

Wednesday meeting – 22nd February 2017

Hearing God's voice in your daily life

Let me explain something as I start today - it is something the Lord has been teaching us and it seems to be working. When you receive a word of knowledge and you claim it in your heart and walk away, chances are that nothing will happen after that. Of course it may happen, but the chances are that nothing much will happen. So we claim the words and nothing happens. But you have to take the risk of taking a step in faith and not only claiming it but coming forward. For example, you can move your limbs which you couldn't move before as an act of faith. There is a tendency for God to release power from heaven and many things take place.

There is a gap here. All of us take the words we like and we go home. Next week we come back and nothing has actually happened, because we don't move out of the comfort zone. It seems to be that you have to take a step of faith. What I am saying is a biblical principle. Jesus said, "It is your faith that made you well." The woman with the hemorrhage took a step of faith to hold on to Jesus' cloak. So when you declare it and you're prayed over, most probably, things will begin to happen.

In Sydney there was a person who came with a problem in the spine for over 2 months. As we prayed for her and she held to the word, she was instantaneously released of the pain she was carrying for 2 months. Another person who couldn't shift her neck, as we prayed for her, she was instantly released from this - because they took a step of trying to do something they could not do before.

We need to break into this dimension. If you sit back that's all you'll do. But if you take the step, come forward and claim it, ask for prayer and do something you couldn't do - God is going to give you a breakthrough. It happened in Brisbane last week. There was a word of knowledge that a person who had a problem in the bone of the leg who couldn't walk was being healed. Nobody claimed it because everyone sat back and waited. But after the meeting, the word was so strong that we called it out again. This time a person reluctantly came forward and said, "It is me." I asked, "Why didn't you claim it the first time?" He said, "He was waiting to see." If you wait and see you'll be waiting until the cows come home. On Friday he was walking on his feet and on Sunday he came for the four step retreat and testified that that morning he had walked three kilometers for the first time in so many months, because the power of God had been released into this situation.

There are many things we miss from God because we don't take that step. My duty is to tell you and your duty is to take the step. Today when we finish, please come forward, claim the word, be prayed over, and as you're prayed over, do something you could not do before - and you'll see many things will take place.

We were in Australia for our main programme which is held every year in January or February. We spend two and a half weeks there. This time we went to Brisbane, Melbourne and Sydney. We started from Brisbane on a Friday evening. Brisbane has an evening prayer meeting and normally we preach from here to these places. On that day we did the meeting in Brisbane and you can see the collection of people who have come together for the Friday meeting.

We did the four step retreat in Brisbane. What is significant here is, in Brisbane, the Sri Lankans only amounted to 10%, 90% were Aussie. That's a real breakthrough because normally the Sri Lankans come, but the Aussies are few and far between. This time they had done a lot of campaigning and so many had gathered.

I want to say something about the domino effect. Inuk preached last week and I listened to the Wednesday message from Sydney and I thought the message was absolutely, superbly excellent. Though he doesn't look young he is actually pretty young, and it was so powerful. I was so contented that as we pass the 60's mark, we have to march through time and walk off the stage - that's what life is all about. We have to go into the eternal Father and that's our purpose in life. We are more than halfway there already. Here we have young people emerging who are as good as, or even better than what we were in that age.

Inuk was touched by the Lord and transformed, and he has a friend. What happened to inuk deeply impacted his friend and his friend came to the first four step retreat we did in Brisbane two years ago. He was so touched and completely changed. He had been leading a worldly, difficult life. He changed completely and this time he visited over 20 parishes, testified to what God has done in his life and invited people for the four step retreat. That is why we had close to 200 people in Brisbane following the four step retreat. That boy who was a catholic was changed and his change so impressed his father who himself was a Buddhist, that today, he is also baptized in the Holy Spirit and walking with the Lord - both father, mother and the son. This is the domino effect. One person is touched and so many others are touched as well.

We had the mass on Sunday and the auxiliary bishop of Brisbane, Bishop Joseph Oudeman said the mass and it was a beautiful experience.

We came to Melbourne. We went to the church in which we have our weekly prayer meeting in Berwick. The beautiful thing is, Fr. Hillarian, who was the principal of St. Anthony's college, kandy, retired and went to Australia and he is one of the staff in this parish and he gives us 100% support. We had a meeting on a Friday and the church was filled with so many people in hunger for the Lord. There was no room to even sit and people were standing and joining in. We are privileged because we have it every week, so we yawn and criticize and judge and scratch our head. These people are thirsty and waiting a whole year for this moment.

On the weekend we had the four step retreat in Melbourne. I did the first four step retreat in Melbourne ten years ago, and after that other people did the retreat. But ten years later I did the four steps again and close to 700 people joined in the retreat. We had the great privilege of Bishop Raymond Wickremesinghe, the Bishop of Galle, being present with us. He was there for another purpose and we invited him and he said the mass for the four step retreat and it went powerfully well.

We have our very own Bishop Christopher Prowse. Bishop Prowse is the archbishop of Canberra - the capital of Australia. He is also the patron of the CRL in Sydney. He has very close links with us. This year we did something special. We were invited for a week's programme in Sydney in a diocese by the name of Paramatta. They invited us to do the Holy Spirit week, and for that, they had a

clergy retreat. For the clergy retreat they invited Bishop Prowse as well as the CRL. What is unique about this is, the retreat we did was the four step retreat. Bishop Prowse has done 13 years of postgraduate study and he is a doctor in the church. Yet he had the humility to study the four step retreat, written and done by lay people, and he did the first two steps of the retreats - come as you are and give the truth of your heart. We did the next two steps, and God truly anointed the retreat. After that he celebrated the mass for the retreat with many priests who joined with him and it was a truly powerful experience for us to witness.

On the weekend, we had the Holy Spirit weekend in the Paramatta diocese. Over here, Fr. Ken Barker, Bishop Christopher Prowse and the CRL conducted this programme together. What is beautiful here is that they ran out of space, and when they ran out of space they also ran out of chairs. We had a jubilee mass and then we conducted the anointing service after the mass, led by the archbishop himself. It was truly a time where God led us into the experience of God.

I'm inviting you, specially this week, please pray for the church in Australia. They are going through the biggest crisis they've ever faced. For ten years there has been something called a royal commission that has probed among other institutions, the Catholic Church, to look at the child abuse in the institutions of the church.

In this week, they are interviewing the bishops of Australia. Though these bishops are personally not involved in any of this have to go and face the music for the church. I'm suggesting to you, if you can, find 15 minutes every morning to simply intercede for this. I'm sure you spend a good hour explaining your aches and pains and problems and hurts to Jesus. Forget about it for this week and intercede for Australia that they may come out of it with a deeper blessing and anointing from the Lord.

The church was written off at the cross, and they thought that was the end - but that was only the beginning of the new stage. In the same way, many people are writing off the church in Australia, saying it has no relevance and lost its credibility. In the Christian experience - death will always precede the resurrection. If people humble themselves, fall at the feet of Jesus and seek Him, I can assure you that God will turn every curse into a blessing.

Today's theme is: Hearing God's voice in your daily life. It is God who designed the world and designed you and me. When He designed us human beings, He gave us the capacity to think and to speak. If God designed us to think and speak, it is only logical to assume that God Himself can speak. But today if someone says, "God is speaking to me," the reaction will be, "Have you taken your tablets today?" Today, most people no longer believe that God can speak - even in the Christian tradition. What we have done is, we have taken christian philosophy, Christian theology, Christian ethics, Christian values - put them together and we are trying to find out what the Lord is trying to tell us to do in this situation. Then we analyze how Moses did this, the other one did that, in the church so and so has done that - therefore we think of what we should do.

So when you say God is speaking, that is what people generally mean.

- You read the Bible,

- you look at the ethics and values –
- and according to the ethics and values of Christianity, and this is what the Lord wants us to do.

If you look at Buddhism, they do the same thing. Tradition has been built over the last 2500 years, and Buddhists will say, "According to these teachings of the Buddha, this is what we should be doing." For them that's the voice of the Buddha. It is the same with Muslims. They read the Quran and through the Quran they interpret the voice of God.

While it's an acceptable method, the Bible says that God directly speaks to

people. By now, we should learn how to hear His voice in our daily life. Of course there is a problem - many people who claim that God is speaking to them are actually psychologically, mentally unbalanced people. Because of that, this hearing God's voice has got a bad name. People say, "God is telling me what to do. I put on the radio and God is talking to me." Some others say, "I have a statue in the house, and when I'm looking at it, Jesus is blinking His eyes."

That has given this a bad name. A lot of people think you're cuckoo if you say God is speaking in your life. So we have suppressed this area within us, and many people no longer hear Him speak. But the Bible says God will speak:

Hebrews 1:1

In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways...

The Bible is very clear - God has been speaking right from the start. Unfortunately, when God is broadcasting on FM we are listening on shortwave. Because of these issues many people don't hear God speak.

Hebrews 1:2

...but in the last days He has spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, and through whom He made the universe.

No one can say that God doesn't speak. He has spoken through the prophets and now He is speaking through His son. It is not just good teachings, moral ethics and values like in any other religion - God actually speaks. I am keen that we learn how to hear His voice. When you start hearing the voice of God in your life, a lot of things where you're trying to get other people to help and solve, God will resolve in your heart directly. It's a shortcut to a happy life because God will answer many of the needs in your life.

You must remember, because of this unbalanced situation in human hearts, when someone says, "God is speaking to me," the church says that you have to always discern. That's the Catholic tradition

Among us now, I have enough issues with people because of this. There are some people who say, "We can't do what you're asking us to do." Then I said, "You're making a disturbance in the meeting and

other people are complaining that they can't pray because you're making a disturbance." This person is asking me, "Are you telling me to disobey the Holy Spirit and do what you say?" That person believes that God is directly telling them.

This is not so in the Catholic tradition. In the catholic tradition, what we hear from God, we submit for discernment to the church.

If the discernment says you better not do something, we have something called obedience.

That's why the church has stayed as a unit and a body for 2000 years. We may not agree but we obey. It is the same with us and we do it to the bishops. We may have our personal opinions, but whatever the bishop says, then we simply obey.

This is how you have a protection for your life. Even in the spiritual world, Satan himself is active. I know many people who originally heard from God, but later it was substituted by the counterfeit voice and because they didn't obey, they were not really protected. I know one person who is tremendously gifted by God who wasted his entire life because he said, "God has spoken to me." He actually did and this person influenced so many people - even my own life when I was a young man. But later, he was unable to listen to anyone because he was convinced God was speaking directly to him. He messed up his entire life.

We need to hear God speak, but we protect our hearts by submitting to the discernment of the church.

When you start hearing the voice of God we have a problem:

Isaiah 55:8

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the Lord.

The problem is that God doesn't think like we do. If God doesn't think like we do, how on earth do you hear His voice?

Isaiah 55:9

As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

In brief, God thinks completely differently from us. So how do you hear His voice? Through an intimate relationship with Him. You can hear His voice and understand Him not with your mind, but through an intimate relationship with God.

Many people are wondering how you do that - all I can say is my dogs give me a

great example. We returned from Australia last morning and when we came home, my two dogs had a conversation with me. The dogs asked me, "Where did you go? Why did you leave us? What are you doing?" That conversation was without words, but the dogs expressed their feelings to me. I expressed my own feelings and affection to them by petting them and showing love to them. The dog can't understand if I explain how I need to go to Australia, but the dog has a relationship with me. In this relationship a trust builds, and in that trust you begin to sense what's in the heart of the other.

People who try to lead with the mind only never hear the voice of God, because they're assuming they can understand how God thinks. Imagine there's a cow in the field and you go to the cow, open the ear and describe the Pythagoras theorem to the cow. What will happen? Nothing, because it is beyond the cow. In the same way, "My thoughts are not your thoughts, My ways are not your ways," God says. How do you connect? Through a relationship. Those who pray consistently and continuously over time will start hearing His voice.

I can tell you that from my own experience, sometimes it takes months to get rid of the junk that is within our own mind and heart and to purify our inner being in prayer to start hearing His voice. But when you start hearing His voice, you and I are completely transformed - we are motivated from within and not from outside. Many people practice holiness to show other people, many people want religion to demonstrate to others. Even in the spiritual world they want to climb the human ladder and be the leader, the successful and powerful one. All these are signs that we are not actually hearing the voice of God yet.

We may be knowing a lot of theology, spirituality, good things about religion - but we aren't hearing His voice. If you actually hear His voice, your priorities are completely turned upside down. Everything changes. You hear His voice in the relationship with God.

The next step is the word of God. If you just read the word of God with your mind, it will never give you the voice of God. The word of God is only stories, events, incidents and situations and dry as dust for many people. But when you have an intimacy and relationship with God, God will take this word and use it as a weapon, and open to you His heart and voice in your life. It may have been a simple word you've been hearing for 20-30 years which meant nothing to you - but suddenly the cloud parts and because of that relationship, through that little word, He opens a complete new world to you.

Everyone must hear Him speak - otherwise we are wasting our lives. He is alive and He speaks. It is not to hear about Him or speak of Him but actually hear Him and experience Him.

One of the great misconceptions of our life is that we think God thinks like us.

For example: We human beings are attracted to people and things that are greater and more powerful than us. Many of us have vehicles. When you go on the road, does your eye go to a vehicle that is older than yours? No, your eye goes to one that is newer than yours. Does your eye go to people who are uglier than you? No, you feel a little smug instead. But your eyes stare daggers at people who

are more beautiful than us. Do we envy people who are poorer than us? No, but if you look at someone richer than you then you envy.

This happens because there is a lack and need inside us. Therefore, we think God is also attracted to beautiful, powerful people. The word beautiful doesn't mean only physical, but spiritually, morally beautiful. Therefore, we beautify ourselves to come before God. We act really good and then we hide from God when we have lost our way.

Somebody went to the doctor and the doctor asked, "Where were you? For two months I haven't seen you." The person said, "Yes, Doctor, I was not well. I didn't want to come and show you I'm not well, but now I've recovered and I want to show you how healthy I am." Isn't that what we do with God? We go before God and say, "Praise the Lord. Yesterday I was able to make that sacrifice and I gave six people to eat." But the day I lost my temper and shouted at people, I don't want to go to prayer or even face God because I feel I have nothing worthwhile to take to God.

For years I myself thought that God thinks in that way. Therefore my prayer life was mostly not steady. One day I can come to God and five days I'm hiding. I have nothing to offer Him, nothing to give Him, I have failed and I'm thinking, "I'm one useless guy - God can't actually love me." You advance from there, and say, "Of course God loves me, but like someone who loves someone out of duty. He is God and He created me so He loves me. He doesn't like me because I'm so bad but because He created me, He loves me." It is like a love principle - and nothing to do with affection and intimacy and love. That's why people go running after love addiction. They are running after people to be loved because they don't actually experience love from God.

Many of us may have never experienced love from God. Of course we know the general principle of a moral cloud that God loves us all - but it doesn't mean anything. We want someone to hold our hand, we want someone to share our struggle, we want someone who likes to spend time with us. We think God will never do that with us because we are too broken and wounded.

When you're at the feet of Jesus, through the word of God, God will suddenly reveal His heart to us.

Deuteronomy 7:6

For you are a people holy to the Lord your God...

The word 'holy' means separated for God. The original word is 'Kadosh'. So we are a people who belong to God and we are God's property and possession.

Deuteronomy 7:6 continued

The Lord your God has chosen you out of all the peoples of the face of the earth to be His people, His treasured possession.

Through Moses God is speaking to the people and saying, "Do you know that God has chosen you out of all the people in the world?" The Hebrews would have had their collars up, and this is what the Catholics

also think. Even other Christians think God is their personal property. Everyone thinks we are qualified to have God.

Deuteronomy 7:7

The Lord did not set His affection on you and choose you because you were more numerous than other peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples.

"Your ways are not My ways, your thoughts are not My thoughts." The Lord is saying, "I chose you because you were weak - not because you had anything to offer me." It takes time to digest what I'm saying and it won't register immediately. You have to allow the Holy Spirit to teach you this. God's attractions are different to human attractions. **God is attracted to the weak.**

Deuteronomy 7:8

But it was because the Lord loved you and kept the oath that He swore to your forefathers that He brought you out with a mighty hand...

God is not only attracted to the weak - He also has a personal love for them. "Your ways are not my ways and your thoughts are not my thoughts."

On this trip there was a couple that brought a child to be prayed for. This child was 2 years old and the brain had not really developed. This child didn't make any movements and didn't even cry - he could only open and close his eyes. As they were telling me this story and my wife and I prayed for them, I saw the tenderness and love the parents had for this child.

Mathematically, this child had no value - can't speak, can't understand, will never walk. But it was not an affection based on power or value or getting something back. The weakness and the vulnerability of this child attracted the heart of his parents. God in His great mercy and love is attracted to us who have nothing to offer Him. If you allow this thought to enter your heart, all the barriers of your life will be shattered and broken - the sadness, the depression, the hanging around with their chin reaching their knees. Deep inside we feel alone and rejected and that there's no worth and value in our life. But here is the beauty of God: He is attracted to the weak.

The second thing is, God is not just attracted to the weak. When Jesus came, He showed another kind of attraction. God's heart was revealed completely by Jesus. In the letter to the Colossians, St. Paul says: He is the visible image of the invisible God. That means when you look at Jesus you can see what God is thinking.

Matthew 9:9

As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collector's booth. "Follow me," he told him, and Matthew got up and followed him.

Not only was he attracted to the weak, but he was also attracted to the sinners.

It takes time to digest what I'm saying. You need to take it to prayer and allow the Lord to show it into your heart.

Matthew 9:10

While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew's house, many tax collectors and "sinners" came and ate with him and his disciples.

He wasn't just attracted but he even wanted to spend time with them.

Matthew 9:11

When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and 'sinners'?"

As if they could answer. The others he chose were the weak. Now he is choosing the sinners.

Matthew 9:12

On hearing this, Jesus said, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick."

Many people struggle with lust and if you see someone getting away with immoral behaviour - in your heart you get anger. "How dare you!" That's why they took a stone to hit the adulteress woman. You're angry that they're getting away with something you can't enjoy yourself.

But Jesus was the one man without sin.

There are days when the clouds open, you're reconciled with God, you're forgiven, your inner being is cleansed, you experience the touch of His love and you feel really, really good. There are days from morning after your prayer time you're feeling so great because everything inside has been worked out, you're right with God, you feel the favour of God upon your life and you see events and incidents where you know God is actually favouring you.

And then you see someone struggling with sin. What happens to your heart? You feel sorry for them. They are unable to have this beautiful internal rest and freedom. I'm sensing that's exactly what happened to Jesus. He was so full of the love of the Father, so free inside, so full of the happiness that comes from walking with God, no loneliness, sadness or emptiness - He sees these people caught up and enslaved, and He feels truly sad and He is attracted. Why? He feels, *"I wish I could give them what the Father has given me."*

Tonight, let me tell you: God does not love you. We have taken this for granted. God does not love you. Let me put it in the right way: **God is in love with you.** You can love all the Sinhalese in the world and it means nothing, you can love all the Tamils in the world and it means nothing. But you can actually be in love with one person and that will make all the difference. As you have intimacy with God, the word of God is revealing that God is crazily in love with you. How crazy? Crazy enough to hang on a cross.