

A Reading of the Second Book of Chronicles (2 Chronicles 7:14)

If My people, who are called by My name, will humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land. The Word of the Lord. R. Thanks be to God.

Reflection ~ Listening to the voice of God

God speaks to us through our conscience and heart. *The law of their God is in their hearts; their feet do not slip (Psalm 37:31).* Like any wise, loving parent, God is very concerned about the moral and spiritual development of each and every one of His children. To this end, He acts powerfully by writing His eternal laws and precepts in our minds and hearts. In the deepest of our heart, freed from all pride and demonic deception, we truly know the difference between good and evil, right and wrong. Our hearts were divinely made for love (cf. 1Thessalonians 4:9). To love others is a natural behavior in a child whose innocence is not lost. Our conscience becomes impaired and our hearts hardened when we allow other lesser gods rule our lives.

Differentiating God's voice from that of our own pride, the devil and the world. God speaks softly through the inspirations of the Holy Spirit dwelling within us. If we are not careful this soft, gentle voice will be drowned out by our own loud voice (our pride, fleshy lower self), the voice of the evil one and of the attractions of the world. The voice of our lower self can be very insistent and demanding of its rights and self-interests. The voice of the evil one, the Prince of the world is ever present, very cunningly presenting evil dressed with good exterior. The devil has managed to deceive much of humanity with the aim to bring many to eternal destruction. The lure of the world is also a powerful one with its earthly riches and treasures, constituting an irresistible call for many. How numerous were the souls consumed by consumerism and materialism!

Be open to God's will then we can hear His voice more clearly. When we can overcome our selfishness and pride, and submit to God wholeheartedly, we can discern His will more clearly. To follow Jesus and walk in His footsteps, we need to pick up our daily cross. *My sheep listen to My voice; I know them, and they follow Me (John 10:27).* We are the sheep of Jesus, the Good Shepherd when we follow and practise His divine teachings. *Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths (Proverbs 3:5-6).*

Be obedient and faithful even in small ways. After getting an audience with his father, a great king, a young prince said: "Father, your will is my mission. Just tell me what you want me to do!" Turning to his eager son, the king simply suggested to the enthusiastic youth to help look after his younger brothers and sisters. Disappointed, the youth turned away. Noting his reaction, the great king also felt disappointment in his heart. Too often we are like the young prince. But how do we gain the trust of God when we are not faithful in small things? *"His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!' (Matthew 25:21).*

All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness (2 Timothy 3:16). Through Scripture, God imparts His eternal truths to us and trains us up in righteousness. Scripture is like a love letter from a loving parent instructing his small child how to get home amidst all the dangers and perils on the journey. *Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will never pass away (Matthew 24:35).* Scripture and Christ's teaching must always be our unchanging truth, standard, guide and protection against the false teachings and deception of the world. Through Scripture we can uncover the deceptive voice of the evil one speaking to us in our minds, through the secular media and his human agents.

Conversation with Jesus

Precious Lord, You said, *solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil. (Hebrews 5:14).* Purify my conscience and reform it in Your eternal truths. Purify my heart of all hard-heartedness, pride and anything which opposes holy love, and make it meek and humble. Help me build my life upon the foundation of Your divine teachings so that I may never be overcome by the cunning deception of the evil one. May the Spirit of Truth in me train me always to discern between good and evil. Mary, Mother of Salvation, pray for me. Thank You, Jesus. Praise You, Jesus.