



James 1:19-27 Hearing and Doing the Word Pt 3: Lessons from the Parable of the Sower
May 17, 2015

James 1:19-27

Developing a “Doing” Mindset: A Quick Review!

- Last week, we learned some powerful lessons from Mary, mother of Jesus, and James, the Lord’s brother, as it relates to developing a heart of **obedience** towards God.
 - We saw that Mary’s attitude toward her son was simply, “*Do whatever he tells you.*” We also saw that 30 years before she uttered this statement at a wedding in Cana, she told the angel Gabriel, “*...Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.*”
 - The question is, “How do we get this type of heart?”
1. **We were reminded again through our discussion about Mary that God is good and His Word is good!**
 - *Rom 15:4-6 ESV For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. (5) May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, (6) that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*
 2. **James also helped us: Be quick to hear! (Jam 1:19)**
 - This is part of a mindset that wants to do the will of the Lord: “Be ready to listen!” How many times do we read our Lord saying something like, “He who has ears, let him hear?”
 3. **Be slow to speak! (Jam 1:19)**
 - Instead of forming an opinion right away, listen. We are often too quick to talk...too quick to refute...too quick to scoff...too quick to debate.
 4. **Be slow to anger! (Jam 1:19-20)**
 - Pray before you read and hear. Prepare your heart to receive “what thus says the Lord.” Know going in that WE ALL have presuppositions, biases, hurts and fears, and insecurities. The challenge is to surrender all of that before the will of Christ!
 5. **Pursue holiness! (Jam 1:21)**
 - The more one values righteousness, the easier it is to receive the Word! The greater and larger our vision is of our holy, majestic God, the greater our desire will be to honor Him!
 6. **“Receive with meekness...!” (Jam 1:21)**
 - This is SO important!!! If we can approach the Word of the Lord with meekness and trembling instead of pride and brashness, we are in position to walk in Mary’s magnificent mindset.
 7. **Allow the world to be “implanted.” (Jam 1:21)**
 - Let us consider the statement in James 1:21: “...receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.”

Thoughts on James 1:21

- I find it interesting that James makes no distinction between the Word **saving** and the Word daily **sanctifying**.
- We, of course, know there is a difference but truly it is a difference only in order (which happens first) not truth (whether or not both should happen).

- In other words, the same Word that IS preached unto our salvation is the same Word that WILL cause us to “put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness.”
- Those who have humbled themselves before the living Word (Christ) will continue to humble themselves before His instructions. There can be NO OTHER true process.
- Hearts transformed by the Gospel, DESIRE to obey Jesus! Minds that have been renewed by the Gospel want the will of God and are willing to offer the rest of the body as a living sacrifice! (Rom 12:1-2)
- If the Word of Christ has truly been “implanted” or “engrafted” (KJV) in us, it will **grow**! Why? Because the Word is NOT dead: *“Heb 4:12 ESV For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.”*
- The believer **SHOULD NOT BE THE SAME** over time. There should be fruit! There should be growth! There should be a desire to grow and learn and obey and love and give and walk in Him!
- Not that these things save us; they are the products of walking with the one who did: Jesus our Lord!
- In fact, Christ spoke about this very process and mindset (those who hear and don’t do, and those who hear and do)...and this brings us to the *Parable of the Sower*.

Lessons from the Parable of the Sower

Mark 4:1-20

- In this parable, our Lord describes four types of people and their various heart conditions when the Word is “sown.”
- “Sown” could mean when the Word is preached, taught, or read.
- Please note the **warfare** going on when the Word is preached! Satan is active, fears are active, and worldly lusts are active! Oh, how we need to pray!
- It’s amazing to consider that when the creator of the universe speaks, all of this is going on in the hearts of the hearers. Let’s look:

The Unresponsive Heart (v4)

1. The “path” heart is the “wayside” heart. Seeds here fall on the “road” if you will, where people often walk. By implication, this is a “**hard**” place.
2. John MacArthur wrote, “This is a hard-hearted, stubborn person: unresponsive, unconcerned, inattentive, indifferent, negligent, and sometimes hostile.” The Word of God goes in one ear and out the other.
3. Each time this person hears the Gospel they are viciously attacked by Satan according to verse 15 when Jesus explains the parable. Luke said it this way: *“The ones along the path are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved.” (Luk 8:12 ESV)*
4. It is important to note that the unresponsive heart is deliberately attacked by Satan when the Word comes so that the heart remains HARD. It is intentional on the Enemy’s part. Therefore, this person exhibits a blatant **rebellion**, with no possibility of lasting fruit because they, under the influence of Satan, refuse to change and be saved.
5. Since James addresses Christians in James 1, and also warns those same Christians of self-deception, we should learn the principle here: **Just because you are saved, doesn’t mean Satan won’t attack you as you hear the Word!**

The **Superficial** Heart (v5-6)

1. This is the “rocky”, “stony”, or “shallow” heart. The imagery here is that there is a layer of stony deposit underneath the soil, preventing the Word from firmly taking root. This heart looks like really good soil on top, but is shallow and even harder than the “path” folks beneath. This would cause those unfamiliar with this type of heart to wonder “what happened to the fruit?” 😊
2. These are the folks who profess obedience...at least for awhile.
3. Again from MacArthur: “This kind of heart is enthusiastic but **shallow**. It responds positively but not with saving faith. There is no thought involved, no counting the cost. It is quick, emotional, euphoric, instant excitement without any understanding of the actual significance of discipleship.”
4. Let’s read verses 16 and 17 again:

Mar 4:16-17 ESV And these are the ones sown on rocky ground: the ones who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy. (17) And they have no root in themselves, but endure for a while; then, when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately they fall away.

5. Please note WHY the persecution arises in this text: “...on account of the word.”
6. When it’s time to stand in the midst of trouble for Christ and His Word, they fall away. When the truth of Christ makes life hard...when God calls us to buck the trends and cultural norms...when the pressure is on...they fall away.
7. And again, let’s not think Christians cannot fall into this in areas...receiving the Word with joy, then little or no follow through.
8. **This person’s true issue is **deception**. Whether they know it or not, the hardness within (even though they smile without) prevents the true planting of the Word. They think they have received it...but time tells the tale. Actually, this is heartbreaking. May the Lord help us all be true...**

The **Worldly** Heart (v7)

1. This is the “weedy” soil, the heart surrounded by thorns. It is worldly in the sense that worldly concerns squeeze and choke the seed so God’s Word cannot be received.
2. In verse 19, Christ mentions two areas that cause the downfall of the worldly-hearted person: the cares of the **world** and the deceitfulness of **riches**. He sums it up with the phrase: “the desires for other things...”
3. This person can’t or won’t place Christ above **everything** else. There’s always something involving money that’s more important, or some event, some party, some game, some vanity, some desire for worldly acceptance. The desire for rest, relaxation, entertainment, self-fulfillment, more money, physical pleasure, etc. are our nation’s idols. This person walks in idolatry and doesn’t know it.
4. God’s Word though is clear: “Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world--the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions--is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.” (1Jn 2:15-17 ESV)
5. **Sadly, the “weeds” of the world literally choke out God in this person’s life. In other words, they never really understood the cost of following Jesus. They never got the fact that “to live is Christ; to die is gain” (Php 1:21). They never understood that true disciples**

are in the world but not of it (John 17:11, 16). So worldly matters usurp Christ and His Word in them and they are “unfruitful.”

The **Receptive** Heart (v8)

1. This is the “good” heart, properly conditioned and prepared for the seed.
2. It is important to know that this is a sovereign work of God’s Spirit. It is God who knows the heart and God who by various means prepares it. Man has no recourse on his own...
 - *The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. (Gen 6:5 ESV)*
 - *The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it? (Jer 17:9 ESV)*
3. Hearts prepared by the Master receive the Word with **meekness**. They aren’t perfect and they’ll tell you that. But there is a sincere effort to please Him in all things, at all times, and in every way, repenting as they go.
4. Friends, WE DO NOT HAVE A WEAK SALVATION. Jesus saves to the uttermost! (Heb 7:25)

As we close, consider again the glorious Gospel of our Lord...what He purchased for us at Calvary...the greatness of His love...

- *1Co 15:1-4 ESV* Now I would remind you, brothers, of the **gospel** I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, (2) and by which you are being saved, **if you hold fast to the word** I preached to you--unless you believed in vain. (3) For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that **Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures**, (4) that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures,
- *Rom 5:6-10 ESV* For while we were still weak, at the right time **Christ died for the ungodly**. (7) For one will scarcely die for a righteous person--though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die-- (8) but **God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us**. (9) Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. (10) For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.
- *1Pe 2:21-25 ESV* For to this **you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps**. (22) He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. (23) When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. (24) **He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness**. By his wounds you have been healed. (25) For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.
- *Joh 19:26-30 ESV* When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, **"Woman, behold, your son!"** (27) Then he said to the disciple, **"Behold, your mother!"** And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home. (28) After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the Scripture), **"I thirst."** (29) A jar full of sour wine stood there, so they put a sponge full of the sour wine on a hyssop branch and held it to his mouth. (30) When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, **"It is finished," and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.**

Precious friends, how do we NOT live for and love this Christ with everything we have? The mindset we are trying to cultivate this month is simply a day to day manifestation of the greatest Commandment:

Mar 12:29-31 ESV Jesus answered, "The most important is, 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."

Amen!