



Day 28: Saturday

hearing voices

Therefore Eli said to Samuel, “Go, lie down, and if he calls you, you shall say, ‘Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.’” So Samuel went and lay down in his place. Now the Lord came and stood there, calling as before, “Samuel! Samuel!” And Samuel said, “Speak, for your servant is listening.”

1 Samuel 3:9–10

Prepare

My psychiatrist asked, “Do you ever hear Jesus talking to you?” She paused to allow me some time to answer, without looking up from her notes.

I froze, nervous to say anything. My heart started beating faster. What should I tell her? I do believe I have heard God’s voice before, especially during really tough times when my anxiety was at its peak. But if I tell her this, will she think I am crazy?

“No, I haven’t,” I replied, knowing full well this was a lie. She made a notation in my file and carried on with her questions.

Later that night, while I was doing my laundry, I had a chance to reflect upon my choice to tell her that I had never heard God’s voice before. The

truth is that I wholeheartedly believe that God speaks to people, like God did with Samuel when he was a boy. So why did I choose to deny that the same thing had happened to me?

I felt a wave of shame wash over me. *Grad student who is studying theology lies to psychiatrist about hearing God's voice.*

I took my things out of the dryer and began folding my clothes. *She would have thought you were crazy, I thought. And then she would have upped your meds. Or worse, she would have added even more pills to the chemical cocktail you are already on.* I continued folding, finding no solace in the rhythmic action that usually calmed me down.

The next day I took my dog for a walk and had some more time to think. *Psychiatry be damned.* I thought. *Why are people of faith being taught that their mystical experiences are evidence of pathology? We need to have a more nuanced and open view about voice-hearing.* As we walked through the park, I started to feel a bit better. And I made a promise to myself that the next time a mental health professional asked me about hearing God's voice, I wouldn't lie.

Ponder

What are your thoughts on hearing God's voice? Do you think that God speaks to people today? Why or why not?

Pray

God help me to hear your voice as I go throughout my day today.

Practice

Set up some reminders on your phone or computer today at three-hour intervals (for example, 9:00 a.m., 12:00 p.m., 3:00 p.m.). When the reminder goes off, turn your awareness to the presence of the Divine and invite God to speak to you.

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