



Have you played that game of 'Chinese Whispers'? The first person whispers something to the second and so on round the room. When the last person to get the message announces what he/she has heard, it is usually quite different from what was originally said. The message becomes distorted as it is passed from one person to another because it has not been heard properly.

I think that sometimes it is a bit like 'Chinese Whispers' when God speaks to us. If we are not quite in tune with Him, for whatever reason, then we do not hear clearly what He is trying to say to us. What is the solution????????? I have heard it said that we have been given two ears but only one mouth so that means that we are intended to spend twice as long listening to God as we spend talking to Him. Do we spend enough time listening to God?



It is quite noticeable in the Bible that people who did great things for God spent time initially away from everyone, away from their routine of normal life and went off into isolation for a long period of time in order to concentrate on their relationship with God and to find out what it was that He was asking them to do. Not only did they go into isolation but also went into wilderness country where there would be a lack of food and water. Everywhere would be still and quiet with no distractions. They would be in a position to hear the slightest whispers from God.



My favourite Old Testament character is Moses. He used to spend ages away on his own in order to listen to God. On one occasion he spent 40 days up a mountain. When he came down with the Ten Commandments and saw that the people were worshipping a golden calf instead of God, he smashed the stones on which the commandments were written and then went back up the mountain again. It says, 'Then I lay prostrate before the Lord as before, forty days and forty nights. I neither ate bread nor drank water because of all the sin that had been committed.' (Deut. 9) Total of 80 days. Now that was more than 11 weeks and was not for himself but was on behalf of the people whom he was leading.

Now I do not know how you go on if you are trying to go without food. When I am attempting to lose weight I only manage to go to mid-afternoon before I begin to feel a bit peckish! I am not able to imagine how Moses went over 11 weeks – without liquid as well as food. I am aware that a period of time without food enables us to hear God more clearly when He wishes to say something to us, but many people find it a difficult thing to do.



John was another person who spent time on his own. We are told that he came from the wilderness to preach and tell people to repent of the things that they had done and said wrongly and folk were flocking to him to be baptised. He was so in touch with God that even Jesus came to him to be baptised. Over 700 years previously a prophet named Isaiah foretold about John's ministry to the people. To be used by God in such a powerful way was a result of his spending time listening to the whispers of God.



When Saul (Who was later named Paul) was on his way to Damascus and dramatically heard Jesus speaking to him, his whole life was totally changed. One of the first things he did after this was to go into the desert of Arabia. No wonder he needed time to sort out his thoughts and come to terms with what had happened to him. For years he had been responsible for seeing that Christians were put into prison or even put to death and now suddenly he was being told to become a Christian himself! Listening to God would be a whole new experience for him because he had been confronted by a living Jesus. His mind must have been in absolute turmoil as he thought about the new life he was being asked to live. In the desert he would have been away from other people and be able to focus on what God was saying to him in preparation for all that He had in store for him. What a challenge. What a turn-around. What an incredible thing to happen!

Jesus Himself, after he had been baptised, also spent time in the wilderness before the start of His ministry. If Jesus needed to spend time in silent surroundings, then I am sure that we too are expected to find a quiet place and time if we wish to go along the path that God has chosen for each one of us.



God's whispers

*God is **always** waiting to speak
Not only on certain days of the week
His presence is constant and there every day
So carefully listen to what He has to say*

*Sometimes He speaks in whispers so low
Little seed thoughts in our minds to sow
He may not shout at the top of His voice
And to listen to Him is always our choice*

*He is not a dead god made of wood or stone
He does not need computer or mobile phone
He is living and active and able to show
With each tiny whisper the way we should go
DMO*

