

KNOWING the VOICE of GOD CLEARLY

7-3-17, Class 3, On-Line

INTRODUCTION

Knowing the voice of God clearly is not a gift-of-the-Spirit. It is not found in the list of 1 Corinthians 12, nor anywhere else in the Bible, as a gift to be bestowed upon you.

It is the result of intent, desire, and earning (on your part) the trust of the Lord Jesus Christ, by proving yourself faithful.

Being a child of the King, a Christian, does not grant ongoing clarity of hearing and depth of closeness to God.

No years in the pews, no scholastic degrees, no titles of leadership, can earn you the relationship where you will know His voice clearly.

SPIRITUAL MATURITY

What is maturity?

Maturity is the quality or state of being mature.

Mature is:

- a) having completed natural growth
- b) having attained a final or desired state
- c) the older state of a biological entity
- d) the condition of full development
- e) having progressed to the point of completion
- f) the state of maturity

Now, we will examine maturity in the context of our subject, "Knowing the Voice of God Clearly".

{Read Ephesians 4:11-14}

(Ephesians 4:11) "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;"

These positions of responsibility are also in the body of Christ today; are supposed to be.

(Ephesians 4:12-13) "For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Until we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ:"

We are to become Christ-like. Our inner man/woman is to change from the 'old man' of the carnal and natural natures, to a 'new man'. This does not occur by teachings of information from the Bible into our minds. Neither would a Biblical version of *Emily Post's book of *Etiquette* bring about character change in a person, you or me, to become Christ-like. {*An American woman socialite; remembered today for her famous book '*Etiquette in Society, in Business, in Politics, and at Home*'.}

(Ephesians 4:14) "That we from now onward be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:"

Maturity level: spiritual babies...

{Read 1 Corinthians 3:1-3}

(1Corinthians 3:1) "And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people, but as to carnal people (people of the flesh), even as to babes in Christ."

This was a rebuke, an admonishment because of their wretched spiritual condition. They were carnal; fleshly, unregenerate, and unwilling to yield.

He called them babies. Not because there were new believers, but because they had never grown up, and it was their fault.

(1Corinthians 3:2-3) "I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for up till now you were not able to bear it, even now you are not able. For you are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are you not carnal [of the flesh], and walk as men?"

Their behaviors were the same as non-believers, as if they had never received Jesus.

Paul is addressing Christians who ought to have attained at least a modicum of maturity in the length of time that they had already been Christians; some Christ-like fruit was expected.

But, they had no fruit. Correction, they had fruit, bad fruit. Just like Jesus going to the fig tree, Matthew 21:18-20, there should have been some fruit by now.

In Paul's letter to the Hebrews, we find a similar account.

{Read Hebrews 5:12-14.}

(Hebrews 5:12) "For by this time you ought to be teachers [masters], you have need that one teach you again which are the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not solid food."

These believers had been Christians long enough for Paul to rightfully expect them to be teachers not students, fathers not children.

Their condition was so bad that Paul said they needed to spiritually go back to the beginning, being nursed and having their carrots pureed for them!

(Hebrews 5:13-14) "For every one that uses milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a baby. But solid food belongs to them that are [implied...spiritually] mature, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised [practiced] to discern [or understand] good from evil."

Over time, wisdom (maturity) is expected to be acquired through experience. Knowledge walked out through multiple experiences leads to wisdom (maturity). But they had not taken what they had been taught, nor tried to walk in the knowledge of Christ that had already been taught to them by Paul.

Let us double-back to verse 11: *"Of whom [Jesus] we have many things to say, and hard to explain, seeing you are dull of hearing [sluggish, lazy]."*

There was much more that Paul wanted and needed to teach them, but they were not interested. If you seek to have a mature and deep relationship with Jesus, then he will give you the "ears to hear".

(Proverbs 18:15) "The heart of the prudent gets knowledge; and the ear of the wise seek knowledge."

Again, Paul was not contending with people who had recently become new "baby" Christians. These people were babies because of their sin. They wanted Jesus as Savior, but not yielding to him as Lord.

YOU HAVE MORE THAN ONE TEACHER

Boys and fathers teach...

{Read 1 Corinthians 4:14-16}

*(1Corinthians 4:14-15) "I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you. For though you have ten thousand instructors [boy teachers, tutors] in Christ, you do not have many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have *begotten [conceived, reproduced] you through the gospel."*

Paul says that there are many people teaching us, but few of them are advanced in the knowledge of Christ. That is what the word "father" means, "one advanced in the knowledge of Christ".

In verse 14, Paul said, "I warn you". The Lord Jesus is warning us through Paul's writing to the fact that most of our teachers in Christ are not mature. He considers this something that we must be made aware of, WARNING! If you truly want to walk in the fullness of Jesus Christ, then you need spiritual fathers in your Christian walk, not just spiritually young boy and girl teachers.

(1Corinthians 4:16) "Wherefore I beseech you, be you followers [imitators] of me."

Ask the Lord for a truly mature spiritual *father* in the body of Christ, instead of just children.

The five-fold ministries teach...

{Read Ephesians 4:11-15}

(Ephesians 4:11-12) "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:"

The original Greek word (paidagogos) used in 1 Corinthians 4:15 that was translated as instructor, means a 'boy leader'.

The original Greek word (didaskalos) used here, in verse 12, is translated as teacher, and means a 'master instructor'.

(Ephesians 4:13) "Until we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge [full discernment] of the Son of God, unto a perfect [complete] man, unto the measure of the stature [maturity] of the fullness of Christ:"

These positions of leadership are to be held by people that the Holy Spirit has chosen who will be capable of leading us into spiritual maturity.

Their qualifications for these positions have to include that they themselves are mature, and that God himself has selected them for their positions.

(Ephesians 4:14) "That we be no longer children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:"

{Read Acts 13:1-4}

(Acts 13:1) "Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers [master instructors]; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul."

(Acts 13:2) "As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work I have called them to." [Saul is the Hebrew form of the Greek name Paul.]

The prophets and the teachers were all mature Christians. They knew the Spirit's voice clearly.

(Acts 13:3-4) "And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus."

The qualification that the leadership at Antioch required of Saul and Barnabas, was that they were chosen by God. The leadership did not examine Barnabas' and Saul's experiences, nor their capabilities,

nor their schooling, nor whether they were popular in the church of Antioch. The qualification was, God said so!

Barnabas and Saul (Paul) themselves also heard from the Holy Spirit that they were to take up this ministry! They took up the ministry because it was God's idea, not because they reasoned it in their own minds and knew that it was a good 'biblical' thing to do. They heard from God. The other leaders were able to confirm the call to this ministry because they were also able to hear from God.

(Colossians 1:9-10) "For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that you might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; That you might walk worthy of the Lord fully pleasing him, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;"

Barnabas and Paul had the knowledge of God's will for them, to begin ministry, because the other leaders and themselves knew the voice of God clearly!

The Holy Spirit teaches...

If the Holy Spirit was human, we would say that "*he is a man of many talents*". He is not human, but his capabilities are endless. He is the supreme *teacher*.

(John 14:26) "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I [Jesus] have said to you."

Some false teachers tell us that direct instruction from the Holy Spirit is no longer needed, that men's instructions from the Bible is all we need now.

I call them false teachers because their doctrine is false, not because they are not Christians (though many of them are not), but because they are Biblically wrong.

The Bible is not a substitute for God himself. No man with a Bible is a substitute for the Holy Spirit.

(Luke 12:12) "For the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what you ought to say."

"I will tell you what to say at the time you need it," says the Spirit. In order for this to occur, you need to know the voice of God clearly so as to receive his instructions! God did not say, "When the time comes, use a quote from the Bible that you think is appropriate". Now, he may tell you to quote a particular verse, but you need to know his voice in order to hear him give that piece of instruction!

The Holy Spirit was telling people "*what...to say*" long before the Bible was available to quote from. The Bible has not been and is not available to everyone everywhere in the world, but the Holy Spirit is.

Paul's chief teacher...

(Galatians 1:11-12) "But I certify you [make known to you], brethren that the gospel which was preached of me is not after [from] man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation [disclosure] of Jesus Christ."

Paul had been a Christian 5-7 years before his first missionary journey began. He had tutors, master teachers, apostles, prophets, and evangelists to give instruction and guidance in his growth. He listened and learned, but ultimately everything was corroborated or rejected through the Holy Spirit's direct communication with him.

The Holy Spirit provided direct oversight of what Paul was to believe. All of us recognize the greatness of Paul's walk in the Lord. This occurred because Paul knew the voice of God clearly and could thus receive direct teaching from the Spirit.

God has not changed his m.o [mode of operation]. He still expects you to listen to your human teachers, but everything you learn is supposed to be confirmed by the Holy Spirit. *"He who has ears to hear what the Spirit says..."*

NATURAL VERSUS SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING

{Read 1 Corinthians 2:10-16}

Paul was speaking to the Corinthians about, *"the things which God has prepared for those that love him"*.

(1Corinthians 2:10) "But God has revealed them to us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God."

The Holy Spirit has taken the cover off all things for us, including the depths of God. That which has been covered becomes uncovered (revealed).

(1Corinthians 2:11) "For what man knows the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knows no man, but the Spirit of God."

You know all about yourself and God knows all about you, and the Holy Spirit knows all about God.

(1Corinthians 2:12) "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God."

Paul says that these Corinthians who he was writing to had received or taken the Spirit. They had willingly been filled with the Holy Spirit.

That made it possible so that they might come to know the things of God! How is that possible? The Spirit knows everything about God and what God knows. (The Holy Spirit is God.) The Spirit is capable of passing along what he knows by speaking to those who know his voice clearly.

If you are not filled and led as in hearing and obeying the Spirit, then you are not learning anything deep. If you do not know the voice of God clearly, then you cannot learn the depths of God from him.

(1Corinthians 2:13) "Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Ghost teaches; comparing spiritual things with spiritual."

If you have been filled with the Spirit and know his voice clearly, then the Spirit will be able to teach spiritual things to you, a spiritual person. Daniel's prophecy of the last days, "*But you, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.*" (Daniel 12:4) Teaching about God and the Bible is available in great abundance today. But people, who know the ways of God like Moses *face to face*, are few in comparison.

(1Corinthians 2:14) "But the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness to him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

The natural man, a person not filled with the Spirit and not hearing his voice, does not accept the things of the Spirit of God: for they are silly and absurd to him: neither can he understand them, because they are spiritually scrutinized or investigated; absolutely impossible without God's voice.

(1Corinthians 2:15) "But he that is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is judged of no man."

A person that is filled with the Spirit, and hears the voice of the Spirit, and continually responds to what the Spirit tells him, that is a spiritual person who can understand all the things that the Spirit teaches him; yet he and his beliefs and his actions cannot be understood by a natural person, including one who is a Christian but not walking with the voice of God.

(1Corinthians 2:16) "For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ."

We end with my own paraphrase of verse 16... "Who understands the mind of the Lord, no one is capable to instruct him. We may learn what is in the mind of Christ, but we also are not qualified to instruct him." {See also Isaiah 40:13-14}

FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT IS NOT THE SAME AS POWER

{Read Luke 4:1-15}

Jesus went into the wilderness full of the Spirit, verse 1, and came out of the wilderness in the power of the Spirit, verse 14. After which, Jesus started his ministry, verse 15.

(Luke 4:1) "And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness,"

Prior to Jesus entering the wilderness, he had been baptized in the Jordan River by John the Baptist and had been anointed by the Holy Spirit. Jesus was fully permeated [*full*] with the Spirit. This occurred before he started his ministry. How many people are in ministry today, but are not *full* of the Spirit? God thought that it was necessary for Jesus before he started ministry.

Also occurring before the start of Jesus' ministry, the Spirit led, or as it said in Mark 1:12, "*the Spirit drove him into the wilderness*". The Spirit *drove*, or *ejected* Jesus into the wilderness. God, the Holy Spirit, was of the opinion, and his is the only opinion that counts, that what happened in the wilderness was necessary before Jesus could start ministering. Jesus received the power of the Spirit from going through his wilderness experience. Then, and only then was Jesus ready to begin ministry.

Few leaders and teachers in the body of Christ have spent time in the wilderness. That is why there are so many tutors and few fathers.

When a man has impregnated a woman, then he is a father. And a man that stays in a child's life to provide shelter, clothing, and food, is a better father. But the man who gives godly discipline, affirms the mother, prays and weeps and pleads before God for his child, has shews himself a godly man before the world; that is a true Father. He walks in *power*.

So is the spiritual father. He sacrifices his private life; he studies and prays, works, and weeps for those the Father has put into his charge.

What happened in the wilderness?

I will not be doing an extensive teaching, at this time, on the subject of Wildernesses, nor of Jesus's experience found in Luke 4 and Mark 1. But I will provide some understanding of what happened in Luke 4 between verse 1 and verse 14, the fullness becoming the power.

The Greek word *eremos* was translated into the English word *wilderness*. We think of a wilderness as a place that is vacant of people and their developments. The location into which the Holy Spirit sent [*drove, ejected*] Jesus was unpopulated. I have backpacked into high peaks mountain ranges many times. The change in Jesus did not occur in me.

(Luke 4:2) "Being forty days tempted of the devil. And in those days he did eat nothing: and when they were ended, he hungered afterward. And the devil said to him, 'If you are the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread."

During forty days of fasting, an adult human's body that is in perfect physical shape and health has been consuming itself. The body has consumed glycogen (broken down into sugar) from liver and muscles, then a mix of fat and muscle, fatty acids, proteins, tissues, muscle mass, impurities and fluids; starvation. All that is left to do is to die.

After, not during, but after forty days without food, Satan approaches Jesus. Satan's reasoning is that if Jesus does not decide himself to break the fast and start eating food, then Jesus will be dead and God's plans for Jesus will be dead also. Is that not reasonable?

(Luke 4:4) "And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God."

Jesus heard the *word of God*; that put him in the wilderness. Only a word from God will make him leave the wilderness.

Jesus had the ability to turn a stone into a loaf of bread. Jesus refused to take an ability that he had in order to change the circumstance that he was in. Jesus would not avoid or alter what the Spirit had led him into.

Verses 3-12 tell us of the temptations that Satan offered to Jesus. Jesus was tempted to use reasoning and his abilities to create a different plan than what the Holy Spirit had. Satan says that there is a better way to achieve the same results.

You are tempted also, “with your fine reasoning mind and capabilities, you can find a better way”. That is how mankind got in the spiritual shape we are now in. {Read, SO EVE REASONED, from Class 2 notes}

As it was with Adam and Eve, Jesus was tempted to be independent from God the Father.

(Luke 4:13-14) “And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season. And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about.”

(Luke 4:15) And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all.

Historically, many people have cloistered themselves in a desert place believing that denying the body will attain them power in God.

Jesus goes in full of the Spirit, and comes out in the power of the Spirit. Now, Jesus’ ministry starts. Jesus now has the power of the Spirit. It came because he resisted the temptation to follow reasoning and abilities instead of the voice of God.

Jesus set the example. Jesus, even being God himself, did not believe it was right to do his own thing.

(John 5:19) “Then answered Jesus and said to them, ‘Verily, verily, I say to you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he sees the Father do: for what things so ever he does, these also does the Son likewise.” [“Verily, verily, or truly, truly”; the double-emphasis is an indication of a prophetic message; great significance.]

Wilderness means *solitary*. God’s will is to solitary, the only thing that counts. It is not God’s will and us. It is not God’s will, and us, and our abilities. It is not God’s will, and us, and our abilities, and our reasoning. Jesus heard and obeyed the voice of God.

Your water baptism does not empower you. Your water baptism and being filled with the Holy Spirit is not enough. You must successfully come through the personalized wilderness experience(s) chosen by the Holy Spirit for you. You must resist the temptation to enter into ministry because you have abilities and have reasoned it. You must resist entering into ministry that others encourage you to do, or church leaders tell you to do, but only do what and when the Holy Spirit tells you. (You may have previously received true prophetic words from the Spirit about your calling and future ministry. But to enter into ministry without the Spirit telling you specifically when and where, is gross SIN. {Re-read the notes about Acts 13:1-4})

NOT EVERYONE’S RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD IS THE SAME

At what stage is your relationship with Jesus now? Are you a new born or adult Christian, or somewhere in between? Let us look at the type of relationships you can have with Jesus.

If you are a newborn Christian, a baby Christian, you are just getting started. You accept instruction from everyone else, because everyone else has been at this longer than you, and should know more.

A toddler has more experience at being a Christian than a new born, but not a whole lot more.

As a pre-adolescent Christian, you start helping those who are already more mature than you. Their good examples start rubbing off on you.

As an adolescent you are spiritually mature enough to know that you are not yet spiritually mature. You have attained a place of spiritual responsibility over those who are younger in the Lord than you are.

If you are an adult Christian, you are spiritually Christ-like; you are mature. You are only involved in the ministries that the Spirit has told you to be part of.

Through-out your growth in Christ, knowing the voice of God is essential. You heard his voice when you were a non-believer; you responded and became a baby Christian. A believer can only grow to the point of Christ-likeness by continuing to do what he/she did as a non-believer; hearing and obeying the voice of God.

[Let us look at a special relationship...](#)

{Read Matthew 1:18-25}

(Matthew 1:18-19) "Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly.

(Mat 1:20-21) But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.

(Mat 1:22-23) "All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel" (which means, God with us).

*(Mat 1:24-25) "When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, but *knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus."*

Joseph *knew her not* until after Jesus was born. The Greek word (*ginosko*) is translated to English as *knew*, means *sexual relations*.

This same word is used throughout the New Testament to indicate the deepest of relationship with Jesus/God. It is not used to infer a physical relationship, but the mental, emotional, and spiritual bond that only a husband and wife can have. This relationship of *knowing* Christ goes far beyond all others.

I know my neighbor. I know my 8th grade science teacher. I know my brother. I know my parents. I know my children. I know my wife. Oh, that I "*might know*" my Lord Jesus Christ!

See you at the next class, August 20th!