

Luke 8 • (Part 1): 1-21 • The Challenge of Hearing

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Luke chapter 8, we're going to continue our study here this morning in the gospel account of Luke, and we're in the 8th chapter. Luke chapter 8, just beginning that chapter today. We're going to take the first three verses first, and I promise you we'll get a little bit farther than that today, but I want to read the first three verses and then talk about them if we could.

It says this, *“Soon afterward, (and of course that refers to after the events that took place in the previous chapter) he (Jesus) went on through the cities and villages, proclaiming and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God. And the twelve were with him, ² and also some women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities: Mary, called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, ³ and Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's household manager, and (also) Susanna, and many others, who provided for them out of their means.”* (ESV) Pause there for just a moment, if you would, please.

This is an interesting and rather insightful insight into something that we don't hear about elsewhere in the Gospels. And that is how Jesus had His needs met during those years of earthly ministry. Not everything was a miracle from the standpoint of catching a fish and finding in its mouth a coin that is enough to take care of all the needs of the day or whatever.

There were women who followed Jesus along with His closest followers. And then, of course, there were always crowds that came along to see and to hear. But there were women who were devoted to following Jesus. And we're told that in addition to His twelve, that those women included Mary of Magdala, which is what her name. Magdalene, means; out of whom we're told was cast seven demons. Jesus delivered her from a life of pretty incredible difficulty.

Another woman was named Joanna, who was actually the wife of the steward of king Herod; that's a crazy connection. And then we have a woman named Susanna. And then we're told there were several others who are unnamed, but we know that they supported Jesus. They were providing for Him out of their own means.

And this is really interesting because Jesus had a very different attitude as it relates to women than the rabbis of the day. It was quite common for a rabbi to ignore a woman and not to speak to her, not to— directly anyway, not to minister to her.

Jesus did all of those things and even allowed some of the women the privilege of following and caring for their needs out of their own ability and so forth. And of course, receiving from people takes humility and this shows some of the humble nature of Jesus. Because it's humbling, isn't it, to receive goods from someone when you're in need? It's humbling.

It's humbling to accept. I've told you guys before that when I was a young man, just starting off in the ministry I was doing a Bible study at a community nearby; well, about an hour away from the church where we were meeting and I was— and I honestly, I have to admit, I had no business leading a Bible study at that point in my life, but they asked me to do it, and so I did it.

And I've told you many times before that at the end of this particular Bible study, one of the guys just thrust out his hand to give me some money to offset my gas cost or whatever, and my immediate response was like, no, no, no. I'm not going to take your money, sort of a thing. But there was an older gentleman with me, who was thankfully much wiser than I, and he just looked at me and he said, you take it.

And I didn't want to. I was begrudging, okay. I stuffed it in my pocket. And this guy and I rode together to this Bible study and he gave me a talking to on the way home and basically explained to me that it was an act of humility on my part to accept the gifts of others.

And of course, I knew nothing of humility at that point. I knew nothing of really anything at that point. But he explained to me that it took a humble heart to receive from people. And he was absolutely right. And I've learned that since and I see it here in the heart of Jesus.

This is a Man who did not need to receive from anyone. I mean, this is a Man who could say to a stone, become bread, for His meal or whatever. He had that ability, as God in human flesh. And yet He received humbly the gifts of people. And, it's just cool to see. Jesus humbled Himself. Freely receiving.

All right, we move on to one of, I think, one of the most insightful and important parables in the gospel accounts. Although I think most people think

they probably fully understand what this means. It's the parable of the sower. And it begins in verse 4, follow along as we look at it here.

And when a great crowd was gathering and people from town after town came to him, he said in a parable, ⁵ “A sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell along the path and was trampled underfoot, and the birds of the air devoured it. ⁶ And some fell on the rock, and as it grew up, it withered away, because it had no moisture. ⁷ And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up with it and choked it. ⁸ And some fell into good soil and grew and yielded a hundredfold.” As he said these things, he called out, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”

And by the way, that is critical that you understand that last sentence of that verse there, but we've obviously covered this parable before; you've heard it. You've probably heard it, even somebody teach on it or preach from it many times. We went through Matthew back in 2013 and we did this parable. We went through the Book of Mark in 2016 and we did this parable. And now we come to the very same parable here in the 8th chapter of Luke.

It's interesting, isn't it? Matthew, Mark, and Luke are called the Synoptic Gospels, and the reason they're called that is because there are so many similarities between the three. John, of course, is the odd man out, as one who presents a very different angle of presentation related to the Gospel of Jesus. But Matthew, Mark, and Luke are very, very similar. And, it's often that we get to the Book of Luke and we go— (Pastor Paul starts grumbling). Well, we covered that.

Or maybe you're reading through your Bible. And if you're one of those people who reads through the gospels all together— I personally can't do that. That's— I can't even teach that way. That's why when we're going through the Bible, I'll teach through Matthew and then we'll do Acts, Romans, maybe 1 Corinthians, then go back and do Mark and then do a few more books and so forth. I always have to break them up because otherwise my natural tendency is to get to Luke, the last of the Synoptics and go, yeah, yeah, yeah; I know that.

And even when I read through my commentaries when I'm studying, the commentators who are doing whole Bible commentating of the Word, they'll get to Luke and they'll just refer back to their previous comments: See what I said back in Matthew or Mark or something like that.

So here we are dealing with the same parable again and the meaning is basically unchanged. Essentially. But the context in which Jesus is presenting this parable

for you and I is really given to us again in verse 8. So can I get you to look at that again?

Verse 8. Well, it's really the end of verse 8— after He says that some of the soil was good and the seed fell into that and produced a bountiful harvest. But then He goes on to say— and it says that *“As he said these things, he called out, (and this is critical, you guys, he called out,) “He who has ears to hear, let him hear.””* And that is the context.

That is the context of what we're seeing; that's the context of what we're dealing with in this parable. Four kinds of soil, and we're talking about listening. So let's go into this and let's read about what this means, because we're told in verse 9, if you look with me in your Bible, that when His disciples got together with Him later on, they asked Him what this parable meant.

And *“¹⁰ he said, To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of God, but for others they are in parables, so that ‘seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand.’”*

Well, gee, that's testy of You, huh? What exactly does that statement mean? Well, a parable is a story and as such it teaches spiritual truths, but a parable is like a doorway.

Have you ever been walking by somebody's door— and you were walking by a room and you hear a conversation going on in there and you pause for just a moment, maybe just beyond the door or whatever. You don't want to make them know that you're listening— but you're listening.

That's like a parable. It's like walking past the door and you hear something and you hear something even intriguing. But the question is, are you going to stop and listen? And a parable is like that. It presents us with an opportunity to pause and listen and really think about what we've heard.

Or are you just going to walk by the door and go, Yeah, that's interesting, and then just blow past it? Yeah... telling a story; I don't know, He always tells stories, sort of a thing. Or is that parable going to be a reason for you and I to stop and say, What does that mean? And to listen.

And I mean really focus our attention and listen. Right? Because obviously parables demand thought, don't they? A parable isn't something usually that you can just sit and go, oh, as in I understand. I mean there are a few very simple

kinds of parables, but often they are something that we really have to give some consideration to if we're going to know the truth about which they speak.

And this is— parables are where you tend to separate the real listeners from the casual hearer who is hearing, but not really hearing, versus the person who is like, What does that mean? What are you trying to say to me? And I like the attitude of the disciples here to press in on Jesus. Would you explain this to us? We want to know. We want to hear what's really going on in this parable. And that is what distinguishes a real hearer. And parables, as I said, present an opportunity for you and I to listen and to focus and to hear.

Now notice as Jesus explains the parable. He says in verse 11. *“Now the parable is this: The seed is the Word of God.”* And we'll pause long enough just to say that what Jesus gives us at the very beginning is the absolute key to understanding this parable. All right? And there always is a key, but this is it right here: *“The seed is the Word of God.”*

If you miss this key, then the parable is going to become either just confusing to you, or it's— you're going to come up with all kinds of other sorts of metaphorical interpretations.

And have you ever noticed how people love to do that? They'll hear like a parable or a story; Well I think it means that when we go camping if we don't pack the right— it's just weird stuff people come up with. I just threw that one up off the top of my head and you could tell how stupid that was. But it's how dumb a lot of interpretations are, so you have to look for the key.

What's the key to understanding the parable? Jesus lays it out from the very beginning: *“The seed is the Word of God.”* All right. See, now we're established and we're ready. We're ready to understand. And by the way, this is a side point, but I do think it's interesting that the Word of God is likened unto a seed; because they're both alive and they produce fruit. So here we go.

He goes on to explain various levels of hearing. Verse 12. *“The ones along the path are those who have heard, ...”* I want you to notice that: they have heard. Then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts so that they may not believe and be saved.

Now, this is one of those times when I'm really glad that we have the Synoptic Gospels because Matthew actually gives us some further insight into this person who hears but has it stolen away from them by the enemy? Let me put this up on the screen for you. From Matthew chapter 13, it says,

Matthew 13:19 (ESV)

When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is what was sown along the path.

When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. (And) That is what was sown along the path.

And that's what's particularly interesting about this explanation, is that they hear it, but they don't understand it. That's the insight that Matthew gives us. They hear the Word of God. They hear it. Did they hear it? Yeah. Did they understand it? No. So because they didn't understand it, it's taken away.

The enemy comes and snatches it out of their heart. And I think the idea here is that the person rejects God's Word simply because he or she lacks the ability to fully understand what's being said. Right? And this lack of understanding creates a crisis of faith in their hearts where human intellect ultimately wins out over simple childlike faith.

Have you ever met that kind of a hearer? Have you ever been that kind of a hearer? I remember the very first time I met this kind of a hearer, and I think I've met many of them along the way, but it was back around 1983. I was confronted by my very first Jehovah's witness at my door. Never met one before.

And here's this guy at my door with a young boy. And I knew that Jehovah's Witnesses differed from what— I was really new in my faith at the time; just getting my feet wet, so to speak. And I— but I knew that I was at odds with this person as it relates to what we believed. But I wasn't really sure where the difference was; I didn't know enough yet.

So I came out and I asked him, I just said, okay, all right, I know we differ, but where do we differ? And it didn't take long that he zeroed in on the issue, the big issue, frankly, which is the deity of Jesus Christ. I mean, that was— that's the big bugaboo, I think.

And so I quickly affirmed to him my belief that Jesus Christ and God the Father are One. And I'll never forget his response to me back then. He said I can't understand that. And it was a simple sort of a response, but it was just, I can't understand that.

Can I just tell you that in the many years that have passed since I had that conversation with that Jehovah's Witness, I've had countless opportunities to say the same thing: I don't understand that. And I've— this is my third time teaching through the entire Bible. And I, especially when I get to the Book of Revelation.

We say that a lot, don't we? I don't understand that. We read it and then we go, Duh. There's a whole lot in the Word of God that we just don't get. And so I've had a lot of opportunities because the more I've learned about God through His Word, the more I've laid hold of my own lack of understanding.

I've been teaching the Bible for 35 years now. And I've got to tell you, there are some things in the Word of God that I am no closer to being able to explain than I was when I first started out. Doesn't that impress you? Yeah. And you know why? It's because I don't fully understand them. And that's because my brain isn't big enough.

And at the end of the day I have a choice about such things when it comes to things like the deity of Jesus. I mean, understanding the full grasp.... And the Trinity. Try to figure that One out. I love it when people say to me, pastor Paul, can you explain the Trinity to me?

And you know what I say to them. No, can't. I wouldn't even try. I'd be an idiot if I tried. Well, then how can you believe it? Because the Bible says it. The Bible reveals it. Do you guys understand there's a difference between embracing revelation and embracing understanding? Do you get that? Do you understand there's a difference between embracing faith and embracing comprehension?

There are a ton of things that I cannot comprehend in the Word of God, but I embrace them nonetheless because I believe that the Bible is God's Word. Okay? And so just because I can't personally, intellectually apprehend a particular topic or truth as it is expressed in the Word of God does not mean that I'm going to reject it just because I simply can't believe it.

Which is essentially what I believe many groups are doing and people are doing. They're essentially saying, if I can't fully be satisfied in my intelligence related to that thing, then I refuse to embrace it.

I have learned, brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ, that it is pride that causes a person to reject a revelation of truth simply because they cannot fully comprehend it. I truly believe that it is pride because what they're basically saying is, if I can't understand it, it's not worth understanding. And that is a

dangerous road to travel. I've heard people say many times, I can't understand why God allows so much suffering in the world, as if we can understand it.

But what they're inferring when they say that is that there's nothing more for them to know about the subject of God and human suffering. They're basically saying human suffering doesn't make sense to me in the light of the existence of God, therefore I pass judgment on God. I pass judgment on this presence of evil and suffering and I declare it to be what it is: the fault of God, based on my understanding.

So based on my understanding, I have passed judgment and I have said, He is guilty; guilty as charged in my heart and mind. What incredible pride to say my understanding is the understanding. So yeah....

Let's look at the next hearer, shall we? Verse 13, *“And the ones on the rock (He says) are those who, when they hear the (Word of God, or hear the) word, receive it with joy. But these have no root; they believe for a while, and in time of testing fall away.”*

Jesus says that there's another person who, notice, they hear the Word of God, and they even respond in faith. It says that they sprout— poof (Pastor Paul makes a hand gesture— poof!). Right? They're responding to the Word of God.

The issue isn't that they didn't respond. The issue isn't that they didn't hear. They heard. They responded. But there was a shallowness to their life. You know when it says that the seed was sown among the rock, it literally means in a rocky place where there was very little soil, just very shallow soil and beneath it a bedrock.

And we know what that's all about in this country, don't we? A bedrock of hard pan. A rocky sort of stuff where the root can't penetrate, get down and so forth and be protected from the sun and so forth. And so this person hears the Word of God. They respond to the Word of God.

But what they hear is ultimately wrestled away from them by the onset of troubles and difficulties, which essentially just fry them, the roots away. In other words, their hearing of God's Word is ultimately overruled by the difficulties of life, the painfulness of life.

They allow, and this is what's happening, they're allowing pain and hardship to speak louder and to fill their ears where they once heard the Word of God. You see, there's a shallowness to their life. And so— they've heard. They've

responded. But they've been shriveled up. The root of their faith has been shriveled away by the difficulties of life. And I've met this hearer too.

More than that, I have been this hearer. I have been this hearer. By the way, people think that you're either one of these kinds of soils and you're only ever one of those kinds of soils. Oh, good grief. Nothing could be further from the truth. I have probably been all these soil types. I hope I'm the last one, at least, to some degree, but I have been all of them. And I think most of you have too. I think that a believer can even be some of these soil types ongoingly. I think you can be a believer and you can still hear badly in an ongoing sort of a way.

Anyway, this sort of a hearer is the one who hears the Word of God, but the maintaining of the Word of God is dependent upon my circumstances. Right? I hear the Word of God, but my circumstances dictate whether I'm going to really truly hear what is going on and embrace what God is doing in my life. And so my hearing of truth becomes dependent on God giving me what I think He ought to give me.

And I get pretty angry if God doesn't give me what I think He ought to give me. If life doesn't come at me with the satisfaction that I'm looking for, well then, I'm probably just going to stop listening! Because you see, that's what this hearer is all about. The hearing is dependent upon my circumstances.

Let me ask you a question. Has that ever happened in your life? Has your hearing ever been dependent upon your circumstances? You know, Pastor Paul, I hear what the Word of God says, but I just don't understand what's happening in my life. I hear what the Bible says, but I just don't understand why this is happening in my life.

Do you hear what's going on here? Somebody is presenting to you what they believe to be a contradiction between God's Word and what's happening in their lives, and therefore they've stopped hearing. It happens all the time. Like I said, been there, done that. I've been this person. And I know some of you have too.

And I want to share a passage with you that helps to bring depth and dimension against this kind of hearing. Let me show you this from Acts chapter 14 on the screen. It says,

Acts 14:21-22 (ESV)

When they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.

When they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, (in other words, continue hearing,) and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.

That's one of those verses that we probably don't pin up on your refrigerator. But it's a truth that we all need to embrace at some point so that we keep hearing; we keep hearing God's Word.

We must go through many trials and many tribulations to enter the kingdom of heaven. Do you understand that? We must go through many difficulties. And many of us are going through many difficulties. And we have different shades and colors and flavors of difficulties, but we're all going through difficulties. And we must go through many difficulties, and we forget one thing: we forget that God's way is to wound so that He may heal.

We forget that. He did it with His Son and He's probably not going to pass you over. So we can't forget that. Because you see, when my ability to hear God's Word is directly affected by my happiness with God's performance in my life, I have begun to travel a very dangerous road. Okay? When my ability to hear God's Word is dependent upon my satisfaction with His performance in my life, I have stepped down onto a very dangerous path.

And then there's another hearer, described here, verse 14. *“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.”* And this gives us the picture of our third hearer.

Again, this person hears, do they not? Isn't that what Jesus says? They hear. So what's their problem? And did they not grow, at least for a while? They did, didn't they? It doesn't say that this person didn't grow, it says they didn't mature. But they did grow initially, but there was something else growing in their life at the same time.

And that is pictured by the weeds that were also in that soil, that grew up at the same time. So they're growing, but there's something growing simultaneously in their life. And that is those weeds, of course, which are a picture of riches and pleasures and the cares of this world— the things that the world cares about. You know what the world cares about. All you have to do is turn on your TV and it's all over— or just pop onto the Internet. And you know exactly what the world cares about.

Well, if you start caring about those things in the same way, which are the riches and the pleasures of life, they're eventually going to drown out the voice of truth. And that's what's happening in this person's life. They hear, they respond, they even grow, but there's something else growing. And that other, that something else, is the whole desire for the things of this world.

And I'm willing to bet that every single one of us in this room has been this hearer at one time or another in our lives. Maybe even right now. It's the time when my will comes right up against God's will and there's a battle. And He'll let me win. That's a crazy thing about my God. He will actually let my will win over His... when it comes to me. I sometimes wish He wouldn't. But He will let me— He'll let me go my way. And He'll also let me discover the consequences of going my own way. He'll gladly let me deal with the consequences of going my own way.

But my will comes up against His, and then that battle ensues for my attention, my devotion. Right? What am I going to be devoted to? The things of this world or to the Lord my God and His will and purpose for my life? Oh, what a struggle. What a struggle. Because pleasure— Okay, this is going to sound deep.

Are you ready for this? You might want to write this down. Pleasure is pleasurable. Wasn't that deep? You can stick around and get those every week right here at Calvary Chapel Ontario. Pleasure is pleasurable. Right? And sin is enjoyable... for a season. That's what the Bible says. And nobody's going to tell you otherwise.

And those things that give us pleasure and joy can easily become the total focus of our devotion. And when that happens, all these weeds are growing up around us at the same time. We may not even be aware of it and they are choking out our ability to hear the Word of God and to truly respond in a way that's going to cause us to mature as Believers.

Because you see God's will is motivated by the perfection of His purpose and plan. But my will is motivated by my greed, frankly. My will is devoted, or

motivated rather, by my desire for worldly treasure and earthly pleasures. That's what spurs my will on. The only reason I'm willing to admit it is because yours is the same. So here we are dealing with this issue of hearing, but then being choked from hearing.

Now let's look at the final hearer. Verse 15. It says, *“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.”*

So they hear the Word of God. They hold it fast. We'll talk about that in just a second. But it says they do so with *“an honest and good heart.”* Wow, *“an honest and good heart.”*

How many of you guys have an honest and good heart? We're all going, Wait a minute here, Pastor. Didn't you once tell me before that the heart of man is deceitfully wicked and evil and beyond cure? (Jeremiah 17:9)

And didn't you say that was me? Yeah, I did. So our question is— we read something like this and we go, So how in the world am I ever going to be good soil, if it requires having an honest and good heart? Because I've been told that I don't have an honest and good heart.

Well listen, an honest and good heart is something that is ultimately possessed by an individual who knows the true condition of their heart. So it begins with understanding that the heart of man is deceitful and wicked and beyond cure, and then coming to God knowing that He is the one who can transform my heart when I confess my sin at the foot of the cross. You with me? That, people, is an honest and good heart. It's a heart that admits that it's evil.

It's a heart that admits that it's lost without God. It's a heart that admits that it's always going astray and needs the Lord. Then we're being honest, right? I'm being honest with God. I'm finally being honest with God. I'm finally being honest in the sense that I'm saying, You know what God, my heart is a mess. It is a train wreck and I need You because I'm constantly going astray. I'm constantly doing my own thing; going where I want to go and thinking what I want to think. And my heart and my motives and my desires are so contrary to Your own.

You get that? Do you hear that? You hear what's coming out here? This is honesty, You Guys. And it's good. Being honest with God is a good thing. And that's what Jesus is looking for. Because when we're honest about the condition of our heart, we're going to begin to really, truly listen.

When I understand that I am obsessed by worldly thinking, I'm finally going to come to God. And I'm going to say, You know what Lord, my motives are not right. They're not good. And so I need to bring them to You. I need to acknowledge them. I confess that my heart is constantly going astray; constantly heading its own direction. But I bring those things to You. They're real genuine weaknesses; I bring them to You. I bring them to You. I confess them. And now I'm ready to hear.

Now I'm ready to hear what You have to say. Because I'm not going to play games with You anymore. I'm done playing games. I'm done trying to make myself appear like I'm some paragon of virtue, because I'm not. I'm going to agree instead with Your Word. And now I'm ready to listen. And I'm ready to hold fast. Because you see, rather than denying my true heart condition, now I've confessed it. And that makes me a true hearer. Because see, God told me what my heart condition really was. And I heard it. I really heard it. Now I'm ready to listen. Maybe for the first time in my life.

Look at verse 16, *“No one after lighting a lamp covers it with a jar or puts it under a bed, but puts it on a stand, so that those who enter may see the light.¹⁷ For nothing is hidden that will not be made manifest, nor is anything secret that will not be known and come to light.”*

Look at this next statement. *“¹⁸ Take care then how you hear, for to the one who has, more will be given, and from the one who has not, even what he thinks that he has will be taken away.”* That's the power phrase, isn't it, right there? That's the power phrase of those couple of verses, Take care how you hear.

Guys take care how you hear. Because a lot of people hear. It's like he's just not hearing. No, he heard. He heard.

Have you ever shared the Gospel with somebody and they're like, (Pastor Paul makes noises). I guess he didn't hear me. No, he heard. But there was this attitude. There was this thing that was going on. They either rejected it because Well, I don't get that; that's stupid. That's hearing without understanding. That's that first soil.

Or there's other kinds of hearing, but there are other issues going on. So Jesus says, *“Take care then how you hear.”* And He's telling us to listen to God's Word in such a way that we allow the light of the Word of God to illuminate our hearts. That's why He went through that whole thing about You light a lamp. You don't light a lamp just to put it under the bed or to cover it up.

Can you imagine turning on a light in your room just to throw a blanket over it or something like that? No, let it illuminate. Let it— and the idea for you and I is let the Word of God illuminate our lives, our hearts.

Let it happen. Because you see, you can choose to say No, I'm not going to let the Word illuminate this area of my life. And that's one way of hearing. I'm hearing, but I'm not really hearing. I'm not really— if I'm not hearing, I'm not allowing the Word of God to illuminate in my heart. I'm not allowing it to teach me what God wants me to know.

So many times people look into the Word of God to find out what they want to hear. In other words, they've got their own little light, their own little flashlight. And they're going in there and they're looking around for a proof text that's going to back me up. Oh, there it is: these three words! Forget the context. I'm just going to focus on these three words and I'm going to use them to beat everybody over the head who doesn't agree with me.

Did you know that the apostle Paul actually told us that one of the characteristics of the last days is that people are going to stop being hearers. Are you aware of that? Let me show you this in 2 Timothy 4 on the screen.

2 Timothy 4:3-4 (ESV)

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 look at this) and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.

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 look at this) and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.

Yeah, that's a serious thing. Wouldn't you say? It's because they've stopped listening. They're going to stop listening. Do you know why? They don't want to. That Word of God just turns on too bright of a light and it's uncomfortable when you do that! So stop doing that, would you please?

Would you stop turning that light on? I don't like looking at all the stuff in my heart. It's not fun so I'm going to turn around and I'm going to find myself a teacher who's going to tell me what I want to hear. I'm okay; you're okay. Right? We're all okay! Yeah Let's go get them! Thank you pastor, I feel so much better. (Pastor Paul frowns) Who cares?

Can I read again that warning in verse 18? This is so important you see this. Verse 18: *“Take care then how you hear, for to the one who has, (in other words who has embraced hearing and has received knowledge) more will be given, and from the one who has not, (in other words, who has stopped hearing) even what he thinks that he has will (ultimately) be taken away.”*

And again, that speaks to our human pride, our tendency for us to hear and then become satisfied with what we know, so I'm going to stop hearing because I can. I know. Oh, pastor, (Pastor Paul is laughing) I know that. I know what the Word of God has to say. You don't need to say it again.

The bottom line is that hearing always brings change. Hearing God's Word brings change in our life. Did you know that? Hearing God's Word brings change, but it's not always good change. And that's something people forget. There are people, maybe even in this room, who are hearing God's Word right now and having a negative reaction to it. Isn't that something?

Because you're either moving forward or you're moving backward as it relates to your ability to embrace and to hear God's Word. And so you have to ask yourself, What direction am I going?

One last section then we're going to close. This is very quick, verse 19. *“Then his (Jesus') mother and his brothers came to him, but they could not reach him because of the crowd. ²⁰ And He was told, “Your mother and your brothers are standing outside, desiring to see you.” ²¹ But he answered them, “My mother and my brothers are those (oh look at this!) who hear the word of God and do it.””*

And this is that final punctuation of what we've been looking at in Luke chapter 8 thus far. You know, there were all kinds of people that were following Jesus during His ministry. Of course, the twelve, we know about the women who were there and helping support, and there were crowds and stuff. But his own family was not among those who followed Him, at least not initially.

They occasionally came to check up on Him, and they usually thought that He was out of His mind. In fact, there's one particular instance in the Gospels where they came to take Him home because they believed He was insane. (Mark 3:21) Did you know that? So you think when your parents or your family thinks you're out of your gourd, or you've joined a cult just because you go to church every Sunday, just know that it happened first to Jesus.

But anyway, this occasion was one where His family came to check on Him, but they couldn't even get close to Him because the crowd was so massive. So, they sent word and eventually Jesus gets word: Hey, Your mother and Your brothers are out there. They want to talk to You.

And His response is really interesting here. He basically says, My mother and My brothers are those who hear the Word of God and who do it. It might sound on the surface to you and I like Jesus is dismissing His family, but that's not what He's doing.

What He's doing is, He's conveying a larger understanding of what it means to be the family of God. And the family of God in God's kingdom is comprised of those who hear and do the Word.

The family of God in the kingdom of God are those who hear the Word of God and do it. That's the good soil. The one who takes care how they hear and they don't stop hearing and doing.