

## ARE YOU LISTENING?

"Can you hear me now?" Few things are as frustrating as not hearing or not being heard. Do you wonder if Jesus was frustrated with His hearers? In Luke 8 He says "*take heed how you hear*" and "*he who has ears to hear, let him hear.*" Jesus exhorts you to pay attention!

He said these things along with His parable about sowing the word of God on four kinds of soil, hard, rocky, weedy, and good soil. Only one soil produced the obedience of faith, resulting in yields. It's both the invitation and the command of God to bring forth faith in those who will believe, by the sovereign activity of the Holy Spirit in regeneration to repentance and faith.

**SHINE THE LIGHT** - In verse 16 Jesus observes, "*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.*" People had to chuckle at this everyday illustration. They got the picture. The word of God was spread everywhere. It's not meant to be covered up, but rather so that everyone can see.

"The gospel we possess is not given only to be professed, but to be practiced," notes JC Ryle. "We are not in darkness like the heathen. Glorious light is available to us. No candle God lights was meant to burn alone. The highest form of selfishness is to be content to go to heaven alone."

Billy Graham said, "We are the Bibles the world is reading, the creeds the world is needing, and the sermons the world is heeding." Jesus in John 8:12 said "I am the light of the world" and in Matthew 5:14-16 He said "you are the light of the world."

Believers are to shine the light of Jesus to everyone around. "This is not an option for believers. Jesus commands you to do so," notes RC Sproul. "If you were charged with being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to convict you?" Are you trusting and obeying the Lord Jesus? The evidence in your life is the fruit of repentance and faith that you bear, the fruit of the Spirit.

**ALL WILL COME TO LIGHT** - In verse 17 Jesus declares, "*For nothing is hidden that will not be made manifest, nor is anything secret that will not be known and come to light.*" Not only does God's word light up the reality of your life, and whether you have faith in God's word and truly trust Jesus as Christ, Lord, Savior, but this activity will also be made known.

First, by the fruit of your life. If your roots truly are in Christ, then you will bear the fruit of Christ. This fruit of repentance and faith is the evidence that reveals you are trusting Christ, resulting in the transformation of your life as you believe and obey God's word by His power within.

If no fruit, then there is no root. All this will be made known at the last judgment, when God's light will reveal the truth about things that otherwise would remain hidden. Jesus says everything secret will be made known. All the evidence will come to light. God knows all things. Your deeds, words, thoughts. Nothing will be hidden and all will be revealed. Comfortable with that?

"What do the secrets you seek to conceal tell you about your life?" asks RC Sproul. "If you are in Christ then those things are hidden in Christ. Otherwise they will be exposed by Christ. There are only two options. Hide yourself in Christ, or be exposed."

**TAKE CARE HOW YOU HEAR** - In verse 18 Jesus warns, "*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 seed scattered on the soils is the word of God. But just because people have heard God's word of the good news about Christ Jesus doesn't mean they believe.

Don't be deceived by people. Hearing is not believing. And merely "believing in God" or "believing in heaven" doesn't make you a Christian. Only saving faith in Christ bears fruit. Remember Jesus' parable. The hard ground heard the word, but had no root, no shoot, and no fruit.

Rocky ground heard the word, but was shallow, so no root and no fruit. The word took root in the weedy ground, but the shoots were choked by cares and riches of life, so bore no fruit.

Only in the good ground did the word take root, grow shoots and produce fruit. These are the hearts which hear and respond to God's word, bearing the fruit of repentance and faith, and growing the fruit of the Spirit. Only these were truly saved. That's why Jesus says "*take care how you hear*" and "*he who has ears to hear, let him hear.*" How are you hearing? And heeding? ☐