

Can you Truly Hear the Gospel?



Mark 4:1-9

If you have your bibles, go to Mark chapter 4. I got a phone call earlier this week and I looked at the caller ID. I knew the person and I hadn't talked to them in a long time, so I answered not really knowing what this guy would need. I put my ear to the phone, and without saying hello, hey how are you, or any small talk, he just said, "Do lukewarm Christians go to Hell?" Alright...No how are you doing? How are the kids? Is everything good in your life? There was nothing. There was just that, just an explosive question right out of the gate, and then just a pause just waiting for me to say yes or no. So we began a conversation because I knew a question like that probably had some context around it, and of course, it does. This guy teaches Sunday school at another church and this question came up because in Revelation, Jesus says if you're lukewarm, I'll spit you out of My mouth. What does that mean? What about lukewarm Christians? How do we deal with that? There was some lively discussion in the Sunday school room and a lot of people had different opinions on what exactly happens to lukewarm Christians. As we think about that question, some of us probably have some questions because we at least know some people who fit the category as a lukewarm Christian. We've had neighbors or family, maybe moms or sons or different people who have claimed Jesus, said a prayer, walked an aisle, gotten baptized, and maybe followed the Lord for a little

while. They start to have life change and everything seemed like they loved Jesus, and then they just stopped. They stopped coming to church, stopped seemingly following Jesus, started pursuing their own life, and that's where they are now. We say they are a lukewarm Christian. They believe in Jesus, but they're just not following after Him right now.

So how do we explain those types of people and what happens to them on Judgment Day. Do lukewarm Christians go to Heaven or Hell? That's the question that spurred this conversation this guy asked me. I think that fits well with our text because Jesus is going to help explain why people react differently to the news of the gospel. Why do different people hear the gospel differently? Why do some dismiss it? Why do some seem to grow for a while and then stop? Why do some seem to get it, and then all of a sudden, life happens and they stop chasing after Jesus and stop loving Him? Why do some hear it, respond to it, love it, and produce fruit for the glory of Christ? Why are there different responses to the gospel? Jesus is going to help us see what the reason is with this parable of the sower.

That's what we're going to go to in Mark chapter 4. I think as we see this parable of the sower, we are going to see that it's really all about our ears, our response to Jesus. He's going to go to our ears. How do you hear the gospel? How do you hear the Word of God? We will see that we actually hear with our hearts. It's not just our ears; it's our heart. To hear the Kingdom, you must love the King. That is the big picture. When it comes to hearing, what you hear will go down to your heart, and the response determines how your heart reacts to what you hear. For instance, we've been watching games this week. A lot of basketball has happened this week. If you're a college basketball fan, college is a great time. We've been watching game after game at our house. It's amazing that when a whistle is blow, there is a sound that goes out. There is hearing that is had. Everyone in that stadium hears that sound. Everyone on the other side of the TV hears the sound, but there are different reactions to hearing a whistle blowing. If you were watching the game yesterday and you had blue on, when you heard the whistle, it was not good. You were protesting the whistle, every whistle you were protesting. If you wore orange, the whistle was singing a beautiful song to you. It was a happy whistle sound.

Whatever color shirt you had on determined how you heard the blowing of the whistle, because it wasn't just the sound of the whistle it was how the sound affected your heart. If you loved one team, it was bad news, and if you loved another team, it was good news. What Jesus is going to show us is when it comes to the Word of God, how you hear it will show which team you're on. If you're on His team, or if you are opposed to Him, the way you react to it is going to show the condition of your heart. Your ears are connected to your heart, and we will also see your heart is connected to your hands. When it comes to your heart, if you love the King, when you hear the Word of God, you're going to embrace it and accept it. The heart news of Jesus will then go out to your hands and your feet, and you will have life change, you will produce fruit for the glory of God. Jesus is going to tell the story that is all about hearing. It's not going to be about the volume; it's going to be about the value. If you're a parent, you've probably said to your kids, "Can you not hear me? Did you not hear what I said?" Oh, they heard you. It wasn't a problem with volume. Yelling it louder doesn't help any. It's not volume to your kids; it's value. Do they want to obey? If the answer is no, they are going to tune you out and do something else. As we see the Kingdom, it's not about volume, not about if you actually hear the words, it's what about value. Does your heart love the Word of God and does it respond to the Word of God? Do you produce fruit when you're under the Word of God? How you hear will reveal your heart, so Jesus is going to give us a parable to show why different people respond differently to the hearing of the good news of the gospel. Ultimately, you hear with your heart, and in order to hear the Kingdom, you must love the King.

Scripture

"Again he began to teach beside the sea. And a very large crowd gathered about him, so that he got into a boat and sat in it on the sea, and the whole crowd was beside the sea on the land. And he was teaching them many things in parables, and in his teaching he said to them: "Listen! Behold, a sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seed fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured it. Other seed fell on rocky ground, where it did not

have much soil, and immediately it sprang up, since it had no depth of soil. And when the sun rose, it was scorched, and since it had no root, it withered away. Other seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no grain. And other seeds fell into good soil and produced grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold." And he said, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

(Prayer)

Father God, I pray that this morning we would have ears to hear because we know to have ears to hear means we have a heart that responds to You, that loves You, and that follows You. If we have a heart that responds to You, then You can produce a fruit beyond our wildest imaginations, in and through us, for Your glory. We pray this in Jesus good name, amen.

Parable of the Sower

We have Jesus teaching beside the sea. So many people come to hear Him that He has to get in a boat and set it out into the water. He is in a fishing boat teaching this mega-crowd of people that are hearing Jesus. They have all come to hear the teaching of Jesus, and Jesus begins to teach them in parables. A lot of times, we think about a parable as an illustration, but here, the parable is the sermon. His sermon is a parable. He gets up and the first word He says from the boat to this massive group of people is "Listen! Behold." Literally, the first thing He says is 'listen and look.' That's cluing is in on what the parable is going to be about. It's going to be a question: Do you hear what I'm saying? Do you see what I'm saying? We say that a lot when we're talking to somebody. "Do you hear what I'm saying? Do you see what I'm getting at?" We're asking if you can understand what I'm saying. Jesus, before He even starts, says you're going to have to listen and you're going to have to see what I'm about to say. Then He goes through this parable. He says there is a sower who went out and sowed seed. Now, everyone there knows what is going on here. They would have been used to walking by the way, walking down the road, and seeing farmers out in their field sowing seed. Jesus said picture a

farmer who's going out and casting seed along the ground. He says here's the parable. Some seed fell on the path along the road, and everybody hearing knows that is a bad idea. You don't put seed on a road. Jesus says exactly, because what happened is when it hit the path, it was too hard, and birds actually came and ate up the seed. Then He says there is a second type of soil that the seeds went on, and that was rocky ground. Everyone knows that it is not good to plant on rocky ground because there is soil, but underneath it, there is a layer of rock. When the seed fell into the rocky ground, it immediately shot up, started to grow, but it had no roots because there is only rock. When the sun came up, it withered away and died. It produced no grain. Then Jesus said there was a third soil type and the seeds were sown in this other soil. The seed starts to grow, it looks really good, everything seems like it's going to produce a harvest, but everything around it ends up choking it out, and it, too, produces no grain. One produces nothing, the other starts to grow, but withers, and the other starts to grow and gets choked out. Everyone is tracking with Jesus right now. This is common stuff. Everyone can get this. Everyone knows that if you sow on a path, it's not going to grow. It would be Jesus saying there was a farmer who got in his tractor, hooked up the planter, and then drove down 641 and planted down the highway. It didn't grow anything. We would all get that. That makes perfect sense, Jesus, we get that you don't sow on a path. It's not going to grow anything. We sort of know these things. If it's rocky, it's not going to grow good, if it's thorny, it's not going to grow good. Everyone in here knows that, everyone in Jesus' day knew that, but then Jesus refers to good soil. What He says about good soil is going to be the hook in the parable. It's going to be the explosive statement that would have been shocking to everyone. He says, "Other seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no grain. And other seeds fell into good soil and produced grain, growing up and increasing and yielding..." That's pretty common sense. If you plant seed in good soil, it's going to grow, it's going to produce grain, and it's going to yield. All of that the people understand and they're right with Jesus, but then Jesus says this about the amount of grain that it actually produces; it's thirtyfold, sixtyfold, and a hundredfold. When Jesus says that, everyone who knows anything about agriculture starts chuckling.

Yeah, ok...that guy is not a farmer! He's in a boat; He needs to stick to fishing because He knows nothing about agriculture. What Jesus says when He says thirtyfold, sixtyfold, and a hundredfold, He is talking about a harvest that is impossible. The Baker commentary said that in that day in Palestine, the average yield was five to seven fold. The most a farmer could possibly hope for would be a tenfold harvest. That is a bumper crop. Could it really do tenfold? If you're a farmer in here, that's two hundred bushel of corn. That's a good thing. But here, Jesus says it does produce tenfold; it produces three times that. It produces thirtyfold. You farmers, this is not two hundred bushel corn, this is six hundred bushel corn. Imagine; Jesus is saying we planted a field and it produced a thousand bushel corn. Aaaaa....you can't do that. It's impossible! It's not going to happen! There's no way that it could actually produce that much corn. It would be impossible, so that's what Jesus is trying to get them to see. This good soil has an impossible crop. The Message actually translate this 'a harvest beyond their wildest imagination.' That's a pretty good translation of what Jesus is trying to do here with thirtyfold, sixtyfold, and a hundredfold.

Jesus is telling a story. This farmer is putting out seed, it's going to all these different soil types, and nothing is happening. Then it's going into good soil, and it produces a supernatural crop, something that can't be explained by natural means. At this point, Jesus is beginning to lose His audience. This guy doesn't know what He's talking about. This is impossible. There is no way that story could actually take place. Here is what Jesus says, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear." He who has ears to hear, let him hear. You've got this massive amount of people, He tells this parable, then He gets to the punchline and it's that there are all these soil types and none of them produces anything, but there is this one soil type that produces a supernatural crop, something that's actually impossible. Now Jesus says can anyone hear this? Does anybody get this? Does anybody have ears to hear? In other words, there's something about this parable that it's going to take another way to hear this that's not just in your ears, you're going to have to hear another way. Jesus is trying to say you're going to have to hear this, not just in your ears; you're going to have to respond to it in your heart. He tells the parable, and He just leaves

it, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear," then He seemingly just leaves the crowd. So now, the crowd is wandering off, like, 'that guy had a good story, but man, that ending was a little strange. I don't get the end of that...that could never happen' and they're going about their day, doing their own stuff.

The Secret

And then we find that we have this in between the first telling of the parable and the second telling of the parable, this sandwich event, where we have a private conversation with a private group of people. He's going to tell them about a secret. When we hear that, we get excited, right. Hey, I've got a secret to tell you! If you tell kids you've got a secret, they are all over you, "What is it?" "Do I know who knows it?" There is this hiddenness about secrets that we want to know what it is. Jesus is going to tell the disciples about a secret, so let's read what this secret is in verse 10. It says, "And when He was alone..." In other words, there is no more big crowd in boat. Now He is alone, along with those who were Him, with the twelve, they asked Him about the parables. So now, we have a smaller group, His disciples, and some other followers. Remember what His question was. He who has ears to hear, let him ear. Then everybody walks away and you have the disciples and some other people who are following along. They're staying with Jesus. They're coming for more instruction. They want to hear more, so they go to Jesus and say, can you tell us about this parable that you just told, because we don't really understand what it means? When you think about a parable, what exactly is a parable? It means to throw something alongside something. A parable is to take something that everybody knows about, you throw it along, and you're trying to teach about something else. For Jesus, the point of telling a parable is ultimately about comparing something that everybody knows with the Kingdom of God. I love what one of the commentators said. He said it was like a work of art, but also a work of warfare. You have both of these things happening. A parable is a work of art, and that's very true for the parables of Jesus. We remember them, we know them, and we pass them down. If you go to a non-believer and say do you know the parable of the sower, there's a good chance they're going to know at least a few of

the soil types. They're very memorable, but they're also an act of warfare. They're doing war in and amongst the hearers. They are separating people with different heart responses, and that's what Jesus is going to ultimately get to.

So the disciples come and say hey, that parable You told; we know it means something else. We know there's a deeper meaning, so would You explain it to us? Could you tell it to us? So the disciples come to Jesus wanting to understand what they just heard, and here's what Jesus said to them, "To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God, but for those outside everything is in parables, so that "they may indeed see but not perceive, and may indeed hear but not understand, lest they should turn and be forgiven." This is kind of an interesting dialogue with the disciples. They come to Jesus because they don't understand the parable, just like everybody else doesn't understand it. Nobody is getting what exactly the soil types mean, so they're either leaving or they're coming to Jesus for further explanation. The disciples come to Jesus and say 'we don't get the whole thing about the good soil and the crazy crop and these different soil types. Could you explain what you mean by that?' He says 'yeah, you have the secret. It's been given to you. You know it. You've got the secret.' I have a feeling they are saying 'no we don't; we're coming to you. We don't get it. We don't know the secret.' You know those pens that you write with that have invisible ink; you write and then you get a little flashlight and you can see what it says. I think their thought is if we have a secret, is there invisible ink that we can look at? We don't have it. We're not getting it either. Jesus, you're telling a story, and we're just as confused as everybody else. Jesus replies with, that's right...because you have the secret to the Kingdom. I'm still not getting it Jesus. We don't understand. We don't have a secret. We are just as confused. We are here. So what is Jesus trying to get at? Notice what He says, "To you, it has been given the secrets of the Kingdom." Who is that 'you' group? Right now, it is the disciples who are around Jesus and it's the other followers who are around Jesus. Then He brings another group in. He says, "...but for those outside, everything is in parables." So to you, you have the secret, you're with Me, you're right here in My presence, those others who are outside; everything to them is a parable. They don't have the secret.

The question I wrestled with all week is what is the secret? That's what I want to know. What is the secret? Could it be that Jesus gave the disciples deeper understanding? I think the answer is no, because they don't know any more than the other people know. They're having to come to Jesus to get an explanation. They don't hear it and say, did you hear that? We've got the secret. They don't know, but we do, because we're in. They're just as confused. They don't know either.

What is different about the disciples and the followers? What did they have that the outside group doesn't have? The only conclusion I could come up with is they have Jesus. That's the difference. They're confused too and Jesus says he who has ears to hear, let him hear, and Jesus walks off. Everybody leaves except for this group of people who follow. 'Um, Jesus could you explain that? We think you said this, but we're not sure. Could you help us to understand this?' What are they doing? Their ears are leading them to the Savior. Their ears are leading them to Jesus. They are the ones coming to the King to hear the Kingdom. I think what Jesus was saying is the secret in knowing the Bible, in knowing the Word of God, in knowing the Kingdom, is you have to actually have the King. You have to have a relationship with the King to understand the Kingdom; apart from the King, you can't know the Kingdom. Your ears aren't going to work properly unless you love, follow, and have a relationship with the King. What makes these insiders different? They have Jesus. What makes the outsiders different? They refuse to come to Jesus. Notice, in the condemnation of the outsiders, He quotes Isaiah chapter 6:12, "they may indeed see but not perceive, and may indeed hear but not understand." They're going to see and they're not going to see it. They're going to hear and they're not going to hear it. Why is that? Notice what He says, "...lest they should turn and be forgiven." What's the problem? It's not that they're not hearing the right things, it's not that they're not seeing the right things, it's in their stubbornness they're not turning to Jesus. They're not coming to the King, lest if they would turn and they would come, then they could get forgiveness, then they could start hearing, loving, and responding correctly to the Kingdom. Here we have a parable. Everybody is confused and a select few come to Jesus and ask Him to help them understand, and He says, you've got it. You've got the keys. You've got the secret. The

secret is Me. Only through Me can you understand and live out a Kingdom life. To those who won't come to Me, they can't understand the words that they read from Scripture. They always take Scripture and twist it. They make it about themselves. They won't take Scripture, mold their life around it, and live for the glory of God. They will never produce fruit for the glory of Christ because they don't come to the King.

Hard Soil

So then Jesus...now they have the interpreter, they have the secret, they're in front of Jesus, and He begins to explain the parable to them. He is talking to this first group of people and He says, "Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables? The sower sows the word. And these are the ones along the path, where the word is sown: when they hear, Satan immediately comes and takes away the word that is sown in them." He says the seed is the Word of God; it's the message of the gospel. These different soil types are people. So here is the group of people that are like the path. They hear the Word of God, they hear the gospel, and immediately it is snatched away. Here we have hard soil. You guys probably know people or work with people who would be classified as hard soil people. When you share the gospel with them, it is probably offensive, they get angry, hostile, they heckle you, or they just ignore you or make fun of you. It is like, 'I don't want anything to do with that Jesus stuff,' 'keep that as far away from me as you can; I don't want anything to do with it.' That is hard soil type of people. Maybe you're in here because you got drug here and this is you. 'I don't want anything to do with this Jesus guy; I don't want anything to do with the Kingdom.' 'I hear it; I reject it.' The scribes and the Pharisees were like this. Every time Jesus did something, they say, hey, you're Satan. That's pretty hard soil. When you call Jesus Satan, that's pretty much hard soil type.

Rocky Soil

Then there is this second group, a second soil type, that isn't rejecting right off the bat, but instead, there is some acceptance. Let's see what Jesus says about this next group in verses 16-17, "And these are the ones sown on rocky ground: the ones who, when they hear the word,

immediately receive it with joy. And they have no root in themselves, but endure for a while; then, when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately they fall away." Here is a group who doesn't reject it at first. They actually receive it. They hear the news of the Kingdom. 'Wait, Jesus, you're telling me the time is fulfilled? The Kingdom is at hand? You're telling me you're the King? You're King David? You're going to overthrow the Romans? You're going to make everything right, and now, our people are going to be prosperous, and our wildest dreams are going to be fulfilled? Yes, I want that Jesus!' They come to Jesus and they accept the words with joy and excitement. You've seen these people; maybe you are this soil type. When you heard the gospel, or when you shared the gospel, there was immediate joy. 'You're telling me I can have my sins forgiven and I can go to Heaven by confessing Jesus? I'll do that; that's awesome!' They came to Jesus primarily for forgiveness of some past sin and the hope of going to Heaven, and that maybe Jesus would make life a little bit better. Then all of a sudden, now that they're following Jesus, life isn't getting better. Life actually gets worse because of Jesus. Now, because you or your friend are a Jesus follower, you're being ostracized, you're being made fun of, and you can't do your business like you used to do it because you have to have integrity, and you've got to be under the Word of God. So as you're reading Scripture, you're saying 'I'm not going to do that, I'm not going to give up that, or no, I want that.' All of a sudden, the happiness that you receive in Jesus is no longer happy any more. Jesus isn't leading to happiness; He's leading to further suffering, even persecution because of the gospel. So what happens? This person, this soil type, because it's rocky, there's no root, no real producing fruit, it quickly withers away, it quickly gives up on Jesus. We see this would be what happiness seekers are, those who come to Jesus to be happy. Jesus will fix my marriage, Jesus will make me happy, or Jesus will give me my career. They get Jesus and they suffer, so they soon give up Jesus because what they ultimately want is happiness, and happiness is not coming through Jesus, so because of persecution, they wither away. Notice, in this soil type, there is no fruit and no grain; there is only confession and a moment of receiving, but it is soon given away because of persecution.

Thorny Soil

Then we have a third type, which is not going to be withered away through persecution; it's going to be choked away through prosperity. This is even a little more dangerous for us as a group of people because we can all so easily fit into this next category. Here's what it says about this next category in verses 18-19, "And others are the ones sown among thorns. They are those who hear the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it proves unfruitful." This group of people also hears and has a response. There's a moment of growth. It seems like they get it, seems like they're following Jesus and loving Jesus, but then, as a little bit of time passes, all of the other cares of life soon choke the Word away. All of a sudden, we see three different cares of life.

- The Cares of the World

This would be those people who come to Jesus, believe in Him, think they have a conversion moment, and get baptized. You think everything was good now, you're following Jesus, but then life happens. Sports take off, kids have to go places, the house needs repairs, and all these different things. Now, your life becomes about the cares of the world, and soon you're no longer loving Jesus or following Jesus. Apart from showing up on Sunday, there is no thought about the gospel or Christ through the rest of the week because you've got all the cares of the world to worry about.

- The Deceitfulness of Riches

It is the pursuit of if I can buy this, if I can get this, I will be happy. We pursue, we strive, and we do, and soon, the Word and the Kingdom gets lost. We completely forget about what Christ wants for our lives, what Christ would want to do in us and through us.

- The Desire for Other Things

This is the scariest one of all to me. In this passage is this little explosive thing...the desire for other things. For me, that was just an eerie little statement. It's not specific; it just says some of them get choked out. Some of them forget the Word and forget Jesus just because of other

things. Can you imagine how heartbreaking that is? For some people, they stop loving Jesus because of other things. It could be good things, it could be bad things, but it's definitely lesser things. Imagine that you once followed Jesus and loved Jesus, and now because of other things, you're not loving Him, you're not pursuing Him; you're going off and doing your own thing, living your own life, and apart from a Sunday show up, Jesus has nothing to do with your life. What would Jesus say about that group? He says the problem is there was never any fruit. There was never any grain.

None of these soil types, the hard, rocky, or the thorny ever produced anything. They were never fruitful. What He is trying to get at is they actually never had the gospel. They never got it. Their ears never went down to their hearts and they never had a heart respond to Him. They had an outside response. All take Jesus because He will give me this, but when Jesus didn't give them that, they soon neglected or left Jesus. Jesus tried to answer why there were so many responses to the gospel. It was because there are different soil types that the gospel lands on.

Good Soil

In the other three soil types, we had a hearing. They heard it, 'but.' Now we have another 'but,' there's a different group. The first three were non-productive, and I would say they were not true believers. Now there will be a fourth group that will be aside from these other groups, and there will be a different response from them. He says in verse 20, "But those that were sown on the good soil are the ones who hear the word and accept it and bear fruit, thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold." There is no 'but' in there. They accept it 'and' they grow. They accept it 'and' they produce. They accept it 'and' they follow after Jesus. They have a life that bears the fruit of God. This is the good soil people.

Notice it's thirtyfold, it's sixtyfold, and it's a hundredfold. Why does Jesus make the numbers so big? Why does He make the yield to be an impossible number? I think what He's getting at is the good soil is not a natural soil type. I think that naturally, as people, we have one of three soil types: hard, rocky, or thorny. That's our natural soil types. When we hear

the gospel, that is our natural response. But there is another way, a supernatural soil type, and that is good soil and it produces a supernatural crop.

The question is how do we get the supernatural soil type put into our hearts? I think Jesus is answering that with the sandwich. It is those who come to Him for forgiveness, those who come to Him who know the secrets. Those who have Him are the ones who have good soil and produce a supernatural crop. I don't think the question you need to be wrestling with is do I have bad soil or good soil? Have I come to Jesus and has He given me good soil? Am I producing a crop in my life that can't be explainable by just trying a little bit harder, but only by God has come and invaded my life? Now, through me and in me, He is working out righteousness in ways that I can't explain. He is putting sin to death in ways I can't explain. He has given me a witness to people that I can't explain. He is producing in me and through me and I can't explain it, but it's because I have a secret, and the secret is I've come to Jesus, I've loved Jesus. In loving Jesus, I can actually hear the Kingdom. The whistle sounds good to me. The whistle sounds correct to me, and I come under the Word, I changed my life around the Word, and I produce a life of righteousness, joy, love, and peace because I'm seeking after the Lord Jesus.

Notice in this parable, it was all about hearing. All of those people heard the gospel. Jesus says let those who have ears to hear, let them hear. Here are all the different ways you can hear. You can hear the gospel, hear the message, and respond in all of these different ways. So Jesus would ask a question. I think at the end, if we could have a follow-up discussion, He would say, 'how do you hear? How are your ears?' Your ears are going to reveal your heart. You actually hear, not just with your ears; you hear with your heart. The condition of your heart is going to go through your hands and your feet, and it will be what ultimately produces good fruit for the Lord. So, how is your heart? Has your heart responded to the gospel? Have you believed, repented, and followed after Jesus Christ? Have you heard the good news and it was joy and celebration so that you turned from you and turned to Jesus? Now that you have Jesus, here's what your

life is about. It's about growing. It's about producing. It's about yielding. This fruit is coming through you because you are connected to the vine. You're a branch, and all of a sudden, this vine is producing through you good fruit because you have a life connected to Jesus.

So, why do different people respond differently to the gospel? Jesus is trying to say it's because of the soil type in our hearts. Some start out strong, but then fade away. It's because they never truly got the gospel. They never had a heart of stone change to a heart of flesh. They never truly had that good soil that grew and produced a life that was about the glory of Christ. That question on the phone call: Do lukewarm Christians go to Hell? That's a loaded question. It's a question that takes a lot to process. There's a whole lot of ways you can explain what exactly it a lukewarm Christian means. Does it mean you're having a season of your emotions wavering? Does it mean you're having a season where you're not sure about Christ? That's a different conversation, but if what you mean by lukewarm is you said a prayer when you were six and now you're fifty, and from six to fifty you could have cared less about Jesus, then yes. If that's what you mean by lukewarm Christian, you have no hope that you will be with Christ forevermore. It's only those who hear the gospel, respond to the gospel, grow in the gospel, and produce good fruit for the gospel and the sake Christ that can have confidence... 'Oh, I know the secret, I know the King, I know Jesus; I'm connected to Him.' So when they hear the Word of God, it is good news, it's a good song to me! The whistle says yes, I believe and I'm going to live my life around the Word of God.

How do you hear? How do you hear the Word of God? Does the word of God wrap around your life, form you, and change you? Or, does the word of God come in and go out? What Jesus is trying to say is your hears, how you hear, it is showing the condition of your heart because your ears are connected to your heart. How are you hearing the Word of God? When you hear the gospel, when you hear the good news, when you read your Bible, how does it sound to you? Does it go into your ears and into your heart and have a response? You're following Jesus. You're living for Jesus. That is how you can have confidence that you know Jesus. If your life is only about other things, or if your life is only about a once relationship with

Jesus that is no more, then you can't have any confidence that you truly know Jesus, and truly have a relationship with Him. I think Jesus would say it's only those with good soil who hear, respond, follow, and live a life to glorify Christ that have confidence that they know the Kingdom. In order to hear the Kingdom, you have to love the King, and hearing is something we ultimately do, not just with our ears, it's what we do with our hearts. So, how are your hearts? Look at your ears. How do you hear? How do you respond?