

Dr. Joe Jursa's Sermon

[Listen to Him](#) - Matthew 17:1-9, 5

Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain, by themselves. ² And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became dazzling white. ³ Suddenly there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. ⁴ Then Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if you wish, I will make three dwellings here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." ⁵ While he was still speaking, suddenly a bright cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud a voice said, "This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!" ⁶ When the disciples heard this, they fell to the ground and were overcome by fear. ⁷ But Jesus came and touched them, saying, "Get up and do not be afraid." ⁸ And when they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus himself alone. ⁹ As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus ordered them, "Tell no one about the vision until after the Son of Man has been raised from the dead."

"This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; LISTEN TO HIM!"

I knew the image because I grew up with the commercials of the dog listening to the victrola but it was Jackie who reminded me that this was the RCA logo for years. And the words you always heard with the commercials were "His master's voice." What RCA was telling you was the victrola was such a good recording that the dog could recognize the sound of his master's voice.

I have to admit that seldom do I read this passage about the Mount of Transfiguration that I don't see that dog in my mind. The RCA dog knew the sound of his master's voice and obviously came when he was called. I want to know the voice of Jesus that well, we all need to.

When my girls were growing up and even today I tend to call them by whatever name comes to mind, their own or their sisters, sometimes I even called them by the dog's name. They would remind me of their name and complain about being called by the dog's name. I would remind them that the dog always came when he was called, sometimes they came and sometimes they didn't.

How do we do respond to the voice of Jesus? Are we familiar enough with the sound of the voice of Jesus that we know when he calls? Do we know the ways that Jesus talks with us?

My dad broke down about a year ago and finally got a cell phone. But the contract also came with free text messaging for a time period. I don't use text messaging, I've since even shut off that service for incoming so people cannot text message me. But when Dad first got that he would text message me about once a week. I would pick up the phone and call him back. It just didn't make a lot of sense and then when the bill came in and I found out I was being charge a nickel for each of those messages I told him to quit and just call as that cost nothing.

I bring that up because sometimes Jesus chooses to communicate with us in ways we choose not to communicate. Maybe we have a hard time listening to Jesus, because Jesus would speak through our times of bible study, but we don't do much of that or through our prayers but we are not doing as much as some other time or through a mentor or friend or small group but we have stopped doing that.

Jesus went to the high mountain with three of his disciples, not everyone, just three. They would be privileged to know God's thoughts about his son Jesus. They would witness Jesus talking with two of the greatest people in the history of Judaism. And they would be instructed into how to respond to Jesus. "This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!"

There was confusion on their part during all of this. When the two others appeared, Moses and Elijah, they wanted to build dwellings, one for each of them. Their plan was to stay right there and live between the three. They would create an environment where they could live in the presence of Moses, Elijah and Jesus. They would live and listen to the conversation between these three great men.

But God had different plans. In the twinkling of an eye, Moses and Elijah were gone and Jesus alone remained. And God's direction for them was clear, "This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!"

I do not believe God's direction for you or I has changed from that day to this. God's direction is still, Listen to him! What I think that means for us is we each individually have to find ways of hearing clearly the voice of Jesus. Don't get caught up in old ways, listening to prophets and leaders from our yesterdays. Recognize that if we give God the opportunity God will clear off the mountain top and leave only Jesus standing there. It will be clear and the voice will become truly recognizable because it will not be one of many but truly one of a kind.

Why did the RCA dog look so funny at the phonograph? Because while he did not recognize his master's face in that speaker, he clearly heard his master's voice. God's desire for each of Jesus disciple, for Peter, James and John and for you is to listen to the voice of Jesus.

I have this feeling if we are truly listening for the voice of Jesus there will be times we look just like the dog. We recognize the voice of Christ, we just didn't expect to find it where we are hearing it. We will be expecting Jesus to speak through ways he has spoken before and all of a sudden he will speak through a new way. While the appearance may be funny and cause us to look quizzically like the dog, we will know the voice of Jesus.

Avail yourself of every means you have until you clearly hear the voice of Christ in your life. In the past, saints have heard Jesus speak through scripture, through prayer, through worship, through Christian friends, through mentors, by readings of Christian saints of the past or spiritual retreats. Try each one and any new ways that God seems to bring to mind. How you hear the voice of Jesus is unimportant, what matters is that you hear Jesus voice and that you listen to him.

In the past Christ has spoken to you through times of prayer, by all means do not cease from praying this year. Consider instead spending a little more time praying or even praying more often. If Christ speaks to you through prayer and you want this to be a year in which you are lead more clearly by Jesus pray. But don't allow this to be the only way you will listen to him. Try some other means as the year progresses. Is there a retreat that you have wanted to attend in the past but have failed to find time for, why not this year? Could you be more faithful in bible study, either in private or with a small group? What could you do to widen your horizons as you seek to listen for the voice of Jesus?

We live in a great era. In times past you could only read to learn about God or attend services. Today there are CD's you can play in the car while driving that will teach you aspects of your Christian faith. There are DVD's with great teaching, movies and worship experiences. There is Christian radio as well as books and month publications. There is virtually an endless source of material available on and over the internet. The only reason we could fail to hear the voice of Jesus in our culture is because we intentionally shut him out. I have to be very systematic and intentional if I don't want to hear about the call of Jesus Christ upon my life.

The three disciples to accompanied Jesus onto the mountain were privileged by God to learn firsthand what they were to do; listen to him. Could you become a better disciple this year, this month, this next week if you would be more intentional about seeking to hear the voice of Jesus?

The RCA dog knew to come when he heard the sound of the master's voice. Would our lives be better, richer, fuller if we like that famous dog would learn to hear our master's voice?

I invite you to come to the altar today to consider your own life. Is this a season when you could or should be more intentional in listening for the voice of Jesus? Does God have things in store for you that can only happen if you hear more clearly the voice of Jesus?