

**Date** : 13 July 2025  
**Theme** : Gospel of Mark  
**Topic** : Hearing the Word – God’s expectation of His servants  
**Key passage** : Mark 4  
**Key verse** : *And He said to them, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear!”*  
*Mark 4:9 (nkjv)*

### **Introduction:**

The first habit for personal growth is the correct way of HEARING God’s messages. Hearing His word is the foundational element to build your spiritual life. The Lord teaches that if we cannot even grasp the meaning of this opening parable, about hearing correctly, then we will not be able to understand the rest of the secrets of His heavenly Kingdom.

**Key Word: Hear.** The Lord opens His teaching with the word **hear**. It is in the imperative – a command with its meditative hearing perception. The kind of hearing accompanied by meditation. It is also in the accusative mode, meaning you have heard the details.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> word ‘**behold**’ means to see and understand fully. Again in *verses 9 & 23 “Let him hear”*. This instruction means to listen with the intent to obey and act. The New Testament uses the word **hear** in two main ways:

- When we hear attentively to obey or to act on it, it is called the accusative case. So when we say ‘God hears our prayer’, it means He not only hears what we pray but He answers prayer as well.
- The bible differentiates the use of the word **hear** to express the idea that when we only hear words but do not understand what it means, the Greek text uses what is called the genitive case. That is, we can hear the sound, but it makes no sense to us. Like when we speak to a stubborn person and we say “he doesn’t listen to me.” We mean that he hears clearly but rejects us.

The command the Lord gives is to pay careful attention to hearing His Word. Only 1 in 4 hears in a meditative way, acceptable to Him. 3 out of 4 hearers hear incorrectly and produce no fruit, reaping no benefit whatsoever.

The day is coming when we have to give an account for the way we hear His word.

### **1. Why does it matter?**

- Perceptive hearing matters to God.  
When we refuse to hear His Word, He will also not listen to us. So when we ignore the Lord, He can ignore our prayers. *Deuteronomy 1:43 & 45* explained why the Lord had refused to protect His people in their battle. They had just been badly defeated. They had not listened to God and He refused to answer their prayer.

- Meditative hearing unlocks spiritual secrets of the Kingdom *Mark 4:11*.  
These are spiritual truths that enable us to be victorious and fruitful. We cannot understand these truths without listening with the 'light' or illumination by His Spirit *Mark 4:24*, otherwise, we only hear sounds or words and they make no sense to us. So this parable is for us to put on spiritual ears and have prepared hearts.
- It matters because we need faith to please God.  
Faith comes by the hearing of His Word *Romans 10:17*.

## 2. The Parable of the Hearers

The 4 kinds of soils represent the condition of our hearts.

### a. The Wayside Path hearers

Those whose hearts are hardened.

- When wayside hearers listen, they hear sounds but receive no spiritual truth. They want amusement not instruction. For them, a good message must be entertaining, full of jokes, something that will boost their ego, easy to do, costing little, requiring no effort or sacrifice.  
To the wayside hearers, stretching their minds to grasp or remember truths and doing anything that requires discipline, is off. "Keep things simple, teach less is more" are their mantras.  
These hearers have no intention to change or remember truths. *James 2:5* describes them as forgetful hearers.
- Wayside hearers are unaware that Satan, as the thief, works overtime to snatch the truth, even before the seed of God's Word touches the ground. Satan's assistants, "birds of the air" are poised to snatch the Word from unattentive hearers. At the end of the sermon, they cannot recall in a coherent way what principle was explained.
- How do we evaluate our own hearts to check against becoming wayside hearers?
  - Repeat: Can I repeat the principle that has been taught? ☐
  - Reproduce: Can I teach someone? ☐
  - Function: Is the principle (truth) that has been taught functioning in my life? ☐

### b. The Stony Ground hearers

Those whom we would call 'the feel good' hearers.

- They receive the word with joy, welcome and enjoy the message. They find it exciting; even talk about it.  
But alas! When the Proof Test is applied, they give up. The test of persecution arises when they try to practise God's Word. For instance, practising integrity in an environment of corruption with pressures to comply and then refusing to lie, may be costly.

- Stony ground hearers are basically 'fair weather Christians'. When the storms of life arise, they quickly opt out. Faithfulness is not in their vocabulary. Such 'believers' do not believe in paying the cost of discipleship. They want to feel inspired, but not necessarily inspired to do something.
- Stony ground hearers are shallow.  
They have no roots.  
They are not rooted in the promises of God.  
They see no value in putting down roots because it takes effort. Roots take time to grow too. But being prepared for the scorching sun of persecution is necessary for any survival.
- How do we evaluate our hearts to examine for stony ground?  
Examine our hearing habit.
  - How much effort do we make to pay attention when the Word is preached? ☐
  - Do we have the habit of turning to the Scriptures and taking notes? ☐

c. The Thorny Ground hearers

The thorny ground hearers care only for riches and things.

- They are choked by anxious thoughts and worries. We face problems of one kind or another. These concerns are intractable, distracting and frustrating. They range from issues covering ill health, financial (money not enough) and disharmonious relationships, among other things. We all face them. No one is exempted. But the issue is whether we will allow them to hold us back from obeying His Word?
- Secondly, thorny ground hearers are easily seduced by the deception of riches. How do we recognise this chokage?  
When our conversations reveal an inordinate admiration for the success of the wealthy.
- Thirdly, the attraction for things or for the admiration of people. We evaluate our own thorny ground hearing by examining:
  - The amount of things we have accumulated. ☐
  - The anxieties that block us from moving forward. ☐

d. The Good Ground hearer

The good ground hearer aims to be fruitful.

- Fruit covers two areas:
  - i) Becoming Christlike in our character.  
These are the fruit of the Spirit, i.e. love, joy, peace ...

- ii) The harvest resulting from our labour.  
The crop of souls saved, the difference we have made in reproducing godly people, heroes of faith, labourers raised, the Kingdom of God enlarged; God is glorified.  
It is finishing the work we have been assigned to do. It requires the relentless pursuit of mastering His Word and seeking to emulate Jesus' example, doing the things He did.

- Good ground hearers bear much fruit.  
The measure of fruitfulness ranges from 30-fold to 100-fold.  
Good ground hearers examine their fruitfulness by their fruit and fruit bearing capacity. Through these we identify where we are.

### Application

- How do we evaluate our ground?
  - Wayside path hearer — forgetful hearer ☐
  - Stony ground hearer — feel-good hearer ☐
  - Thorny ground hearer — fall away hearer, due to persecution / troubles ☐
  - Good ground hearer — fruitful hearer ☐
- What kind of fruit do I want to see in the next 6 months?  
Kingdom of God enlarged (names) .....  
Godly people reproduced (names) .....  
Labourers raised (names) .....  
Others (names) .....