



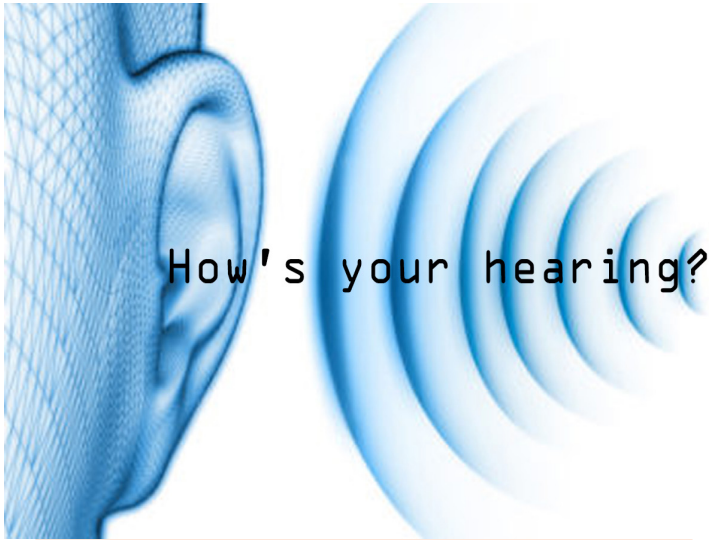
Smith Rock
COMMUNITY CHURCH

Community
Group
study guide

LUKE

J E S U S F O R E V E R Y O N E

For the week of
16th of May 2020



How's your hearing?

Most people like a good story, and during this time when we have been spending more time at home there has been a lot of opportunity to catch up with watching series we might have missed.

Back in the day we all used to watch one story at a time as there was pretty much only three platforms to watch them on, but today there are loads of different platforms all offering hundreds of stories for our viewing pleasure. But how many of those stories do we remember the next day, week, month or year? We heard them but we can't recall most of them and they certainly didn't change our lives, but some stories should if we have heard them right.



8 Soon afterward he went on through cities and villages, proclaiming and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God. And the twelve were with him, 2 and also some women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities: Mary, called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, 3 and Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's household manager, and Susanna, and many others, who provided for them out of their means.

4 And when a great crowd was gathering and people from town after town came to him, he said in a parable, 5 "A sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell along the path and was trampled underfoot, and the birds of the air devoured it. 6 And some fell on the rock, and as it grew up, it withered away, because it had no moisture.

7 And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up with

it and choked it. 8 And some fell into good soil and grew and yielded a hundredfold.” As he said these things, he called out, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”

9 And when his disciples asked him what this parable meant, 10 he said, “To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of God, but for others they are in parables, so that ‘seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand.’ 11 Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. 12 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. 13 And the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear the word, receive it with joy. But these have no root; they believe for a while, and in time of testing fall away. 14 And as for what fell among the thorns, they are those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by the cares and riches and pleasures of life, and their fruit does not mature. 15 As for that in the good soil, they are those who, hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patience.

16 “No one after lighting a lamp covers it with a jar or puts it under a bed, but puts it on a stand, so that those who enter may see the light. 17 For nothing is hidden that will not be made manifest, nor is anything secret that will not be known and come to light. 18 Take care then how you hear, for to the one who has, more will be given, and from the one who has not, even what he thinks that he has will be taken away.” 19 Then his mother and his brothers came to him, but they

could not reach him because of the crowd. 20 And he was told, “Your mother and your brothers are standing outside, desiring to see you.” 21 But he answered them, “My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it.”

Luke 8:1–21 (ESV)

Commentary

The text starts off by emphasising the itinerant nature of Jesus’ ministry as He travels around all the local cities and villages in Galilee “proclaiming and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God.” Luke also adds “the twelve were with Him,” although the only role they play in this text is to request from Jesus an explanation to the story He told.

Luke also tells us that there were some women who accompanied Jesus, and they provided for them. Luke also mentions these are women who have encountered the healing power of Jesus and have responded in a positive way to the Good News which came to them. Mary Magdelene is mentioned specifically as a woman who was under severe oppression from seven demons, until Jesus cast them out. These women are Jesus’ most faithful disciples, they followed Jesus through thick and thin and Mary is mentioned as both a witness to Jesus’ crucifixion and to His resurrection. It is unfortunate that historically Mary has often been confused with the identity from the previous section, because clearly she is not the same woman. In addition to Mary is Joanna who is person of both status and means and she uses

these to support the ministry of Jesus. This is an unusual eclectic group of disciples Jesus has around Him who would never have been allowed to be disciples of any other teacher. Jesus tells a story about a sower going out to sow his seed. It would have been a story which every one could have related to because it was a common enough sight. This was an agrarian society so Jesus told a lot of stories about farming and horticulture. We call these stories parables and they have a point. A couple of observations with parables; it is possible to try and read too much in to it, for instance it might be considered a waste to sow on ground that wouldn't produce. Secondly there is generally only one point to the story.

This parable is about seed which lands on four different kinds of ground with differing results, but only one produces fruit. After telling the story Jesus calls out, "he who has ears to hear, let him hear."

The disciples question Jesus about the meaning and Jesus tells them because they are seeking they will get the answer but those who aren't won't. The parable Jesus says is about hearing, and how the word (the seed) because if it has been heard right then it will be acted on and produce fruit. The first soil the word is heard as a sound only, but doesn't penetrate the heart with any kind of belief and is snatched away by the devil. The seed which lands on the rocks has no endurance, it is heard, but only just without any realisation of what it entails, and at the slightest sight of trouble withers away. The third seed lands on among thorns which choke out the seed, and Jesus says these are analogous to the cares, riches, and pleasures of the world

which so grab the attention and resources of a person's life, thus leading to a lack of investment in the word and not leading to any fruitfulness. But the seed which fell in the good soil is like that of a good heart which patiently bears fruit because it has heard and understood, and acted.

Jesus confirms what everyone knows; you don't light a lamp to hide it in a jar under a bed. Although only you know what you have "heard," your ability to hear will be made evident to everyone.

Take care Jesus says about "how you hear," and by this Jesus doesn't mean whether we listen to Him in stereo or surround sound, He means what our hearing leads to. The one who has truly heard will receive more, but the one who hasn't heard, even though he thinks he has will lose everything.

Just to hammer His point home Jesus is told that His family has arrived to see Him, but they can't get near Him because of the crowd, and so they send word to Jesus that they are standing outside, seemingly expecting Jesus to come and see them. But instead Jesus uses them as an illustration by telling the crowd His family are those who do the will of God.

As we have seen in previous texts, for Jesus correct hearing leads to action, the two cannot be separated out.

Group Study

Open the group with prayer and discuss how you have used your application from last week's study in your life, and what you have learned from it.

What is the loudest thing you have ever heard?

Did it effect your hearing?

What sort of things effect the way we hear?

What do you think effects the way we "hear" Jesus?

According to Jesus what does "hearing" lead to?

What does it look like for us to have "heard" jesus?

Read the following passages.

28 For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law.

Romans 3:28 (ESV)

4 What then shall we say was gained by Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh? 2 For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. 3 For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness."

Romans 4:1–3 (ESV)

6 just as Abraham “believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”?

7 Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. 8 And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, “In you shall all the nations be blessed.”

9 So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

Galatians 3:6–9 (ESV)

8 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, 9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Ephesians 2:8–10 (ESV)

From these texts what do you think brings salvation and justification?

Now read James 2:14 -26

What does James say about salvation and justification?

How do can Paul James and Paul complement one another rather than contradict?

How do you think the women mentioned in the first three verses “heard” Jesus?

Personal study time

Read the following passage and using the REAP method to reflect on how your hearing is.

45 And when Moses had finished speaking all these words to all Israel, 46 he said to them, "Take to heart all the words by which I am warning you today, that you may command them to your children, that they may be careful to do all the words of this law. 47 For it is no empty word for you, but your very life, and by this word you shall live long in the land that you are going over the Jordan to possess."

Deuteronomy 32:45–47 (ESV)

2 *making your ear attentive to wisdom
and inclining your heart to understanding;*
3 *yes, if you call out for insight
and raise your voice for understanding,*
4 *if you seek it like silver
and search for it as for hidden treasures,*
5 *then you will understand the fear of the LORD
and find the knowledge of God.*

Proverbs 2:2–5 (ESV)

33 So I sent for you at once, and you have been kind enough to come. Now therefore we are all here in the presence of God to hear all that you have been commanded by the Lord."

Acts 10:33 (ESV)

2 Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it.

Hebrews 2:1 (ESV)

NAME OF THE BOOK

Reflection

Lined area for reflection.

REAP Method of studying Scripture

READ

Read the passages with an open heart, asking the Holy Spirit to give you words of encouragement, direction, and correction (2 Timothy 3:16). Underline the verses that seem important and that God is using to speak to you.

EXAMINE

Spend some time reflecting and writing about what you've read. Write down one or two of the key verses that stuck out to you. Ask yourself these questions and write down your thoughts:

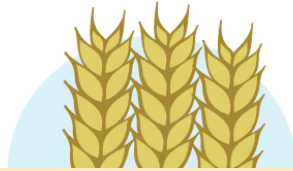
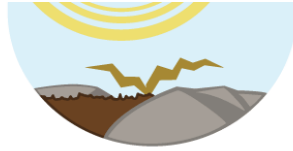
- * What is going on in the passage?
- * Who is writing and whom is he writing to?
- * When was the author writing?
- * What are the circumstances that the author is addressing?
- * Does the writer mention anything that might indicate his purpose or intent?
- * how do you think the author wants his audience to respond?

APPLY

After examining the passage, apply the text to your own life. Ask yourself these questions:

- * What is God's word for me from this passage?
- * How will I live differently and be different today because of what I just read?

KIDS CORNER



Get Up and Grow!

1. How many things can you think of that help plants grow?

Seeds can't grow into plants all on their own. No one buys a bag of tomato seeds, leaves them in the bag, and expects them to magically produce tomatoes! That's because anyone looking to grow a strong, healthy, tomato-filled plant would know that it's impossible to do in a bad environment. It's the same way in our spiritual lives. God's perfect wisdom and truth are like seeds that can produce in us spiritual strength, health, and amazing Christ-like qualities like love, joy, patience, peace, and self control. But, just like tomato seeds, God's word can't fully flourish in our lives if we provide a dark, dry environment.

Jesus described four ways our lives can be bad or good environments for His truth. If we are hardhearted and resistant to Him,

then the devil can snatch away the truth right from our hearts, preventing any growth. If we're all gungho for Jesus outwardly, but we don't take time to work on our relationship with Him inwardly, then we find our efforts become weak, our passion fades, and our lives begin growing less and less. If we value the things in life that are comfortable, impressive, easy, or fun more than Him, then our lives will be so full of meaningless things that there will be no room for God's growth. But, if we hear God's word, cling to it, and patiently pursue the growth it enables, then our lives will be strong, healthy, and constantly changing to be more like Christ.

2. How can you live in a way that enables God's growth in you?

