



The Whisper

CHALLENGE

PREVIEW

Our lesson today is derived from the 19th chapter of I Kings, and contrary to the deep, thundering voice we've grown accustomed to hearing throughout Morgan Freeman's many roles as "God," there is a more subtle communication used here by God that Elijah could only hear after the distractions ceased: A whisper.

PRAISE

Split up everyone into two even teams and play the game telephone. Use various short verses from the bible and their references as the phrases. ("John 11:35, Jesus wept," "1 Thessalonians 5:16, Rejoice evermore," "1 Thessalonians 5:20, Despise not prophesyings.")

PARABLE

Generally, when we envision God, the image in our mind depicts a strong and powerful ruler who speaks with a thunderous voice that could rattle entire cities. Although this description would not be considered incorrect, as we see in our Bible passage today, God can and often does speak in other ways. We understand that God is in control of everything in heaven, earth, and beyond. He spoke through a donkey, and He said that if we don't praise Him the rocks will cry out. So why would He not get Elijah's attention with a message through the roaring earthquake, or the raging fire? Why a whisper? Let's find out.

The Whisper CHALLENGE

PRESENT

There are definitely times when we need a good ole slap in the face by God to get back on track, a wakeup call if you will. Look at Paul. He was on the road to Damascus, going by his former name Saul, and God blinded him so hard it knocked him off his horse. This crash course encounter set Paul on a completely new path and trajectory, and he would go on to be one of the greatest apostles to the very same Christians he was persecuting and murdering. However, we recognize that there is a unique intimacy that exists when God is able to speak to us in a whisper. God chooses this method because we are only able to hear His whisper if we are close to Him, and the closer we are the more clearly we will hear His voice. Additionally, Elijah had to endure many loud and obnoxious distractions before he could hear God's whisper. This generation must recognize that we are surrounded by more distractions from this world than any time period before us, and if we keep those distractions closer to us than God, they will drown out His still small voice.

PRACTICE

So, what are some ways that we can tune our ears to His whisper? (Praying – when we pray, we get closer to God and farther from the distractions, and we get more familiar with His voice and how He speaks; Making right decisions – living our lives like Jesus forces us to think and walk like Him; Reading the Bible – John 1:1 says the word is God, so the more scripture that we consume and understand, the more of God we will understand, and we will better recognize His voice). One of the most important keys to hearing God's voice on a daily basis is understanding that He speaks to us in more ways than just an audible voice. Read II Timothy 3:16. Every verse in the bible was inspired by God, and he used obedient people to pen the words, meaning every word that we read in the Bible was designated and placed by God for a purpose, and that purpose is to speak to us. Finally, another way God will speak to us is through open and closed doors. What does this mean? When facing decisions in life, God will leave some doors/opportunities open, while closing the other doors that are not in alignment with His will.

The Whisper *CHALLENGE*

PRAY

God, we understand that You are constantly speaking to all of us in very different ways, so we ask that You help us to tune our ears to Your voice and to eliminate the distractions of this world so that we can hear Your quiet whisper and grow closer to You every day.

PLUS

In the following weeks, months, and even years, communicate with trusted spiritual leaders about how God is speaking to you. These people can help pray with you so that you understand what God is saying and where He is leading you, and they can also help you dispose of any harmful voices in your life that are trying to lead you astray.