

THE ANATOMY OF A CHRISTIAN

V. Ears That Hear

"He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

Matthew 11:15

A well-known zoologist announced he was trying to cross a parrot with a black panther. "Good heavens," exclaimed a newspaper reporter, "what do you expect to end up with?"

Well, I can't rightly say," admitted the scientist. "But if it starts talking, people had better listen."

I don't know about that creature, but I can assure you that God is speaking and we had better be listening. In fact, a Christian has ears that hear and they are (or ought to be) attuned to God's voice.

The problem is that there are so many voices—such a cacophony of sound. The radio, the television, the Internet and the newspapers — all are clamoring to be heard. Sometimes we feel like a stray dog at a whistler's convention. We are not sure what to listen to.

We must however, be like Samuel who prayed, "*Speak Lord, thy servant heareth.*" (I Samuel 3:9-10) His voice does not always come as we expect. Look at Elijah. He was listening expectantly. First the wind came, "but the Lord was not in the wind." Then came an earthquake, "but the Lord was not in the earthquake." After the earthquake came the fire, "but the Lord was not in the fire." And after the fire, there came the "still small voice". God spoke to him and his life was changed.

We too must hear His voice in the medium that He chooses to use. Certainly He speaks through the Bible. He speaks as we pray, as we worship, and in our devotions (such as this one). He speaks in the circumstances of life and at times we are not expecting. He speaks through our minister and our leadership team as they call on us to sacrifice.

When God speaks it may be a call to salvation. "*Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone will hear my voice ... I will come in to him ...*" (Revelation 3:20)

It may be a call to service. He called for one to serve and Isaiah responded, "*Here am I, send me.*" (Isaiah 6:1ff)

It is a call to submission. Listen to God as He speaks through David, "*Who is willing to consecrate his services this day unto the Lord?*" (I Chronicles 29:5)

It certainly is a call to stewardship. Jesus Himself challenges, "*Give and it shall be given unto you ...*" (Luke 6:38)

Do you ever wonder why there is no outpouring of the Holy Spirit? Do you question why there is no great renewal in our church? O. S. Hawkins put it like this. "*The principal hindrance to the advancement of the Kingdom of God is greed. It is the chief obstacle to heaven-sent revival. It seems that when the back of greed is broken, the human spirit soars into regions of*

unselfishness. I believe it is safe to say there can be no continuous revival without "hilarious" giving. And I fear no contradiction: wherever there is "hilarious" giving there will soon be revival!"

And Jesus said, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." (Matthew 11:15) Our problem may be that we hear but do not listen. Much like the man who boasted that he had the best hearing aid money could buy. A friend asked him, "What kind is it? He replied, "Oh about 2:30!"

Now in this critical time in the history of our church we need also to listen carefully and prayerfully to the voice of our minister and leadership team as they challenge us to give sacrificially. As God speaks to us let us obey and rejoice in the privilege of giving.

Oh those words spoken by Jesus – "Son Remember!" They are recorded in Luke 16:25 in the story of Lazarus and Dives.

Think of this in light of eternity. We stand before Him and He says, "My child remember."

- ◆ Remember how your time could have been used to enrich the lives of others.
- ◆ Remember how your talents could have brought glory to my name.
- ◆ Remember how your treasure might have enriched my church and brought others to eternal salvation.
- ◆ Remember! Remember! Remember!

It doesn't have to be this way. Today, this very hour, we can change this. God promises in I John 1:9, "If we confess ... He will forgive." We can start over as good stewards!

Today is the first day of the rest of your life – a new beginning.

Today if you hear His voice harden not your heart!

(Hebrews 3:8)

Lord, I hear so many sounds around me, but the sound I long to hear above all others is your still small voice saying, "I love you my child."