

“ON EAGLES’ WINGS MINISTRIES

See how I bare you on eagles’ wings and brought you unto myself.” Exodus 19: 4.

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In a well-known verse of scripture, Jesus said: *“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.” John 10:27.* Jesus added: *And a stranger will they soon not follow but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers. “John 10:5.* Hearing the voice of Jesus Christ, in reality, takes us to a higher level of communication with heaven. It suggests that there is in place, a dimension that is higher than simply reading the bible and many time we are required to get hold of Strong’s Concordance to do a word search for definition of what we read. Hearing the voice of the Lord can offer more clarity and specifics instead of doing a word search. The writer of Hebrews noted the following: *“Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, Today, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the day of provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years.” Hebrews 3:7-9.*

The term—today if ye will hear his voice—seem to suggest that God speaks every day. In fact, according to the Psalmist, God does not stop speaking since the creation of the worlds. Here is his narrative: *“The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handy work. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun.” Psalm 19:1-4.* This goes to show that we can hear God’s voice each and every day, if we allow our ears to be tuned in listen as He speaks.

Speaking and hearing brings us into the realm of aerodynamics! In simple terms, and from the prospect of listening to voices that speak across the airwaves, one thing of vital importance is “a receiver”. For instance! When you turn on your television or radio (now a days it includes your cell phone) you have the opportunity to choose what material you wish to listen to. You can be listening to “old time classics” while the person next to you is listening to rock and roll, and the next person is listening to “Home on the range”. What is the setting that we are observing? Again! You can be watching the news, the next person is watching ice skating, the next is watching a ball game, and the next is watching wrestling. It makes no difference if everyone is sitting shoulder to shoulder. What makes the difference in this scenario? The difference is because each person has a “receiver” that is capable to reach in among the multitude of information, and zeros in on the one that is selected. So, it is with us listening to the voice of the Lord. We must be able to avoid all that we did not select, and tap into that which God speaks, that comes to us loud and clear.

Noting the dynamics between the sheep and the shepherd, Jesus outlined more of the working parts in this lesson. He explained that the shepherd puts forth his sheep, then goes before and leads them in the path he has chosen. And in this process, the sheep follow the shepherd because they know his voice and a stranger they will not follow, because they know not the voice of strangers. John 10:4,5. What are the dynamics that apply to the sheep in this lesson? The sheep are obedient only to the voice they recognize, and they are capable of recognizing, or differentiating between all the voices that are floating in the air space around them. When we read, “today, if you will hear his voice, harden not your heart” it suggests that God speaks every day. For one’s spiritual growth, hearing his voice every day is a prerequisite for spiritual growth. Paul offered a strict admonition to “*Prove all things: hold fast to that which is good.*” *1st Thessalonians 5:21*. As we can see, so far, to live a Christ-like life on a daily basis requires a constant review and testing of what we hear, what we can prove to be good according to the scriptures. It calls for daily examination, to see whether we are in the faith or not. Paul offered a cleansing formula, that makes for a victorious Christian life that pleases the Father in heaven. Here is what the Apostle suggests!

“Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates? 2nd Corinthians 13:5. What are we learning so far? Reading only a few scriptures, it is enough to place the onus on each individual in our pursuit of righteousness and perfection in true holiness unto the Lord. See how Paul laid it out in plain language: “*For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honor.*” *1st Thessalonians 4:3,4*. What these scriptures have done in this study, is to remove the task and remedy of Christian growth from others, and make it, in every sense a matter of personal responsibility.

Seemingly, today, more than ever before life has become more challenging because of the crowded airwaves that linger just above our heads. News Media, Social Media, and many other forms of information now determine what we hear and even what we believe. The process has left many confused, uncertain, and at their wits end, or at the end of their wits. (or both,) Many factors come into play that determine the quality of life (especially the Christian life) that one is able to create. Just about every voice that screams for our attention, declares that they are right—that they are honest and true. As the choices we have to make everyday increases, so likewise our ability to make the right choices diminish. How about hearing the voice of the Lord spoken by ordinary people with whom you interact? As usual, I like to highlight real life stories because it is much easier for us to identify with people who were much like ourselves. Elijah had gotten into a bad relationship with Jezebel over her husband’s effort to grab the field of their neighbor Ahab. “*Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah, saying, So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time.*” *1st Kings 19:2*. This development sent Elijah on the run for his life.

“But he himself went a day’s journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree; and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, it is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life for I am not better than my fathers. While he slept, the angel of the Lord came to him with a message from the Lord. Observe carefully, the sequence of events that followed. “*And he came thither unto a cave, and lodged there; and, behold, the word of the Lord came to him, and he said unto him, What doest thou here, Elijah?* About this time there came a strong wind, and an earthquake. *And behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind: and rent the mountain, and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the*

earthquake. And after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire: and after the fire, a still small voice.” 1st Kings 19: 4-12.

Notice carefully that there a number of incidents that would suggest that the Lord was speaking directly to Elijah—notice how God was not in those events—until He spoke in a still small voice. The task we are faced with in many situations, circumstances, and even messages that are meant to come from the Lord. But speaking candidly, it takes more skillful and drastic steps for us to be sure that we are hearing from the Lord himself. Let us bear in mind that the airways are jam packed with myriad voices, with many that are designed to deceive us and to drive us over the edge and totally out of God’s perfect will. I can remember when I lived in London, England, and began to seriously seek the face of Christ, and to hear directly from him. He said to me during one of those moments of diligently seeking his face. “He said, when you read the bible, read slowly and watch every word—because words have meanings. Take nothing for granted and check the source of the information. If the source is wrong, throw it all out because everything else will be wrong also.

No matter how smart one is: no matter how noble the thought of the heart is, one needs kind words and expert advice. Not one of us can be qualified as a “master expert” concerning the word of God, and his master plan in the salvation of the human race. This next real-life story speaks volume for us to draw from, and be sure that we do not allow ourselves to fall into the same trap as the prophet featured in this lesson. The story begins this way: *“And, behold, there came a man of God out of Judah by the word of the Lord unto Bethel: and Jeroboam stood by the altar to burn incense. And he cried against the altar in the word of the Lord, and said, O altar, altar, thus saith the Lord; behold, a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah; and upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places that burn incense upon thee, and men’s bones shall be burnt upon thee.*

*And the king said unto the man of God, Come home with me, and refresh thyself, and I will give thee a reward. And the man of God said unto the king, If thou wilt give me half of thy house, I will not go in with thee, neither will I eat bread nor drink water, in this place. For so was it charged me by the word of the Lord, saying, eat no bread nor drink water, nor turn again by the same way that thou camest. So he went another way, and returned not by the way that he came to Bethel. **Here comes a twist in the story that we need to take to heart!***

Now there dwelt an old prophet in Bethel; and his sons came and told him all the works that the man of God had done that day in Bethel: the words which he had spoken unto the king, then they told also them they told also to their father. These sons saddled the horse of their father, so he could pursue after the man of God.

When this old prophet caught up with the man of God, he asked him: *Art thou the man of God that camest from Judah? And he said I am. Then he said unto him, come home with me, and eat bread. The man of God replied: I may not return with thee, nor go in with thee: neither will I eat bread nor drink water with thee in this place. For it was said to me by the word of the Lord, Thou shalt eat no bread nor drink water there nor turn again to go by the way that thou camest.*

He said unto him, I am a prophet also as thou art; and an angel spoke unto me by the word of the Lord, saying, Bring him back with thee into thy house, that he may eat bread and drink water. But he lied unto him. Be careful about those old prophets! So he went back with him, and did eat bread in his house and drank water. GOD NOW TAKES OVER! And it came to pass as they sat at the table, that the word of the Lord came unto the prophet that brought him back. And he cried unto the man of God that came from Judah, saying, Thus saith the Lord, for

as much as thou hast disobeyed the mouth of the Lord and hast not kept the commandment which the Lord thy God commanded thee; but camest back, and hast eaten bread and drunk water in the place, of which the Lord did say unto thee, Eat no bread, and drink no water; thy carcase shall not come unto the sepulchre of thy fathers.

And it came to pass, after he had eaten bread, and after he had drunk, that he saddled for him the ass, to wit, for the prophet whom he had brought back. And when he was gone, a lion met him by the way, and slew him: and his carcase was cast in the way, and the ass stood by it, the lion also stood by the carcase. And, behold, men passed by, and saw the carcase cast in the way, and the lion standing by the carcase: and they came and told it in the city where the old prophet dwelt. And when the prophet that brought him back from the way heard thereof, he said, It is the man of God, who was disobedient unto the word of the Lord: therefore the Lord hath delivered him unto the lion, which hath torn him, and slain him, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake unto him. And he said unto his sons, saying, Saddle me the ass. And they saddled him. And he went and found his carcase cast in the way, and the ass and the lion standing by the carcase: the lion had not eaten the carcase, nor torn the ass.

And the prophet took up the carcase of the man of God and laid it upon the ass, and brought it back: and the old prophet came to the city, to mourn and to bury him. And he laid his carcase in his own grave; and they mourned over him, saying, Alas, my brother! After this thing, Jeroboam returned not from his evil way, but made again of the lowest people priests of the high places: whosoever: whosoever would, he consecrated him, and he became one of the priests of the high places. And this thing became sin unto the house of Jeroboam, even to cut it off, and to destroy it from off the face of the earth." 1st Kings 13.

This account is lengthy to read, but the story and all the dramas it contained are worth much to us as we read all the details. We must notice how a man of God allowed himself to be taken aback and submitted to disobedience after being told by God in no uncertain terms exactly what to do. It goes to show how dangerous it can be to take for granted the words of another who claims to be a prophet of the Lord. The lesson this man of God learned even to the losing of his life, was brutally demonstrated in the fact that the lion killed the man of God, but it was not for food. It remained standing by the corpse of the dead man, as if to demonstrate that he had done what the Lord motivated him to do. He was made an executioner by the Lord God, to reward the man of God for his evil ways: ways that were from the lips of an old, washed-up prophet.

We are not given specific details as to the personality and actual calling by God to be his prophet. We cannot determine for sure why this man was called "the man of God." There are several instances in which God gave time and showed patience and tolerance for corrections to be made for man's sins, in acts of disobedience to the direct commands, given by the prophets, in dreams, or other sources. It would take a long time for us to make a list of these cases in which God was slow to take action against those who disobeyed his will and his word. But in the case of this "man of God" the Lord was quick and even unmerciful in taking action for this act of disobedience. His action was swift, direct, and thorough.

It is never enough to accept and allow yourself to be taken in downright disobedience simply by another who claims to share your dreams or claim to be of the same calling as yourself. Salvation is a very personal matter, and God holds each one of us to what he has called us for in his vineyard. We must always bear in mind that no one else can answer to God for your personal task, no matter how well you did your job, or failed to labor at your best. We notice the difference between Elijah and this man of God, whose name was not mentioned. Yes, Elijah ran

for his life from the wrath of an enraged woman. He had called for fire from heaven to consume the sacrifices of false prophets and idol worshippers. Thinking that he was the only one left on God's side, he fled and sought a place to rest and even to die. When the angel of God told him that God had reserved for himself many (some 7000men) who will not bow to idols, his courage grew quickly.

Elijah was told by the angel: *"It shall come to pass, that him that escapeth the sword of Hazeel shall Jehu slay; and him that escapeth from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay. Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him."* 1st Kings 19: 17,18. This lesson tells us of God's provision for us no matter how dire the circumstances are. Surely, he will not leave himself without a witness, and he will not deny himself at any cost. It is important for us to look at the lives of men and women from days gone by, and learn from their struggles, falls and risings again, and in weakness they waxed strong. As Hebrew 11 listed the exploits of these ordinary people, who through their faith turned the world upside down: caused new laws to be written, and have left a path of victory for us to follow.

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