

The Gospel According to Luke

February 17, 2019

Reading: Luke 8:4-18

(Matthew 13:1-23 and Mark 4:1-25)

Sermon #33

Luke 8:4-18

Hearing – Part II

This morning in our 2nd study of Luke chapter 8, verses 4 to 18, I will put forth practical applications of the parable of the 4 soils. Last week it became clear that the sower is a preacher but it was critically important how one hears the Word of God. Let me review why the hearing is critical.

“Hearing” Parable

At the end of verse 8, Jesus calls to the people, “**He who has ears to hear, let him hear.**” This is the first mention in this passage of hearing. It is a warning that some people have physical ears only and they do not have spiritual ears to take the words of God into their heart, mind and soul.

The disciples after hearing the parable asked Jesus its meaning. Remember during the 3 years Jesus was teaching and preparing the disciples, but they had not yet been indwelled with the Holy Spirit. Jesus answers the disciples with a quote from Isaiah 6, verses 9 and 10, where God tell the prophet to go to the people of Israel and say, “**Keep on hearing, but do not understand; keep on seeing, but do not perceive.**”¹⁰ **Make the heart of this people dull, and their ears heavy, and blind their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed.**” Just as Israel at the time of Isaiah had hardened their hearts and no longer heard the words of God so too it had moved away from God at the time of Christ. Luke 8, verse 10 reads, “**To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of God, but for others they are in parables, so that “seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand.”**”

This is the 2nd reference to one's ability to hear – some hear spiritually revealing the secrets of God and some only physically which hardens their heart. Just as it was too late or time had run out for some in Isaiah's time so too this was true in Jesus' time and is certainly true today. For some, God's judgment takes place both here and in eternity. Paul's writing to the believers in Rome helps us understand, "Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves ...²⁶ For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. ...²⁸ And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done." (Romans 1:24, 26, 28) These people of the world did not hear. Do Jesus' teachings in the form of parables penetrate us and do we understand both the Father and Son better or do they not make any sense? The issue is the difference between physical and spiritual hearing.

The issue is hearing. We see this in each soil. Each soil in verses 12-15 describe a different type of hearing. Hearing is mentioned in each verse. In verse 12, the poor hearing allows Satan to take away the Word. Verse 13, the shallow hearing enables the trials of the world to destroy the Word. Verse 14, a partial hearing is drowned out by the worries, riches and pleasures world and the Word of God is choke out. Finally, in verse 15, there is a hearing with a good and honest heart, a spiritual heart and the Word of God bears fruit in perseverance. The issue is hearing: how one hears the preaching of the Word of God is key.

Last week I passed over verses 16 and 17 and went to the final reference to hearing in verse 18, "Take care then how you hear, for to the one who has, more will be given, and from the one who has not, even what he thinks that he has will be taken away." The conclusion is if you have spiritual ears and a good and honest heart you will receive understanding and your life will be fruitful for the kingdom. On the other hand, if your soil is not good, if you have only physical ears, then

even what you think you have will be taken away by the devil in verse 12, by the trials of the world in verse 13 and the worries, riches and pleasures of the world in verse 14 because all of these are under influence of the prince of this world.

How one hears is then a very important issue, in fact it has eternal consequences. Look at the end of verse 12, “so that they may not believe and be saved.” If one does not hear and does not have the Word of God in a good and honest heart, they will not be saved. No matter what some almost “Christian” churches teach there is only one path to salvation. Jesus said, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” (John 14:6) To come to the Father one must come through Jesus which includes believing in his divine Word, the Bible.

Hearing with a spiritual ear does not come naturally. It is a gift from God when he regenerates your soul. Once you are regenerated it takes dedicated effort to surrender oneself to the Holy Spirit allowing one to grow deeper in their relationship with God and this allows one to become fruitful for the kingdom.

Now I want to go back to verses 16 and 17. I have included them with the parable of the soils which ends in verse 18. Verse 18 is the conclusion of the parable of the soils and it also refers to verses 16 and 17, so I believe Luke intended verses to be included. Let me read them – follow me in you Bible, ¹⁶“No one after lighting a lamp covers it with a jar or puts it under a bed, but puts it on a stand, so that those who enter may see the light. ¹⁷For nothing is hidden that will not be made manifest, nor is anything secret that will not be known and come to light.”

Hearing Kingdom Secrets

Verse 16 is tied to verse 15 – Jesus is saying the bearing “fruit” of verse 15 is the “light” of verse 16. This light has the purpose of helping people see their way to “enter” the kingdom of God. This should not be surprising – a believer’s faith results in good works for the glory of God and they are His light to the world. Paul wrote, as believers we are “to Walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.” (Colossians 1:10) Earlier Luke wrote of this, as believers, we are to “Bear fruits in keeping with repentance.” (Luke 3:8) Good works founded in faith bring glory to God and in Matthew’s gospel account Jesus makes clear that good works are light. Jesus said, “let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good work and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.” (Matthew 5:16) Believing the Word of God with a good and honest heart produces both faith and fruit and the fruit of faith is God’s light. Bearing fruit for the kingdom is doing good deeds. Our lives, your life and mine lived for the glory of God gives light to show people how to come and enter God’s kingdom. You need to understand the world is watching each of us to observe what we truly believe by the way we live.

Jesus in verse 10 speaks of the hiddenness of the gospel, “for others they are in parables, so that “seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand.” Those without spiritual ears cannot hear and understand the gospel. But this is not to keep the disciples or you or me from the bold, public proclamation and the living out of the gospel for as believers for verse 10 tells us, “To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of God!” Verses 16 and 17 make clear our calling, “No one after lighting a lamp covers it with a jar or puts it under a bed, but puts it on a stand, so that those who enter may see the light. ¹⁷ For nothing is hidden that will not be made manifest, nor is anything secret that will not be known and come to light.” The question before each of us is, “Is my

life a light shining out into the dark world helping people see and come to the kingdom of God?” God is saying one of the primary purposes he has revealed the secrets of his kingdom to you is that the hearing will penetrate your heart’s ear and it will build your faith and upon that faith you are to be a servant doing good works and your good works are to be light to the spiritually dark world. Jesus said it another way giving instruction on how his followers, the children of God are to live, ²⁶ **“So have no fear of them, for nothing is covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. Have no fear of the world it cannot take your salvation. God is to be reveal in you.** ²⁷ **What I tell you in the dark, say in the light, and what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops. Jesus taught the truth and the light of God to those living in the dark world, but with his arrival darkness was ending and the gospel is to be proclaimed.** ²⁸ **And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.”** (Matthew 10:26-28) Christians need not fear death when they are the good soil, true believers. It is those who hear with spiritually dead ears of the first 3 soils that their souls die and they should fear eternity.

Here is what the parable of the soils is teaching; not only that your salvation and fruitfulness depend on how you hear the Word of God, but the success of how the Word of God spreads throughout the world depends on how you hear. This is why verse 18 begins after what Jesus reveals in verses 16 and 17 of how we are to be his light says **“Take care then how you hear.”** How the church hears the Word of God is critical and it a high calling because salvation is its fruit when one hears with spiritual ears. Remember Jesus’ words, **“let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good work and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.”** Hearing builds faith and faith produces good works for the glory of God and good works shine God’s light into the darkness of the world and the light of God shows

people how to come to him. How then should we, you and me, prepare for the hearing of God's Word and faithfully proclaim it as he has given it?

Preparing To Hear

I want to finish this morning with some practical applications of how you can prepare to hear God better and this will deepen your faith. I hope you will write them down and spend time thinking about them, discuss these with your family, and brothers and sisters in Christ. Talk about them and flesh them out in greater detail. I cannot give them the complete attention they deserve in the short time I have. How you prepare throughout the week to hear the Word of God preached on Sunday morning is important. Dedicating time to the Lord will not be pleasing to the evil one and often you will find resistance building through the week as Sunday grows closer. Saturday evening is important as you prepare your heart and mind. Having time on Sunday morning before your head to church is important for these set the framework of your mind and heart.

Pray

Spend time throughout the week in prayer. Pour out your heart to God and ask him to instill in you a good and honest heart as spoken of in verse 15. The world wants us to keep our old heart for what the heart loves is what we seek. Time in prayer seeking God molds our heart into the heart that loves and enjoys God. As one comes closer to God as the prophet Ezekiel wrote becomes true, God [“will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.”](#) (Ezekiel 36:26) Someone asked me to pray for them “in the spirit” this week. My thought was how can I pray and seek my God if I am not in the Spirit? Prayer is to be heart felt not some rote prayer done out of habit with little engagement. As one opens their heart in prayer the prophet Jeremiah says God [“will give them a heart to know](#)

that I am the LORD, and they shall be my people and I will be their God, for they shall return to me with their whole heart.” (Jeremiah 24:7) One cannot have a deep relationship with anyone in their life if they do not invest energy and time. I often pray to God and cry out, “Lord give me a heart for you. Please give me a humble and meek heart, a servant’s heart, a fruitful heart, a heart the seeks you above all else.”

Meditate

Meditate on the Word of God. Read portions of your Bible for understanding and to stir up hunger for God within your heart and mind. What is the purpose of an appetizer? It is to give you a taste and excite your hunger and make you look forward to the meal. If Sunday’s sermon is the meal given for you to feed on the Word of God then your meditations throughout the week will give you the aroma to want the meal. Who knows if you begin to partake of spiritual appetizers throughout the week you may begin eating spiritual meals before Sunday arrives. Take care how you hear! When you meditate on the Word of God you hear with your spiritual ear of you heart mind and soul.

Purify

Purify your mind by turning away from worldly entertainment that is dishonoring. James wrote, “Put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.” (James 1:21) I am not saying do not watch TV or movies. What I am saying is be careful what you put into you mind. This is an area I am working on. By the nighttime I am tired and vegging out is appealing. Do not allow the visual filth the world produces come into you mind. Before you go to bed spend a few minutes in the Word that your dreams may be of our amazing God. Paul said, “Brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure,

whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.” (Philippians 4:8) This will move you from an appetizer to the meal of God’s wonders.

Trust

Trust in the truth of God, he is forever proven faithful. The 2nd soil failed to hear because it had no root. God’s Word is rooted in eternity past and future. I love the image of the words Jeremiah gave us, ⁷“Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, whose trust is the LORD. ⁸He is like a tree planted by water, that sends out its roots by the stream, and does not fear when heat comes, for its leaves remain green, and is not anxious in the year of drought, for it does not cease to bear fruit.” (Jeremiah 17:7-8) When you pray and meditate, tune out the world and fix your heart on the promises of God for his promises are true. This will make you desire to come to church even when it is inconvenient.

Rest

We struggle to focus on God and stand up to the fiery darts of the world if we are tired. It takes more discipline to go to bed on time than it does to get up on time. Go to bed at a time on Saturday night that will give you the rest you need for Sunday. I am up at 4:30 Sunday morning – so you can, most likely, guess what time I have to go to bed on Saturday night. Planning for Sunday morning is important; you need time to eat and have coffee – coffee for me is critical. You need time to get dressed, but it should not end there – you need time to pray and meditate and prepare your heart and mind. Parents help your children learn that Saturday nights can be fun but they need to end in time to get a good night’s rest. Letting children stay up late to play video games or teenagers to go out and stay up late teaches them worship of God is optional and this would be a terrible thing to teach your children. Take heed how you hear and what your light shows.

Be At Peace

We need to seek peace within our families and with brothers and sisters in Christ. I do not know about you but there have been times when Saturday night a problem arises. Sometimes we need to let something go until a later time when it can be dealt with properly. Have you ever had an argument as you are driving to church? The evil one wants you to not focus on God. This can destroy your ability to hear the Word of God. Do not come to church and pretend there is no problem. We all have problems. What we should be asking God to do is show us the log in our eye so that we can understand someone else's need for compassion and help. Whether it is a problem with family or brothers and sisters in Christ we need to seek God to give us humility and direction on how to deal with problems. If we care about each other and listen to each other it will be amazing how God can heal and change how we feel. Again, it is important how one hears – both the Word of God and each other.

Be Teachable

Come to church with a spirit of meekness and a desire to be teachable. I am not saying one should be gullible for all teaching must be held up to the unchanging Word of God. James taught that hearing the Word with an open heart is important. James said, “[receive with meekness the implanted word.](#)” (James 1:21) If one comes to church with an attitude that they know better than others what the Word says they will not be open to listen and determine if what is being taught is true to the Word and of value. If we come to church with a humble heart it opens our minds to hear and impact our lives. If the Word impacts our lives then we will change and our light will shine brighter before the world.

Learn To Be Still

We had a problem when we met in the community center because people did not think of the room as the holy place of God. Now we have this new place to come and worship. When we enter it is a time to begin to separate ourselves from the world and prepare to worship. It is not a time of horseplay. We need to come ready to pray and hear God's Word. We need to leave the world and make ready to take risks for God. We need to be willing to reenter the world and love those who are unlovable and invite them to come hear God's truth in an environment that is safe and loving.

Becoming still to prepare for worship is the reason our music and song is prayer in music and not a performance. The Psalmist wrote, **"Be still, and know that I am God."** If one knows God intimately, they will be able to, as the psalmists continues, **"exalt God among the nations."** In the next verse it says we need to understand, **"The LORD of hosts is with us."** (Psalm 46:10-11) God is not off in some distance heaven observing what we do – he is here with us! Become still and think deeply about the text that will be taught – for you know which verses will be taught on Sunday before you arrive.

Contemplate

As worship on Sunday morning begins, think and contemplate the words being sung and preached. As Paul instructed, **"Brothers, do not be children in your thinking. Be infants in evil, but in your thinking be mature."** (1 Corinthians 14:20) Hearing without contemplation is hearing without understanding. Paul told Timothy, **"Think over what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything."** (2 Timothy 2:7) If it is worth your time to come to church to hear a sermon then it is worth thinking about and contemplating over to increase your understanding.

Accept The Truth

Desire and seek the truth of God's Word for it is the only eternal truth. Here is what the Psalmist said about the words of God, they are, "More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb. ¹¹ Moreover, by them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward." (Psalm 19:10-11) Since the Bible is God's gift to mankind to teach us who he is and who we are in him it should be desired more than all else. This is what is written in Proverbs, "if you call out for insight and raise your voice for understanding, ⁴ if you seek it like silver and search for it as for hidden treasures, ⁵ then you will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God." (Proverbs 2:3-5)

My beloved, may God make us a people who hear the Word of God and bear fruit a hundredfold so that the lamp of our lives will be on a lampstand giving light to all who enter the kingdom of God. Take heed how you hear! Amen.