

The Gospel According to Mark

Take Heed to What You Hear

Mark 4:21-25

Sunday, June 28, 2020

Introduction

We live in a world that is hurting. We live world plagued by sin. And we live in a time and place where many people are familiar with the name of Jesus and even with His death and resurrection. But sadly, many have heard and yet remain deaf. They have seen and yet remain blind. Many have an awareness of Jesus but they don't have saving faith. The question for us all is, will we take heed to what we hear?

Context: The Parable of the Sower and the Soils (A call to hear)

The call of Mark 4 is a call hear and more specifically to hear with ears of faith. In Mark 4:1-20 Jesus shares and explains the parable of the sower and the soils and describes four responses to Gospel. There are many who hear but who never truly hear.

Within the context of the parable of the soils Jesus also acknowledges that for many, because of their hardness of heart, the parables don't serve to reveal Him, but instead they further conceal Him. But the appeal of Jesus continues to be for all people to hear and believe.

The Parable of the Lamp

Now Jesus shares another parable, and the call is the same: He has come to be seen and He has come to be heard, and the call is for true hearing. For those who hear and continue to listen, there is a great return. But for those who fail to hear with ears of faith, there are dire consequences.

The Revealing of Jesus (Hear and Believe) (vv. 21-23)

- **Jesus came to give light (vs. 21)**
 - **The Parable of the Lamp** - During a time when people lit their houses using oil lamps everyone understood the importance of proper lamp placement. The questions Jesus asks are rhetorical, everyone knows that a lamp must not be hidden or covered.
 - **Understanding the Parable** - In order to understand the parable it is vital to understand what or whom the lamp represents. The context and the grammar of the verse reveal that Jesus is speaking of Himself. He is the lamp that has come. And He has come, not to be hidden, but to shine His light for all to see (John 1:4, 9).

- **Jesus came to be revealed (vs. 22)** - In verse 22 Jesus restates the point of the parable in a different way. He has not come to be hidden or to remain as a secret; He has come to be revealed and known.
 - **A time of hiddenness - A progressive revealing** - In vs. 22 Jesus acknowledges that for a time He and the Kingdom of God have been somewhat hidden or concealed. But His coming, His life and His ministry are moving the Kingdom of God into a place of visibility. And after the resurrection and then at His coming what was once hidden is being more and more clearly revealed (1 Pt. 1:10-11).
- **Be a true hearer (vs. 23)** - Jesus has come to be revealed. He has been made know and now the appeal is for all people to hear and believe.
 - **Application: Our call to reveal Jesus** - In this context Jesus speaks of Himself as a lamp, shining His light in the world. But in other contexts He uses the same imagery to speak of our role in revealing Him to the world. Jesus desires to be known and trusted and we are called to make Him known (Mt. 10:26-27; 5:14-16).

Responding to Jesus (Pay attention to what you hear) (vv. 24-25)

- **Listen Carefully** - The appeal to hear is affirmed through repetition. It also becomes clear that our hearing is more than a one-time event. Jesus is calling for ongoing, faithful hearing. As we hear and obey there is the promise of a great return, but there are also dire results for those who fail to hear.
- **The return of faithful hearing (vs. 24b-25a)** - Jesus, speaking in a proverbial manner, reveals the benefits of faithful hearing. He explains that those who hear (and obey) will be granted greater hearing (increased faith). As we faithfully listen and believe, we will increasingly be enabled to listen and believe (Proverbs 9:9-10; 2:1-7).
 - **Application** - Many struggle with doubt. Many struggle with maintaining confidence in Christ. A key to growing in faith is faithfulness to hear and obey. As we are faithful to listen and obey God will grant us increased faith.
- **The result of not hearing (vs. 25b)** - While faithful hearing leads to greater hearing, consistently ignoring the truth will have the opposite effect. Failure to hear will lead to a heart that is unable to hear at all (Matthew 13:15-17). The longer we follow Jesus the better it gets, but the longer we ignore Him, the harder it becomes to ever hear Him.