

THE FIRST 15

Wednesday, January 29, 2025

Today is Wednesday, January 29. As we continue our study on the Practice of Prayer, we study what the Bible says about listening to God.

OPENING PRAYER

As a new day dawns, I seek the presence of the God who loves me. I claim a quiet space set apart from the rush of the world. I pause and become still, and breathe deeply and slowly. Quiet my mind to listen. Help me recognize the distinct sound of Your voice speaking to my soul. Reveal the message You have for me through the power of Your Holy Spirit. Amen.

SCRIPTURE

The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger's voice. John 10:3-5

REFLECTION

Jesus defines himself as the Good Shepherd who gives life to a lost and broken humanity. He is the gate into God's fold. Jesus fulfilled the Old Testament promises that God Himself would come to shepherd His people. God came in Jesus to be the ultimate Shepherd I trust and obey. The voice of the Shepherd calls me by name. He is the one who gave His life for me.

Yet even after hearing the promises of God, I still persist in living outside the flock. I struggle to discern the voice of the Shepherd. Or worse, I don't think I am worthy of His love. The Shepherd loves the sheep who don't want to have anything to do with Him. He loves the sheep who wander away. The Shepherd goes searching to bring them back and reminds them where they belong and to whom they belong.

I imagine Jesus, the Good Shepherd, calling my name. He leads me. He goes ahead of me and I follow Him. I recognize the distinct timbre of His voice and I stay in step with Him. There are other voices in my life, voices of selfishness, voices of the world, voices on social media, voices of the stranger, voices of the enemy. I sometimes get distracted by the many voices that speak into my life. If I am not careful, I can even mistakenly confuse His voice with the others.

The Shepherd whispers His love for me. His voice guides me, protects me and reminds me I am His beloved. All I have to do is tune the ears of my soul and listen. As Jesus goes ahead of me, he goes to prepare whatever is next in my life. I can trust and follow Jesus in this next season because He is already there, making sure everything is exactly as it should be. I can lie down in safety and rest securely. I give Him all my anxieties, worries and fears, because I know I can trust Him completely. He has things well in hand. I listen to His voice and follow Him faithfully. Jesus is the one I follow. The only one.

Ask: How can I recognize the voice of Jesus over other voices in my life? What helps me clearly discern what Jesus is saying and test it against other worldly voices?

Pause and pray

CLOSING PRAYER

Holy Lord Jesus, lead and guide me. Call me by name and direct me on the path of righteousness. Guide me to safety and security. Shepherd of my soul, I invite You into my life. I listen for Your voice, speak to me and lead me the way I should go. Forgive me for the times I do not trust in You, when I run ahead of You or fail to keep pace with You. Enable me to recognize the distinctive sound of Your voice and follow You and no other. Amen.