

LET EVERY MAN BE SWIFT TO HEAR

JAMES 1:19 & MATTHEW 13

Text: James 1:19

James 1:19

¹⁹ Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath:

Introduction:

We have in the verse three directives, all of which deal with timing. We are to be swift to hear, slow to speak, and slow to wrath.

Again, when we read a list in the Bible we should pay close attention to the order that the list is given.

Note the order of these three directives:

1. Swift to hear
2. Slow to speak
3. Slow to wrath

Over the next few weeks I want to expound further on these directives.

We will consider the first this week – “Swift to hear.”

The Bible has a lot to say about our hearing. The word hear is used a total of 550 times in the Bible.

In Mark 4 the word is used 18 times.

We are living in a day where there are more churches than ever before. There is more ability to get the Word of God out through the airways, with radio, short-wave radio and television. The internet has also open unlimited opportunity to get to the world the Word of God.

With such opportunities why are things not getting better, but growing worse at a rapid clip?

I understand the world and society getting worse, but why is God’s people keeping pace with the world. But some say we are at the same distance from the world as we always have been. I would question that but if that is true, we are now doing today in churches what was preached against just ten years ago.

In the book of Matthew the Lord gives a parable that I believe makes clear this directive found here in James.

Read Matthew 13:1-9, 17-23

Matthew 13:1-9

¹ The same day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the sea side. ² And great multitudes were gathered together unto him, so that he went into a ship, and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore. ³ And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow; ⁴ And when he sowed, some *seeds* fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up: ⁵ Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: ⁶ And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. ⁷ And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them: ⁸ But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold. ⁹ Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

Matthew 13:17-23

¹⁷ For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous *men* have desired to see *those things* which ye see, and have not seen *them*; and to hear *those things* which ye hear, and have not heard *them*. ¹⁸ Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower. ¹⁹ When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth *it* not, then cometh the wicked *one*, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side. ²⁰ But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; ²¹ Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended. ²² He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful. ²³ But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth *it*; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.

In this parable the Lord speaks of:

- The Seed – which we know is the Word of God.
- A Sower – Those who sow the good seed of the Word of God

The Bible how to sow

Psalm 126:5-6

⁵They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. ⁶He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves *with him*.

The Bible tells us where to sow

Acts 1:8

⁸But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

The third thing this parable speaks of is:

- The Soil – This represents those who hear the Word of God.

In this parable we find four different types of hearers.

Let's examine these hearers and see which type of hearer we are today.

Notice:

1. THE STUBBORN HEARER (VS. 4, 19)

Matthew 13:4

⁴ And when he sowed, some *seeds* fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up:

Matthew 13:19

¹⁹ When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth *it* not, then cometh the wicked *one*, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side.

A. Their Heart is Unyielding

The seed never took root because the seed fell on hard soil, the hard beaten path, where no plough had broken up the ground.

Before the seed can take root the ground has to be prepared.

Hosea 10:12

¹² Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for *it is* time to seek the LORD, till he come and rain righteousness upon you.

About the only weapon we have against the hard heart is prayer. God will answer our prayers for the hard-hearted sinner but usually it comes with a high price.

The Church was, no doubt, praying for Saul of Tarsus.

The Lord finally had to strike him down on the Damascus Road to get his attention.

To be receptive to the Word the heart must be prepared.

B. Their Heart is Uncaring

We expect those without Christ to have a lack of compassion, and concern for those around them, but I remind you that some of the hardest people you'll ever deal with are church people and some of them are preachers and other leaders.

If the heart lacks *caring* then the Word cannot make a lasting impact on the life!

This is the stubborn hearer, notice also:

2. THE SHALLOW HEARER

Matthew 13:5-6

⁵ Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: ⁶ And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away.

Matthew 13:20-21

²⁰ But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; ²¹ Yet hath

he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.

A. They Lack Spiritual Growth

These are people who have never matured in the Word of God. Notice the Lord said:

Because they had no deepness of earth when the sun came up they were scorched, and because they had no root they withered away.

For the Christian – growth is not a choice but rather a command!

2 Peter 3:18

¹⁸ But grow in grace, and *in* the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him *be* glory both now and for ever. Amen.

Ephesians 4:14

¹⁴ That we *henceforth* be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, *and* cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

When you hear the Word of God you should be able to tell the difference between truth and error and the difference between what is false and what is faithful.

B. They Lack Sustaining Grace

These are babes in Christ who cannot take sound doctrine. They are easily led off into false doctrines. The Lord says of them:

Matthew 13:21

²¹ Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.

They are emotional, spasmodic, and easily offended. The reason many are so easily offended today is because they don't love the Word. The psalmist said in Psalm 119:165:

Psalm 119:165

¹⁶⁵ Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them.

How do you hear? We have looked at the stubborn hearers, and the Shallow Hearers, notice also:

3. THE STRANGLED HEARERS

Matthew 13:7

⁷ And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them:

Matthew 13:22

²² He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.

A. They Are Distracted By the World

They have allowed themselves to become entangled with the things of this life instead of giving priority to their spiritual well-being.

2 Timothy 2:4

⁴No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of *this* life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.

We are in a spiritual battle and Satan will do everything in his power to *distract* us so that we will not be our best for God!

Remember, there is nothing wrong with possessions as long as our possessions don't possess us!

B. They Are Disobedient to the Word

When we are *distracted by the world* we then are also *disobedient to the Word*. Martha is an example of being entangled and *distracted by the world*.

Luke 10:40-42

⁴⁰But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me. ⁴¹And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: ⁴²But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

How are we disobedient to the Word when we are distracted by the world:

- We Love the Things of the World

We become enamored with the things of this life. God loses the priority in our lives. A close companion of Paul named Demas turned back to the world. Paul tells us in 2 Timothy 4:10:

2 Timothy 4:10

¹⁰ For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia.

- We Let Things Bring Us Anxiety and Worry

Philippians 4:6-7

⁶ Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Worry is sin. But we let the anxieties and cares of this life build up in us and then we start to worry about many things.

- We Lose the Ability to Worship

Philippians 4:4

⁴ Rejoice in the Lord alway: *and* again I say, Rejoice.

We may not be happy at all times about the circumstances of our lives but we can be happy in the Lord!

We have seen the stubborn hearer, the shallow hearer, and the strangled hearer, notice on final hearer:

4. THE SPIRITUAL HEARER

Matthew 13:8

⁸ But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold.

Matthew 13:23

²³ But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth *it*; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.

A. They Have a Strong Foundation

Notice verse 8 speaks of “good ground.” Verse 23 tells us: “he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word and understandeth it.”

These people are “rooted and grounded” in the Word of God.

They refuse to be led astray. They know what they believe and why they believe it.

- They Read the Word of God
- They Heed the Word of God
- They Obey the Word of God

We are reminded and encouraged in Colossians 2:6-7:

Colossians 2:6-7

⁶As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, *so* walk ye in him: ⁷Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.

B. They Have a Stable Faith

The Word of God has made an impact on their lives and influenced their behavior. The psalmist said in Psalm 1:1-2:

Psalm 1:1-2

¹Blessed *is* the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. ²But his delight *is* in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.

They do not all bear the same amount of fruit because they are not all gifted in the same measure.

The Lord said— “*Some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold.*” (**v8**). They do not all bear the same amount of fruit but they do what they can.

These are the ones who can be counted on.

Psalms 1:3 tells us the blessed man will be:

Psalm 1:3

³ And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

Close:

The Lord said in Matthew 13:9:

Matthew 13:9

⁹ Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

What type of hearer are you, A Stubborn Hearer, A Shallow Hearer, A Strangled Hearer, of are you A Spiritual Hearer?

The real test is what you will do with the Word of God you have heard?

May we be swift to hear!

James 1:19

¹⁹ Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath:

