



Matthew 13:18-23

# LISTENING TO THE WORD OF GOD

One of the great realities with which we have to deal is the Voice of God in His world. The briefest and only satisfying cosmogony is this: "He spake and it was done." The "why" of natural law is the living Voice of God immanent in His creation... This word of God is the breath of God filling the world with living potentiality. The Voice of God is the most powerful force in nature, indeed the only force in nature, for all energy is here only because the power-filled Word is being spoken. The facts are that God is not silent, has never been silent. It is the nature of God to speak. The second Person of the Holy Trinity is called the Word. The Bible is the inevitable outcome of God's continuous speech... I think a new world will arise out of the religious mists when we approach our Bible with the idea that it is not only a book which was once spoken, but a book which is now speaking.  
—A. W. Tozer, *The Pursuit of God*

Matthew 11-12 is the **Kadesh Barnea** moment for the nation of Israel during Jesus' day. That "generation" saw the mighty works of the Messiah. They heard the message of the kingdom. They were on the doorstep of the Promised Land, so to speak. And they said, "No!" to the Spirit of God. Thus, they experienced God's judgment (12:38-45).

Their biggest problem was the condition of their \_\_\_\_\_.



What we see and hear (and *how* we see and hear) both reflect the condition of our hearts (13:13-15).

The biggest \_\_\_\_\_ is having a transformed heart that hears, sees, and understands God's truth as revealed in Jesus Christ (13:16-17).

## THE IMPORTANCE OF LISTENING (13:18)

- The Hebrew verb, *shama*, "to hear" is used 1159x in the OT. The Greek verb, *akouo*, "to hear" is used 437x in the NT.
- Listening is foundational to all communication (Jam. 1:19), to all learning and wisdom (Prov. 1:5; 4:1; 8:33; 12:15; 23:19), and to all relationships—with God and with others (Deut. 6:4; Job 21:2).
- Listening requires...
  - **E** \_\_\_\_\_
  - **A** \_\_\_\_\_
  - **R** \_\_\_\_\_

*The parables in Matthew 13 focus on the phase of God's kingdom program that extends from the time of Israel's rejection of Jesus in His earthly ministry to the time of judgment at His second coming.*

—Mark Bailey

*Two significant events occurred at Kadesh Barnea: 1) the Israelites' faithless refusal to possess the Promised Land (Num. 13:32-33) and 2) their opposition to Moses at not having enough water (Num. 20:2-5). These two events, marked by unbelief, grumbling, and disobedience, directly affected Moses, Aaron, and the Israelites.*

—gotquestions.org

*The heart wants what it wants, or else it does not care.*

—Emily Dickinson

*The workings of the human heart are the profoundest mystery of the universe.* —Charles Chesnutt

*People generally see what they look for and hear what they listen for.* —Harper Lee

*The word "listen" contains the same letters as the word "silent."*

—Alfred Brendel

## THE INTERPRETATION OF THE PARABLE (13:19-23)

- The seed is \_\_\_\_\_ (cf. Luke 8:11; 1 Peter 1:23).
- The sower is one who \_\_\_\_\_ God's Word.
- The soils represent \_\_\_\_\_.

## THE IDENTIFICATION OF THE FOUR SOILS



The \_\_\_\_\_ Heart (13:19)



The \_\_\_\_\_ Heart (13:20-21)



The \_\_\_\_\_ Heart (13:22)



The \_\_\_\_\_ Heart (13:23)

## MY PERSONAL RESPONSE

- \_\_\_\_\_ God's Word in my mind.
- \_\_\_\_\_ God's Word in my heart.
- \_\_\_\_\_ God's Word in my life.
- \_\_\_\_\_ God's Word in the lives of others.

*The Word of God is proclaimed and causes a division among those who hear. God's people receive the Word, understand it, and obediently fulfill it; others fail to listen because of a hardened heart, a basic superficiality, or a vested interest in riches and possessions.*

—Simon J. Kistemaker

*When God speaks to humanity, a cosmic battle breaks out.*

—Darrell Bock

*If the seed sown vanishes swiftly, the fault is not in it, but in ourselves.*

—Alexander MacLaren

*A hard heart does the Devil's work for him.*

—Charles Spurgeon

*High pressure evangelism often produces this kind of shallow "conversion."*

—John Phillips

**World.** Greek, *aion*, "the fleeting mass of thoughts, opinions, maxims, speculations, hope, impulses, aims, aspirations, which always circulate in the world. It is the atmosphere which we inhale each moment of our life in order to inevitably exhale it again" (Trench).

**Understanding.** Greek, *suniami*, "to bring together in the mind."

*The good soil has none of the faults of the rest of the field. It is loose, and thus unlike the path; deep, and thus unlike the rocky bit; clean, and thus unlike the thorns.*

—Alexander MacLaren

*The interpretation demands that each person look to himself as to how he "hears" the message.*

—D. A. Carson