

## 1 The Divine Secret: Part 2

## 2 God Has Got a Secret

- In my last sermon, I shared how God has a secret—a mystery that has been kept hidden since the beginning of the world. (Rom. 16:25)
- A plan that was so secret that if it was made known, the rulers of this world would have not crucified the Lord of glory. (1 Cor. 2:8)
- Yet God has made it known to His holy apostles and prophets and entrusted His “secret things” to them. (1 Cor. 4:1)
- Nevertheless, not everyone can receive this knowledge, as it is spiritually discerned and it is a gift to those whom God has chosen.

## 3 SPIRITUAL DISCERNMENT

- Over and over in both the Old Testament and New Testament we find a phrase that is used both positively and negatively.
- It is the phrase, “Eyes that see and ears that hear” or “Eyes that don’t see and ears that don’t hear.”
- Both are referring to people’s ability to not only discern truth, but connect the activity of Jesus of Nazareth with that of God.

## 4 Parables

- The disciples came to him and asked, “Why do you speak to the people in parables?” (Matt 13:10 NIV)
- He replied, “The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them. (Matt 13:11 NIV)
- [Why?] “For this people’s heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.” (Matt 13:15 NIV)
- But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear. (Matt 13:16 NIV)

## 5 Origins of Unbelief

- The word of the LORD came to me: “Son of man, you are living among a rebellious people. They have eyes to see but do not see and ears to hear but do not hear, for they are a rebellious people. (Ezek 12:1–2 NIV)
- “Why is my language not clear to you? Because you are unable to hear what I say. [Why?] You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desire.” (John 8:43–44 NIV)
- “If I am telling the truth, why don’t you believe me? He who belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God.” (John 8:46–47 NIV)

## 6 My Sheep

- “The watchman opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice.” (John 10:3–4 NIV)
- “But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger’s voice.” (John 10:5 NIV)
- Jesus used this figure of speech, but they did not understand what he was telling them. (John 10:6 NIV)

## 7 My Sheep

- “I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me — just as the Father knows me and I know the Father — and I lay down my life for the sheep.” (John 10:14)
- “I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd.” (John 10:15–16 NIV)

## 8 My Sheep

- “Many of them said, “He is demon–possessed and raving mad. Why listen to him?” But others said, “These are not the sayings of a man possessed by a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?” (John 10:20–21 NIV)
- Jesus answered, “I did tell you, but you do not believe. The miracles I do in my Father’s name speak for me, but you do not believe because you are not my sheep. My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.” (John 10:25–27 NIV)

## 9 Who Are the Sheep?

- They are people who have not rebelled against the voice of the Holy Spirit by making their hearts callous—refusing to accept guilt or correction.
- As Jesus has said, . . .
  - “This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God.” (John 3:19–21 NIV)

## 10 Stephen the Martyr

- “You stiff-necked people, with uncircumcised hearts and ears! You are just like your fathers: You always resist the Holy Spirit!” (Acts 7:51 NIV)

- “Was there ever a prophet your fathers did not persecute? They even killed those who predicted the coming of the Righteous One. And now you have betrayed and murdered him — you who have received the law that was put into effect through angels but have not obeyed it.” (Acts 7:52–53 NIV)

## 11 Work of the Holy Spirit

- Those who harden their hearts and refuse correction from the Holy Spirit become spiritually blind where they call good evil and evil good.
- They will even call the activity of God through Jesus the work of the devil and want to kill Him along with all those who support Him.
- But those who receive correction from the Holy Spirit and take responsibility for their sins, God by His grace does a work in their hearts, so that when the Gospel of Christ is preached they believe.
- These people are God’s Sheep—chosen by the Father who having listened already to God’s voice, follow Jesus and are blessed. Why? because they are already blessed.

## 12 Blessed are . . .

- When Jesus gives His sermon on the mount, He is actually calling out to His Sheep—giving them assurance of their blessedness because they listen to the Holy Spirit.
  - poor in spirit (recognize their sinfulness and rightfully judge their spiritual state)
  - mourn (regret and feel sorry over their spiritual failures)
  - meek (not stubborn, willing to comply to God’s will)
  - hunger and thirst for righteousness (deeply wants to do what is right)
  - merciful (willing to give others a second chance)
  - pure in heart (no pretension or false motives)
  - peacemakers (willing to be part of the solution in the repairing of relationships)
  - accept persecution for righteousness (willing to make a stand for what is right)
  - accept persecution for following Jesus (willing to identify with Jesus)

## 13 God Knows His Sheep

- God knows His sheep before the sheep are conscious of this fact.
  - When Jesus saw Nathanael approaching, he said of him, “Here is a true Israelite, in whom there is nothing false.” “How do you know me?” Nathanael asked. Jesus answered, “I saw you while you were still under the fig tree before Philip called you.” (John 1:47–48 NIV)
- Why did Jesus tell his disciples to be optimistic in their outreach and that the fields were “white to harvest?”

- Why did he tell them that “others” had done the hard work and that they would be “reaping” where they had not sowed?
  - One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision: “Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent. For I am with you, and no one is going to attack and harm you, because I have many people in this city.” (Acts 18:9–10 NIV)

#### 14 God Knows His Sheep

- A short man that everyone believed was a sinner because of his wealth and position as a Tax Collector was singled out by Jesus for a special visit at dinner.
  - All the people saw this and began to mutter, “He has gone to be the guest of a ‘sinner.’”
  - But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, “Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount.”
  - Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.” (Luke 19:7–10 NIV)

#### 15 The Love of the Father

- “All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away.” (John 6:37 NIV)
- “Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.” (John 17:25–26 NIV)
- “Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him.” (John 17:1–2 NIV)
- “Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.” (John 17:24 NIV)

#### 16 The Divine Secret

- The Divine Secret is this, . . .
  - God is reconciling himself to the world, through His Son, Jesus Christ for the sake of those who have hardened not their hearts and have “Eyes that see and ears that hear.” They will put their faith in the words of His Son through the preaching of the gospel of Christ.

- Thus having understanding to the things of God they can become a vessel holy and pure where God comes by His spirit and lives His life through us.
- As the Apostle Paul has said, I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness — the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints. To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. (Col 1:25–27 NIV)

## 17 Conclusion

- For God has called us to be participants in His divine nature so that we can through His precious promises escape the lust and evil that is in the world—caused by those who have hardened their hearts, where we can be for God—His disciples and bring glory and honor to His name. (See 2 Peter 1:1–4)
- God by His Spirit has done the hard work. He has found a remnant of people from all nations, tribes, and people groups who are now primed for faith.
- All we need to do is go and preach the Good News of Jesus Christ with clarity and power and those who are called and chosen by grace will believe.
- As the Scripture says, “not by works, but by Him who calls.” (Romans 9:12)
- Therefore [let us] go and make disciples of all nations, . . . because God by His Spirit is preparing a people for us to make into being His disciples. The fields are indeed white to harvest.