

SERIES: 'CONNECT WITH GOD'- 5/4/25 (#6) PASTOR ROB

- Introduction: Pastor Rob refreshes us on the “10,000 hour rule” which centers around the theory that a person reaches a high level of ‘expertise’ when they’ve devoted 10,000 hours to it. Today, we will talk about...not being an expert in ‘something’ but rather, in ‘someone’ (eg. a spouse, a friend, etc.)...which is, in part and again, a function of time. You become an ‘expert’ in that person...their emotions, desires and even their voice.
- As it relates to our Sermon Series....CONNECT WITH GOD...and in the midst of the chaos that we all experience in our lives, He wants you to know *HIS* voice...and to hear Him clearly...its the heart of our faith as Christians...its about a relationship with God.
- As Christians, we lean on the Bible...and as inerrant and perfectly principled as It is, there are times when our circumstances seem a bit ‘grey’/unclear and we struggle for the exact answer to our specific circumstances....especially ones that seem affected uniquely by our modern culture and technology (TV, social media, etc.). Fitting into this are things like how we devote our time, our choice of jobs (and related effort), what we consume (eg. alcohol), how we spend our money, relationships, etc. *How do we listen to God in this chaotic environment?*
- This leads us to the story of King David who was an expert at listening to the voice of God. By way of background, his predecessor, King Saul- -the ‘first king of Israel- - in the midst of his 42 year reign, had his anointing taken away. Through Samuel, God anointed David who bided his time to become the next King of Israel. Saul, driven by fear and jealousy, hunted for David (who was accompanied by a few hundred followers).
- In 1 Samuel 23, David was almost captured by Saul...but through God’s providential intervention, saves him by distracting Saul and his men with the Philistines.

1 Sam 24: 1-22- - After Saul returned from pursuing the Philistines, he was told, “David is in the Desert of En Gedi.” (2) So Saul took three thousand able young men from all Israel and set out to look for David and his men near the Crags of the wild Goats. (3) He came to the sheep pens along the way; a cave was there, and Saul went in to relieve himself. David and his men were far back in the cave. (4) The men said, “This is the day the LORD spoke of when He said to you, : I will give your enemy into your hands for you to deal with as you wish’ “ Then David crept up unnoticed and cut off a corner of Saul’s robe. (5) Afterward, David was conscience-stricken for having cut off a corner of his robe. (6) He said to his men, “The LORD forbid that I should do such a thing to my master, the LORD’S anointed, or lay my hand on him; for he is the anointed of the LORD.” (7) With these words David sharply rebuked his men and did not allow them to attack Saul. And Saul left the cave and went his way. (8) Then David went out of the cave and called out to Saul, “My Lord the king!” When Saul looked behind him, David looked down and prostrated himself with his face to the ground. (9) He said to Saul, “Why do you listen when men say, “David is bent on harming you’? (10) This day you have seen with your own eyes how the LORD delivered

you into my hands in the cave. Some urged me to kill you, but I spared you; I said 'I will not lay my hand on my lord, because he is the LORD'S anointed.' (11) See, my father, look at this piece of robe in my hand! I cut off the corner of your robe but did not kill you. See that there is nothing in my hand to indicate that I am guilty of wrong doing or rebellion. I have not wronged you, but you are hunting me down to take my life. (12) May the LORD judge between you and me. And may the LORD avenge the wrongs you have done to me, but my hand will not touch you. (13) As the old saying goes, From evil doers come evil deeds, so my hand will not touch you. (14) Against whom has the king of Israel come out? Who are you pursuing? A dead dog? A flea? (15) May the LORD be our judge and decide between us. May He consider my cause and uphold it; may He vindicate me by delivering me from your hand." (16) When David finished saying this, Saul asked, "Is that your voice, David my son?" And he wept aloud. (17) You are more righteous than I," he said. "You have treated me well, but I have treated you badly. You have just now told me about the good you did to me; the LORD delivered me into your hands, but you did not kill me. (19) When a man finds his enemy, does he let him get away unharmed? May the Lord reward you well for the way you treated me today. I know that you will surely be king and that the kingdom of Israel will be established in your hands. Now swear to me by the LORD that you will not kill off my descendants or wipe out my name from my father's family." (22) So David gave his oath to Saul. Then Saul returned home, but David and his men went up to the stronghold.

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- **Pastor Rob points out, firstly, the specificity of this narrative....it doesn't read like a myth....its reads like a description of historical events.**
 - **The course of these events, starting out with the descriptive (and undignified) manner by which Saul chooses this one of hundreds of caves and enters it, lends itself to the realism and the providential nature of what's going on.**
 - **In reiterating/reviewing this narrative and touching on Verse 4..., Pastor Rob clarifies that the implied quote "I will give the enemy into your hands....." appears nowhere else in Scripture (different possibilities to explain but can't reconcile). In any event, the scene was, in every sense (urgency, danger, etc.), chaotic....so, would he be able to hear God's voice?**
 - **So there was great tension in that moment....just as we experience chaotic moments that, notwithstanding, require us to make choices. Amidst the 'noise', do we hear God's voice?**
 - **In David's case, he is moved by God to spare the King's life....and in doing so, cut the piece of robe so as to clearly prove his mercy and goodness to the King. The act also served to give notice that he was 'dethroning' Saul. Afterward, David's heart was guiltily struck by that symbolism and the awareness that Saul had been appointed by the LORD.....he, effectively, was hearing the Voice of God.**
 - **What would we have done in this same situation and knowing that Saul was steadfastly out to kill David....spare him as David did?....or eliminate the nightmarish, constant threat while seizing on this most humiliating, vulnerable moment for Saul and kill him . (??) Would we have heard His Voice? David did...and notwithstanding (maybe because of) his own anointment.**

- In David's case, he would have recalled the Torah accounts (eg. Moses and Aaron being challenged by the Korah priests who then suffered drastic results)..... so he understood well the meaning of being one of God's 'anointed'....reflecting his unique 'expertise' in hearing God's voice and his connection with God.....
- This connection probably started in the pastures, as a boy shepherd, with little to do but to focus on God in deep and profound ways.....for years...24/7....listening to His Voice...a man after God's own heart. Picture David writing this Psalm (song), perhaps in these fields:

Psalm 32: 8- I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you.

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- In the modern world, some view Christianity as a kind of rote religion....but David knew very deeply/profoundly that the heart of our faith is a relationship with God.
 - Question: How can we reduce the volume of the chaotic noise of life (smartphones, tv's, computers, books, crazy/hectic jobs, etc.) and concentrate, more so, on hearing Him....on being connected with Him....in a relationship with Him??!
 - Pastor Rob: Do you know God is present with you and He has His eyes on you? Through all the chaos, He wants to speak to you. And when faced with difficult and complex decisions, do you take them to Jesus? *Its a relationship....not a religion!*
 - Just like David exhibited in the face of extreme crisis (David vulnerably stepped out of that cave- -V 11-15...with utmost confidence in his God), we can do the same, knowing we are moving in a direction with Him! For us too, it can be a relationship that fosters confidence and faith!
 - That confidence and serenity....think of Psalm 23:1-2 "....laid me down in green pastures beside still waters.....". In contrast, think about the words of James:

James 1:5-8- If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. (6) But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. (7) for that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; (8) he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

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- So, if you are faced with a truly grey area (eg. no direct scripture, no harm to others, unwise, etc.) and are seeking God's voice, ask for it...spend time connecting with Him...and confidently listen to it. In any event, He will be with you. Pastor Rob, for example, gave up an 'intended' career against all advise.....a decision coming out of prayer and connecting with God during his college senior year and proceeded toward ministry.
 - We cannot deny God's voice in our lives-not a preference-its an imperative...a conviction. A relationship with Jesus changes your life as well as everyone around you. It's contagious! Note: Just as David's heart was struck by God, Saul's heart was struck by the faith of David! Grace changes peoples' lives....Saul's, David's and ours...thru Jesus.
 - Note! We think of our selves like David....but rather, we are much more like Saul!!!!

LISTEN TO HIS VOICE!

