

Jeremiah 23:23-29
Psalm 82
Hebrews 11:29-12:2
Luke 12:49-56

Sermon August 18th 2019

Jesus Draws Us Back to God's Voice

Everyone of us here this morning has probably had to make at least one difficult decision where we needed the help of others before making that decision. And for the most part we are pretty predictable when it comes time to our methods on how to access this advice. First, we reach out to our closest friends and family for advice.

Then if we are still struggling to make a decision we go onto social media and post this question for all the people we have ever known to ponder. Because, if we are honest with ourselves Facebook, Twitter, Snap chat is more about the quantity of friend's we have verses the quality of friendship. Like we meet a person once and then a day later a friend request pops up. Cool. Now I am at 819 friends. Of course, only 3 of them I actually talk to on a regular basis. Anyways, we post this question with the hopes that someone may have faced a similar dilemma, and then chooses to divulge their wisdom to us.

Third, if we are still unsatisfied with the info gathered so far then we turn to good old trustworthy google where we can find all the information we want to help guide us in making the best decision.

If we are still undecided then maybe we head to the local indigo/chapters to see if we can find a book on the subject.

Then if all these methods fail to get us to our decision, we find ourselves reaching out to God for help. We pray. We pull out our Bibles. Blow the dust off, and start reading hoping we will find what we are looking for.

There are so many voices out there telling us how the best way to live our lives is. Above I shared some examples of the multitude of voices that we encounter when we reach out for advice. But, there are also a multitude of these voices that we encounter that give us advice whether we want it or not.

For example, choose MSN as your home page and you will find many articles that are front and center telling you how to live healthier. Or how to improve certain aspects of your relationship. Or how to make 100, 000.00 dollars a day without leaving your home. Now when internet advice gets pushy you can at least choose whether to click or not.

How many people have come up to you and given you unwanted advice? Maybe they see your child screaming in the shopping center and think they can offer you the perfect parenting strategy so that your child will never scream again. Of course, they don't have children, and never plan to have children. But that is besides the point. They read an awesome article that their friend posted on Facebook the other day that has suddenly enlightened them into being the best parents of your children.

Or you are dealing with a chronic condition like back pain or knee pain, and when people hear about your struggles they want to offer you this perfect method to healing. I injured my back in 2001 and I think I have heard about a million different ways that will heal my back.

Or you go through a life changing experience like getting married or having a baby. I think these moments are where we get the most unwanted advice. I always tell a couple getting married that if they get through the marriage planning alright they can make it through anything.

So, there is a lot of information out there. There is a lot of diversity out there, which leads to us receiving a lot of different advice from people. So, with all these voices telling us how to live our lives do we struggle to hear God's voice? Is God the first one we bring our problems to, or is God an afterthought?

Jeremiah confronts the Israelites tendencies to listen to other voices when seeking guidance on how to live their lives. Jeremiah is trying to draw the people back to those who speak God's word faithfully. To hear God's voice as they try to discern how to live their lives.

In our history, God often sent prophets to help turn our attention back to God. To help us focus on what God wants for our lives and for our community. The prophets continue to speak to us every time we open our bibles and listen.

In our gospel, Jesus, like the prophets before him, is calling us to refocus our attention on his teachings and ministry. Why? Because Jesus is a reflection of God's love for us. And when we can focus on Jesus' teachings and ministry when making decisions we are motivated to make decisions that reflect God's love. So, others too can experience God's love.

Or in other words, when we live fixing our eyes on Christ then people will experience the kingdom of God through us. We will experience the kingdom of God through each other. This is important for Jesus as he has come to make things right. To breathe justice into our lives. This may be why Jesus is so frustrated when we become distracted by other voices including our local weather reporter.

But as frustrated as Jesus sounds in this moment, we need to hear this story in the wider context of Luke where Jesus's ultimate goal is to bring peace into our world and our lives. As we hear from a multitude of angels in Luke's famous Christmas story. Even if achieving this goal means we have to face some resistance before reaching this goal. As Jesus does when he finds himself hanging from a cross. Showing us unbelievable grace. Forgiving us for our ignorance.

And so, even though sometimes Jesus responds to our inability to always focus on God with frustration, Jesus also responds with love. Graciously inviting us back to prayer. Back to hearing God's inspired word in the stories we read in our bibles. Back to the font, the altar, the pulpit, where we receive God's forgiveness. Promise. Good news. Back to the ministry where we experience God's love in our giving and service for others. Back to where we are meant to be. Steeped in God's love for us.

Let us pray, gracious God, when we become distracted from all the voices out there draw us back to your voice. When we struggle to live up to your challenge for us, have mercy on us. Give us what we need so that we can make decisions based on your guidance and love. In Jesus name we pray, **Amen.**