**Take Heed How You Hear**

*Luke 8:4-18*

**Introduction**

1. Knowing the truth and obeying the truth is of paramount importance.
   1. Sets us free from sin – **John 8:31-32** (Power of God’s word)
   2. Gives us fellowship with God and Christ – **2 John 9**
2. We are commanded to understand the truth (**Ephesians 5:17**), but are warned that some will believe a lie, and be given to delusion (**2 Thessalonians 2:11-12**).
3. Many are skeptical of truth (**John 18:38**), and in the age of relativism religious people either yield to a form of said relativism (denominationalism – it doesn’t matter what you believe, as long as you believe in the man Jesus; relativism within the Lord’s church – extending fellowship boundaries, and doctrine regarding the conscience, and suggesting honesty trumps evidence of sin and error), worry about whether they are of the truth (am I believing a lie?), or stand as the outliers who confidently assert their possession of truth.
4. How can we be sure of the truth? How can we be sure we have the truth, and haven’t believed a lie? How can we put such worry to rest so we can live our days in peace knowing we are right with God?
5. Jesus gave the important instruction to, ***“take heed how you hear” (Luke 8:18)***.
6. The Text – Luke 8:4-18
7. Jesus Explains His Use of Parables **(vv. 9-10)**
   1. After speaking the parable of the sower **(vv. 4-8),** disciples asked about the parable:
      1. **(v. 9)** – concerning the parable’s meaning **(vv. 11-15** – such is given).
      2. **Matthew 13:10** – concerning the reason for speaking in parables.
      3. Twofold – He would give the explanation of the parable, but also explained why He taught in such a way.
   2. **(v. 10**) – has been given to some to know, but to others in parables so that they can’t see or understand.
      1. ***“that”*** – i.e. so that, or for the purpose of causing them not to see or understand. ***(“so that”*** – **Mark 4:12**)
      2. **Matthew 13:13-15** ***– “because”*** they already don’t see or hear, and they fulfill the prophecy of Isaiah.
      3. Twofold – they don’t want to see, and don’t want to hear, so Jesus speaks in parables so that they are incapable of doing so.
   3. ***“To you it has been given to know”***
      1. **(v. 9)** – disciples asking, reply to them. (only the 12?)
      2. **Mark 4:10** – those around Him, and the 12.
         1. **Cf. Acts 1:21-22** – other disciples who followed Jesus everywhere in addition to the 12.
      3. It was not that Jesus’ truth was purposely concealed from all except the 12. It was offered to all, but only revealed to those who had the hearts to receive it 🡪
8. The Parable in Context Serves as an Illustration **(vv. 4-8, 11-15)**
   1. Parable of the Sower given – **(vv. 4-8)**
   2. Explanation given **(vv. 11-15):**
      1. **(v. 11)** – seed is the word.
      2. Soils represent the hearts of men, and their reception of the truth or rejection of the truth:
         1. **(v. 12)** – wayside – hard hearts that the word cannot penetrate, and it is taken away completely.
         2. **(v. 13)** – rock – they believe and are joyous in the beginning, but it is shallow faith that isn’t nurtured, and fails in trial and temptation.
         3. **(v. 14)** – thorns – believe, and continue on in faith only to lose focus, and forget the Lord because of distractions.
         4. **(v. 15)** – good ground – believe, continue on in faith bearing fruit, and persevere in service to God.
   3. Quality of the good ground heart:
      1. Noble – *kalos;* of uncertain affinity; properly, beautiful, but chiefly (figuratively) good (literally or morally), i.e. valuable or virtuous. (STRONG)
      2. ***“an honest and good heart” (NASB)***
      3. They are intellectually honest and have genuine desire to be pleasing to God.
      4. TO THEM IT HAS BEEN GIVEN – honest seekers of the truth will always find the truth. (**cf. Matthew 7:7-8** – seek and find)
9. Jesus Explains the Intention to Reveal, not Conceal **(vv. 16-17)**
   1. **(v. 8)** – a warning about the importance of hearing, and an INVITATION to hear.
      1. **(v. 9)** – asked what the parable meant.
         1. Didn’t immediately grasp the parable.
         2. However, they desired to know – **Matthew 13:16-17**
      2. **(vv. 10-11)** – notes the desire for them to hear, and explains the parable to them.
   2. (**v. 16)** – lamps aren’t lit in order to be hidden – defeats the purpose.
      1. **Cf. Matthew 5:14-16** – speaking of discipleship and living as Christ in a world of sin.
      2. **Context** – not using the figure in the exact way as sermon on the mount but speaking about the intention of Jesus to let the light of the gospel shine.
         1. His preaching is not intended to keep people from the truth.
         2. His preaching is intended to reveal the truth to all who want to hear.
   3. **(v. 17)** – the mystery of the gospel is going to be made known and is in the process of revelation. (GOD DID NOT DEVISE A PLAN TO KEEP IT SECRET)
10. Jesus Explains the Individual Responsibility to Understand **(v. 18)**
    1. This being the case – that all are offered the truth, and Jesus is freely willing to bring us to an understanding, but those that don’t truly desire it will never find it – the WAY in which one hears is extremely important.
    2. Hearing like the first 3 soils? (**vv. 11-14)**
    3. Has, more given; does not have, even what he seems to have will be taken away – THOSE WITH DESIRE TO KNOW AND DO TRUTH WILL BE GIVEN TO GROW IN THEIR UNDERSTANDING; THOSE WHO DON’T ACTUALLY WANT THE TRUTH, THOUGH THEY PERCEIVE TO HAVE SOME UNDERSTANDING, EVEN THAT WILL BE DECREASED.
       1. If you don’t use it you will lose it, and God will make sure of it.
11. Take Heed How You Hear
12. Do I have an urgency about knowing the truth, and submitting to it?
    1. Eradicating ignorance and making any necessary changes is an urgent matter. Our souls depend on it.
    2. Felix is a demonstration that urgency is important – **Acts 24:24-27** – the more convenient time never came.
    3. To delay the investigation of truth is to gamble away time and opportunity. The honest heart doesn’t delay.
       1. Life is a vapor – **James 4:14**
       2. Seek Lord while He may be found – **Isaiah 55:6-7**
13. Do I intend to put forth the necessary effort to ascertain the truth, or am I only desiring truth if it comes easy?
    1. The disciples didn’t immediately understand the parable – **Luke 8:9**
       1. However, when the meaning was not immediately perceived, they did not give up, but they investigated.
       2. Jesus gave them the meaning.
    2. Must dig deep – **Luke 6:47-48** – hard work to get to the truth.
    3. **Acts 17:26-27** – God’s revelation of Himself is in such a way that requires effort on our part to find Him – seek, grope, find.
    4. Requires diligence – **2 Timothy 2:15**
       1. **Acts 17:11** – searched scriptures daily.
14. Do I possess the predisposition to accept the truth regardless of its content?
    1. Have I determined before hearing that, upon validating through investigation that such is truth, I will obey it no matter what? – **Acts 17:11** (“readiness” – predisposition)
       1. Do we love the truth? – **cf. 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12**
    2. **James 1:21** – “meekness” – accept God’s dealings as good without disputing or resisting.
15. Do I intend to obey the truth?
    1. **Luke 6:46** – those who call Jesus Lord, but don’t obey don’t have faith.
    2. If one does not have the determination to obey what he comes to know, he will not come to know – **John 7:17**
       1. They didn’t believe Jesus because they didn’t truly want to follow God.
16. Do I truly wish to follow God, or do I have ulterior motives in my heart?
    1. Some act as though they come to God pursuing truth, but God knows their hearts are already set on other matters and will allow them to deceive themselves further – **Ezekiel 14:1-5** – answer according to your idols.
    2. The implanted word cannot be received without putting off known sin, and sinful thoughts – **James 1:21** (cultivation of the soil)
17. Do I want the truth, or am I seeking validation for settled beliefs?
    1. Some investigate the truth with a closed mind, already having settled on certain doctrines or views not allowing the truth to do its work.
    2. **Luke 10:25-29** – the Lawyer was wanting to justify his position on who his neighbor was. He wasn’t truly interested in the truth.
18. Do I have any reservations before hearing the truth which I have predetermined will take precedence?
    1. Some are willing to follow all truth save a few specific things in their life.
    2. They will not be able to fully understand the truth, and ultimately will reject it.
    3. **Matthew 19:20-22** – the rich young ruler was willing to follow/accept truth until it meant giving up riches. (He wasn’t willing to change.)
19. Do I intend to follow truth wherever it may take me, even through trial and tribulation?
    1. Some listen to the truth fully intending to follow it, but only to a certain limit.
    2. They don’t count the cost of discipleship and are destined for failure. **(cf. Luke 14:28-30)**
    3. **Mark 8:34-38** – willing to lose life to save it?
    4. **John 15:18-25** – willing to go through what the Teacher went through?

**Conclusion**

1. We must know the truth, and Jesus offers the truth openly.
2. However, it will be impossible for us to know the truth if we are not taking heed how we hear.
3. We must always be open to self-examination to determine our hearts reflect that of the good soil.