

“When Heaven Speaks”

Isaiah 42:1-9; Matthew 3:13-17 ~ Baptism of Our Lord

Rev. Jo Ramsey ~ Sunday, January 12, 2014

You know it's not every day you hear God's voice. But, this week, God spoke to a woman at the Gibsonia Walmart. I know because I was there. And it just so happened that the message was about me. I was in the sock department when the woman approached me. “God just told me that you know the Lord,” she said. I gave her a smile, “Yep,” I said, “Sounds like you do too.” “Oh yes,” was her reply. I turned back to my shopping.

She addressed me again. “God is telling me you need to buy colorful socks, pink, yellow, purple.” This was about the time when I began to question whose voice she might be hearing. I knew I needed navy socks, so I had to question the Lord's wisdom. The woman pointed to a specific package of socks. “These are the socks God wants you to buy.” I politely agreed that they were very nice socks, and turned back to the navy.



She and her friend intercepted me in the next aisle. This time, she grabbed my hand. God told her we needed to pray. I must have looked a bit taken aback because she and her friend said they'd be quick about it.

Unfortunately, God had other plans. The woman began to pray aloud, and suddenly God convicted her of a sin, and told her to prostrate herself. So down she went, flat on her stomach, right there in the Walmart sock department praying loudly. It was at this point that I asked God to stop talking, and if not, then at least, wrap it up. I needed to buy my socks and get out of there!

This woman believed she could hear heaven speak. I have people like this in my family – and while I love and respect them, I'm not so sure.

Wouldn't it be nice if we could all hear heaven speak so clearly? Wouldn't it be nice if God told us just what to do all the way down to our socks?



Last week our Reel to Real Youth SS class watched a bit of the movie *Bruce Almighty*. Morgan Freeman is the voice of God. When Ben got home, he said to me, “You know, Mom, Morgan Freeman has the perfect voice to be God. He sounds just like God.”

most of us like being distracted. We like our lives full and noisy. Who here is guilty of grabbing your smartphone or the tv remote the minute we have a second to spare? But, in order to hear from heaven, we need to turn down the volume on distractions. We need to be quiet. We need to tune in to God's voice.



God is there waiting. He has something to say to us. Sometimes, God's voice is loud and clear. You just know. The sign is plain. You have no doubt. Sometimes, God's voice is still and small. Only a whisper or nothing at all. Like candle light that flickers and is gone.

God uses almost anything and everything to call to us. Sometimes, he's like a media mogul, and the message comes on a billboard or the radio or a t.v. commercial. Often God uses nature or music or circumstances. Of course, God consistently uses His Word, the Bible. God can also speak to us through our own minds and emotions and instincts. Sometimes God uses others to instruct and affirm us. Or God reaches us through just one word or an image which surfaces during prayer. C.S. Lewis wrote that "God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains." Always, he is there, calling to us, reminding us of his presence, love and redeeming grace.



Yet it seems like it's been a long time since God spoke so clearly that humanity could hear. Long ago, the signs seemed so obvious that everyone knew something extraordinary was happening. When God spoke, miracles happened---they were dramatic and startling and amazing demonstrations of God's power.

These are the stories we tell in Sunday School---The Lord told Noah to build an Ark. Moses came upon a Burning Bush. Samuel heard God calling in the night. Heaven spoke of things to build, jobs to do, messages to proclaim.



2000 years ago, heaven called again...In angel-visits to Mary and the shepherds and dream-directions for Joseph and the kings, and star-guides that shine down from heaven on all of them, and all of us.



But, it is **in and through Jesus himself that heaven speaks in a truly unique, unparalleled way**, unlike any

message given before or since. Jesus himself is the Word of God. God incarnate, made flesh! Jesus is both the messenger and the message. He is the Good News, come to life!



Both of our passages this morning make it clear that the Messiah is God's beloved, with whom he is well-pleased. Jesus is the fullest expression of God's love. He captures, brings to life, embodies all that God has been trying to say since history began. In everything Jesus says and does, we hear heaven speak...

...through his relationships with friend and foe, outcasts and kings,
...his spoken word, his healing touch, his amazing miracles,
...his body broken for us, his body raised for us.

Heaven has spoken, and continues to speak. Heaven speaks of love that does not fade, hope that will not fail, grace that never ends. It offers no condemnation. It never leads us to hurt another. It doesn't fill us with fear or worry. It is not critical or discouraging. It is consistent with God's character and his written word. It is sometimes comforting, often challenging, on occasion unsettling, rarely about socks, but always real, always alive, always drawing us closer to God.



So, listen for him. Read his word.
Enter into his presence. Call for him.
He will call back. His will speak to you.

Marco...Polo
Father...Child
Jesus...Beloved

Heaven has a word for you,
for me,
for all of us...



And that word will **claim** us and give us identity.
That word will **call** us and fill us with purpose.
That word will **change** us and set us free!
Let us listen, and listen well.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.