

## E-DEVOTION FOR FEBRUARY 4

Many times, throughout the Gospels Jesus uses these words... "***He who has ears, let him hear.***"

Hearing is an amazing gift. As many of you can identify, my hearing isn't what it used to be. I know that's just something that comes with aging. And then there are those times when I hear (in a loud voice) ... **Do you HEAR me?** Yes, that happens.

So... maybe it isn't so much about 'hearing,' as it is about 'listening.' Jesus is clearly telling us that we have the capacity to HEAR Him. But we may not be listening.

In James 1:19, we read, "*Everyone must be quick to listen, but slow to speak and slow to become angry.*"

Quick... to listen. I suppose that means turning one's attention away from the television or the book one is concentrating on so steadily... tuning out all the clamor around us and really 'listening,' focusing on the speaker. Ever find yourself so distracted when 'listening' to someone that when they finish speaking and look at you with that quizzical look... you have no idea what was just said? That's been my experience more than once.

I remember when the children were small and on more than one occasion, they would take my face in their little hands and say... face to face... LISTEN TO ME! As I look back on that, I wish I would have been more 'quick to listen.' Slower to speak and slower to become angry.

We can certainly apply those words to our living in these days. We may 'hear' certain things and then go about repeating or disparaging what we have heard, when in truth... we really didn't 'listen' very carefully.

And then there is that anger. It often does come after some 'not so careful' listening and too quickly speaking. So, let's all focus on becoming better listeners. Really listening. And then, maybe holding our tongue. If we do that, the level of anger might just go down a notch or two. I hope so.

Wear your mask, wash your hands, fold them, bow your head, and ask God to give you the ability to be a better listener. I know I need to work on that.

Pray with me: "Dear Lord, so many times we find ourselves angry because we have spoken before we really 'heard' what was said. Help us to listen more and speak less. We pray especially for those good listeners who sit at the bedside of the sick, for those who listen to the cries of the depressed, for those who listen for the whole story before making judgements. Give us all a little more patience to really listen. Amen. In Jesus' Name, Amen.