

Luke 8:16-18
May 5, 2019

Open with Prayer

HOOK:

Q: What is the difference between a good listener and a poor listener? [Let people engage]

Transition: Good listeners make good company. Good listeners make good friends. Good listeners make good learners. Good listeners make good counselors. On the other hand, poor listeners tend to want to hear themselves talk, or when forced to listen are only planning their rebuttal as soon as you take a breath.

From a relational standpoint, learning how to listen is important. Strong listening skills will enhance our relationship to others. How well we listen to others is certainly important, but even more important is how well we listen to the Lord. How good are we at listening to God? What kind of listeners are we?

This brings us to an intriguing little section of verses from v.16-18 in which Jesus gives us a warning about “taking care of how we listen.” Moreover, He tells us what good listeners or “hearers” do. Let’s begin, and we’ll also do a couple of cross-references to get a more rounded picture of what Jesus said.

BOOK (NIV 1984):

X-REF: Mark 4:21-25; Matt 5:14-16

V.16:

- “No one lights a lamp and hides it in a jar or puts it under a bed. Instead, he puts it on a stand, so that those who come in can see the light.

V.17:

- For there is nothing hidden that will not be disclosed, and nothing concealed that will not be known or brought out into the open.

V.18:

- Therefore, consider carefully how you listen. Whoever has (eternal life, salvation) will be given more; whoever does not have, even what he thinks he has will be taken from him.”

Process Observations/Questions:

Q: What did you most like about this passage? What resonated with you? [Let people engage]

Q: What did you least like about this passage? [Let people engage]

Q: What did you find in this passage that you didn’t understand? [Let people engage]

V.16-18: The disciples were perplexed because Jesus taught in parables, so they asked Him for an explanation (Luke 8:9–10). His reply in v.9-10 seems to suggest that He used parables in order to *hide* the truth from the crowds, but just the opposite is true, and Luke 8:16–18 makes that clear. His teaching is a light that must be allowed to shine so that sinners may be saved. It is

a serious thing to hear and understand the Word of God, because this puts on us the obligation to share that Word with others. Everyone who receives the seed then becomes a sower, a light-bearer, and a transmitter of God's truth (see 1 Thess. 1:5–8). If we keep it to ourselves, we will lose it; but if we share it, we will receive more.

V.16-18: This short parable is a logical extension of the Parable of the Sower. The emphasis is once again on hearing or, as it is put here, on listening (v. 18). If one understands the Word of God his life should reflect that understanding (cf. v. 15). Just as one does not light **a lamp** in order to hide **it** (cf. 11:33–36), so also a person is not **given** “the secrets of the kingdom of God” (8:10) in order to keep them secret. The disciples were to make **known** the things Jesus was telling them. Why would anyone want to conceal the Good News? The people who followed Jesus were to **consider carefully** (v. 18) **how** they listened. If they heard and responded with genuine belief (cf. v. 15), then they would receive **more** truth. If they did not receive what they heard, they would lose it.

Q: What do we learn about Jesus from just these first three verses? [Let people engage]

LOOK:

It is a serious thing to hear and understand the Word of God, because this puts on us the obligation to share that Word with others. Everyone who receives the seed then becomes a sower, a light-bearer, and a transmitter of God's truth (see 1 Thess. 1:5–8). If we keep it to ourselves, we will lose it; but if we share it, we will receive more.

Close in Prayer

Commentaries for Today's Lesson:

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

Hear and share the Word (vv. 16–18). The disciples were perplexed because Jesus taught in parables, so they asked Him for an explanation (Luke 8:9–10; also see Matt. 13:10–17). His reply seems to suggest that He used parables in order to *hide* the truth from the crowds, but just the opposite is true, and Luke 8:16–18 makes that clear. His teaching is a light that must be allowed to shine so that sinners may be saved.

The word *parable* means “to cast alongside.” A parable is a story that teaches something new by putting the truth alongside something familiar. The people knew about seeds and soil, so the Parable of the Sower interested them. Those who were indifferent or proud would shrug it off. Our Lord’s parables aroused the interest of the concerned.

A parable starts off as a *picture* that is familiar to the listeners. But as you carefully consider the picture, it becomes a *mirror* in which you see yourself, and many people do not like to see themselves. This explains why some of our Lord’s listeners became angry when they heard His parables, and even tried to kill Him. But if we see ourselves as needy sinners and ask for help, then the mirror becomes a *window* through which we see God and His grace. To understand a parable and benefit from it demands honesty and humility on our part, and many of our Lord’s hearers lacked both.

It is a serious thing to hear and understand the Word of God, because this puts on us the obligation to share that Word with others. Everyone who receives the seed then becomes a sower, a light-bearer, and a transmitter of God’s truth (see 1 Thess. 1:5–8). If we keep it to ourselves, we will lose it; but if we share it, we will receive more.

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)

c. The need to respond positively to His teaching (8:16–18) (Mark 4:21–25).

8:16–18. This short parable is a logical extension of the Parable of the Sower. The emphasis is once again on hearing or, as it is put here, on listening (v. 18). If one understands the Word of God his life should reflect that understanding (cf. v. 15). Just as one does not light a **lamp** in order to hide it (cf. 11:33–36), so also a person is not **given** “the secrets of the kingdom of God” (8:10) in order to keep them secret. The disciples were to make **known** the things Jesus was telling them. The people who followed Jesus were to **consider carefully** (v. 18) **how** they listened. If they heard and responded with genuine belief (cf. v. 15), then they would receive **more** truth. If they did not receive what they heard, they would lose it.

Cabal, T., Brand, C. O., Clendenen, E. R., Copan, P., Moreland, J. P., & Powell, D. (2007). *The Apologetics Study Bible: Real Questions, Straight Answers, Stronger Faith* (p. 1528). Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers.

8:18 On the parable of the soils, see note on Mk 4:11–12.

Stein, R. H. (1992). *Luke* (Vol. 24, pp. 248–250). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

Context

These three sayings, which also follow the parable of the soils in Mark, emphasize the importance of how listeners are to hear God's word. The disciples are to "consider carefully how you listen" (8:18a; cf. 8:8a) and hear God's word with "a noble and good heart" and with perseverance (8:15). Then they will be good soil and bear fruit (8:15) by speaking this good news throughout the world (24:48; Acts 1:8). Although Luke 8:17 is closely tied grammatically to 8:16, the exact relationship between them is unclear. Most probably these two verses refer to the secrets of God's kingdom, which the disciples had been privileged to learn (8:10) and which they would proclaim after the resurrection (9:36). Luke 8:18a ties the concluding promise/warning closely with 8:16–17 and with the preceding parable and thus serves as a closing saying to Jesus' teachings in 8:4–17. All three verses are found as doublets in 11:33; 12:2; and 19:26.

Comments

8:16 This verse, like its parallel in 11:33, consists of a common similitude from everyday life. An oil lamp is not lit in order to be covered by a jar or vessel, for this probably would extinguish it; nor is it lit in order to be placed under a bed, for this would hide its light. The purpose of the lamp would be thwarted by such actions. Rather a lamp is to be placed on a stand in order for its purpose of giving light to be aided. Since 8:18 is directed to Jesus' followers, it is incorrect to understand this verse as referring to Jesus as the light and his teaching ministry as representing the shining of the light. It refers rather to those who hear God's word (8:8, 15, 21) and let their light shine.

Those who come in can see the light. The purpose of the light is that those, i.e., the "others" of 8:10, may share in the light of the gospel. The disciples, who know the secrets of God's kingdom (8:9–10), are to provide that light in order that others might believe and be saved (8:12). Luke may have been envisioning here a large Greco-Roman house (cf. 11:33) rather than a typical Palestinian single-room house in which a lamp would provide light throughout the entire room (cf. Matt 5:15). See comments on 5:19.

8:17 For. This ties Luke 8:17 closely to 8:16, but the exact relationship between these two verses is debated. This verse is associated with the preceding by similar contrasts (light/darkness; disclosed/hidden; brought out into the open/ concealed), so that Luke probably used it as a commentary on 8:16. As the disciples (and the believers of Luke's day) witness and proclaim the good news, the secrets of God's kingdom which are hidden to the others (8:10) will become known and understood (cf. Matt 10:26–27).

8:18 Therefore consider carefully how you listen. Whereas the parallel in Mark 4:24 emphasizes "what" one is to hear, Luke emphasized more "how" one is to hear (cf. Luke 8:15).

Whoever has will be given more. Compare the modern proverb, "The rich get richer and the poor get poorer." In the present context, however, the concern is not wealth or possessions but rather the revelation of God. The person who has listened carefully to God's word will understand it even more clearly, but the person who does not pay heed to how he or she hears God's word will lose even that which they think they know. Careful hearing, i.e., heeding, results in greater understanding of God's revealed word; careless hearing, i.e., a lack of heeding, results in the loss of what has been heard. How Luke understood this latter negative result is not clear, but perhaps he may have had such passages in mind as 20:16–18; Acts 13:46; 18:6; 28:25–28. The parallelism found in this saying makes the exact correspondence between the picture part of the saying (having

and not having possessions) and the reality part to which the picture points (hearing and not hearing God's word) somewhat awkward.

The Lukan Message

The theological message found in our passage focuses on the hearing (8:18) and proclamation of God's word (8:16–17). Having emphasized through the preceding parable the importance of both hearing and heeding God's word, Luke stressed the importance of the church's proclamation of that word. The gospel light is not meant to be hidden. Even before the missionary commissions of 24:48 and Acts 1:8, the reader is aware of the need to spread the good news. How will people turn from "darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins" (Acts 26:18) unless those who know the secrets of God's kingdom (Luke 8:10) let their light shine?

There is also present a concluding emphasis on the necessity of heeding God's word. It is not enough to hear the word. It is not enough to hear correct doctrine and theology. One must pay careful attention to how one hears God's message. The word must be heard with a "noble and good heart" (8:15), so that a faith results that will be "persevering" (8:15).