

Bible Study Review Lessons 6 to 8, March 27, 2018

Open Line Bible Study Lesson Six January 2, 2018

Scripture Texts: Matthew 13:1-23, Mark 4:1-20, Luke 8:4-15

Tonight's Subject Matter:

the Story, the Challenge, the Question, the Answer

The following comments are derived from the story of the parable. 1) Listen! Every time JESUS speaks He doesn't always start with the command to listen. Mk remembers this story being told at least once with this beginning warning/exhortation. While we should listen to every Word that proceeds out of the mouth of GOD for they all benefit us, I have noticed the following. In every occasion the LORD has spoken to me there have been a few times HOLY SPIRIT has declared, "LISTEN"! Again we should always listen but why would the LORD add this in some situations?

The scale that I gave you can be used sometimes to see what is happening inside us with learning to more fully deeply HEAR, Listen & OBEY the LORD. Go over this list every month or so and let HOLY SPIRIT examine where you currently are. The scale is #1) that's all me right now! #2) that's often me #3) that's sometimes me #4) that happened a few times #5) that is not really me.

I fit into "That's often me" 8 times! They are 5,6,9,17,18,22,24,25. I fit into "That's sometimes me" 15 times. They are 1,2,3,7,10,11,12,13,14,15,16,19,20,21,23. I fit into "That's happened a few times" thrice. They are 4, 8 & 26. The #1 & #5 category is currently none for me. Below, I've included a few of the reasons we must listen more closely that were very applicable to my storyline. What about yours?

Five, the LORD is challenging us to "Listen" with our spirit ability rather than our natural ability. We must learn to hear beyond the realm of our own mind and common sense. We must hear with our super uncommon sense. The Spirit speaks to our spirit within us. We must become fine-tuned and sensitive! Six, when we hear "Listen" it could mean the LORD sees that we are too pre-occupied with the circumstances around us we are in.

We are listening to the voices, sounds and issues around us rather than focusing in on listening to what GOD says! Eighteen, "Listen" may challenge us to consider the question, "can you see the difference in the two contrasts of where, who, what you are right now compared to what the LORD is saying?" The LORD is different than us and the word "Listen" can denote that reality. Twenty Two, "Listen" denotes the LORD's desire to treat you as a son and no longer as just a servant. You have sonship in Christ! Let the LORD develop within you the faith of sonship moving from a slave/servant mentality. Be freed from an orphan spirit! Twenty Five, "Listen" is more important than we ever imagined. Without the skill to listen then we will miss what is actually being said. Listening is not just hearing. It is understanding, obeying, identifying with the intent of the Word. We have never realized how important listening really was. After all these and others the Spirit could show us are we really ready to "Listen" to the parable of the sower? We added one more as we discussed this on Jan 2nd. #26 "your ability to listen may spare or save someone else's life! WOW! That's #4 category for me.

So far, this study is derived from one comment in the story line! One word, "Listen"! With so much to consider let me encourage you with the following info. Here is a general outline of what we will examine from this parable before we finish. First, we'll discover the 4 Hearts picture of this parable. Each heart is described in profound detail in the story. (not yet done) Secondly, sample prayers will be given to teach us to pray over the condition of each heart with the goal to move to the Prepared Heart development of Discipleship. This will increase our ability to discern the "heart" of a person, issue, situation or atmosphere. You have to learn what you are dealing with. What is the "heart" of the issue? (not yet done) Third, we will examine each Key Issue in the story. Then we will relate the progression of each Key Issue to our lifeline to better see where we are and how well do we identify with the "Unseen Heart" in the story! (we are working on this now) Fourth, we will learn to see this pattern every time the gospel is shared by the 5 fold ministry and how we can cooperate with this process as we are workers in the vineyard! (the concept has been identified) Fifth, we'll see the Key Players in this process. What role do they play in my life? Who is the sower, the seed, the heart, the enemy, the problem, the promise? (Partially done).

Open Line Bible Study Lesson Seven January 9, 2018

I will add that we can always listen and that as each day passes it is more crucial we listen with deeper insight into the WORD. May the LORD grant you understanding of these truths into your spiritual man as you “Seek 1st the Kingdom of GOD”.

Let’s go forward in M’s story line. If you look at v. 18, Jesus begins explaining the parable to the disciples. Now here is something to ponder few ever consider. Notice v.18, Jesus states, “listen then to what the parable of the sower means:.” Did you see the word again “listen”? Notice that Jesus tells the general audience to listen and we can assume some really heard the story but most did not. We can safely conclude such due to the very way JESUS tells the parable. According to the story only 1 in 4 persons or hearts were ready to receive the WORD! While JESUS isn’t referring to a literal 25% will hear Him, we can also use the WORD to safely conclude that “few there be that find it. (Life)” M7:14. So few, in the general audience really listened to the story. However, when JESUS speaks to the disciples to “listen” in M, HE is expecting more out of them b/c more has been given to them to enable them to actually hear the truth at a deeper understanding and application! YOU can hear at a deeper level, the level of spirit and truth!

The Challenge

If you have ears to hear, are you using those ears to hear? So let’s make application of that as Disciples and Intercessor’s when the Gospel is being shared and we are involved in the process. Keep the listening factor in mind. You, the disciple are listening at a different frequency than others. Then there are other believers who will hear even more than we will for various reasons. We are all hearing the same words stated but not hearing the same truth shared by HOLY SPIRIT’s activity in the words spoken by a person. Lord, what do you want the uncommitted to hear? What do you want me the disciple to hear? What do you want other disciples present to hear? We also have to realize HOLY SPIRIT may direct us to specifically pray for a given person in the setting we are in. They could be Christian or not. Consider L8:18. L states this as a general principle to be practiced in the disciple’s life. L doesn’t directly tie this statement into the sower parable but it comes soon after. “Therefore consider carefully how you listen. Whoever has will be given more; whoever does not have, even what he thinks he has will be taken from him.”

We must ask the LORD's mercy on those who cannot or will not hear the truth at the level they need to heed the truth. I've often heard stories through the years about local churches that had assigned intercessors praying while the pastor or others preached. This increased the effective connection of truth to listener. There is no gospel communicator who is effective without an army of intercessors working behind the scenes!

The Question

When the disciples ask about this parable, M tells us they want to know why JESUS speaks to people in parables. (v.10). Mk tells us the disciples and others ask JESUS about the parables. (Mk 4:10). L tells us the disciples wanted to know what this parable meant. (L8:9) DO YOU SEE A PATTERN HERE related to Christian maturity? In M, the primary concern is with other people. In Mk, the primary concern is questions about parables. In L, the primary concern is their desire to understand the parable themselves. These series of questions by the disciples parallel the common sequence of our focus through the process of discipleship. The question in M reveals first how we could be too focused on others in ways that often reveal our self-righteousness. We want to know about others to the neglect of knowing about ourselves. The question in Mk reveals second we are too focused on the meaning of parables, doctrines, timelines and truth to the neglect of complete application of those truths to our lives. We can explain truth to others but not necessarily apply those truths to our own situations. We all do this but many never see their own blindness and thus continue to repeat the same mistakes. The Father longs to develop loving disciples who know truth rather than knowledgeable disciples who do not love. The question in L reveals third that such questions imply the disciples are starting to see their own need of grace more deeply. Their concern is now for themselves in the right manner. They don't know it all and must be taught and moved beyond their present faith level. I've pastored many persons who stay in the first stage all their lives. Some move on to the 2nd stage and only a few move into the 3rd stage. Can we pray the HOLY SPIRIT will move us to the 3rd level of faith and humility?

Open Line Bible Study Lesson Eight January 16, 2018

In tonight's lesson we are going to go back to the story and continue to further examine its content. While Jesus goes into great detail describing the challenges & frustrations of cultivating a garden and what the observant farmer and gardener learns about horticulture those facts aren't the point. ALL THIS INFORMATION IS GIVEN TO MAKE A PARELLEL COMPARISON to the state and nature of the human beings ability or inability to receive the gospel's work and influence within their heart! JESUS takes the natural and compares it to the spiritual realm of reality. JESUS is not giving a lesson in how to grow your garden. He is revealing how complex the heart is. When looking into the sower parable notice that JESUS does not use the word heart until after the parable is given. Then heart is referred to in verses 15 & 19 in M. In Mk, the word heart is not referred to at all in the sower parable! Lk treats the story the same way M does. The heart is referred to in the explanation but not the story. Is there anything we can immediately learn from that fact? What should we consider/remember that as the sower parable is told the heart is not referred to but then in the explanation it is the central focus of JESUS explanation? In order to discuss that question more thoroughly let's first define what heart often means in the Biblical narrative.

In both the Old Testament (OT) and the New Testament (NT) the word "heart" is used to refer to the whole of the innermost part of the human, NOT merely the emotions. However, in the twenty-first century English the word "heart" is used to express the emotions as an individual compartment of the inner part of the human. It is common for Americans to divide humans into the physical and the metaphysical. While this is a widespread insight, the way most Americans compartmentalize the internal (metaphysical) aspect of humans is diverse from many other cultures. We Americans tend to see people as having two separate parts, wherein one part is the emotions, which we refer to as the heart, then a brain, which houses the mind.

The Bible does not divide man so easily – it focuses on all three making up the whole of a being – this is Biblically called the "heart." When both the Old and New Testaments speak about the heart, it never means merely human feelings (emotions). The Biblical word "heart," is the inner aspect of a man, made of three parts all together, with the primary part: the Brain (The Mind).

The heart, in its moral significance in the OT, includes the emotions, the reason, and the will. The Holman Bible Dictionary gives the most thorough explanation concerning the definition of the English word “heart,” when it states: The heart is the center of the physical, mental, and spiritual life of humans.

Because the heart is at the root of the problem, this is the place where God does His work in the individual. For instance, the work of the law is “written in their hearts,” and conscience is the proof of this (Rom. 2:15). The heart is the field where seed (the Word of God) is sown (Matt. 13:19; Luke 8:15). In addition to being the place where the natural laws of God are written, the heart is the place of renewal. Before Saul became king, God gave him a new heart (1 Sam. 10:9). God promised Israel that He would give them a new spirit within, take away their “stony heart” and give them a “heart of flesh” (Ezek. 11:19). Paul said that a person must believe in the heart to be saved, “for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness” (Rom. 10:10)

Conclusion

Hopefully from the plethora of references cited, it is beyond dispute that when the Bible refers to the heart it is not referring to the emotions solely. GOD is not after your emotions, GOD is after the entire being of the heart!

Personally, I believe the best definition of heart, is the focus and determination of the mind, and the response of the emotions. We must always remember, what God says about the human heart, that it: “... is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked,”⁸ because man is a fallen creature, subject to sin; however, it is also with our heart that we exercise faith unto salvation.