



# DESERT VIEW BIBLE CHURCH

**SERIES: THE SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES    SILENCE & SOLITUDE**

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**MATTHEW 3:16-4:7    •    8/13/2023**

## MAIN POINT

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We will hear the voice of God if we choose to quiet ourselves long enough to listen.

## INTRODUCTION

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**How do you do with silence and solitude?**

**Do you think being alone and silent is difficult in our culture? Why or why not?**

**What do you think the value of silence and solitude might be for your relationship with Jesus?**

We live in a loud, loud world. Everywhere we turn, someone or something is trying to communicate to us. Whether it's the thousands of marketing messages coming at us at every turn or the constant buzz of the cell phone, someone or something is always trying to make their way into our minds. It's no wonder, then, that we struggle to hear the voice of God. In this session, we will see that God is speaking. But we will only hear His voice if we choose to quiet ourselves long enough to listen.

## UNDERSTANDING

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**List some of the ways/means God speaks to us. Through which of these have you heard the voice of God before?**

**Sometimes we can discover that God is trying to communicate through our circumstances. How have you found that to be true?**

**What are some of the obstacles to you hearing the voice of God through your circumstances or one of the other avenues he mentioned?**

Many of us live our lives as functional atheists. In other words, we live our lives without ever bothering to try to listen to the voice of God. We never acknowledge that God is with us in every circumstance, and we therefore never really try and engage to hear Him speak. But God is not hiding Himself from us, and there are several places in Scripture that reveal important truths about the manner of His speaking.

**READ 1 KINGS 19:11-13.**

**What do we learn about the voice of God from this passage?**

**If God speaks in a still and small voice, what is required of us in order to hear Him?**

Elijah heard the voice of God, but he had to quiet himself and listen for it. For us to do the same, we must begin to integrate the disciplines of solitude and silence into our lives.

**READ LUKE 10:38-42.**

**What do we learn about the voice of God from this passage?**

**What is required from us if we want to hear from God as Mary did?**

We must be willing to be ruthless with our schedules and carve out time devoted to hearing from God. We cannot be so overcome with activity for God that we fail to listen to God.

**READ MATTHEW 3:16-4:7.**

**How did Jesus' hearing the voice of God impact the way He dealt with the challenges in His way?**

**What is the point here for us? Why do we need to hear these words from God?**

So much of our hurry, anxiety, and even pride is driven by our insecurity. Jesus was able to resist the temptation to prove Himself to Satan because He was secure in who

He was. This security came through hearing the voice of God, and it can come to us when we believe the gospel. In the gospel, God pronounces the same thing He pronounced over Jesus time and time again.

## **APPLICATION**

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**What is one specific time and place in which you are going to pursue solitude and silence this week?**

**How are you going to alter your schedule to listen to God this week?**

**What are some other ways you can remind yourself throughout the day that God is speaking, and then actively listen for His voice?**

## **PRAYER**

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As a part of your group prayer time, invite your group to spend some time in silence and encourage your group to simply sit and listen for God's voice.

## **COMMENTARY**

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3:16-17. When Jesus came up out of the water from being baptized by John, He received an immediate confirmation from His family. He saw the Spirit of God, and he heard His Father's approval. This scene is something like a family reunion—all three members of the Trinity manifesting their presence in such a way that bystanders could see or hear them. This was a testimony to human witnesses about the identity of Jesus, the Messiah. It serves as one of hundreds of exhibits in Matthew's Gospel for Jesus as the Messiah.

It was also a personal affirmation from the first and third members of the Trinity to the Son. This fact reminds us of the emotional-relational side of the Godhead, a side we often forget. Even God the Son enjoyed personal affirmation from His family. And certainly the people needed to hear from the Father (John 11:42).

Twice in Matthew the Father speaks from heaven. In both cases He speaks in third person, addressing listeners other than Jesus (compare the second-person "you are" in Mark 1:11; Luke 3:22: and the third-person "this is" in Mark 9:7; Luke 9:35). The second instance is in Matthew 17, on the Mount of Transfiguration. The wording in this warm, fatherly statement is reminiscent of the threefold emphasis on Isaac's uniqueness and value to Abraham in Genesis 22:2. There has never been, nor will there ever be, a prouder father in all the universe than God the Father.

4:1-4. Jesus' temptation immediately followed His baptism. Many of God's people have faced strong temptations immediately after spiritual mountaintop experiences. Jesus' baptism has been viewed as the beginning of His public ministry. In His temptation, Jesus faced choices regarding how He would accomplish the mission God had given Him. Would He choose God's way or Satan's way?

At the beginning of these temptations, Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert. Did the Spirit do the tempting? No, the tempter did. Although led by the Spirit into the desert, Jesus was tempted by the devil. An important note of difference between the work of the Spirit and the work of Satan is evident in this verse. The Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness, but the devil was responsible for the temptation. This verse warns us that we must never blame God for temptation nor should we view Satan as having power equal to God's. The devil is always bound by what God permits. Satan

attempted to prove Jesus faithless. God permitted Jesus to be tested to demonstrate His faithfulness. Satan attempted to create division between God and His Son. The devil works against God's purposes and God's people. The temptations Jesus faced were real temptations. Yet He steadfastly and repeatedly resisted temptation (Heb. 4:15).

The temptations recorded in Matthew 4 happened after Jesus had fasted forty days and forty nights. After a 40-day fast, Jesus was hungry. Jesus was both God and man. As a man, Jesus experienced the same kinds of physical needs we experience. What did the devil mean by the phrase "if you are the Son of God"? Satan tempted Jesus to use His power for selfish gain. The devil looked at the desert with its barren rocks and tempted Jesus to tell these stones to become bread. Jesus responded to the devil's temptations by quoting Scripture. In this instance He quoted from Deuteronomy 8:3 to remind him that man does not live on bread alone. Jesus knew that human beings need physical food. But He also recognized people's greater need for spiritual food. We need every word that comes from the mouth of God. God's Word can satisfy our deepest needs.

4:5-7. Satan took Jesus to the holy city of Jerusalem and had Jesus stand on the highest point of the temple. Satan tempted Jesus to throw Himself down from the high point. The devil quoted the written Word of God in his attempt to convince Jesus to claim God's promise of protection. Satan quoted Psalm 91:11-12. These verses refer to God's protection of the faithful who remain committed to Him. As we might expect, he twisted the meaning of Scripture.

The psalm does not teach that God's people are free to abuse God's power to satisfy a personal whim. Why did Satan tempt Jesus to abuse God's power in this way? People are drawn to the spectacular. If Jesus jumped and was rescued in a supernatural way, He could gain followers. But He rejected the temptation to build His kingdom in this manner. Jesus again responded to temptation with the Word of God: Do not put the Lord your God to the test (see Deut. 6:16). Jesus refused to abuse God's power. He refused to build His kingdom with spectacular displays of power. Jesus resisted the temptation to bypass the cross and His redemptive mission by refusing to yield to this temptation.