***The Power of a Whisper***

***Hearing God. Having the guts to Respond.***

**Worship Series – Week 4**

***Wide Open for Good*(This service covers Chapters 7 and 9 of the book which also follows Bible Study material)**

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| **WORSHIP SERVICE OUTLINE**SEach worship outline contains all elements needed for your worship service. The order of each service presented is only a *suggestion*. No doubt changes will be needed to accommodate the flow and worship style of your corps. The outlines are flexible and allow opportunities to “cut and paste” as needed. If you are blessed with instrumental or vocal music resources, you may find there is more structured material here than needed. Sermon manuscripts are included as a *sample* and not to be preached verbatim. |

**Announcements and Offering**

***Whisper: ‘I want to guide you…’***

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| **Drama – Making the Call** |

**Call to Worship**

It is the little acts of obedience that invites God’s power to fully flow in our lives. When you and I prove ourselves faithful with the small whispers, he entrusts us with bigger ones. And when we follow through on those big ones, *big* kingdom results can be gained.

(*The Power of a Whisper*, page 56)

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| **HC#171 – Stand Up and Bless the Lord** | HC-171 | HCD16-T11 |
|  **Additional Optional Songs** |
| **SB#56 – Praise to the Lord, the Almighty****HC#251 – Praise to the Lord, the Almighty** | TB-721 – Lobe den HerrenHC-251 | HTD4-T11 (4 vs.)HCD24 – T11 |
| **HC#93 – Holy, Holy, Holy** | HC-93 | HCD8-T13 |
| **SB#411 – Come in, my Lord, come in** | TB-162 – Diademata | HTD1-T8 (4 vs.) |
| **SB#814 – God of grace and God of glory** | TB-423 – Regent Square | HTD4-T12 (4 vs.) |
| **HC#189 – Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing** | HC-189 | HCD17-T19 |
| **SB#27 – Guide me, O thou great Jehovah****HC#231 – Guide me, O thou great Jehovah** | TB-414 – Cwm RhonddaHC-231 | HTD3-T7 (4 vs.)HCD22-T13 |
| **SB#504 – Lead us, heavenly Father, lead us** | TB-406 – Praise, my soul | HTD2-T12 (3 vs.) |
| **HC#261 – How firm a foundation** | HC-261 | HCD25-T11 |

***Whisper: ‘It’s Your Move…’***

**Responsive Scripture:**

**Leader:** When Jesus preached the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 7:7-8 is at the heart of Jesus’ message to his disciples.

**All:** *Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; those who seek find; and to those who knock, the door will be opened.*

**Leader:** Keep in mind that for the group to whom Jesus was speaking when he delivered his hillside talk, this news came as a real surprise. The idea that ordinary people could talk directly to God was staggering. It went against hundreds of years of religious tradition in which they needed an intermediary to talk to God for them. “No priest is required?” they must have asked, just to be sure they had the new deal straight.

**All:** “No priest required,” Jesus’ message confirmed. “There are no hoops to jump through, no rituals to entertain, no sacrifices to tend to and no ceremonial purification rights to respect. You can come boldly before my Father’s throne and receive an audience with Almighty God.”

**Leader:** One can only imagine the inner turmoil this caused for the crowd that day. Perhaps it is causing you a little trauma as well. Depending on what faith system you grew up in, it is possible that what you are reading on these pages seems downright illegal, or at least blasphemous and brash. But it’s the truth of Scripture: because of Jesus Christ’s work on the cross, there is *no* red tape between you and God.

**All:** He is available.

**Leader:** He is approachable.

**All:** And he stands ready to talk to you now.

**Leader:** The writer of Hebrews put it this way:

**All:** *Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus. . . let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith.* (Hebrews 10:19, 22)

**Leader:** Whatever aspect of life seems to be weighing you down today, you can bring that burden before God. What Jesus was so sure of, we can know for sure too. God is *available*. He is *approachable*. And he is ready to talk to you now…it is your move!

(*The Power of a Whisper*, pages 60-61)

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| **HC#122 – Bow the Knee** | HC-122 | HCD11-T12 |
|  **Additional Optional Songs** |
| **HC#182 – He Knows My Name** | HC-182 | HCD17-T12 |
| **HC#167 – I’m in His Hands** | HC-167 | HCD15-T17 |
| **HC#130 – Lead Me, Lord** | HC-130 | HCD11-T20 |
| **HC#205 – Closer Still** | HC-205 | HCD19-T15 |
| **HC#208 – Faithful God** | HC-208 | HCD19-T18 |
| **HC#213 – In the presence of Jehovah**  | HC-213 | HCD20-T13 |
| **HC#215 – Holy Spirit**  | HC-215 | HCD20-T15 |
| **HC#228 – Still**  | HC-228 | HCD21-T18 |
| **HC#236 – Lord, I need you**  | HC-236 | HCD22-T16 |
| **HC#242 – In your presence**  | HC-242 | HCD23-T12 |
| **HC#247 – Still, my soul, be still**  | HC-247 | HCD23-T17 |
| **HC#249 – Near to the heart**  | HC-249 | HCD23-T19 |
| **HC#255 – Lord, There are Times**  | HC-255 | HCD24-T15 |
| **HC#265 – Come just as you are** | HC265 | HCD25-T15  |
| **HC#279 – Draw me nearer** | HC279 | HCD26-T19 |

***The Congregation Prays***

**(This prayer time could be opened up to the congregation to pray either silently or publicly; a time of intercessory prayer in their seats or at the altar)**

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|  **Intercessory Prayer** |
| **HC#192 – Somebody Prayed for Me** | HC-192 | HCD18-T12 |

**Pastoral Prayer**

**Message – Whispers that Will Change the World**

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| **SB#588 – I bring to thee my heart to fill** | TB-414 – Christ is all | HTD3-T6 (3 vs.) |
|  **Additional Optional Songs** |
| **HC#57 – Open My Eyes**  | HC-57 | HCD4-T17 |
| **SB#255 – I’m set apart for Jesus** | TB-213 – Aurelia | HTD3-T3 (3 vs.) |
| **HC#87 – Passion** | HC-87 | HCD7-T17 |
| **HC#186 – When I Look into Your Holiness** | HC-186 | HCD17-T16 |
| **HC#35 – In the Secret of Thy Presence** | HC-35 | HCD2B-T15 |
| **HC#173 – In This Quiet Moment** | HC-173 | HCD16-T13 |
| **SB#623 – Take my life, and let it be** | TB-249 – HendonTB-246 – Consecration Hymn | HTD8-T6 (4 vs.)HTD12-T3 (3vs. – 2 vs. text per vs.) |
| **SB#613 – O Jesus, I have promised** | TB-213 – Aurelia | HTD3-T3 (3 vs.) |
| **HC#205 – Closer Still** | HC-205 | HCD19-T15 |
| **HC#208 – Faithful God** | HC-208 | HCD19-T18 |
| **HC#213 – In the presence of Jehovah**  | HC-213 | HCD20-T13 |
| **HC#215 – Holy Spirit**  | HC-215 | HCD20-T15 |
| **HC#226 – I Worship You**  | HC-226 | HCD21-T16 |
| **HC#228 – Still**  | HC-228 | HCD21-T18 |
| **HC#236 – Lord, I need you**  | HC-236 | HCD22-T16 |
| **HC#242 – In your presence**  | HC-242 | HCD23-T12 |
| **HC#247 – Still, my soul, be still**  | HC-247 | HCD23-T17 |
| **HC#249 – Near to the heart**  | HC-249 | HCD23-T19 |
| **HC#265 – Come just as you are** | HC265 | HCD25-T15  |
| **HC#279 – Draw me nearer** | HC279 | HCD26-T19 |

**Benediction: (congregation in unison)**

“Oh, give me Samuel’s ear, the open ear, O Lord,

Alive and quick to hear each whisper of Thy Word;

Like him to answer at Thy call,

And to obey Thee first of all.”

*-- By James D. Burns, 1857*

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| **SB#359 – Eternal God, our song we raise** | TB-439 – Eternal God | HTD12-T5 |
|  **Additional Optional Songs** |
| **HC#112 – The Potter’s Hand** | HC-112  | HCD10-T12 |
| **HC#109 – Total Praise** | HC-109 | HCD9-T19 |
| **HC#202 – O Church, arise** | HC-202 | HCD19 – T12 |

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| **Week #4** |
| **DRAMA****Making the Call****By Martyn Scott Thomas**© Copyright 2012 by Martyn Scott Thomas. All rights reserved. Used by permission. |
| **Topic:** | God’s call, Evangelism |
| **Scripture:** | Leviticus 19:18 |
| **Synopsis:** | A husband and wife try to work up the courage to invite a neighbor to church. |
| **Characters:** | Ronald RileyKathy Riley |
| **Props/Costumes:** | Two chairs, a table and a phone (could be a cell phone). Casual dress. |
| **Setting:** | The Riley’s living room. |
| **Production notes:** | This script has three potential endings. Select the one most appropriate for your setting. |
| **Running time:** | 4 minutes |

[*Kathy is seated. Ronald is standing looking out the window at his neighbor.*]

**Ronald:** [*disgusted*] I don’t believe it. He’s at it again.

**Kathy:** [*puzzled*] Who’s at what again?

**Ronald:** Doug. He’s taking his garbage out.

**Kathy:** I would think that that’s a good thing.

**Ronald:** [*looking at her, explaining*] But he doesn’t cover his trash cans.

**Kathy:** And . . .

**Ronald:** And if he has food in there, that means the raccoons will have a field day.

**Kathy:** So the raccoons eat his garbage; big deal.

**Ronald:** [*getting a little agitated*] It is a big deal. They don’t just eat his garbage. They tip his cans over and spread it all over my yard.

**Kathy:** Is it really that difficult to pick up a little garbage?

**Ronald:** It’s a lot harder than putting lids on your trash cans.

**Kathy:** Really, Ron. Don’t be such a baby.

**Ronald:** Me? A baby? Listen, I’m not the one who whines every time the leaves from our apple tree fall on his side of the fence.

**Kathy:** Well, you could trim it back a little. It does hang over.

**Ronald:** I don’t hear him complaining when he picks the apples off of it.

**Kathy:** And I didn’t hear you complaining when Shirley brought over the pie she made with them.

**Ronald:** It wasn’t that good. I could only eat three pieces.

**Kathy:** Poor baby.

**Ronald:** And don’t even get me started on his dogs.

**Kathy:** What’s wrong with his dogs? He keeps them in his yard. Besides, they’re cute.

**Ronald:** Cute? How is constant barking, cute? And I wouldn’t even call it barking. It’s more like yipping. [*imitating the dogs*] Yip! Yip! Yip!

**Kathy:** I thought you were going to try and get along with Doug.

**Ronald:** Yeah, well . . .

**Kathy:** And I thought we were going to invite them to church with us.

**Ronald:** That was your idea, not mine.

**Kathy:** Um, it was our idea, remember? We prayed for a week about our neighbors and Doug and Shirley were the ones who kept coming to mind.

**Ronald:** Only because he kept bugging me. He’s still never returned my hedge clippers.

**Kathy:** That’s because they’re his hedge clippers. You borrowed them and didn’t return them for over a year.

**Ronald:** [*changing the subject*] Yip! Yip! Yip!

**Kathy:** Stop it! I’m serious, the two of you need to put your pettiness aside and act like grown-ups.

**Ronald:** I will when he does.

**Kathy:** That’s exactly what I’m talking about. [*sternly*] Ronald Riley, we’ve prayed about this and we’re going to invite them to church with us.

**Ronald:** Fine. As soon as Christmas rolls around again.

**Kathy:** No. We’ll invite them this week. Now pick up the phone and give them a call.

**Ronald:** Can’t we just throw some more apples in their yard?

**Kathy:** Ronald . . .

**Ronald:** Okay. [*picks up phone and dials*] Yeah, Doug? This is Ron Riley from next door. [*pause*] No, I don’t need to borrow anything . . . [*looks at Kathy and shrugs*] we just wanted to invite you and Shirley to come to church with us this Sunday.

**Kathy:** Well . . .

**Ronald:** [*shushes her*] No, it’s nothing special, it’s just that we thought you guys might enjoy some good Bible teaching . . . [*retreating*] not that we think you’re heathens or anything like that, I just thought that you’d . . .

**Kathy:** Well . . .

**Ronald:** [*shushes her*] Yeah, well I see. No it’s no problem at all. [*pause*] Yeah, we’ll talk to you later.

**Kathy:** Well?

**Ronald:** I don’t believe it.

**Kathy:** What? What did he say?\*

***(\* Ending 1)***

**Ronald:** He said they’d come. Now what do we do?

[*Blackout*]

***(\* Ending 2)***

**Ronald:** He invited us to their church.

[*Blackout*]

***(\* Ending 3)***

**Ronald:** He said they’ve been coming to our church for the past three weeks and that they sat right behind us last week.

[*Blackout*]

**The Power of a Whisper Worship Series**

**Week 4 – Sermon – Whispers that Will Change the World**

**(Major Stephen Yoder)**

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| **Scripture:** | Acts 9:1-22 |
| **Text:** | Acts 9:21-22: All those who heard him were astonished. . . . Saul grew more and more powerful and baffled the Jews. . . . |
| **Focus:** | Obedience to God’s whispers will always lead to something that glorifies God. |
| **Function:** | To glorify God through obedience to his whispers. |

**INTRODUCTION**

God understands why we sometimes hesitate to do what he asks of us. God knows that it’s not that we don’t **want** to be obedient, but he understands very well our human condition. Let’s begin with the obvious for Ananias and for us: God will never ask of you what you can do yourself; he always asks more so that you have to rely on him!

SASB #773, verse 2 of that song melds beautifully with Acts 9 and the experience of Ananias:

 If all were easy, if all were bright,

 Where would the cross be, and where the fight?

 But in the hardness, God gives to you

 Chances of proving that you are true.

Or, here’s how Jesus himself referenced that idea as recorded in Luke 9:23-24:

*If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it.*

Have you ever thought about how much you and I have in common with Ananias? And aren’t you grateful for his very human example! Let’s take a look at Ananias in Acts 9:10-19:

Verse 10 – a disciple, a follower of Jesus

Verse 10 – God knows him personally by name

Verse 10 – seemingly ready to serve – *“Yes, Lord”*

Verse 11-12 – asked to do something utterly terrifying!

Verse 13-14 – hesitant before God

Verse 15-16 – given a nudge by God

Verse 17 – ultimately obedient

Verse 18-19 – great result!

A disciple – just like you and me! How wonderful to have that in common with today’s hero. But what we don’t have in common with Ananias, necessarily, is such a clear explanation about why God asked him to do this thing. But do you have to know all the why’s and wherefore’s in order to obey? Here are two simple questions for us to consider:

* What are the benefits of disobeying God?
* What are the problems caused by disobeying God?

Corrie Ten Boom was greeting people at the back door of the church following one of her presentations about her life in a German prisoner of war camp, and suddenly realized someone in line to greet her was one of the Nazi guards who sorely used her and her sister. She had to decide to step out on the “hard road” of obedience. [*Corrie Ten Boom’s short short story, “I’m Still Learning to Forgive,” is at end of sermon.*]

What about Salvationist young people around the world that are denied education simply because they’re Christians? What about believers who are physically, mentally, emotionally beaten and abused simply because they bear the name of Christ as their own?

But I don’t want to leave you out! What hard obedience have you followed and what have you suffered for Jesus that is a proving of your faith? To the willing, faithful, ready follower of Jesus Christ, God’s divine whisper is stronger than the shouts and cries and bellowing and bullying of the world, because we want to be good “trees” for Jesus, don’t we?!

Matthew 7:17-21 –

*. . . Every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.*

*“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.”*

Remember in the “Wizard of Oz” when Glinda asks Dorothy if she’s a good witch or a bad witch? Let me ask you simply: Are you a good tree or a bad tree? Do you bear good fruit or bad fruit? You’ll be proven one way or the other, so answer yourself honestly! The testing is in the whisper or hard obedience. After all, who cares what you *say*; we’re watching what you *do*!

Who likes being lied to? No one does—including God. So don’t call him Lord if you don’t mean to be obedient. It’s a lie. Here’s the high call of Jesus to us all; I wonder if Ananias had heard his words before? Luke 6:27-28:

*Love your enemies . . . Do good to those who hate you. . . . Bless those who curse you. . . . Pray for those who mistreat you.*

Can someone please check Acts 9:17 and tell me who went with Ananias to do this terrifying deed? *Then Ananias went to the house and entered it* (verse 17). He went alone.

So many of our Salvation Army songs jive with this idea of standing alone, being faithful alone, being given up personally for God – like this verse from SASB Song #801 from the pen of Commissioner Harry Read himself:

 God’s soldier has to stand alone,

 Accepting burdens not his own;

 A lonely work he cannot shirk,

 Where dark and deadly dangers lurk.

 God’s soldier must courageous be,

 And from his duties never flee,

 For millions wait, whose need is great,

 And he must not God’s plan frustrate.

I’ve shared with you the hard word from the Lord, and you seem to have taken it well; so let me give you a bright note to cheer you on your way! Obedience to God’s whisper will always lead to something that brings glory to himself. And because you and I want to bring glory to God, we **choose** today the path of obedience, even . . .

* When I’m not in the mood.
* When it’s not convenient.
* When it doesn’t make sense to me.
* When I’d prefer to do something else.
* When it’s embarrassing.
* When it hurts or costs.

Like the kind of God-honoring life Jesus himself lived, and which his faithful follower Ananias demonstrated to us in Acts 9. Now it’s time for you to decide what kind of follower you will be!

The following description of Corrie Ten Boom’s experience is excerpted from her 1971 autobiography, *The Hiding Place*, written with the help of John and Elizabeth Sherrill.

**I’m Still Learning to Forgive**

***by Corrie Ten Boom***

It was in a church in Munich that I saw him, a balding heavy-set man in a gray overcoat, a brown felt hat clutched between his hands. People were filing out of the basement room where I had just spoken. It was 1947 and I had come from Holland to defeated Germany with the message that God forgives.

And that’s when I saw him, working his way forward against the others. One moment I saw the overcoat and the brown hat; the next, a blue uniform and a visored cap with its skull and crossbones. It came back with a rush: the huge room with its harsh overhead lights, the pathetic pile of dresses and shoes in the center of the floor, the shame of walking naked past this man. I could see my sister’s frail form ahead of me, ribs sharp beneath the parchment skin. Betsie, how thin you were!

Betsie and I had been arrested for concealing Jews in our home during the Nazi occupation of Holland; this man had been a guard at Ravensbruck concentration camp where we were sent.

“You mentioned Ravensbruck in your talk,” he was saying. “I was a guard in there.” No, he did not remember me.

“But since that time,” he went on, “I have become a Christian. I know that God has forgiven me for the cruel things I did there, but I would like to hear it from your lips as well. *Fräulein,* ...” his hand came out, ... “will you forgive me?”

And I stood there — I whose sins had every day to be forgiven — and could not. Betsie had died in that place — could he erase her slow terrible death simply for the asking?

It could not have been many seconds that he stood there, hand held out, but to me it seemed hours as I wrestled with the most difficult thing I had ever had to do.

For I had to do it — I knew that. The message that God forgives has a prior condition: that we forgive those who have injured us. “If you do not forgive men their trespasses,” Jesus says, “neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses.”

And still I stood there with the coldness clutching my heart. But forgiveness is not an emotion — I knew that too. Forgiveness is an act of the will, and the will can function regardless of the temperature of the heart. “Jesus, help me!” I prayed silently. “I can lift my hand, I can do that much. You supply the feeling.”

And so woodenly, mechanically, I thrust my hand into the one stretched out to me. And as I did, an incredible thing took place. The current started in my shoulder, raced down my arm, sprang into our joined hands. And then this healing warmth seemed to flood my whole being, bringing tears to my eyes.

“I forgive you, brother!” I cried. “With all my heart!”

For a long moment we grasped each other’s hands, the former guard and the former prisoner. I had never known God’s love so intensely as I did then.

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