

Luke 8:19-21
May 12, 2019

Open with Prayer

HOOK:

Last week we began our lesson processing the difference is between a good listener or a poor listener. We focused our attention on this because Jesus gave a warning in v.18 in which He said, “Consider carefully how you listen.”

Transition: Today we pick up the next three verses, which reveal a logical outcome of the preceding teaching (vv. 1–18), which is that a person who understands (and therefore puts into practice) the things Jesus was saying was rightly related to Him. Would someone read v.19-21.

BOOK (NIV 1984):

V.19:

- Now Jesus’ mother and brothers came to see him, but they were not able to get near him because of the crowd.

V.20:

- Someone told him, “Your mother and brothers are standing outside, wanting to see you.”

V.21:

- He replied, “My mother and brothers are those who hear God’s word and put it into practice.”

Process Observations/Questions:

Q: What did you most like about this passage? What resonated with you? [Let people engage – Jesus seizes the opportunity to share a spiritual lesson, i.e. my real family are those who hear God’s word and puts them into practice.]

Q: What did you least like about this passage? [Let people engage – It seemed like Jesus was disrespecting his own family, etc...]

Q: What did you find in this passage that you didn’t understand? [Let people engage; This reaction of Jesus in no way indicated a lack of filial love or respect for His mother (note His care for her at the cross (John 19:26-27). It does indicate, however, that her place in the kingdom is no higher than any others “which hear the word of God and do it.”]

Q: What do we learn about Jesus in this passage? [Let people engage; Jesus believes His family is made up of those who listen and obey. Jesus puts Mary and His own brothers on the same level as any who would listen to Him and obey Him. If you want to be “family”, if you want to be close to Jesus, then pay attention and do what He says. X-Ref Paul to Titus (Titus 3:8)

LOOK:

Q: How are we to live in light of this text? [Let people engage – Because being a part of His spiritual family is much more important than any human relationship and is based on obedience

to the Word of God, it is not enough to “hear” the Word of God; we must also “keep it” (Luke 8:15); Faith without works is dead; see James 1:22-25]

Q: What are the pain points you’re feeling from this passage? [Let people engage]

Q: How does Jesus helps us? [Let people engage]

Close in Prayer

Commentaries for Today’s Lesson:

Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible Exposition Commentary* (Vol. 1, pp. 201-202). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

Hear and obey the Word (vv. 19–21). Our Lord’s mother, Mary, and His half-brothers (Matt. 13:55–56; Acts 1:14) were worried about Jesus and wanted to talk with Him. Some of His friends had already said that He was out of His mind (Mark 3:21), and perhaps His family agreed with

them. Jesus took this as an opportunity to teach another spiritual lesson: being a part of His spiritual family is much more important than any human relationship and is based on obedience to the Word of God. It is not enough to “hear” the Word of God; we must also “keep it” (Luke 8:15).

In one of my radio series, I emphasized the importance of *doing* the Word of God, putting it into practice in daily life (James 1:22–25). I warned listeners that it is easy to think we are “spiritual” because we listen to one preacher after another, take notes, mark our Bibles, *but never really practice what we learn*. We are only fooling ourselves.

A listener wrote that my words had made her angry, but then she faced up to the fact that she was indeed guilty of being an “auditor” and not a doer of the Word. She began to listen to fewer radio preachers, to listen more carefully, and to practice what she heard. “This new approach to Bible study has transformed me!” she wrote. “The Bible has become a new Book to me and my life has changed!”

As His disciples, we must take heed *what we hear* (Mark 4:24) and *how we hear* (Luke 8:18), because God will hold us accountable. Listening to the wrong things or listening to the right things with the wrong attitude, will rob us of truth and blessing. If we are faithful to receive the Word and share it, God will give us more; but if we fail to let our light shine, we will lose what we have. It is a solemn thing to hear the Word of God.

Martin, J. A. (1985). Isaiah. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 206)

d. The response of Jesus’ earthly family (8:19–21) (Matt. 12:46–50; Mark 3:31–35).

8:19–21. The logical outcome of the preceding teaching (vv. 1–18) is that a person who understands (and therefore puts into practice) the things Jesus was saying was rightly related to Him. **Jesus’ mother and brothers arrived to see Him**. These brothers were undoubtedly sons of Mary and Joseph who were born after Jesus. Joseph had no sexual relations with Mary until after the birth of Jesus (Matt. 1:25). The implication is that after Jesus’ birth Mary and Joseph engaged in normal marital relations and had a number of children. Thus these “brothers” were Jesus’ half-brothers.

Jesus was informed that some blood relatives wanted **to see Him** (Luke 8:20). In His answer Jesus did not negate His relationship with His family. Rather, He positively stated that His affiliation with those **who hear the Word of God and put it into practice** is like a family relationship. In addition, Jesus’ remarks showed that the gospel is not limited to a people, the Jews, but is for all who believe, including Gentiles. Once again, the importance of hearing **God’s Word** is central; this time, however, the admonition is that the Word must be “put ... into practice.” James, Jesus’ half-brother, must have learned the lesson well, for he wrote about obeying the Word instead of merely listening to it (James 1:22–23).

Stein, R. H. (1992). Luke (Vol. 24, pp. 250-254). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

Context

Luke used the following story to conclude this section (8:1–21) on Jesus’ teaching in parables. It is found earlier in Mark, but Luke chose to include it here because it forms an excellent conclusion to his teaching concerning the hearing of God’s word and in particular hearing God’s word in Jesus’ parables. In our passage Luke seeks to inform his readers that belonging to Jesus’

family is not a matter of physical kinship (cf. John 1:13 “of natural descent”) but of hearing and doing God’s word.

Comments

8:19 Now Jesus’ mother and brothers came to see him. In the history of the church there have been three main explanations about who the “brothers” of Jesus were. (1) The Helvidian view argues that they were the subsequent sons (and daughters, cf. Mark 6:3) of Joseph and Mary. (2) The Epiphonian view argues that they were the sons (and daughters) of Joseph via an earlier marriage in which the wife died, i.e., Jesus’ older step-brothers and step-sisters. (3) The Hieronymian view (the view of Jerome) argues that they were the cousins of Jesus, i.e., the term “brothers” is being used figuratively. The first view best explains the biblical data.

8:20 Your mother and brothers are standing outside. This should not be interpreted metaphorically, as designating that they were outside the believing community, but literally.

Wanting to see you. They wanted to visit with Jesus (cf. “met” in Acts 16:40, which is the same Greek word).

8:21 My mother and brothers. This can be interpreted in two ways: (1) “Do you see my mother and brothers out there? They are the ones who hear ...”; (2) “My real mother and brothers are not my physical kin but those who ...” In the context of Luke 8:15, 18, where Luke emphasized how one should hear God’s word and that those who heed the word are the good soil, it seems that (2), which is addressed to the hearers in general, is the best translation. This would also agree with the interpretation of this saying found in Mark 3:35; Matt 12:50; and GT 99; and with Luke 11:28 (cf. also 14:26; 18:29–30). The lack of the Greek article, i.e., a *the* before “mother and brothers,” also favors (2), for this indicates that the group being referred to was a less specific group than “the mother and the brothers of Jesus.”

Those who hear God’s word and put it into practice. Compare Luke 6:47; 11:28. This is the climax of 8:1–21. For Luke, as well as James, “faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead” (Jas 2:17).

The Lukan Message

The main point of our passage is found in Luke 8:21, which serves as a summary for the entire section that began in 8:1. Even as Luke through the preaching of John the Baptist in 3:7–14 pointed out that salvation does not come through a sacramental act, so here he pointed out that it does not come through birth or the circumstance of having heard the gospel. **To have heard God’s word is of no value (8:4–7, 11–14) unless accompanied by “faith.” Yet that “faith” is of no value, as 8:13 reveals, unless it is a faith that puts God’s word into practice (8:21).** Earlier Luke described this kind of faith as a faith “with a noble and good heart” which perseveres (8:15). **The gospel must be responded to in faith, but saving faith is more than mere intellectual assent. True faith endures. It perseveres. It puts into practice the teachings of that faith. Luke believed that we are indeed saved by faith alone, but the faith that saves is never alone. This faith is accompanied by action (Jas 2:17), expresses itself through love (cf. Gal 5:6), and puts God’s word into practice (Luke 8:21).**