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by Zac Poonen

In a prophetic reference to the Lord Jesus in Isaiah 50:4, it is said of Him that morning by morning God spoke to Him, for His ears were disciplined to hear His Father's voice. The result was, as the same verse tells us, that Jesus had a ready word for all who came to Him, according to their need. He was truly the Father's perfect mouthpiece. If this habit of listening to God's voice daily was necessary for Jesus Himself, then how much more is it so for us? We shall never be able to minister adequately to those in need if we fail here. It is only when we learn to "hear as a disciple" that we shall have "the tongue of a disciple." Unfortunately, many who should have been teaching others by now are still spiritual babes, because they have either ignored or neglected this "one thing."

Listening to the Lord does not mean merely reading the Bible. There are many who read their Bibles purely as a matter of routine. Listening to the Lord means more than that. It means meditating on His Word until we receive, through it, His message for us. Thus alone can our minds be renewed and conformed growingly to the mind of Christ. But many who read their Bibles have never yet learned thus to meditate.

There are at least three spiritual truths to be learnt from Mary's sitting at the feet of Jesus. (Lk. 10:39)

Sitting - unlike walking, running, or even standing - is primarily a picture of rest. This teaches us that our hearts must be at rest and our minds still, before we can hear God speaking to us. Unconfessed sin will preclude the former, while over-occupation with the cares and riches of this world will stand in the way of the latter. With a conscience ill at ease or a mind filled with anxiety or fear, how can we hope to hear God's "still small voice?" Psalm 46:10 tells us that we must be still if we are to know God.

Sitting at a person's feet is also a picture of humility. Mary was not sitting on a chair on the same level as Jesus, but on a lower level. God never speaks to a proud man, except in judgment. But He is ever ready to speak and to offer His grace to the humble soul who will be as a child before Him (Matt. 11:25).

Thirdly, sitting as Mary did is a picture of subjection. It is the attitude of a disciple in the presence of his Master. Our subjection is manifested in obedience to God's Word. God has not spoken in his Word to satisfy our curiosity or to give us information. His Word is an expression of His heart's desire. He speaks in order that we may obey. Jesus made it clear in John 7:17 that it is only if we are willing to do God's will that we shall receive an understanding of that will.

Many Christians go through months and years of reading the Bible without seeking to hear God speaking to them through it. Still they

seem to be quite satisfied. I ask you, do you hear the Lord's voice each day? If not, what is the cause? He speaks to those who listen. What is it that is stopping your spirit's ears? Is it lack of stillness before Him, lack of humility of spirit, or lack of obedience to what He has already said to you? Or is it perhaps a lack of desire itself? Whatever it be, God grant that it may be remedied at once and permanently. Pray Samuel's prayer, "Speak Lord, for Thy servant heareth." Then open your Bible and seek the face of the Lord earnestly, and you too shall hear His voice.