

Encountering God Series Bible Study 5 – Listen!

Begin by reading Psalm 95:7c – 11

Context

Skim Exodus 13 – 16. What amazing things has God done for the Children of Israel?

Read Exodus 17. What is the people's demeanour? 17v7 gives the context for Psalm 95.

How easy is it to forget the Lord's blessings as we live in the present? Any examples from anyone?

Numbers 14:33 tells us the consequences of Israel's grumbling and testing of the Lord. What are they?

Command

The Psalmist writes to a later generation using the incident at the rock as an example of what not to do when the Lord speaks? What?

In other words, LISTEN!

The word, "Today" should not be passed over. The psalmist was writing many generations later. He expected the Lord to speak in his day.

Refer to Hebrews 3:7 – 4:13. The writer quotes the psalm which quotes the original incident. Clearly the Hebrews writer was expecting God to speak to his generation.

POINT: God speaks today and we need to listen or we might miss out on his blessing.

How does God speak today?

We'll consider several ways under two headings: Timeless and Timely

Timeless ways

- The Bible, scripture, the Word of God. God's self-revelation of himself, his character, his ways and purposes. Read 1 Timothy 3:16 and Hebrews 4:12. What do these verses mean to you? In what ways has God spoken to you through his word recently? One aspect of being evangelical is being bible-based – that's why we put so much emphasis on bible study and preaching at Saltisford.
- Jesus – the living word of God. Read Hebrews 1:1-3 and John 1:1, 14. In Jesus we see the character and nature of God in human form. Take a moment to think about Jesus character revealed in the gospels. What aspects speak to you and challenge or inspire you as to how you live your life?
- Creation. Read Psalm 19:1-4, noting the word 'speech' in v2. Read Romans 1:20. Creation speaks to us of the glory of God. What aspects of creation wow you and cause you to praise?

Timely ways

God speaks to us by his Spirit in our hearts, prompting us, challenging us, inspiring us in lots of ways. Below are some ways in which he does this:

- God can use the circumstances, situations, pressures and everyday things of our lives to speak to us. What things are going on for you at the moment? How might God be speaking? What is he saying?
- God sometimes uses other people to speak his truth into our lives. Has anyone experienced this? How did it feel? What do we need to be wary of?
- Dreams and visions, pictures, thoughts, ideas. Again, what do we need to be wary of?
- Words of knowledge and wisdom (2 Cor 12:8). How are these different from our own thoughts and hunches? How can we tell the difference? Does anyone have any experience of receiving these?

All of the above need to be handled carefully and tested to see that it is God's voice we are hearing, and not our own, or worse, the devil's. What checks do we need to practice before speaking out or acting upon what the Lord might be saying? (Answer = scripture; other people wiser than ourselves. We need to use humility in speaking to others, just in case we're wrong.)

If time allows, pray for one another that we might receive gifts and be able to hear and act upon God's words to us.

