

Near To You a choral reading for three voices

Introductory Notes

Hear, O my people, and I will speak.
Psalm 50.7

To hear God speaking, to listen to his voice does not necessarily involve the auditory senses, but is like a field of vibrations that surround one's life and one's horizon with an engaging reality that overwhelms what is in sight before one.

Prayer, Hans Urs von Balthasar

How does the Word of God enter our lives? How does it make its home in our minds, in our hearts? And how do we make it stick? Sometimes we try to force-feed ourselves with programs, disciplines and exercises. We feel the pressure to be spiritually attuned, spiritually robust, spiritually always advancing towards some higher ideal.

While these efforts display the best of intentions, they are not always aligned with God's ways. Deuteronomy 30.11-14 and Paul's reprise of this text in Romans 10.5-9 point to another dynamic of God's ways with us human beings. Even as we strain and struggle to obtain and retain God's Word, the truth of the matter is that this Word is already so near you it is within you — in your mouth and in your heart. It is gift. It is given in trust and always to be trusted.

So relax. Release. To believe and to hear the word of God are one and the same thing.

Listen for the Word. Give ear to the rushing waters of baptism that continue to surround you. Listen for the resurrection.

This is your life.

Near To You

a choral reading for three voices

- A Word
[
- B Let those who have ears
C do you have ears?
B let them listen
- A Listen
[
- A And God said
B God speaks
God speaks the Word
- C In the beginning was the Word
A Word from the beginning
C hovering over the depths
deep calling to deep
- B Word of all worlds
A through whom the world was made
C the light of all people
shining in the darkness
- A the Word
C full of grace and truth
B given to us
C full of grace and truth
[
- B Moses
A who first heard God's word at the burning bush
after many years of desert wandering
B summoned all the Israelites and said to them
C What is asked of you
is not too hard for you or beyond your reach
Do not say in your hearts
- A The word is far away
too far away to reach
too long a journey
- C The Word is not in heaven
that you need say
- A Who will go up to Heaven for us
to get the Word
so that we may hear the Word
and observe it?
[

C Again
 Do not say in your hearts
 A The Word is far away
 Who will cross to the other side of the sea
 Who will abandon safety and the shoreline
 B Who will descend into the abyss for us
 to get the Word
 so that we might hear the Word
 and observe it ?
 [
 C No
 A These are not the questions
 C No
 B Do not be deceived
 C For the Word is near you
 in your heart and in your mouth
 A so near
 B it is already in your mouth
 already in your heart
 C in your breath and in your blood
 B you cannot escape it
 [
 B It pulses with your every heart-beat
 A so near
 B it moves with your every breath
 C so near
 B it vibrates with every word you speak
 A so near
 B it soars with every song you sing
 A so near

 [
 C You hear
 A because you were created in the Word
 the Word of God
 B so near you
 C through whom all things are made
 A because you were created
 C created in the Word
 A It cannot be taken from you
 B so very near you
 [
 [

C Yes
 A You need not search it out
 B It searches you
 the light that enlightens all peoples
 A No planning
 No long distance travel
 C The word is near you
 B so very near you
 [
 A It is not what you see
 It is not what you think
 It is not what you feel
 B It is what is given you to hear
 A Faith comes by hearing
 C ah yes
 A the Word of God in your mouth
 C ah yes
 B the Word of God in your heart
 C ah yes
 A and what is heard
 B comes through the Word
 C of Christ ROMANS 10.17
 B that dwells in you so richly COLOSSIANS 3.16
 [
 A Do not be among those
 who look and look and do not see
 C who listen and listen and do not hear
 [
 A Catch the word as it flies by you
 B gentle breath
 A catch it as it rests upon your forehead
 C sweet slow whisper
 A catch it as it pounds upon your chest
 B heavy hammer
 A catch it as it cuts between
 C a two-edged sword
 A cuts between
 life and death
 [
 B Listen for the Word
 C Listen to the Word
 A Listen in the Word
 C the Word so near you
 B And speak the words that gird your heart

that sound your soul
A sweet deep echo
C the Word so very near you
[
A Have you heard the Word
the Word of God?
C this word
A heard and unheard
vibrating out through all time
B It is not beyond you in the heavens
C nor lost in the depths
A No
B It is near you
so utterly near you
C already in your mouth
already in your heart
A in your breath and in your blood
B You cannot escape it
C It is your life
[
A Word

Presentation time: 4-1/2 minutes

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