

Speaking to the soul

Hearing from God

**The LORD said: “These prophets are telling lies in my name. I did not send them or tell them to speak. I did not give them any messages. They prophesy of visions and revelations they have never seen or heard. They speak foolishness made up in their own lying hearts.”
Jeremiah 14:14**

Jeremiah had some very harsh things to say. He needed everyone to know that if they didn't change their ways, they would receive God's judgement. This was not what the people wanted to hear. They wanted prophets who would tell them that everything was fine and they had nothing to worry about. They wanted to listen to prophets who told them that because they had the temple of the Lord, nothing could possibly go wrong. Jeremiah continually battled with these false prophets, whose comforting words were simply wrong.

It is very easy for someone to make a statement adding the words “thus saith the Lord”, but did those words truly come from God? This has always been a challenge, and it was a particular problem in the early Church. When Paul wrote to Timothy, he warned that a time was coming when people would no longer listen to sound and wholesome teaching.

“They will follow their own desires and will look for teachers who will tell them whatever their itching ears want to hear” (2 Timothy 4:3). People love to hear soothing and comforting words, so we need to be on the alert. To use Paul’s words to the church in Thessalonica, we need to “test everything that is said. Hold on to what is good” (1 Thessalonians 5:21).

God will only ever speak words of love and truth, but because of his love for us, he will often say things that we find hard to hear. He may tell us that we need to completely change direction or give up habits that have become hardwired into our way of life. We would much rather listen to the people who tell us that we are wonderful and can stay just as we are, but God’s words are faithful. When we know that we are truly hearing from him, we need to make sure that we welcome his words and live by them.

QUESTION

How do you check whether you are truly hearing words from God?

PRAYER

Loving God, help us to listen carefully for your voice. Thank you that your words to us are always full of love. Amen

