

# Surprise the World!

## Week Four: Listen/Holy Spirit Promptings

*Read Chapter 5 from Surprise the World by Michael Frost*

**Get Connected:** Think back to a time when someone really listened to you. What was the occasion and what how did you feel after that encounter?

### **Bible Study:**

You are invited to engage with scripture each week using an ancient practice called *lectio divina*. Read the scripture once. Allow a minute of silence following, and then each person answers the first question. Read the scripture aloud the second time, followed with a minute of silence, and then each person answers the second question. Read the scripture a third time, hold a minute of silence, and then answer the third question. It is most helpful when everyone has the scripture in front of them so they can underline phrases and make notes regarding the question. The other important practice to this form of engaging with the scripture is holy listening. Each person listens deeply to the other's response without interruption or dialogue. At the end of the three rounds, if the group would like to enter into dialogue and conversation with the scripture that is the appropriate time. A person can certainly pass answering a question at any time. Listen for what the Spirit seeks to share with you in this living encounter with the Word.

This section of Revelation comes at the end of the letters to the churches where they are being called to account for how they have not fully lived into their calling. **Read Revelation Chapter 2 and 3**, and then meditatively focus on these verses.

Revelation 3:19-22

*The people I love, I call to account—prod and correct and guide so that they'll live at their best. Up on your feet, then! About face! Run after God!*

*Look at me. I stand at the door. I knock. If you hear me call and open the door, I'll come right in and sit down to supper with you. Conquerors will sit alongside me at the head table, just as I, having conquered, took the place of honor at the side of my Father. That's my gift to the conquerors!*

*Are your ears awake? Listen. Listen to the Wind Words, the Spirit blowing through the churches.*

What is the word or phrase that captures your imagination?

How do keep your ears awake?

What is God inviting you to do, change, or be through this passage?

**Video:** Show week four with Rev. Susan Nienaber on listen

**Discuss:**

- 1) Any blessing or eating stories to share this week?
- 2) Rev. Nienaber talks about three kinds of listening: to ourselves, to others, to God. Which is most challenging for you? Which is most energizing for you?
- 3) When have you found it hard to hear the Spirit's voice speaking in your life? When have you found yourself particularly open to the Spirit's voice? What has made the difference?
- 4) How have you been able to cultivate silence, solitude, and prayer practices in your life?
- 5) Have you ever had an experience where you felt like God spoke directly to you or prompted you to do something? What was that like?
- 6) Thomas Merton has written: *not all persons are called to be hermits, but all persons need enough silence and solitude in their lives to enable the deep inner voice of their own true self to be heard at least occasionally, for one cannot go on happily for long, unless one is in contact with the springs of spiritual life which are hidden in the depths of this own true soul.* Has this been true for you? If you are an extroverted/active spiritual type, how do you respond to this guidance?

**Action Step:** Practice silence and listening this week. Perhaps it is five minutes with a cup of coffee as you begin your day. Maybe it is turning off the radio on your morning commute, or going for a walk with no headphones or background music. If you need some prompts, try an app such as Abide to learn how to meditate. Or find a centering prayer group and join them for a 30-minute time of prayer. Offer a simple prayer as you begin your silence, simply asking God to speak to you today. Take some time to write whatever prompting arise in your quiet time.

Continue to ask God to help you see who can bless and eat with this week.

**Share Your Stories:** Post quotes on silence/listening as well as any prayers you have for the world that have come from your silence and listening on social media with **#surprisetheworld**.

**Conclude:** Join hands and go around the circle, with each person saying what they thank God for and what they ask God for, and then all join in the Lord's Prayer.

*If you are using the Michael Frost videos that can be found at <http://www.crossover.org.au/surprise-the-world/>, begin the session with Minnesota Annual Conference video, follow with the Get Connected Question, and then use the Michael Frost video after the Bible study.*