

Conversation Starter

For the week of May 18 to 24, 2008

This week's theme: I Heard A Voice

Reading #1: Genesis 12:1-9

Reading #2: Matthew 3:1-6 & 3:13-17

Reading #3: Genesis 18:16-33

Reading #4: Exodus 3:1-10

Reading #5: Joshua 1:5b

Reading #6: Matthew 17:5b

Both of last Sunday's scripture readings were about hearing "a voice", that is the voice of God. In the Old Testament lesson, it was Abram – who later become known as Abraham – who clearly heard God speaking to him. And this is what God said: *"Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."* (Genesis 12:1-3) And did Abram obey God? Yes he did. It says that Abram took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, all the possessions they had accumulated, and the people they had acquired in Haran and left for Canaan. (See Genesis 12:4-5) And then in the gospel reading, the people gathered for Jesus' baptism had a real treat of hearing God's voice right after Jesus came up out of the water: *This is My Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased.* (Matthew 3:17)

The examples of people hearing God's audible voice isn't just limited to these two scripture readings, there are others noted in the Bible who could claim I heard a voice:

- Abraham regarding God's plans to destroy the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah due to the wickedness of those living there. (See Genesis 18:16-33)
- Moses via a burning bush about God wanting him to lead the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt. (See Exodus 3:1-10)
- Joshua just before he led the Israelites into the Promised Land: *As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you.* (Joshua 1:5b)
- And then there was God speaking to Jesus and disciples Peter, James and John on a mountain after they saw Jesus transfigured and Jesus speaking to Moses and Elijah. What did God say to them? *This is my Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased. Listen to Him!!* (See Matthew 17:5b)

One of the privileges you have as a child of God is that you, too, can hear His voice. It may not be in the same way as these biblical examples, but God is speaking to you on a regular basis. Therefore, the question is: are you able to hear Him?

1. Describe different ways God speaks to us today.
2. What is the primary way God speaks to His people today? Why is this so?
3. How do we "test" whether or not what we've heard is actually the "voice" of God?
4. Have you ever heard the audible voice of God? If so, perhaps you might want to share this experience.
5. What things can negatively affect our ability to hear God's voice?
6. What things can get in the way of our responding to what God is saying to us? calling us to do?
7. Have you ever been afraid of stepping out into what God has asked you to do? Explain your answer.

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