

1 Samuel Chapter 3 v 1 - 10

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[0 : 00] And we're just a couple of weeks after Easter, as you're well aware, though it seems like it's gone very quickly. But the week after Easter was a momentous occasion for the life of Thomas.

We've all heard of doubting Thomas, and he's been given a bit of a bad press. But when Thomas met the Lord Jesus Christ as he was risen from the dead, this is what he said.

My Lord and my God. When he saw Christ risen from the dead, he recognized in the Lord Jesus something quite unique.

My Lord and my God. Titles only belonging to God himself, but given to the Lord Jesus. When we come to worship Christ, we're not worshipping a man.

We are worshipping him who is God from eternity. But God who stepped into our world that we might know him and have a relationship with him, which is full of life.

[0 : 56] And our first hymn reminds us of that truth. Jesus is Lord. It means that he is in control. He is the one who we must acknowledge ultimately as the Lord of our lives, the King of our lives.

So we're going to stand and sing. The song's going to come on the screen behind me. And we'll stand and sing. Jesus is Lord. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

[3 : 18] and cry on that raise as he presents and every youth will know in every eye and every heart will see his glory the judge of all will take his children home because Jesus came to us God came to us so we through Christ can come to God in prayer let's come to him now let us pray together three very simple words that we've been singing about this morning oh Lord our God three words yet so full of truth so full of relevance so full of importance so full of blessing for us who have come to know you our God through Jesus the Lord we thank you again for him your son the Lord Jesus Christ we thank you again that he humbled himself and came into our world we can never get to you

God we can never climb to you or reach you through good works or religion there's nothing we can do to make ourselves your friends rather our sin and our folly our rebelliousness our arrogance our pride our greed all these things Lord have separated us from you cut us off from you so that oh Lord we are alienated strangers yes even enemies because of our sinful actions but we thank you oh Lord our God that in spite of us and in spite of all that we are and what we've done and continue to do in love you sent Christ your son Jesus Jesus the man God Jesus the one who came into our world and took on the frailty and weakness of our lives the one who purposefully determinedly went to the cross and died in our place we thank you that there Lord Jesus you were treated as a sinner you were treated by your heavenly father as the one who had carried out the sins our sins you were punished in our place you were condemned

Lord for us you took the sentence you took the blame the guilt everything on our behalf and we thank you that there you did die and gave your life your life for our lives but we thank you again for the reality and the wonder that you rose from the dead on the third day that death could not hold you that you conquered death just as you overcame sin and paid for our sins so you overcame death for us as well you conquered death so that we might not fear death so that we may not die ultimately eternally but that we might have life which is full in this world and life which is fuller and perfect in the life to come the world to come in your presence we thank you that Jesus is Lord is three simple words but if we can say it from our hearts if we can say it and mean it that Jesus the God man who came and died for me is

Lord of my life King of creation the God who I seek to serve follow and obey then we thank you Lord Jesus that through saying those words and meaning them and knowing them you've promised that we shall be saved from our sins we shall be right with God we shall have life everlasting we shall know your nearness presence friendship love every moment of our lives in this world and for eternity to come we ask oh Lord that each of us this morning by the end of this morning if not already may be able to say with whole heartedness just as we've sung but mean it Jesus is Lord of my life of this world come oh Lord we pray and have your way with us this morning make yourself known to us by your Holy Spirit speak to us so that we may be able to say Lord what is it you want me to do how is it you want me to live we ask again that you would richly bless and encourage us for we know that we need you and we need you that's why we're here Amen to your seats thank you thank you Amen.

[8 : 39] Amen. Jesus, Lord, full of obedience, Holy reverence to the living team, Chest of foes and your attitudes In the radiance of your purity.

For some nature rise, for some righteousness to see Your majestic love and authority.
Words of love that can never play When the truth within over unbelief.

Sing, O Lord, that we knew our minds That must run the heights of your plans for us.

Truth and change from the dawn of time That will echo down through eternity.

[10 : 22] And my grace will stand on your promises And my grace will walk as you walk with us.

Sing, O Lord, till your church is built And the air is filled with your glory.

Remain seated as we sing.

Sing, O Lord, till your church is built How is he Thank you.

Thank you.

[12 : 18] Thank you. Thank you.

As he follows me, your goodness will lead me home. Thank you, Caitlin.

Thank you, Caitlin.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

[14 : 26] Thank you. Thank you. and let's read then from verse 1 of 1 Samuel 3. The boy, Samuel, ministered before the Lord under Eli.

In those days, the word of the Lord was rare. There were not many visions. One night, Eli, whose eyes were becoming so weak that he could barely see, was lying down in his usual place.

The lamp of God had not yet gone out. And Samuel was lying down in the house of the Lord where the ark of God was. Then the Lord called Samuel.

Samuel answered, Here I am. And he ran to Eli and said, Here I am. You called me. But Eli said, I didn't call you.

Go back and lie down. So he went and lay down. Again, the Lord called. Samuel. And Samuel got up, went to Eli and said, Here I am.

[15 : 30] You called me. My son, Eli said, I did not call. Go back and lie down. Now Samuel had not yet, sorry, now Samuel did not yet know the Lord.

The word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him. A third time, the Lord called. Samuel. And Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, Here I am.

You called me. Then Eli realized that the Lord was calling the boy. So Eli told Samuel, Go and lie down. And if he calls you, say, Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.

So Samuel went and lay down in his place. The Lord came and stood there, calling as at the other times. Samuel. Samuel.

And Samuel said, Speak, for your servant is listening. It would be helpful if you have a Bible to hand and that you turn to 1 Samuel chapter 3, because that's where we're going to be considering this event in the life of this young boy, Samuel, and what it means to us.

[16 : 47] Whether we're young boys or young girls, or old boys or old girls, God's word is relevant and helpful. I wonder how good your hearing is.

Perhaps you have a very good acute hearing. Perhaps as you've got older, that hearing has diminished. Out of all the creatures that God has made, it may surprise you which has the best hearing, or believed to have the very best hearing of all.

It's not an elephant. The elephant has certainly the largest ears out of all the creatures. Though an elephant does have very good hearing, much better hearing than you and I, than any human being.

Nor is it a dog. We know they have very good hearing and hear pictures, but it's not a dog either. It's not even a bat. Though the bat comes in a close second with its hearing, because as you're well aware, it's able to navigate and direct itself just with its hearing, and with the noises that it makes. In fact, the creature that's thought to have the very best hearing of all is a moth. And the reason that it has much better hearing than a bat is so important, because that avoids it becoming a bat's dinner, because moths are a favourite delicacy of bats.

[18:06] So the hearing of a moth really is a matter of life and death. It's pretty important. Its hearing is good. But even for us, hearing is a very important thing, isn't it?

It can be a matter of life and death. Our hearing, if you're crossing a street and you don't hear a car coming or something, it could be very dangerous. Or if you're in a house and you don't hear the fire alarm go off, or whatever it may be, hearing is important to us.

And loss of hearing is a tragic thing. That's why a few of us here have hearing aids to help us to hear better, because we need our hearing.

But there's a type of deafness, a type of hearing loss, which is far more serious than loss of natural hearing. And that is a deafness to the very voice of God.

Being unable to hear the voice of God speaking to us. In the letter to the Hebrews, which is a New Testament, as you know, the writer there warns those he's writing to on three occasions, using the words of a psalm.

[19:15] It's Psalm 95. He says this three times. Today, if you hear his voice, that's God's voice, do not harden your hearts, as they did in the days of rebellion.

He's referring back to in the wilderness when God spoke to his people as he was leading them on the way to the promised land. And again and again, God spoke and they continued to, we might say, turn a deaf ear to him.

Deafness to the voice of God is not a matter of our natural hearing in the ear. It's not about those three little bones, the stirrup and the other ones.

It's about our hearts. It's not a fault in the hearing. It's a fault in the hearts, which prevents us from hearing the voice of God. And the result, says the author to the Hebrews, the writer to the Hebrews, is that when you don't hear God's voice, and these people didn't hear God's voice, he says on two occasions, so God says, I declared on oath in my anger, they shall never enter my rest.

Not hearing the voice of God and responding to it in the right way brought about God's anger and God's promise, if we can put it that way, that they should never enter his rest.

[20:31] And for the people of the Old Testament, as they traveled through the wilderness, we looked at that in Exodus recently, it meant that they didn't get into the promised land. They all died in the wilderness. They didn't get to the place where God wanted them to be, where they planned to be.

And ultimately, the writer here tells us this means in the presence of God in heaven. To be deaf to the voice of God is to condemn ourselves never to enter heaven, never to enter into that place of perfect rest with God and with all those who have heard his voice and responded to it.

So it's important. Very important. Seriously important. It's a matter of life and death. So the question is really, how does God speak to us and what should our response be when he does?

And for that reason, we're here in 1 Samuel chapter 3 because here in 1 Samuel 3, we have this exchange between God speaking to Samuel and Samuel responding to him and what happens. And although in one sense, what Samuel is being called to here is being called to be the leader of God's people, he's being called to be a prophet, he's the last of the judges who ruled God's people in that time before the kings came along, a very important position.

[21:55] Ultimately, God was calling him into a relationship with himself, firstly and foremostly. Can't serve God. You can't be part of God's plan. You can't do the work that God wants you to do unless you first know him, know him personally, know him in a very real relationship.

And we know that we're told here that Samuel, in verse 7, did not yet know the Lord. He didn't know him. He wasn't on good speaking terms with him.

He wasn't in a relationship with him in that right way. But there's two things I want to just take aside for a moment here which are very important as well. They're important for you boys and girls and they're important for all of us who are parents or grandparents too.

Because in this event, we have something very encouraging and something very challenging as well. You see, here is Samuel, a young boy, and he doesn't know the Lord.

But he was brought up in a home that did know the Lord. We might say he was brought up in a Christian home. But being brought up in a Christian home does not mean that you will become a Christian.

[22 : 59] It doesn't make you a Christian. It doesn't supply saving faith. Being brought up in a Christian home is a real great privilege. And you may think sometimes, boys and girls, it's a bit boring being brought up in a Christian home because all your friends can do lots of other things that you wish you could do.

But being brought up in a Christian home is a wonderful, wonderful privilege indeed. And we know that that's the case for Samuel because Hannah, his mother, was a woman of God, a woman of prayer. And the first two chapters, in fact, of the book, 1 Samuel, are all about Hannah and her relationship with God and how she gave Samuel to the Lord to serve him as part of her thanks that God had answered her prayer and given her this wonderful son.

So he would have learned about the Lord. He'd have heard about the Lord. In fact, of course, here he is now. He's working in the temple, the tabernacle. He's working in God's house.

He's working with Eli who was the prophet or the chief priest at that time. And so he knows a lot about God. He's heard a lot about God. He probably knows the stories from the Old Testament about Noah and about Abraham and about Joshua and all those sort of things that you might learn about as well in Sunday school.

But he didn't know the Lord. And so it's very important, dear friends, that we recognize that we cannot give to our children saving faith.

[24 : 21] We cannot make them Christians. God alone is the giver of a relationship with himself. And for that reason, how important it is that we pray for our children, pray for our grandchildren, how important it is, dear friends, that we are a good, godly witness and testimony to our children and grandchildren.

How important it is that we don't do anything to put them off coming to faith in Christ, be a hindrance or a handicap. It's a challenge to us as parents and grandparents. Does my life point to the need for Jesus?

Does my life encourage my children and grandchildren to want to know Jesus and put their trust in him and follow him? The second thing which is wonderfully encouraging here is of course that even though Samuel was a young boy, he did come to that real knowledge of God as his Lord and Saviour.

We don't know how old Samuel was here. He may have been maybe 10, 11 at the oldest, I think it's fair to say. He's a very young boy. Perhaps your age.

How old are you? 10. Great. Okay. So he may have been just like you. Your name's not Samuel, is it? No. Okay. That's all right then. There is a Samuel here and he's, how old are you Samuel?

[25 : 35] Eight. Okay. Brilliant. So he may have been about the same age as you and some of your other boys and girls as well. But he comes to know the Lord God.

He hears the voice of the Lord God and he comes to faith in and trust in and relationship with the Lord God. It's not just for old people. Okay. Adults.

You boys and girls. It's for you as well. You can know Jesus as your Savior and Lord. You can know him and trust him and enjoy a relationship with God while you're still very young.

You must be very careful not to put off our children from coming to faith in Christ. Asking questions about Christ. Encouraging to put their trust in him while they're yet young.

It's not simply a matter of something that adults do or do we put off until then. We must pray for our children. We must seek to be examples as we already thought expecting and longing that God would save them.

[26 : 33] See Timothy and he's in the New Testament. He became a pastor in the end but he was somebody who had a great family. His mum and his gran were Christians.

And in fact we're told because Paul knows that even when he was a young boy from infancy he'd known the Holy Scriptures. He'd learned about the Bible when he was young and Paul says this how from infancy you've known the Holy Scriptures which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.

So Timothy had a really good start. He had a Christian family and he came to know the Lord Jesus we believe when he was still very young and God went on to use him. So let me ask you boys and girls for a moment because you're here and I didn't expect you to be here so it's lovely you are but

we've got some others as well.

Do you know the Lord Jesus as your saviour? You don't have to answer me. Do you know him? Have you put your faith and trust in him? Is he someone who's special to you? Not just to mum and dad or your grandparents but to you. Is there a way in which you've said Lord Jesus be part of my life?

I want to know you. I've heard you speaking to me through Sunday school or through the Bible stories I've heard or through the preaching and I would say even to this to you boys and girls today even through me Jesus is speaking to you.

[27 : 52] God is speaking to you and he's saying I want you to know me. I want you to trust me. I want you to follow me. Okay. So let's pray for that. Pray for children. Pray for young people because God wonderfully is able to save them even when they are very very young.

Now let's get back to Samuel. Let's get back to what happens here. Samuel comes to know the Lord because he hears God's voice speaking to him and God speaks to us.

He reveals himself to us. He calls us as well whether we're young or whether we're old. But how does he call us? How does he speak to us? Well the first thing is it's quite clear here that God speaks to Samuel personally.

He speaks to him personally. He calls him by name doesn't he? In verse 6 to begin verse 6 Samuel and then verse 8 a third time God calls Samuel and then the fourth time God speaks Samuel, Samuel.

So God is speaking to him personally. Clear that God knows him isn't it? That's a pretty obvious thing but God knows him. God knows you. He knows me. He knows all about us. He knows us by name. He knows what we like.

[29 : 03] He knows what we do. He knows the things that we sin. He knows our hearts and our lives. There's nothing about you that's hidden from God. He knows all about you and he knows you by name.

When God speaks to us he speaks to us personally. What do I mean by that? Well Eli clearly is nearby. He doesn't hear anything. Now we're only told that Eli was blind.

We're not told he was deaf. Okay? But he doesn't hear the voice of God speaking to Samuel. He hears Samuel because Samuel comes and says what do you want?

You've called me. And he says no I didn't. Go back and lie down. Three occasions he does that. So the voice of Jesus speaks to Samuel in a way that he particularly can hear.

Okay? Speaks to a way he can hear. Now earlier on when we were talking to the children we were talking about Jesus the good shepherd and how he speaks. And Jesus says this in the Gospel of John chapter 10 speaking about himself as a good shepherd.

[30 : 03] He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. Jesus calls us by name individually personally speaks to our hearts speaks in a way that nobody else may hear.

It may be perhaps when somebody's preaching like now and suddenly say God seems to be speaking to me that's about me. Or we're reading part of the Bible and it suddenly becomes very alive it becomes sort of leaps off the page God is saying something to me.

Perhaps you've read it another time or other people have read that and it doesn't seem to say the same thing to them but God is speaking this is his Holy Spirit speaking to us. It's not a voice that we can hear in our ears it's a voice that we can hear in our hearts it's something that's saying this is for me this is God speaking to me personally.

Perhaps speaking to us about our sin there's things that are wrong in our lives and we begin to feel uneasy about them we're conscious that these things are not good these aren't things that please God well that's God speaking to us through our conscience.

This isn't just the case when we first become Christians let me put it this way but as we grow as Christians as well we are looking for and seeking to hear the voice of God because God will continue to speak to us that's why he brings us into this relationship with himself a relationship is about speaking to one another isn't it we speak to God in prayer but he speaks to us as well through his word by his Holy Spirit we've talked with the boys and girls before sometimes through Christian friends sometimes through things that we read in books sometimes through the preaching as well God speaks to us and he may speak to us not only about becoming a friend of his and a right relationship with us with him but he may speak to us about what we should be doing in the life of the church he may speak to us about who we should be marrying or not he may speak to us about any manner of things about the job that we do speak to us about our attitudes speak to us

about things that we do day by day speak to us about the plans he has for the future the question really is are you listening are you listening out for the voice of Jesus speaking to you the second thing as well that we read and we see here is how God speaks to Samuel patiently doesn't he [32 : 24] God is wonderfully patient four times as I said four times in fact before Samuel answers him again and again and again now clearly Samuel is somewhat confused by the voice he hears he keeps thinking it's Eli he's not heard the voice of God speaking to him before he may have thought he was just having a dream especially after he went twice to Eli and Eli said no I didn't call you he may have been confused and thought well perhaps I've eaten something funny for my supper and it's given me the funny dreams or maybe Eli is just playing tricks on me and he's calling me just to see whether I'm paying attention you see Samuel was confused and didn't understand the voice of God not because he was against God or rebellious against God it's because he was ignorant because he didn't know God's voice he knew about God as we've seen already he served in the temple yes but this was something very different this was something very real this was something more than just knowing about God this was something about knowing

God personally and in spite of his ignorance God keeps on calling doesn't he again and again and again he doesn't give up on Samuel he doesn't say well I've called you twice Samuel you still haven't responded to me in the right way that's it I'm going to look for somebody else to be my prophet my leader or have a relationship with me no God is gentle God is patient God is long suffering God is kind thank God that he truly is that way with us he keeps on calling he maybe called you first of all and you heard his voice perhaps when you were very young like this boy Samuel but he keeps on calling it may be that now you're much older and you haven't heard the voice of Jesus calling for some time but he's calling you this morning or he's been calling you recently God calls us through many different voices he can call out to us yes through our parents or through the things that we hear preached he can call out to us through the things that we experience he can call out and speak to us through our sufferings through the troubles and trials of life as well through our conscience especially through his word but God constantly is calling out to men and women and boys and girls to come and seek him and come to know him the trouble is of course that sometimes we're just ignorant of the voice of God but more often than not what happens is that we want to ignore the voice of

God we don't want to obey the voice of God and yet God continues to be patient continues to speak continues to call but remember that warning remember that warning that the writer of the Hebrews gave that warning that says today if you hear his voice do not harden your hearts let me say to you every person here this morning God is speaking to you he wants you to hear his voice not my voice his voice speaking to you calling you to himself don't harden your heart don't say no when God is speaking to you dear Christian about a particular sin in your life or a relationship in your life or a habit in your life which you know isn't right and God keeps speaking to you about don't keep saying no I'm not listening no I'm going to do what I want no I'm going to please myself God is calling you to put your faith and trust in Christ you can't keep throwing up those hurdles those blockages all the time saying no I'll follow you and I'll listen to you if you do this for me or if you answer this for me or if this happens don't harden your hearts to the voice of God listen to his voice obey his voice respond to his voice and lastly there's we see here in this situation and all the way through the Bible really that when

God speaks to us he speaks to us powerfully that is he keeps on calling us until we hear or until his call carries out what he wants it to carry out what he wants remember when Jesus again talks about himself as a good shepherd he says my sheep listen to my voice I know them and they follow me there's a there's an action that follows the hearing the voice of God is an effectual powerful voice so the voice of God that spoke creation into being read that in Genesis 1 God said let there be and there was Samuel did hear the voice of God ultimately the powerful voice of God kept on calling and calling and brought him into that living experience of the Lord exactly what happened when Jesus first began to draw disciples to himself in Matthew chapter 4 we've read it many times before he was walking by the lakeside and there were those men drying their nets fixing their nets weren't they and here's what we're told he saw two brothers Simon called

Peter and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake they were fishermen come follow me Jesus said and I will send you out to be fishers of men at once they left their nets and followed him why did they follow him because the voice of Jesus was powerful voice of Jesus called them it had an effect upon their hearts it drew them to himself he simply said come follow me they did it they did it

of course there's a wonderful illustration of that isn't there when the in the the raising of Lazarus from the dead you know the story here's Lazarus he's been dead four days he's in this tomb which is like a small cave and after four days Jesus comes and he says take away the stone and people a bit concerned because they thought he might be a bit smelly by then but Jesus we're told did this called out in a loud voice Lazarus come out the dead man came out his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen and a cloth around his face Jesus said to them take off the grave clothes let him go here's a man he's dead he can't hear anything can he not with his ears can't see anything can't sense anything he's dead but when Jesus spoke the voice of Jesus was so powerful it brought him back to life in fact that's what being a Christian is that's what happens when we hear the voice of Jesus calling us what happens is that he calls us to life spiritual life sin robs us of life sin robs us of our relationship with

[38 : 56] God sin spoils everything about us makes us dead to the voice of God dead to the love of God dead to the truth of God makes us susceptible to be led and guided by all sorts of wrong voices that lead us in wrong ways harmful ways but when Jesus speaks to us and we hear his voice then something transforms us we're changed his voice has power we've come to life our God you are there God you really do exist God you can be known now that truth that God speaks and gives life doesn't let us off the hook in the sense of saying well I don't I haven't heard the voice of Jesus and so I'm not going to put my faith and trust in him you see we can have a self-imposed deafness to the voice of God we can determine that we're not going to listen when he calls to us but we haven't an excuse we haven't an excuse God's word speaks to us we can't say we can't hear it you all are here this morning you all have heard the voice of Jesus speaking the voice of

God speaking you can't turn away and say God never spoke to me so we need to hear the voice of God so we've God speaks to Samuel he hears but what's his response because that's the important thing isn't it I've talked about how God speaks to us but what's your response going to be what's the right response for you in coming to Jesus in you as a Christian as well well our response first of all must be that we need to be alert we need to be alert got Samuel as soon as he hears the voice of the Lord speaking he jumps up and he runs to Eli he doesn't sort of turn over you know how difficult it is to get out of bed in the morning particularly in the middle of the night you know and there's a noise or whatever oh just turn over and go back to sleep but he doesn't do that middle of the night he doesn't go back to sleep he jumps up here I am runs to Eli three times he's alert he's listening he responds to God's voice that's a lesson for us as well he didn't put it off for another day think well I'll go I'll go and find out what Eli wants tomorrow when I wake up he's attentive now imagine that we're here and I'm speaking and you're beginning to get a bit sleepy and go like that and suddenly through the door somebody runs in shouts fire fire you'd all wake up wouldn't you hey you say well what's going on you'll be alert it's to find a way out there's a fire in the place we need to find a way out you do something you wouldn't just sit still dozing you'd wake up even if you were on the phone texting somebody and somebody shouts fire you'd stop it or watching telly watching your favorite program and somebody shouts fire you'd stop watching you'd be if you were busy about your job whatever you were doing you'd put it down you'd stop you know that this is important you've got to react you've got to respond and so really what I'm saying to you here dear friends is that when God speaks to us it really is a matter of life and death this is serious when God calls you and speaks to you and to me we can't afford to be relaxed about it we can't afford to ignore the voice of God we can't afford to just put it to one side and hope that it will go away or that he'll stop speaking are you alert are you ready to hear the voice of God you want to hear the voice of God are you willing to act upon the voice of God the second thing that we see from Samuel here is that he he is aware he is aware of who is speaking to him that was a problem to begin with wasn't it for three times he wasn't aware that it was the Lord speaking to him he was alert he he acted but he wasn't aware of who it was we need to recognize God's voice who it is that's speaking to us we need to distinguish his voice from the voice of others in the world who are clamoring for our attention again when we speak to the boys and girls that was part of this the talk was this that that's there's so many people who will tell you what to do your friends your work colleagues the television the radio the books you read they'll tell you to do this live like this be this way and we need to distinguish between those voices that are harmful and the voice of God which is always for our good ever watch those nature programs with David Attenborough somebody and they're in the Arctic no the Antarctic that's right and there's all these thousands and thousands of penguins they all look the same to us don't they penguins and that and they have their chicks and so on and then for part of

the year the the mother penguin goes off and feeds and comes back and the way that she finds her chick is because every chick's call is distinctive to the parents and they can tell out of the thousands of and the noise and the hubbub they can tell which is their chick they can pick it out and they can return and they can feed that chick well the voice of God is again very striking and we need to attune our ears to the voice of God it's not something that comes naturally to us as we've seen it's something that takes time we need to hear the voice of God and we need to learn to hear the voice and recognize the voice of God from all the clamor and all the the calling out around about us how do we do that well again we do it because we learn how God's voice sounds this is how his voice is like calls us to those things which are for our good and for our blessing for our encouragement for our help we need to be able to block out in one sense those voices and ignore those voices which are unhelpful and harmful to us the voice of the world will always call us away from God the voices that we hear the majority of voices the popular voice the the the loudest voices we hear in this world will always be the voices that call us away from God it is God's voice we need to hear remember when I think it was

Elijah met with God and we're told that God there was a thunderstorm and there was an earthquake and there was a loudness and then there was a whisper and that was God speaking we need to listen finally then dear friends not only do we need to be alert we need to be aware this is God speaking but we need to be available and this is what Samuel did Eli gave him the words to speak didn't he and that's what Samuel said when he heard God speaking the fourth time he said speak Lord your servant is listening speak Lord your servant is listening he's displaying an attitude of submission to the voice of God he's displaying an attitude of a desire to obey God's voice to act upon what God says it's no good saying yes I want to hear God speaking to me I want to hear God guiding me and leading me I want to hear what God wants but when he tells me what he wants I'm going to ignore it and not do it James says this don't be hearers of the word only but do us what's the point dear friends of us wanting to hear God's voice and God speaking to us but we ignore his voice and we do what we think's best anyway that shows that we think we're better than God we know better than God that

[46 : 26] God doesn't want the best for us when he does are you available let me first of all address that to you Christians you were believers how long have you been in this church when was the last time you heard God speaking to you about the way that you live the way you act the way you behave your your your relationships within the life of the church are you listening to God are you obeying his word is he calling you is he speaking to you about something you should be doing something you shouldn't be doing and what about you who are not Christians this morning perhaps you've just come to church because you've been dragged here or you've come because it seemed like a nice thing to do on a sunny day to sit in the church under fluorescent tubes it's all no accounting for taste but you're here God is speaking to you what are you going to do about it are you available you can't afford to miss what he's saying literally everything in life and death hangs upon how you respond to the word of God this morning don't say well I'll think about it and maybe next week or the week after the week after what have you cut done about Jesus's call because

Jesus is calling to you here's just one of the things that he has to say to you listen come to me all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest take my yoke upon me so I take my yoke upon you and learn from me for I'm gentle and humble in heart and will you will find rest for your souls you see the call of God the call of Jesus to come to him to receive from him life freedom joy peace hope strength what are you going to do with that can you really afford no you can't to ignore his call his voice before we sing our final hymn just going to take a minute to be quiet bow our heads close our eyes respond to what God has been saying to us individually let's do that now Lord our God we thank you that you have been speaking to us we thank you that you will continue to speak to us we ask that you would help us so Lord to recognize your voice and not to disobey it ignore it reject it stifle it we pray Lord that where you are calling us to place our faith and trust in you that you would give us that faith that repentance to turn away from our sins and our selfish ways and to receive your forgiveness your love where you've been speaking to us about aspects of our lives for some time which are not right not as they should be

Lord we ask again that you would give us that desire that strength to turn away from those things and to turn back to your way and to live for you we've been speaking to us oh Lord about anxieties and fears and worries that we haven't given over to you we've held on to them then Lord again give us that strength that we need to let go to receive your healing to receive your peace to receive your

grace oh Lord we thank you that you do speak and we pray that you would attune our ears to your voice that not just on a Sunday but Lord through the week and in everything that we do we may be attentive to your voice that we might be available to your word that Lord we might not only be hearers but doers we ask this in the name of your son amen let's sing our final hymn it's number 579 579 I heard the voice of Jesus say come on to me and rest if you have heard his voice then use this him as a response to that voice and come to him even now 579 against them I heard the noise for Jesus saying come on to me and rest if your father can do me before and enter the love comes to yourself me and rest if me so just ■■ when I pray that you will not continuously victor you are in ■■

I fragments of this for me so have my memory say now unto thee and rest lay down the weary long lay down thy head upon thy breast I came to Jesus as I was weary and gone and sad I found him in the resting place and he has made me glad I heard the voice of Jesus said behold thy freely clear the living water thirsty blood to crown and drink and live

[52 : 32] I came to Jesus and I cried upon thy filling stream my thirst was quenched my song revived and now I live in him I heard the voice of Jesus say cry out this dark world's night look unto me thy dawn shall rise and all thy daily night I look to Jesus and I bow in him my star my star and in that light of life I'll walk till drowning days I come

Jesus says come to me all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest take my yoke upon you and learn from me for I'm gentle and humble in heart and you will find rest for your souls amen