

REVEALED

An Exposition of the Book of Mark



Examine How You Hear

Mark 4:1-20

Main Idea

The fruit God's word bears in your life depends up responding to God's grace by preparing your heart.

Overview

All Hearing is Not the Same

- Jesus teaches the crowd by using a parable of four different kinds of soil
 - The only thing that changes in each scenario is the soil; same sower; same seed
 - All the soils receive seeds; thus this parable is for 'church going' people
- On both sides of the parable (vv. 3-9) Jesus commands the crowd to listen
 - Generally speaking all people have ears, yet Jesus says, "he who has ears"
 - Jesus is talking about hearing with the ears of your heart, spiritual ears not just physical ears

Proper Hearing Requires Responding to God's Grace

- Verses 10-12 are sandwiched between the telling of the parable and the explanation to tell us how to understand the parable
- Those who seek out Jesus understand only because it is "given" to them – God's grace
- Jesus quotes Is. 6:9-10 to show that God's word brings salvation to those who repent and condemnation to those who don't
 - God's word is a double-edged sword; saving some and hardening others
 - Puritans: "The same sun that melts the snow hardens the clay"

Examine How Your Hear

- The seed sown is the word, which is the gospel (James 1:21; 1 Pt. 1:23-25)
 - God Created. Man Rebelled. Christ Redeemed. You Respond.
- Hard Heart
 - Satan immediately snatches the word away, not from unwilling victims but from willing participants
 - We must immediately & urgently respond to God's word
- Shallow Heart
 - The seed look like it's going to bear fruit but has no roots; circumstances prove to tough
 - Jesus says "when" not "if" tribulation and persecution come
 - Only those with deep roots in the gospel withstand suffering
 - Be prepared for suffering; not pessimistic outlook, but looking toward God
- Crowded Heart
 - The seed grows and looks promising but gets choked
 - Three things choke out the word: (1) the cares of the world; (2) deceitfulness of riches; (3) desires for other things

- The human heart is not large enough to worship more than one 'god'
- Only Jesus satisfies
- Prepared Heart
 - Only soil that produces fruit
 - Not only hears, but accepts the word
 - Continually and actively accepts God's word and develops roots which produce increasing fruit

Questions

1. What are some common everyday examples that show we have more than one type of hearing?
2. In vv. 3 & 9 Jesus commands the crowd to listen. What is the significance of this 'double' command?
3. In today's terms, who is audience of this parable? What does that mean for us?
4. In verses 10-12 it seems as though Jesus uses parables to prevent some from being forgiven. What's really going on in these verses?
5. God's word is a double-edged sword. What does that comment mean? Implications for hearing the preached word?
6. Verse 15 says that Satan "immediately comes and takes the word away"...is this fair?
7. What does it mean to have "hard heart?"
8. What does it mean to have a "shallow" heart? How can we ensure we are establishing deep roots so that "when" tribulation comes we will not fade?
9. How does the 'crowded heart' scenario diagnosis our culture/ourselves? Why can't we worship more than one god/God?
10. Practically speaking, how can we ensure we hear with a 'prepared' heart?