

Hearing and Responding

By Bill Scheidler

(Two Part Message, Part 2)

Introduction – Review last week

Last week we began by describing the kind of Christian that we wanted to be including'

1. A Christian that God can use for His purposes.
2. A Christian who is mature enough to weather the storms of life.
3. A Christian that others can follow.
4. A Christian who is a true reflection of Christ to the world.
5. A Christian who is not consumed with satisfying my own needs but who is a true servant to the needs of others.

We said that this kind of Christian is possible, but that kind of Christian must be established on a strong foundation.

That foundation is Christian life is based on the principle of hearing and doing.

We say this especially in Jesus story of the wise and foolish builders. The only real difference between the two is that while both heard the word, only one of them put the word into practice. We saw that there are many who have ears but they do not hear what God is saying to them.

Today we want to look at another parable of Jesus—The parable of the sower (Mt. 13:1-23).

Four different types of hearers

Jesus described four different types of hearers by the four different kinds of soil in the parable of the sower. The seed represents the Word of God and the soil represents our heart condition.

Matthew 13:1-23

On the same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the sea. 2 And great multitudes were gathered together to Him, so that He got into a boat and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore. 3 Then He spoke many things to them in parables, saying: "Behold, a sower went out to sow. 4 And as he sowed, some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds came and devoured them. 5 Some fell on stony places, where they did not have much earth; and they immediately sprang up because they had no depth of earth. 6 But 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

sprang up and choked them. 8 But others fell on good ground and yielded a crop: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. 9 He who has ears to hear, let him hear!”

10 And the disciples came and said to Him, “Why do You speak to them in parables?” 11 He answered and said to them, “Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. 12 For whoever has, to him more will be given, and he will have abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. 13 Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. 14 And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says: ‘Hearing you will hear and shall not understand, and seeing you will see and not perceive; 15 For the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, so that I should heal them. 16 But blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear; 17 for assuredly, I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.

18 “Therefore hear the parable of the sower: 19 When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, then the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside. 20 But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; 21 yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles. 22 Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful. 23 But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.”

A. The Wayside Hearer

1. The natural illustration (Mt. 13:4)

Matthew 13:4

And as he sowed, some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds came and devoured them.

Seed was sown on a pathway where the ground was hard. The seed stayed on the hard surface and became very vulnerable to the birds of the air eating it before it had a chance to take root.

1. The spiritual meaning (Mt. 13:19)

Matthew 13:19

When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, then the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside.

Those who have this type of heart can be described this way. These are those who...

- Once were open and soft before the Lord.
- Experienced things that trampled them under foot.
- Became hard and unreceptive.
- Now only listen to the Word in a surface way (on heart but not in heart)
- Lose the seed.
- Bear no resulting fruit.

B. The Stony Ground Hearer

1. The natural illustration (Mt. 13:5-6)

Matthew 13:5-6

Some fell on stony places, where they did not have much earth; and they immediately sprang up because they had no depth of earth. But when the sun was up they were scorched, and because they had no root they withered away.

There is some ground that is very rocky and what soil does exist is very shallow. As a result the roots cannot go down deep to where the moisture is and as soon as things heat up, they wither and eventually die.

2. The spiritual meaning (Mt. 13:20-21)

Matthew 13:20-21

But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles.

Those who have this type of heart can be described this way. These are those who...

- Failed to clear the ground before planting.
- Kept some hard, unproductive areas in heart.
- Have shallow soil whose experience is based mostly on emotion (received with joy).
- Do not have deep roots and a strong foundation.

- Have many obstacles to personal growth.
- Cannot endure the heat of trials and tests.
- Bear no fruit.

C. The Thorny Ground Hearer

1. The natural illustration (Mt. 13:7)

Matthew 13:7

And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choked them.

The thing about weeds is that you do not have to want them or plant them. In addition, they always seem to be large, overspreading plants that block sunlight from the desirable plants. They also have a tap root that is very long and can get moisture when other plants cannot. If you look at a dry patch of land, often it is only the weeds that are green.

2. The spiritual meaning (Mt. 13:22)

Matthew 13:22

Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful.

Those who have this type of heart can be described this way. These are those who...

- Have too much other stuff growing in their lives.
- Have too much competition for the good seed.
- Have lots of activities that fill all of their time, use all of the talents and demand much of their treasure.
- Bear no fruit.

D. The Good Ground Hearer

1. The natural illustration (Mt. 13:8)

Matthew 13:8

But others fell on good ground and yielded a crop: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.

Even in good ground where the soil has been properly prepared, there are levels of productivity.

2. The spiritual meaning (Mt. 13:23)

Matthew 13:23

But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.

Those who have this type of heart can be described this way. These are those who...

- Hear the word and accept it (Mark 4:20).
- Hear the word and understand it (Mt. 13:23).
- Hear the word and keep it (Luke 8:15)
- Bear fruit in their lives.

Luke 8:15

But the ones that fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience.

We all control the ground of our hearts. We must prepare it as Ezra did (Ezra 7:10).

Ezra 7:10

For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the Law of the LORD, and to do it, and to teach statutes and ordinances in Israel.

How we respond to the commands of Christ indicates our relationship to Him.

What kind of relationship do you have to Jesus? Is He your friend? Is He your brother? Is He your personal servant? The way you see the relationship has a huge bearing on how you respond to His voice.

1. It should be a relationship of love (John 14:15).

John 14:15

If you love Me, keep My commandments.

2. It should be a relationship of sheep to shepherd (John 10:26-28; Luke 7:8).

John 10:26-28

But you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep, as I said to you. My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.

3. It should be a relationship of lordship and obedience (Mt. 8:8-10; Luke 6:46; 7:8).

Matthew 8:8-10

The centurion answered and said, "Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed. For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it." When Jesus heard it, He marveled, and said to those who followed, "Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel!"

Luke 6:46

But why do you call Me "Lord, Lord," and not do the things which I say?

4. It should be a relationship of discipleship (Mt. 21:6; 26:19; Luke 9:15).

Matthew 21:6

So the disciples went and did as Jesus commanded them.

The greatest thing that can be said of a disciple is that they followed the wishes of their master and did what he asked.

All of these relationships should inspire us to be "swift to hear" (Jam. 1:19). How do you hear quickly? You hear quickly by responding quickly to what the Lord is saying.

James 1:19

So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath...

To neglect to lay this foundation is the height of folly and deception (Jam. 1:22-25).

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 observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.

When we only hear the word but do not put the word into practice...

- We deceive ourselves (We think that knowing is the same as doing).
- We forget the word easily.
- We do not receive the blessing of obedience to the word.

There are benefits and privileges for those who are both hearers and doers of the word.

1. They live “blessed” lives (Mt. 24:46; Luke 11:27-28; 12:43).

Luke 11:27-28

And it happened, as He spoke these things, that a certain woman from the crowd raised her voice and said to Him, “Blessed is the womb that bore You, and the breasts which nursed You! But He said, “More than that, blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it!”

The word “blessed” means “fortunate, well-off and happy.” It denotes the transcendent happiness of a life beyond care, labor and death (Kittle). It can also mean “rich.” It speaks of those who are much to be envied, who live above the cares of others and who are favored with a happy destiny.

2. They receive special instruction and insight from the Lord (Luke 6:27; Mt. 13:16-17).

Luke 6:27

But I say to you who hear...

Jesus has special instructions for those who have an ear to hear. He lets them in on His special secrets (I Th. 5:4). As such they are protected from the winds of doctrine that blow on the earth (John 7:17).

John 7:17

If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.

3. They are considered His closest friends (John 15:13-15).

John 15:13-15

Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you.

Abraham was call a friend of God (Jam. 2:23). We have that same oppourtunity to be a friend of God. We cannot be God’s friend or walk with God unless we are in agreement with His words in our life (Amos 3:3).

4. They are placed in the same category as His mother and brothers (Mt. 12:50; Mark 3:35; Luke 8:19-21).

Luke 8:19-21

Then His mother and brothers came to Him, and could not approach Him because of the crowd. And it was told Him by some, who said, “Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, desiring to see You.” But He answered and said to them, “My mother and My brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it.”

The natural relationships that are described in this passage are the closest of all human relationships. Yet Jesus said that if we are hearers and doers of the word of God we have a closer relationship to Him than even that of His mother and brothers.

5. They find a place of safety, security and protection in His fold.

John 10:26-28

But you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep, as I said to you. My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.

I John 2:15-17

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world--the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life--is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

The hearing and the doing of the word of God is the sure foundation.

Because this area is so critical to the success of the Christian, it is good to do things that will assist you to both to hear and to do what the Lord is saying to you. Try doing the following. Take a clean sheet of paper and make four columns (See Sample). Carry this in your Bible and keep it with you in your prayer times. Record the things that God says and the date. On the other side of the page keep record of what you have done about it and the date that you accomplished it. Review this list often. Most Christians hear God more than they realize. But too often they are forgetful hearers of the word. Writing things down helps us to remember them.

Pass out form on the way out.*

“I Am a Hearer and a Doer of the Word of God”

What the Lord Said	Date	What I Have Done About It	Date

*Note: On the following page is a full sheet like the above that can be duplicated and distributed to the people to carry in their Bibles.

“I Am a Hearer and a Doer of the Word of God”

What the Lord Said	Date	What I Have Done About It	Date