

THE VOICE OF THE LORD

Acts 7:31, 33 ... “When Moses saw it [the flaming bush] he marveled at the sight; and as he drew near to observe, the voice of the Lord came to him....Then the Lord said to him, ‘Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground.’”

The Christian church, since its inception nearly 2,000 years ago, has gradually adopted greater casualness in how we relate to God. Our worship has gradually become less formal and rigid, with teachings expanded beyond the simple truths of Scripture. Catholic and Orthodox churches have remained more consistent over the centuries, but they, too, are not without change. The changing nature of our connection to God has affected how we communicate with him, and it may be affecting how we hear from him.

In the Old Testament era, God spoke to his people through prophets via his literal voice. Sometimes God sent an angel or the pre-incarnate Christ (prior to his birth as a man) to deliver messages. In the 32 years in which Christ lived among us, he introduced us to the possibility of a personal relationship with God, anchored in the indwelling of his Holy Spirit in the lives of each believer. That eliminated the need for prophets and priests. We are blessed to live in an era when Christ is a personal savior who desires to freely speak to us directly through his Spirit.

Apart from the rigid rules that the children of Israel had to follow to stay in God’s good graces, there are certain ancient truths we might want to be reminded of, such as what we read in today’s passage. When Moses encountered God in the burning bush, he was ordered to remove his sandals in reverence because that small parcel of soil on which the bush was planted, had temporarily become holy ground due to the presence of God’s Spirit. This was a learning experience for Moses and God may have gone easy on him during that first visit. If Moses had been an informed and anointed priest or prophet, God might have struck him dead for disrespecting him.

Contrast this with believers today who treat God like a call center employee, or a customer service hotline. They call upon God with all the reverence of a frustrated customer seeking help about their broken toaster oven. I’m not suggesting we must remove our sandals before praying to God, but a measure of respect and reverence symbolic of his role as our sovereign creator, might be appropriate. If you are having difficulty hearing from God, perhaps you should consider how you are speaking to him. Are you considering his role as the creator of the universe, the author of all life, the supreme authority over everything and everyone, and the sacrifices he made to save you? Perhaps if you keep this image in mind as you approach his throne to ask for intercession in your problems, and seeking his blessings, you might actually begin an encounter in which he is willing to speak to you in return. Think about it. Try it!

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