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**Isaiah 55:10-11**

10 As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, 11 so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.

**Romans 8:12-17**

12 Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation-- but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. 13 For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, 14 because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. 15 For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." 16 The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.

17 Now if we are children, then we are heirs-- heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

**Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23**

1 That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the lake. 2 Such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat in it, while all the people stood on the shore.

3 Then he told them many things in parables, saying: "A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up.

5 Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. 6 But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root.

7 Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants.

8 Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop-- a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. **9 He who has ears, let him hear. . ."**

18 "Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: 19 When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is the seed sown along the path.

20 The one who received the seed that fell on rocky places is the man who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. 21 But since he has no root, he lasts only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, he quickly falls away.

22 The one who received the seed that fell among the thorns is the man who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke it, making it unfruitful.

23 But the one who received the seed that fell on good soil is the man who hears the word and understands it. He produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown."



INTRO - In 1941 the US has information about a possible attack on Pearl Harbor. However, somehow this information did not get through to the decision makers, or was put off as not possible. The leaders of our country did not listen, and there were dire consequences to not listening, as the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor showed..

In 1990 we were clearing land on our new church in Jacksonville. I was trying to burn a wet pile of stumps and branches. I was going to use gasoline, but was told that was dangerous. I tried a couple of other methods to start a fire, and they did not work, so I poured gasoline on the pile and threw in a match. It almost exploded. My friend asked, "Did you use gasoline?" I didn't listen. Luckily the consequences were not what they could have been.

I could go on and on and on with stories where I didn't listen, where family did not listen, where God's people have not listened.

I. Today Jesus tells one of His most important parables and says, **9 He who has ears, let him hear. . ."**

A. Jesus calls us to hear His Word.

1. This means more than just reading, or being around when it is explained.
2. To hear means to understand and follow the Word of our Lord.
3. In order to do that we have to pay attention, remember, and then do what is said.

B. God wants us to hear what Jesus has to say about the kingdom, about the Messiah, about sin, righteousness, faith, forgiveness, and life.

II. Yet, primarily, this parable tells of ways that God's Word is not heard.

A. Listen to what Jesus says.

1. When seed, God's Word, falls on the path, on the way everyone else is going, the Word is snatched away by Satan.
2. When seed falls on hard soil, on hearts that want their way, not God's way, the seed grows, but dies because it's roots cannot grow.
3. When seed falls on a patch of weeds or thorns, on lives full of worry and pursuit of this world's possessions, these things choke out the message of God's Word.
4. It is only the seed falling on the good ground that lives and bears fruit.

B. We may think we don't ignore or lack understanding of God's Word. After all, we are in worship today, aren't we? Consider the ten commandments before considering whether you really listen to the Lord.

1. God calls us to have no other gods, to have him as *the* priority for our lives. But often instead of choosing between God and this world, we want it all.
2. God calls us to honor His name. Do our lips praise Him, witness to Him, or do our lips use His name carelessly?
3. God calls us to remember the Sabbath day. But, do we sometimes think we have something more important to do than worship the Lord and hear His Word?
4. God calls us to honor parents, and obey authority. Which laws do you treat as less important?
5. God calls us not to kill, or even hurt another in word or deed. Have you ever

been purposefully mean to another?

6. God calls us not to commit adultery, but to honor family, and use sexuality according to His guidance. Do you ever get caught up in the exploitation of sexuality in or culture?

7. God calls us not to steal. Have you ever been loose in some areas?

8. God calls us not to lie or gossip about others, but to protect their name. You've never gossiped, have you? Hmm.

9. God calls us not to covet, not to desire what we can't rightfully have of possessions, or people. Are you always satisfied with God's blessings, in your life?

C. Do you listen? Or do the ways of this world, the worries and possessions of life, the rebellious and selfish sin in your heart cause you not to hear God at times, or even ignore Him?

III. Last night I worked in the garden. I used a tool to break up the soil, to take out the weeds, and to protect the vegetables growing. A field ready for the seed has it's soil plowed, or broken.

A. 1. How many times did Jesus tell His disciples that he would suffer, and die, and rise? They did not hear.

1. Jesus taught humility, and his disciples argued about who was the greatest.

2. You see, as Jesus told this parable, He was pointing to the sin of His disciples. He was showing that even they did not listen, but needed to repent and be forgiven.

3. In telling this parable, by showing that His disciples did not listen, Jesus was breaking the soil of their hearts.

B. Today's parable can break our hearts, because it can point to our sin, our failure to listen to God.

C. But, when God shows our sin and our need, then He shows us His love.

1. Jesus, the holy Son of God, Jesus, the farmer, the planter, the sower died for sinners.

2. The rocks in our lives, the places of rebellion, hatred, sinful desire, and the pain they cause tell us we need a Savior. Jesus has forgiven our sins on the cross.

3. The weeds and thorns, the busy-ness and materialism of our lives, and the problems they cause tell us we need a Savior. Jesus offers a life of no sin in heaven through His rising from the dead, when we listen to Him, and believe in Him.

4. Jesus, not only calls us to listen. He calls us to hear and believe that He loved us, died for us, and rose for us, and then Jesus calls us in faith to bear fruit by following Him with our hearts and our lives.

CONCLUSION - Today, we do not gather as people who are perfect. Instead are sinners, people who have failed the Lord and each other, gathering around Jesus, Jesus the forgiving life giving Word of God. Jesus tells us, **9 He who has ears, let him hear. . .**"