LISTENING UP

INTRODUCTION

One of the themes from the mid-1960s is the silence of God.

We may frame the question differently today.

But essentially it’s the same: How does God speak into my world?

• Basically the ark is a box

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• It served as a sort of advance scout

“The ark went before them” – Num 10:33
1. God Speaks to Us in Our Pain (1-5)

“Moses heard the voice speaking to him from above the atonement cover on the ark”
– Numbers 7:89

1 Samuel 6 is about where and how to listen for God.

“All I felt was guilty, very guilty. In fact, I still do. It is a guilt I will carry for the rest of my life. The whole time I was praying that the person in the other car was alive. In my mind, I was calling ‘Please, God. Please, God. Please, God,’ over and over and over again”
– Laura Bush
“The extreme greatness of Christianity lies in the fact that it does not seek a supernatural remedy for suffering, but a supernatural use for it.”
– Simone Weil

“In my pain I cast myself on the love of Christ”
– a Malayan Christian

“Jesus asks all who are his to live by the same law of harvest that he lived by. Every experience of pain, grief, frustration, disappointment, and being hurt by others is a little death. When we serve the Savior in our worldly world, there are many such deaths to be died. But the call to us is to endure, since God sanctifies our endurance for fruitfulness in the lives of others.”
– J. I. Packer

II. God Speaks to Us in Viral Ways (6)

The genius of God’s communication is that it often reaches us through multiple, decentralized, unofficial sources.

III. God Speaks to Us in Events We Can’t Explain (7-12)

Have you experienced something you can’t account for? It may be God speaking.

IV. God Speaks to Us through Ordinary Extraordinary Lives (13-15)

“The five rulers of the Philistines saw all this . . .” (v. 16a). What did they see?
1. A fundamental trust (13a)

To honor God does not necessarily imply doing great things for Him. It is rather the consistently maintained attitude of heart which refers every choice to the His judgment, measures every value by His standard, and endeavors to make every incident of life contribute towards the glorifying of His name.

2. Joy in God’s surprises (13b-14a)
3. “Crazy” worship (14b-15)

V. God Speaks to Us in Jesus Christ

“The sequence of the OT offerings furnishes part of their spiritual significance. First, sin had to be dealt with (sin or guilt offering). Second, the worshiper committed himself wholly to God (burnt offering). Third, communion between the Lord and the worshiper was established (fellowship offering)” – NIV Study Bible

1. The Philistines present a guilt offering but no burnt or fellowship offering is mentioned
2. The people of Beth Shemesh offer burnt and fellowship offerings but no guilt offering. Why?

“Place the atonement cover on the ark, and put the testimony inside. I will meet with you between the two cherubs” — Exodus 25:21-22
The Gospel in a “Box”

- God desires to “meet” with us
- The broken commandments are in the box
- The cherubim are there to keep law breakers out (Gen. 3:24)
- The “atonement cover” let’s them in
- Jesus is our atonement cover

“He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world (1 John 2:2)

CONCLUSION

What will we do with God’s inconvenient ark? Listen up or send it away?