How To Hear

Intro: Luke 8:18. The way for Christ was prepared by a preacher, Mat. 3:1-2 “In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea. And saying, Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” “Preaching” is from the Greek κηρύσσω (kerusso) which means to proclaim as a herald (a public crier). The message did not originate with the herald, but he was obligated to faithfully proclaim the message given to him. God could have used other means, but he did not!

1. Salvation is to be preached.
   a. Mark 16:15 “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.”
   b. Luke 24:46-47 “And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.”

2. God’s plan for saving man is a preaching plan; 1 Cor. 1:21 “For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.”

3. Effective preaching demands responsive hearing as well as a faithful proclamation of the gospel.

I. IMPORTANCE OF THE HEARER.

A. Hearer must help produce powerful preaching.
   1. Jesus could not do the job by Himself; Mat. 13:15-16 “For this people’s heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. 16But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear.”
   2. One today could say, Preacher, you had better make it good; I have many important things that could engage my thinking.”

B. Some results of placing all the responsibility on the preacher.
   1. Preaching becomes a competitive performance on the part of preachers.
   2. This produces envy and jealousy which in turn result in strife.
   3. Efforts sometimes are made to make the pulpit compete with the entertainment world.

C. Sermons, scriptural discourses, are not ends in themselves.
   1. Sermons are not exhibits to be analyzed by curious spectators.
   2. They are lessons designed to enlighten, stir, inform and save.
   3. Sermons should, “comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable.”

II. EMPHASIS ON HEARING IN THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER.

A. Luke 8:4-16 “And when much people were gathered together, and were come to him out of every city, he spake by a parable: 4A sower went out to sow his seed: and as he sowed, some fell by the way side; and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it. 5And some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture. 6And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it. 7And other fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit an hundredfold. And when he had said these things, he cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. 8But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear.”

9. They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away. 10And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection. 11But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word,
keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience. 16 No man, when he hath lighted a candle, covereth it with a vessel, or putteth it under a bed; but setteth it on a candlestick, that they which enter in may see the light.”

B. Nothing was wrong with the seed. Luke 8:11  “Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God.”
1. God’s Word is living and powerful; Heb. 4:12 “For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”
2. God’s Word is able to save the soul; Jam. 1:21 “Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.”

C. What was the real problem?
1. Not the sower, who so often must take the blame.
2. In this parable the real problem was the hearer.
   a. Buttrick has called this parable, “The parable of the soils” or “The responsibility of the hears.”
   b. Hearing is urgent business; Luke 8:8 “And other fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit an hundredfold. And when he had said these things, he cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.”

D. Who are the hearers described and warned in this parable?
1. Hearer with the shut mind (unteachable).
   a. Mind could be closed by pride.
   b. Fear of learning new truth.
2. Hearer who fails to think things out.
   a. He does not count the cost.
   b. Luke 14:27-33 “And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. 28For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? 29Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, 30Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish. 31Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? 32Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace. 33So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.”
3. Hearer with excessive interest in life.
4. Hearer with a good and honest heart.

III. HOW SHOULD ONE HEAR?
A. One should not be:
1. An indifferent hearer.
   a. Jam. 1:19 “Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath;”
   b. Acts 10:33 “Immediately therefore I sent to thee; and thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.”
2. A captious (anxious to catch trip up others) hearer.
   a. One fond of finding fault, and making objections.
   b. Pro. 5:13 “And have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined mine ear to them that instructed me!”
3. A forgetful hearer; Jam. 1:22-25 “But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. 23For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: 24For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth
what manner of man he was. 25But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth
therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his
deed.”

4. A hearer with itching ears; 2 Tim. 4:3-4 “For the time will come when they will not endure
sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;
4 And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.”

B. One should hear in order to understand.

1. Luke 8:8 “And other fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit an hundredfold. And when
he had said these things, he cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.”

2. Eph. 5:17 “Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.”

C. What one needs to do.

1. Give careful attention to the lesson, in spite of noise, heat, time, etc.
2. Strive to overcome mental laziness.
3. Strive to analyze the sermon.
   a. What is the aim of the sermon.
   b. What are the main points.
4. Note taking often helps one keep up with the lesson.

Conclusion: There is a law of action and reaction, “to him that hath shall be given.” Let the hearer accept
his responsibility in the preaching situation. The hearer must obey; Jam. 1:21 “Wherefore lay apart all filthiness
and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.”