

Paraklēsis : Hearing

Did you ever meet a person and you sometimes couldn't tell if they were joking or not? Or maybe the way they explained things was very different from how you would explain the same? How about getting to know someone that hardly ever smiled, and you thought that they were unfriendly – until you got to know them. Surely you have gotten a note from someone and after reading it said, "What are they trying to say here?" I can remember one of my calculus professors in college (I had several because it took me a few times to finally get it...) She was a small Chinese woman with an amazing command of math and calculus. But her command of pronouncing English – especially l's and r's, was ... somewhat less than amazing. Most of the time, I simply could not understand what she was saying – surely it did not help that she was using a lot of new or rarely used words in my vocabulary – derivative, integral, polynomial, discontinuity, asymptote, concavity... (I can still hear her struggling to say "limit") These words and many others that I knew and understood caused me so much trouble; the math concepts we were trying to learn took a back seat to deciphering her English. After several weeks, however, I started recognizing words and being able to piece together her sentences... Eventually, the challenge of understanding her nearly went away.

Communication comes in many forms and sometimes there is a challenge understanding the message. If you get the message, then often there is a challenge understanding the meaning of the message. Things can really go off the rails when we think we get the message, we think we understand the meaning and then we try to discern the motive... But, that starts to delve into deeper things like psychology and I am not going there today. The point I want to make here is that for two parties to understand each other's message and meaning, there first needs to be a common language. For the most part, for us, those reading this, English serves well enough. In our western culture, there is a body language that is fairly standard and common that we all, mostly, agree on. (like arms crossed in defense, or nail biting when nervous...) I think facial expressions (another form of communication) are mostly universal amongst all humans... A smile does not need to be translated. Deviations from these standards tend to cause confusion – e.g. never smiling even if you're friendly, not being able to pronounce l's and r's, leaving out articles or using the wrong pronouns in a written note, etc... Clear communication is paramount to successful and smooth relationships.

What is my point?

*"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, **He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.** (John 14:26)*

My point is that **I really do want to do God's will**, and I often ask Him what that is so that I can make the right decisions in life. I find myself **asking Him in prayer and listening for the answer** with limited success. Maybe that is because I don't hear what I want to hear, or that I am impatient, or I am too distracted and I am not paying attention... Or **maybe I just don't know Him well enough yet**. He has promised that His spirit will help us, will teach us all things. Why does that seem so unattainable sometimes?

After the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire; and after the fire a sound of a gentle blowing. When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood in the entrance of the cave. And behold, a voice came to him and said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" (1 Kings 19:12-13)

We need to be quiet enough in our thoughts to hear a gentle blowing, we need to believe that God does speak to us, and we need to be willing to recognize it and accept it as truth.

"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; (John 10:27)

Do we hear His voice? Those who have ears... LISTEN UP!

Revelation 2:7; 2:11; 2:17; 2:29; 3:6; 3:13; 3:22, Mat 13:9, Mar 4:23, 7:16, Luk 14:35 – and more... These are scriptures that tell us to pay attention. God is not talking about our physical ears, but our willingness to use them.

And, here is a promise that we've been given:

*Behold, a king will reign righteously And princes will rule justly. Each will be like a refuge from the wind And a shelter from the storm, Like streams of water in a dry country, Like the shade of a huge rock in a parched land. Then the eyes of those who see will not be blinded, **And the ears of those who hear will listen.** The mind of the hasty will discern the truth, And the tongue of the stammerers will hasten to speak clearly. (Isaiah 32:1-4)*

In order to HEAR our God speak to us, we need to KNOW Him. The better we know Him, the easier it is to recognize His voice.

*Indeed, I count everything as loss because of **the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus** my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith— that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death..." (Philippians 3:8-10) (ESV)*

Paul strove to know God better all his life. Being perfect and getting to know our Messiah are not discrete tasks to accomplish, these are processes that we continually work at. We need to incorporate these goals into our lifestyle. The next time you meet someone and they ask you, "So, what do you do?" answer with your quest of getting to know the Son of God. Paul was on that quest and repeatedly encouraged us to do the same.

*"...so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and **to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge**, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God. (Ephesians 3:17-19)*

I believe that Hosea is not talking about knowing doctrine here: "Listen to the word of the LORD, O sons of Israel, For the LORD has a case against the inhabitants of the land, Because there is no faithfulness or kindness Or knowledge of God in the land." (Hosea 4:1) Surely if we have faithfulness, kindness and knowledge of God, He will have less of a case against us.

As we talked about in the beginning of this letter, communication is smoother and more effective when the two parties know each other well. **Get to know God**, and His communication with you will be more clear and easier to discern. Hearing His still, quiet voice takes practice.

Is our goal eternal life? That is why God sent His only begotten Son. "This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. (John 17:3) **Get to know the Son of God!**

Peace to you and Glory to God!

-Nate

www.paraklesis.net