



THE GOSPEL OF

MARK



Sermon Series Notes

“To Hear or Not to Hear” (Mark 4:21-25)

Danny Hodges - NT3673

Intro: I read an article years ago on how good listening helps prevent heart attacks. In preparation for this message, I scanned the internet to see if there were other recent articles about good listening. Here’s an excerpt from one I found:

“Do you remember the public service announcement that talked about the importance of good listening skills? It aired quite a few years ago and sought to explain the difference between hearing and listening. While hearing is a physical ability—actually one of our five senses—listening is a skill. It is possible to have one but not the other. Someone who is hearing impaired can be a [great listener](#) if he or she pays attention to the information someone conveys to them regardless of how it is being communicated. Likewise someone with very sharp hearing can be a poor listener.”

In 1991 the United States Department of Labor [Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills \(SCANS\)](#) identified five competencies and three foundation skills that are essential for those entering the workforce. Listening skills were among the foundation skills SCANS identified.” (Internet site “about careers”).

This is very interesting information in light of what Jesus has to say in our text today. Read Mark 4:21-25.

EVIDENCE OF A HEARING EAR: A LIGHT THAT SHINES

The hiding of the light seems to suggest a lack of witness that validates the genuineness of one’s salvation. Matthew 5:14,16 You are the light of the world...Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.

Philippians 2:14-15 Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shone like stars in the universe.

ENLIGHTENMENT OF A HEARING EAR

Enlightenment = Illumination, insight, education.

Once the light of the gospel has impacted one’s life, everything in life begins to change. God shines his light into your life, and you see things you never saw before. And things you saw before you see differently.

II Cor.5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!

The longer you travel on the path of light, walking in truth and seeking more truth, the more revelation you receive.

Proverbs 4:18-19 The path of the righteous is like the first gleam of dawn, shining ever brighter till the full light of day.

See Colossians 1:9; Eph.1:17-18

Some wisdom/revelation/spiritual understanding comes pretty much immediately, and some over time.

The following were some things that changed in my life immediately:

- I no longer feared death
 - Hebrews 2:14-15
- The way I viewed people
 - II Cor.5:16; Note the context of this verse; see II Cor.5:11a, 14-21
 - Right after I became a Christian, I had an intense desire to share with anyone and everyone what Christ had done for me. I wanted them to have what I now had. I still do, although I have hit periods in my life where my passion to share Christ has not been as great as at the beginning.
 - Prov.11:30 The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and he who wins souls is wise.
- What I did with my money
 - I heard a message on tithing, and immediately wrote a check for \$200.00 and gave it to my pastor. I've since learned it would have been better to give it in the offering anonymously, but I did it in innocence. Ever since then I have tithed on every dollar God has given me, and I have learned to give beyond the tithe. It has been such a blessing in my life.
 - One of the most basic building blocks of spiritual maturity is honoring the Lord with your money. See Luke 6:13, 10-11; Prov.3:9; II Cor.8:7.
 - Israel's first test in The Promised Land was the material riches of Jericho. God told them that these were to be devoted to the Lord (see Joshua 6:17a, 19). This was because the firstfruits belong to the Lord. Honoring the Lord with the firstfruits of our income is a basic building block of spiritual wisdom understanding. Israel failed in this (Achan), & they could not go on to further victory until the sin was dealt with (Ai).
 - There are many examples in the Scriptures of people who failed to keep earthly riches in proper perspective; Achan, Gehazi, Israel (repeatedly dishonoring the Sabbath, offering blemished sacrifices, etc.), the Pharisees (Luke 16, loved money), Ananias & Sapphira, the unnamed people of I Tim.6 eager for money, wandered from the faith...Demas?
 - Had the rich young ruler had a different perspective on earthly riches, he would not have forfeited eternal riches for riches that would not last.
- My thirst for the Word of God
 - I Peter 2:2 Like newborn babies, crave spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation.
 - Prov.1:5 Let the wise listen and add to their learning...
 - The Word of God is the primary means of spiritual maturity, and it is also the primary means of increased wisdom, revelation, & spiritual understanding.

Let's focus for a moment on what Jesus says in the text, specifically v.24 – "with the measure you use, it will be measured to you – and even more." The measure we use to hear determines the measure by which

we will receive. And we will always receive back beyond the measure we use – v.24b, “and even more.” Someone has said, “You can’t out give God.” The Scriptures confirm this truth.

Luke 6:38 Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

Malachi 3:10 bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this, says the Lord Almighty, and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it.

Let me attempt to summarize the truth Jesus seeks to convey here. For those who truly hear the gospel, the gospel impacts their lives in such a way that the light of their testimony becomes obvious to the world. They have become a new creation in Christ Jesus. But the light they have received is only meant to be the beginning. God has more revelation, wisdom, & spiritual understanding to reveal to them. But the degree by which they receive is determined by the “measure” they use to hear.

Measure = Amount, quantity, portion.

Let’s look at a practical example from the Scriptures. See Luke 10:38-42; John 12:1-8. Please note the depth of Mary’s spiritual wisdom and understanding. This is because of the measure she used to listen to Jesus, in contrast to her sister Martha.

Those who make the choice in life to hear the Word of God, to make it a priority in life, will gain greater wisdom, revelation, & spiritual understanding.

LOSS FOR THE CARELESS LISTENER

I believe the prophecy Jesus quoted in v.12 should be applied here (Read v.12). In Acts 28 Paul quotes it and emphasizes the human responsibility in one’s ability to hear. See Acts 28:26-27; see also John 12:37-39.

Use it, or lose it.

A failure to hear over time causes one to lose the ability to hear.

Two eternally vital questions: What impact is the Word of God having in my life? What *measure* do I use to hear the Word of God?

In Hebrews 5, the writer addresses believers who should have been more mature than they were, and their lack of maturity was directly linked to the measure of the Word in their lives. Read Hebrews 5:11-14.

The exhortation of Hebrews 6:1 is my exhortation to you today (Read).

Advantages of Christian maturity:

- Maturity
 - Firm and established (Eph.4:14)
 - Live by faith (Deut.8:3)
 - Look toward the future, not back at the past (Phil.3:12-16)
- Wisdom for life (Deut.8:3; Proverbs, etc.)
- Insight into prophecy, especially as it relates to Jesus (Luke 24:32; I Peter 1:10-13)
- Deepening relationship with the Lord (Eph.1:17)
- Focus on the reality of another world (II Cor.4:18; Col.3:1-4)

I think of heaven every day. It is fascinating to me, and I am looking more forward to seeing it (and Jesus) with every birthday I celebrate.

Living for another world helps me say no to the temptations in this world. Living for another world helps me to sacrifice and suffer for Christ in this world.

I Cor.15:19 If only in this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men.

I Cor.15:32 If I have fought wild beasts in Ephesus for merely human reasons, what have I gained? If the dead are not raised, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die."

Romans 8:18 I consider that our present sufferings are not worthy to be compared with the glory that will be revealed in us.

CONCLUSION

A hearing ear **begins** with a right response to the gospel.

John 7:47 He who belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you do not hear is because you do not belong to God.

John 10:27 My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.

Salvation invitation

Christian invitation

Adjust the measure you currently use to hear the Word of God?

Illustration: Different utensils for measuring.

Reminder: Baby Christians need to be bottle-fed, etc.

James 1:22 Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.

In light of the Olympics, see I Cor.9:24-25; the path to spiritual maturity is one of self-discipline & sacrifice. But the rewards are for this life, and the one to come.