

LET HIM HEAR

MARK 4

Text:

Introduction:

The Bible has a lot to say about our hearing. The word hear is used a total of 550 times in the Bible and is used 18 times in this 4th chapter of Mark.

The truths that are revealed by the Lord in these parables here in Mark 4 are life altering, if they are heard and heeded.

They teach a truth so powerful that they cannot be ignored.

Notice the parable of the sower and soils:

(See Matthew 13:1-9; 18-23)

1. THE TASK OF THE SOWER

A. The Sower's Identity

In the parable, the sower is a farmer who is broadcasting seed into his fields. According to Jesus and His interpretation of this parable in Mark 4:14; the "sower sows the word" of God. The sower pictured in the parable is a reference to Jesus, and by extension, to all those who preach the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. I am sowing at this very moment.

B. The Sower's Intentions

As this farmer casts the seeds into his field, he does so with the hope that some will fall on good soil. He sows because he ultimately desires to reap a harvest. He casts his seed with the expectation of much more in return. The sower has one goal: to get his seed into the ground so the harvest can come.

The same is true with the seed of the Gospel message. It is sown into the field of the world with the prayer that it will fall on good hearts, take root and grow up to produce much fruit to the glory of the Lord.

C. The Sower's Investment

The farmer must give something away before he can expect to receive anything in return. He takes the precious seed that he saved from the last harvest and he casts it into soil, hoping that it will produce a great harvest. The seed is all that the farmer has and he gives it away hoping to receive more in return.

Jesus gave His all so that there might be Gospel seed to cast into the soil of the human heart. He died on the cross and rose again, literally giving His all, knowing that some seed would fall on the good soil and that a great harvest would come back to Him.

2. THE TREASURE OF THE SEED

In Luke 8:11, Jesus identifies the seed as the “Word of God.” When the farmer walked into his field with his seed bag, he held in his hand a genuine treasure. He cast that treasure to the wind, hoping it would accomplish his desires.

Notice the treasure of the seed

A. It Holds Great Power – Life

Before the seed falls on the soil, the soil has no life. It lies there barren and empty. But, when the seed falls onto good soil and germinates, it always brings life to something that before was dead.

When seed germinates it always transforms the soil in which it was sown. It brings forth life, and eventually fruit, in a place where only barrenness and death could be found before.

B. It Holds Great Promise – More

Every seed that was sown by the sower had the potential to produce much more seed.

One little seed had the potential to multiply itself 3000%; 6000% and even 10000%.

You can plant one bean seed and from that seed reap many beans, with each pod containing several more seeds. Sow one squash seed and it will produce a plant that yields several fully grown squashes, each containing dozens, if not hundreds or new seeds. Plant one corn seed and watch it produce a plant that will yield several ears, each containing many rows of fresh seeds. Each seed has the potential to reproduce itself many times over. Seed always holds the promise of more.

3. THE TESTIMONY OF THE SOILS

A. The Compacted Soil

The “*way side*” refers to the narrow footpaths that ran beside and through the fields. These were the roads of the day and the soil on them had become as hard as concrete from the feet of the travelers and animals that had walked upon them. When the seed fell on the footpath, it could not penetrate the soil and it remained there in the open, only to be devoured by the fowls of the air.

We are told that this speaks of the person who hears the Gospel, but are hard hearted and the seed of the Gospel cannot penetrate the soil of their heart. They hear the Gospel and dismiss it as foolishness, 1 Cor. 1:18.

1 Corinthians 1:18

¹⁸For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.

When this happens, the devil and his minions will snatch away the Word of God by diverting the mind and helping the person become even more hardened against God. This person has a heart that is not prepared for a work of grace leading to salvation or obedience to the Word of God.

B. The Crippled Soil

These stony places are common in Palestine. Often there will be an outcropping of limestone rock covered by a thin layer of topsoil. This soil looks like it is ready to be sown. This ground looks good and productive and seed cast here will germinate and quickly spring up into a promising plant. But, because there is no depth of soil, as soon as the sun beats down on the tender plant, it withers and dies without producing any fruit.

This kind of soil speaks of the heart that makes an emotional response to the presentation of the Gospel and the preaching of God's Word.

Perhaps this person heard the Gospel and said, "Well, I've tried everything else, maybe that is what I need! I might as well give Jesus a try" Or, perhaps they came to an altar and prayed because a friend did. Perhaps they heard a shallow presentation of the Gospel that presents the benefits of salvation but does not share the costs. This person knows nothing about repentance, dying to self, and turning away from the old life.

Whatever happened, they made a profession or a commitment, they are excited, they are active, and they are accepted as the real deal. But because they have no depth to their profession, they fall away when the persecutions and tribulations associated with knowing the Lord arises.

They begin to have problems with simple matters like church attendance, prayer and reading the Bible. They have a difficult time making a genuine, lasting break with their sins. They shrink away from the radical claims of Christ and the cross, Matt. 16:24.

Matthew 16:24

²⁴ Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any *man* will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

They become offended when they are mocked, ridiculed, laughed at or persecuted for their profession of faith. These are the people who make a profession, often running well for a time, and then wind up right back in the world. In the end, they are further away from God than they were before they made their profession

C. The Crowded Soil

This soil looks like it is ready to be sown also, but underneath the surface are the living roots and seeds of thorns and weeds. When the seed falls here, it also springs to life quickly and gives every indication that a

good harvest will follow. However, the same ground begins to produce the thorns and weeds that were already there and they soon choke out the tender plant. This plant withers and dies without producing any fruit at all.

D. The Choice Soil

Finally, some seed fell onto good ground. This ground had been worked and prepared. It had been plowed and tilled and it was ready to receive the seed when it came. The seed germinated within the heart of the soil and the plant began to grow. When the plant reached maturity, it began to produce fruit that brought honor and gain to the farmer.

The only difference between these types of soil was fruit. On the hard soil, the seed never penetrated the hard ground and was carried away. On the other three soils, the seed penetrated and disappeared, but only that which fell on the good soil produced fruit!

Close:

Note how the Lord concludes:

Mark 4:24-25

²⁴ And he said unto them, Take heed what ye hear: with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you: and unto you that hear shall more be given. ²⁵ For he that hath, to him shall be given: and he that hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he hath.

He says to “Take Heed What Ye Hear.”

You will be treated according to the use you make of your opportunities of hearing and learning. If you consider it well, and make a good improvement of what you hear, you shall be well rewarded. If not, your reward shall be small. This is a proverbial expression.

When it comes to hearing there is preparation, determination, consecration involved.

When it comes to God’s Word we need to – Hear it, heed it and honor it as the Lord speaks to our heart.