

18 August 2019

WHY DO MY THOUGHTS WANDER WHEN I'M PRAYING TO YOU?



One caution was to distinguish between the 'Subjective' and the 'Objective'. God's word in the bible is 'Objective'. What I hear, or believe I hear is 'Subjective'. It's not a universal word for everyone, but God's word to a specific situation, which I believe is his talking into my life's situation. But I could be wrong, or not have the whole picture.

Then we prayed for each other; quite simply. In a small group we simply prayed for one person, inviting Spirit to speak, and then we paid attention, and shared the thoughts, images, feeling, promptings we received with the person being prayed for.

Why wouldn't it have been God, we just took him at his word and asked, inviting him to be personally involved? Why wouldn't it be God?

We even prayed for Christ Church; one image was holding a rope with things tied to them, and then letting go of the rope. One person got an image of the statue in Rio. Another got the impression that we need to get the information out clearly, a person was prompted with a bible reading that we are standing under grace, no longer under law.

Who would want Jesus to send the Spirit to share his thoughts with them? I know Jesus wants to. Jesus wants to be invited into your life so that he might

share his thoughts, his hopes and dreams with you, for your life, personally.

So I encourage you to pray for each other; Ask Jesus, grab the thoughts, images, feelings, words, impressions you get and share them, then step out and do it. Why wouldn't it be God, you just asked him.

Over the last two weeks we've been musing over the question; 'Why do my thoughts wander when I'm praying to you?' We have reflected on prayer being at heart a conversation with Jesus. A conversation where we share openly and honestly, because it is lived out in a relationship of trust.

Can we trust Jesus? Without a shadow of doubt; he has come to save, to set us free, to breathe life into us, and at the cost of his life. We certainly can trust Jesus.

Today I want to share a few thoughts from our workshop with Pastor Michael Dutschke where he focused on 'Listening to God'.

That assumes two things; God is talking, and we can hear.

Who thinks God is talking? Is Jesus talking, or did he go the extreme of being born our brother, die on the cross, be raised to new life and then ascend to heaven, to once again become unknown. Hardly!

Without a shadow of doubt God is talking. In Jesus, God came and talked personally with us. Through the Spirit, God came and talked, that's why we have the bible. The recorded words of God, talking to us, so that we might know what's on his heart and soul. So we might know him.

We did an interesting exercise where one person left the room, then we gave another

person a list of things to get the other person to do when they entered the room. Just one catch, they couldn't communicate except by their facial expressions. How well would you have gone if you had walked into the room and could only go on the other person's facial expressions?

It reminded me of the essential nature of being able to hear what the other person is saying and thinking. Guess-work can be so frustrating, and so easily misunderstood. I'm not a good mind reader, so when I'm guessing at what you might want, I'll take a stab in the dark, and usually get it wrong.

Life works so much better when someone simply shares with

Christ Church Lutheran

Worship Times - 9.00am & 10.45am
Pastor: Tim 0427326553



Jesus' disciples multiplying disciples

you what they're thinking. So God came in Jesus; no guess-work, but here we see and hear God talking clearly, personally. What a blessing the written words of God are.

But you may notice the bible doesn't specially answer all your questions, or address all your life situations.

When I brought a car earlier this year, you might be surprised to know that as I read the bible I didn't get any word on what car to buy. General principles on the value of money and how to use it; but no specific word on what to buy.

Who thinks Jesus might be interested in me buying a car? Who thinks Jesus might want to be involved in this process? I do, without a shadow of doubt for I know Jesus is interested in me. So of course

he's happy to be involved in my life. Isn't that why he came?

Amazingly Jesus not only came to be involved in my life, but that I might be involved in his life. Jesus wants to share his life with you, so of course he's interested in

Who thinks God is talking?

whatever you do, and opens his heart and mind so you can be involved in what he's doing.

So if God is speaking, and in Jesus, through Spirit, speaking regarding what car to buy, the question becomes how can I listen?

Jesus certainly backs this up with his image of him being the 'Good Shepherd' and us being the sheep. Jesus says; "My sheep hear my

voice". He's speaking and we are able to hear.

We reflected on what God uses to speak to us, and reflected on seven categories.

First, the Bible, God's clear word. Second, other people, which included direct conversations, books, songs, things other people have said and done.

Third, our senses, which included our feelings, that inner voice, our gut feelings.

Fourth, pictures, visions and dreams.

This reminded me of Peter quoting the prophet Joel on the day of Pentecost; which was fifty days after Jesus resurrection, where Jesus poured out the Spirit on his followers. Peter quoted Joel: "In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit upon all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy. Your young men will see visions, and your old

men will dream dreams." (Acts 2:17)

Just an aside, the other day someone said the only difference between a vision and a dream is in a vision you're awake and in a dream you're asleep. So now it is clear to me why the older men will dream dreams!

The fifth way we can hear God is through circumstances. Michael told the story of a pastor being asked to move to Perth. He wasn't interested. But on a visit to his son in Melbourne, when they were out for dinner, he meets the bishop of WA who obviously lived in Perth. Who would go to Perth via Melbourne? He took it as God tapping him on the shoulder.

The sixth way was 'Spiritual Gifts' as mentioned by Paul in his first letter to the community of faith in

the town of Corinth. Paul wrote: "A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other. To one person the Spirit gives the ability to give wise advice (a word of wisdom), to another the same Spirit gives a message of special knowledge (a word of knowledge). The

How can I listen?

same Spirit gives great faith to another, and to someone else the one Spirit gives the gift of healing. He gives one person the power to perform miracles, and another the ability to prophesy. He gives someone else the ability to discern whether a message is from the Spirit of God or from another spirit." (1 Corinthians 12:7-10)

The seventh way God speaks we labelled, 'Other',

because God can use anything and everything. I love the story of God using a donkey to speak to its owner, who just wasn't listening. If your donkey spoke to you, I reckon it would get your attention. Proverbs points to ants; God speaking to us through the ants and their diligent working together.

The idea wasn't to make an exhaustive list and then argue over whose list is right. That's one of the devil's ways to stop us listening. Have you ever noticed when people are having a shouting match, they're not listening to each other. The aim of these categories was to help us focus on listening to God, to be open to hear his voice.

So we were encouraged to be paying attention, recognising Spirit's voice and also testing what we received.