

I Know My Shepherd's Voice



Annie

Scriptures:

John 10:1-30

Isaiah 40:11

Isaiah 30:21

I have a really vivid memory of an event that happened when I was probably about 7 or 8 years old. I was at a bus stop with my father, we had no car so public transport was very familiar to our family, and I had turned around for some reason, with my back to my father. When I turned back, I immediately put my arms around the waist of the man in front of me, only to find myself looking up at a stranger's face when he turned to see what was happening. Then I heard Dad's voice say my name, and saw him just in front of the stranger I had hugged. To hear his voice was all I needed to drive away the panic that I had initially felt, and restore the balance of my world.

There is such comfort, such assurance in realising that our Great, Good Shepherd knows my name, but it is multiplied exponentially as I get to know His voice in amongst the clamour of other voices that surround me. Jesus tells us that, as one of His flock, learning to recognise His voice means that I will not follow false shepherds whose only aim is to steal, kill and destroy. So, how do I learn to distinguish His voice in this noisy world we inhabit?

Firstly I have to know from the depths of my being that I am known and loved by our mighty, Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the One and only true God. When that truth permeates my being, the journey of getting to know His Voice can begin in earnest. In Isaiah, we are told that our God will feed His flock, He will gather up the lambs in His arms and gently lead the whole flock. What a precious image of our Great Shepherd, revealing beyond doubt how much He loves and treasures each member of His flock, and we need to grasp this with all our might. He first loved us, He has pursued us and He calls us by our name, and He desires that we know Him just as intimately.

As we declare and acknowledge this truth, we can reach out to Him to reveal Himself to us. The initial step in this is by immersing ourselves in His Word, absorbing the treasure of His promises, the wonder of His love, the exuberance of His delight in being with us. As we do, we will learn to recognise His voice speaking to us from the scriptures, and the more time we spend hearing His voice in this way, the better we will learn to recognise and distinguish His voice from all the other voices surrounding us.

Often we need to remind ourselves that God's is not necessarily the loudest voice we hear, Isaiah tells us that we will hear His voice in our ear, quietly and confidently directing us in the way He has planned for us to go. That still, small voice, full of love and tenderness, quickens our spirit to respond with as much love as we can offer in obedience and humility. Our task as obedient sheep is to tune in to our Shepherd's voice, to constantly fix our eyes upon Him, straining to hear all that He desires for us to hear. In this noisy, busy world it is so easy to become distracted, to suddenly find ourselves in the middle of a situation, wondering how we got there, and how we get out of it.

Then we become fixated on our plight and forget to do the one thing that we need to. All God expects of us is for us to lift our eyes to His, to repent of our human foolishness and relinquish our fear, sorrow and worry into His safe Hands, and leave it all with Him. As we let go and begin to thank Him for just Who He is and how much He loves us, that Peace that is beyond all human understanding fills us, cleansing and opening our hearts to hear Him once again.

Prayer: Dear, wonderful God, You delight in seeing us seeking to hear You and know our Shepherd's voice more clearly each day. To be known and loved by You is a blessing that we do not deserve, yet it is real, true and so abundant, and Your Joy to give us. Thank you Abba Father, in Jesus Name Amen.