

Week 17: Hear the Word of God

Readings:

- Luke 8

Resources:

- HG Bishop Youssef
 - Luke 8 Part 1: <https://soundcloud.com/his-grace-bishop-youssef/luke-8-1-25-bible-study-english-arabic?in=his-grace-bishop-youssef/sets/luke-bible-study>
 - Luke 8 Part 2: <https://soundcloud.com/his-grace-bishop-youssef/luke-8-26-56-bible-study?in=his-grace-bishop-youssef/sets/luke-bible-study>
- Fr. Tadros Yacoub Malaty
 - Luke - https://www.dropbox.com/s/81uupstc71zfyd9/042_Luke.pdf?dl=0

Quiz:

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Material:

- Parable of the Sower
 - Read verses 4-8
 - Explain the parable
 - Read verses 11-15 - The Lord tells us what the Parable means
 - Some points:
 - The Lord used images that were familiar to them... sower, fishing, vineyard, servant/master, etc.
 - The seed is the Word of God..
 - Without a sower, what good is the seed? This is because the word of God is actually the words of God, and words backed up by the power of God
 - Seeds and plants are living things just as "the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." (Hebrews 4:12)
 - The same seed is being used in all of the different soils, but having a very different effect
 - The soils
 - Each soil produces a plant that's progressed more than the one before it

- The point of the parable is not for me to see which soil I am and then lament because I'm Rocky or Thorny or by the wayside... but for me to ask "how can I be the good soil"
- Wayside
 - Those who hear and then the devil comes and takes away the word out of their hearts
 - These are the people who only get as far as hearing the word, but don't even receive it with joy... someone who will hear a sermon and criticize the person who is giving it, or those who hear and doubt. Satan knows the power of the word of God, so he will try to quench it as early as possible.
 - Example: I hear a lesson about tithing, and I think "well he just wants money" or "well I don't trust what the church is doing with my money so I'm not going to do that"
- Rock
 - Those who hear and receive the word with joy, but have no root and fall away in time of temptation
 - Many times we will hear a sermon, or a Bible verse, or a Sunday School lesson, and we will say "wow what a great lesson I really liked it" or we walk out of the lesson very happy - but in the end, there is no fruit. We go home and don't do it.
 - Example: I hear a lesson about tithing, and I think "wow these are all good points" but I don't take an action for myself
- Thorns
 - Those who hear, go out and are choked with cares, riches and pleasures of life, bearing no fruit
 - This person hears, and agrees to do it, but gets distracted by the chores of life
 - Example: I hear a lesson about tithing, and I think "I'm gonna start next week!" and then next week the bills come in, or the new game I'm waiting for comes out... and I say "well the tithes can wait"
- Good Ground
 - Those who hear and do and bear fruits
 - This person hears, and does. He bears fruits.
 - Example: I hear a lesson about tithing, realize I'm not doing my part, so I start to do it immediately. And from the tithing I grow spiritually, and the Lord blesses me in my work, and the Church can better help the community
- Purpose of Parables
 - Read verses 9-10 again
 - An easy way to learn the lessons in a language and with illustrations that they can understand
 - Seeing they may see, and hearing they may not understand
 - This seems harsh but it is related to the parable!
 - The Lord is referencing Isaiah 6
 - Isaiah saw a great image of the Seraphim glorifying God to one another "Holy holy holy is the Lord of hosts and then he stood in shock and a

seraphim came and put a coal on his lips... and the Lord said "whom shall I send?" and Isaiah said "Here I am! Send me!"

- Then the Lord told him "Go and tell the people - keep on hearing, but do not understand; keep on seeing, but do not perceive. Make the heart of this people dull, and their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and return and be healed."
- So Isaiah asked "Lord, how long?"
- And the Lord said: "until the land is desolate"
- The Lord knew their stony hearts and how they were not accepting His message, but they are accepting His miracles and are enjoying His parables. They are like the Rock, who receive the parable with joy, but have no foundation.
- But to the Disciples, it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God
 - The disciples will be priests who need to spread the faith throughout the whole world
 - The disciples will need to be discerners of people - to understand who is Wayside, who is Rock, who is Thorns - and to give the message to each one in a way they will accept it.
 - The Lord is laying the foundation for the Church - He will perform the act of salvation on the Cross, but He gives it to the Disciples to spread the faith through the Church throughout all nations
 - The disciples doesn't just mean "the twelve disciples" - but all of those who were following Him. Including the women that we read about in the beginning of the chapter. The twelve, however, will have the role of priesthood
- Parable of the Light
 - Read verses 16-18
 - Explanation
 - You wouldn't light a flashlight and throw it under the bed...
 - Especially in those days, oil wasn't free... so lighting a lamp and putting it under a basket would be a waste of oil and money and everything
 - Therefore, take heed how you hear
 - This is a continuation of the message from the Parable of the Sower
 - If you're gonna light a lamp, you do it for people to see. Jesus isn't preaching to hear Himself talk... He is telling them these things for a reason.
 - There will be accountability down the road... everything that we hear, we will be accountable for it.
 - What did I do with what I heard?
 - Did I ignore it?
 - Did I say "wow good speech" and then do nothing?
 - Or did I bear fruit?
 - Whoever has, to him more will be given; and whoever does not have, even what he seems to have will be taken from him
 - Who has: the person who really hears... to him, more will be given

- If we are seeking understanding and seeking His wisdom, and trying to put it in practice, then that will be rewarded.
- "But without faith, it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him." (Hebrews 11:6)
- God will never turn someone away who is pursuing Him, or trying to put into practice what He said
- More what?
 - More understanding
 - More knowledge of Him
 - Closer to Him
 - etc.
 - Not more money, better job, etc.
- Salvation is a continual process of drawing closer to God and growing in these things. And when we receive more, we are responsible for it.
- Whoever does not have: the person who doesn't really hear...
 - Sometimes Lisa talks to me while I'm on the computer or something and I'll nod my head and say "uh-huh" and "yeah" and it ends up that I didn't hear a word she said...
 - Sometimes we do this with God.
 - We hear a Sunday School lesson and nod our head and stare at the screen and repeat some answers back... but in the end
 - Even what he seems to have... even what he thought he heard will be taken away.
- Jesus' Mother and Brothers
 - Read verses 19-21
 - These verses are a continuation of the previous stories... all of them are related
 - Jesus is saying that what really makes them My mother and brothers is that they hear the Word of God and do it.
 - Who are the brothers?
 - Relatives of the Lord - cousins, etc.
 - James the "brother of the Lord"
 - It was common in those days to call a close relative "a brother"
 - St Mary did not have other children after the Lord Jesus Christ
- Wind and Wave obey Jesus
 - Read verses 22-25
 - This story reminds us of the story of Jonah
 - Jonah is called by God to go to Nineveh... so he went the opposite direction. Sometimes we give him grief, but it's like telling one of you to go to Iran and tell ISIS that in three days God will destroy them... it's not easy
 - But as he's going the opposite direction, he's on a boat and a big storm comes... and all the mariners, who are pagans, start praying. And they go to Jonah and find him sleeping and ask "what do you mean by this?"
 - And Jonah says "I know why this is happening... it's my God because I disobeyed Him. Listen, just throw me off the boat and you will be completely fine."

- They do it and the storm subsides
- Now, we have the disciples of the Lord on a boat, and a windstorm comes, and the boat is filling with water... They were in jeopardy... and they go to the Lord and how do they act? They are panicking!
 - They don't say "well Lord, come and take care of this storm"
 - Or "Lord, we know that we will be fine because You are with us"
 - They don't even stand and pray as the pagan mariners did
 - But they go to the Lord and say "We are perishing" as if to say "and you are perishing with us!"
- The Lord rebukes the wind and water and it stops and He asks them "Where is your faith?"
- Where is your faith?
 - The disciples had heard more than anyone else, from the teachings of the Lord... but when reality hit them.. panic!
 - So what do they know about Jesus? Who do they think He is? If He's the Messiah, how would He perish with them and drown?
 - St Luke juxtaposes this with the previous stories
 - First he tells us what we need to do (be the good soil, etc.)
 - Then he shows us how most of us act in reality
 - Do I act like this?
 - I go out to my car and it doesn't start... my first thought isn't to pray. Not to trust God... but to try to fix it myself, or to think of "how much money is this gonna cost" or "ugh this will be such a hassle." Maybe in a few days after it actually runs, I'll say "thank God" - and I won't really mean it but I'll say it
 - We might be judgmental of the disciples, but car not starting is minor compared to being in a boat in a storm with water coming into the boat
- Demon Possessed Man
 - Read verses 26-39
 - In contrast to the disciples who asked "Who can this be?" - the demon knows "Jesus, Son of the Most High God"