

Listening For God's Voice

A Native American and his friend were in downtown New York City, walking near Times Square. It was during the noon lunch hour and the streets were filled with people. Cars were honking their horns, taxicabs were squealing around corners, sirens were wailing, and the sounds of the city were almost deafening. Suddenly, the Native American said, "I hear a cricket." His friend said, "What? You must be crazy. You couldn't possibly hear a cricket in all this noise!" "No, I'm sure of it," the Native American said, "I heard a cricket." "That's crazy," said the friend.

The Native American listened carefully for a moment, and then walked across the street to a big cement planter where some shrubs were growing. He looked into the bushes beneath the branches, and sure enough, there was a small cricket. His friend was utterly amazed. "That's incredible," said his friend. "You must have super-human ears!" "No," said the Native American. "My ears are no different from yours. It all depends on what you're listening for." "But that can't be," said the friend. "I could never hear a cricket in all this noise."

"Yes, you can," came the reply. "Here, let me show you." He reached into his pocket, pulled out a few coins, and discreetly dropped them on the sidewalk. And then, with the noise of the crowded street still blaring in their ears, they noticed that every person's head within twenty feet turned and looked to see if the money that tinkled on the pavement was theirs. "See what I mean?" asked the Native American. "It all depends on what's important to you, and what you're listening for."

What's important to us? What do we listen for? Are there times that we fail to listen to God, because we are focused on other things that are more important to us? Regarding the Jews, Jesus said, "For the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, so that I should heal them. But blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear." (Matthew 13:15-16; cf. Isaiah 6:9-10; Acts 28:26-27).

Brethren, amid the distractions of the world all around us, may our ears always be open, not only ready to listen for, but to hear and be obedient to God's voice as He speaks to us through His word (1 Samuel 3:9-10; cf. John 8:47; John 10:4; John 10:27; 1 John 4:6).

Mike Riley