A New Day’s Resolution

Two life altering truths:

1. God is speaking.
2. You have one day fewer to listen than you had yesterday.

I rarely ever had those kinds of thoughts in my twenties and thirties, but now truths recur often. ***Have I listened to God? Have I really lived my life to the fullest? Have I heard God’s voice?***

The old adage is true: *Our life is God’s gift to us. What we do with it is our gift to God.*

Jesus came to bring us rest if we will only stop long enough to listen and to let Him speak. This is the kind of life Jesus lived out in front of us. He connected with the Father intimately and dynamically. We, on the other hand, are often too busy doing things *for* God that we miss entirely the presence *of* God.

God really does have something to say to each one of us. I know it like the back of my Bible. I preach it, teach it, encourage others to listen, but if I’m not careful I’ll get so focused my schedule that I don’t slow down enough to hear the Whispers. When I shut down all the white noise and ambiance, God speaks. It’s not always an audible voice, but a Voice just the same.

Every now and then I’ll experience a feeling of being very small. You’ve probably don’t know what I’m talking about. All around me there are bigger ministries, larger budgets, more talented communicators, and more successful pastors. (I know you probably never feel that way but may I confess that I do from time to time.) It’s at that moment that I have to refocus on a simple four-word sentence. *“Jesus is with me.”* I know.

It’s a Children’s Sunday School sentence but it’s still such a gigantic sentence. *“Jesus is with me.”*

Jesus is with me and He has something He wants to say ***to*** me—not just ***through*** me. It’s not enough for us to believe that He exists and has something to say to me personally. . It would be a shame for us to finally arrive in Heaven and not recognize the voice of God. In order to hear Him, I must remember to adjust my spiritual sensors. It took me a while to grow out of the belief that He’s not a manipulator of people and I don’t have to be one either. We can’t control our people. That’s the way God made them: UNCONTROLABLE. Sometimes in the past I’ve wanted to but I’ve gotten over it. These sheep can’t be controlled, but they can be led. The basics of listening must overcome the relentless pressures that we as worship leaders and pastors face. Let me encourage you to try the following things that will lead to a heightened sensitivity to hear God’s voice

- ***Today*— I’ll live a life of urgency and celebration.** The brooding life is not holy. To many it might look holy but a grave-digger and party pooper do not a Kingdom make!
- ***Today*— I’ll simplify to remove distractions.** Our inability to hear God is directly linked to the static of modern life. It’s perhaps the greatest plague of the church. We are uncomfortable with silence. The things we place before our eyes, the multitude of messages we receive on a daily basis, even the food that we eat potentially blocks our reception of God’s voice. We often expel the voice of God through texts, emails, Facebook walls, radio, TV, and music.
- ***Today*— I’ll meditate on Holy Scripture.** Don’t just read it. Become preoccupied with it! Stuff your self full of holy words and you’ll see it bring a blessing of peace over your life because your eyes and ears are open to His Word.

- **Stop all self-promotion campaigns.** We all involved in a throne battle. Who will you place on the throne of your life. To which king will you bow down?
- ***Today* I'll follow God's heart and not my own.** Keep in mind what God thinks of your heart: It is deceitful. Songs, movies and pop culture have urged us to follow our heart. Please don't. It's a dead end proposition. Discover the heart of God and follow His.
- ***Today* I'll clarify boundaries in my personal world**. The ability to hear God is directly related to our ability to say **no** to lots of things in your life- even a few good things. We understand that we are not capable of doing everything for everybody. Your closest friends will not understand it. Some will be disappointed in you and others will think you are a prude, but celebrate your boundaries. If you understand the purpose you have been created to achieve, saying **NO** (sometimes in bold and all caps) is not just recommended, it is required.
- ***Today* I'll seek discernment regarding your day.** Every morning, ask for wisdom and courage. You need them both in order to discern the voice of Holy God and to do whatever He tells you to do.
- ***Today* I won't tolerate negativity.** If you find yourself surrounded by negative, whiney, sarcastic people, consider the architecture of you life and think about doing a little renovation.
- ***Today* I'll have faith in the process.** St. John of the Cross, an early church father coined the term: the dark midnight of the soul. "*The journey in Faith—the midnight of the soul when the light has all faded away and darkness has completely descended.*" He concludes that many Christ followers don't wish to endure the power of pain and tragedy that is necessary to pass through before the light shines again. I would argue that an overriding theme of the Bible is that suffering is not simply to be experienced but celebrated. It produces a deeper intimacy with God.

I hope that today is enough to lead you into a conversation with the Divine. He speaks softly and He speaks in present tense.