

Take Heed How You Hear

by Alan Martin

This sermon emphasizes the importance of receiving and utilizing the grace that God has freely given us in Christ to be complete and perfect in our roles as parents, spouses, and individuals. It highlights the need to carefully listen to the Spirit's guidance to fully experience the divine grace available to us on a daily basis. The message stresses the significance of valuing and seizing God's word to receive abundance and avoid losing what we have been given.

Scripture: Matthew 11:28, Luke 8:18, Mark 4:24, John 16:13, Isaiah 6:9, Matthew 13:16

Topics: "Grace in Daily Life", "Listening to the Spirit"

Description

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Transcript

And we're so grateful that the Lord was pleased with this son, because it says that the father was pleased to have all of his fullness dwell in Christ's bodily. And why was God pleased to have all of his fullness dwell in Christ's bodily so that you and I could be made complete in him? Isn't that what we need really as a parent, as a husband, as a wife? What you want is every grace that God has invested and fully and freely given us in Christ. That's what you want now, because it's that grace in him that makes you the husband that will be a blessing to your wife, makes you the the wife that's a blessing to your husband, that will make you the parent that's a blessing to your children as you receive every grace that God has already given.

And that's the good news. Every grace that you need to be that complete and perfect mate and complete and perfect parent, it's given. You don't have to beg.

God wanted God saw your need of it before you were even aware of it. And he has fully invested. It is given and available to it.

And we are those who have not received the spirit of the world, have we? We have received the spirit from him so that we may freely understand all the things that he has freely given us. But how do we come to

understand those things? They are given every grace that we need is already given and provided. But sometimes we wrestle with fully receiving and utilizing the grace that's there.

Do we remember how this glorious grace in Christ Jesus is made known to us? Jesus said when the spirit of truth is better for the disciples, then for him to go away, because when he went away to the father, he would send the spirit to the comforter who would come in this spirit. He said would not speak on his own. The Holy Spirit will never speak on his own.

He will speak only what he hears. And then he said this, and he will take from what is mine, all this grace, every provision for life and godliness that is ours through the knowledge of Christ is given. And the Holy Spirit will take that grace.

And how does he impart it to us? What does it say? John 16, he will declare it unto us. He'll speak it unto us. So how do we receive this divine grace that is fully given in Jesus already? We must hear the spirit, declare it to us.

So let him who has ears to hear, hear what the spirit says to the churches, because the spirit is declaring the glory of God in Christ. And that glory is for you as a parent is for you as a spouse. It's for you as a brother and sister in Christ to experience every spiritual blessing that God has given us in Christ.

And as we experience this blessing and glory together, the testimony of the beautiful life of God at work in us to do what according to what he wills and what's pleasing to him is such a beautiful light that men see what it produces is good works. And the word there for good is Kali. There's Agathos in the Greek and there's Kali.

Kali means beautiful in form, attractive. When men see the fruit of the spirit being radiating from us in the light of our good works, what do they do? They glorify the father in heaven because they recognize this doesn't come from us. This is a grace and a power and a life that is divine.

And it is Christ in us glorifying the father, showing the father that the father is holy, gracious, generous, powerful and good before the eyes of men. That's what the people of the first covenant never fully manifested. And that's why God made a new covenant.

And that's why God sent his son and filled him with every bit of his glory. The entire fullness of the Godhead dwelt bodily in Christ and it dwelt bodily in him so that it could be made available to us on a moment by moment basis. And the way we fully receive this and fully experience it so that it's not a theory, but it's a reality because Jesus Christ does not want to be a museum piece that we say, oh, how wonderful he was and how wonderful and how good and how perfect and holy he is.

And he's not a museum piece. He is the source of God's grace and divine power to us, for us to be able to experience every day as a mom when you wake up, as a dad when you come home from work, as a husband and wife, as a couple to experience every bit of the grace and power and goodness that God intended for us to experience so that he will have the testimony before the world of how good and generous he is. And if this means comes to us by hearing, hearing the spirit, don't want to show you that it was it's it was always God's intent for it to be given.

But the key and the reason that some men and women do not experience it because they're not hearing, they're not hearing what God is saying. So if you want to turn with me, I'm going to start in Matthew chapter 13. The parable of the sower.

I'm not going to read the parable of the sower because I believe it's familiar to you. You know that there's four types of soil. But I believe the point of the parable is there are four ways we can hear.

We can hear one of four ways. Only one will actually produce fruit and we can hear based upon a given time or given season in our life. We can hear effectively or we can hear very poorly or somewhere in between.

But I'm going to go to the explanation of the parable starting in verse 10. And the disciples came to him and said to him, why do you speak to them in parables? And Jesus answered them to you, it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. But to them, it has not been granted.

And then he gives a conclusion that both Mark and Luke also give. It's interesting. He gives Matthew remembers the conclusion here.

And this is the answer to why some people are filled with grace and some people are not. All the grace is there, but not everyone has it. Look at the answer.

For whoever has to him, more shall be given and he will have an abundance. But whoever does not have even what he has shall be taken away from him. Therefore, I speak to them in parables because while seeing they do not see and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand.

And in their case, the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled, which says you will keep on hearing, but you will not understand. You will keep on seeing, but you will not perceive. For the heart of this people has become dull and with their ears, they scarcely hear and they have closed their eyes.

Otherwise, they would see with their eyes, hear with their ears and understand with their hearts. And what would they do? They would turn and I would heal them. But blessed are your eyes because they see and blessed are your ears for they hear.

For truly, I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desire to see what you see and did not see it and to hear what you hear and did not hear it. So, and of course, Matthew is recalling. Remember, Matthew heard these words months or years earlier, but now they've come to him in a way of understanding.

And Matthew understands that the reason that Jesus, when when the disciples ask him the question, why do you speak to the people in parables? He understood it because it's been given to you to know, but not to them. Now, you would think that that's a favoritism, that that's some predestination of God. But he didn't stop there, did he? Read these two thoughts together in verses 11 and 12 for to you.

It has been given to know the kingdom of God, but to them it has not been given for everyone who has will be given more and he will have an abundance. But to him who does not have even that which he thinks he has shall be taken from him. And Matthew understood that this was the prophecy of Isaiah.

When you hear the word prophecy, don't think prediction. Think proclamation. What is he referring to? Isaiah was told to go and proclaim this word.

You remember when he was given this message? At when he saw the Lord high and lifted up in Isaiah chapter six, and when he had that beautiful experience of being cleansed by the by the coal from the altar, and he heard the Lord say, who shall go to this people and say to this people the message? And Isaiah

said, Here am I. Send me in the Lord to go and say to this people, go proclaim to this people. And what did the Lord say to proclaim? The Lord said, Tell this people proclaim be ever seeing and never perceiving, be ever hearing and never understanding. Why? Why? Why was that? Why would Isaiah be given that kind of proclamation? Because you have to understand who this people were.

If you read Isaiah chapter one all the way through Isaiah chapter six, you would understand every attempt that God had made to speak to this generation. Remember Isaiah chapter one? He had made so many attempts to correct them that their entire body was covered with sores from his discipline. This people had were so persistently stubborn, refusing to turn, refusing to see, refusing to hear.

That when Isaiah was given his commission, the Lord told him, You go and proclaim this to the people. And Matthew tied the two together. When Jesus answered, Why do you speak to the people in parables? He said, Because in them the prophecy of Isaiah, the proclamation of Isaiah is fulfilled.

And so what about this generation that Jesus is speaking to? We need to understand why he has chosen to speak to them in the way he does back up to Matthew chapter 11. But if you want to know the generation that Jesus is talking to, Matthew and Luke both put this together because the disciples were remembering that Jesus is already in a very difficult tension with the generation. He is a he is a wonderful group of followers, but for the most part, he comes to his own people in his own received him not.

It's to them that received him to those who believed in his name. To them, he gave power to become sons of God. But this generation in chapter 11, they were asking about John the Baptist.

You remember who is John the Baptist? And and because John the Baptist had sent people to inquire the Lord Jesus, go ask him. He sent two disciples. Go ask him.

Are you the one that's coming? Are we to look for another? You remember what Jesus told them? Go and tell them what you see in here. The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is the one who is not offended in me.

So he sent the disciples back and he turns to the crowd and speaks to them about John, that if you're willing to hear it, what did you go out to? What did you go out to the desert to see a reed shaken by the wind? No, did you go out to see a man and find fine clothes? No, men in fine clothes are found in royal palaces. What did you go out to see a prophet? And yet I tell you more than a prophet for this is the one who said I will send my messenger before you to prepare the way. And I tell you the truth, there is none born of women greater than John for the kingdom of God is preached through him.

And then Jesus addresses the people themselves. But what am I going to say to this generation? This generation is like children sitting in a marketplace saying we played the flute for you and you didn't dance and we sang a funeral dirge for you and you didn't beat your chest. You didn't mourn for John came.

This generation says John came neither eating and drinking. And what did this generation say of John? He had a demon and the son of man comes drinking and eating. And this generation says he's a glutton and a wine viper and a friend of tax collectors and sinners.

But Jesus said, but wisdom shall be proven of our deeds. You know what the next thing he did? The next thing in Matthew chapter 11 is he began to denounce the cities in which most of his miracles had been performed. And he made those startling statements that it was going to actually be better for Sodom and

Gomorrah than the cities in which most of his miracles had been performed.

Because he said, if the miracles had been done in Sodom or Gomorrah, they would have repented long ago in dust and ashes or sackcloth and ashes. But it will be more bearable for them in the day of judgment for this generation. And lest you think, lest you think that Jesus somehow lost compassion in those kind of statements.

He turns from speaking to the people and he begins to bless his father. I bless you, father, Lord of heaven and earth, for you have hid these things from the wise and the learned and you've revealed them to babes. Isn't that incredible? And then he ends this section dealing with the people saying this beautiful thing.

Come unto me, all who are weary and heavy laden. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me. You'll find rest for your souls.

I am meek and lowly of heart and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light. That was his heart.

It is always his heart. Always. But not everyone hears what he's saying.

Not everyone benefits from the heart he has. The conclusion that Matthew gave, and this is the answer to why you or I. Husband or wife parent will either receive the dynamic grace that is available for you on a day by day basis or you'll be wondering why things are so hard. Why is the way of the Lord so hard? Is it really? Jesus said my yoke is easy and my burden is life.

When you learn of him and how do we learn of him? The spirit whom I send, he will declare. He will take from what is mine and declare it to you so that all the father has his mind and the spirit will take what is mine and make it known to you. He'll declare it to you.

That's why it's so important for him to have ears to hear. Let him hear what the spirit is saying. Back to their Matthew chapter 13.

Now, just so you can see this again. The question is. Why do you speak to the people in parables? And the answer we need to come to understand because to you, it's been given to them.

It's not been given to you. It's been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven to them. It's not been given.

Don't stop there for whoever has. He will be given more. And he will have an abundance.

But whoever does not have. Even what he thinks he has will be taken from him. And now the beauty just like a church, just like the fullness of the gospel comes about when a when a fullness of brothers share and add together.

Mark and Luke come along and make these statements clear. You know, sometimes you don't fully get what the teacher is trying to explain until she puts the example on the board with Jesus in the same way. And Mark and Luke both remember it.

He's about to put the example on the board so you can fully understand what he means. Why to him who has it more shall be given and he will have an abundance. But to him, he does not have even that which he thinks he has should be taken from him.

Let's go to Mark chapter eight. If you want to really fully understand this parable, you'll see it in Luke eight about Luke chapter eight, Mark chapter four and then Matthew chapter 13. So let's go to the explanation at the end of the parable that Luke gives.

Luke make Luke remembers that Jesus said in verse eight or verse 10. He makes the same statement to you had been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. But to the rest, it is in parables so that seeing they may see and hearing that they hear and not hear.

So he still quotes Isaiah, but he doesn't necessarily do it as thoroughly as Matthew does. But to fully understand what he meant, Jesus gives this illustration. Follow me.

Starting in verse 16. I want to ask you children something to so you can understand. Are you like children listening? How many of you have seen your parents walk in the room, go over to the light switch, turn on the light switch, and then quickly try to grab a bowl from the counter and cover the light over the ceiling? You ever seen that in your home? Someone has.

Maybe you've seen them walk in, turn on a lamp and grab a towel or something and try to throw it over it right away. You ever seen that in your home? Jesus uses that very same kind of illustration. Verse 16.

No one, after lighting a lamp, covers it over with the bowl or puts it under a bed. What sense does that make? Why would a lamp is light? You use light to see things. Why would you light a lamp and then immediately try to stick it down where it's not going to give any light? Does anybody do that? Nobody does that, do they? Hmm.

He says, instead, when they light a lamp, they put it on a stand so that anyone who comes in will be able to see by the light. And then Jesus says, for nothing is hidden that will not be made known. Nothing is hidden that will not be made known.

There's not a thing hidden to you as a parent or as a spouse that Christ doesn't want you to know and how to relate in his grace to one another. Not a thing. He's not hiding anything.

He won't hide things. The purpose of him bringing grace is not to hide it from us. Never.

No. There's nothing hidden that will not be made known. Nothing concealed away that will not be brought into the open.

And then what does he say? What's the next statement? Verse 18. So, therefore, connect the dots. Be very careful how you hear.

For whoever has shall be given more. There it is. There's a conclusion.

Nothing's going to be hidden from you. God has not intended. Jesus said, I am the light of the world.

He's not hiding himself from anybody. Everything that God wants us to have has been given to us in Christ. But be very careful how you hear.

For whoever has, he will have an abundance. But whoever does not, even what he thinks he has will be taken from him. Now, what happens when you think you have something? If you've already got it, are you going to ask for it? But what if you don't have it? And what if you don't think you have it? And what if you don't think you know it? What are you going to do? You're going to do like my grandchildren.

I've seen them do them for a day. They ask. Except ye be converted and become like a child.

You shall know I see or enter the kingdom of heaven. Because you know what these children do continually? They ask. They ask and they ask and they ask and they ask.

And they want to know why and they want to understand why. And that's how we begin to receive. And as we have, more shall be given.

But to the person who does not have, even what he thinks he has, shall be taken from him. It's there. Mark adds one more thing to this.

And I'm almost done. Mark adds one more thing to this in chapter 4. Mark adds something that Matthew and Luke didn't have. If you want to turn there, Mark chapter 4, verse 24.

And as he was saying to them, take care what you listen to. Luke says take care how you listen. Mark puts it, take care what you listen to.

By your standard of measure, it shall be measured to you. And then he adds, for whoever has will be given more. What did he mean by by your standard of measure? I'll tell you what he meant.

Those right here that are of the same age, same age, same opportunity. Let's say those here that have had the same opportunity for the same amount of time. Why among those who would be here for the same amount of time and have had the same opportunity, why would there be someone who has so much more than someone else? Why would there be? If God desires for us all to be filled with all, why would there be a difference? Because some measure the value of what they're hearing greater than others.

According to the value you place upon it, that's the value that you will receive from it. You place little value upon it, it will do you little good. But if you count it as your life, if when you hear do everything without murmuring and complaining, if you hear that as salvation to your soul, to never do that to your spouse, to never do that before your children, to never do that regarding another brother or sister, that will become so valuable to you.

It will save you from many ugly words. Because it's the way you value it. It becomes that valuable to you.

See, I've seen it in the heart of God. He wants his people to be filled with all the grace of Christ, every one of us. But there is a difference in the way we value that.

And the way we value it affects how carefully we pay attention. Some of you are teachers, while you were teaching here, you can kind of tell who's paying attention and who's a little distracted. Selective hearing is a reason we don't benefit from every grace that God desires us to have in Christ.

I want to encourage you. If you want to experience all the fullness of Christ in this life, fullness in your marriage, fullness as a parent, fullness of his grace, simply work on the way you hear. Listen very carefully.

And every single thing you say be like the last soil in the book of Luke. Remember, I'll end with this. The last soil in the book of Luke, what does it say about that man? And when he heard the word, what did he do? He seized it.

Kata echo in the Greek. He seized it. He grabbed it in such a way that he said, I am not letting this go.

Everything we let go that we have had opportunity to hear, we don't benefit from. Not because God doesn't want us to have it. It's because we were not careful enough in how we heard.

May the Lord give you wisdom and understanding in this.

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