

PSALM 95: HEARING GOD'S VOICE – Leader Notes



Big Idea of Study: *This is a shortish intro study for Growth Group. The big idea is that God is a great creator God who deserves our worship and praise. We need to listen and submit to his voice or else we could be judged and excluded from his blessing. This will mean a culture of heartfelt praise and thanksgiving in Growth Group (plus/minus actual singing in GG). It will also mean we listen to God's word and encourage each other not to harden our hearts.*

Would say you are a good listener? What would your spouse / good friends say?

This a launching question to get people talking. Most of us realise we're probably not that great at listening. Especially when we're tired or busy.

Psalm 95 has a lot to say about listening. Read the Psalm aloud.

1 Come, let us sing for joy to the LORD; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation.

2 Let us come before him with thanksgiving and extol him with music and song.

3 For the LORD is the great God, the great King above all gods.

4 In his hand are the depths of the earth, and the mountain peaks belong to him.

5 The sea is his, for he made it, and his hands formed the dry land.

6 Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the LORD our Maker;

7 for he is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care.

Today, if you hear his voice,

8 do not harden your hearts as you did at Meribah, as you did that day at Massah in the desert,

9 where your fathers tested and tried me, though they had seen what I did.

10 For forty years I was angry with that generation; I said, "They are a people whose hearts go astray, and they have not known my ways."

11 So I declared on oath in my anger, "They shall never enter my rest."

1-7a From 1-7a highlight /underline what does the psalmist call us to do?

You might like to supply some pencils / highlighters.

Fairly easy observation question, but people will appreciate this.

Now highlight/underline the reasons he gives for this.

This is also fairly easy observation.

Is this how we think of God? How might we apply the commands of these verses in Growth Group this year?

We always forget and need reminding about God – especially that he is our Rock, the great God, our creator and our shepherd. We could apply this at GG in singing and praise, but also keeping GG about God primarily (not ourselves). We want to know God more, remember him, pray to him, give thanks to him. We want to stay away from other 'gods' who demand our loyalty.

7b-11

What's the warning of 7b-11 (see Exodus 17:1-7)?

Don't harden your hearts (the same word as what Pharaoh did)

Meribah and Massah from Exodus tells the original story.

The hearers should listen to God's voice.

If they don't, they might not enter into God's land, or into eschatological blessing, or into an ongoing fellowship with him.

How do we experience the same temptations?

We don't listen to God as much as we could. We don't read our Bibles, or we daydream during church or Growth Group.

Or if we do hear something we harden our hearts so we don't obey it.

We grumble like the Israelites and doubt that God is good.

Going deeper What are some ways that Jesus fulfils this Psalm?

There are many ways, don't feel like you need to cover all of them. A few will do:

Jesus is now our rock, he is fully God.

God the father created through him (see Col 1)

It is right to worship Jesus.

He is our chief shepherd (see Hebrews 13 or John 10)

He speaks to us/calls us (John 10)

He gives us rest (Matthew 11:28-30)

Hebrews 3 and 4 picks up on this Psalm in a big way. Read Hebrews 3:7-13. If we take Psalm 95 and Hebrews seriously this year, what would that mean for the culture of our Growth Group?

Hebrews is a great passage. There's a clear call to encourage each other daily (weekly is still good). We need to watch out for sin's deceitfulness and having a hard heart.

In Growth Group, this would mean listening hard to the Bible, encouraging each other, turning up! , being aware of the dangers.