



“IT’S JUST ME!”
By Rev. J. K. Golding

St. John 10:4,15-16 “And when He putteth forth His own sheep, He goes before them, and the sheep follow Him, *FOR THEY KNOW HIS VOICE!*”

“As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.”

“And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also must I bring, and they will *HEAR* my voice; and they shall be one fold, and one shepherd.”

“When God whispers your name” is the title of one of many of Max Lucados’ books. “When God whispers your name!” the title, the very words, the thought intrigues me. The Creator! The God of the Universe, whispering my name! Isn’t that an awesome thought! The Great I AM whispering your name!

Over the years of my ministry, be it as teacher, pastor, counselor or minister, have, or on a mission field of foreign soil, I believe the most frequent question is and always has been; “How can I know it is *GOD’S* voice?”

I hear statements like this; “Is it an audible voice? Do I hear Him with my ears? My head? My heart? Is it a voice or a thought or a feeling? How can I know it is Him, and not me, or even worse, Satan?!”

All reasonable questions, so, let’s look at this in a manner that will give us reasonable, reassuring answers.

One of the handiest inventions that we enjoy today, in our home is the answering machine! It has brought a whole new service to our home, via the telephone. When I’m not at home or unable to “pick up”, it answers for me, and tapes that incoming call in a most efficient manner!

When my sons call, or a family member, even almost all my close friends, they start out by saying, “It’s just me!” And then go on with the message. Rarely, if ever do I get a name, unless it is a doctor’s office or a business call. And, I know I do the same thing when I call my children, I’ll say, “Hi kids, it’s just me, wondering if everything is okay, or whatever the message is.

But, when I listen to the machine, and all these, “It’s just me’s, I know exactly who the “just me” is! How? Why? It is a familiar voice, one I’ve heard for years, or as in the case of my sons, all their lives! We have had lots of conversations, much communion with each other. Their voice is so unique, distinct as it is different from all others, not to be mistaken! It cannot be mistaken because of all the “talk” that has occurred between us!

In Genesis the second chapter we read: “And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it” v.15 “But of the tree of the Knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” V.17

“And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: And He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof.” V.21

“And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.” V.25

Then in Genesis 3:6-10 “And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her, and she did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew they were naked, and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. And they *HEARD* the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day; and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden. And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, ‘Where art thou?’ And he said, ‘I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked: and I hid myself.’”

If you go to the Word and read these two chapters, you will find there was much dialog between Adam, Eve, and God. So much so, there is never a question by any party, as to who is speaking. They were all familiar with each other’s voice. Why? Because of all the talking that had occurred between them.

In the text we have at the top of this article (John 10:4, 15-16) we have Jesus assuring us, we *WILL KNOW HIS VOICE AND HE WILL KNOW OURS*, Just as a sheep know their shepherd’s voice. The shepherd spends a good deal of time with his sheep, he talks to them, coaxes them on in their search for pasture land, even singing to them in his idle time. The sheep *KNOW* that voice, that voice means love, protection, and security.

My husband and I had sheep for several years, and all we had to do was call them by name and they would come running to us! Many times when we had visitors, they were convinced if they took “goodies” out to the pasture and called, the sheep would come, over and over they would try, but **NO the sheep would not move. They knew it was not the shepherd!**

We had a ewe named Lucy. I learned so much from her! But one outstanding lesson was, when she had lambs (she usually had twins!) they were kept very close to her. If someone called with a goodie, she would firmly stomp her front foot, and that meant, “NO!” They stopped in their tracks and didn’t move! She taught them about danger and the importance of going *ONLY* to the shepherd!

We learn God’s voice by conversation, speaking together, informal exchanges of ideas, questions and information. Intimate associations, not just me speaking, but listening to Him. Sometimes from the Word, sometimes in the quiet, and sometimes through another servant of His! But *ALWAYS* His voice confirms His Word and His Character!

**God Bless you in your walk with Him!
Rev. J Kehl Golding**

“COMPASSION FOR SHARING”

By Mary Mayko

Acts 2:44-45 LB “And all the believers met together constantly and shared everything with each other, selling their possessions and dividing with those in need.”

Acts 4:36-37 LB “There was Joseph (the one the apostles nicknamed (“*Barny the Preacher!*”)) He was of the tribe of Levi, from the island of Cyprus. He was one of those who sold a field he owned and brought the money to the apostles for distribution to those in need.”



Many people with a compassion for sharing or giving keep a low profile. They simply want to do something that helps others in a significant way. They don't need to “*toot their own horn*” or draw attention to themselves. When Barnabas sold some property and gave the proceeds to the apostles to assist other believers, he most likely never dreamed that for the next 2000 years, people would use his compassion as an example of a generous spirit! Do we examine our motives for giving to the Lord's work?

Not only did Barnabas share his material blessings with others, he became known as an encourager and consoler. He was also courageous, for when other disciples feared Saul/Paul, only Barnabas spoke out for him! Saul's reputation had followed him even after his conversion! Barnabas discerned that Saul had truly met the LORD as his life had changed! We see the Lord used Barnabas to give the early church an opportunity to hear and use Saul's gifts.

Acts.11: 22-26 Barnabas was sent to Antioch to evaluate the growth and encourage the believers. After evaluating the needs there, he sent for Saul to join him. We see a man so confident in the areas of ministry God had called him, he did not feel threatened by the gifted Saul! He recognized they needed the talents of both to support other believers for effective ministry in Antioch. When news of a special need in Jerusalem came to their attention, a collection was taken up and sent by Saul and Barnabas for the people. These were well respected and trustworthy men! What a gift he was to the early church!

Although they had a disagreement later over John Mark, it was not a permanent split! Paul spoke well of both men in his writings. The Bible often shows us the human side of people and even though we may not agree on some subjects, we don't have to damage their reputations! Barnabas had multiple gifts, compassion, encouragement, discernment among them! We see his influence in the writings of John Mark as well as Luke and Paul. He is still an excellent role model for both church leaders and lay people!

How about you? What kind of influence do you have on others? Do you share your God given abilities and money with compassion and without the need of public acclaim?

Gal. 6:4 LB “Let everyone be sure that he is doing his very best, for then he will have the personal satisfaction of work well done, and won't need to compare himself with someone else.

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“ABUNDANT PEACE”

By Mary Mayko

Psalm 37:7 LB “Rest in the Lord; wait patiently for him to act. Don’t be envious of evil men who prosper.”

The Lord has promised abundant peace to those who walk humbly before Him and serve Him with their whole heart. While we know we have peace *with* God, there are times our *peace of God* becomes disturbed when some one is hateful with us, they misunderstand us, or we are upset over an important issue. We naturally try to defend ourselves as that is an inborn instinct! Self preservation or even pride can rise up quickly if we are not alert and we can act or say something in a foolish way.

Can we hold our thoughts and tongue in check long enough for God’s peace to calm us down or do we promptly rebuff our accuser? If we have walked with the Lord for awhile, the Fruit of the Spirit should become evident in our relations with others. The Fruit of the Spirit is described in Gal.5:22 with a portion of that being peace! *How we long to please the Lord with all our heart!* When we fail, we grieve and sometimes berate ourselves! We need to remember that every day we must *crucify our flesh!* That isn’t easy for most of us! That means we have to humble ourselves!

Ps.37:11 LB “But all who humble themselves before the Lord shall be given every blessing, and shall have wonderful peace.”

Ps.39:1 KJV “I said I will take heed to my ways that I sin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me.”

Ps.37:34b LB “Don’t be impatient for the Lord to act! Keep traveling steadily along His pathway and in due season He will honor you with every blessing.” V37 KJV

“Mark the perfect (mature/blameless) man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace.”

How easy it is for us to grieve over mistreatment or some injustice and lay awake for hours at night planning what we’d like to say or do! We often *replay* the incident over in our mind so much we can’t seem to focus our attention back on the Lord or His Word! When we are in such a state we really do not feel very spiritual! During times such as this, we need to force our thoughts on some scriptures we have memorized. The 23rd Psalm is one many people memorized as a child and can be the point of *rescue* for us if we will meditate on the words!

Quietly reflect on one verse at a time, saying each word slowly and deliberately! David was a man who went through many attacks against him mentally, physically and emotionally! He wrote this Psalm that encourages our hearts from his deep

Personal experiences in life! God’s Word is designed to bring peace, abundant peace to the hearts of His children! Listen to Jesus’ words in John 14:27 LB “I am leaving you with a gift- peace of mind and heart! And the peace I give isn’t fragile like the peace the world gives. So don’t be troubled or afraid.”

When David’s life was being threatened by his own son Absalom, he wrote Psalm 3. It helps some people to be able to write their thoughts down in a journal or diary. By looking honestly at your own words, we can sometimes pray more effectively for our needs! It can be helpful to use some of the Psalms for guidelines in recording your thoughts and prayers. [Ps.3:1-5]

While the Bible does not promise that every one and every thing around us will be peaceful, it does promise that *the peace of God* is available in spite of the turmoil that may swirl about you!

“Dear Lord! Thank you for your promise of abundant peace and rest! How gracious you are to grant us the gift of peace for our hearts and minds! We praise you for your love and your care for us. When our minds and spirits are overwhelmed, help us turn to you for that peace! Amen.”

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