

St. Luke's Episcopal Church
The Last Sunday of Epiphany
February 26, 2017
Matthew 17:1-9
The Reverend John P. Carr

Listen!

There was once a little boy who listened.¹

He learned to listen and he grew up knowing the value of listening.

Although his father left their home in Oklahoma in the early 1920's when the little boy was six, he learned to listen to his mother and then his grandfather as they moved in with his grandparents.

He listened when he was ten at the Baptist Church.

He paid close attention to the preacher and his message.

He was saved by that message.

He listened and heard that we are all sinners

but that Jesus came to die on the cross to save us.

He listened, he learned and he believed.

His professional course in life was set

when he listened to the rising drone of an approaching airplane.

It was Charles Lindberg doing his flight across the country, following his famous trip across the Atlantic.

Lindberg dropped low after circling the school house and waved to the kids. It seemed like an invitation to join him.

Twelve years later that invitation was made real when *he listened* to a call to join the fledgling Army Air Corps to become a pilot.

When Pearl Harbor was attacked on December 7, 1941 his answer to his calling to be a pilot became a more urgent need. He was a good pilot and became an instructor pilot in WWII until its end.

He heard the call again in the Korean War and did his part.

Following the Korean War he went on to fly for Braniff until he was 60.

All during that time he had been *listening* to another voice.

God was calling him to serve in many ways.

He began by being a good husband and then becoming involved in his church.

His demanding flight schedule prevented him from being there every Sunday.

So he gave up his captain's stripes to be a copilot.

Then he was able to be home with his kids on the weekends and to be in church on Sunday.

When he retired at sixty, he asked God if this were it for him and flying.

He had sixty years of practice at prayer but this time he asked for a quick answer to his prayer.

What was he supposed to do?

The answer came right away.

Twelve hours later a call came from a friend

who asked him if he could fly a Cessna to England for him.

Oh and also, could he return another plane to Dallas?

While he was waiting for the return call to arrange his flight to England

another call came in from someone he didn't even know.

The man said he needed to get a pastor and dentist

into a small Mexican town and leave by noon today.

Could he do it?

He was *listening* and he believed God was listening too.

The day after his prayer about what to do,

God had sent him to provide support of two airborne mission trips!

These were the first of forty five aircraft ferry trips that he would fly

in his new life as a ferry pilot for missions, over the next 19 years.

He had prayed to God for an answer and *listened* for the response.

It was a clear answer, and he followed that call.

He once said *“I don’t believe in an angry, disinterested God.*

My God is a loving Father who is there to guide me along the path

He has chosen for me.

I discover my path in this earthly existence by listening to God.

I ask Him to watch over me and help me as I carry out His will.”

Listening is an important part of our lives.

But we sometimes find it difficult to listen.

On the mountain, with a transfigured Jesus,

Peter received a lesson in listening that we all need to heed.

Peter was talking when *he needed to listen.*

On that high mountaintop in the presence of Jesus, Moses and Elijah,

God spoke. God gave Peter instructions.

It was a simple message for Peter but it is a message for us as well.

God removed all doubt about who Jesus is. He identified Him clearly.

“This is my Son, whom I love, with Him I am well pleased.”

God said, *“LISTEN TO HIM!”*

In our lives, we pray prayers of thanksgiving, praise, need, confession but then we need to add a time to listen for that still small voice of God. It may come as an answer in a message from another person, an event, an insight or an inspiration in response to your prayer. If we don't listen, we will miss God's response to our prayer.

Prayer is a bit like playing catch.

You don't just throw the ball into the field and hope it will somehow roll back to you.

You throw it to someone you trust who will throw it back to you.

You throw and you prepare to catch a throw back to you.

It might come back as a high fly, or a grounder, a fast ball or a curve, or even a knuckle ball but it will return.

There will be a response to our prayer, *if we listen*.

God said, "**LISTEN TO HIM.**"

Let's make that our prayerful response.

Amen

1. "The Running Man, Flying High for the Glory of God"
By Orville Rogers with Barbara Norris