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Can You Recognize His Voice?

John 10:3: (NASB) *To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.*



Social media is one oversized voice with a thousand different facets that begs for our attention, our obedience and our loyalty. As a Christian, walking through this hyped up mass of messages and glittering folly is not only a challenge, it is our responsibility because we are supposed to be following only one voice - the voice of Jesus. How do we find that voice and how can we be sure that what we *think* is his voice really is his voice?

We will use one simple parable to focus our thinking: **John 10:1-6:** (NASB) *¹Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter by the door into the fold of the sheep, but climbs up some other way, he is a thief and a robber. ²But he who enters by the door is a shepherd of the sheep. ³To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴When he puts forth all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. ⁵A stranger they simply will not follow, but will flee from him, because they do not know the voice of strangers. ⁶This figure of speech Jesus spoke to them, but they did not understand what those things were which he had been saying to them.*

We can begin to distinguish the voice of Jesus in several steps by unfolding the parable.

From the Parable	What it Represents
The shepherd	Jesus
The sheepfold	The protective environment of the Jewish Law
The sheep	The Jewish people – specifically the followers of Jesus (other sheep appear later)
The door of the fold	The justification earned by fulfilling the Law that Jesus claimed as his
Thieves and robbers	The corrupt and hypocritical leaders of the Jewish nation
The doorkeeper	John the Baptist
The stranger	False leaders of the sheep of Jesus

The voice of Jesus is not about overstimulation. It is about a quiet, sensible voice of reason, direction and focus on something higher.

How do we know the voice of Jesus? YOU KNOW IT IS THE VOICE OF JESUS WHEN...THE MESSAGE IS JUST, RIGHTEOUS AND FOR THE TRUE BENEFIT OF THE SHEEP

John 10:1-2

Jesus explains the parable: **John 10:7-10:** How can he be the door and the shepherd at the same time? These describe different aspects of what Jesus is and does.

He tells us the way to find real value in life is going through the door representing him.

The same issue of thieves and robbers were a problem in the Old Testament, too: **Ezekiel 34:2-3:** The troubles of leadership within Israel were nothing new in Jesus' time. They had been going on for a long time before that, which is why Jesus gives this particular parable. He was emphasizing they have to listen to the right voice - the authentic voice - so they could be led in the right direction and not listen to the thieves and robbers.

How well are those who should lead us to Jesus' voice truly reflecting Jesus' voice?

Why did Jesus tell this particular parable at that time? We will start looking at the context of what happened before the parable was spoken. Per his usual experience, Jesus was going about "doing good unto all" when he was once again waylaid by the Pharisees. The following experience could easily have been his motivation to present the parable of his sheep and his voice.

John 9:1-3: Jesus capitalized on a bad situation to bring glory to God.

We can recognize the voice of Jesus by observing the pure good of his message.

There were two types of early Christians: 1) Jewish Christians that came out of the Jewish nation and 2) Gentile Christians that came from the pagan nations. We could surmise it was easier for the pagan converts to find the voice of Jesus, as the Jewish Law dominated the entire nation of Israel. Christianity was telling them to put that Law and its rituals aside, even though the Law was a good thing.



In the book of Hebrews, Paul taught what to listen for and immediately begins that book with the common ground of prophecy, as he introduced Jesus in the context of the Old Testament. He quotes from [Psalms 2:7-8](#), alludes to [Proverbs 8:22-30](#), quotes from [2 Samuel 7:14](#), [1 Chronicles 22:10](#), [28:6](#), [Psalms 89:26-27](#) and [Psalms 97:7](#)...all within the first six verses!

[Hebrews 1:1-6](#): The Apostle's goal in writing the book of Hebrews was to help the Hebrew Christians transition from listening to the voice of the Law to listening to the voice of Jesus. He helped them find a way to leave behind something good to embrace something better - and necessary - if they were going to become Christians.

[John 14:1-2](#): We can recognize the voice of Jesus by seeing how it fits into the context of the whole Bible.

Many times, Christianity focuses just on the New Testament, which is a mistake. Another danger is to focus so much on the Old Testament that we do not allow the New Testament to build on it as a foundation. The structure of Christianity has its firm footing on that Old Testament foundation.

There are lots of voices in the world that claim to be reflecting the voice of Jesus, but are they? How can you tell? It might make you feel good but is it really his voice? We are laying out biblical principles that show ways to identify the right voice. It must harmonize with all Scripture.

[John 10:3](#): The doorkeeper recognizes the one with the authority over the sheep (the Messiah) has arrived. The doorkeeper represented John the Baptist. John "opened the door" for Jesus so that Jesus could perform his ministry. John's ministry was preparation to get the people's hearts right.

YOU KNOW IT IS THE VOICE OF JESUS WHEN...THERE IS PROPER AUTHORITY TO LEAD

John the Baptist was a voice to identify the real voice of Jesus: [Matthew 3:1-3](#): The work of John the Baptist was for the Jewish people to get them to focus on recognizing the value of the Law; Jesus would then build upon that foundation. We still need, in principle, the "John the Baptist message" today, because one cannot hear the voice of Jesus unless one's heart is in the right place. [Matthew 3:11](#)

We can recognize the voice of Jesus through other voices - just be sure about those other voices!

Jesus used his authority of his being the Messiah to be a light and to bring signs to the people.

Back to the context before the parable: [John 9:4-8](#): Jesus performed this miracle in a very unusual way. Normally he proclaimed something and it happened. Here he made the man do something very specific. So, the voice and actions of Jesus command a glorious miracle! Shouldn't everyone celebrate? Can it get any better than giving sight to someone who never had it? He was showing the people what his future kingdom would look like.

Let's come back to this, but first we continue with the Hebrews account of Paul prophetically comparing angels to Jesus, the only son of God: [Hebrews 1:13-14](#) [Hebrews 2:5](#): The Hebrew Christians understood angels, as angelic intervention happened in the Old Testament. Paul compared Jesus to the angels, saying Jesus had a higher, better position. They were to embrace the spiritual greatness of Jesus and his position.

We can recognize the voice of Jesus through the brightness of all that he stood for - the good and salvation of mankind!

[Ephesians 6:10-13](#): Our struggle is against many wrong powers and paths! Many can even take on the name of "Christianity" but are not really doing the work of Christianity. We want to get to the real voice of Jesus. We must realize the enemy is far more powerful than we are.

One of the ways to "confirm" the voices we would trust as authentic representations of Jesus: [Galatians 1:6-8](#): Are the voices we trust to represent Jesus at all distorting the pure Gospel message?

[John 10:3](#): (NASB) *To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.*



YOU KNOW IT IS THE VOICE OF JESUS WHEN...THE VOICE REFLECTS GODLINESS, SACRIFICE AND THE HIGHEST FORM OF SELFLESS LOVE

John 10:5: The true followers of Jesus instinctively know his voice. Are we instinctive in this knowledge? It is not a feeling; it is a learned spiritual instinct built on study, prayer and living a Christ-like life. Jesus taught love and sacrifice.

Jesus explains the parable: John 10:12-15: Jesus establishes a distinction between himself and those on the periphery. He said he will lay down his life for the sheep, but the hired hand will just run because he is not invested in the sheep, but he is. The same focus and attention is given to the sheep as God gives to Jesus.

We can recognize the voice of Jesus by its harmony with God's love for His creation.

Back to the context before the parable: John 9:14-19,22: Those leaders were the *thieves and robbers* in the parable. They were so tied up in the ritualistic focus of the Law that they missed what the Law was there for. The Law did allow for people to be helped on the Sabbath. The Pharisees wanted to attack the voice of Jesus. **Luke 16:14-15**

We can recognize the voice of Jesus by what it is NOT - it is NOT egotistical or childish! The Pharisees were both of these things.

How do you find the voice of Jesus in your life if you are so focused on "me?" There will not be enough time to focus on the Lord! The world is devious today!

Paul continues to build the credibility of Jesus by reminding the Hebrews that Jesus was one of them, as well as having the responsibility of destroying evil and being a high priest. **Hebrews 2:14 Hebrews 2:17**

We can recognize the voice of Jesus by its familiarity with our condition.

YOU KNOW IT IS THE VOICE OF JESUS WHEN...THERE IS A CALLING AND A DESERVED FOLLOWING

John 10:4: They followed him out of the "sheepfold" of the confines of the Jewish Law.

Jesus explains the parable: John 10:11: (NASB) *I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.* You are called and protected by the shepherd.

Back to the context before the parable: John 9:24-33: This man, a beggar all of his life, understood the voice of Jesus through the actions of Jesus. He understood something the Pharisees wanted to deny. When Jesus was here, there were those who wanted to make sure people did not hear his voice. And yet, his voice rang true with those whose hearts he opened.

We can recognize the voice of Jesus by the grace he gives us to see that which we could not!

The voice of Jesus is a transformative voice and needs to be studied, observed and meditated upon in our everyday life. You cannot follow a voice you do not recognize or understand.

Matthew 7:12-14: Jesus defines the Law and the Prophets (and the Pharisees were all about the Law and the Prophets!) as treating others as you want them to treat you. But that is not how the Scribes and Pharisees acted.

We can recognize the voice of Jesus by its message of self-sacrifice.

Jesus described following him as a difficult, *narrow way*. You have to learn to put away other things that no longer apply in your life. For us now in our world, the mess and noise around us is not applicable to what we are trying to become. We have to essentially put blinders on in a lot of circumstances so that we can latch onto and focus on that one, quiet voice of Jesus. You will look strange to those around you! But that is exactly the reaction Jesus received...that means you are on the right track!

Paul reinforces his connection to the Hebrew Christians as brothers in Christ, then parallels Jesus and Moses' faithfulness: Hebrews 3:1-2: Paul took what they knew to help them build upon it to something better. **Now Paul begins to seriously clarify his argument by elevating Jesus over Moses: Hebrews 3:3-4**

Paul labels his clarification - the house of servants and the house of sons: Hebrews 3:5-6: (NRSV) *Now Moses was faithful in all God's house as a servant, to testify to the things that*



would be spoken later. *“Christ, however, was faithful over God’s house as a son, and we are his house if we hold firm the confidence and the pride that belong to hope.*

There is a difference between Moses and the work he did and Jesus and the work that he did. Moses was of the *house of servants* and Jesus is of the *house of sons*. We are called to be *sons of God*, not servants, just like Jesus.

Paul was telling the Hebrew Christians: What you have had was really good, but let’s build on that to get something much bigger and stronger.

We can recognize the voice of Jesus by its elevation to the standard of son-ship! The voice of Jesus is higher and clearer (not louder!) than everything else around it.

Back to the parable... Jesus “raised the bar” for any of those Jewish people who would follow him out of the jurisdiction of the Law into the jurisdiction of the son the God.

YOU KNOW IT IS THE VOICE OF JESUS WHEN...THERE IS SACRIFICE, THE GRACE TO BROADEN THE CALL, UNITY AND THE POWER AND AUTHORITY FROM THE FATHER.

The parable ends and Jesus not only explains it, but he expands the lesson: John 10:16-18: (NASB) *¹⁶I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; (I have followers who are not of a Jewish background) I must bring them also, and they will hear my voice; and they will become one flock with one shepherd. ¹⁷For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life so that I may take it again. ¹⁸No one has taken it away from me, but I lay it down on my own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from my Father.*

This was God’s plan from the start. Jesus fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies (the sheep from the first fold) and confirms there were others from another fold who were just as important and who also need to learn his voice. Sheep will respond to their own name. There is a personal connection and attachment shown here. The Jewish and Gentile Christians are both supposed to hear only the voice of Jesus. We have established what a challenge that is in our world today.

Let’s go back to the context before the parable. Remember the Pharisees were upset that Jesus healed a man blind since birth. They twice questioned the man who was healed. John 9:34-38: This man of great and pure heart was given an immense privilege to follow after Jesus.

We can recognize the voice of Jesus by embracing the magnitude of his purpose.

The healing that Jesus did was just a symbol of God’s coming kingdom. *Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.* That is what Jesus told us to look forward to!

This shows us the result of finding, recognizing and listening to the voice of Jesus: Matthew 11:25-30: We can recognize the voice of Jesus by hearing the call to rest in him. It takes discipline for us to unplug, clear the clutter and just listen to his voice!

Let’s go back to Hebrews, where Paul is helping the Hebrew Christians to transition from resting in the Law to resting in Christ. Paul admonishes his audience to learn from the mistakes of others, based on the common base of credibility that Jesus was one of them (a Jew, a man on earth, etc.).

Hebrews 4:11: Paul cites the Christian’s advantage: Jesus, our leader, having experienced the flesh and now passed into the heavens, understands us and walks us through our trials. He was here and can sympathize with our fallen condition. Hebrews 4:14-16: We can recognize the voice of Jesus by embracing its leading us to the Father. Philippians 3:13: (NASB) *Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead...*

The Apostle Paul worked every day at recognizing and following the voice of Jesus - it is a lifetime work! Let the world go and listen just to the voice of Jesus.

*So, can you recognize his voice?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!*