



The Gospel According to Luke Wk. 36 “The Importance of Hearing” By Pastor Bill Alderson

My wife, Bonnie, will tell you that I have a particular talent for listening without hearing. My skill is that I can always remember the last 8 or so words you said to me in a conversation. So for most of our marriage, Bonnie would be in the midst of telling me a story, and notice that I’m not actually paying attention. When she would call me out on this, I would say, “Yes I was, you said the woman at the checkout was rude to the clerk...” or whatever the last few words were.

I’ve been called out on this in business as well. I can remember several times that I was on the phone with a particular employee, Paula. Paula was pretty good at calling me out when I did something wrong, especially when I wasn’t paying attention to a discussion. “You’re check your e-mail aren’t you?” she’d ask, when she noticed I wasn’t actively listening to what she was saying to me.

I’ve also been known to be plagued with the “Uh Huh’s” – You all know what the Uh Huhs are – that’s when you’re goofing on your phone, and someone is talking to you, and at every pause you say “Uh Huh” so that it sounds like you’re paying attention. You can also level up at this game by throwing out the occasional “Really,” “Seriously,” or if you’re feeling bold, “Wow, what did you do...”

In all of these examples, there’s one thing in common – my ears were listening to what the other person is saying, but my brain WAS NOT hearing their message.

Well, today’s word is all about The Importance of Hearing.

Please open your Bibles with me to Luke 8, verses 16 through 21.

These are the words of our Lord, Jesus Christ, so let’s take a moment to pray so that we might clear our thoughts of earthly concerns so that we might hear what He has to say to us today.

Prayer.



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Luke 8:16-21

16 “No one after lighting a lamp covers it with a jar or puts it under a bed, but puts it on a stand, so that those who enter may see the light. 17 For nothing is hidden that will not be made manifest, nor is anything secret that will not be known and come to light. 18 Take care then how you hear, for to the one who has, more will be given, and from the one who has not, even what he thinks that he has will be taken away.”

19 Then his mother and his brothers[a] came to him, but they could not reach him because of the crowd. 20 And he was told, “Your mother and your brothers are standing outside, desiring to see you.” 21 But he answered them, “My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it.”

Main Message

Our Big Takeaway today from these verses is very simple – Jesus isn’t interested in attracting passive listeners – No.

He wants us to be active, fully-engaged, and **“Hearing”** His message in a way that impacts our thoughts and our words and our actions.

Last week, Pastor Jody presented Luke 8:1-15, in which Jesus explained to the disciples why he taught with parables.

In his sermon, Jody said that Jesus packs the Gospel in parables so that people will know by COMPREHENDING THEM if they are in the Kingdom.

The Gospel is good news that not only shares a truth about Salvation, but it necessitates action. Jesus demands obedience.

Remember that, to Jesus, Hearing is synonymous with obeying. So, building on that thought, we have three main points that we’re going to walk through today.



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Point 1: The Gospel Must Be Heard

Luke 8:16

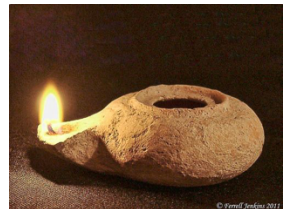
No one after lighting a lamp covers it with a jar or puts it under a bed, but puts it on a stand, so that those who enter may see the light.

Let’s talk lamps for a moment –

In Jesus' day, lamps were simple, made of clay with a reservoir for the oil and a "nozzle" on which the wick would be placed.

Household lamps, like the one I’m showing here, were often small enough to be carried in the palm of your hand.

So in this time, when it was dark enough to light a lamp, you would try to set it up on something tall so that you could get the most illumination from the lamp as possible – on a shelf or, in the case of the parable, on a lampstand, probably in the center of the room. This position would allow for best illumination.



But we must remember that Jesus is speaking in Parables here, so he had something else in mind in our passage in Luke 8:16.

There are two different messages we can take away from this verse.

First, that Jesus is directly referring to the light of his own teaching. Luke said, in chapter 1 verse 79, that Jesus had come “to give light to those who sit in darkness” and later in chapter 2, verse 32 that he was “a light for revelation to the Gentiles” It seems that the emphasis in Luke’s Gospel is Jesus’ own teaching, and in particular how it is received. Like a lamp in a house, the truth of Jesus’ message must be received and put into practice.

A second meaning we see referenced in the book of Matthew, in which Jesus refers to his disciples as being lights to those around them. In



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Matthew’s Gospel, 5:14-16, Jesus said to his disciples, “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.”

In Matthew’s Gospel the emphasis seems to be on his disciples being evangelistic. We could say that Jesus’ message must be heard responsively.

Jesus’ point is that now that the disciples had heard his message, what were they going to do with it?

The **SAD** fact is that many people listen to the message of God’s word but never **HEAR** it – there is never a change in their lives. The message goes in one ear and out the other.

The Gospel was not given to us only to be admired, talked about, and professed – **but to be practiced.**

It was not meant to merely reside in our intellect and memories – **but to be seen in our lives.**

If you profess to belong to Christ, **the message of the gospel must transform you.** When you hear the the gospel, the message of God’s word, **you must hear it responsively.** You must adjust your life in accordance with God’s word.

What will happen **if you do not** hear God’s word responsively? According to Jesus, you will not get away with ignoring God’s word forever **but will be held accountable.** Jesus reiterates this point in verse 17:

17 For nothing is hidden that will not be made manifest, nor is anything secret that will not be known and come to light.

R. C. Sproul shares a very interesting perspective on Jesus’ statement that nothing is secret. He says:



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“It is interesting to speculate as to how God will expose all of these secret things and the hidden, covert dimensions of our personalities in that last day. One brilliant student I taught, said to me once, that he, too, wondered how God would reveal the secrets of our hearts on the last day.

He was becoming increasingly amazed at the capacity of the human brain to store data and information, and gave a lengthy and complicated description of how the brain works, saying to me that there is no impression, no experience, no word that we ever hear, no sight that we ever perceive, that is not recorded somewhere in the inner chambers of our brain. The brain is a massively complex computer with a storage capacity that is nothing short of incredible.

And he said, ‘You know, I kind of envision it this way, that on the last day God is not going to bring in witnesses to speak against us, but he is simply going to unplug our brains and run them through his own gigantic computer and play back messages whereby our own brains will reveal to us the storage data of our own experience and every word we have ever spoken, every deed we have ever done, will be confessed by our own brain cells. It will be all a matter of absolute record.’

*Now, of course, that is all speculation, but the man was saying something that was important, and that is that **we cannot erase the reality of the deeds that we have committed.** We cannot blot out, as Lady Macbeth sought so desperately to do, **the blemishes upon our soul.***

But we try; we try to hide them, we try to keep them concealed from people. It is not that we are supposed to stand naked before the world and confess every one of our sins before all mankind. No.

*But we are to reveal those things and confess those things to God, knowing that if we don’t, **that God will himself expose us.***

‘For nothing is hidden,’ says Jesus, ‘that shall not become evident; nor anything secret that shall not be known and come to light.’ “



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Next, in verse 18, Jesus issues a warning to his disciples:

18 Take care then how you hear, for to the one who has, more will be given, and from the one who has not, even what he thinks that he has will be taken away.”

This is a core message of the Bible – **especially throughout the Book of Hebrews.**

The author of Hebrews argues that, now that Jesus has come, how foolish it is to neglect his message. The author repeats this to us again and again. We hear this in Hebrews 3:7-8; 3:15; 4:7 –

“Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts”

Do not harden your hearts.

Every time you hear the message of the gospel and resist it, **you make it easier to resist the next time.**

So little by little, even what you think you have is **taken away** from you.

Many of us took music lessons when we were children. But we haven’t picked up an instrument in years. In fact, we have probably forgotten more than we ever learned.

The same principle applies to each of us spiritually.

You come to church. You hear the message of the gospel. But you do nothing with it.

You hear it, but it goes in one ear and out the other.

You do not hear it **responsively** – which means by answering or replying.

And it is of the utmost importance to **hear** the Gospel responsively if it is to do you any good.



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So, Jesus’ message must be **heard**, and it must be heard **responsively**.

Point 2: The Gospel Must Be Obeyed

19 Then his mother and his brothers[a] came to him, but they could not reach him because of the crowd. 20 And he was told, “Your mother and your brothers are standing outside, desiring to see you.” 21 But he answered them, “My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it.”

While Jesus was teaching, Luke tells us that his mother and brothers came to him, but they could not reach him because of the crowd. Luke does not tell us why Jesus’ mother and his brothers tried to reach him, but it was probably important enough that they felt they should interrupt Jesus while he was teaching.

And Jesus’ answer to his mother and brothers seems surprising on the surface, if you’re not following the subtext of the story.

He answered them, “My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it” (8:21).

It’s important to take note here that Jesus is very clear that ***our spiritual relationships supersede family relationships***.

In addition, those who are rightly related to Jesus are **not** those who merely **listen** to His message, but those who **hear it and obey it**.

Jesus’ message must be **heard and acted on**. We must demonstrate that we hear his message **by obeying it**. And how do we accomplish this?



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Point 3: Our Actions And Beliefs Must Be Put To The Test

Let’s look once more at what Jesus said in verse 21:

“My mother and my brothers are those who hear the Word of God and do it.”

So what is that Word? And how do we do it?

Luckily, Jesus made the answer to this question really clear for us.

This time he would not be speaking in parables, but in clear, understandable, directive language:

Matthew 28:18-20 – The Great Commission

18 And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Here at Highlands, we believe wholeheartedly in the authoritative and prescriptive nature of the Gospel. And therefore, we seek to adhere to the directives that Jesus gave us.

We also understand that we are an imperfect people seeking to love and follow a perfect Savior. That’s why at Highlands Community Church, “community” is our middle name.

We can’t do this alone.

None of us can do this alone.



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So at Highlands we strive to live in biblical friendship.

We believe that we are **blessed as a people** to have a Savior who refers to us as “Friend,” and who earnestly seeks for us to speak truth to one-another – in love.

In John 15, Jesus speaks to the Disciples on the topic of **true Biblical Friendship**:

John 15:14-17

14 You are my friends if you do what I command you. 15 No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; **but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.** 16 You **did not choose me**, but **I chose you** and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that **your fruit should abide**, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. 17 These things I command you, **so that you will love one another.**

I read this, **and the Gospel compels me** to stand before this congregation and repent of my failures as a friend.

I confess that there have been times that I haven’t answered a phone call because I was tired or busy. That I’ve passed up the opportunity to meet because my schedule was too hectic. That I avoided a conversation because it was going to be too hard.

And I confess that when I look at my failures, it’s hard not to be mired down in guilt and despair, and think to myself:

“Will **I** ever **be** good enough?”

Well **thank God it’s not up to me.**

And thank God **for His blessed Forgiveness and amazing Grace.**



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Romans 8 – 1 There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. 3 For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, 4 in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

And so I **must** stop condemning myself for my failures.

I must stop – and listen...

The Gospel compels me to **Hear**.

And the Gospel compels me to **obey**.

It compels me to **move past my failures**,
and to **get up**, and to **try again** – but not to **try harder**.

Instead, the Gospel compels me to truly **Hear** the word of God and **Obey** his commandments.

So Friends, I ask you today to **Hear** and **Obey** the word of the Lord.

If you **struggle to believe** that God loves you, I ask you today to **HEAR** the word of the Lord, and to **OBEY** his commandment to **believe** that **YOU** did not choose **HIM**, but that he chose **YOU**.

If your **fear of failure** is holding you back, I ask you today to **HEAR** the word of the Lord, and to **OBEY** his commandment to **GO and make disciples of ALL nations**.

And Friends, if **others have failed you**, and you **struggle to forgive them and move on**, I ask you today to **HEAR** the word of the Lord, and to **OBEY** his commandments, **so that you may love one another – as He has loved you**.
Let's Pray.



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COMMUNION

PRAYER

BENEDICTION

Go in the name of the Father XX.

Go in the name of the Son XX.

Go in the name and power of the HS XX!