

May 16, 2021

Are we really hearing?

by Ken Weliever

Last night we attended the opening session of the Florida College Lectures. The general theme this year is “Never Has a Man Spoken the Way This Man Speaks.” Specifically, it’s dealing with Jesus’ parables.

Edwin Crozier presented the keynote address entitled “How Will You Understand All the Parables? Subtitled “The Parable of the Sower.”

It was masterfully presented in a way that was thought-provoking, challenging, and stimulating.

While Edwin didn’t follow the printed Lecture book, he did incorporate many of the thoughts from the book into his lecture. His approach reflected the quote by Klyne R. Snodgrass. “Throughout much of the church’s history, the parables of Jesus have been mistreated, rearranged, abused, and butchered. Often they still are today. They are used more than they are heard and understood.”

“The Sower,” Edwin wrote, “is so fundamental to hearing, when asked what it means, Jesus responded, ‘Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables?’ (Mk. 4:13). We study the Sower first because we not only need to hear it but to learn how to hear from it.”

Edwin hammered home the point that is possible that we’ve heard some

of the parables so often both listening to sermons and reading them that possibly the personal application is missed.

There is a tendency to apply the parables to other people and not us. The wayside ground. The stony ground. The thorny ground. That’s not us. It’s them. We’re the good ground. The good and noble heart. But are we?

Interestingly, Jesus’ parables indicted the religious leaders of the day—The scribes and the Pharisees. We may be guilty in our superficial reading to miss that Jesus is speaking to us. To you and I.

Could there be times in hearing the Word, that it has not penetrated the heart? Like the wayside soil, where people walk and pack down the ground, are you allowing others to harden the soil of your heart?

Hearts, like the ground, need to be plowed and cultivated to receive the seed. This can be a painful process. If you’re not obeying the gospel and you know you should, be careful not to harden your heart.

Suppose like the seed that fell on the rocks, we may at times possess a shallow heart? Could it be that we’ve become so familiar with some of Jesus’ teaching, that we’re not really hearing what he’s saying to us? That we’ve become so well acquainted and accustomed to certain passages of scripture that we’ve failed to

Welcome!

When you visit our assemblies, you will be received friendly, kindly and courteously. We believe this to be the natural attitude of those who truly love God and mankind. Though you may at first be among strangers, we hope that you will come to know us well and count us as your friends.

We offer Bible studies as well as correspondence courses for those interested in learning more about what God expects of us.

Important Dates

Upcoming Ladies’ Bible Classes - Next class May 11.

If you know of upcoming events, please inform Darrell so they can be included here.

let them penetrate the heart?

Has our heart become crowded with the worries of the world, the cares of daily life, the pursuit of pleasure, and the deceitfulness of riches, that the Word is unable to take deep root in our lives and bear fruit?

We want to believe that, unlike others, we're the good soil. But are we bearing good fruit? Do we allow the Word to be implanted deeply with us, so it can germinate? Can others around us see the results in our lives of really hearing? Really believing? Really obeying?

"The Sower," Edwin wrote, "is about hearing. The question is not will we know the parables, will we enjoy the parables, will we love the parables. The question is will we hear the parables." Really hearing with discernment and personal introspection is the challenge whenever we listen to a sermon, attend a Bible class, or read the Scripture.

The repeated refrain last night, and I suspect throughout the week, will be one that we need to heed: "Those who have ears to hear, let us hear."

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Prayer Requests

Jack Wilson continues to struggle with debilitating back pain.

Jerry Richardson is still undergoing cancer treatments.

Nancy Richardson is doing better but still dealing with breathing problems.

Ron Stanberry has been diagnosed with lung cancer, causing great pain. Please pray for him and Sue both.

Karen Hallmark has improved but is still struggling with her health and her eyes.

Morgan O'Hair is undergoing tests to determine the possibility of some tumors. She is also struggling with her walking as well as an immune system issue. I haven't received any updates on the tests

Dinah Williams continues to be homebound due to mobility issues.

Bobbie Gibbons continues to be limited by balance and breathing issues. She could use encouragement.

Tyler Hairston is investigating options to treat his cancer.

Don and Alene Simmons are both suffering from pain and mobility limitations.

Dorothy Steadman is continuing to recover from her recent stroke. She is staying with Pam.

Faye Estes has been diagnosed with colon cancer.

If you know of someone that needs to be on this list, please tell Darrell (email preferred) and provide updates so names stay on the list as long as needed.

**"praying at all times in the Spirit,
with all prayer and supplication.
To that end, keep alert with all
perseverance, making supplication for
all the saints,"**

(Ephesians 6:18 ESV)

The Oaks West church of Christ is a group of individual Christians who have been added to the Lord's body through baptism (Acts 2:38, 47; Gal 3:26, 27), and have joined themselves together (Acts 2:42ff) in an effort to do the Lord's will.

We are not a part of any larger organization - we do not follow any man-made creeds and we do not answer to anyone other than the Lord.

Our standard of faith and practice is the Word of God. We believe in the God of revelation (Eph 3:1-7; 2 Tim 3:16-17) and follow his instructions in an effort to have an ongoing relationship with him (1 John 4:7-11; 5:3).

Our times of study and worship are open to all, and our members are happy to meet with interested individuals or families for study.

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