

Dear Brothers and Sisters



A scribe asked him, *'Which is the first of all the commandments?'* Jesus replied, *'Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is Lord alone! You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength. The second is this: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'*

The greatest commandment is to Hear, to Listen.

This command is given to Israel.

Israel - the name given to Jacob. Israel means 'strong with God.' Jacob wrestled with God, trying to overcome him, but discovered God was stronger than he. Jacob left the struggle with a dislocated hip, limping the rest of his life. He was weak, but would be strong in the measure he leaned God. His name became Israel. Our name is Israel if we have this experience.

Jacob had to learn to listen to God.

Faith, says St. Paul, is transmitted, or handed on, through listening.

Only those who listen to God have faith. They are the true Israel.

Thus, the most important thing we can do is hear God speaking to us. To do so produces faith, and with faith everything is possible, but without it nothing is possible.

Did you hear God speaking today? Did you listen to him? What did He say to you? How do you know it was him?

Christians are called to be a people of the ear, those who listen to God's voice.

God speaks to us primarily in the events of our life, in Scripture, and in the Magisterium, the Church.

Usually we do not hear Him at all. We are too busy with our own thoughts, our own plans, our own desires, our own projections, our own worries, our own problems to fix.

Try this. Sit down alone and in silence. Calm yourself, close your eyes, and begin to repeat, slowly, these words: 'Jesus, Son of David, Have pity on me, a sinner.' Do it for fifteen minutes. Do it again the next day. Do it again the following day. Do it every day for a week.

You will begin to hear God speaking to you. He was always speaking to you, but now you have the chance to hear him.

You will discover that he is the only God. You will begin to love him.

Fr. Sean