

Interactive lesson



picture from <http://brainbasedbiz.blogspot.com/2010/05/Listening-other-side-of-questions.html>

What is this woman doing? <Let them respond>

When we have a conversation with someone, how well do we listen to what they say? <Let them respond>

Studies of people show that many times, we are already forming responses or planning how to express our point of view before the other person finishes what they are saying. Do you think that is good listening? <Let them respond>

What is good listening? <Let them respond>

I want us all to be silent and listen to the sounds around us. <Time 30 sec for silent listening>

What did you hear? <Let them respond>

Did God speak to you, or call you? <Let them respond>

How do we know when we hear the voice of God? Where do we hear it? <Let them respond>

How often do you think Jesus calls to you?
<Let them respond>

I think God is calling to us constantly, in many different ways. May you always recognize and be filled with joy at God's call in your life.

Gospel lesson

Last week we heard about the disciples first seeing Jesus after the resurrection. This week we go back to a discourse Jesus gave during His ministry, as a reminder of why He died and rose again. Let us listen and hear what He has to say.

picture from

John 10:11-18 (NRSV)

¹¹ "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

¹² The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away--and the wolf snatches them and scatters them.

¹³ The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep.

¹⁴ I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me,

¹⁵ just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep.

¹⁶ I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd.

¹⁷ For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again.

¹⁸ No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again. I have received this command from my Father."

The word of God for the people of God

<Hymn "Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us" UMH #381>

Message: Listen to My Voice



picture adapted from <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/living-the-resurrection/fourth-sunday-of-easter-year-b-lectionary-planning-notes/fourth-sunday-of-easter-year-b-graphics>

Please pray with me?

Good Shepherd, as we take time now to further consider today's scriptures, please

- speak Your words through my mouth,
- open our ears to Your message, and
- abide in our hearts,

that we may **hear** You more clearly, love You more dearly, and thus follow You more nearly. Amen.

DISCIPLESHIP MINISTRIES
The United Methodist Church

Living the Resurrection

- ♥ April 4 – Terror & Amazement
- ♥ April 11 – Unless I See
- ♥ April 18 – Touch and See
- ♥ **April 25 – Listen to My Voice**
- ♥ May 2 – Abide in Me
- ♥ May 9 – No Greater Love
- ♥ May 16 – We Are Yours

After seeing and touching, our “Living the Resurrection” series now focuses on this:

“The real question for us today is not, “Will God speak to me, to us today?” Instead, will we listen for that voice that is speaking?

Jesus doesn’t say, “Listen and maybe I’ll have something to say.” He says, “Listen to my voice.”

“I am speaking” is the implied message, so pay attention.”

I wonder, sometimes, if – or how much, really – God gets frustrated with us for not paying attention to His messages for us. Let’s dig in to what we heard today.

Just prior to today’s Gospel lesson, Jesus had healed a blind man on the Sabbath; the Pharisees took offense that the man identified Jesus as being from God, saying that **they did not know where Jesus was from**; and Jesus made it clear that the Pharisees were, if not blind, then filled with sin.



Picture compiled from
<https://www.freebibleimages.org/illustrations/qnpi-063-good-shepherd/>

Jesus then began His “Good Shepherd” discourse. At first the Pharisees did not get His analogy of the people being sheep and following the shepherd they recognize, like the no-longer-blind man recognized Jesus as being from God.

So Jesus repeated His point from several different angles. When something is repeated in the Bible, it means we are to pay attention!

“I am the good shepherd.” Jesus says this twice. It is in contrast to the thief, who steals and kills, and in contrast to the hired hand who runs away instead of protecting the sheep from danger.

- † Psalm 23 equates the shepherd with the Lord. Jesus was making it clear that He was of God.
- † If someone is supposed to lead the people to God but turns them away from the one sent by God, then they are like the thief or hired hand. Jesus was telling the Pharisees they were not doing their job right, and it was hurting the people.
- † Jesus knows who is faithful, and they recognize Him as being of God.

“The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.” and “I lay down my life for the sheep.” Jesus talks

about laying down His life no less than five times in this passage.



picture from https://www.freepik.com/free-photo/resurrection-concept-crucifixion-jesus-christ-cross-sunset_3952231.htm

Jesus was making it clear that He was going to die on behalf of the people.

- † Jesus would die to save people from the wolf of sin.
- † Jesus would die so that the whole world – not just the descendants of Abraham – would follow God.
- † Jesus would die not because He could not avoid it, but because He chose to do so.

“[T]he Father knows me,” “the Father loves me,” and “I have received this command from my Father.” Jesus was making it clear that He was there because of God.

- † God was doing mighty things on behalf of His people – on behalf of us.

† God knows us, loves us, and commands us through Jesus.

“I lay down my life in order to take it up again.” and “I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again.” Jesus knew the resurrection would happen and twice foretold all listening about it.



<https://www.agnusday.org/comics/951/john-10-11-18-2021>

So Jesus is the Good Shepherd, where the traditional Jewish leadership were not. And the temple leaders still did not listen or hear it even when Jesus's followers also showed mighty acts of power that could only come from God, and credited it to Christ.

Last week we heard how, after healing a lame man, Peter used the moment of awe as an opportunity to preach about Jesus to the people going into the temple. Immediately following that, the Sadducees (who did not believe in resurrection of the dead), the temple priests, and the captain of the temple

guard came to where Peter was preaching and threw both him and John into jail.



picture from <https://www.freebibleimages.org/illustrations/peter-john-arrested/>

What we heard today from Acts was Peter answering questions from the high priests about who gave them the right to show up in the temple and go against their teachings. Filled with the Holy Spirit, he told them it was Jesus, the one whom they had killed and God had raised from the dead.

But did the high priests listen? Did they really hear the answer, or were they too busy trying to think of a condemning retort? If you keep reading the chapter, you learn that sadly, it was the latter – but the people had heard!

So the high priests tried to let the apostles go with threats and orders to not teach about Jesus. Do you think Peter and John listened to them?

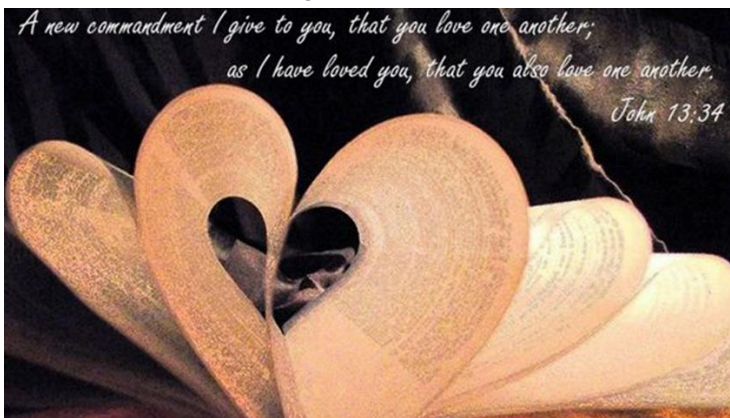
I love Peter's reply, from the Spirit:

“Whether it is right in God's sight to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge; for we

cannot keep from speaking about what we have seen and heard.” (Acts 4:19-20, NRSV)

And the temple leaders had to let them go, because of the people. The high priests listened to people; the uneducated, “ordinary” men, Peter and John, listened to God. Who do you think were more blessed?

I think a lot more people throughout history learned the names of Peter and John than learned the names of those high priests. We read from one of the letters from John today.



picture from <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/11047961556024184/>

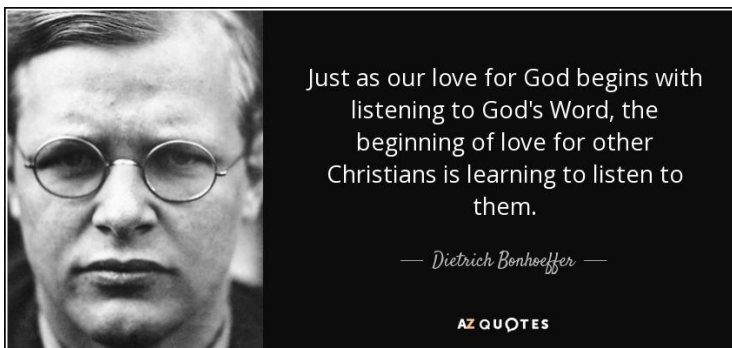
He spoke about God’s love and said that “...we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us.” Both Paul and Peter also quoted Jesus as saying, “Love one another.” According to the Gospel of John, Jesus gave the disciples this commandment in the evening after the Last Supper.

By any count, the word “love” is used in the Bible hundreds of times. If repetition means we need to pay

attention, then love is extremely important! So how do we listen to God, to know that we are doing this “love” thing properly?

We did that “be silent and listen” exercise earlier; prayerful meditation can be one method of literally listening for God. More commonly, we “listen” through reading the scriptures. After all, in the prologue to John, Jesus is identified as the Word that was with and was God, that became flesh and lived among us. So we listen to God by reading the Word.

As the Good Shepherd, Jesus protected and nurtured the faithful, teaching them about and leading them to God. If we are to love others in this day and age like Jesus loved others two millenia ago, we need to figure out how to protect and nurture them, teaching them and leading them to God.



picture from <https://www.azquotes.com/quote/908430>

This quote is attributed to Dietrich Bonhoeffer: “Just as our love for God begins with listening to God’s Word, the beginning of love for other Christians is learning to listen to them.”

I think there is a lot of truth to that, and that it applies not just to other Christians but to other people in general.

We need to listen to God's call to show the love of Jesus to all people, that they too may hear God's voice in their hearts. Let us listen, truly listen, to understand who people are, what matters to them, and how we can best help them.

Let us now respond with **A Modern Affirmation** UMH #885

Pastor:

Where the Spirit of the Lord is,
there is the one true church, apostolic and universal,
whose holy faith let us now declare:

Pastor and People:

We believe in God the Father,
infinite in wisdom, power, and love,
whose mercy is over all his works,
and whose will is ever directed to his children's
good.

We believe in Jesus Christ,
Son of God and Son of man,
the gift of the Father's unfailing grace,
the ground of our hope,
and the promise of our deliverance from sin and
death.

We believe in the Holy Spirit
as the divine presence in our lives,
whereby we are kept in perpetual remembrance
of the truth of Christ,
and find strength and help in time of need.

We believe that this faith should manifest itself
in the service of love
as set forth in the example of our blessed Lord,
to the end
that the kingdom of God may come upon the earth.

Amen.

<Doxology>

<Prayer of Dedication and Pastoral Prayer>

Let us pray:

Ever-present God who speaks in thunder and earthquakes
and in the softest whisper: we long to hear your
voice over all the noise of the world this day.

In a world so divided and polarized, we need to hear
not only the voice of the Shepherd but the cries of
other sheep who are being marginalized, forgotten,
and abandoned.

May the gifts we offer today and our actions in every
day going forward be our response to hearing the one
who speaks in the language of love and compassion.
Give us wisdom as we go about our daily lives. And
help us, Lord, with:

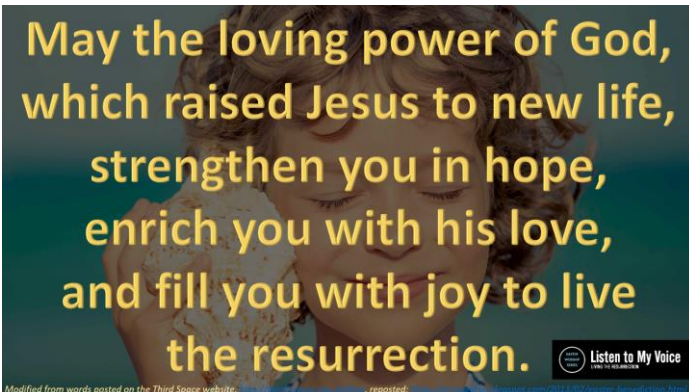
- Healing touch and comfort for all who are ailing.
 - Coronavirus victims - isolated; **school**; out-of-work; health care workers (especially: Marie Curri, Laura Davis, Nicole Marshall, Vince Marshall, Heidi Newton, Jennifer Tibbens-Scalzo) & those serving critical needs
 - **Lolita White** - 2nd afib ablation early Mon morn Apr 26
 - **Gary Sweet** - radiation therapy & home issues
 - **Elaine Perkins** - heart issues and life decisions
 - **Wenda West** - health issues
 - **Paul Lott** - continued health issues
 - -
 - -
 - -
- Thanks for
 - **Joan Clary** - passed away at 95
 - -
- Hold those who cannot be with us in Your loving embrace until we see them again.
 - Travelers
 - Family far off
- Social unrest - dismantle racism and reform systems
- Guide our Leaders - local, state, federal, international, and especially of Your church.
- Help us to be fearless in talking about our faith as a normal part of daily living.
 - For the sake of this our local church, one part of Your great church, guide each one of us this week to invite someone to come know You better.

- Help us to encourage one another toward faith in You and toward living together in true Christian community.

All these things we pray as You taught us to pray,
<The Lord's Prayer>

<Hymn "Crown Him with Many Crowns" UMH #327>

<Benediction>¹



background from <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/living-the-resurrection/fourth-sunday-of-easter-year-b-lectionary-planning-notes/fourth-sunday-of-easter-year-b-graphics>

As we leave today, listen for the voice of the Good Shepherd in every aspect of our lives.

May the loving power of God,
which raised Jesus to new life,
strengthen you in hope,
enrich you with his love,
and fill you with joy
to live the resurrection.

Go in grace, as the Holy Spirit guides you. Amen.

¹ Modified from words posted on the Third Space website. <http://third-space.org.uk/blog>, reposted: <https://re-worship.blogspot.com/2013/02/easter-benediction.html>.