

Stand Alone...All the Voices in Your Head

10/27/19 – Pastor Randy

How many of you battle voices in your head? Do you ever argue with yourself?

If you were transported into today from 40 years ago, imagine how strange you would feel walking around on the street, watching and listening to everyone talking to themselves. You wouldn't have any knowledge of the modern technology of cell phones and Bluetooth earbuds. You would actually think everyone is having a conversation with themselves.

John 10:1-5

*"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber. But he who enters by the door is **the shepherd of the sheep**. To him the gatekeeper opens. **The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.** When he has brought out all his own, **he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.**"*

John 10:16

*And **I have other sheep** that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and **they will listen to my voice**. So there will be one flock, one shepherd.*

John 10:24-27

*So the Jews gathered around him and said to him, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly." Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father's name bear witness about me, but **you do not believe because you are not among my sheep. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.**"*

A few months ago I spoke to you about the subject of choices. I mentioned that living in a culture like ours that presents us with so many options that compete for our time and money, it is more challenging than ever to make decisions and to make the right decision. We not only have to find the right things to say "yes" to, but we also have to have the wisdom and self-control

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to say “no” to the options that will rob us of the time and money we need to choose the right options.

Related to that issue of living in culture that presents us with a multitude of options, we also live in a culture that presents us with a multitude of messages that compete for our attention and have the power to exert influence over our attitudes, affections, and actions.

The question for you today is “Who are you listening to?” Let me phrase that same basic question in two more ways: “Whose voice are you paying attention to?” What messages are you allowing to influence your attitudes, affections and actions?”

Before we look at the basic points from these words of Jesus in John 10, let me give you some context. Jesus words are directed primarily to a group of religious leaders who did not accept that he was the son of God and Savior. Jesus parables about the gate of the sheepfold and the good shepherd were intended to draw a contrast between Jesus and the religious leaders with the words of the prophet Ezekiel from Ezekiel 34 in the background.

In the OT a shepherd served as a metaphor for a king or leader. In Ezekiel 34 the leaders of Israel had proven themselves to be false shepherds; shepherds in name only; shepherds who didn't shepherd. God promised that he was going to remove these fake shepherds and shepherd the people himself. God, through the prophet Ezekiel, said that He would shepherd the people the way a true, or good shepherd, ought to. Although the term “good shepherd” is not used in Ezekiel 34, that phrase is a perfect description of the kind of shepherd God declares he was going to be.

In John 10, when Jesus referred to himself as the “good shepherd” he was making a massive claim, identifying himself with the God who spoke through Ezekiel.

In addition, God, speaking through Ezekiel, said he would come and “shepherd” the people himself and here is how he would do it:
“And I will set up over them one shepherd”

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Let's put the pieces of the puzzle together:

I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I myself will make them lie down, declares the Lord God. Ezekiel 34:15

"And I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd." Ezekiel 34:23

And I, the Lord, will be their God, and my servant David shall be prince among them. Ezekiel 34:24

Remember, God revealed himself as Israel's true King. When he said, the shepherd he would set up over them would be "prince", he was saying this shepherd would be His Son.

God, the King will shepherd the people himself, through his Son!

Now, look again at the words of Jesus in John 10:16,

*And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, **one shepherd**.*

Jesus intentionally echoed the language of God from Ezekiel 34, referring to God's future messiah, the future shepherd-king, who God would send to shepherd his people. This language prompted the reply of the religious leaders we read about in verse 24,

So the Jews gathered around him and said to him, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ (i.e. Messiah), tell us plainly.

Jesus said, "I told you but you don't believe me!" because you are not my sheep.

In other words, I have told you, but you won't listen!!! The reason you don't listen is that you are not my sheep!

Here is the message Jesus was sending to these religious leaders:

1. Jesus is the one whom God promised he would send to replace the failed leaders of Israel as the true, good shepherd.
2. Jesus' sheep are God the Father's sheep and the Father's sheep are Jesus' sheep! Not only is this point implied by the Ezekiel 34 background passage, it was also made explicitly by Jesus in verses 29 & 30.

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My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. I and the Father are one."

3. God's sheep are evidenced by the following:

a. They hear his voice, know his voice, listen to his voice, and believe his voice.

You won't find the phrase, "believe my voice". But here is what Jesus said in vs. 26 & 27: *"...but you do not believe because you are not among my sheep. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.* With these words Jesus contrasted the unbelief of the religious leaders with the belief of those who were following Jesus. We would not be distorting the text to interpret Jesus words as, "You do not believe me because you are not my sheep. My sheep follow me because they do listen to my voice and believe me."

b. As a result of hearing, knowing, listening, and believing... they follow.

c. They do not listen to voices other than Jesus. In verse 8 Jesus said the sheep don't listen to the thieves and robbers

So that brings me back to my question for today: "Who are you listening to?" "Whose voice are you paying attention to?" What messages are you allowing to influence your attitudes, affections and actions?"

1. Don't listen to the voices that kill, steal and destroy.

In verse 8 Jesus said the sheep don't listen to the voice of the thieves and robbers. What are some messages you hear that have the power to destroy?

A. You are a lost cause. The Devil is called "the accuser". When the Devil tries to remind you of your past, just remind him of his future.

B. God isn't good. The first of the two destructive messages from Satan were the lies he planted in the mind of Eve in the garden.

He said, "Did God really say...". Satan's question was intended to raise doubt about the goodness of God. In effect he was suggesting that God had withheld all the good stuff in the garden from Adam and Eve. God hadn't said that, but the Devil wanted to focus Eve's attention on the one exception rather than on God's abundant provision.

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C. You Know Better than God's Word.

This is the lie that Saul believed when God told him not to keep any of the possessions of the Amalekites when Israel defeated them in battle. But Saul thought he knew better so he decided that he would keep some and justify doing so by suggesting that he could use them to offer sacrifices to God. He lied to himself and God to justify doing what he wanted to do rather than what God wanted him to do!

D. God won't judge your sin? The second great lie Satan planted in the mind of Eve was that she didn't need to respect God's commands. He said, "You won't die?" "God won't judge you!" This is the lie that, once embraced, paves a persons way to hell!

2. Do Listen to the Voice that Leads to Life.

Are you hearing the sound of the Shepherd's voice? If you are listening to the Good Shepherd you should hear all four of these messages. The sound of the Shepherd's voice will change in its tone and inflection.

A. Hear Him Send You Out into His Service.

The Shepherd calls us to follow him into service.

When Isaiah's attention was focused on God like a laser beam, He heard God call, "Who can I send? Who will go for us?" (Isaiah 6:1-8)

Peter heard Jesus say to him, "Go and feed my other sheep!" (John 21:15-17)

The disciples heard Jesus say, "Go and make disciples of all nations..." (Matt 28:18-20)

The word of the Lord came to Jonah, "Go!" The Lord told Philip to

"go" to the Ethiopia official, he told Peter to "go" to Cornelius, he told Paul and Barnabas to "go" to the Gentiles. Jesus is constantly telling his people to "go" and tell; to go and show and tell!

B. Hear Him Speak Courage into Your Fear.

One of the most common expressions of Jesus is, "Fear not" or "do not be afraid". The message "fear not" is usually accompanied by a reminder that God is with us and that he can be trusted. "I am with you. You can trust me."

C. Hear Him Call You When You Wander

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Sometimes God's voice is very loud and very stern. That is because the voice of warning needs to be loud and stern. If your child is wandering into the street you will not speak to him gently and quietly. You will shout to get his attention.

D. Hear Him Call You His Own.

Over and over again in John 10 Jesus drives home the point that the sheep are his sheep; his own sheep. He repeatedly describes them as "my own" and "my sheep". Jesus tells us we are his own. We belong to him. One of our greatest needs is our need to belong. God created us with this need belonging need; a need that other humans can only fill to a degree. It can only be filled ultimately and absolutely by coming to know that we belong to him!!