



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.*



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

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

But first a reminder of what we are battling in our quest to hear Jesus' voice. This epitomizes the noise and static going on in the world around us:

 **Denis Leary, Hulu commercial (2009)**

(Hulu is an online company that offers a selection of TV shows and movies. It ran an ad campaign intended to humorously reveal "the shocking secret behind Hulu," portraying the site as an "evil plot to destroy the world," suggesting its celebrity spokespeople are really aliens in disguise.)



- Come here! It's time for a little "Come to Denis" meeting. Your parents were right, your teachers were right, even that creepy scout master with the tight brown shorts was right. TV is slowly rotting your brain and turning it into a slimy, gooey, mushy blob of pudding and there's nothing you can do about it! See? I just told you what was happening and you're still watching TV! Amazing! ...we built Hulu to pump thousands of hours of free TV right into the one screen you drag around everywhere. Now I need you to take your stubby little human fingers and and hit this button on Hulu, then you can share those TV shows in your bliggity blogs, and your facie-spacies and your tweety pages for all your bookwormie, anti-boobtubie friends. So here's the deal. Help us turn their finely cultured skull beef down to the aforementioned pudding and we will slurp out yours last. Yeah? Yeah. Because we are aliens...*
- (Announcer) Hulu. An evil plot to destroy the world. Enjoy.*

It takes a real factual message, makes a joke out of it and then says it is good. This is sad because it shows us the power of media in our lives that really diminishes the things we can and should stand for.



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: (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.

Jesus explains the parable:

John 10:7-10: (NASB) ⁷So Jesus said to them again, Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. ⁸All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. ⁹I am the door; if anyone enters through me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. ¹⁰The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.

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: (NASB) ²Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel. Prophesy and say to those shepherds, Thus says the Lord GOD, Woe, shepherds of Israel who have been feeding themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flock? ³You eat the fat and clothe yourselves with the wool, you slaughter the fat sheep without feeding the flock.

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?

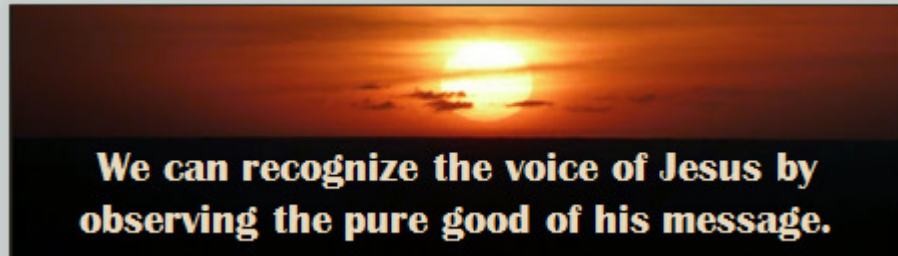
Which early Christians were challenged in trying to hear Jesus' voice?

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: (NRSV) ¹As he walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. ²His disciples asked him, Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind? ³Jesus answered, neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him.

Jesus capitalized on a bad situation to bring glory to God.



 **Less white matter, 5 Crazy Ways Social Media Changes Brains - AsapScience**

- With social media sites being used by one-third of the entire world, they've clearly have had a major influence on society...but what about our bodies? Here are five crazy ways that social media and the



Internet are effecting your brain right now: Can't log off? Surprisingly five to ten percent of Internet users are actually unable to control how much time they spend online. Though it's a psychological addiction as opposed to a substance addiction, brain scans of these people actually show a similar impairment of regions that those with drug dependents have. Specifically there's a clear degradation of white matter in the regions that control emotional processing, attention and decision making. Because social media provides immediate rewards with very little effort required, your brain begins to rewire itself making you desire these stimulations.

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: (ASV) ¹God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, ²hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom also he made the worlds;...⁴having become by so much better than the angels, as he hath inherited a more excellent name than they. ⁵For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, This day have I begotten thee? and again, I will be to him a Father, And he shall be to me a Son? ⁶And when he again bringeth in the firstborn into the world he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.

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.

A reminder of what we are discussing simultaneously:



John 10: Parable of the sheepfold and the shepherd

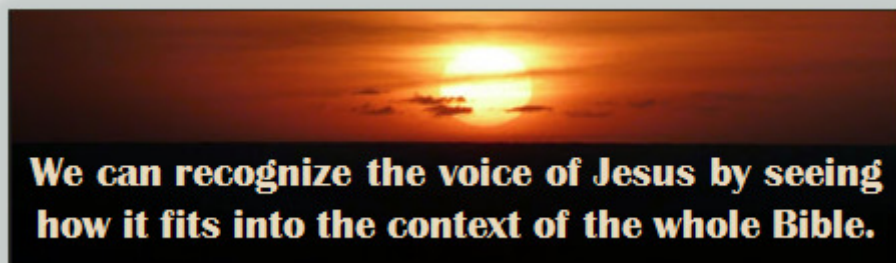


John 9: The context to know why Jesus spoke that parable



Hebrews 1-4: How the Apostle Paul related to the Hebrew Christians so they could figure out the voice of Jesus and leave everything else behind

John 14:1-2: (NASB) ¹Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in me. ²In my Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you.



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.

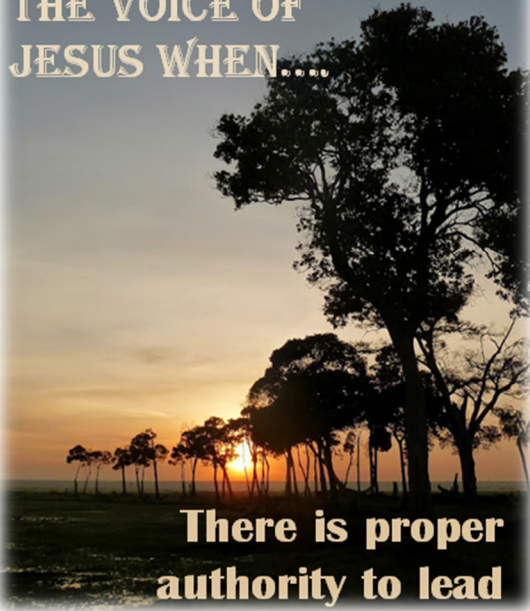


John 10:3: (NASB) *To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.*



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: (NASB) *¹Now in those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying, ²Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. ³For this is the one referred to by Isaiah the prophet when he said, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make ready the way of the Lord, Make His paths straight!*

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.



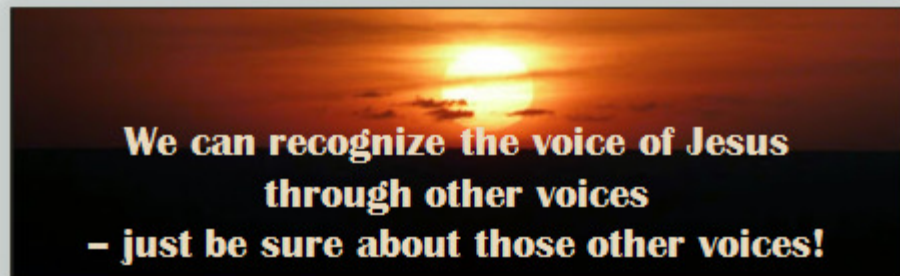
Multi-tasking and phone vibe, 5 Crazy Ways Social Media Changes Brains - AsapScience

- We also see a shift when looking at multi-tasking. You might think that those who use social media or constantly switch between work and websites are better at multi-tasking, but studies have found that when comparing heavy media users to others, they perform much worse during task-switching tests. Increased multi-tasking online reduces your brain's ability to filter out interferences and can even make it harder for your brain to commit information to memory. Like when your phone buzzes in the middle of productive work - or wait - did it even buzz? Phantom Vibration Syndrome is a relatively new psychological phenomenon where you think you felt your phone go off but it didn't. In one study 89 percent of test subjects said that they experience this at least once every two weeks. It would seem that our brains now perceive an itch as an actual vibration from our phone.





Matthew 3:11: (NASB) *As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove his sandals; he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.*



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: (NRSV) *⁴We must work the works of Him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work. ⁵As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world. ⁶When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man's eyes, ⁷saying to him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. ⁸The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?*

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: (NRSV) *¹³But to which of the angels has he ever said, Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet? ¹⁴Are not all angels spirits in the divine service, sent to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?*

Hebrews 2:5: (ASV) *For not unto angels did he subject the world to come, whereof we speak.*

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: (NASB) ¹⁰Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. ¹¹Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. ¹²For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. ¹³Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.

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.



A caller from Connecticut suggests Christian Questions does "John the Baptist" work each week by pointing to Jesus. Matthew 13:16: Blessed are your eyes because they see and your ears because they hear. Matthew 16:15: Jesus asks Peter who Peter says Jesus is. He answered, Thou art the Christ. How did Peter know that? The Heavenly Father revealed it to him because he was willing to listen. John 20:16: Mary heard the voice of the Master - what a privilege for her to have been there.



Distracted thinking, *What is the Internet Doing to Our Brains, Epipheo*

- *It's an incredibly information rich environment that the net creates for us and that's why you use it so much. I mean sounds, pictures, words, text - and what this tends to do is promote a sort of compulsive behavior in which we are constantly checking our smart phone, constantly glancing at our email inbox. We're kind of living in this perpetual state of distraction and interruption which is dangerous because that mode of thinking crowds out the more contemplative calmer modes of thinking and that focused calm thinking is actually how we learn. It's a process called memory consolidation and that means the transfer of information from our short term working memory to our long term memory, and it's through moving information from your working memory to your long term memory that you create connections between that information and everything else you know.*

Our long term memory is getting messed up and that is disturbing! We will not be able to hear the right voice because it does not shout louder than everything else.





One of the ways to “confirm” the voices we would trust as authentic representations of Jesus:

Galatians 1:6-8: (NASB) *⁶I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; ⁷which is really not another; only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. ⁸But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed!*

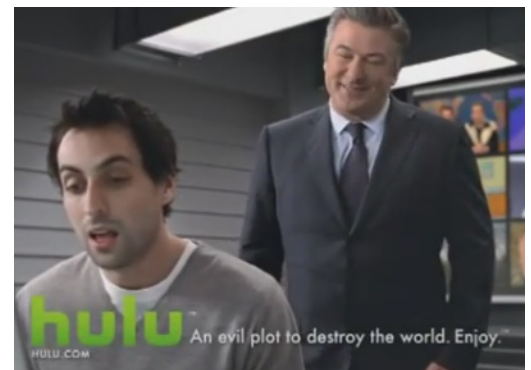
Are the voices we trust to represent Jesus at all distorting the pure Gospel message?

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.*



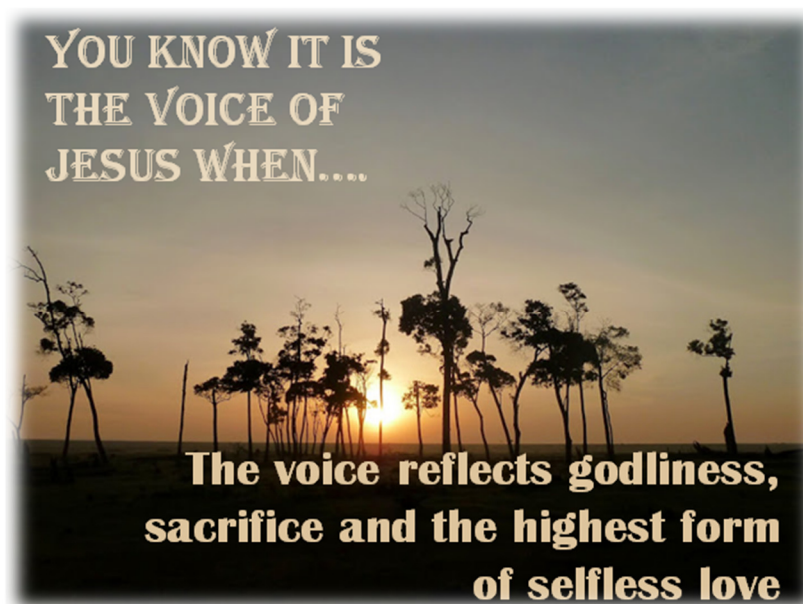
 **Alec Baldwin, Hulu commercial (2008)**

- *Hello again, Earth! I'm Alec Baldwin, here at Hulu with some exciting news. Now that we are beaming TV shows to your lap-based computing boxes for free, 24/7, they have finally rotted your brains just like mom promised they would. So keep watching! The sooner your brains have percolated into bubbly cheesy goo, the sooner we can slurp them through your ear canals and pass them through our lower intestines. Because we are aliens. That's what we do.*



- *Hulu. An evil plot to destroy the world. Enjoy.*

The advertiser is making a joke out of something serious. We are impairing our ability to think long-term and to be able to process and reason because we are so used to instant gratification. It makes finding the voice of Jesus that much harder.





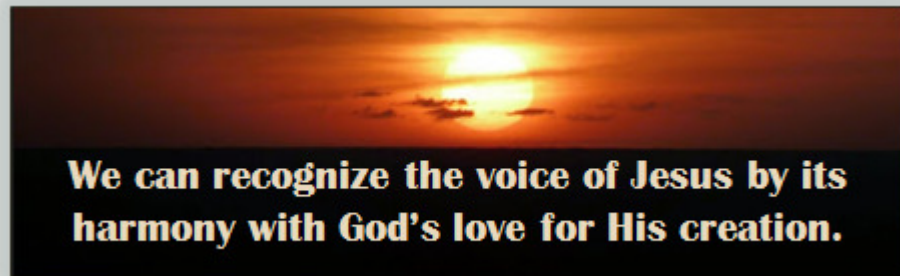
John 10:5: (NASB) *A stranger they simply will not follow, but will flee from him, because they do not know the voice of strangers.*

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: (NASB) ¹²*He who is a hired hand, and not a shepherd, who is not the owner of the sheep, sees the wolf coming, and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. ¹³He flees because he is a hired hand and is not concerned about the sheep. ¹⁴I am the good shepherd, and I know my own and my own know me, ¹⁵even as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep.*

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.



Back to the context before the parable:

John 9:14-19,22: (NRSV) ¹⁴*Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. ¹⁵Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. He said to them, He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see. ¹⁶Some of the Pharisees said, This man is not from God, for he does not observe the Sabbath. But others said, How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs? And they were divided. ¹⁷So they said again to the blind man, What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened. He said, He is a prophet. ¹⁸The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight ¹⁹and asked them... (the parents denied any knowledge of what happened) ...²²His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue...*

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: (NASB) ¹⁴*Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, were listening to all these things and were scoffing at him. ¹⁵And he said to them, You are those who justify yourselves in the sight of men, but God knows your hearts; for that which is highly esteemed among men is detestable in the sight of God.*

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.

🔊 **All about me, 5 Crazy Ways Social Media Changes Brains - AsapScience**

- *Social media also triggers a release of dopamine, the "feel good" chemical. Using MRI scans, scientist found that the reward centers in people's brains are much more active when they're talking about their own views as opposed to listening to others. Not so surprising - we all love talking about ourselves, right? But it turns out while 30-40 percent of face-to-face conversations involve communicating our own experiences, around 80 percent of social media communication is self-involved.*



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:** (ASV) *Since then the children are sharers in flesh and blood, he also himself in like manner partook of the same; that through death he might bring to naught him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;*

Hebrews 2:17: (ASV) *Wherefore it behooved him in all things to be made like unto his brethren, that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.*

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



What does the voice of Jesus call us to?



John 10:4: (NASB) *When he puts forth all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice.*

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.



A caller from Connecticut suggests James 1:23: *If anyone is a hearer of the word, not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his own face in a mirror.* The Temple of Jerusalem was a noisy, busy place. Imagine the voices, the animals for sacrifice, the sounds, the smells. But amidst all that bustle one day, where people thought they were getting close to God, was a man who was (the son of) God. Hebrews 4:2: *The message they heard did not benefit them because they were not united by faith, those who listened.* We are surrounded by noise, activities and duties that we think we have to perform. We may think we are getting close to God. But even more so than that day in Jerusalem, Jesus is standing next to us. Do we take the quiet to notice? Matthew 13:16: *Blessed are your eyes because they see and your ears because they hear.*

Here the son of God was standing in the presence of man and giving them something that came directly from God. He took the message from heaven. Jesus was the only begotten son of God who delivered this Gospel message in such a short time and then was gone.

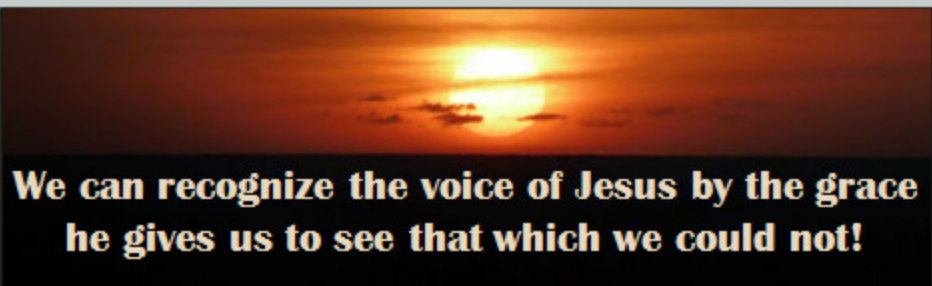


c o n t e x t

Back to the context before the parable:

John 9:24-33: (NRSV) ²⁴So for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and they said to him, Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner. ²⁵He answered, I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see. ²⁶They said to him, What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes? ²⁷He answered them, Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples? ²⁸Then they reviled him, saying, You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. ²⁹We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from. ³⁰The man answered, Here is an astonishing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. ³¹We know that God does not listen to sinners, but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will. ³²Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. ³³If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.

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!**

Shortchanged intellect, *What is the Internet Doing to Our Brains, Epipheo*

- So, you've got this awesome life-changing piece of information in your short-term memory but then you hear that email ding and poof! There it goes. That email takes its place and you never get a chance to learn anything all because of that one distraction.
- So, attention is the key and if we lose control of our attention or are constantly dividing our attention then we don't really enjoy that consolidation process. But I can hear it now - someone out there is saying, "What does learning matter if all the information in the world is just a Google search away?" Well...
- That is kind of short-changing our intellects. If that's the way you are using your mind, just kind of searching very quickly and finding the information and then forgetting it very quickly, you're never building knowledge. You're kind of thinking like a computer.
- Which means that our very humanity is at stake.



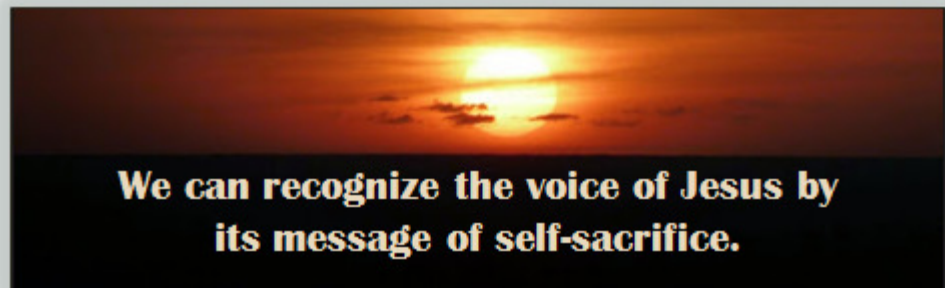


We can search the Internet to find a quick answer, but without doing the research and thinking - finding the "why" behind it, that is not going to stick - it is not transformative.

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: (NASB) ¹²*In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets.* ¹³*Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it.* ¹⁴*For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it.*

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.



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: (NRSV) ¹*Therefore, brothers and sisters, holy partners in a heavenly calling, consider that Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession,* ²*was faithful to the one who appointed him, just as Moses also was faithful in all God's house.*

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: (NRSV) ³*Yet Jesus is worthy of more glory than Moses, just as the builder of a house has more honor than the house itself.* ⁴*(For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God.)*

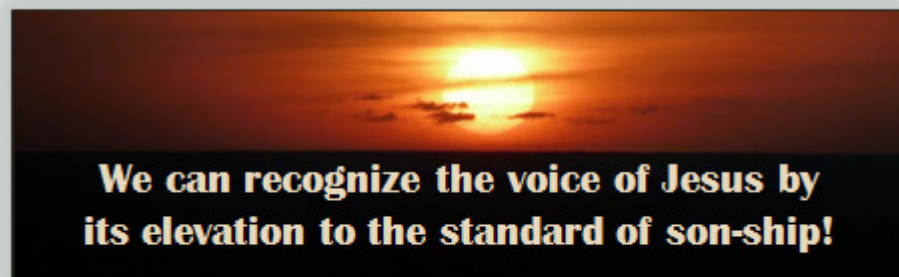


Paul labels his clarification - the *house of servants* and the *house of sons*:

Hebrews 3:5-6: (NRSV) ⁵Now Moses was faithful in all God's house as a servant, to testify to the things that would be spoken later. ⁶Christ, 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.



The voice of Jesus is higher and clearer (not louder!) than everything else around it.

Back to the parable...

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

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.



What does the voice of Jesus give us?

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) ¹⁶*I 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.



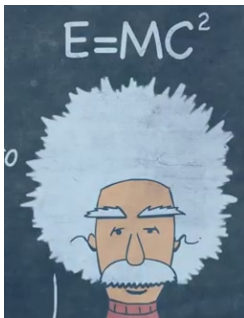
John 9:34-38: (NRSV) ³⁴*They answered him, you were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us? And they drove him out. ³⁵Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him, he said, Do you believe in the Son of Man? ³⁶He answered, And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him. ³⁷Jesus said to him, You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he. ³⁸He said, Lord, I believe. And he worshiped him.*

This man of great and pure heart was given an immense privilege to follow after Jesus.

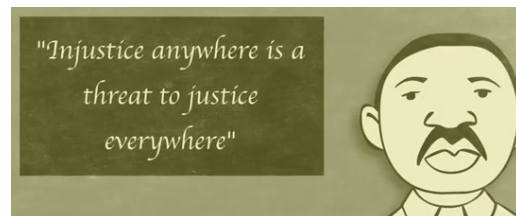
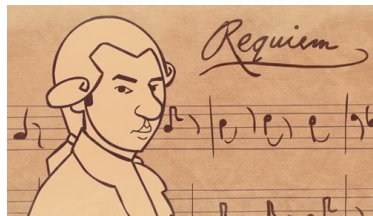
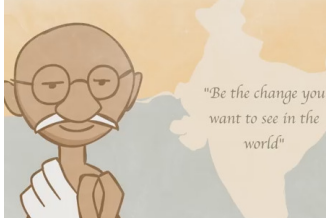
We can recognize the voice of Jesus by embracing the magnitude of his purpose.

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!

 **Critical thinking, What is the Internet Doing to Our Brains, Epipheo**



- I really believe that if you look at the great monuments of culture, they come from people who are able to pay attention, who control their mind. That's what allows us to think in the highest terms, think conceptually, think critically, think in some very creative ways.*
- And it is this kind of thinking that's at risk, being eroded by one cute cat video at a time. Don't get us wrong. The Internet is good for lots of things and it should be celebrated, but the best thing we can do for our minds is to find some time everyday to unplug, calm down and focus on one thing at a time. Your email - and those cats - will be here when you get back.*



This shows us the result of finding, recognizing and listening to the voice of Jesus:

Matthew 11:25-30: (NASB) ²⁵At that time Jesus said, I praise You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent and have revealed them to infants. ²⁶Yes, Father, for this way was well-pleasing in Your sight. ²⁷All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father; nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him. ²⁸Come to me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

We can recognize the voice of Jesus by hearing his 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.

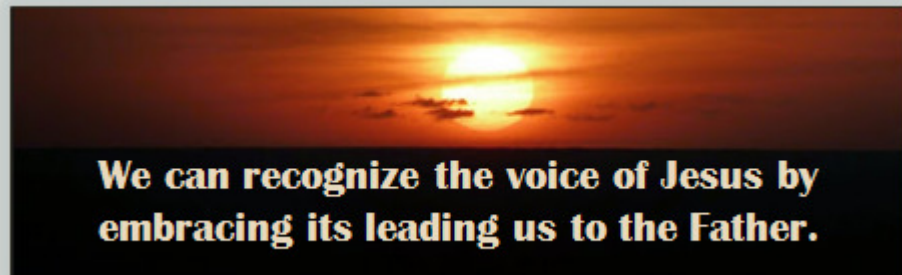
Paul admonishes his audience to learn from the mistakes of others, based on the common base of credibility that Jesus was one of them (a Jew, a man on earth, etc.).



Hebrews 4:11: (NRSV) *Let us therefore make every effort to **enter that rest**, so that no one may fall through such disobedience as theirs.*

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: (NRSV) *¹⁴Since, then, we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast to our confession. ¹⁵For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*



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...!*

*And now even more to think about...
only in the **Full Edition** of CQ Rewind!*





A bit more on Jesus being the *door* as well as the *shepherd*:

After speaking the parable, the audience did not understand what Jesus was talking about, so he restated the main lesson putting additional focus on the details that were of the greatest importance.

John 10:7: (NRSV) *So again Jesus said to them, Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep.*

Wait a minute! This is a detail that he didn't speak of before...how can Jesus be the gate AND the shepherd?

The Jews were protected by God's Law (the sheepfold) - it was put in place to separate them from the world, so we can look at this sheepfold as the protection of the Law. The only way to have a relationship with God before Jesus was under the Law. Jesus fulfilled the Law and now the only way to have a relationship with God is through Jesus.

Galatians 3:13: (NRSV) *Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree.*

Why was the Law a curse? No one was able to fulfill it! So, the gate of the sheepfold is the fulfillment of the Law - the only way out - and Jesus redeemed Israel - he was the way out to get to God.

Matthew 5:17-20: (NRSV) *¹⁷Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill. ¹⁸For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter, not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. ¹⁹Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. ²⁰For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.*

We can see how Jesus easily fulfills the symbolism in the parable.

His sacrifice of his perfect life was the gate - the fulfilling of the requirement of the just Law:

Romans 5:18-21: (Phillips) *¹⁸We see, then, that as one act of sin exposed the whole race of men to God's judgment and condemnation, so one act of perfect righteousness presents all men freely acquitted in the sight of God. ¹⁹One man's disobedience placed all men under the threat of condemnation, but one man's obedience has the power to present all men righteous before God. ²⁰Now we find that the Law keeps slipping into the picture to point the vast extent of sin. Yet, though sin is shown to be wide and deep, thank God his grace is wider and deeper still! ²¹The whole outlook changes - sin used to be the master of men and in the end handed them over to death; now grace is the ruling factor, with its purpose making men right with God and its end the bringing of them to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

A closing thought:

2 Corinthians 11:12-15: (NASB) *¹²But what I am doing I will continue to do, so that I may cut off opportunity from those who desire an opportunity to be regarded just as we are in the matter about which they are boasting. ¹³For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. ¹⁴No wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. ¹⁵Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness, whose end will be according to their deeds.*