

When the Bible Isn't Boring Anymore

Steve Burchett

“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.”

-John 10:27

Jesus Christ knows His sheep, and His sheep know Him (John 10:14). They don't “know” one another in the sense that they were merely introduced sometime in the past, but they have an ongoing and personal relationship. There is a substantive level of intimacy between the true believer and Jesus, similar to the bond between the Father and Jesus (John 10:15).



But how can you discern if you “know” Jesus in this sense? How can you be sure that you have an ongoing relationship with Him? At the beginning and end of John 10:27, Jesus identifies two characteristics of those who know Christ. Consider the first: “My sheep hear My voice.”

A group of pastors from a church were interviewing two teenagers who were seeking to become members of their church. One of the pastors said to the young men, “Tell us what changes have taken place in your life that would lead us to believe you have been converted.” One of the teens replied, “Oh, it was no change in us. The change was in you, about six months ago, when your preaching got interesting.”¹

What had transpired in the lives of these boys? Sunday after Sunday, they sat unengaged through sermons, longing for the final words to be said so that they could get on to more interesting things, but not anymore. Something had in fact changed, but it wasn't the preaching—it was them! The Holy Spirit had given them spiritual ears so that they began to hear the Lord speaking to them through the preaching and His words became compelling and glorious. The gospel was no longer foolish or a stumbling block, but “the power of God and the wisdom of God” (1 Corinthians 1:23-24).

Those who know Christ hear His voice, which is more than just being engaged with Scripture on a purely mental level. Also necessary is the

Holy Spirit causing a person not only to hear the pastor teaching the Bible, but also to subjectively know that Christ Himself is speaking to him. When this happens, God is revealing Himself to the person by a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit who gives ears to hear Christ speaking directly to his soul. Even Bible reading will be dramatically affected: Scripture is no longer cold language in a thick book, but irresistible words of life.

Do you hear the voice of Christ? Have you heard Christ say, “Come to me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28) and understood that He was talking directly to you? Are you drawn to His words as He speaks in the gospels and through His prophets and apostles in the rest of the New Testament, and as He reveals Himself in the Old Testament? Do you love to hear the Bible taught because it is a treasure to you? Do you consistently make time to read Scripture because you desire to hear the Lord talk to you?

Those who know Jesus don't *endure* Biblical sermons and Bible reading, they thoroughly enjoy any form of Bible intake because they don't want to miss what their Lord is saying. This is true of *every* Christian.

Maybe you would say, “I haven't heard the voice of Christ, so what am I supposed to do?” or “I don't *think* I have heard the voice of Christ, so what should I do?” Keep seeking Christ and listening for His voice. Don't be like the dying man back in the 1700's who said to pastor Increase Mather, “Sometimes I set myself to sleep on purpose when you have been preaching, and do you think there is any mercy for me?” Mather shared this story and the question of this man in a sermon, and then stated, “Yes, there was mercy for him if he repented; but he died in doleful despair. Take heed of setting yourselves to sleep when you should be hearing for your lives, for your souls.”²

If you haven't heard Christ's voice, or if you are unsure if you really have, keep putting yourself in the best places to hear Him speak. Find a church that faithfully teaches the Bible. Attend the Bible study at work. If nothing else, go to your bedroom, open up a Bible, and start reading just like I did at the age of 14 when I first heard Christ speak to me.

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¹ This story was shared by Geoff Thomas in a sermon titled, “How the Gospel Came to Philippi,” located at www.alfredplacechurch.org.uk.

² “Advice to the Children of Godly Ancestors,” in *God's Call to Young People: Sermons for the Rising Generation* (Morgan, PA: Soli Deo Gloria Publications, 2001), 72-73.