

What Does God's Word Sound Like to You?

I can give you a host of reasons why I enjoy working at home:

- The Keurig coffee maker is nearby.
- Shoes are not required.
- The commute involves walking upstairs—without traffic.
- My wife is working at her job in the next room.

That last benefit, though, causes an occasion problem. I like having her close at hand, but this clashes occasionally with another benefit I find working at home.

- I listen to music while I work.

If you're familiar with the educational theory of multiple intelligences, I am a musical learner. Music enhances my learning and working environment. In



other words, I usually work better with music playing in the background. No Deff Leppard, thank you; my music is a mixture of classical and jazz. All day. (At this moment, it's the fourth movement from Brahms's fourth symphony.)

So far not a problem. But in my iTunes library is a fair share of opera, and when some aria kicks in, I hear my wife from the other room, "SOMEONE SOUNDS LIKE THEY'RE IN PAIN."

Over the years, I've come to appreciate and enjoy opera. OK, so I don't know what they're singing, but I didn't understand half the lyrics I listened to in the 70s either, so there. But what has become pleasant to my ears is painfully annoying (or annoyingly painful) to my wife.

We can all relate. We all have certain styles of music we enjoy that make others want to cover their ears. And vice versa. Our culture, background, and individual tastes draw us toward some sounds and

away from others. (I'm hoping heaven will be devoid of any accordions.)

This same idea applies to God's Word. When some people hear Scripture read and proclaimed, it sounds refreshing and beautiful.

"Your words became a delight to me and the joy of my heart, for I bear your name, Lord God of Armies" (Jer. 15:16).

For other, though, that same Word sounds harsh. It's hard to hear.

"Is not my word like fire' — this is the Lord's declaration — 'and like a hammer that pulverizes rock?'" (23:29).

God's Word is hard. In its words, I see my sin and rebellion against God. I see where I've failed. When I am living for myself or running from God, I don't want to hear the word of God. It hurts to hear its words because it reveals what I don't want revealed.

Yet the same Word can be healing. When I accept what I hear and embrace its truth, that hammer that breaks apart my sinful life becomes a light that shows me the path to deliverance and life. The Word of God that rebukes me is the same Word that continues on to correct me and train me in righteousness (2 Tim. 3:16).

My wife may never get to the point where she enjoys opera, but we can move from fear or disdain for the Word of God to a place that we take great joy in hearing it—even when it painfully exposes yet another area we need to bring under the lordship of Christ. Yes, it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart (Heb. 4:12), but as we let God work His Word into our lives, we will discover its words "are more desirable than gold —than an abundance of pure gold; and sweeter than honey dripping from a honeycomb" (Ps. 19:10).

Ooo, a portion of Verdi's *Il Trovatore* just started playing, so let me stop here and turn the volume up.