

CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP BAPTIST CHURCH

Kansas City, Missouri

WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL

Can You Hear Me Now?

God's Superior Way of Speaking in the Kingdom

Hebrews 1:1–2 (NIV)

“In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son...”

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DAY 1 — CAN YOU HEAR ME NOW? THE QUESTION GOD KEEPS ASKING

Scripture Reading

Hebrews 1:1–2 (NIV)

In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe.

Devotional Thought

There is a moment in nearly every marriage when one person turns to the other and says, in sheer exhaustion, “I have told you this over and over — and you still don’t hear me.” It is rarely about volume. The words were spoken clearly enough. The trouble is that two people can live in the same house, share the same meals, and sleep under the same roof, and still fail to actually hear one another. And a household where no one is truly listening does not move forward — the agenda stalls, and both people wonder why nothing ever changes.

That is the picture behind an old commercial many of us remember, in which a man walked from place to place with a phone pressed to his ear, asking the same question again and again: “Can you hear me now?” He was not changing his message. He was searching for the coordinates where the signal would finally connect. And that, beneath everything else, is the question God has been asking His people across the whole span of Scripture. He is not changing His mind about who He is or why He made us. He is adjusting the method, moving across the generations, asking the same patient question of each one: Can you hear Me now?

The writer of Hebrews opens by tracing how God has spoken. In the past, he says, God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets — at many times and in various ways. He used Samuel and Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel and Daniel. He used dreams and visions, angels and signs, the law and the festivals and the symbols. It was genuine communication, but it came in pieces, delivered through representatives, revealed a little at a time. No one saw the whole picture at once. God was speaking, but the connection ran through many hands.

“Living in the same house and not talking to each other does not move the house agenda forward. God is still asking His people the same question: Can you hear Me now?”

Then comes the great shift. “But in these last days,” the writer says, “he has spoken to us by his Son.” The method has changed. The message no longer arrives through a long chain of messengers; it comes from one source — and that source is not a prophet or an angel but the Son, appointed heir of all things, the one through whom the universe itself was made. Under the new covenant God did not merely upgrade the delivery system. He made His communication relational rather than merely informational. He is no longer only sending us information about Himself; He is inviting us into a relationship with Himself. We are not talking to a messenger anymore. We are talking to the Boss.

Here is the sobering part: many of us are still living as though nothing changed. We treat God as distant and occasional — someone who speaks only through dramatic signs or other people, someone we consult in emergencies. And all the while He is asking the same tender question He has always asked — not because His voice has grown faint, but because we have drifted out of range. The invitation this week is simply to move back into the coordinates where we can hear Him, and to remember that the God who spoke the universe into being still wants to speak, today, to you.

Personal Reflection

1. When I am honest, how would I describe my current line of communication with God — clear and daily, or occasional and full of static? What has it actually been like this past week?
2. Have I unconsciously kept God at the distance of the Old Testament — expecting Him to speak only through dramatic signs or other people — rather than relating to Him directly through His Son?
3. What would it look like this week for my relationship with God to become genuinely relational and not merely informational — a conversation rather than a consultation?
4. What is one specific “coordinate” — a habit, a distraction, a divided attention — that I need to adjust so I can actually hear Him again?

DAY 2 — DON'T DRIFT: LISTENING PERSONALLY

Scripture Reading

Hebrews 2:1–3 (NIV)

We must pay the most careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away. For since the message spoken through angels was binding, and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment, how shall we escape if we ignore so great a salvation?

Devotional Thought

The first adjustment the new covenant asks of us is that we learn to listen personally. Hebrews puts it plainly: “We must pay the most careful attention... so that we do not drift away.” Drifting is not a decision; it is a direction. No one wakes up and resolves to lose touch with God. We simply stop paying attention, and the current does the rest. That is why the warning is so urgent — because the danger is not dramatic rebellion but quiet, unhurried neglect.

In the Old Testament, the prophet did the chasing. Wherever the nation went, the word went after them. If they were carried into exile, the prophet went to exile. If they wandered in the wilderness, the prophet wandered too. The people could afford to be passive because the message pursued them. But something has changed. God now says, in effect, I am not going to chase you down; you must pay attention to where I am if you want to understand what I have to say.

Think of the difference between an assignment and a syllabus. In grade school, the teacher handed out assignments — she told you exactly what to do, reminded you when the test was coming, kept up with your progress on your behalf. Then you got to college and, on the first day, they handed you a syllabus. A syllabus lays out the whole plan for the entire year and then places the responsibility squarely on you. No one will remind you of the test; it is on the syllabus. No one will chase you about the reading; it is on the syllabus. “I didn’t know” is no longer an excuse, because you were given everything up front. This is precisely the shift God has made with us. In the old way, His people waited for a word to arrive. In the new way, we go and get the word that has already been given.

“In the old way you waited for a word to arrive. In the new way you go and get the word already given — I am not chasing you; you must pay attention to where I am.”

Our generation feels this shift acutely, because we have traded the map for the GPS. When we grew up with maps, you unfolded the whole state, found where you were, and understood that you were a small part of a much larger picture — and that you had to adapt yourself to it. The GPS asks nothing of the sort. It simply adapts to us, narrating one turn at a time, never showing us the whole. And so we approach God the same way: concerned only with our little piece, our next turn, what the map says about me — forgetting that we are traveling on His road, inside His larger design, and that the whole point is to align our lives to His purpose rather than expecting His purpose to reorganize itself around us.

To listen personally, then, is to stop waiting to be chased and to start paying the most careful attention. It is to open the syllabus God has already handed us — His Word — and take responsibility for keeping up with it. The person who drifts is rarely the one who defies God outright; more often it is the one who simply stopped paying attention, one distracted week at a time, until the signal was gone.

Personal Reflection

1. *In what specific ways have I been drifting rather than defying — not rejecting God outright, but quietly neglecting to pay attention? Where did the drift begin?*
2. *Am I still waiting passively for God to “chase me down” with a dramatic word, instead of taking responsibility to seek the word He has already given?*
3. *If God has handed me a syllabus rather than an assignment, what part of it have I been ignoring — and what would “keeping up with it” look like in my daily life?*
4. *What is one distraction I need to turn down this week so that I am paying the most careful attention to where God actually is?*

DAY 3 — YOKED TO THE TEACHER: LEARNING INTENTIONALLY

Scripture Reading

Matthew 11:28–29 (NIV)

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

Devotional Thought

If the first adjustment is to listen personally, the second is to learn intentionally. Jesus frames it with the image of a yoke — the wooden beam that binds two animals together at the neck so they walk in step and pull as one. “Take my yoke upon you,” He says, “and learn from me.” Notice what He does not say. He does not say, drag Me along behind you toward the destinations you have already chosen. He says yoke up with Me — bind your pace to Mine, walk close enough to feel which way I am leaning — and in that nearness you will learn where I am going before I go.

The learning He calls for is intentional, and this is exactly where many of us fall short, because we are not naturally the read-the-instructions kind of people. We are the glance-at-the-box kind of people. Anyone who has ever assembled furniture “some assembly required” knows the feeling of standing over the finished piece with a small pile of parts left over, quietly deciding they must be extras. They are not extras. They mark the steps we skipped — and the day always comes when what we skipped announces itself, when the shelf leans or the joint gives way. The Christian life works the same way. What we skip in our learning does not disappear; it waits.

Jesus attaches a promise to intentional learning that we should not rush past: “you will find rest for your souls.” Many of us carry souls that are stressed and frayed — down, as it were, to our very last nerve. But we were never meant to be down to one nerve. The exhaustion usually comes from trying to carry what God already offered to carry, from doing for ourselves what He said He would do for us. The yoke of Christ is not another burden added to an overloaded life; it is the exchange of our heavy, self-managed striving for His gentle, well-fitted pace. “For I am gentle and humble in heart” — He is not a harsh driver cracking a whip. He is a patient teacher who bends His stride to ours.

“He did not say drag Me along toward where you already decided to go. He said, yoke up with Me and learn — walk close enough to know where I am headed before I go.”

To learn intentionally is to close the gap between hearing and understanding. It is to sit with the Word until we actually grasp it, rather than assuming it will somehow force itself into us while we remain passive. It is to stop treating obedience like a chore we must be repeatedly reminded to do, and to begin taking ownership — to understand what needs to be done and simply do it, the way a maturing child finally stops needing to be told. The yoke is an invitation to walk so closely with Christ that His ways become our instinct, and His direction becomes our own sense of where the road turns next.

Personal Reflection

1. Am I genuinely learning from Christ, or am I mostly trying to drag Him toward destinations I have already chosen for myself? Where is the tension between His direction and mine?
2. Where in my walk have I been the “glance-at-the-box” kind of disciple — skipping steps in my learning and telling myself the missing parts were extras? What has that cost me?
3. What weariness am I carrying right now that comes not from Christ’s yoke but from trying to do myself what He already offered to do for me?
4. What is one area this week where I will take ownership of my own learning — sitting with the Word until I understand it — instead of waiting to be reminded or spoon-fed?

DAY 4 — MORE THAN MERELY LISTENING: RESPONDING OBEDIENTLY

Scripture Reading

James 1:22–25 (NIV)

Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it — not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it — they will be blessed in what they do.

Devotional Thought

The third adjustment completes the pattern: we listen personally, we learn intentionally, and now we must respond obediently. James refuses to let us stop at hearing. “Do not merely listen to the word,” he writes, “and so deceive yourselves.” That last phrase is worth sitting with. Merely listening does not leave us neutral; it deceives us. The person who hears the truth and does nothing with it walks away convinced he is fine — he knows the truth, after all — while the truth he refused to obey quietly indicts him. Knowing better and doing nothing is not spiritual maturity. It is self-deception with a Bible in its lap.

Most of us would rather debate than obey. We want to examine the command, weigh it against our preferences, and negotiate its terms — and somewhere in all that examining, the moment for obedience passes. But notice: God never said you had to understand the command before you obeyed it. He said respond obediently. Some of His instructions will not make sense to us in advance; understanding often comes on the far side of obedience, not before it. The call is not “agree, then obey.” The call is “obey, and trust the One who gave the command.”

Consider how foolish it is to do otherwise. If someone who built a machine tells you exactly how to fix it, and you go in and do the opposite — because their way did not make sense to you, or because you simply did not feel like it — you will still get an outcome. It just will not be the one you wanted. Instead of the refrigerator running, it burns up. Instead of the car starting, it stalls. When we experiment with our own methods on the assumption that we might improve on God’s design, we are not choosing between an outcome and no outcome. We are choosing a different, and usually more damaging, outcome. Our method will never produce His result.

“God never said you had to understand it. He said respond obediently. My method will never produce His outcome.”

This is the honest place where many of us live. We have drifted from nearly everything God told us about how to build a life, a marriage, a family — and then we expect our methods to somehow yield His blessings. It does not work that way. James says the one who looks intently into God’s word and continues in it — not forgetting, but doing — is the one who will be blessed in what he does. The blessing is tied to the doing. God knows our hearts, yes; but knowing our hearts does not mean He amends His plan to fit our preferences. He is not asking us to understand everything. He is asking us to trust Him enough to obey — and to discover, on the other side of obedience, why He said what He said.

Personal Reflection

1. *Where have I been merely listening — hearing the word, even agreeing with it — while quietly doing nothing, and calling that faith?*
2. *What command of God am I currently debating or negotiating rather than simply obeying, because it does not yet make sense to me or I do not feel like it?*
3. *In what area of my life have I been running my own method and expecting God’s outcome — and what has that experiment actually produced?*
4. *What is the one act of obedience God has already made clear to me, that I need to step into this week before I fully understand it?*

DAY 5 — THE RADIANCE AND THE DIRECT LINE: WHY THIS WAY IS SUPERIOR

Scripture Reading

Hebrews 1:3 (NIV)

The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.

Devotional Thought

Some of us secretly wish we had lived in the Old Testament — imagining that the age of prophets and pillars of fire was somehow closer to God. Hebrews corrects us. The new way is not a lesser substitute for the old; it is far superior. And the reason is Jesus Himself. “The Son is the radiance of God’s glory,” the writer says, “and the exact representation of his being.” Radiance is what you see when something is so bright that its light reaches beyond itself — the way a diamond throws its brilliance into the room so that you say, before you ever touch it, “that’s beautiful.” Christ is the radiance of God: God expanding His own glory outward so that we can experience who He is without being consumed by Him. And He is not a counterfeit or an approximation. He is the exact representation of God’s being — not merely what God looks like, but the very essence of who God is, made available to us.

Think about what this means for how we now approach God. Call almost any company today and you are met by a machine. “I can help you with that,” it says, and you know it can’t. It offers you menus, options, this-or-that, all designed to keep you from the one thing you actually want — a real person, the source, someone with the authority to solve your problem. God’s old covenant could feel a little like that: you went through a priest, through a confession, through an angel, through a prophet — layers between you and the throne. But in Christ, the layers are gone. He took away the middlemen and gave us direct contact with the glory of God shining in His Son.

It is the difference between the general customer-service number and a direct line. Imagine calling a company and, instead of the endless menu, a real person says, “Here is my personal number — call me directly, anytime you have a problem.” That is what Jesus has done. You no longer have to work your way up through a system, hoping to be transferred to someone who can actually help. He says: I am seated at the seat of majesty, with the full glory of God upon Me and the full representation of Him in Me, and I have put Myself into a word you can connect with. Take down My number and call Me direct.

“I took away the prophets, the angels, the middlemen — and I gave you direct contact with the glory of God shining in Jesus. Take down My number and call Me direct.”

And He has the authority to make the offer, because of where He is seated. “After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.” He did not sit down until the obstacle between us and God — our sin — had been dealt with fully and finally. Then He took His seat at the place of ultimate authority, next to where all things are judged. This is why the new way is superior: it is not merely more convenient, it is more direct, more personal, and more powerful. We are no longer straining to reach God through a chain of intermediaries. We have been handed a direct line to the reigning Son, who is Himself the radiance and exact representation of the eternal God.

Personal Reflection

1. Do I actually live as though I have direct access to God through Christ — or do I still relate to Him as if I must work my way up through layers to be heard?
2. What “middlemen” have I quietly put back between myself and God — rituals, other people, my own performance — that Christ already removed?
3. If Jesus has handed me a direct line, what does it reveal that I so rarely use it? What keeps me from coming to Him directly and immediately?
4. What is one burden I have been navigating through everything except Him, that I will bring straight to the reigning Son this week?

DAY 6 — YOU REMAIN THE SAME: AN ETERNAL PLAN AND AN EVERLASTING INHERITANCE

Scripture Reading

Hebrews 1:10–12 (NIV)

In the beginning, Lord, you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment. You will roll them up like a robe; like a garment they will be changed. But you remain the same, and your years will never end.

Devotional Thought

Here many of us quietly miss the point: the Word of God does more than deliver information — it connects us to an eternal plan and an everlasting inheritance. Hebrews reaches all the way back to creation: “In the beginning, Lord, you laid the foundations of the earth.” When you connect to Christ, you are not connecting to an installer who arrived late; you are connecting to the Architect and Manufacturer of everything that exists, including you.

We know instinctively how this works. When something breaks in our homes and the installer cannot solve it, he calls the manufacturer — the one who designed it and knows how it works. And when the problem is serious enough, the manufacturer himself comes out and fixes it. That is precisely the story of Scripture. For generations God sent installers — prophets, judges, leaders — but His people kept drifting and wandering. So the Manufacturer Himself came down. Jesus, through whom we were made, said in effect: I put these people together, I know how they work — let Me repair them Myself.

And this Architect does not wear out. “They will perish, but you remain,” the passage says. “They will all wear out like a garment... but you remain the same, and your years will never end.” Everything else in our lives is a garment slowly wearing thin — the systems, the securities, the seasons we lean on. But the One we connect to in Christ never gets outdated: times change, but He remains the same. And what He speaks to us through His Word is anchored not in the temporary but in the eternal — which is exactly why His plan sometimes chafes against us, because we measure it by what feels urgent today rather than by what lasts forever.

“You are going to graduate from this world one day. If you live as though this is all there is, you will be shocked at how much you did not know.”

Consider how much of our energy goes into things with a short shelf life. In high school, the popularity and the positions and the friendships felt like they would define our whole lives — until graduation came, and all of it dissolved in an afternoon. And here is the sober truth: you are going to graduate from this world one day. If you live as though this life is all there is, you will be shocked at graduation to discover how much you did not know and how much you invested in what could not last. God is inviting us to live for what comes after — to connect our short years here to an inheritance that never ends.

And this is finally what the new communication secures for us. “To which of the angels did God ever say, ‘Sit at my right hand?’” the writer asks. “Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?” The very angels we once depended on now serve those who are heirs. When you connect to Jesus, you connect to your inheritance — an eternal place that cannot be taken from you. So do not trade a forever inheritance for a season’s comfort. Hear the question He is still asking, tune your life to His frequency, and stay connected to the One whose years will never end.

Personal Reflection

1. How much of my energy and worry is currently invested in “garments” that are wearing out — things real enough today but temporary by nature? What am I neglecting that lasts forever?
2. Where have I been settling for the help of “installers” — my own strategies, other people, quick fixes — when the Manufacturer Himself is offering to do the work in me?
3. If I am truly going to “graduate” from this world, what would I need to change now so that I am not caught unprepared for what lasts?
4. What is one eternal investment — a relationship, an act of obedience, a surrender — that God is asking me to make this week in light of my inheritance in Christ?

CLOSING PRAYER

A Prayer to Unify the Week

Lord, You have been asking us the same question across every season of our lives — can you hear Me now? — and we confess that too often the answer has been no. Not because Your voice grew faint, but because we drifted out of range. We have lived in the same house with You and gone silent, expecting the relationship to thrive while we stopped listening. Forgive us, and draw us back into the coordinates where we can hear You clearly again.

We thank You that in these last days You have spoken to us by Your Son — not through a distant chain of messengers, but directly, relationally, face to face in Jesus. Teach us to pay the most careful attention, so that we do not drift. Where we have waited passively to be chased down, give us the resolve to seek the word You have already given. Where we have glanced at the box and skipped the instructions, yoke us to Christ and make us intentional learners who walk closely enough to know which way You are leaning.

We admit, Lord, that we would rather debate than obey. We have examined Your commands, negotiated their terms, and run our own methods while expecting Your outcomes. Have mercy. Teach us to respond obediently even before we understand, trusting that understanding waits for us on the far side of obedience. Keep us from the self-deception of merely listening — of knowing the truth and doing nothing with it.

Thank You that the way You have given us is not a lesser way but a superior one. Jesus, You are the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of His being. You removed every middleman, dealt fully with our sin, and sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. You have handed us a direct line to the throne, and yet how rarely we use it. Forgive our distance, and draw us to call on You directly, immediately, as the reigning Son who sustains all things by Your powerful word.

And when the systems around us shake and our securities wear thin like old garments, remind us that You remain the same, that Your years will never end, and that You are the Architect who came down to repair us Yourself. Anchor our short years to Your eternal plan. Keep us from trading an everlasting inheritance for a season's comfort. Prepare us for the day we graduate from this world, so that we are not caught unaware of all we did not know.

Here we are, Lord — tuning our lives to Your frequency, straining to hear You above the noise. Speak, and we will listen. Lead, and we will follow. Send, and we will go. We want to hear You now, and every day You give us, until we see You face to face.

In the mighty name of Jesus, Amen.