

Experiencing God

#6 – Hearing God (part 2)

5-10-20

Good morning Southeast family. We're glad you're here with us. We're glad to be able to join you in your home via the magic of the interwebs. We're excited to share this morning with you. I hope you're blessed by what you experience with us and we have some announcements that we need to make you aware of. Some of this is stuff that's coming up. As the world begins to open, we're going to have the opportunity to do some things. Also, we have some things that have been happening that we need to also celebrate and we'll talk about that in just a second. But probably most important thing that we need to celebrate right now is it's mother's day. So if your mom is still with you, call your mom and let her know that she's important. I don't know if you know this but you wouldn't be here if it wasn't for your mom. And so, moms are great. We need to celebrate them and according to some people in my home, I'll let you decide who, but according to some people in my home, this is the most important day of the year. So, we need to celebrate moms happy mother's day. A big shout out to you. Thank you moms for all that you do.

So obviously with the world being what it is right now, our normal VBS program, which is enormous, is not going to happen this year... at least not the way that it is normally done. What we're going to do this year is we're going to have a virtual VBS. It's going to be free to you. The dates are going to be June 16th to the 19th and it will be a take home version, personalized VBS boxes for you, for each family to do, who registers. You can go to our website, go to Southeastcc.org forward slash VBS and you can get registered and we will make sure that you get the supplies that you need to do VBS in your home.

Number three thing that we need to talk about is this. Last Saturday we had a really amazing thing. I don't want to get all technical on you. It was a thing that happened here at the church parking lot. The treasure house of hope came in sold bread and they were doing a fundraiser and the treasure house of hope is a group of folks that work in downtown Denver on Colfax. They work with people who were coming out of difficult circumstances and they bring them into their home. They live with them in their home, they disciple them for a year. It's a pretty incredible program and it's a self sustaining program by baking loaves of bread and then they sell it to some of the local area businesses around where they are. Well, with things in the world as they are, a lot of the businesses that they would normally sell to are not open and so they asked if they could come and do a fundraiser here and I said, absolutely. So, they set up outside in the parking lot and people drove by. They bought loaves of bread and I just want to give you the numbers because the numbers on this are staggering. First of all, they sold 1,387 loaves of bread. That's a bread store. They sold that in two, four hours, I think it was four hours. 152 of those loaves were donated to SECOR, which is awesome because every purchase helps. We had 258 total cars that came by and they raised \$9,087 toward helping go and support them. All that money goes directly to support their ministry and that's awesome. They said that was the largest single day fundraiser that they've ever done to which I say, well done Southeast. I'm proud of you Southeast family -- but it's better than that. Here's the kicker. Since then, we've got an email this week. Since then, an additional \$6,525 has been raised from donations and bread orders that were connected to people that came to be a part of that event. That's incredible and that's the church deployed. That's the church getting outside of the walls and making a difference in a real tangible way. That's us taking our resources that God's blessed us with and making a difference in the life of somebody who doesn't have access to those kinds of resources. Good job. Southeast. I'm so proud of you.

Here's the last thing I want to talk about before we jump into our sermon. As we start to reopen the world. There's a lot of questions about what reopening church is going to look like. Everything from how to when, you know, what are we going to do with kids? So there's some logistical issues that we want to make sure that we're ahead of the game on and how do we mesh people who are at high risk with families. We figure out how to separate all that and we have lots of ideas on how to do all of that. But here's what we want from you. Early next week, probably Tuesday you're going to get an email from the church that's going to have some survey questions in it and it's going to be pretty comprehensive.

But all this data, we're trying to gather will help us in being able to move forward and opening up well. And that includes timing of when we open up. It also includes information of different ways that we can open up and it's just a big data gathering. It will help us understand where you're at as our Southeast family in what does it look like for us to come back to church. What we're seeing right now, across the country, is as churches are starting to open up slowly, somewhere between about 15 and 25% of their people are actually coming back to church because people are still really uncomfortable with getting out in public. And I totally get that. And so we want to know how are our people doing? How are we feeling about that? Are we ready to come back to church or do we need to be distanced a little bit longer? And so we had lots of questions about those kinds of things. How do we do that? Well that will be coming to you early next week. We'd love for you to fill that out, as soon as you can, and get that information back to us. It will help with us knowing how to reopen well. So that'll be coming next week.

Okay, now we're in this series, week six of experiencing God, and it's part two of knowing when God speaks and how God speaks. Okay? So last week what we really focused on was this. There's a lot of things, a lot of different ways that God speaks in the Bible. The point isn't how God speaks. The point is that when God speaks, we know that it was God and we know what he says and that when God speaks, he reveals himself his purposes in his ways. Then we opened up this conversation on the how of God speaking, and we talked about the different dialects that God uses.

So I'm going to present to us this morning, seven different dialects, languages that God uses to speak to us, okay? But last week we said this, and I'll say it again. God's primary language is the Bible. It's like this. I speak English, that's my primary language and really the only language that I speak fluently. I speak a little bit of Spanish and I also speak enough Hebrew, just to be dangerous, just because we go to Israel and we're there and I want to be able to speak Hebrew with my guide because I don't want the people to know what we're talking about. Cause if we're like there was a bomber back there. Did you see him? No, I'm just joking. That doesn't happen. But some, a lot of the stuff that we plan or decisions that we have to make or those kinds of things, they're made on the fly based on kind of our assessment of a multiple number of factors and so we talk about that without having people feel like they need to jump in so we can speak Hebrew. But I don't know very much Hebrew, at all. I don't know. Just a little bit but enough to get by. But here's the thing, you have to understand. If you hear me speak Hebrew, you have to know that in my mind I'm thinking English. That's because English is my primary language. Even when I structure my sentences in Hebrew, I can put the vocabulary in the right order, but grammatically it might not make sense because Hebrew's got a different grammatical construct than English does and I'm going to arrange it the way I would in English. Why? Because English is my primary dialect, so if you hear me speak Spanish or Hebrew or anything other language that I don't know how to speak, like if you hear me speak that, you have to know that if you're going to understand what I really am trying to get at, you're going to have to convert it back into English because that's my primary dialect. Okay?

God's primary dialect is his Word. Any of the other languages that God uses, you're going to always have to take them back to his Word and what we do too many times is we get kind of lost and trying to figure out how to short circuit that because learning the word of God is hard. The Bible is a really big book with a lot of words and not very many pictures unless you get a children's Bible, which is a whole other thing, and that's kind of cool. But, it's a big book and it's hard to think about really learning it all like that. That's a massive undertaking, and I agree with that, but, God's word, this is his primary language. So, you can't just go, well, God gives me desires. He does. Yes, he does. But if those desires don't get refiltered back through the word of God, then we don't know that they're godly desires or selfish desires. We'll never know that for sure. Everything that God does, every way that he speaks to us has to be reinterpreted through the lens of his Word. Okay, so I want to look at some scriptures. Proverbs 30:5 here's what it says: Every word of God is flawless. He's a shield to those who take refuge in him. Every word of God is flawless. That's our view of the Bible. Every word of God is flawless. Matthew 4:4, Jesus says this -- This is during his temptation. And Satan comes to him and tries to get him. He actually throws a scripture at him. He's like, Hey man, doesn't live by bread alone. Or he says, if you're the son of God, turn these stones into bread. Now, Jesus, at this point, has been fasting for 40 days. So that's a thing. And the funny thing is, Matthew, here's the funny thing in Matthew 4, it says: Jesus fasted for 40 days and 40 nights -- which an obvious question is, why do I need to know that? Well, just fun little side trip for you. Go back through the Bible and look up the number 40 and see what it's attached to. Jesus fasted for 40 days and 40 nights. And then the next statement is the most obvious statement in the whole Bible. It says, and after that he was hungry. I don't think you had to say that part. It's just me, but I'm not the Holy spirit. So, what do I know? Satan comes to him and says, Hey, if you're the son of God, turn these stones into bread. Now here's the thing. Jesus is hungry. So he has the desire to turn the stones into bread. He's God, so he has the ability to turn the stones into bread, and it's not even gluttony. It's completely within his power and desire and right to turn the stones into bread. If he wants to turn the stones into bread, he can turn the stones into bread. So why doesn't he just turn the stones into bread? What's the problem? Like, why is this such a big deal? Well, here's why. Because Jesus answers him with scripture. He says, it's written, man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God. See, the problem is if Jesus just turns the stones into bread, then he puts himself in a position where God doesn't have to provide for him. How does he know that? Because it's what the word of God says.

God's primary language doesn't change, right? So, for example, when God calls us to generosity, there will never be a time in your life where God, where you can look at your context and go, do you believe that God really expects me to be generous in my context? And you go, ah, nah, no. God's word is clear. God expects you to be generous, period. His primary language is his Word. It does not change. It is what it is and we need to know that. Here's Hebrews 4:12 -- I love this verse, the word of God is alive and active. It lives. It's, it's like, it's like God, through his Word, meets us right where we're at every time we read it,. It's sharper than any double edged sword, it penetrates, even dividing the soul and spirit, joints and marrow. It judges the thoughts and the attitudes of the heart, which is hard. That's a hard one to wrestle with because it would be way better if the Bible just told us what to do and not do. But what the Bible does is open up a whole conversation about how we should feel and what we should think. That's, that's a way bigger deal. Here's, here's another one -- and I think this is our call when we think about having a relationship with God. If you really want to know how to have relationship with God. Like, if I'm going to have a good relationship with my wife, I've got to learn how to communicate well. When my wife and I are not communicating well, our relationship struggles. I got an, and that's not just me learning. It is me learning to communicate well, but it's not just that. It's also me learning how to understand what she's communicating. Same thing in our relationship with the Lord. 2 Timothy 2:15

says this, do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth. Like this is our call to know God's word and to handle it correctly. And that's a dance, cause part of the problem for us is the Bible has been around for a couple thousand years now and at least parts of it have been in let's say 1800 years. It was canonized in the 300's, so do the, I don't, I'm no mathematician. What is that 1700 years? So, the Bible, as we understand it's been around that long. There's a lot of Christian history sludge that is put on to the Word of God at this point. And that's all valuable -- like we should, we should consider what other people have gleaned from the word of God over the years. So I don't mean to negative when I say sludge, but one of the things that happens is that sometimes church tradition can take the place of actual really good biblical scholarship. And we've got to wrestle with that. We, this isn't the job for academics. This is you and me, just average Christian sitting in the Pew. We need to present ourselves to God as a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth. This is sacred for us because when we do that, we begin to understand how God communicates. That's his primary language.

So I want to talk this morning with the rest of the time that we have together about six other languages that God uses. Okay? Three PS and three DS. It will be easy to remember. I didn't come up with these this way. This is again, I told you guys this last week. This is taken out of the book, whisper by Mark Batterson. Great book. I said last week that you could run on to Amazon or audible and get the book and read it for this week. And then I had people all week emailing me, well, what part of the book should I read? The book? The whole book's really good. But this is, this is like, if you didn't get a chance to read all the book this week, I'd recommend that you did if you started it. That's awesome. If you can get all the way through it, I'd love you to finish it up. This is a great book, but these are the six other languages from Mark Batterson's book "Whisper " , that God uses.

Number one is people. God speaks to us through people. Okay, Hebrews 3:12-13 here's what it says. See to it brothers and sisters that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God, but encourage one another daily. Now, I love to stop right there every time and say, Hey, how often are we supposed to encourage one another? It says daily. Why? Because we want to make sure that we don't have a sinful, unbelieving heart hardened by sins, deceitfulness -- encourage one another daily, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness. God speaks to us through people. He uses other people to communicate his message to us so that we stay on track and here's the truth. You know this to be true in your own life. When I'm struggling with sin, I'm struggling because I'm starting to allow myself to be isolated. It's this weird thing that happens the first -- long before I ever fall off the wagon into sin, whatever sin that is, I'm walking a path where I start to peel off into isolation. Community -- God's community is there to help me stay on track. That's what it's there for. And so that's really significant for us because we need to make sure that we're staying connected. If you think about Satan prowls around like a roaring lion, I used to play this video when I was in youth ministry all the time. National geographic video of this group of lions, they're hunting this herd of Gazelles and what they do is they find one of the Gazelles that they think they can take and the first thing they do is cut it away from the herd. That's the first thing they do. They get between that particular one and the herd and then they just take turns running it to death until it can't run anymore. That's how Satan works. Like step one is cut us away from people, which should lead us to a really some really important conclusions. Like if we want to hear God speak in our life, number one, we need to surround ourselves with people who are godly, biblically grounded people. And that's significant because for a lot of us, we want to grow to the place where we don't need anybody else anymore and yet maturity would say that there's an increasing awareness of our need for one another. Not ever a point where we don't need anybody else. God speaks to us through people. You think about different ways that God speaks in the Bible through

prophets. God speaks through prophets. God speaks through preachers. God speaks through people coming into our lives during special circumstances. That's actually really, have you ever had a moment where somebody says something to you? This happens to me from time to time where somebody will say something to you and you're like, there's no way that you have any idea how what you just said impacts me based on where I'm at because you don't know where I'm at, but you just spoke some really amazing truth into my life and God uses that to bring comfort or hope or inspiration or whatever I need in my situation. I'll tell you a story. I had a guy, just a guy who was a log truck driver in the church where we came from and he came up to me one day and he goes, Hey, I'm super nervous to say this, but I've been praying for you and, I've never done this before, but I feel like the Lord wants me to tell you, you don't have to be afraid. He didn't know anything about my world. But what he didn't realize, but God did, was that that particular time in my life was riddled with fear for a number of different reasons. And so these words that he spoke, which to him were full of fear. He was like, I don't even know if this is right, to me, were full of life because God uses people to speak to us.

Next -- so it was people. Number two is prompting. God prompts us. He lays something on our heart. And this is the one that we love to default to. Well, it would be so nice if this was God's primary language because it's efficient. Like we wouldn't actually have to read the word at all. We could just be prompted. The problem with the prompting of the spirit is that it does happen. God does prompt us to do things. God prompts us like in a situation that we're in, God prompts us to speak into that or we see a need and God prompts us to meet that need. My wife and I recently were at a concert and we felt prompted to take on a child through sponsorship -- feed the hungry. That was, we just immediately that was put on our heart to do that. There we were. I feel often prompted to go and say hi to people or sometimes you'll be talking to someone, a coworker or a neighbor, and then you'll be prompted to invite them to church. Like, I don't want to invite...I feel like in the Holy Spirit's just nudge you like, yeah, go ahead. Go ahead. Now there's sometimes where you don't feel that prompting. There's sometimes where you're like, I don't want to talk to you about God at all and God's not prompting you to do that, but sometimes God is prompting you to do that. If you try to force God into those kinds of situations where you're not being prompted, it doesn't ever go well, but if you'll be aware of God's prompting in those relational situations when he is leading you, you're going to be able to see some crazy things. And prompting is this really cool thing because it actually begins to open up like how God made you to function in the world is kind of how God will prompt you to engage other people with his message.

I'll give you an example. So my friend Jim, I've talked a little bit about him before. He and I planted a church together in Northern Idaho. He is the most gifted evangelist I've ever met in my life. God has hardwired him to be an evangelist. And so, he will stand on a street corner and three people will come to know Jesus. And so everywhere I would go with him, like if we went to the hospital, we went to the hospital one time, one of the many times that something weird like this happened and we were seeing somebody that was there and we decided to go down to the cafeteria to get some food. And as we're on our way to the elevator, there's these two men and a lady are fighting in front of the elevator, like shouting at each other. And it's really loud now. I mean, you know, hospitals are places for some really hard conversations. So we weren't so surprised by that. But we kinda tried to navigate around them, got in the elevator, went down, got to the cafeteria, got our food, came back and we pushed the button on the elevator and the elevator doors open. And there is the lady who was in the fight and we both were like, I don't want to get in her way. Um, what's the saying? Hell hath no fury like a woman's -- like we knew that she was really upset and did not quite know what she was capable of and so we just were like, clear out and she didn't get off the elevator. She said it's okay, you guys can get on. I'm going to go back up. Okay, now me, I am not prompted in that moment. I stand in the corner farthest away from her as squished into the corner as I can possibly get and count like it's a three second elevator, 1001 1002

like I was just like, may it be over quickly cause this is so awkward right now. Jim, he has this thing called the move. I call it the move. Where he will look somebody in the eye and put his hand on their shoulder. It's all like genuine, like it's supernaturally empowered and he'd be like, how are you doing now? He does this in the church lobby all the time and it's like you would be having a great day and he'd be like, hi, how are you doing? It happens every time. It's magic, right? So he looks at the lady and he's like, how are you doing? I was hiding in the corner. This is me hiding in the corner. And he's like, how are you doing? Okay, she's, she starts to cry. I'm like, if there was one thing that could make this moment more awkward, her breaking down. And he's like, I don't know if you're okay with this, but I'm a pastor and he does the move. I'm going to pray for you. She's all crying by the time the elevator door opens, she's saying yes to Jesus for the first time. Like, I'm like, what just happened? So I was like, I'm gonna be like, Jim, I'm going to do the move. It's the move. That's the magic, right? So the next Sunday we're in, it was, it's unbelievable. He does this often and, and so the next Sunday I'm in church lobby and somebody's talking to me and they're kind of sharing. They're having a hard time and I'm like, do the move. I'm gonna pray for you. And they're like, that's how they creep out and take a big step back. Here's why.

Because the Holy spirit prompts Jim in a certain way. He doesn't prompt me in the same way. And that's okay. It doesn't mean that I'm not useful to the ministry. It means that the Holy spirit prompts me in a different direction and that's okay. We have to know that, and we have to understand that prompting isn't universal. It's gotta be squared in the word of God. The only universal truth is the word of God. So if we're prompted by the spirit, we've got to be able to square it with the word of God before we act on it. Cause it could be a Holy spirit prompting. It could be tacos, right? It could be that you ate some bad Greek food like you don't -- we don't know for sure unless we can square it with the word of God.

Another issue with prompting is, I promise we'll move on eventually. I just want to make sure that we understand the groundwork for prompting. This is not God's primary dialect and the issue for me is that we want to just lay it like, well, I just sensed, I felt and that was the whole of our relationship with God. That's not a relationship with God. God's primary dialect is his Word --- prompting is a piece of how God communicates to us, but if you don't understand God's Word, you'll never have a great relationship with the Lord. God's prompting is one of those things that we always have to square with the word of God. This is what John 14:26 says, it says, the helper, the Holy spirit whom the father will send in my name. He will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I've said to you. What I love about that is that when we're in a situation where -- we talked a little bit about the context of God's speaking, like when we see somebody searching for spiritual things, they bring up God. They bring up church, they bring up like, Hey, you go to church, don't you have some questions? That kind of thing. We don't have to worry about like somebody else needs to respond. No, no, no, no. The Holy Spirit's there to empower you, to prompt you, to lead you, to help you be exactly what that person needs and God invited you to be in that moment so you don't have to shrink back from it. You just have to make sure that when God is prompting you that you can square that prompting with the Word of God because what will happen is we'll have a lot of really nice thoughts and anecdotal thoughts that come to our mind that aren't the Holy spirit at all.

Okay? Number three. So we have people, God speaks to us through people. God speaks to us through promptings and God speaks to us through pain. God speaks to us through pain and I know we don't like to hear that, but God speaks to us through pain sometimes. Sometimes God uses pain to communicate to us and I'm going to do a sermon one day on like suffering as a broader topic. Is that the only reason why we have suffering in our life? No, but does God speak to us through suffering or does God use suffering in our life to speak to us sometimes? Absolutely he does that. It doesn't mean that every pain you've ever encountered was God speaking to you. What that means is that sometimes God speaks to us through pain. Hebrews 12:11 it says this, for at the moment, all discipline seems painful rather than

pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who've been trained by it. If we'll let God's discipline, which is not pleasant, discipline is not pleasant, but if we'll let God's discipline train us, then it will yield a peaceful fruit of righteousness, and I would just submit that maybe as we're in this crazy upheaval of a time right now, that what we could really use is peaceful fruit of righteousness. Maybe that would be as much of a witness to who our God is as anything else.

So God uses people, he uses prompting and he uses pain. Now those, let's look at Romans 8:28-29, we know that for those who love God, all things work together for good. For those that are called according to his purpose. Okay, let me stop right there and say this is one of the most abused verses in the Bible. The verse doesn't say that all things are good. Some things are really bad. And a problem for a lot of Christians is that they misinterpret this verse and they don't feel like they ever have permission to have a bad day. What it says is that in all things God can work for good. Here is how God works for good. Verse 29 -- for those whom he foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed into the image of his son in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. The way that hard things, God can work in those hard things to bring about our good, is that in the process of those hard things, God can help us look more like Jesus. Okay? So God uses people, he uses promptings and he uses pain.

Those are our three P's. Now I want to give you three D's. Number one D is doors. God uses people prompting and pain and he uses doors. Again, God doesn't only speak through doors and if you feel like God is trying to show you something through open doors or closed doors, always square it with the word of God. Don't make a whole decision on an open door or a closed door. Also, pay attention to the closed doors as much as you pay attention to the open doors. What we often do with doors is, we're like, well God, open doors. Just show me the open door. Just open the door the way you want me to go. Listen, if God doesn't want you to go there, pay attention to the closed door too. Like that's as much a part of it as anything else. Revelation 3, it says this, I know your works. Behold, I've set before you an open door that no one is able to shut. I know that you have but little power and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name. Like it's not your power to open the door, but I opened the door for you and no one can shut it. I know you don't have the power to pull this off on your own, but I opened the door for you. Good news. You don't have to have the power. God will show you the way. Colossians 4:3 it says this, at the same time we pray also for us that God may open to us a door for the word to declare the mystery of Christ on account of which I am in prison. So Paul is praying for God to open a door for them to go to Colossae. 1 Corinthians 16, Paul says this, I'm going to stay in Ephesus until Pentecost, for a wide door for effective work has opened to me. Why is Paul staying in Ephesus? Because God opened a door for him to have influence. Effective work has opened to me and there are many adversaries. This is Paul's like God opened the door. So I'm going to stay. Paul used doors to determine God's. So doors are evil and I know a lot of people are like, I just pray open doors, closed doors, just open doors, closed doors. You don't need open doors or closed doors. You just need to do the will of God, right? But God reveals his will through open doors and closed doors, but those are always grounded in the word of God. So you can't use doors alone like not unlike any of these other things. You can't use any of them alone. You've got to use them all in light of the word of God. Acts 14:27 Paul writes this, Luke wrote it about Paul, when they arrived and gathered the church together, they declared all that God had done with them and how he had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles. God opens doors. 2 Corinthians 12:13 when I came to Troaz to preach the gospel of Christ, even though a door was open to me from the Lord, my spirit was not at rest because they did not find my brother Titus there, so I took leave of them and went on to Macedonia. God opens doors for us. He also closes doors for us. God speaks to us through doors; he does.

So we have people promptings, pain, doors, and number five is desires. God speaks to us through desires. Here's what the Psalms say, Psalm 37:4, delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart. Now let me clarify what that verse means so that we're all clear with what that doesn't mean -- that if you're a good enough Christian, God's going to give you whatever you want, which a lot of people have tried to interpret it that way. What that means is that when you really pour into your relationship with the Lord, God puts desires in your heart for you, the things that are part of his plan for your life. He puts those desires to fulfill those things in your heart. God speaks to us through our desires, and as we cultivate our relationship with the Lord, he magnifies those desires that he wants us to focus on. But again, those desires have to square with the word of God. If you're like, man, I have this desire and I think it's from the Lord, I'm going to go be a drug dealer. Whoa. Probably not. Probably not from God, right? Like God puts his desires and it, but it has to square with the word of God. Think about this. Here's a desire. I have a desire to be a better provider for my family. There's nothing wrong with that desire, but what a lot of men will do is they'll take promotions in jobs and they're like, I can be a better provider for my family. Yeah, but the problem is you're on the road all the time and when you're home, you're spent because your job is way harder and you don't have anything to give to your family. So you may be a better provider, but you're an infinitely worse father. That doesn't square with the word of God. We have to wrestle with those like do I have a desire to be a better provider? Yeah. There's nothing wrong with that, but is that, does that desire, that desire becomes fleshly one. It allows me to compromise other biblical truth. I have to square those desires with the word of God always.

Here's the last one. So God speaks to us through people prompting and pain. God speaks to us through doors, desires and dreams. Now, I'm not going to get to cooky on this one, okay? Cause people will take this one wacko in a hurry. But here's what the Bible says: in the last days, it shall be that God declares, I will pour out my spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy. Your young men shall see visions and your old men shall dream dreams. God does speak to us through dreams. And I gotta be honest with you, and I'm not, I'm not too cooky in my understanding of the Holy spirit. But there have been times where I've had dreams that were just dreams. And then there have been times where I woke up from a dream and was very confident that that was more than a dream, that there was something there that God was trying to say to me. And I wasn't always sure what that was. But there've been a lot of times in my life, and that's true for other people as well. God speaks to us through dreams. Now, you can do this if you want. If you go home, go to bed tonight and go, Hey, God gave me a dream. You can pray that prayer. It doesn't mean God's under any obligation to actually do that. He might do that. But he's not under any obligation necessarily to do that. But what I am saying to you is that when God wants to get your attention, he does speak through dreams sometimes. But, again, all that has to be squared with the word of God because God's word is his primary language.

So he has seven languages, seven ways that he speaks to us. And I would say typically, if God is hitting you in more than one way, when, when those all line up, that gives us greater confidence that we know it's the Lord, but God's primary way that he speaks to us is through the Bible. That's his primary language. And then he speaks to us through people, prompting and pain. He speaks to us through doors, desires and dreams.

So I want to work through some implications for this message, and I hope that we can have confidence, growing confidence in our own personal ability, right? Where you're at. Our own personal ability to hear God speaking when he's saying something because God, God doesn't have an audible language. I know that some people say audible language, they've heard it. I've never heard God speak audibly to me, but

there've been times that without a doubt, I knew God was saying something to me and I had to get, he was getting my attention. Moving here to this place was a whole series of God speaking to me and man, what a blessing. Like God, it was so hard because God had to tear away all the things that we loved about where we were and the life that we had built and make it okay for us to walk away from that. And there were so many questions on the front end of that moment where we were believing God leading us. God's speaking to us. Something like, God, why would you, why would you? And here's what I've learned, once we got on this side of God speaking to us -- the blessings that he had for us make me frustrated that I ever questioned it. Like, why couldn't I just trust that what he had for me was better than the things I was clinging to. Why can't I trust that? That's my own faith journey. As God speaks to us, we have to learn to let go of the things that he once gave us, to take hold of the better things that he still has yet to provide for us.

So, some implications: Number one, God's primary language will always be the word, which means this. If you want to hear God speak consistently in your life, the first and foremost thing that you need to commit to is to have a committed solid understanding of God's word. Like we're never going to be able to escape that. And that's not fancy and it's not pleasant, it's just the reality.

Number two, implication number two, God speaks in different ways, but he will never contradict his word. And that sounds kind of like the same one, but it isn't the same one. God's primary language is his word, but even when God's speaking to you in the other ways, he's never going to contradict his word. And that's really important for us to know. Now, what he will contradict sometimes is church traditional understanding of the word. So that's a wrestling match for us and that's part of why we need to have a solid community of people around us, that we can process. -- I sense God saying this, and the Bible, and I understand it this way, and am I missing this? Am I being ridiculous? Those are the kind of moments that we need our, we need our life group. We need our group of people that are around us to be able to have that conversation. Like I feel like God's saying this to me, but I don't know for sure and I need you to help me understand this. What? What do you see the word saying? And what's cool, is then the Holy spirit uses those people to speak that truth into you and so it gets confirmed, or it gets rejected, through another venue of God speaking.

Implication number three, if you sense God speaking to you in a secondary dialect, make sure it's in alignment with the word. Like you can't not point back to the word of God.

And implication. Number four is this. God speaks in order to lead us toward his desires for our lives, which are always better than anything we can dream up for ourselves. This is critical. God speaks in order to lead us toward his desires for our lives, which are always better than anything we can dream up for ourselves and his dreams for our lives, whatever's next. is also better than all the things that he's provided for us up to this point. Like you can stay in step with God and step into a moment where God gave you something and be like, man, this is so fulfilling. And then God comes and starts speaking and leading you in addition to that, and you can, I, I've experienced this in my own life. One of the, one of the things that I wrestle with in my own faith has gone, but God, you gave me this so I have to hold onto it. God's like, no, no, no, no. Let it go cause I gave you that and I'm about to give you more. But God speaks in order to lead us toward his desires for our lives, which are always better than anything we can dream up for ourselves that we've got to be willing to let that go and we're going to move into communion time with that.

We take communion every week in our church and we have an open table at our church, and what that means is anybody who's willing to celebrate the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus with us, we invite you to partake in communion right where you're at. I want us to just take a few minutes and maybe think about this: Jesus died for you and me so that we could have access to the voice of God through his blood because of the forgiveness of our sins. Where is God speaking to you right now? Maybe through some of these other things, the prompting, people, pain desires, doors and dreams. Maybe through some of those things, God has been speaking to you and you didn't even know how to recognize it until you were sitting there listening to this sermon went, Oh, you know what? That. That makes sense, that explains what was going on there. Where's God's speaking to you right now and what does he want you to do in response to his speaking to you? Let's, take some just a few seconds and think about that.

On the night Jesus was betrayed. He took bread and he broke it and he said, this is my body, which I'm giving for you. Nobody's taking it from me. He says, nobody can take this. I'm giving it for you. Whenever you eat this bread, do it in remembrance of me. And then in the same way, after the dinner, he took a cup and he said, this cup, this is the blood of the covenant which is shed for you. So whenever you drink this cup, do it in remembrance of me.

Let's pray. God, thank you. Thank you that you consistently speak to us and that this relationship that we have with you is not a one way conversation. And Lord, for those of us that haven't even considered what it means to be able to hear your voice, I pray God that you would give us deep awareness of when promptings or other people or desires or doors or all these different things when, when they are you and when they're just purely circumstantial and Lord drive us to your word so that we can have a clean foundation to be able to filter all those other things. I thank you for the people in my life that have helped me to discern your leading. You're so good to us. You're so faithful. In your name, Amen. Let's sing one more song.

Two things: First of all, that song is amazing, and secondly, I just wish Tom could sing it. He's so, so good. I'm so blessed when you sing that song. Gosh, I was thinking while we were singing that song specifically about God using pain, and I know that for a lot of us, that's a very real reality right now where we live and it just feels like if we, if we're honest, it feels like God's picking on us. I'm like, why? Why would you pick on us? Why would you pick on me right now in the midst of all these other things? And I would just encourage you to, to hang on to this truth. I don't know why. All I know is on the other side of it, t's going to be worth it. To him who overcomes, to him will be given the crown of life. May you have the fortitude to endure in your faith so that you can experience the fullness of God's goodness in your life. Thanks for tuning in. Have a great week.