

- I. My Notes ... WWC message 1/17
- II. Series: Practicing What We Believe
 - Title: Results of Listening
 - Text: James 1:22
 - Quote: *If you wander off the road to the right or the left, you will hear his voice behind you saying, "Here is the road. Follow it." (Isaiah 30:21 GNT).*
- III. Introduction
 - For the last two weeks, we've been laying the foundation for a faith that doesn't just sit in our heads but shapes our lives. Two weeks ago, we began by asking a simple but essential question: What is faith?
Hebrews 11:1–6 showed us that faith is not spiritual optimism or vague hopefulness. It's confidence in God's character and conviction about His promises. We said that faith begins with who God is—not with how we feel. And we challenged ourselves to move faith out of theory and into trust.
 - Last week, we moved from definition to direction. We looked into listening and what that looked like. We talked about how faith steps, how it hears, how it moves even when the path is unclear. Using the reference that, *"faith comes by hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ."* (**Romans 10:17 ESV**). We learned that faith continues to grow as we take the time to listen and allow the words of God to encourage and strengthen us. This leads to steps of obedience.
 - And now today, we take the next step in that journey.
Because if faith begins with who God is... And if faith moves us to listen and learn trust Him step by step... Then the natural question becomes:
How do we know where to step? How do we know what God is saying? How do we recognize His voice—and then actually live it out?
 - This is where faith becomes deeply practical.
Jesus said, *"My sheep hear my voice, I know them and they follow me"* (**John 10:27 CSB**). There's a rhythm in that verse: hear → know → follow.
 - Hearing leads to following. Revelation leads to response. Voice leads to movement. But many believers today feel stuck right in the middle of that rhythm.
 - They say, "I think I hear God... but what do I do with it?"
 - That's what today is all about. Moving from recognizing God's voice to responding to it. From inspiration to incarnation. From hearing to living.
 - In a world full of noise, distraction, and competing voices, this is one of the most important skills a believer can develop. And Scripture gives us clear, practical steps for how to do it.
 - So, let's step into this together.

IV. Responding to the Recognition

- **James 1:19-25 NLT**

- *19 Understand this, my dear brothers and sisters: You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry. 20 Human anger does not produce the righteousness God desires. 21 So get rid of all the filth and evil in your lives, and humbly accept the word God has planted in your hearts, for it has the power to save your souls. 22 But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves. 23 For if you listen to the word and don't obey, it is like glancing at your face in a mirror. 24 You see yourself, walk away, and forget what you look like. 25 But if you look carefully into the perfect law that sets you free, and if you do what it says and don't forget what you heard, then God will bless you for doing it.*
- Hearing God is the invitation. Doing what He says is the transformation. Many believers stop at recognition, acting as if it is enough to hear Him. They sense God nudging them... convicting them... prompting them... yet it doesn't lead to anything. But faith becomes practical when obedience becomes the response, even in small things.
- We've all been there. Here is something we can relate to ... a parent calling their child from another room. The child hears the voice—but the relationship is revealed in response to the call. Hearing without responding is not obedience; it's acknowledgment. The child shouting, "Yeah, what??!!" It is a fitting example of acknowledgment. The call should be something that leads to action. How many times have you had (or been involved in) a conversation that basically says, "I call, you should come ..." God is not looking for acknowledgment. He's looking for trust. His call is leading us to steps of obedience.
- Faith is built on simple steps.

V. It's Not Complicated

- We are beginning to see that hearing is the invitation and obedience is the response. With this understanding, the next question becomes: How do we actually live this out? What does it look like to trust God in real time, in real decisions, in real pressure? Proverbs 3:5-6 gives us the posture that makes obedience possible.
- **Proverbs 3:5-6 NLT**
5 Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. 6 Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take.
- This is a passage that many of us know or have heard a lot. Some probably have it memorized in one form or another. It is a powerful call of reliance on the Lord God. I want to unpack it a bit more.
- The core message is one of complete trust in the Lord God. It is understanding that His ways are different from ours (see Isaiah 55:8-9) and believing that to a point of

inclusion in all our decisions. It starts with listening and when listening impacts our choices, we begin to take steps of faith.

- Trust is not a feeling, it's a posture - a settled orientation of the heart, mind, and will toward God.
- Ponder on this for just a moment. A posture is something you assume, maintain, and return to. It shapes how you stand, how you move, and how you respond.
- This focus shows up in the way you make decisions, set priorities, and respond to pressure. Most of a believer's life is not lived in dramatic moments. It's lived in the ordinary: the way that you speak to your spouse - how you handle stress in the moment – it can be seen in the way that you treat people who can't repay you - how you prioritize what matters most.
- Practice surrender (it's another way of saying "choose obedience"), live this trust, in the small ways: your tone, your schedule, your reactions. Faith becomes practical when trust becomes your default, not your last resort.
- Remember that David cried out for help, for relief, in a time of deep crisis. **Psalm 55** begins with, "God, listen to my prayer and do not hide from my plea for help." (**vs. 1**) And by the end of this plea David states, "Cast your burden on the Lord, and he will sustain you; he will never allow the righteous to be shaken." (**vs. 22**). This is not only a recognition that God is with us in our times of distress – that He is faithful. But it also an encouragement that God is trustworthy and capable of handling the most difficult circumstances that we can face.
- It's the difference between leaning on your understanding and trusting God and His ways. One choice can be backbreaking; it can be devastating. The other, sustaining.
- Have you ever stood in a strong wind? What is the only way that you maintain your balance and stay on your feet? You lean into the wind. That is what trusting God is – leaning into the wind. If you lean back, relying on "your ways" (what got you there), it is likely that you will fall. If you lean to the side, you will stumble. It's only when you lean forward, trusting God for the next step, that you continue.
- It is about making the choice on the direction you are going to face and adopting a posture that trusts.

VI. A Change in Perspective

- Once trust becomes our posture, something else begins to happen inside us. Our perspective shifts. Our thinking changes. And Paul tells us exactly how that transformation works in his letter to believers in Rome.
- **Romans 12:1-2 CSB**
Therefore, brothers and sisters, in view of the mercies of God, I urge you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God; this is your true worship. Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God.

- Paul is talking about the practical life of a believer. It is a life based on faith and trust. He begins by telling us that genuine worship is seen in obedience. That our faith, our belief, and trust in the Lord God is a choice that sets us apart from the remainder of the world and is pleasing (honoring, glorifying) to Him.
- The Apostle goes on to tell us that as we live our faith, as we trust in the relationship we have with the Lord, we gain the ability to discern (detect, recognize) God's will for our lives. And this is something that many are wanting to determine.
- The noise that we deal with in daily life causes our attention to drift from the Lord and His guidance. We might not be living in the loudest time, but we are living in one of the noisiest. Discernment is the ability to recognize God's voice, God's plan for your life, and God's purpose in the middle of the constant pull of other voices – distractions – outside inputs. Paul teaches us that discernment (faith being lived out) is a result of the transformation that accompanies our choice to obedience and honoring God.
- Discernment is not about knowing the whole journey, it's about recognizing the next faithful step. And Scripture shows us repeatedly that God leads His people one step at a time.

VII. The Next Step Looks Like

- Faith is not built by having the whole picture—it's built on trusting God enough to take the next step He puts in front of you. Scripture consistently shows that God rarely reveals the entire journey. Instead, He gives enough light for today, enough grace for this moment, and enough direction for the next act of obedience.
- Faith grows not by seeing more, but by stepping with what you've already been given.
- **James 1:22-24 CSB**
22 But be doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. 23 Because if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like someone looking at his own face in a mirror. 24 For he looks at himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of person he was. 25 But the one who looks intently into the perfect law of freedom and perseveres in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer who works—this person will be blessed in what he does.
- Faith is choosing to walk with the light you have, not waiting for the light you want. We learn of the light by hearing, by listening. Then we can apply what we have learned to our actions, our behaviors.
- We live in a time where people want to know the future. It almost seems like the next step isn't as significant as what the end looks like to many people. James tells us that hearing is important but if it doesn't lead to action then nothing has honestly changed. Faith teaches you to have an honest view of who you are and how you live each moment. Actions testify. Faith in Jesus brings freedom to our life. It frees us

from the bondage and the penalty of sin. Living by faith is revealing who we trust and how our lives have been changed.

- Trusting in the character of our Lord means choosing His guidance over our own. This trust is not passive, it's active. It shapes our daily choices, our reactions, and the way we navigate uncertainty. As we walk in faith, each step—however small—becomes a declaration of our reliance on God's wisdom rather than our own understanding. The process of living by faith means surrendering our desire for complete control and instead embracing the daily invitation to obey, to listen, and to act on what God reveals in each moment. Through this ongoing walk, our faith matures, our actions align more closely with God's purpose, and our lives reflect the transforming power of Christ's love, not just for our benefit but as a testimony to those around us.

VIII. Bringing It Together

- Learning to listen is an important skill. It's more than just hearing, it is applying those significant truths to daily life. This is something that develops as we practice it. As I make this statement, I think of the words of Zechariah ... *"Do not despise these small beginnings, for the Lord rejoices to see the work begin, to see the plumb line in Zerubbabel's hand."* (*The seven lamps represent the eyes of the Lord that search all around the world.*)" (**Zechariah 4:10 NLT**). Do not despise small beginnings – it is a process, take the first small step. This reminds me of the lesson of Peter walking on water (Matthew 14:22-31). Peter listened as the Lord told him to come. That listening turned to action when he stepped out of the boat. Peter didn't walk on water until he stepped out of the boat. He had his eyes on Jesus, Peter listened to the Lord call him, and he took a step of faith. He walked on water until he took his eyes off Jesus. When we learn to listen to the Lord's voice and step out in faith, supernatural things will happen. And they will keep happening as long as we keep our eyes (our focus) on Him. The words of Jesus echo loudly in these times ... *"You of little faith, why did you doubt?"* (Matthew 14:31). It was Peter's belief (that he was able to do what the Lord had told him) that Jesus challenged. The lesson here is that keeping our eyes on Jesus, not the situation, will bring us to the place that He has purposed in our daily walk.
- It's time to ask yourself the big question: What is the next step God is asking you to take? Not the whole journey. Not the five-year plan. Just the next step. Faith grows as we choose to take the next step ... when we listen, when we trust, and when we obey. And as you take that step, you will discover again that God is faithful, God is present, and God is leading you forward.
- This week's daily readings:
 - Day 1 – Psalm 119:105
 - Day 2 – Joshua 3:13-17
 - Day 3 – Hebrews 11:8-10

Day 4 – James 1:22-24

Day 5 – Proverbs 3:5-6

Day 6 – Zechariah 4:10

Day 7 – John 10:27

- Let's Pray
- Grace First, Grace Always