

**July 17, 2016**

**Scripture Lesson**

*Genesis 18:1-15*

*Luke 10: 38-42*

**Sermon**    *What Did You Say?*

Imagine this: It is getting to be the time of day that you need to figure out what to make for the evening meal. You haven't had a chance to go shopping, which means being creative with whatever leftovers you have or what is in the cupboard. Then your spouse runs in and says, "We have guests that just showed up and I invited them to stay for supper!" Your first thought is; "What did you say"? You think about how the house looks; the floors need sweeping, how long it has been since you've cleaned the toilet, and what in the world am I going to cook for the meal. Then you hear one of the guests say to your spouse. "I hear congratulations are in order, you are going to be parents." "What did you say"? Unlike Sarah who laughed when she heard this news, I would do something entirely different, like say "Are You Crazy?" And George would probably faint.

Sarah heard what God said, but was she really listening to what He said at first? God did grace Sarah with a child, who was named Isaac, as He promised.

Then there is Noah. Can you imagine hearing that you are to build an ark and fill it with two of every animal on the earth and gather your family for God is going to flood the earth? "What did you say"? But Noah listened and the ark was built and filled with the animals and family. After the earth was flooded and time passed, God fulfilled his promise to Noah.

Moses had times like Sarah and Noah where I am thinking his first thoughts were "What Did You Say"? For instance, when God told Moses that he could part the Red sea with his staff, so the Israelites could cross and flee safely from the Egyptians who were chasing them. But Moses listened and God did as He said He would.

The definition for the word "hear," *is to be aware of sounds by the ear.*

The definition for the word "listen," *is to make a conscious effort to hear.*

This painting is one that I found some years ago at a craft show. For some reason, it spoke to me. There are days when I have been the speaker and George was the listener and there are days when George was the speaker and I was the listener. But looking at the painting, do you think that either of us as the listener was really listening?

One of George's and my favorite cartoons is Pickles. It is about Earl and his wife, Opal, and for some reason we relate to them.

A couple of the cartoons this week were about hearing and listening.

Opal asks Earl if he would like to go shopping with her. His reply was "What's that? Would I like an egg and onion sandwich? You bet I would." She says, "What's the matter with you? Do you have delusional hearing or something?" He replies "Why yes! I would love tomato on that."

The next day it reads; Opal says to Earl as he is relaxing on the porch with his feet up, "You know what your problem is, Earl?" "You don't listen to me!" "You just hear what you want to hear." He replies "Sure, I'd love a nice cold lemonade!"

Do you think he was really listening to Opal? I am thinking not so much. How often does this happen to us? Someone is telling us something that is important to them but we are only half listening if it all. We are thinking about what needs to be done at home, what appointments are coming up this week etc. We need to put our thoughts aside and listen. They need us to hear what they are saying. It may be important to hear and listen to maybe what is going on with them that isn't being said but is being alluded to. Do they need our help, do they need a friend, do they just need someone to listen to them, and maybe they are lonely. It is the same with God. God is always listening to us, whether we are actually talking to Him or not. He is speaking to us whether we are actually listening or not.

Have you ever gone outside and just listened? I was at the neighbors the other morning picking raspberries and amazed at what could be heard. Yes, there were the noises from the cars and trucks going down the road, but when there were no vehicles; I could hear the birds singing their songs, the breeze going through the leaves of the trees. I could hear the bees buzzing around me and I could hear the silence of the moment. During that silence is when God could have been speaking to me. He doesn't need anything large and loud and dramatic to let you know what His will for you is. His will can be shown to you in a large, loud way like it did for Sarah, Noah, and Moses, but it can also come to you in the silence.

You just need to make a conscious effort to hear Him. You need to listen.

I found some Bible verses that will give you food for thought as the week goes on.

Mark 4:24- And he said to them, "Pay attention to what you hear; the measure you give will be the measure you get, and still more will be given to you."

Romans 10:17 – So faith comes from what is heard and what is heard comes through the word of Christ.

Luke 8:18 – Then pay attention to how you listen; for to those who have, more will be given; and from those who do not have, even what they seem to have will be taken away.

I Kings: 19:11-13- He said: "Go out and stand on the mountain before the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by." Now there was a great wind, so strong that it was splitting mountains and breaking rocks in pieces before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake, and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a sound of sheer silence. When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. Then there came a voice to him that said, "What are you doing here Elijah?"

Listen. Can you hear it? Amen.