

Hearing and Receiving God's messages to us
Luke 11:29-36

One of the many wonderful blessings of being a child of God is the reality that God speaks to us. To think that the God of all creation loves us so much that He takes time to speak to us both collectively and individually within the context of our particular life situations is indeed cause for us to praise and thank God. The reality is that God sends messages to us all the time in our daily lives; the only question is do we hear them and receive them when they come? There are times when God speaks to individuals, and times when He speaks to an entire generation or nation. There are times when God speaks directly to us, and times when He speaks to us through His chosen messenger as a vessel. There are times when God comes on strong with His message, and there are times when God is more subtle in the style with which He communicates. Whatever the case, it should be the desire of every Christian to grow and mature in their faith to the point where they can hear and receive messages from God and recognize them when they come.

In the text today, Jesus is pronouncing judgment on a generation who is looking for a “sign” or miracle from Him as some sort of validation or proof of His credibility. The irony is that they have not received the messages that are literally staring them right in the face in the person of Jesus. It seems that because they knew Jesus' earthly background and lineage, they were unwilling to accept that He was truly speaking what God wanted to say to them. So, Jesus uses some history lessons to show them the error of their ways. Specifically, he uses the examples of Jonah and Solomon to teach the people about what it means to hear and receive messages from God. We notice the following:

1) The presence of the messenger themselves is a “sign”

Just like it was assumed that the inhabitants of Ninevah would be against Jonah, the crowd that was gathering was against Jesus. But Jesus rightly points out that the very presence of Jonah in Ninevah was a powerful sign to the people that helped them repent. The physical, bodily presence of God's messenger in a potentially hostile place is a sign of God's grace and love. Jonah didn't want to go to Ninevah at first, but his presence encouraged the people to repent. Not only did Jonah preach, but he also lived his message and lived among them. The people should have recognized the same truth about Jesus in their midst.

2) Sometimes the message comes to you, and sometimes you must seek the message

In Jonah's case, God sent him to Ninevah. In Solomon's case, the Queen of Sheba traveled a long distance to come and hear his messages of wisdom. These two examples show that the child of God must do both. We must open our hearts and minds to messages and messengers that God sends to us; and we must also sometimes put forth extra effort to seek out what God is saying through His chosen messengers, even if it inconveniences us.

3) God's message is “light” to our souls if we open our eyes to it

In the Bible, the analogy of light usually represents knowledge, wisdom and understanding. When we open ourselves to receive God's messages, they light up our whole body and life. When we close our eyes and ears to it, we live in darkness; lost and without guidance.

