

Listen And Heeds God's Voice

"My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no-one can snatch them out of my Father's hand"

(John 10: 27-28)

Jesus Christ the image of the invisible God, the good shepherd He calls his sheep and lead them to eternal life. Jesus He gave His life to save us from sin and death and He want us to follow Him and live our lives for Him. He calls sinners to live in righteousness; He cleans the sinners with His blood that He shed on the cross for the forgiveness of mankind sin. Therefore He wants those who follow Him be fully committed to Him, listening to all His commands and instructions and obeying them.

God in the Old Testament time anoint Saul to be a king over His people. One day the Lord God commissioned King Saul through His prophet Samuel to go and totally destroy the Amalekites as we can read here: *"Samuel said to Saul, "I am the one the LORD sent to anoint you King over His people Israel; so listen now to the message from the LORD. This is what the LORD Almighty says: 'I will punish the Amalekites for what they did to Israel when they waylaid them as they came up from Egypt. Now go, attack the Amalekites and totally destroy everything that belongs to them. Do not spare them; put to death men and women, children and infants, cattle and sheep, camels and donkeys.'" (1 Samuel 15:1-3)* But let us read the response of King Saul: *"So Saul summoned the men and mustered them at Telaim—two hundred thousand foot soldiers and ten thousand men from Judah. Saul went to the city of Amalek and set an ambush in the ravine. Then Saul attacked the Amalekites all the way from Havilah to Shur, to the east of Egypt. He took Agag King of the Amalekites alive, and all his people he totally destroyed with the sword. But Saul and the army spared Agag and the best of the sheep and cattle, the fat calves and lambs—everything that was good. These they were unwilling to destroy completely, but everything that was despised and weak they totally destroyed." (1 Samuel 15: 4-5, 7-9)* Clearly we can see that Saul did not do exactly what the Lord had commanded Him through His prophet Samuel. He kept the king of the Amalekites and the best of the plunder. Therefore let us read what the reply of God to Saul's action through His prophet Samuel? *"Does the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the voice of the Lord? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams. For rebellion is like the sin of divination, and arrogance like the evil of idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, He has rejected you as king." (1 Samuel 10-23)* God rejected Saul to be a king over His people because he rejected the word of God and disobey the voice of the Lord, and fail to comply with the sound teaching of His word.

But what was the reason for Saul not to obey God? Let us read what he said to Samuel, the prophet, *"I have sinned. I violated the LORD'S command and your instructions. I was afraid of the people and so I gave in to them." (1 Samuel 15:24)* He was afraid from the people that is why he did not obey God. But is this an acceptable reason not to obey God. Many are not doing exactly what God is saying to them because they are afraid from people around them.

People oppose God's instructions and they will influence you not to follow God, but to follow what they are saying to you. Among such people the followings:-

1) **Friends:** Bad friends will hinder you from following God's commands precisely. *"Do not be misled: "Bad company corrupts good character." (1 Corinthians 15:33)* Cut any relationships with friends who does not believe in Jesus and who does not follow God's word.

2) **Family members and family ties:** Our parents, brothers, sisters or even our children may oppose us when we want to follow God's commands, and they will try to influence us to follow their ways. But we ought to love God more than anyone else. And this is what the Lord Jesus Christ said, *"Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me."* (Matthew 10:37)

3) **Culture, tradition, people customs and norms:** Sometimes certain cultural things from our past or country background will hinder us from following exactly what the word of God says to us. Certain people they follow their cultural and previous practices that are human made more than Christ. But still when you advice them, *"They would not listen, however, but persisted in their former practices."* (2 King 17:40) And Jesus says to such kind of people, *"You have a fine way of setting aside the commands of God in order to observe your own traditions!" (Mark 7: 9)*

My dear and beloved: The sheep of Jesus are those who listen to His voice; those who follow His steps and obey His commands. To those Jesus gives eternal life; they will never perish and no one will snatch them from the hand of God. The word of God it tells us, *"Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says."* (James 1:22) Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent, and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you. Get rid of all wrong friendships, family and cultural ties and put the word of God first and honour what it says, as you agree to pray.

My prayer: Father God I come before you in the name of your Son Jesus Christ who died on the cross for my sins and rose from dead to give me eternal life. Lord I am ready to listen to your voice and obey your commands. Help me to follow you and leave behind things that you are not please with. I thank you Lord, this is my prayer in Jesus name, Amen.