

NO FOOLING!

In Luke 8, Jesus declares to His hearers, "*take care how you hear*" and "*he who has ears to hear, let him hear.*" It's the point of the famous parable of the four kinds of soil, and how only the good soil produced fruit. Jesus demonstrates that true hearing has visible results. Not everyone who simply hears the word of God will put their faith in Christ as Lord and Savior.

HEAR & DO - As Jesus spoke, God's providence gave another opportunity to powerfully apply these truths. In Luke 8:19-20, "*Then His mother and His brothers came to Him, but they could not reach Him because of the crowd. And He was told, 'Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, desiring to see You.'*" How would you expect Jesus to respond?

In verse 21 He answered, "*My mother and My brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it.*" But Jesus isn't snubbing His own relations. He's taking advantage of a teachable moment to make an important point, which supports the parable of the seed and the soils.

RELATIONSHIP - "Jesus demonstrates the preeminence of spiritual relationship to Him," notes theologian WA Grudem. The Jews highly regarded genealogy and relations, and their status as God's chosen people. But Jesus speaks through this outward pride to show them their hearts. It's more important that you are a child of God than any other human relationship.

Hebrews 2:5-18 speaks of Christ Jesus come in human flesh for the offspring of Abraham. These are the offspring of faith, those who are adopted into God's forever family by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. It's explained in Galatians 3:22-4:7, which says, "*for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God through faith, Abraham's offspring, adopted by God.*" These are eternally His own.

EVERY EFFORT - Luke 8:21 speaks of "*those who hear the word of God and do it*" and relates to the good soil in verse 15, "*those who, hearing the word, hold it fast and bear fruit with patience.*" These are the ones in verse 16 who shine the light of God's truth to all around them. These are regenerated by the Holy Spirit, born again from above to repentance and faith. These receive Christ Jesus as Lord and Savior, and abide in Him, and bear the fruit of Christ.

2Peter 1 says it's through the knowledge of God by the word of God, by grace through faith, that God has given everything you need for life and godliness, so that you grow and bear fruit, as you make every effort to put your faith into practice, living out God's word of truth. And it's all by His power within, as you receive the word, believe it and live it out, trusting and obeying.

LIVE IN THE WORD - In John 7:31-32 Jesus said, "*If you abide in My word you are truly My disciples, and you will know the truth and the truth will set you free.*" Abide means to dwell, to live, to live in the Word of God. Colossians 3:16-17 says "*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, that whatever you do in word or deed, you do in the name of the Lord Jesus.*"

Colossians 1 and 2 exhorts, "*as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving... so as 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, strengthened with all power, for all endurance and patience, with joy, giving thanks, having been delivered from darkness into light.*"

LIVING IT OUT - "Hearing God's word is worthless if it does not result in doing," observes RK Hughes. Attention to God's Word must be coupled with willingness to do it, by the Spirit's power. He offers several examples: Has God's Word impressed on you that you must forgive? Then do it! Has God's Word impressed on you that you must confess a wrongdoing? Do it!

Has God's Word impressed on you that you must apologize? Do it! Has God's Word impressed on you that you must speak truth regardless of consequences? Do it! Has God's Word impressed that you must discontinue a certain practice? So do it! Has God's Word impressed that you must give a gift? Do it! Has God's Word impressed that you must bear witness to another? Do it today! Has God's Word impressed on that you must leave all to serve Him? Do it!

DO IT - "If you realize that you are a soil other than the good soil, repent and believe without delay!" says Hughes. "Ask God to put eternal life in your soul today, and produce the fruit of the Spirit abundantly in your life." Luke 8:4-21 is parable and a few paragraphs summed up in one sentence: Hear the Word of God and heed it. Do it by His power within you. Starting right now! □