benner in his book 'Opening to God' re the 'listening essence' founded within prayer...

'prayer becomes the overflow of the living waters that spring up from our depths. **It becomes us listening in on a loving conversation of God with God as that conversation passes through us.** Our relationship with God may not begin in love, but it never deepens significantly until we enter into a personal encounter with Love. The more our being is grounded in God's love, the more prayer begins to flow from our hearts, not simply our minds.'

Shhh...listen!

