



Northside Proclaimer

Proclaiming The Word Of The Lord

1 Thessalonians 1.8

Northside Church Of Christ Welcomes You!

Jan. 25, 2015

“He Who Has Ears To Hear, Let Him Hear”

Bryan Garlock

In the book of Acts, Luke records examples of individuals being converted to Christ. Jesus said, “Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation” (Mark 16.15). These conversions occurred because Christians obeyed Jesus in making disciples of all nations by proclaiming the gospel (Matt. 28.19). As Peter proclaimed to the Jews, “Men of Israel, hear these words...” Likewise, Philip went about preaching the Christ to those in Samaria (Acts 8.5) and to the Ethiopian (8.26-40). Finally, Jesus told Saul, “...enter the city [of Damascus], and you will be told what you are to do” (Acts 9.6). The Scriptures show that the gospel must be heard!

When our Lord healed a blind man He said, “‘Do you believe in the Son of Man?’ He answered, ‘And who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?’ Jesus said to him, ‘You have seen him, and it is he who is speaking to you.’ He said, ‘Lord, I believe....’” (John 9.35-38) Though this man confessed his belief in Christ, he first had to be shown and told what to believe.

Prior to his conversion, the Philippian jailor asked, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” (Acts 16.30). Paul and Silas responded, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household” (31). For this reason they “spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house” (32). Obviously from the text the jailor and his household *needed* to hear the word of the Lord since they had never *heard* of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Therefore, it was not sufficient to tell them to believe; they first had to hear the evidence for believing.

Preceding the conversion of Cornelius (Acts 10-11), God told him, “...send for Simon...He will tell you what you must do” (5-6). When Peter arrived, Cornelius said, “...[W]e are all here in the presence of God to hear all that you have been commanded by the Lord” (33) Since hearing the gospel was necessary for Cornelius' salvation, Peter immediately began preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ, a message by which Cornelius would be saved (11.14).

Northside
church Of Christ

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Announcements

- Remember the shut in's.
- Pray for the church and one another.
- Men's Bible May 10th @ 3:30 PM
- Kid's drill today @ 4 PM
- Ladies' Bible study Tuesday 7 PM @ Ruth Bryan's house
- Remember the spiritual sick among us
- Call or email me to add announcements, thanks.

Chronological Bible Reading Plan

May 3 Ps 106-107
May 4 2 Sam 5:11-6:23, 1 Chr 13-16
May 5 Ps 1-2, 15, 22-24, 47, 68
May 6 Ps 89, 96, 100, 101, 105, 132
May 7 2 Sam 7, 1 Chr 17
May 8 Ps 25, 29, 33, 36, 39
May 9 2 Sam 8-9, 1 Chr 18

These examples demonstrate an underlining principle concerning our part in God's plan of salvation. Before any person can be saved, he or she must first hear the gospel. Paul taught, "For 'everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.' How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? ...So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ" (Rom. 10.13-14, 17). No one can call on the name of the Lord without first hearing the gospel preached to them. This is because one cannot have faith in Christ Jesus without first hearing the word! Therefore, not only is hearing essential, for without hearing none can be saved, but it also is the first condition of salvation.

God must have been concerned about our hearing His Word. He spoke from heaven, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!" (Matt. 17.5 NKJV). Therefore, during His ministry Jesus taught, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear." The kind of hearing Jesus refers to is hearing with the heart and not just with the ear. Man has always had a choice to hear or not to hear (Zech. 7.11-12; Acts 2.37; 7.57). This irrefutably proves the doctrine of free will. Men will either listen to Christ or they will reject Him. Whether they accept or reject what they hear, it is through the same vehicle, namely God's word, that both outcomes are brought forth. Therefore, there is a difference between hearing and hearing with understanding.

When Paul preached, "...some were convinced by what he said, but others disbelieved. And disagreeing among themselves, they departed after Paul had made one statement: 'The Holy Spirit was right in saying to your fathers through Isaiah the prophet: "Go to this people, and say, 'You will indeed hear but never understand, and you will indeed see but never perceive....'" Therefore let it be known to you that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; they will listen" (Acts 28.24-28).

Matthew recorded, "And the disciples came and said to him, 'Why do you speak to them in parables?' And he answered them, 'To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given...This is why I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. Indeed, in their case the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled that says: "You will indeed hear but never understand, and you will indeed see but never perceive."

For this people's heart has grown dull, and with their ears they can barely hear, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and turn, and I would heal them” (Matt. 13.10-15). A dull ear will lead a sinner to never obey the gospel and a Christian who is dull of hearing will never grow, forfeiting his or her salvation (Heb. 5.11-14). Both sinner and saint hear, but some do not *hear*.

Those who reject Christ will not allow the word to take root in their hearts. Luke recorded, “...The seed is the word of God. The ones along the path are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved. And the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear the word, receive it with joy. But these have no root; they believe for a while, and in time of testing fall away. And as for what fell among the thorns, they are those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by the cares and riches and pleasures of life, and their fruit does not mature. As for that in the good soil, they are those who, hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patience” (8.11-15).

Jesus describes four kinds of hearts who, upon hearing the word of God, react to the seed in four different measures. Three of the hearts describe those who hear, but do not continue hearing. Jesus described them as “...a foolish man who built his house on the sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it” (Matt. 7.26-27). This man, hears the words of God, but does not do them (7.26).

The fourth heart Jesus likened to “...a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock.” Indeed, this man “...hears these words of mine and does them...” (Matt. 7.24-25) Therefore, not only are we to hear, but also give attention to what we hear (Mark 4.24).

Jesus said, “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me” (John 10.27). While sheep often give attention to their shepherd, they are also known for wandering (Luke 15.1-7); we too can wander away from the truth (James 5.19), that is, we can stop hearing the voice of Jesus. Paul said, “For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths” (2 Tim. 4.4-3). Solomon wrote, “If one turns away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer is an abomination” (Prov. 28.9). Hearing then is a continual process. We must always be ready to hear (receive with meekness) and bear fruit (be a doer of what we hear). The more one hears *Continued on back...*

the word of God and neglects or fails to obey it, the duller he or she becomes and the less he is able to understand it. Indeed, "...seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear."

When approaching the word of God we must receive, i.e., embrace and give ear to¹, with meekness the message that is able to save us (James 1.21). This message, when heard, is sown in the hearts of men and takes root, and when obeyed, produces fruit to the glory of God. James taught, "...But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing" (1.22-25).

One who looks into a mirror and sees messy hair, grease on his or her face, etc. and walks away to start his day, not only forgets but also openly accepts the condition of his appearance. God's word is also seen as a mirror. The one who looks into life's mirror, God's word, and sees a sinful condition and deals with it appropriately is a doer of the word. He is not a forgetful hearer, but a hearer who perseveres. John wrote, "...blessed are those who hear, and who keep what is written..." (Rev. 1.3) Indeed, heeding and following that which has been heard is just as essential to our salvation as simply hearing the word of God. His word points us to a Savior who can deliver us from the bondage of sin. The first step to being set free is to hear the word (Rom. 10.17). BG

¹"Greek Lexicon :: G1209 (KJV)." Blue Letter Bible. Sowing Circle. Web. 9 Apr, 2015. ¹"Greek Lexicon :: G1209 (KJV)." Blue Letter Bible. Sowing Circle. Web. 9 Apr, 2015.