

“Hearing God’s Word”
Luke 8:4-15 * May 30, 2010

I. Let’s play make believe...

A. *What used to be true about America that isn’t anymore?*

B. *According to Jesus in the parable of the sower, our fruitfulness in life depends on us doing three things:*

1. _____ *God’s Word*
2. _____ *God’s Word*
3. _____ *in God’s Word*

II. Why is the simple act of hearing God’s Word so powerful?

A. *It awakens _____ in a person’s heart.*

1. *What is true about me?*
2. *What happens in the end to a secular life?*

B. *It _____ me how to live my life.*

1. *Why did our Founding Fathers & Mothers want the Bible taught in every public school?*
2. *Who are presently the most “honest” nations? Notice anything?*

III. What happens to a people and nation that stops hearing God’s Word?

A. *People become restless, plagued by inner _____.*

1. *How did God describe the people of Ninevah?*
2. *How did Jesus see people in his time?*
3. *Is any of this going on today?*

B. *Society becomes ruthless, plagued by outer _____.*

1. *What was society like in the days of the Judges?*

2. *What are 3 characteristics of a chaotic society?*

- a. *It is _____.*
- b. *It is _____.*
- c. *It turns to alternative forms of _____.*

2 Timothy 3:1-5 – “But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God – having a form of godliness but denying its power.”

IV. If all this is true, how should I then live?

A. *Make it my goal to begin taking God’s Word into my heart and mind _____.*

B. *Get on board now with our new _____ plan.*

C. *Make sure I get a regular dose of hearing God’s word taught in _____.*

D. _____ *the Word of God _____.*

V. A famine is coming.

A. *What is this famine?*

B. *What are some signs that it is happening as we speak?*

C. *How will I respond?*

“Hearing God’s Word”
Luke 8:4-15 * May 30, 2010

I. *Let’s play make believe...*

A. *What used to be true about America that isn’t anymore?*

It used to be, not all that long ago really, that the Bible was a prominent part of life in America. It was taught in all our schools. And every one who went to church on Sunday also attended Sunday School classes before church to go deeper into learning about the Bible. Even those who didn’t go to church knew its stories and main teachings.

B. *According to Jesus in the parable of the sower, our fruitfulness in life depends on us doing three things:*

1. **Hearing** God’s Word
2. **Retaining** God’s Word
3. **Persevering** in God’s Word

II. *Why is the simple act of hearing God’s Word so powerful?*

A. *It awakens **faith** in a person’s heart.*

1. *What is true about me?*

You were created in the image of God. You were created to know and love God. You look at the star-fields at night and wonder, ponder, marvel, worship. You dog or cat looks at the star-fields at night, and drools. Not you. You know there is more to you than that. A longing in your heart, maybe you can’t quite put your finger on it. But it’s there. It’s a hunger to know why you are here, and deeper yet, a longing to know *who* put you here.

2. *What happens in the end to a secular life?*

A secular life, a life lived without God is so empty and shallow in the end. All those people out there right now practicing soccer or baseball; blowing off church to golf or shop or sleep in – they may feel at this moment like they’re doing fine, that their lives are good, why do they need to be in a stuffy old church for? Well, if you drink the secular Koolaid, and think the life is only about just what you see

around you, the day is coming when the thrill of those things will dry up, and you will feel your very insides, your very heart drying up. And you’ll wonder what it is. Why is it that you have no pleasure in life any more. It’s because you’re more than an animal, but you’ve been living like one.

B. *It **teaches** me how to live my life.*

1. *Why did our Founding Fathers & Mothers want the Bible taught in every public school?*

They understood that in reading it, and hearing these amazing stories where people wrestle with issues of right and wrong, they become better people as a result. They learn how to make good and moral choices for themselves.

2. *Who are presently the most “honest” nations? Notice anything?*

In the current issue of Readers Digest was an international survey to determine who were the most honest nations. A question was asked: If you found a wallet lying on the ground, would your first choice be to return the wallet and the money. The most honest nations, the top four for whom that would be their first choice were: Australia, the US, Canada and Great Britain. Notice anything? These are nations which not too long ago were saturated by a worldview shaped and influenced by the Bible.

III. *What happens to a people and nation that stops hearing God’s Word?*

A. *People become restless, plagued by inner **confusion**.*

1. *How did God describe the people of Ninevah?*

God said to Jonah these words. Jonah 4:11: “But Ninevah has more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left, and many cattle as well. Should I not be concerned about that great city?” Do you hear how God describes people who have never heard the Word of God? They don’t know their right hand from their left. That’s how God describes the inner confusion inside the souls of these people.

2. *How did Jesus see people in his time?*

Matthew 9:36 says, “When [Jesus] saw the crowds he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.” Inner confusion everywhere.

3. *Is any of this going on today?*

If you’re looking for a job, I read it the other day, where to find one. This nation is facing a 40% shortfall in one critical field – psychiatrists and psychologists. We cannot keep up with demand in this field. There aren’t enough clinicians and counselors to deal with all the brokenness around us.

B. *Society becomes ruthless, plagued by outer chaos.*

1. *What was society like in the days of the Judges?*

1 Samuel 3:1 says something interesting about those days. It says, “In those days the word of the Lord was rare; there were not many visions.” No one heard God’s Word. And what was the end result of that? Judges 21:25 tells us. “In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit.”

2. *What are 3 characteristics of a chaotic society?*

a. It is violent.

b. It is hedonistic.

c. It turns to alternative forms of spirituality.

2 Timothy 3:1-5 – “But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God – having a form of godliness but denying its power.”

IV. *If all this is true, how should I then live?*

A. *Make it my goal to begin taking God’s Word into my heart and mind daily.*

B. *Get on board now with our new discipleship plan.*

C. *Make sure I get a regular dose of hearing God’s word taught in sermons.*

D. *Share the Word of God personally with others.*

V. *A famine is coming.*

A. *What is this famine?*

“The days are coming,” declares the Sovereign Lord, “when I will send a famine through the land – not a famine of food or a thirst for water, but a famine of hearing the words of the Lord. Men will stagger from sea to sea and wander from north to east, searching for the word of the Lord, but they will not find it.” (Amos 8:11-12)
I fear we are entering into such a time as a nation.

B. *What are some signs that it is happening as we speak?*

You want proof? The dying of Sunday School across America. We have forty adults who participate in Grace’s Sunday School. That’s great! you might say. Until you look at who’s coming. It’s mainly those in their upper thirties on up. Younger couples, younger families, are not. A famine is taking hold of their hearts. The idea that the Sunday morning of the Sabbath Day belongs to God and to growing in him and learning about his Word – that idea is withering in the hearts of so many. We’re so busy. We’re so exhausted. When the weekend comes, we’re so in need of rest, and entertainment and fun – and church isn’t *that*.

C. *How will I respond?*