***The Power of a Whisper***

***Hearing God. Having the guts to Respond.***

**Worship Series – Week 2**

***Divine Input for the Day-to-Day*(This service covers Chapters 3 and 6 of the book which also follows Bible Study material)**

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| **WORSHIP SERVICE OUTLINE**SEach worship outline contains all elements needed for your worship service. The order of each service presented is only a *suggestion*. No doubt changes will be needed to accommodate the flow and worship style of your corps. The outlines are flexible and allow opportunities to “cut and paste” as needed. If you are blessed with instrumental or vocal music resources, you may find there is more structured material here than needed. It is recommended that the headings of each section of the service be included in the bulletin. |

**Announcements and Offering**

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| **HC#99 – Shine, Jesus, Shine!** | HC-99 | HCD8-T19 |
|  **Additional Optional Songs** |
| **HC#51 – Come into His Presence** | HC-51 | HCD4-T11 |
| **HC#171 – Stand Up and Bless the Lord** | HC-171 | HCD16-T11 |
| **SB#411 – Come in, my Lord, come in** | TB-162 – Diademata | HTD1-T8 (4 vs.) |
| **SB#814 – God of grace and God of glory** | TB-407 – Regent Square | HTD4-T12 (4 vs.) |
| **HC#209 – Come People of the Risen King** | HC-209 | HCD19 – T19 |
| **HC#221 – Servants of God**  | HC-221 | HCD21 – T11 |
| **HC#231 – Guide me, O thou great Jehovah**  | HC-231 | HCD22– T11 |
| **HC#250 – Hear the call of the kingdom**  | HC-250 | HCD23 – T20 |

***Whisper: ‘I want a relationship with you…’***

**Call to Worship:**

Throughout history God has spoken. For millennia, he has forged his children’s faith by promising parted waters, empowering unlikely leaders, declaring world-changing prophecies—and imparting last-minute sermons to pastors who questioned whether he really would deliver. In short, our God is a communicating God. Always has been, and always will be. And if there is one story in Scripture that goes to great lengths to prove this point, it’s the story of Elijah, the prophet described in 1 Kings as a man who was “zealous for God.”

(*The Power of a Whisper*, page 41)

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| **Drama: Psst!** |

***Whisper: ‘Trust Me…’***

**Testimonies of Assurance (choose people from corps to testify)**

Samples from the book:

* Lisa said she knows God spoke to her. She had been prompted to start a Mothers of Preschoolers group but was unsure of her skills and available time. Still she pressed on, believing it was what God had asked her to do. Everything seemed to be going smoothly until she was due to give a talk at the first meeting of the year.

“I seriously thought I was going to be sick,” Lisa wrote. “I had prayed and prayed for weeks beforehand, and had prepared carefully, but now that the occasion was upon me, my throat was closing up.”

Moments before Lisa was to take the stage, she sensed God say, “Lisa, you’ve done the faithful work of preparation. Now all you have to do is go out there and open your mouth. Once you do that, I’ll take it from there.”

With renewed confidence, Lisa walked out on the stage and gave a talk that ministered to many young mothers.

* Jeanne said she clearly heard God’s voice in the midst of her company’s layoffs. “I was so concerned about my work status that I was having trouble sleeping,” she said. “I would play out hypothetical scenarios over and over again: What if I lost my job? What if I couldn’t afford rent? What if I wasn’t able to find employment again? What if? What if? What if?

Suddenly God cut through the noise in her head and simply said, “Worry not.” It was such a straightforward and obvious solution, but it made *all* the difference that night. Two simple words: *Worry not!*

(*The Power of a Whisper,* pages 66-67)

***Whisper: ‘Obey Me…’***

**Whispers of Admonition**

**Reader 1:** If there’s ever a time when you and I employ “selective listening,” it’s when we’re on the receiving end of a dressing-down, courtesy of God himself. Have you noticed this dynamic along the way? God suggests that you *stop* doing something or *start* doing something or, for once in your life, act your age, and instantly, God gets tuned out. “Surely that piece of insight wasn’t from *God*,” you think. “I was probably just making it up.”

**Reader 2:** You go on your pre-planned way, thinking everything is alright once more, until minutes or days or a few weeks later, when you careen face-first into the brick wall known as God’s wisdom, and realize it was *his* voice you actually ignored.

**Reader 1:** *There is no more critical goal in life than to keep a pliable heart before God.*

**Reader 2:** God cannot be seen by spiritual eyes that are shut.

**Reader 1:** God cannot be heard by spiritual ears that are plugged.

**Reader 2:** And God cannot be followed by a heart that stubbornly stays hard.

(*The Power of a Whisper*, pages 71, 78)

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| **HC#62 – When God Comes Near** | HC-62 | HCD5-T12 |
|  **Additional Optional Songs** |
| **HC#66 – The Power of Your Love** | HC-66 | HCD5-T16 |
| **HC#110 – He is Here** | HC-110 | HCD9-T20 |
| **HC#122 – Bow the Knee** | HC-122 | HCD11-T12 |
| **HC#133 – Breathe on Me** | HC-133 | HCD12-T13 |
| **HC#156 – Enter In** | HC-156 | HCD14-T16 |
| **HC#173 – In This Quiet Moment** | HC-173 | HCD16-T13 |
| **HC#205 – Closer Still** | HC-205 | HCD19 – T15 |
| **HC#208 – Faithful God** | HC-208 | HCD19 – T18 |
| **HC#213 – In the presence of Jehovah**  | HC-213 | HCD20 – T13 |
| **HC#215 – Holy Spirit**  | HC-215 | HCD20 – T15 |
| **HC#226 – I Worship You**  | HC-226 | HCD21 – T16 |
| **HC#228 – Still**  | HC-228 | HCD21 – T18 |
| **HC#236 – Lord, I need you**  | HC-236 | HCD22 – T16 |
| **HC#242 – In your presence**  | HC-242 | HCD23 – T12 |
| **HC#247 – Still, my soul, be still**  | HC-247 | HCD23 – T17 |
| **HC#249 – Near to the heart**  | HC-249 | HCD23 – T19 |

***Whisper: ‘Do something!’***

**Whispers of Action – Introduction to testimony time:**

**Reading:**

Divine promptings that spur you to action are some of the most important words you’ll ever hear. Maybe you can remember times when God prompted you to write a letter, place a call, avoid a particular route home, give a job candidate a shot, engage a grumpy neighbor in friendly conversation and more. Sometimes the whispers are fairly involved and sometimes they’re short and sweet. Maybe all you needed was a one-word command like “Go!” or “Stop!”

Ephesians 2:10 (TNIV) says, *“For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do,”* and it seems that one of the primary ways God helps us to get these good works done is by divinely guiding our steps.

So what do “good works” look like?

[Have members of the congregation share if they have had a whisper from God such as healing a relationship, impacting a neighborhood, encouraging a friend, expanding a horizon, giving tangible resources, seizing opportunities to serve, sacrificing comfort and more.]

(*The Power of a Whisper,* pages 79-80)

**Testimony - Relational Actions**

Stories having to do with impacting people.

**Testimony - Financial Actions**

Stories having to do with people releasing their grip on money.

**Testimony- Spiritual Actions**

Whispers that prompt us to take spiritually oriented action—surrendering a life, praying a prayer, speaking an encouraging word—can be heard all throughout the Christ-following life.

**Testimony - Acts of Service**

Stories having to do with serving others.

**Reading:**

One of the most meaningful exhortations in the New Testament comes from 1 John 3:18. It says, *“My dear children, let’s not just talk about love; let’s practice real love. This is the only way we’ll know we’re living truly, living in God’s reality. It’s also the way to shut down debilitating self-criticism, even when there is something to it. For God is greater than our worried hearts and knows more about us than we do ourselves”* (MSG).

The goal of the Christ-following life is to grow to the point that we live in God’s reality—that we love like he loves, serve like he serves, give like he gives, show compassion like he shows it. And that’s a way of life we’ll only maintain consistently by hearing from heaven on a regular basis. Take to heart the stories you’ve just heard. Tell God you too want to live wide open to his whispers of assurance, his words of admonition and his promptings to take kingdom-building action in your world. I promise he will deliver on his commitment to guide your steps.

(*The Power of a Whisper*, page 89)

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| **HC#87 – Passion** | HC-87 | HCD7-T17 |
|  **Additional Optional Songs** |
| **HC#3 – He is Able** | HC-3 | HCD1-T3 |
| **HC#4 – Here I am** | HC-4 | HCD1-T4 |
| **HC#47 – As the Deer** | HC-47 | HCD3-T17 |
| **HC#65 – God Will Make a Way** | HC-65 | HCD5-T15 |
| **HC#89 – Knowing You** | HC-89 | HCD7-T19 |
| **HC#199 - I Stand in Awe**  | HC-199 | HCD18-T19 |
| **HC#205 – Closer Still** | HC-205 | HCD19 – T15 |
| **HC#208 – Faithful God** | HC-208 | HCD19 – T18 |
| **HC#213 – In the presence of Jehovah**  | HC-213 | HCD20 – T13 |
| **HC#215 – Holy Spirit**  | HC-215 | HCD20 – T15 |
| **HC#236 – Lord, I need you**  | HC-236 | HCD22 – T16 |
| **HC#242 – In your presence**  | HC-242 | HCD23 – T12 |
| **HC#247 – Still, my soul, be still**  | HC-247 | HCD23 – T17 |
| **HC#249 – Near to the heart**  | HC-249 | HCD23 – T19 |

***The Congregation Prays***

**(This prayer time could be opened up to the congregation to pray either silently or publicly; a time of intercessory prayer in their seats or at the altar.)**

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|  **The Lord’s Prayer** |
| **SB#781 – Our Father, who in Heaven art** | TB-70 – Fewster | HTD3-T13 (4 vs.) |

**Pastoral Prayer**

**Devotional – God’s Whispers are Always Good! (because there are numerous opportunities to include testimonies from the congregational, the message is shortened to a devotional length.)**

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| **HC#117 – Draw Me Close** | HC-117 | HCD10-T17 |
|  **Additional Optional Songs** |
| **SB#30 – He giveth more grace** | TB-591 – Blacklands | HTD1-T3 (3 vs.) |
| **SB#760 – I am praying, blessèd Savior** | TB-374 – I am praying, blessèd Savior | No CD |
| **SB#763 – I do not ask thee, Lord** | TB-186 – Terra Beata | HTD4-T16 (3 vs.) |
| **SB#707 – I need thee every hour** | TB-680 – I need thee | No CD |
| **HC#89 – Knowing You** | HC-89 | HCD7-T19 |
| **HC#87 – Passion** | HC-87 | HCD7-T17 |
| **HC#110 – He is Here** | HC-110 | HCD9-T20 |
| **HC#122 – Bow the Knee** | HC-122 | HCD11-T12 |
| **HC#133 – Breathe on Me** | HC-133 | HCD12-T13 |
| **HC#156 – Enter In** | HC-156 | HCD14-T16 |
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| **HC#247 – Still, my soul, be still**  | HC-247 | HCD23 – T17 |
| **HC#249 – Near to the heart**  | HC-249 | HCD23 – T19 |

**Benediction: (congregation in unison)**

**“Oh, give me Samuel’s ear, the open ear, O Lord,**

**Alive and quick to hear each whisper of Thy Word;**

**Like him to answer at Thy call,**

**And to obey Thee first of all.”**

*--by James D. Burns, 1857*

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| **SB#359 – Eternal God, our song we raise** | TB-439 – Eternal God | HTD12-T5 |
|  **Additional Optional Songs** |
| **HC#112 – The Potter’s Hand** | HC-112  | HCD10-T12 |
| **HC#109 – Total Praise** | HC-109 | HCD9-T19 |
| **HC#202 – O Church, arise** | HC-202 | HCD19 – T12 |

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| **Week #2** |
| **DRAMA****Psst!****By Martyn Scott Thomas**© Copyright 2012 by Martyn Scott Thomas. All rights reserved. Used by permission. |
| **Topic:** | God’s call |
| **Scripture:** | 1 Kings 19:1-18 |
| **Synopsis:** | Elijah describes an encounter with God. |
| **Characters:** | Elijah – the Prophet |
| **Props/Costumes:** | Biblical or casual dress. |
| **Setting:** | Bare stage. |
| **Running time:** | 3 minutes |

[*Elijah is standing center stage.*]

**Elijah:** There are many times in life when it would be good to hear from God; a word of approval, a word of hope, or a word of encouragement. And even if we don’t want to hear it, there are also times where we need a word of warning, a word of discipline, or even a word of rebuke. But for some reason, God remains silent and we are left alone with our thoughts or situation.

 It’s amazing how quickly that loneliness can set in, even after the greatest of victories or the closest of encounters with God. There have been times when I have been lifted by God’s power only to come crashing back to my reality in the next breath. When that happens, I desperately need to hear from God.

 One of the highest times of my life came when God spoke to me and I defeated 450 prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel. And because of that, the whole nation of Israel proclaimed that the Lord is God. But immediately, Queen Jezebel threatened my life, and I was on the run.

 How could this happen? Wasn’t I faithful to God’s call? Didn’t I achieve a great victory in his name? Why was I now so all alone? I couldn’t take it anymore. I was ready to give up and die. I needed an explanation. And I needed to hear from God.

 An angel of the Lord came to me and sent me on a forty day journey to Mount Sinai where I spent the night in a cave. It was there that God spoke and told me to go out and stand before him on the mountain. I was about to experience God Almighty first hand.

 As I stood at the mouth of the cave, a mighty windstorm hit the mountain. I hung on with all my strength as the wind blasted the mountain, tearing rocks loose. I was in awe of the power, but God was not in the wind. Just as I was recovering, a great earthquake shook the entire mountain. Again, rocks crashed around me and I thought I might be buried under the deluge, but God was not in the earthquake.

 Once the ground stopped shaking, a great fire consumed all that was left around me. The heat was so great, I thought I would erupt into flames myself, but God was not in the fire. Three awesome displays of power and God was not there. Could I even hope to stand in the presence of such a powerful God?

 Then I received the greatest surprise – a gentle whisper. Perhaps it was there all along, but I was too distracted by the mighty display around me to hear. But God had my attention now. And he continued to surprise me. I was not all alone, as I had feared, but there were 7000 others who had not bowed to Baal waiting for me in Israel.

 When I needed him most, God spoke to me; a word of approval, a word of hope, a word of encouragement. There are many times in life when it would be good to hear from God. But it’s up to us to block out the distractions and listen for the gentle whisper.

[*Blackout*]

**The Power of a Whisper Worship Series**

**Week 2 – Sermon – God’s Whispers are Always Good!**

**(Major Stephen Yoder)**

**[NOTE: This sermon is meant to be short because the service is longer if all the testimonies are used.]**

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| Scripture: | 1 Kings 18-19 |
| Text: | I Kings 19:3 – *Elijah was afraid and ran for his life.* |
| Focus: | God’s whispers are not always gentle, but they are always for our good. |
| Function: | To heed God’s whispers, knowing they are always for our good. |

**INTRODUCTION:**

The things I like about Elijah are the things that he did wrong: the very things that I often allow myself to give into! He was afraid. He ran away from his fear. He ended up isolated and alone in his fear. But then God came near and everything changed. And though God’s whispers are not always gentle, they are always for our good: whispers of assurance and admonition and action.

1 Kings 19:3 reads, *“Elijah was afraid and ran for his life.”* If you’re afraid, then listen to these whispers of . . .

**ASSURANCE**

Jeremiah 31:3 – *The Lord (said), “I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with unfailing kindness.”*

Matthew 11:28 – *Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.*

Matthew 28:20b – *I am with you always.*

I love you. I’m with you. I’ll never leave you. I understand you. I’m sorry for your pain. I really do care. Tell me the truth; I can take it. Be real; don’t hide your feelings. Tell me what you want. Tell me what you need. Share your dreams. Share your hopes. Share your deepest and most intimate self.

Verse 2 of Song 771 (SASB) –

Though Satan should buffet, though trials should come,

Let this blest assurance control,

That Christ hath regarded my helpless estate,

And hath shed his own blood for my soul.

Or this golden oldie (SASB #310): “Blessèd assurance, Jesus is mine!”

Assurance is simply God saying, “I’m here…,” and you responding, “I know. . .”

**ADMONITION**

But maybe sometimes you wish God wasn’t there with you – because of the shame or embarrassment or sad condition of your life. You know you’re a washed-up mess, and you don’t want him to look at you! And though it’s harder sometimes to take the criticism or correction from someone close to you, isn’t that where it ought to come from? I do think that sometimes in our “mamby-pamby-pathetic-isn’t-everyone-wonderful” and “don’t-you-dare-say-a-negative-thing-about-anyone-society,” we let each other live wrongly and head in dangerous directions without daring and caring enough to give a hard word. Is the Lord whispering to you today a hard word – an **admonition** – a word of correction?

The people I honor most in my life are those who’ve held me to account – to the highest standards – trusting I could be more than what I seemed to be capable of in the moment. We need to be as able to tell one another when we’re wrong or stupid or arrogant or prideful or out of line, just as easily as we are told how wonderful and good and kind and faithful we are. When we talk about being saved, sometimes it’s good to remember that we’re often saved from ourselves – our worst selves – our destructive habits and ways and paths. It’s an awful thing to see someone about to crash and do nothing about it!

Job 5:17 – *Blessed is the one whom God corrects; so do not despise the discipline of the Almighty.*

Proverbs 15:5 – …*Whoever heeds correction shows prudence.*

Proverbs 15:10 – …*He who hates correction will die.*

Proverbs 15:32 – *He who ignores discipline despises himself, but whoever heeds correction gains understanding.*

James 5:19-20 – *. . . If one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring him back, remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death and cover over a multitude of sins.*

The irritating thing about correction and admonishing and unwanted, prickly advice is that it often comes in a whisper through God’s appointed messengers, and those are often people I don’t want to hear from!

Will you dare to listen to God’s admonishing or correcting voice today? And will you do it without struggling or fighting back or making excuses or responding in pride when a moment of humility in his presence could very well protect you from a lifetime of pain and sorrow?

The pivotal verse in 1 Kings 19 is verse 15 – *“Go back the way you came . . .”* The whispers of assurance and admonition Elijah received meant nothing if he didn’t also heed the whisper of . . .

**ACTION**

You’re wasting your breath. “You’re wasting your breath if you’re speaking but what you’re saying is being ignored or having no effect.” Am I wasting my breath? Or more devastatingly, is God wasting his breath on you?

Matthew 17:5 – *. . . A bright cloud enveloped them, and a voice from the cloud said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!”*

James 1:22 – *Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.*

For example, let’s remember a great man: Martin Luther King, Jr. Let me ask you three questions about his life, and then compare it to your own:

* Did Martin Luther King, Jr. have any reason to live in fear? (And did it stop him from doing what he knew was right?)
* And what was the final cost to him?
* How much is too much for God to ask of you?

That’s all. I’m done. It’s time for me to sit down and time for us all to respond to God’s whispers! I happen to believe God is here. I believe he’s not only speaking now, but that he’s been speaking throughout our time of worship.

* What whisper of assurance is he asking you to believe?
* What whisper of admonition is he asking you to heed?
* What whisper of action is he waiting for you to act on?

Get on with it then!