

"HOW WELL DO WE LISTEN?"

Mark 4:23-25

INTRODUCTION

- A. Jesus often said: "He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"
Matt 11:15; 13:9; 13:43
- B. To seven churches of Asia: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." Rev 2:7,11,17,29; 3:6,13,22
- C. Such sayings inform us that "What is being said is very important, so you had better pay attention and listen!" (Text)
- D. Jesus had same problem we have today - people simply don't listen or don't listen so as to understand
- E. Many today don't appreciate the importance of listening well. This concerned Jesus, so we ask, "How Well Do You Listen?"

DISCUSSION:

I. THREE "TYPES" OF LISTENERS

- A. There are the "dull of hearing" Matt 13:13-15; Heb 5:11
 - 1. Hard to explain things to person with this problem
 - 2. Fault not with "subject" material, nor "presenter", but "listener"!
 - 3. This way because they are DULL OF HEART!
 - 4. Prevents them from: Understanding truth; Turning to God; And being saved by God!
 - 5. Certainly no one wants to be this kind of listener
- B. There are those with "itching ears" 2Tim 4:3-4;
 - 1. Only listen to that which is pleasing
 - 2. Don't like "sound doctrine" - many afflicted with this problem
 - 3. Reason for admonitions in 2Tim 4:2
- C. There are those who hear with "honest and good heart" Lk 8:15
 - 1. Bereans were listeners of this kind Acts 17:11
 - a. "Fair-minded" (NKJV), willing to give a fair hearing
 - b. Showed in that they "received" word "with all readiness"
 - 2. This is the kind of listener we all should be

II. WHY GOOD LISTENING IS IMPORTANT

- A. It is essential to "blessedness" Matt 13:16-17; 5:6
 - 1. For those willing to listen, there are wonderful things to learn
 - 2. Pertaining to wonderful blessings available in Christ! Eph 1:3
 - 3. We can miss out on these blessings if we don't listen carefully
- B. It is essential to saving "faith" Rom 10:17; 1:16-17
 - 1. Comes through the proclamation of the gospel Rom 10:14,17
 - 2. Yes, one can gain faith by reading God's Word Jhn 20:30-31
 - 3. One must "listen" to what they read
 - 4. Does your "listening" hinder the development of your faith?
- C. It is essential to "bearing fruit" Lk 8:15
 - 1. Only kind of soil (heart) bearing fruit was one listened properly
 - 2. Bearing fruit comes from "understanding" grace of God Col 1:6
 - 3. Colossians bearing fruit "since the day they heard and knew (understood, NAS) the grace of God in truth;"

- 4. Only by listening well can we "understand" God's grace and be motivated to bear fruit to His glory

- D. It is essential to avoid "drifting" Heb 2:1-3
 - 1. Solution: "give more earnest heed to things we have heard"
 - 2. Poor listening is often one of the first steps to apostasy
- E. It is essential to avoid "rejection" & "condemnation" Matt 10:14-15; Acts 13:44-49; Matt 12:41-42
 - 1. Nineveh repented after hearing just one lesson from Jonah
 - 2. Many reject gospel after being given many opportunities
 - 3. The rejection and condemnation not limited to just these individuals – if we fail to hear, God will reject us

III. SUGGESTIONS FOR BETTER LISTENING Heb 5:11

- A. Make listening an act of worship.
 - 1. How you listen to God's word is as much an indication of your devotion to God as to how you pray or sing
 - 2. So listen, with "a worshipful attitude"
 - 3. How would you listen to great speaker (well-known person)
 - 4. Doesn't God's Word deserve as much attention?
- B. Listen from first to last
 - 1. Pay attention all way through - don't expect to understand a novel by simply reading a sentence here and there
 - 2. In listening - sentences, phrases, words, to be understood must be heard in light of context in which presented
 - 3. Speaker has responsibilities so as to be understood
- C. Looking at the speaker - aids concentration, requires self-discipline, but helps develop longer attention span
- D. Read along in your Bible - remember more of what you both see and hear over what you simply hear
 - 1. Reason visual aids are often used in sermons
 - 2. Greatest visual aid is your own Bible!
- E. Listen with faith - with a willingness to accept and believe what is shown in God's Word Heb 4:1-2
- F. Listen to do - people in Ezekiel's day loved to hear him, but for the wrong reason - Ezek 33:30-32
 - 1. Do we listen because of how well the speaker presents?
 - 2. Must hear and do to be of any profit Jas 1:22-25

CONCLUSION:

- A. To be blessed in what we do is goal of these thoughts on listening
- B. Listening to God very important! Isa 55:2-3 essential for good of soul
- C. God does not listen when sins are between us and Him Isa 59:1-2
- D. However, if we will listen to God He will extend His mercy Isa 55:6-7 which is offered through Jesus, God's Son. And God said: "This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!" (Lk 9:35)
- E. Have you heeded Him by obeying His word? Or does Jesus' question in Lk 6:46 apply to you?

(from Mark Copeland)