

Over the weeks we have been focusing upon how we hear God. We know that he speaks in various ways, but how can we really know it is God speaking? What are the 'rules' of discerning this both as individuals and as a community? This study will largely focus upon the personal; next week we look at the life of the community, and hearing God.

True faith examines its object before reposing confidence in it. Every prophet is the mouthpiece or spokesperson of some spirit: true prophets of "the Spirit of God" (v. 2), also called "the Spirit of truth" (v. 6), and false prophets of "the spirit of falsehood" (v. 6) or "the spirit of the antichrist" (v. 3). So behind every prophet is a spirit, and behind each spirit is either God or the devil, the world and/or self. Still today there are many voices clamouring for our attention and cults, beliefs or ideologies have gained widespread popular support. Some of them claim a special revelation or inspiration to authenticate their particular doctrine. There is a need for Christian discernment and grace.

How do you know if something is true, right or good in life?

Read 1 John 4:1-8

1. The background of this passage is a situation in which "prophecy" was prevalent. Apparently John's readers were tending to uncritically accept all teaching that claimed to be inspired. What is the purpose of testing the spirits (v. 1)? Read 1 Thessalonians 5:19–21. How are Paul's exhortations similar to John's?
2. John wrote of his own time that "many false prophets have gone out into the world" (v. 1). How is this still true today?

3. (1 John 4:1-3) Why is believing that Jesus was God in the flesh so important and what are the implications of the fact that Jesus could live out His divine life in a human body like ours? What significance does it bring to the crucifixion and to the resurrection? See Hebrews 10:5-10
4. What further tests should we apply in discerning whether what we hear is from God? What are the dangers of applying formulas and techniques to knowing God's voice? When have you been right and wrong in discerning God's voice? How did you respond?
5. Twice John tells us plainly we are "from God." How does that truth help us to discern? See Romans 8:15-16. Several times in his letter, John has pointed out how believers are different from nonbelievers (1 John 2:20-21; 3:1, 7-8). In what additional ways are John's "dear children" different from "the world" (vv. 4-6)?
6. (1 John 4:7-8) Why is the statement, "God is love," so important? What does it say about God's nature? How does love being the essence of God's nature affect us when we discern? If we were created in God's image of love, but fell, what does this say about the road to healing in our lives? Why does love demand a willingness to forgive? In what way do we think forgiveness is important when it comes to discerning others?

Prayer Points

Pray for those who are currently unwell, convalescing or receiving treatment. Pray for Pat (end of life care) and Janet Walsh, Angela McCulloch (fractured ankle) and Shella Robertson (cancer treatment).

Fit for purpose, earthquake resistant medical buildings are critical in Nepal. Pray that BMS worker Toby Vokuhl can well assist with the infrastructure growth plans of one of their Nepali partners, enabling continued and improved medical care.

Sermon Notes

Ways of Knowing

T_____ - 1

T_____ - 2

True Knowing



BIBLE STUDY

March 19th 2023

Hearing God:

Hearing God – How do I know
it is not just me?:
1 John 4:1-8

‘God spoke to me.’ ‘The Spirit spoke to my heart.’ ‘God revealed the idea to me.’ Being close to God means communicating with Him, telling Him what is on our hearts in prayer and hearing and understanding what He is saying to us. It is this second half of our conversation with God that is so important but that can also be so difficult. How do we hear His voice? How can we be sure that what we think we hear is not our own subconscious? What role does the Bible play? What does the Bible teach in how the Lord speaks to us? These are some of the areas we will be covering over this next series, as we seek to grow in our relationship with Jesus.

If you would like to join a Connect Group, please contact the church office 01424 730001