



**Going Deeper - Weekly Sermon Discussion Guide**  
**Reimagine: A New Normal Series - Week 3**  
**May 10, 2020**

This week, we spent time in Mark Chapter 4. The lifestyle of Jesus and his disciplines is our focus. Please remember friends, that discipline does not equate to punishment, rather preparation. We are preparing for a harvest of righteousness and peace. This is us as we are intended to be. We are not called to normal human life. We are first born, then filled, and then formed by the Holy Spirit. In this week's discipline, hearing God's voice, we must connect the power of Jesus with the practices and disciplines of Jesus. We must connect the spirit filled life with the spirit formed life, as this is where our transformation happens. There is so much more transformation available to us. We do not have to return to normal.

So, how does God speak? He speaks through creation, miracles, prophetically, directly to us, through others, through the Holy Spirit, through His word, and through Jesus. I've noticed, in my own life, that some of my most profound encounters with God have happened on mountaintops or airplanes. I need a bird's eye view and a chance to see the horizon spread out before me. I need to take deep breaths and allow myself to really listen to what is happening around me. It's usually the wind in the trees that lifts my gaze and I am more aware of His presence than ever before. A few summers ago, on a back-packing trip, I climbed into my tent just after dark, exhausted, and as soon as my head hit my tiny little camp pillow, I heard God speaking. It was like galloping horses that whipped my ponytail and threatened to knock me over with their power. And He did not let me rest (or breathe) until He had shared His plans with me. It all sounded so impossible at the time. A full 90 degree turn in my career, a chance to go back to school. Three months later, all of it happened. Just as He said it would. As I write this, the words to one of the worship songs we sing comes to mind: *"I believe you made a way when there was no way. And I believe you'll do it again."* Lately, my prayer for all of us has been this: **Good Father, Do it again!**

I think the question I asked for a long time, and the question I hear others asking is one of practicality: How can I trust that the voice I hear is actually God's? We want to make sure we have it right. We want to make sure we are not using God as a kind of excuse to chase after personal wish fulfillment. Pastor Bill said it well, "God does not contradict himself. He is always consistent. He will not violate his word. He is more than happy to violate our perceptions and understanding of His word when it is inconsistent with Himself." I would only add that God gave us two eyes, two ears, a mouth, a sense of touch, a sense of right and wrong, a sense of humor, and so many other ways of communicating. These senses are gifts given to us so that we would enjoy, engage, and communicate with our Creator in an intimate relationship. And yet, we search for God's voice. We think we need to be monks or at the very least holier than we currently are.

Yet, in the context of our example in Mark 4:3-21, the use of the word **hearing** has to do with a person's willingness to be changed by what they hear. The sower (God) is always good. The seed (His word) is always good. The variable is the condition of the soil (our hearts). It is easy to get caught up in all of the competing voices, agendas, and clutter of our lives. If we are not in a position to hear God, we are not in a position to receive from God. I think this was my favorite part of Sunday: God does not speak to us to make us do things *for* Him. God speaks to us so that we are invited to do things *with* Him.

**So Consider:**

1. If you are having trouble hearing God's voice in the midst of these strange days we're living in, what is getting in the way? Clutter, competing agendas... There are so many choices!
2. In what ways have you heard God speak to you?
3. Is there a question you've been holding back from really asking God? I guarantee He already knows your heart. I guarantee He wants to answer you. What is God inviting you into?

**Take Action:**

In your prayer times this week, bring a journal and pen (if you don't already) and ask God to speak directly into the situations and relationships you're praying through. Ask God a question and be bold enough to write it down. And then wait for the answer and write that down too. Take a few deep breaths and listen to what's really happening in and around you. Learning to trust yourself to recognize the voice of God is a huge step. Sometimes, the only question I can think to ask God is, "Father, what would you like to say to me?"

As always, we have a prayer team that would love to come alongside you in support. Please reach out!

Blessings to you this week, Amie