

## Let Them That Have Ears Listen

### Introduction:

- Practicing the presence of God
- Allowing – making God part of your day
  - Do whatever it is you are doing in the name of the Lord and for God's glory.
- "There is not in the world a kind of life more sweet and delightful, than that of a continual conversation with God. Those only can comprehend it who practice and experience it." ... Brother Lawrence

### P1 Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23 ( )

- V-1 (*That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the lake.*)
  - God wants to be available to us. (There was a time when only the High Priest could enter into the inner sanctum, into the presence of God – and even he went there only **ONCE** a year.)
  - God is willing to meet us where we are. As we are. Accepting the good, bad, and even the ugly (More ugly of spirit than physical – but even that. Remember his Christ received and reacted to the 10 lepers – and they had to be about as ugly as you can get)
  - No holiness laws to separate us or to say who can and cannot approach God. (Remember that is in part why the first two men passed the injured man by in the Good Samaritan story. In part they refused to help because doing so would have made them ritually impure and unclean)
  - No barriers. God is ready now. You do not have to wait until you are all cleaned up and dressed up.
- V-2 (*Such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat in it, while all the people stood on the shore*)
  - It is not the least bit surprising that by this time anywhere Jesus appear crowds would quickly form.
  - Many sought him because they had heard the stories of his miraculous abilities to heal the sick
  - Many sought him because they thought he was the Messiah who was going to throw out the Romans and restore Israel to its former glory.
  - Many came simply because they were curious.
  - And there were a few who came because they had glimpsed the truth. They had experienced a sample of heaven in Christ's presence and wanted more.
- V-3 (*Then he told them many things in parables, saying: "A farmer went out to sow his seed.*)
  - In this passage Jesus told the parable (story) of the man who was sowing grain- a story that we know well and have heard many times.
  - This story can be seen as talking about who we are going to share the good news with.
    - Some people will be like the **PATH** –
    - Some people will be like the **ROCKY GROUND**
    - Some people will be like the **AREA WHERE THERE WAS NOT MUCH SOIL.**
    - Some people will be like **GOOD GROUND WHERE THE SEEDS GREW AND PROSPERED**
  - However, I invite you to look at this story from a slightly different perspective.
  - We are the ground, Christ is the one planting the seeds. The seeds are God's message, God's hopes for us, God's relationship with us.
    - Some people will be like the **PATH** – *An interesting thought just occurred to me. A path is something that gets us from one place to another. If you are on the path (presumably) you do not need any instructions. The seeds that fell on the path did not grow. When we are like the path, thinking that we know where we are going and that we don't need any help; God's message and God's gift can't grow in our hearts or minds.*
    - Some people will be like the **ROCKY GROUND** – *When we are standing on rocky ground we need God's word more than ever and it is in those moments that we are least likely to seek God's presence or listen to God's word.*

- Some people will be like the **AREA WHERE THERE WAS NOT MUCH SOIL**. – *God’s presence in our hearts and in our daily thoughts where God’s word to us can grow and blossom. But if we only think about God once in a while, only seek God’s presence on Sunday mornings there is not going to be much chance for our encounters with God to change our lives in a meaningful way.*
- Some people will be like **GOOD GROUND WHERE THE SEEDS GREW AND PROSPERED** – *There isn’t much more that needs saying about this type of ground, Since Jesus was clearing had us in mind when he said this.*
- But we are more complicated than a piece of farmland. We change from time to time, day to day, and occasionally even between one minute and the next. Depending on what is going on in our lives there are also those times when we are like several of those types of ground all at once.
- V-9 (***He who has ears, let him hear.***)
  - There is some something more – something that invites us to ask why? Why do we seek God?
  - There were many in the crowd that day that really didn’t want to hear what Jesus had to say; they liked things just as they were.
  - There were some there that were hoping that Jesus would say something that they could use against him. Those people are always around somewhere – even today.
  - There were also some there that wanted to hear what Jesus said. At least as long as he was saying the things they wanted to hear.
- V-10 (***The disciples came to him and asked, "Why do you speak to the people in parables?"***)
  - A **VERY GOOD** question. Why. It seems to me that things would be a lot simpler if Jesus had just said what he had to say. Why dress it up in a story.
- V-11 (***This is why I speak to them in parables: "Though seeing, they do not see; though hearing, they do not hear or understand"***)
  - Though seeing they do not see, though hearing they do not hear – they (Don’t forget that we are part of that “THEY”) miss the point. They don’t get it.
  - In telling parables Jesus is preparing the ground just as a farmer prepares a field before planting
- V-18/19 (***Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is the seed sown along the path.***)
  - And right there is the central point of this story.
  - These days we don’t talk about Satan very often. As if ignoring him will cause him to go away.
  - The simple fact of the matter is
  - 1) That Satan exists
  - 2) That Satan means us harm (And if you want some proof take a look at Adam and Eve. Then there was Job – a righteous man going about his day to day and Satan tried to crush him and break his faith. Finally there was that incident in the dessert right after Christ’s baptism. Satan was trying to temp him, turn him, and prevent him from completing his mission.
  - 3) That Satan wants to separate us from God.
  - There is only one defense – and that is to put on the whole armor of God. To follow Jesus’ lead – both in how he lived, but in how he turned Satan away. He read scripture, he sought God’s presence in prayer and meditation, and most importantly he relied on God’s word and God’s power to resist Satan.
  - We are heirs with Christ and that means those same opportunities and defenses are available to us.

### Conclusion ( A call to action )

- Let me close by offering some questions to ask yourself this afternoon and this coming week.
- Are we open to receiving God’s message, seeds, story?
- What is God trying to teach us that we are not listening to?