

The God whose Voice Shakes Heaven and Earth
Hebrews 12:25-29

Listening. It is an important skill in any relationship. This is no less true when it comes to our relationship with God. One of the core challenges of the book of Hebrews is to listen to God's voice. We have a responsibility to pay attention to the voice of God and hear everything He is saying to us even when the things He has to say to us are hard to hear. In today's passage, we once again find this challenge to listen when God speaks.

Opening Question: What is the most interesting or helpful thing you listened to this week?

Read Hebrews 12:25-29

1. What does this passage teach about God?

2. What do you think it means to "refuse Him who is speaking" (v. 25)?

3. The author says that we receive a kingdom that cannot be shaken (v. 28). What does that mean?

Steve said:

The fact that we are entering into God's unshakable kingdom should **not** make us yawn; we should not be bored or disinterested in this reality. The fact that we are entering into the safest place in the universe should prompt us to **live thankful lives**: "Therefore . . . let us show gratitude." Let us continually be thankful for what we are receiving. This future reality is supposed to bleed back into the here and now and cause us to live thankful lives. We are supposed to have gratitude for things God has promised in the future.

4. How real in your life is this connection between receiving an unshakable kingdom and gratitude?

5. What do you think it means when the author says that out of gratitude we are to "offer to God acceptable service with reverence and awe" (v. 28)?

6. What is the author's point in saying that God is a "consuming fire" (v. 29; see also Deut. 4:23-24) and how does it connect to listening to Him?

Steve said:

In light of everything we've seen in this passage, ask yourself: ***Am I actively listening to the voice of God? And am I responding with gratitude and service/worship?*** You can hear these questions in a couple of different ways. It's possible to hear these questions and think, "Oh great . . . more things to fit into my busy schedule. I have to take time to listen to God drone on and on about things I probably don't really care about. And then I have to say 'thank you' over and over throughout the day. And then I have to get busy doing things for God." Of course most of us wouldn't be that blunt or honest, but that is sometimes our attitude toward God, isn't it? There is another way to hear these questions. You can also hear these questions in light of everything we know about God (both from this passage and others). Think about it this way:

- The One whose voice will one day shake the entire created order . . . (He is ***that*** powerful.)
- The One who sent His only-begotten Son to die for your sin . . . (He is ***that*** compassionate.)
- The One whose thoughts about you are too numerous to count (Psalm 139). . . (He is ***that*** interested in you)
- The One who shepherds you through this life. . . (He is ***that*** attentive to your life.)

7. Would you say that you are "actively listening" to the voice of God? Why or why not?
8. How might believing in this perspective offered by Steve that God is powerful, compassionate, interested in you, and attentive to your life affect your desire to listen to God?
9. What one thing can you do that would help you more actively listen to the voice of God?