

Bible Study Review Lessons 9, 10, 11, April 10th, 2018

Open Line Bible Study Lesson Nine January 23, 2018

Tonight's Subject: The Challenge, (What did those hear that did not hear)

In John 15:1, JESUS states, "I am the true Vine and my Father is the gardener". Keep in your mind the image of your Heavenly Father being a gardener who works in HIS garden which is your HEART! This will change our perspective about what we are, whom we belong to and who is at work within our life. The MASTER GARDENER IS AT WORK WITHIN YOUR HEART! The quicker we know this by revelation and live in cooperation and obedience to the gardener the better off we are! The following verses bring further enlightenment to our knowledge about the parable sower.

The parable is JESUS explaining the condition of the heart. Look at Proverbs 15:11, "Death & Destruction lie open before the LORD! How much more the hearts of men!" DID YOU SEE THAT!!! In other words, the heart lies open before the LORD! Only the LORD can see the depth of our heart which is like JESUS looking at the condition of the heart in the parable sower. If death and destruction can be examined, the heart likewise can be examined too. This verse implies several characteristics about the LORD's observation tendencies and priority. Death & Destruction are subservient to the LORD's authority. The LORD can see whatever HE determines to see in them. D&D are incapable of hiding from the LORD anything found within their parameters of control or territory. The verse states in so many words, "since D&D is under the LORD's authority, then of course, the heart is too! Apparently, the verse also implies that the LORD is more concerned about what HE sees within the heart than what HE sees in D&D. This is b/c GOD can change the heart. GOD controls D&D but GOD cannot or will not change D&D. The heart is seen and examined by the LORD b/c HE desires to work within the heart. He desires to change and transform the heart. The heart is HIS primary focus, not D&D! In using the garden analogy as used in scripture, eventually pure hearts are cultivated and harvested into the eternal Kingdom. Hearts that remain un-submissive to the LORD are identified with D&D and are burned up. This imagery is strong but parallels the NT teaching how our FATHER either purifies or burns up impurity within our life. This is taught within John 15:1-6. So JESUS is the sower of the truth of HIS Kingdom walking throughout the garden of every person's heart casting HIS seeds within each heart! D&D and the gardener are pursuant of your heart! Which seed will have its way in our heart? Here is another perspective to consider.

The heart can only avoid the false authority and seeds of D&D as it is first submissive to the Gardener! So consider the following. Between the three forces of the Gardener, the heart and D&D there are two sequences of authority here. If possible, imagine this in a diagram you could create. First, if the heart is unredeemed then here is what we see within the garden. The first supreme authority is always the gardener, our Heavenly Father. But since the heart is unredeemed and uncultivated and thus under the false authority of D&D the second source of power and authority in this picture is D&D. The third force is the condition of the heart. Notice here, that D&D are between the Gardener and the heart! Thus we think of the euphemism “getting between myself and my friend, etc.” On the LORD’s side of HIS work this doesn’t stop HIM from reaching out to unredeemed hearts but it does hinder the heart from reaching out to the gardener. Our LORD can easily get through D&D to reach a heart. But the reciprocal is much more challenging. The heart cannot overcome D&D except by the intervention of the FATHER’s grace! D&D will work to keep its control of unredeemed hearts away from the Gardener but D&D does not have the final say in this dilemma! The final say belongs to the Gardener and the heart! Then we have the second diagram to consider. Again, the first supreme authority is always the gardener, our Heavenly Father. GREAT NEWS HERE! The gardener has redeemed the heart in this garden and has begun his pruning work in that heart! Thus the heart has bypassed D&D and moved into second place in this sequence of authority. D&D are now in third and last place! The great news is that the gardener has gained the control of the heart and the heart is learning to receive and accept the seeds of the gardener and to reject the seeds of D&D! Thank you JESUS! Unfortunately until the heart further understands this process, the heart is still very vulnerable to the deceptive seeds and work of D&D. No matter how well developed and nurtured the heart becomes as long as we are within the garden of this world our hearts are susceptible to the seeds of D&D. Which seed will the heart receive, believe and adhere to? The sower parable is all about this question!

Now look at Proverbs 16:1-2. What do these verses teach us about the depth of the heart? Within our heart we have the ability to create or feel or dream or think about our plans. But in the depth of our heart only the LORD can enable our tongue to eventually adequately describe what lies there. Our heart needs the help of the gardener FATHER GOD to prosper. Our hearts left to their own will fail to see their greatest potential come to pass. Verse 2 teaches us that we cannot properly judge or see the depth, motivation, purity or lack thereof in our heart. Until Christian maturity is developed we are prone to justify our actions and motivations. Ultimately the LORD judges our motivations within

the heart. We cannot see into ourselves except the LORD allows us to see within ourselves. In brevity, we are incapable of looking into our own heart with the ability to be thorough, accurate guided by nothing but HOLY SPIRIT given truth to analyze and interpret what lies in the heart. ONLY the gardener can do this completely and perfectly.

Open Line Bible Study Lesson Ten - February 6, 2018

(What did those hear that did not hear)

Consider, “If the heart is the central focus of the sower parable then why is it not specifically referred to in the story line?” To begin considering the answer to that question look at the answer JESUS gave the disciples in M 13:11-13, Mk 4:11-13 & L8:10. In each of these verses they all three separate persons into two or more groups in how they listen.

Without the development of a renewed mind we assume that whatever the LORD wants to make known GOD would shout it aloud or scream it out so loud, long and livid that everyone would know what is going on. Committed disciples learn quickly as they pursue JESUS they discover that this is not how the FATHER communicates. The LORD protects the truth from those who really don't want to hear it. This is also a form of mercy. M13:10-17 helps explain these principles of the Kingdom. Many persons find it confusing to hear the LORD tell the disciples and others to resist going out and telling everyone who JESUS is or what He has done in a given situation. Examples of this are: M12:16, M8:4, M9:30, Mk1:25,34, Mk5:43, Mk7:36, Mk 8:26,30, Lk4:41,35. JESUS told a story to illustrate what the FATHER, the master gardener is doing, HE is examining every human heart. We know this is true but we also know you cannot “cast pearls among the swine b/c they will trample them and then turn on you too” (M7:6) The LORD uses the garden analogy to teach truth to HIS children such as what is hidden in the heart of all men or that the adversary can plant his seeds into our hearts or that the adversary can steal the seeds the LORD plants or that we can expect great returns from what the LORD plants in our heart once it grows to full maturity.

Now, let's look at M13:10. The disciples ask JESUS why he speaks to the people in parables. How did the disciples know to ask this? From the stories it is apparent the disciples rarely understood JESUS themselves. Numerous stories end with JESUS asking them “do you still not understand”. Consider M16:9, LK 18:34, LK 24:45, J 8:27, J 12:16, J 13:7, J 16:18, J 20:9. From these references we learn the disciples didn't get JESUS'

meaning very often so how are they to have the perception to know to ask the question they ask! While the answer of JESUS to them is straight forward, remember what we said a few weeks ago about this question in each synoptic gospel. (Lesson 7, Jan 9) The disciples in between the lines are also saying to JESUS, “We don’t know what you are saying ourselves, help us!” Probably they were also saying, “Why do you speak to us in parables?” It is likely that some of the disciples had been approached by others who would ask them, “Why does JESUS speak to us in parables?” That said, the disciples may have been asking this question more out of the people’s request than out of their own concern, discernment or maturity. This brings new light to the question asked JESUS. This question is not asked by the disciples’ strictly b/c THEY completely understand JESUS themselves and are compelled to wonder why JESUS left everyone else out. No, they have heard persons comment that JESUS doesn’t make sense in what he is saying to his audiences.

JESUS has two challenges here! His disciples don’t know what HE means and His audience doesn’t know either! HIS task is hard. I can assure you the disciples were not praying for the other listeners to get straight what JESUS was saying. They were concerned about getting it right themselves first. We should pray we hear and receive it right first so others hear and receive it right in order to third, be useful to the LORD’s purpose as HIS Word is taught to others.

The very warning JESUS gave in the parable is unfolding in front of the disciples as they ask this question to JESUS! In the parable JESUS speaks of a heart that was shallow. When trouble arises in this heart or life such a person quickly falls away. The point is they become offended through the problems they experience. The very people who heard this parable, some of them were offended at JESUS that HE didn’t make it clearer or why does HE speak in parables reaction. When the disciples hear this question from the audience they too must deal with the question within themselves lest they be offended by the question and take on the attitude of the audience. Few have realized this! When we over analyze the sermon and teaching out of our brokenness and immaturity we are being influenced by the offense against the gospel derived from our sin or carnal nature. We are coming into agreement with the adversary! We must be careful! This has been one of Satan’s best kept secrets but his works are being exposed as we speak now! Our hearts are being purified as the WORD is spoken!

Scripture Texts: Matthew 13:1-23, Mark 4:1-10, Luke 8:4-15

Tonight's Subject: The Challenge, (What did those hear that did not hear)

What did the people hear that did not hear what JESUS wanted them to hear? Only in L 8:9 do the disciples ask specifically about the sower parable. In Mk 4:10 the disciples ask about parables in general. In M 13:10 the disciples want to know why the crowds are spoken to in parables. So don't read into the story line that the disciples ask JESUS why He told the people the sower story in a parable. They did ask that in Luke but not M or Mk. In Mk the disciples ask about parables. JESUS turns the focus back to the sower parable. The disciples did not do that, JESUS did. They have not yet realized how important the sower parable is. They know parables are important and they don't understand them well BUT THEY DON'T KNOW THE SOWER PARABLE IS THE PRIMARY PARABLE TO MUST UNDERSTAND! Jesus emphasizes this in Mk 4:13. JESUS is giving more info. to the disciples than they had asked. The disciples want to know about the parables but Jesus' answer is to tell them "you must find out about the parable of the sower first and then other parables will be clearer in their meaning."

The question in M 13:10 is motivated by enquirers who are thinking, "Don't you want the masses to know the truth JESUS?" The disciples have this human notion that if JESUS would just speak more clearly then everyone would sign up to help JESUS accomplish His mission, whatever that is. HOW MERCIFUL IS OUR LORD IN RESPONSE TO OUR INSENSITIVITY TO HIS GREATER PURPOSES. So, some of the disciples are gullible enough to believe the way JESUS teaches is why persons cannot hear Him rather than knowing the state of the listener's heart is the issue.

When JESUS taught persons HEARD WHATEVER THEY COULD HEAR and then they place the responsibility of that on JESUS. They become so preoccupied with what they don't like or understand that JESUS said they haven't stopped long enough to ask themselves, "Why is it that two or more different opposing interpretations are being heard from JESUS teaching?" Many Christian leaders have dealt with this. When the dispute is dissected by reasonable persons, one of their first discoveries is the realization that the accusation of wrong comments by someone is highly unlikely or impossible if the conversation was in the same place witnessed by numerous persons who didn't hear the same thing said.

We've all heard the comment, "Were you in the same place that I was in? They (or whomever) didn't say that or did say that, etc." SO KEEP THIS IN MIND. The complaint is coming from those who all heard JESUS speak the same thing but they didn't understand it in the same way. In their blindness and immaturity the offended party never stops and asks "Am I hearing or interpreting the teaching correctly?"

The more significant the message is the greater the possibility is our adversary will resist the message perverting what the listener has heard. Satan brings offense to hearts are not ready to further repent at the deeper challenge the LORD gives. There are many reasons we may fail to see all the many nuggets of truth found in the story lines of Scripture. But here is one that the adversary has used to take advantage of one of JESUS' great strengths. Let me explain.

Jesus lived in perfect character and displayed immeasurable patience, love and mercy toward disciples when they missed JESUS point. So our LORD never constantly confronted the blindness of His students or every level of obvious hypocrisy he detected. Neither should we when we recognize some level of immaturity or ulterior motivation in people. That said, Satan takes the gracious manner in how our LORD operates and uses the LORD's silence against us when we read these stories. We can fail to see behind the story line as JESUS did. Just b/c JESUS didn't address it doesn't mean the problem or resistance or hypocrisy wasn't there. JESUS knew this and lived by this principle. He knew that as long as people didn't get HIM right they would not get anything else right either. They failed to understand the sower parable b/c they FAILED TO RECEIVE THE SOWER HIMSELF first in the story. Jesus saw through all the limitations, sin and darkness that motivated so many questions He was asked. Keep this in mind as you study the story line.