

The Comfort Zone That Kills You

Caleb Hyers | The Resting Place Apostolic Family | Matthew 7:24-27 | James 1:19-25 | Acts 21:1-15

WE DO NOT HAVE A HEARING PROBLEM — WE HAVE A DOING PROBLEM

My title is "The Comfort Zone That Kills You." We are going to jump to the very end of the Sermon on the Mount, to a very famous passage. I had some illumination this week while reading this passage. The more you sit with the word of the Lord, the more you learn. If you do not say, "I have learned everything I need to learn," you learn something new almost every time.

Matthew 7:24-27 says this. This is how Jesus finishes the Sermon on the Mount:

Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell and the floods came and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. And the rain fell and the floods came and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.

The main issue is not hearing the word or avoiding the storms. It is doing the word. We are always trying to hear God. We are trying to get a word from the Lord, trying to get direction. We do not have a hearing problem. We have a doing problem.

Many think they need to hear something new or fresh or revelatory. No. You need to be found doing the last word you heard. You need to be found doing it. You know what that does? It attracts more direction from God. It is a stewardship thing. It is like: they are doing what I told them to do, so I am going to tell them more. And you are over here saying, "I need a word." No. You need to go do the last word you heard. Be found doing it.

We can all hear God. Many of us do not even realize we are hearing God half the time. We think it is just us. But God speaks in the language of you. He speaks to you through your spirit, through your brain, into your psyche. It is him speaking, but you are the canvas. If God were painting on a canvas and the canvas was ripped and had holes in it, would you see the correct picture? No. But would the painter be the problem? No. It is the canvas. We have to make sure we are not only hearing but doing, displaying. That is what artwork does. It displays the work of the artist.

BE DOERS OF THE WORD, AND NOT HEARERS ONLY

James 1:19-25 gets even clearer:

Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger. For the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God. Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.

We are over here saying, "Bless me, Lord." He is saying, "Do something that I can bless. I told you what to do. You start doing it. I will bless it." Bless my finances? Give something and I can bless it. Bless my workplace? Show up as a good employee and I will bless it. God has not got to change things around here. He sent you to do it.

Here is the problem: we are overtaught and underdeployed in the church. We are allowed to stay in our comfort zone, and that is what is killing us.

YOU HAVE MORE WORD IN YOU THAN ALL TWELVE APOSTLES

Think about it for two seconds and you will find out I am right. If you spent three weeks in church, you definitely have more word in you than the man who was full of demons. He had a legion of them in there. Jesus gets the demons out. He puts on clothes. And Jesus says, "Go preach." He says, "Let me follow you." Jesus says, "No. Go to the Decapolis, the hub of ten cities." That man went with a testimony and a shirt. And you are over here making excuses.

What was he saying? He was saying, "I used to beat myself with rocks and growl at people, and now I do not. How did that happen? Jesus came and delivered me. That is what happened. He can deliver you, too." That was his entire message. That is all he had. You have more word in you than that man. And I wonder which one is being more effective.

I am not here to hurt you. I am here to help you. But if hurting you helps you on the way, I will hurt you. It is like a doctor. A cut in order to get it out.

BUILDING ON THE ROCK — THE ROCK DICTATES THE POSITION OF THE HOUSE

Building a house on the rock means the rock dictates the position of the house. The rock tells you where the house goes. You would not build on the edge of the rock. The rock actually dictates the position of the house.

But what is building your house on sand? That gives you the ability to determine the position of the house, because you can reshape sand. You can make it look like whatever you want. And I know you live in Florida. I am coming for you. The insurance company is already giving you problems. So why not me?

What is sand? It is little pieces of rock. It can be molded and shaped to whatever you desire. This is a picture of taking the word of the Lord and breaking it down to something manageable. This is a picture of taking what God said and molding it to your preferences.

Your problem is not hearing the word. It is reshaping what you hear to fit your preferences. That happens a few different ways.

WE BREAK THE WORD INTO MANAGEABLE, MOLDABLE PIECES

I do not think the common thing is total disregard for what God said. I will give you an example. God said do not lust in your heart. I do not think anyone reacts to that by saying, "I am going to go lust now." That is not what happens. The more common thing is we break down what lust is or is not. We categorize it. We make categories out of it. We create separate aspects of lust and make one not as bad as the other. We break it down and we manage it. "Well, it is not that. It is just this." That is sand.

We do the same thing with anger. "Do not even be angry with your brother" is the same as murder in your heart. That is out of the Sermon on the Mount. And we categorize anger. We say, "Well, there is justified anger. There is righteous anger." All of my anger feels righteous. I have never felt anger that felt like unrighteous anger. Has anyone? Everybody feels righteous in their anger. But the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God. James 1. I just read it. And we categorize, justifying anger.

Or we say, "I was just venting." I cannot find the allowance for venting in the scriptures. That is breaking the word into manageable, moldable, understandable sand.

The reason we do not do the word is not laziness. It is that we have already broken it into something more comfortable that we can live with. That is why we are not actually doing what he said.

AN ACCURATE PROPHECY WITH INACCURATE HUMAN APPLICATION — ACTS 21

Do we see this anywhere in the scriptures? Yes, we do. Acts 21:1-15. We see an actual example of this in the Bible. It makes me feel better when I see my own mess in the pages.

This is Paul speaking of his journey. He is on an assignment. God told him he was to go to Jerusalem. So he is making his way there. That is the context.

And having sought out the disciples, we stayed there for seven days. And through the Spirit they were telling Paul not to go on to Jerusalem.

That phrase "through the Spirit" -- it is *dia tou pneumatos*. The preposition *dia* with a genitive can mean direct agency: by the Spirit, as in the Spirit is the direct source of the urging. Or it can mean what is called instrumental occasion: the Spirit provided information that the people then had to act on. The majority scholarly view -- FF Bruce, Daryl Bock, Howard Marshall, Richard Longenecker, David Guzik -- is that they had an accurate prophecy with inaccurate human application.

The Spirit revealed what would happen. The Spirit revealed there is going to be suffering, there is going to be arrest. The believers in Tyre drew their own human conclusion: therefore, he should not go. That second move was theirs. It was not the Spirit. So the additional urging not to go was not of the Lord. Otherwise Paul would have been disobedient in going. Do you see that?

We do this all the time. And it is the comfort zone that kills us. We think, "Well, I know God said, but this is what I think he meant. I know God said, but look at the resources available to me. I know God said to do it that way, but it is hard. I do not know how to do it." What did Paul do? The journey was kind of crazy, but the mission was the same. You need to marry the mission and date the methods. But you cannot reinterpret the word of the Lord to fit your preferences when things get hard.

That is the comfort zone that kills you. It is one step away from death because the word is promised and so are the storms. If you build that way, you will die. You are avoiding discomfort and choosing death.

CHANGING THE WORD INTO SAND IS MAKING GOD IN OUR IMAGE

Jesus is the Word. Jesus is the rock. Changing the rock to sand is making God in our image, not being made in his. We are not even willing to look at the truth. People fight for their understanding of the Bible far more than they fight for the word of the Lord. We idolize how we understand the word, or what we thought it meant, far more than what it actually says.

That layer of conversation -- the Lord said A, B, and C, but it is just hard to do it -- that means we are still going to do A, B, and C. Just like Paul said: I am ready not only to be arrested. I am ready to die on the word of the Lord. I would rather be cast upon the rock than have the rock fall on me. I would rather be thrown upon the cornerstone of Jesus looking like an idiot than trip over it and become a stumbling block myself.

The storms are coming. And God has made a path for you to be preserved. It is his word. You shape it into your own and you are killing yourself. You are asking for everything you are building to die. You are asking for everything you are doing to wash away. This is in our personal lives. God said you had better. And we say, "I know God said, but I just cannot." No. You are just dead. That needs to be that clear.

DO IT IMPERFECTLY. DO IT CONFUSED. JUST DO IT.

We need to take the Sermon on the Mount seriously and actually apply the teachings. We spend a whole year in the Sermon on the Mount and none of us do anything different -- what a waste of twelve months. Do not be hearers only but doers. We also need to take the prophetic word of the Lord over our life and apply it and just be found doing it.

Do it imperfectly. Do it confused. Do it doubting. Do it concerned. Do it unable to explain even why you are doing it. But do it. Do not reshape it into something you can do. That is not God. You want to see God do something? You have to do what God said to do. We need to wake up. Some of us have taken journeys. We do not even know why we are in Tampa. We do not even know why we are in this situation. Just keep going after what God said. It is going to be fine. It is going to make sense if you stay after the word of the Lord.

SHE'S CLOSE — IS THAT WHAT GOD SAID, OR IS THAT WHAT I UNDERSTOOD?

It will be eleven years this year. I was in Israel for the first time, in this whole moment with God. My first wife had left me for someone else. It was terrible. I was on a six-month no-dating commitment. I was at the Jordan River, and Georgian Banov was preaching about the crossing of the Jordan -- Joshua, everywhere you tread your foot will be yours, all that. He was preaching about having influence in the land. He said to pray for houses, pray for an inheritance, pray for one another.

I was over here saying, "God, I could not give two rips about a house or an inheritance. I want a wife." I turned around and there were two ladies. One was a little Japanese lady named Janie Stoe. I asked them, "Can you pray for me to have a wife?" They did not know anything about my story. They grabbed my hands, and Janie -- I will never forget this -- the first thing out of her mouth was, "Thank you, God." She knows nothing. "Thank you, God. You are going to bring him a holy partner who will never forsake him."

I fell down. I hit my head on the concrete. Winnie Banov came over thinking there was blood because she heard my skull bounce. She really did. They told her what was going on, and she said, "Oh, she is beautiful. She is spicy. She is a gypsy. She is colorful. She is a worshipper. She is so very, very close." I wrote it down. That is exactly what she said.

I could have really messed it up with my interpretation. "She is close. There are two buses. Maybe she is on the other bus. Who am I emotionally close to right now? What single women are emotionally close to me?" Just as creepy. A little more hidden, but just as creepy.

I wrote it down. I said, "Yes, Lord." Ten days later -- chronologically close, ten days later -- I walked into a Power and Love conference and I met this Puerto Rican, five-foot-nothing, maxi-dress-wearing, flowers-in-her-hair, blonde-and-black-dreadlocked worshipper. Within 48 hours: you are the one, we are the one. We knew. We are married with three children. She is the mother of my children right there.

God said she is close. He meant chronologically close. You see what I am saying? Sand. Is that what God said, or is that what I understood based on what he said? You have to ask the question. Slow down enough to actually evaluate that. Is that what God said, or is that what I reshaped to fit my preferences?

Some of us are mad at God because his word did not come through. No. Your interpretation of his word did not come through, and you are blaming him for the chaos.

One is the firm foundation. The other is the comfort zone that kills you.

Don't just listen to the word of truth and not respond to it, for that is the essence of self-deception. So always let his word become like poetry written and fulfilled by your life. -- James 1:22, The Passion Translation