

TRUE HEARING OF TRUTH

It is a truism that one must hear or learn of a thing before it can be believed or rejected. So it might seem that listing “hearing” as a part of the plan of salvation is unnecessary. However our discussion now focuses not upon only the ears, but the heart too for the attitude of the hearer is essential. Furthermore, what one hears must be pure and unadulterated. The speaker must remain transparent and let the Word of God, the Bible, do the talking.

We will have little to say about the teacher. Except that they are only a vessel through which the Gospel is carried (Acts 9:15). All of the persuasion and power comes from the Word itself (Romans 1:16). The teacher is only a presenter of God’s truth and as such must not attempt to dazzle or impress the student (1 Corinthians 2:1-5). The teacher is responsible for teaching truth (James 3:1; 2 Peter 2:1; 1 John 4:1).

The hearer has a responsibility to be honest with the Scriptures. In the classic verse directed at students of the Bible, Paul wrote: “Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth” (2 Timothy 2:16). In other words, there is a right (and conversely a wrong) way to handle the Bible. Look carefully at the wording of this verse. Students are told to “study” and the student is described as a “workman.” Solomon said that study would produce “weariness” (Ecclesiastes 12:12). Clearly, the work and effort done by the Bible student is not a quick read before turning in at night.

Still in 2 Timothy, Paul warned that some people have “itching ears” and wish to be told what they want to hear rather than the Truth (2 Timothy 4:3,4). As we study and learn we know that the Bible is the source of Truth not the “commandments of men” (Titus 1:14) nor the doctrines of men (Ephesians 4:14). If one is to study profitably and truthfully, one must study truth. With few exceptions (most notably Catholicism and Mormonism) no one dares violate the injunction of Galatians 1:6-9: *“I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: ⁷Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. ⁸But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. ⁹As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.”* (emphasis mine B.E.). However some do altar and seek to modify Scripture by interpreting it in a fashion favorable to their doctrine. It was Peter who charged that “no prophecy of scripture is of any private interpretation” (2 Peter 1:20). Further, we must demand that nothing be added or changed for convenience sake. John said *“For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: ¹⁹And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book”* (Revelation 22:18,19). John wrote in 2 John 9: *Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God...”(NASB)*. So we see that what we hear is essential to our faith. If one desires to make a Chic-Fil-A® biscuit but follows the recipe for a Hardees® sausage biscuit, what does he get? Obviously he ends up with sausage and not chicken. Spiritually, if we follow man’s plan, we get man’s wisdom, man’s salvation and man’s penalty – death. But if we follow God’s plan, we get God’s wisdom, God’s salvation and God’s reward – eternal life. We must follow God’s plan, as revealed in Scripture, and nothing else.

However, even in the presence of Truth, one may still not take in what is being said. Many obstacles may interfere with the reception of the Gospel message. Pride may prevent one from truly hearing the Gospel. Jesus listed “pride” as one of the things that are evil and defile a man (Mark 7:22,23). Solomon said in Proverbs 16:18 that *“pride goeth before destruction...”* Pride may shut down a man’s ability to think and reason and cause him to be lost forever.

Fear may also cause one to freeze at the point of hearing Truth. We fear our family, our neighbors or perhaps our buddies at work. Fear can only be overcome by the realization that any inconvenience here is nothing compared to eternal salvation. Paul said it best in Romans 8:18: *For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.”* Whatever the fear, whatever the concern, it is just not worth losing heaven and finding yourself eternally condemned.

--Bryant Evans

NEXT WEEK: BELIEF UNTO RIGHTEOUSNESS