

HAL M. HELMS

ECHOES *of*
ETERNITY

VOLUME I



PARACLETE PRESS

BREWSTER, MASSACHUSETTS

2019 Eighth Printing

Echoes of Eternity: Listening to the Father Volume I

Copyright © 1996, 2004, 2011 by The Community of Jesus, Inc.
ISBN 978-1-55725-173-2

Unless otherwise designated, Scripture quotations are taken from the King James Version of the Bible.

Scripture quotations designated RSV are from the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, copyright 1946, 1952, 1971 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA. Used by permission.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Echoes of eternity: listening to the Father.
p. cm.
ISBN 1-55725-173-8 (alk. paper)
1. Devotional calendars. I. Paraclete Press.

BV4810.E24 1996
242'.2—dc20

96-24801
CIP

15 14 13 12 11 10 9 8

All rights reserved. No portion of this book may be reproduced, stored in an electronic retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or any other—except for brief quotations in printed reviews, without the prior permission of the publisher.

Published by Paraclete Press
Brewster, Massachusetts
www.paracletepress.com
Printed in China

Introduction

Talking and listening. Speaking and hearing. These are the fundamental prerequisites for conversation. Yet with most of us, our relation with our heavenly Father consists mostly of our speaking. Our oldest traditions, however, tell us that we are invited to hear as well as speak.

We do well to be cautious in this procedure. Our own wishes and the interference of other voices can drown out the “still, small voice,” unless we arm ourselves against illusion, delusion and deception. We do well to be modest in our claims about what we have heard.

Yet having said all that, there is a wonderful invitation that stands as valid today as it was when it was spoken:

“If any one hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me. . . . He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” (Revelation 3:20b,22 RSV)

What the Spirit has said to one who has listened is shared in the hope that these impressions will convey “what the Spirit says” to the hearts of those who read them and will encourage others to “open the door” to hear for themselves what the Spirit is saying.

*Hal M. Helms
Chaplain of the Community of Jesus,
Orleans, Massachusetts
August, 1996*

JANUARY

Lord, speak to me, that I may speak

In living echoes of Thy tone;

As Thou hast sought, so let me seek

Thine erring children lost and lone.

Frances R. Havergal

1836-1879

January First

Lord, Thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations.

Psalm 90:1 (RSV)

Have no fear for tomorrow, My child. Tomorrow will hold only what I bring or allow in your life. All your tomorrows are in My hand. I am the Lord of the years. My hand is a gracious hand and all My ways are faithfulness.

As long as you keep your eyes focused on minor pains and difficulties in your path, you rob yourself of the joy of My fellowship—the communion of the Holy Spirit. You are meant to walk in a different realm—the larger reality of My kingdom. This is not an imaginary “place.” It is a present reality which is open to My children who seek and find it. Doubt and self-pity close off this reality from you, but they do not, cannot, destroy it. So seek and find, My child. Seek and find what hitherto you have only dimly grasped.

January Second

First be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

Matthew 5:24

Put away ill will. It corrodes and eats away the very foundation of your soul. Fight against the feelings of hurt and outrage, and turn

every thought that would lead to ill will into prayer. You cannot hate and really pray for someone's good at the same time.

Realize, however, that it is primarily for your own sake that you are doing this. You must guard against further indulging in hateful thoughts and feelings—even repressed ones—and pray for *good* for those who hurt or oppose you. You see examples of what can happen to a soul who did not restrain feelings of hate and vengeance. Not a pretty sight, is it? Hatred and ill will are never pretty when fully unmasked. The pleasure you derive in them cannot be compared to the *joy* you will have when you put them away.

January Third

If Thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with Thee, that Thou mayest be feared.

Psalms 130:3,4 (RSV)

Your fear of being wrong, My child, shows that you are not living by grace, but by “works.” This is not a minor fault, but a major block in our relationship and in your spiritual growth. Go and read again Brother Lawrence’s testimony—and let your heart absorb the truth of it.

Worry about what others may think of you, how they react to you, puts an obstacle between you and Me. No matter how pious you may appear to others, I see your heart, and I tell you again: your fear of being wrong shows that you are not living by grace. Your soul

is filled with accusations against My goodness. Otherwise, there would be only a desire to please Me out of gratitude, not out of fear.

January Fourth

While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light.

John 12:36

Hark unto Me, My dear child, and listen attentively. Learn to look with the eyes of the spirit beyond the outward shell. Let your thoughts and your words aim at what lies hidden from the natural view, and do not be confused by it. I will give you the discernment you need in order to minister life. Remember that My love and care go beyond any immediate problem. Pray that you may see with Me the long view—the goal to which I am leading each child of Mine. Too much attention to each single incident can cloud that vision and cause unnecessary problems.

January Fifth

If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.

Romans 12:18

My Spirit strives within to bring your spirit into harmony with My divine purposes. Often you are like a bird trapped or held in the hand—struggling to get “free”—to what? You do not know.

My Spirit strives to bring you into peace. You long for peace, but you do not know how to achieve it. Only My wisdom and My way can bring you into perfect peace—and for My way to prevail, your ways must be given up.

Marvel not that the striving between us often leaves you confused and unsatisfied. These are indications of your lack of full surrender. The dissatisfaction is the fruit of your hold-out at some level. But I am God, and My mercy does not abandon you to your false “victory.” The fruit of it in your soul is meant to warn you that losing is winning, and winning is always losing.

January Sixth

If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

Galatians 5:25 (RSV)

I am caring for you, My child, I am caring for you. Remember, with Me there are no accidents, no surprises. What comes to you unexpectedly and unbidden has been long known and foreseen by Me. It comes by My permission and carries the seed of My blessing.

I bid you now to look up. Trust Me beyond your understanding and knowledge. Put your hand in My fatherly hand—to be guided into what lies ahead for you. Fear not and be not troubled. I am faithful, and will not leave or forsake you.

January Seventh

Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I will say, Rejoice.

Philippians 4:4

Praise is the best medicine, but praise must be from the right motive. It must not be thought of as a source of blessing and healing, even though they are its by-products. Praise must come from your gratitude for My many mercies, and for specific ones. Let it well up from your heart and unite with the universal song from all the ages past—an eternal alleluia. Let it drown out the little voices of woe and complaint that run around in your head. Let praise draw you out of concern with your physical condition—and thus foretaste My victory over them all. Praise is work for you, My child, because you have done so little of it in your life. Redeem the time you have left on earth—let your mouth and your heart be filled with My praise.

January Eighth

If ye keep my commandments ye shall abide in My love; even as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love.

John 15:10

Hear and obey. That is the key to your path of blessing. Hearing is not enough. The “birds of the air” pick up the seed sown “along the wayside.” Thoughts, fears, and dreams travel along that way—

leaving precious little soul in which My word can take root and grow. Nourish that which lives. Treasure the words you have received, not as museum pieces to be admired, dusted, and stored—but as spiritual dynamos, sources of renewal, “jump-starters” when you have grown lax or weak.

Hear. Blessed are the ears attuned to My voice. Blessed are those in whose hearts are My ways.

Obey. Procrastination is but another form of disobedience. It is not neutral, but an active, corrosive evil. Watch it, and move against it at all costs.

January Ninth

Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort, who comforteth us in all our tribulation.

II Corinthians 1:3,4

Bring them to Me, My child, bring them to Me—the wounds of the past, the painful memories of foolish choices, the hurtful wrongs you inflicted on others—all that burdens your soul with sad regrets. It was for sinners that I came to this earth. It was for the undone, the heavy-laden souls who knew no relief from the pain of their wrongness.

The crucifixion you feel as these old memories return is a crucifixion of pride. The humiliation and shame are but necessary blows to the nature that still seeks to be “somebody.” As you bury the

memories in My wounds, there is no place for boasting or vainglory. Neither is there any reason to continue to nurture the pain. Gratitude, praise, and expectation can replace the defeating deadness of old regrets.

January Tenth

Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever Thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God.

Psalms 90:2

My word today is this: Endless. You see and fear the “ends.” I see endlessness—eternity. You fear becoming nothing. I see your life growing and continuing. Come over to My viewpoint. See your life in this perspective. Do not grasp at the past nor the present. Let them go with the passing. They are not meant to last. But your life in Me is endless. New times, new challenges, new opportunities to know My ways better. Endless.

January Eleventh

Everyone that asketh receiveth.

Matthew 7:8

Ask and it will be given you. Be more bold in your asking, My child, for I take pleasure in granting the requests of My children. Asking is a way of expressing your faith in Me and in My goodwill

toward you. Take your eyes off the “impossibilities” of circumstances, and ask for what I put in your heart to ask. The process is vital to your maturing and deepening in faith.

Make a record of the big and small things you pray for, so that you will know the surety of what I am saying to you. Ask and believe!

January Twelfth

Look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged.

Isaiah 51:1

My child, do not despise the day of your beginnings. It was no accident or chance that you were born and brought up in your family. Do not be ashamed of them nor of their devotion. All My people are shaped by traditions they did not invent. You have carried into your present life some of the seeds of truth I planted long ago. In spite of your rebellion and sin, the seed remained. It will yet bear fruit to My glory.

Give thanks then, My child, for My fatherly care over you. Let the memories of the past give you courage and incentive for faithfulness in the present. Contemplate My goodness and the sweetness of My presence. In the secret place commune with Me, and do not be ashamed of the “homeliness” of your devotion. There is room for that, too, in My heart.

January Thirteenth

Make Thy face to shine upon Thy servant; and teach me Thy statutes.

Psalm 119:135 (RSV)

Behind the clouds, My glorious light. Behind the doubts, My sure promises. Behind the fears, My blessed hope. Let no darkness remain in your soul, My child. Let the light of My Spirit shine in its hidden places. Do not nourish dark and wicked thoughts, even for an instant. Their stain remains and pollutes. There is light behind the clouds, glorious light. Seek and find it and walk in it.

January Fourteenth

Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; Thy walls are continually before me.

Isaiah 49:16

My child, I have told you, you are graven on My hand—My right hand. By this I meant to quell every fear and doubt you have about your life in Me. “He who fears is not perfected in love.” That is a message to you in the first place, so that you bear in mind the inner work you must still do. Love is active, not passive—and you have become much, much too passive. Exercise your love—such as it is—so that it might fill a greater space in you. Stop quenching the Spirit and act on the intuitive thoughts that come to you. In loving

your neighbor as yourself, you will drive out the overweening self-concern that characterizes your life. Since I remember you, you can afford to forget you. Make a stab at it today!

January Fifteenth

For he doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men.

Lamentations 3:33

I tell you of very truth, I share the sorrow of your heart for those you love who walk in the darkness of this world. The pain you feel is only a minor portion of Mine, and there is no way to avoid the suffering. I know My plans for them, which you do not, but you can trust My infinite mercy and wisdom to act. In the meantime, without being frivolous and irresponsible, you can keep lifting them up to Me. Remember that “prayer availeth much.”

All this will work together for good for you and for those for whom you are praying, and My glory will be seen. Nothing worthwhile comes without struggle and pain since sin entered My world. But in spite of it all, I still love My creation and My plans for it are good.

My dear child, rest in Me.

January Sixteenth

But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory. . . .

II Corinthians 3:18

My child, it is a continual wonder and surprise to you that I, the Lord of all creation, should deign to speak and commune with you, a creature of dust and time. Yet here I glorify Myself in a way that only those created in My image can experience and realize. Nor is My glory a selfish one, for in this communion of Spirit with spirit, your own human nature is lifted to a new level.

Your earthly life span will never exhaust nor solve the mystery you touch here. That is too deep and profound for your present state. But it will “unfold” as you practice it, growing brighter and more precious, even as the mystery remains.

Take seriously this word: you are being prepared for the life beyond your earthly time-span. That is *real*. Do not lose sight of it nor waste the opportunities I am supplying you day by day.

January Seventeenth

. . . let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.

Hebrews 12:1

The riches of My kingdom are for the poor. They are hidden from those who come laden with their own gifts. That is why, My child, you are required to wait while we strip from you the weight of your internal wealth. Each time you are required to wait for My inner voice, you become aware anew of your own poverty of spirit. You face the deadness of your soul apart from My quickening power—and the suffering opens you to be blessed by My refreshing grace.

O ye of little faith! When will you learn to take each moment as it comes without faltering or whining at what it might turn out to be? Your lack of trust is a great handicap, and it is organically tied with your “inner wealth” which turns out to be dust and ashes. The riches of My kingdom are for the poor.

January Eighteenth

There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.

Psalm 91:10

“There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.” The prayers of others have often shielded you, though you knew nothing about it. The faithfulness of others has formed an easier path for you to follow. Be faithful, then, My child, in your watch. Hold up those for whom I have given you responsibility. Link your prayers with the faithful around and before you—that My will may be accomplished “on earth as it is in heaven.”

You still have much to learn about the mystery and marvel and might of prayer. These things are hidden from the wise, but are made known to “babes and sucklings”—to those who are small in their own eyes and are teachable.

January Nineteenth

I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help.

Psalm 121:1

Fix your eyes on the far mountains—mountains of hope. The lowlands breed despair unless you raise your eyes and your mind above the immediate problem. Inspiration is an infilling of Spirit—

your emptiness and lack filled up with what you can neither see nor understand. Yet it causes *substantial* change.

My work is not completed in a day. This is why I say, “Look to the far mountains.” The delays you experience will be much easier to bear when you keep this in mind. I am working My purpose out. I am not asleep. I am not oblivious to you or your prayers. As long as you keep your hope alive, you will find everything needful for your journey of faith.

January Twentieth

. . . and he went out, not knowing whither he went.

Hebrews 11:8

I am the Lord your God. As Abraham walked with Me, so I bid you. Your heritage, like his, exceeds your imagination. Like Abraham, you must allow your family to choose to separate themselves from you. All is not lost! I am still the Lord. I put your prayers and longing in your heart for them, and expect you to be faithful. But it must be praying, not pulling—intercession, not intervention.

The work of prayer is your most important task. Do not neglect it nor make light of it. Prayer taps the infinite resources reserved for those who ask, seek, and knock. Have I not told you?

January Twenty-first

And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

Revelation 21:27

As the sun shines on the earth bringing light and unveiling the darkness, so does My Spirit shine upon your soul. Dark recesses are hidden from your consciousness, but they are not hidden from Me. The cleansing, purifying work of light must go on to prepare you for your eternal home. “And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth.” So the cleansing is an important part of your preparation.

Fear not this process, My child. Already you know that each step brings release and greater freedom within. There are still “ties that bind” and keep you from a full realization of My perfect work, but do not despair nor grow discouraged. *That* would only slow down the process. Be honest with yourself and seek the Spirit of Truth in facing all accusations. He convicts, cleanses, and sets free.

January Twenty-second

. . . avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called.

I Timothy 6:20

My word is often turned aside because it appears too simple. I come to you in simplicity in order to cut across the false reasoning you have allowed to grow up over many years. You come to me and complain of feeling dead and empty. Yet, truth to tell, you are full of many things—mainly yourself. Emptying out results in your feeling less empty.

Keep it simple today, My child. Do not yield to the temptation to try to appear profound. I know the way you should walk, so let Me guide and lead.

January Twenty-third

I am the Good Shepherd, and know My sheep, and am known of Mine.

John 10:14

I am the Good Shepherd. I know My sheep and am known of Mine. I have known you since you were conceived in your mother's womb, and have watched over you with tender care.

Why would you doubt My care for you? I did not bring you this far to abandon you! But My ways are not your ways and you still have

much to learn of Me. Your knowledge and your faith are very small. I watch you draw back into yourself, rather than boldly coming out into the sunshine of My love.

January Twenty-fourth

This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.

Psalm 118:24

The day is Mine. All things are held together by My power and will. “The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof, the world and they that dwell therein.” The grandeur of this vision can bring light and hope into your dark day.

The day is Mine. I am the Light of the world and the Light of My people in a peculiar sense. I am your Light, My child, casting away the lingering shadows of doubt and sin. Light and health are closely related, as more light drives out the breeding places of sickness in your soul. You see and feel the bodily sickness, the ravages of disorder and disharmony in the flesh. I see the soul even more ravaged by dark thoughts and wrong attitudes. The soul struggles to live, but it needs My light and healing even more than does your bodily flesh.

The day is Mine. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness cannot overcome it. Be of good cheer!

January Twenty-fifth

Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity.

Psalm 37:1

Be not troubled in spirit over the negative things being bandied about. In very truth I tell you, the spirit of Antichrist is abroad and doing much harm among those open to it. It need not trouble you. Rather let it signal your need to draw closer to Me, your peace and your vindication. Did I not come to Job's defense after I had dealt with his self-righteousness? Did I not promise that those who follow Me would know persecution? This, My child, is but *reality*. It is built into the fallen state of this world. Until all is brought into conformity with My divine, creative purpose, conflict and persecution *will* be the lot of those who walk with Me.

But is it not a good walk, My child?

January Twenty-sixth

For we walk by faith, not by sight.

II Corinthians 5:7

Do not fret yourself with things too high for you—with concerns over which you have no control. Such fretting only robs you of peace and wastes energy. Focus on the things for which you are sent. Don't

fritter away the days and hours with idleness. Claim the high calling I have given you, and quit yourself like a man.

Those who walk with Me must sometimes walk in shadows. You must be prepared for silence as well as speech. I do not always explain what I am doing, and I want your unqualified trust in Me. If everything were absolutely clear, you would be walking by sight, and for My own reasons, I have called you to the walk of faith. Faith grows in the shadows, but shrinks in the light. You will understand this better when all becomes clear. In the shadows, practice praise. Go steadily on the path I have laid out for you, and be of good cheer.

January Twenty-seventh

And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

John 1:5

The day has dawned with the light of My love. Darkness cannot hold it back because I am its light. Your fears about the future are futile, for the future is in My hand. Every time you give way to foreboding, you abandon the faithground I have provided for you. My dear child, can you stop loving your children? Neither can I stop loving Mine. It is My nature to love, and so I counsel you again: leave the future to Me—your future and your loved ones' future. I care, and will care. Be at peace.

Go forward into the day without fear. I go before you and prepare your way. There are no surprises for Me in the events of the day, even

though they may surprise or even startle you. Keep your perspective. Do not allow the enemy to gain a stronghold through your imagination. Let the truth be your shield and buckler. Remember, My child, you are Mine and the day is Mine.

January Twenty-eighth

For we are saved by hope.

Romans 8:24

Cast not away your hope, My child, for I am its source and its fulfillment. It is I who put hope in your heart, and those who hold fast their hope shall not be confounded. The fractured image of reality you now see will one day be replaced by a clear, undistorted vision. You cannot see the whole picture, but what you see is enough.

January Twenty-ninth

But though He cause grief, yet will He have compassion according to the multitude of His mercies.

Lamentations 3:32

In the shadow of My hand, pain. In the touch of My hand, healing. Sometimes the shadow lingers and pain is prolonged. Will you trust Me in the shadow as well as the sun? Can you walk with Me over

rough ways and not complain? Comfort is a fleeting thing. Struggle brings inner strength. I do not want you to be consumed with attention on the difficulties of your life. They are yet minor in comparison with what many are called to endure. Rather choose to believe that shadows pass. My good will prevails, and your feeble faith is not in vain.

January Thirtieth

Thus saith the One whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit.

Isaiah 57:15

I have told you before, and I tell you again. You must not seek honor and recognition. Your service to Me must be free from the demand of reward. This craving, even when repressed and unconscious, binds you, blinds you, and closes your ears to My voice.

Do you not sense your emptiness and deadness when I am withdrawn from you? That can be and should be a useful reminder that you are not the creator or originator of all good things. They all flow from Me, and you are allowed to be the instrument by which they are expressed. That in itself is blessing enough!

January Thirty-first

*Before I was afflicted I went astray; but now have I kept Thy word.
Psalm 119:67*

My child, do not despise My chastenings. They are sent for your ultimate good, painful and difficult as they are for you. I have not forgotten to be gracious, and I am not absent from any trial you are being asked to endure. As Abraham found, My eye is upon you, and when the work is done, My answer is there, waiting to be revealed.

The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him. This holy fear is a protection against that part of your nature that would carry you into complete darkness. Cherish it, and tremble before My Word. Cherish it, and let it be a protection to you, like a wall around a sheltered garden. You will come to know and trust Me more and more if you will not despise My chastenings.

