

What are you listening to?

What are you listening to? Every generation asks that of the following generations when hearing their music. What are you listening to? This music is terrible. If you want to hear real music you should listen to.... [Insert your favorite music here]. That is music. We aren't here to talk about music, it would be fun, but it wouldn't do anything for our souls. What are you listening to? Or maybe more appropriately, who are you listening to?

Our lesson today is from very early on in the book of John. It is very early on in Jesus' ministry. He is just starting to call his disciples. He is just starting to assemble his team of people that he will train during his life and will be able to teach after Jesus is gone. Jesus went out and he found one of his guys. He found Philip. He told Philip to follow him and Philip listened. He said alright! I'll do it.

Then Philip went out and found Nathanael. And he told Nathanael, Guess what! We found him! We found the one that Moses and the prophets all wrote about. We found the one that our country has been waiting for our entire history. Can you believe it Nathanael? His name is Jesus son of Joseph and he is from Nazareth.

Nathanael is skeptical. He is hearing Phillip, **but he is listening to his own logic**. He thinks to himself. The Savior of the world. The one who has been prophecies about for thousands of years. And he is from Nazareth. Nazareth is nothing in Nathanael's eyes. Its a no stoplight town in the middle of nowhere that no one has ever heard of. It's Tippler Wisconsin, It's podunk Idaho, its basically any other city in Nevada that is outside of the top ten in population. Fallon? Winnemucca, West Wendover. I've lived here coming up on 2 years and no one has ever said the name of any of these cities to me. Nazareth? Can anything come from that little town.

Phillip doesn't really defend himself all he says is come. Check it out for yourself. **Stop listening to your doubts Nathanael**, come and check this out. So Nathanael goes. And he sees. And approaching Jesus, Jesus says to him, Here is an Israelite in whom there is no deicet. Can you imagine that. Imagine being a visitor in this church. Maybe you are a visitor today. And you walk in. And you don't know anyone at the church, And I, the Pastor say... "Here he is. Here is a good guy. I am sure glad you're here." You might have the same reaction of Nathanael. "How do you know me?" I don't know you.

Jesus tells him how he knows him. He does something that only God can do. He tells him that he saw the place where Nathanael was when he heard about Jesus. Even though Jesus wasn't there he knew exactly where and what Nathanael was doing. Because Jesus is God.

Nathanael sees that. Once he sees the power that Jesus has. Once Jesus proves to him what he is capable of doing, then Nathanael says Rabbi you are the Son of God, you are the King of Israel.” Once he knew who his God was. He stopped listening to his doubts. He stopped listening to what he formerly thought was logical, and he started listening to God.

Each of our readings today are about listening to your God over something else. In the Old Testament. There is Samuel. A boy who is living and working in the temple. He is a servant of Eli, a priest. And he heard the Lord call him in the middle of the night. He doesn't know what the voice of the Lord sounds like so when he hears “Samuel” in the middle of the night he runs to his master Eli and said “Here I am.” And Eli said I didn't call you, go back to bed. It happens a second time, Samuel go back to bed. Finally the third time Eli realizes, it must be the Lord who is calling Samuel. And he told Samuel, go back and lie down, and when you hear this voice, say “Speak, Lord, your servant is listening.”

Samuel heard the voice of the Lord, but he didn't know what his voice sounded like. Nathanael was asked to come see the Lord, but he didn't know who the Lord was. This I can be an issue. What does the voice of the Lord sound like. Do you know? Or if someone comes to you and says the Lord is here, we worship the one true God at Green Valley Evangelical Lutheran church how would you know that they are telling the truth?

What are you listening to? There are so many voices calling to us in this world. How do we know which one is actually from the Lord? How do you know it is not just the word of the Pastor, but it is the word of God? Listen to him.

That's all Eli had to tell Samuel to do. He didn't have to convince Samuel that this was miraculous. He didn't have to prep Samuel for the difficult message that he was going to hear that wasn't exactly what he wanted to here. All Eli had to say to Samuel was tell the Lord that you are going to listen to him.

The same is true with Philip. Philip defense to Nathanael flippant remark was, “Come and see.” No apologetics, no proof beyond come and see for yourself. God speaks for himself. Listen to him.

There are so many other voices trying to call us saying to listen to them. From the littlest things, “We have the best cheeseburger in the world.” To big things like, “We have the one and only true God.” There are so many people out there that claim that they have the true wisdom and the true knowledge, and the true understanding. There are other voices that might not make that claim that they have the truth but they do feel for certain that if I don't know how could you know for sure! There is a voice within all of us that calls out the same thing. There is a voice within all of us that says. I know what truth is.

Paul talked about it in Corinthians. He is talking about a specific sin that was troubling people in Corinth and that time. Sexual immorality is a sin that calls out

the every generation of people. It is nothing new. And if its not that sin, it's a different sin that uses the same voice and says to us, "Do you want to know what truth is? Do you want to know what good and right are? Trust your feelings. Trust what makes you feel good, even if it is just for a short time. Trust your most primal instincts. **Don't listen to any one but yourself, and then you will know.** That voice is liar. And it is calling us to our destruction. Those who dive into the world pure indulgence, and no discipline, are never happy in the end. That's why Paul says if you hear that voice flee from it.

If you can't trust your feelings what can you trust? Who can you trust? How do you know who is telling you the truth and who isn't? There are so many voices out there. There are so many people with vested interests in your behaviors telling you to do this or don't do this. How in the world are we supposed to know what to listen to.

Come and see. Say speak Lord your servant is listening. You are not your own, you were bought at a price. Listen to the Lord. Listen to his word. If you want to know what the Lord says listen to him when he speaks to you in his word. Get to know what his voice sounds like. This is what the Lord says to us. Every time we read his word here in church, the Lord is speaking to you. Every time you read his word at home, that is the Lord speaking to you. The more we listen to him, the more we know what our Lord sounds like.

Nathanael listened to Philip. He went to see Jesus. He let God speak for himself and he believed. Jesus said, "You believe because I told you I saw you under the fig tree. You will see greater things than that." He added, "Very truly I tell you, you will see 'heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on '

Listening to our God it's not a negative. It is does not just keep us away from things that would hurt us. Keep us away from lies. Keep us away from a mirage of happiness that looks like it is going to offer us comfort and then just disappears. Listening to our God actually offers us something real and concrete. It offers us life in heaven forever. It offers us everlasting peace. It offers us real guidance and direction from the only one who actually knows where we are all going.

What are you listening to? That's something that each of us has to answer for ourselves. There are many things that are worth listening to. There are many things that are a complete waste of time listening to.

Listen to the Lord. Listen to him tell you about his love for you. Listen to him tell you about the peace that he wants to give you. Listen to what he did for you, that he gave you everlasting life, not because you always listened to him, but because he loved you. Listen to him and you will never be disappointed. It's not an opinion, its a fact. Listen to the Lord. Amen.