

He Who Has an Ear to Hear

By David Phillips

Introduction

1. Many passages in the Bible conclude with the statement, “*He who has ears to hear, let him hear!*” (Matt. 11:15; Rev. 2:7).
2. By this, God is saying, “This is important, so listen up!”—Read [Mark 4:23-25](#).
3. God shows us that there is a way that we must listen to His word in order to benefit from what He says.
4. Sadly, there are many who do not listen the way God expects us to.
5. For that reason, every person who wants to benefit from God’s word must ask, “How well do I listen,” and then, “How can I be a better listener?” For, truth be told, how we listen will ultimately determine how we spend eternity.

Discussion

I. Three Types of Listeners

- A. The “dull of hearing.”
 1. Literally, this refers to a person who is hard of hearing.
 2. Figuratively, it refers to the person who hears without acknowledging or understanding.
 3. Jesus spoke of this kind in [Matt.13:14-15](#).
 4. With these, God’s word has no affect in their lives.
- B. Those with “itching ears.”
 1. This refers to a person who has selective hearing; who hear only what they want to hear.
 2. They are described in [2 Timothy 4:3-4](#).
 3. When those who have itching ears hear God’s word, rather than striving to understanding God’s meaning, they seek teachers who will put a twist on it that is pleasing to them.
 4. When God says we must obey, they only hear “obedience is optional.”
- C. Those who hear with a “noble and good heart.”
 1. These are described in [Luke 8:15](#).
 2. These are the ones who take God’s word at face value; who accept it for the purpose that God gave it.
 3. This is the person who hears God’s word with the intent to do all that it says: this person benefits from God’s word.
 4. Therefore Jesus says they are able to bear fruit: they listen and then they do the things that they hear in order please God.

II. God Places Great Importance on Listening!

- A. Our life depends on it.
 1. In [James 1:19](#) we are commanded to be “*swift to hear, slow to speak.*”
 2. The Proverbs also use this kind of language, as in [Prov. 1:5](#), “*A wise man will hear and increase learning, and a man of understanding will attain wise counsel.*”
 3. In contrast, the fool is depicted as the one who **will not hear** instruction: he is the one who is *swift to speak and slow to hear!*
 4. Notice [Prov. 18:2](#): “*A fool has no delight in understanding, but in expressing his own heart.*” We might say he is so busy talking that he is unable to hear and learn.
 5. Again, it is written, “*The lips of the righteous feed many, but fools die for lack of wisdom.*”
 6. The fool may hear the instruction of the Lord, but he does not take it to heart; he does not consider it and apply it.
 7. This is the man whose hearing is dull, or only hears those things that scratch his itching ears.

8. But God assures us, if we want to have life, especially eternal life, we must be as the wise man: we must be swift to hear, eager to learn, ready and willing to accept the wisdom that comes from the instruction of the Lord, rejecting the foolishness that comes from those who reject God's instruction.
 9. Read Psalm 1:1-3.
- B. If we do not listen, we cannot have faith: read Romans 10:17.
1. We are told in Hebrews 11:6 that, "*Without faith it is impossible to please God.*"
 2. Where does that faith come from? It comes from hearing God's word.
 3. You see, salvation can only come through faith in Jesus Christ.
 4. If we do not hear the gospel, we cannot put our faith in Him, therefore we cannot be saved in Him. That is why Jesus commanded that the gospel be preached throughout all the world.
 5. However, though all must hear the gospel, many do not listen to its message; they hear, but their hearing is dull.
 6. Notice what Paul wrote in Romans 10:16-18, 21: You see, even though God stretched out His hand, even though the gospel was preached, they did not listen; as it says in verse sixteen, "*They have not all obeyed the gospel.*"
 7. Understand, then, that when we read our Bibles at home or when we hear sermons that are preached, it will benefit us only if we add God's word to our faith by believing and obeying.
 8. Our hearing must result in a faith that seeks to obey the gospel!
- C. We cannot bear fruit for God if we do not hear: Luke 8:15.
1. In this parable there were four types of soil that the seed, which is God's word, fell upon.
 2. Only one of those soils was able to bear fruit: Notice what Jesus said, "*But the ones that fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience.*"
 3. Bearing fruit is a necessary part of a Christian's life. If we are not bearing fruit we are like a dead tree that needs to be cut down and thrown in the fire.
 4. But if we want to bear fruit for our Master, we must have a noble and good heart, and we know our heart is noble and good when we eagerly seek the word of God and strive with all our might to obey its commandments.
 5. Those who are depicted by the bad soil in this parable are those who hear the word, but quickly give it up, or hear and choose to do something else.
 6. Romans 6:22 says, "*But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life.*" Do you desire everlasting life? If you listen with a good heart, you can attain it in Christ.

III. Steps to Better Listening

- A. There are some who have a hard time listening:
1. Young people especially, but certainly some older people as well, have a hard time concentrating when reading more than a few verses in their Bibles or when listening for more than a few minutes to a sermon.
 2. For some, this may be because they have no real interest in the message.
 3. But there are also those who simply do not know how to listen. God helps us with this.
- B. Listen with a mind to act.
1. James 1:22-25 says, "*But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves...*"
 2. If we have a mind to act upon the words being spoken, it makes them much more interesting and much more enjoyable to hear.
 - a. If you were to tell a child where the cookies are hidden, he would hang on your every word because he intends to use your directions to go find them.
 - b. Adventures on a treasure hunt will consider very carefully the instructions on their map.
 - c. Truly, we can see how a desire to use the information can affect our ability to listen.

3. Therefore, before we open our Bibles, enter into a Bible study, or begin a sermon, it is essential that we determine in our hearts to use the instruction begin given.
 4. Only then will we have a reason for listening.
 5. **What do you hope to gain from this sermon?**
- C. Along these same lines, we must listen as an act of worship.
1. Worship is the act of glorifying and exalting God in our hearts, and humbling ourselves before Him.
 2. We worship God when we sing, when we pray, when we give, and when we take the Lord's Supper.
 3. We also worship Him (exalt Him) by listening to His word.
 4. It does not glorify God when we allow His instruction go in one ear and out the other, but when we consider His every word and place it upon our hearts, then He is greatly honored.
- D. Listen with faith.
1. Listen with a willingness to accept and believe what is shown in God's word.
 2. Learn from the example in Heb. 4:1-2, "*For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it.*"
 3. Faith is what causes us to acknowledge the truth of God's word and motives us to seek the rewards offered by God.
 4. Do you put your faith in the promises of God? His word is our treasure map to attaining those promises.
 5. When we listen with faith then we will hang on His every word, knowing that in the end we will receive our eternal reward.

Conclusion

1. Without faith it is impossible to please God, but without the willingness to listen with a good and noble heart, it is impossible to have saving faith.
2. How well do you listen? As a test, have you obeyed the gospel?

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