

Message #2 of Scripture Beneath The Surface
“How To Hear The Still Small Voice”

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Hello! Thanks for being with us. For those of you who are new to our program, let me just point out that the messages we bring to you are not necessarily the most evident things of scripture. That's why we call the program, "Scripture Beneath The Surface," because we're attempting to give more depth of understanding than what you get when you just skim the surface, when you just read it and take it at only face value. Scripture contains both the evident message on the surface, and also those things which underlie the surface. It is the underlying meanings of scripture which seem to be so difficult to comprehend, and are indeed difficult to comprehend for those who have had little or no instruction of the symbolism of scripture. Jesus taught many things in parables, and even his closest disciples expressed difficulty in understanding them. However, Jesus made one thing perfectly clear. The words that he spoke were not meant to be understood by those who just skimmed the surface, but by those who searched for the deep hidden things of God.

This doesn't have to be mystical, except in the sense that the wonderful power of God is a mystery to most, but powerful to those who seek God and his Son Jesus Christ with all their heart. And Jeremiah 29:13, emphasizes this when it says, "And you shall seek me, and find me, when you shall search for me with all your heart."

Also, just to let you know, in future programs we'll deal with a variety of topics, such as: baptism, being beheaded for the witness of Christ, the two witnesses of Zechariah 4 and Revelation 11, the two beasts of Revelation 13, on what day of the week Jesus was crucified, the Tower of Babel, Leviathan and Behemoth, antichrist, the rapture concept, the left behind concept,

the Great Tribulation, end time events, the Abomination of Desolation, the Second Coming of Christ, cults, etc.

In all of these topics, we intend to point out and explain the meaning of each one to the best of our understanding. Not just the logical physical surface view, but in keeping in line with the scope of our program, we're going to look beneath the surface in order to bring to view the hidden symbolic meanings as well. For it isn't the superficial or apparent sense of parables and allegories that we're looking for, but the underlying meaning. A simple example of this is the parable that Jesus gave of the, "leaven of the Pharisees." In Matthew 16, Mark 8, and Luke 12, Jesus spoke to his disciples about being wary of the leaven of the Pharisees, and his disciples assumed that he was chiding them for not bringing bread with them. In order to explain to them that he was talking about the hypocritical doctrine of the Pharisees and not the leaven of bread, Jesus' response was to question whether or not the disciples had hard hearts, because they apparently didn't have 'eyes to see' nor 'ears to hear'. The term, 'ears to hear' is repeated several times in scripture to indicate that there is a subsurface meaning that can only be discerned by those who can look past the apparent outward statements.

Now, it's seems to us that it's a simple thing to understand this parable, but we must remember that the disciples weren't stupid. In fact they were chosen by Jesus himself. They just had not applied themselves to looking for the understanding other than that which was plainly stated. I would even suggest that if we didn't have Jesus' explanation in scripture, we would probably tend to miss the true application as well. But the key to understanding a parable lies in recognizing that it is indeed a parable, and not just some evident instruction. You can't see the hidden meaning of a parable if you don't look to see if it is a parable. It is easy, just like the disciples, to take everything at face value.

But we at Preparation Ministries want to share the view of scripture beneath the surface, hence the name of our program. Hopefully, the messages we bring will give some insight into things that you may not have thought of before, and therefore be of some benefit in understanding other scriptures as well. Remember, when Jesus was asked why he taught in parables, his response was essentially that he didn't want anyone to understand who didn't want to get VERY, VERY close to God. He doesn't want to bless the wicked with knowledge, but, as we just read in Jeremiah 29:13, he wants to bless those who sincerely seek him with all their soul, all their hearts, and all their strength.

Now, let's go on with the subject for today.

In Today's message we'll talk about the moving of the Holy Sprit within you, and how you can better recognize that still small voice. It's not something that you can reduce to a science, but it doesn't necessarily need to be so complicated that you give up trying to listen to it.

But first, let's think about WHY we should listen to the still small voice. Some would say that it gets too confusing, and they're better off just using the word of God with common sense. Well, yes, common sense is good, but we also know that Jesus taught that it required more than one witness to establish something. He even said in John 5:31 that his words, if not accompanied by

the testimonies of the Father and the Holy Spirit, were not considered true. Now we know that all the words of Jesus were true, however, Jesus explained, as we read further in that chapter, that his words were true, not because he testified of himself, but because the Father and the Holy Spirit were also witnesses of him. Scripture says that it takes two or three witnesses for a thing to be established. If we want to walk in truth, we not only need the word of God, but we also need to see the word of God as it is revealed through the life of Jesus Christ, and through the working of the Holy Spirit. The truth of God's word is established, not just because God spoke it, but also by the additional testimonies of these two witnesses.

In John 16:13 it tells us that the Holy Spirit will guide us into all truth. If we ignore the work of the still small voice within us, then we ignore the work of God's Holy Spirit. We can hear the spoken word of God from others, and we can read it for ourselves, but we must also realize that truth is not established just by hearing, but also by the Holy Spirit's work of making it real to us, and also by making us aware of misinterpretations, or even deceptions. A simple example might be, when you hear the words, "Go to deepest darkest Africa and become a missionary." It doesn't take much thought to realize that you want to know this is truly God's will before you go. Also, when you hear preaching, it is definitely a good idea to trust the Holy Spirit rather than a man for your understanding. Otherwise you could end up following the man to your death, as we have the example of those who followed Jim Jones.

We HAVE to know the truth, not just a statement of words. The word of God must be followed by the witness of the Holy Spirit within you that the word is true, and if it is scripture you are reading, then you must have the witness within you that your understanding of it is correct. Otherwise, you will walk around in circles, and confusion will reign. Satan loves it when confusion reigns.

Well, let's go on with the question of HOW to hear that still small voice. Probably we've all seen a spirited horse. I can remember watching TV several years ago and seeing a racehorse approaching the starting gate for a race, with the jockey working hard to control it. The horse pranced and danced because of the excitement within him, and the jockey had to work hard to hold him in line. Imagine seeing a racehorse entering a race that wasn't high spirited. We know that a racehorse has to be on that keen edge between extreme excitement and uncontrollable excitement, in order to race well. And we also know that a horse that isn't very excited about the race will not finish at the front of the pack. A spirited horse is necessary if you want to go fast. A horse which lacks spirit is not much good at running a race. This simple principle is also applicable to Christians.

We all have a spirit, and in some way, we are all moved by it to act or speak. Our flesh body will do the actual action or words, but only as we are urged by our spirit. If that urging, or prompting, of our spirit is strong enough, then we will demonstrate it in our outward appearance.

Some have said that the spirit within us is our emotions. I think a more accurate description is that when the spirit within us moves us in a great enough way, we will manifest, show outwardly, the result of that moving by exhibiting emotion along with our actions or words. Whether we are moved to tears, laughter, anger, or strong feelings of love, people will see it, because it's in our

flesh. They can't directly see our spirit, but they can recognize what spirit is within us when they see the action or words coming from our body.

Acts 18, tells us about Apollos, a new convert to Christianity who was fervent in spirit. The word fervent, means, 'with heat'. Apollos was fervent for the Lord. He was hot. He got heated up about the things of Jesus Christ that he had just recently come to know. He was so excited about what the Lord meant to him that he went around trying to tell everyone about it who would listen. He was FERVENT in SPIRIT, and was moved to action. The people around him might not have been able to see the spirit within him, but the evidence coming from his body clearly implied to others that he was spiritually moved.

It's the same thing for each one of us. Whatever spirit is within you will move you. Now, if the spirit within you is in tune with the Holy Spirit, then your spirit is holy, and when dealing with things of the Lord, it will move you greatly. Of course, if the things of the Lord are not that important, you will not be moved greatly. You won't feel heat for what is there, and no one will see any fervency demonstrated in your outward person.

We don't live by our emotions. We live according to the word of God, and we make the attempt to be led of the Holy Spirit. But we can't interpret this as a reason to suppress all emotions in our relationship with Jesus Christ, and in our Christian fellowship with other believers, any more than you would fall in love with your spouse and develop a relationship without ever exhibiting any emotions. However, this doesn't mean that we throw caution to the wind and never restrain our spirit. 1 Corinthians 14:32 says that the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. We are not controlled by our spirit, but rather our spirit is controlled by us, by our inward man. God does not intend that we be so emotional that we destroy the value of what his Holy Spirit is doing in us and through us. But neither does he want his Holy Spirit quenched in a manner which stifles his holy work. The balance must be sought, as well as letting the spirit have its way. And that is your's and my continual responsibility.

The question that each person might ask, though, is, "Do I get fervent enough about the things of Jesus Christ that my outward person will show any emotion? Do I get heated up about the Lord, or do I stay cold? The still small voice of God is his Holy Spirit beginning to move you. When you're affected by things of God, it is the Holy Spirit which will move you. However, if there is little or nothing within your soul that is in tune with the things of God, the Holy Spirit will not find enough there to cause any action. The Holy Spirit must receive from you first, before it can move your body to manifest it. If there is nothing in the cookie jar, you aren't going to eat a cookie. The same goes for the things of God. If there isn't anything deep within you, then there is nothing there for the spirit to bring to the outside.

When you feel moved by a thought, this is the spirit within you. You can quench that spirit, or you can allow it freedom to move you. The strength of that spirit depends on what it finds in your inward man, your soul. Everyone, at one time or another, asks the question, "How can I tell when God is speaking to me, and when it is Satan instead?" The answer lies in your familiarity with God. If you are familiar with God, you will recognize him by the moving of your spirit. If you aren't very familiar with the things of God, you won't recognize what spirit is moving you.

The Bible talks about familiar spirits. God's Holy Spirit should be your familiar spirit. You should know the righteousness of God so well that when his Holy Spirit moves within you, you recognize that this moving is coming from God. To hear and understand the still small voice is actually just a simple matter of knowing the one who is speaking. You'll recognize him by his spirit.

Of course, when I use the word, simple, we all realize this isn't quite so simple to actually put into practice. But if you want to get better at hearing and understanding the still small voice of God, you will have to get more familiar with God himself. That's why Romans 12:2 says that in order to be transformed, we have to renew our minds, so that we can accomplish the good, acceptable, and perfect will of God.

God seldom talks audibly to a person, but even if he talked audibly to you, do you know him well enough to distinguish his voice from Satan's voice? If he talks to you in circumstances, do you know him well enough to distinguish the actual meaning of the circumstances? If a person claims to be a prophet of God, do you know God well enough to recognize whether the spirit of the prophet is the Holy Spirit of God, or a counterfeit?

There is no simple formula for being able to recognize when God is directing you. The only formula is the hard work of seeking God with all your heart, with all your mind, and with all your strength. Then, God will begin to instruct you, and will give you understanding a little bit at a time. Eventually all the pieces will begin to form a firm foundation on which to build your faith. People who know God well, hear God well. People who know God a little, hear little from God, or if they do hear, they understand little of it.

The reason we call God's communication with us, the still small voice, is that instead of hearing with our physical ears, or seeing with our physical eyes, we are seeing and hearing with our spirit. When God communicates to us, we don't understand by physical signs, but by recognizing his Holy Spirit in it. We are born as physical persons, but when we accept Jesus Christ as Savior, we enter, to some extent, into the spiritual realm. Although our physical man is still present, we become a spirit man and therefore must learn to communicate via the spirit. We must learn to see and hear God, not by physical sound waves, nor by images, but by discerning what spirit is moving us. In this regard, the voice within us is still and small, because it is not based on forcing us to hear, but rather, allowing us to hear, and then only by listening and applying it's direction by faith in the word of God. The voice of God's spirit must be discerned by paying very close attention so as to recognize the attributes of the spirit.

One of the reasons hearing is so difficult, rests in the fact that we are communicating in a different manner than we learned as human beings. As physical persons we have always been able to look at the facts and determine logically or scientifically whether something is or is not real. But when we're born again in spirit, we're like newborn babies who have to learn a new language all over again. But then, this gives us a key to the learning process. We know that babies learn fairly quickly how to walk and talk, because their environment is made up completely of those who speak and act in the physical. So if you want to learn to discern the Holy Spirit of God, basically you just surround yourself with as much of the spiritual environment as possible.

Of course, your flesh fights this. Your natural man doesn't like the things of the Holy Spirit, at least until your inward man begins to change. And because you never escape your flesh in this world, the process is a continual spiritual warfare; the flesh warring against the spirit, and the spirit warring against the flesh. But the battle will be turned in your favor the more you surround yourself with the things of God.

Now, let's pause just a moment and think of this. - - - - If you're not advancing in your knowledge of God as fast as a baby advances in its knowledge of life, maybe you should reconsider your level of commitment. Hmhmhmhmhm! You know, many people complain about not being able to understand the things of God. Do you suppose they aren't as smart as babies? Hmm?

Anyway, if babies can do it, you can do it too, however, you must surround yourself with the things of God, and not allow the things of this world to interfere with your progress. We must remember the parable in Luke, chapter eight, about the sower of seed, where Jesus talks about the seed that fell among thorns. It said that it was choked with the cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and brought no fruit to perfection. And further, we see that Hebrews 12:1 encourages us to lay aside the weights which hold us back from the work of God. It isn't just sinful things that destroy the work of the Holy Spirit in a person. It is also the weights of this world that destroy the work of the Holy Spirit. That's why scripture tells us in James 4:4 that friendship with the world is enmity with God. The word 'enmity' means, deep seated mutual hatred. Think about it. Loving the things in this world is in complete opposition with loving the things of God. They war against each other, and unless there is a concentrated effort to focus on the things of God, the cares of this world will quench the still small voice of God's Holy Spirit, and you will not be able to be led by it. See Romans 8:14 where it tells you that if you're not led by his Holy Spirit, you're not a child of God.

So, . . . let's summarize a little. If you want to move in the power of God that comes through his Holy Spirit, then you have to recognize when his Holy Spirit is moving you. In order to do that you have to come to know God very well. You do this by immersing yourself in him, and everything that is about him. Your knowledge of him then changes, little by little, and eventually you grow in strength as you grow in faith.

Well, I hope this has been beneficial. I know it hasn't answered all of your questions, and has probably created a few more questions that you need answers for. But then, that's one work that the Holy Spirit does, for it says in John 16:13, that when the Holy Spirit comes to you, it will guide you into all truth. And it's the truth that sets us free. Satan's lies hold us in weakness, hopelessly in bondage, but the truth of God empowers us, breaks those bonds, and sets us free.