

Take Care How You Hear, part 2

Luke 8:16-18

Luke 8:17, "For nothing is hidden that will not be made manifest, nor is anything secret that will not be known and come to light." How much does God intend to reveal? How much? Notice the comprehensive extent of what Jesus is revealing. He's explaining everything. But this is even more emphatic here. He's using poetic parallelism and it kind of reveals actually, as Jesus kind of breaks into poetry, it kind of reveals the state of his heart as he speaks this verse. There is a joy and an excitement about what he's saying. Listen, Jesus knows. What he has called these disciples to do, he knows what the Heavenly Father has chosen these disciples for. These disciples are the very foundation stones of the edifice of the Christian church. The new temple where God resides by the Holy Spirit.

And Jesus is excited to send these men out, shining the brightest light. The good news about the kingdom of God. Missionary work is going to begin with the twelve in Luke 9 and continue with the seventy-two in Luke 10. It's gonna go on. But

after Jesus' earthly ministry, after Jesus offers himself up as a substitutionary atoning sacrifice for all who believe. After Jesus is risen from the dead, showing the approval of that sacrifice and God's power over death, in Jesus' power over death. After he ascends bodily into heaven where he continues his ministry becoming the head over the church and continuing an intercession ministry and an empowerment ministry from heaven here on earth.

The day would come when Jesus would send forth his Holy Spirit to fill these very apostles. To empower them to continue their preaching and their teaching and their building up of the church. To fulfill the purpose for which God had chosen them. That's a reality that Jesus has in mind here in Luke 8:17, Jesus has lit the lamp. He's put the lamp on the lampstand. He preaches the truth of the kingdom. He preaches it plainly and publicly and straightforwardly. But what he says in verse 17, is that the truth, it's going to be revealed not in minimalistic fashion but comprehensively.

"For nothing is hidden that will not be made manifest. Nor is anything secret that will not be made known and come to

light." It's emphatic language. In fact, the strongest possible way to deny something in the Greek language, namely, that anything could be kept hidden. That anything secret won't be made known or become manifest. The strongest possible way to deny that is found in the grammar here in this verse. It is absolutely emphatic. He's trying to say in the strongest terms possible, to give the greatest assurance possible. The effect is to say, anything that's currently hidden, anything that God has chosen to keep secret for a time. All that previously unknown truth about the kingdom, it will most certainly be made manifest.

And again by putting that in the negative form, nothing hidden that won't be made manifest, nor is anything secret that will not be known or come to light. Doesn't come through as well in the English, but in the Greek language, that expression is totally emphatic. It's so emphatic it conveys the strongest level of certainty and therefore the greatest degree of assurance possible. Everything that's now hidden, it will be made manifest. Everything that's now concealed, again, in the time of the apostles, and they're listening to this. It will be most certainly revealed, most assuredly come to light.

And listen, as I said, this is poetic in its structure. Jesus is excited about this truth. He is joyful to tell them and you gotta get that tone, because rather than a dire warning about all your dirty laundry hanging out before everybody to see to embarrass you, that is not what he's saying here. He's speaking something so incredibly encouraging. You know what kind of confidence they find that the God of the universe has already determined to tell them everything? He's holding nothing back. He's unpacking everything.

The apostle Paul understood the impact of this. The apostolic privilege that he had. He understood it perfectly when he wrote in 1 Corinthians 2:9 and following he said, "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined." Okay, so it's not coming from mankind. It's not coming from human beings, it's completely external. "What God has prepared for those who love him. Those things, these things God has revealed to us." Who's us? Paul, the apostles, those who are involved in his apostolic ministry. "God has revealed to us through the spirit those things."

The spirit, the one that animated, empowered their ministry. The spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. And now we have received the spirit, not of the world. But the spirit, who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given to us by God. Do we have those things? Oh yes, we do. It's written down for us in the apostolic ministry of giving us the Holy Scriptures.

There in Luke 8:17, the word hidden is the word *kruptos*, from which we get the word cryptic. The word secret is the word *apokruphos*, which is where apocrypha comes from. Nothing will remain cryptic or apocryphal for us. For a time, for his purposes in revealing God had kept some truths hidden and secret in the past, but now. "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man ever imagined, all that God has prepared for all those who love him in Christ." God has revealed all of it to us. It's all in Scripture.

All that revelation has been made available to Christians down through the centuries and now to us as well. Nothing for us is hidden any longer. All is made manifest. Nothing is held back as a secret from us, but all has been made known and has come to

light. That's the message Jesus had for his disciples here on this day. God's intention in revealing truth is to go all the way. To tell them everything. And Jesus rejoices here to bring them as it were into the very Holy of holies, into the fullness of kingdom truth. That is exposed to us in the Scripture. If that's the case that God has been so gracious to reveal truth without measure. What does that mean for us, who hear the truth?

This is main point: Man's obligation in hearing the truth. Man's obligation in hearing the truth. Let's personalize it. My obligation in hearing the truth. Because divine revelation places an obligation on those who hear it. Look at verse 18, "Take care then how you hear." The word translated by the ESV, it can be translated then, but because of the connection to what came before, it should retain its usual sense of, therefore. Jesus is talking about an inference here, a logical inference. In light of God's intention in revealing his mind to you, "Take care therefore how you hear, for to the one who has, even more will be given, from the one who has not, even what he thinks he has, that'll be taken away."

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Listen, you cannot hear the truth without bearing personal responsibility for obeying the truth. Hearing truth is a moral issue. It's not simply a physical exercise, just hearing stuff with your ears. Sound waves bouncing off your auditory nerves and going into your brain. It's not just an intellectual exercise only. About just, oh I, I've heard it and I, I get it. I'm, I'm really enjoying the intellectual stimulation that I'm getting from teaching. Hearing the truth, according to what God says, is an issue of morality or immorality. Hearing the truth is an issue of morality or immorality. One's response to it makes all the difference in the world.

If you notice the verse there, there's one command, "Take care how you listen." Followed by a twofold explanation. And one of those explanations is a huge encouragement to believers. The other explanation is a warning to false pretenders. So let's take the command and then each of those explanations one at a time.

First subpoint A: Listen carefully in view of God's benefaction. Listen carefully in view of God's benefaction. Benefaction, it's a word that means to do good to. We're talking

specifically about the good that God has done to us and for us. Remember this first applied to Jesus and his disciples, the ones who heard this teaching. They too had to be careful to appropriate what they heard, to heed the truth that Jesus taught. To assimilate that truth and to obey it. But in light of God's gracious intention to reveal and keep on revealing, granting more light, more truth, more wisdom for living. What believer, including these disciples, what believer, would have return away from it? God's revelation about the kingdom is so glorious. It's so joy producing. It's so obedience stimulating.

For any born-again believer, the fact that God would condescend to say one word to us thrills us to the core. But to reveal everything? Jesus rejoiced to tell them, "It is your father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." "Therefore, don't be foolish," Ephesians 5:17, "but understand what the will of the Lord is." It's all here in black and white, written in the Scripture. As kingdom citizens, "We're not of the night or of the darkness," 1 Thessalonians 5:5, "but we're all children of light, children of the day." "At one time we were in darkness," Ephesians 5:8, "but now we're light in the Lord, we're to walk as children of light."

We're to walk and live according to the light God has given, right? As kingdom citizens, as those with eyes to see, ears to hear, hearts that understand and comprehend. We love to pursue that which is good and right and true. To be children of light is synonymous with being children of God. It says in 1 John 1:5, "God is light, in him is no darkness at all." "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light," we trace our connection to God, who is light. That brings our identity in Christ. The light of the world.

Well, that's the encouragement part. And I do admit it's far too brief. But let's just quickly look at the warning. Subpoint B: Subpoint B says, listen carefully in view of God's salvation and this is really a warning to false pretenders. The one who sits in sermons week after week. The one who listens to them all the time and it's only going in through the auditory nerves, only going up in stimulating the brain a little bit and causing a little bit of heat up here in the cranial area, and then changes the life not one whit. That's the person who needs to hear this. This is the use it or lose it principle.

Those who do not obey what they hear are in for a very rude awakening. Remember, Jesus spoke here in Luke 8. He spoke at first in the hearing of his disciples, and among them at this time was Judas Iscariot. In light of what Jesus knew about Judas from the very beginning. Wasn't it gracious and kind of him to continue to direct warnings to people like Judas? Judas Iscariot, he heard everything that the rest of the disciples heard. He heard the teaching explained. He was there to see truths unveiled. Joyful things promised. Judas saw all the miracles. He witnessed supernatural power.

He experienced the protection of the Almighty God with supernatural power in the passage Luke 8:22-25. Jesus commands the storm. Judas is there. Judas ate miraculous food along with the rest of them. He partook of everything the disciples did. He's among them. Judas didn't weed the soil of his heart. He allowed the weeds to grow. And those weeds choked out the good seed of God's word, and Judas perished in the end, tragically and eternally. Judas' departure and death was so tragic because he was so close to the truth.

Judas, he didn't consider his moral obligation when he was listening to Jesus. He didn't consider the grace and the kindness of God. He took God's grace for granted, and he spurned the gift of divine revelation. He did not take care of how he heard. And thus he lost even what he thought he had. What he thought he had was taken away from him. Again, it's a use or lose principle. That's the way with divine truth. Obedience to the truth if you use it, it leads to greater, deeper, more intimate acquaintance with the truth. Listen, God is under no obligation to reveal anything to those who refuse to be humble learners, to be teachable people. To be obedient recipients of the word.

So I guess the question becomes clear for us here at the end of this. How do we listen carefully? What does it mean practically to take care how you hear? And simply say you need to obey what is revealed. But let me give you just a few points to jot down. Just jot these down at the end of your notes so you can think about these implications for your life and apply it.

Number one: Listen carefully by esteeming God's word.
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dismiss it and set it aside as common, as just any other book. We treat it as holy. I had a Hebrew professor tell me about the concept of holiness when I was in seminary. And he said sometimes we think of holiness as just something that we kind of make special, like you know, remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. It's kind of at the end of our week. It's kind of set apart, holy. He said no, no, no.

If you want to consider the concept of holiness, here's your desk and here's everything on your desk. Take that thing that's holy and put it in your desk and then sweep everything else off your desk. Throw it aside. Holy: Esteem God's word as holy in your life. Esteem God's word as holy in your ears. So when you hear it, you pay careful attention. It's not on the level of Rush Limbaugh. Okay, turn off Rush. Turn on Scripture.

Listening carefully begins with holding God's word in high esteem. God does. Psalm 138 verse 2, "You have exalted above all things your name and your word." God's name and God's word are very important to him. Ought to be important to us.

Number two: Listen carefully by believing God's word. Believing, listen don't come to listen with the spirit of the skeptical doubting age in your heart. Don't come to critique sermons. Don't come to find fault with the preacher. If you want to find fault with me or any other preacher, you don't have to look very long. We're human beings. Don't come to listen to the text as just merely an intellectual exercise that you're going to study and find some really interesting facts and share with other people. Don't come to be a master over the texts of Scripture. Instead come to be mastered by the Scripture. Come in submission. Come in humility and come believing. Come with an ear for believing, trusting, eager to listen, to learn. Listening in that way reveals a heart attitude.

So we might also add number three, point number three. Listen carefully by fearing God's word. Reverence it. Proverbs 9:10 says, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, knowledge of the Holy One is insight." You will only find the knowledge of the Holy One in the Bible where he has revealed the knowledge about himself. He's pleased to reveal himself to us. To share his mind, that we might come into full understanding.

Listen if you don't fear the Lord, though, if you don't reverence him, it avails you nothing.

Listen carefully, number four: By obeying God's word. Obeying, that is what listening carefully is according to Scripture, to heed it, to obey it. We might remember Ezra. Ezra 7:10, "He had set his heart to study the Law of the Lord, and to do it and then to teach his statutes and rules in Israel." He didn't want to teach until he first did. He didn't want to pass on what he wasn't obeying for himself.

Look, that's what counts in God's eyes. Hearing with an immediate concern for obeying to put it into practice. That's what wisdom is. Knowledge rightly applied. We ought to be people who love wisdom, love to, to practice wisdom. That is our birthright, that's our heritage as Christians.

So we listen carefully by esteeming, believing, fearing, obeying God's word. Another one, number five: Listen carefully by praying through God's word. Pray through God's word. Praying isn't waiting to hear God speak to us. Praying is us speaking to

him. God speaks to us in his Scripture. You say I wanna hear God speak audibly. Read the Bible out loud. You'll hear it. So while you read, pray and ask God to help you understand what you're reading. Pray and ask God for what Jesus describes here as an honest and good heart. One that holds fast to the word, a heart that's esteeming, believing, fearing, and obeying God's word. When you come to church each Sunday, whenever you hear the word of God preached, taught, shared, pray that God will give you a heart for hearing and obeying for listening carefully. Pray, pray, pray.

So finally, we've gone through five of them. Here's the sixth: Listen carefully by rejoicing in God's word. Delight in his word. Rejoice in it, find pleasure in it. If you're reading, reading, studying, studying, learning, learning, and grunting out your obedience, but you find no joy. Take a step back and wonder what is going on in your heart, that you do not delight in God's word.

For a true believer, we are the ones who love the Lord our God with all our heart, mind, soul and strength. Love. Love, it says it speaks of an affection. Emotion. Delight. Joy ought to

be driving all of this. If you do all the rest of these other principles here, number one through five. Esteeming, Pharisees esteem God's word. Believing, they said they believed it. Fearing, oh yeah, they feared it. They created extra laws. They didn't break those laws. They said they feared God's word. Obeying, they're fastidious about external obedience. Praying, three times a day. Do they rejoice?

If you do all these other five things, but there is no joy and delight in your heart over God in his word, you're no better than a Pharisee. And Jesus has some pretty harsh words to speak to us that go through a form of religion but deny its power. Remember, don't ever forget, the high and holy privilege that is yours. It is the pleasure of your father in heaven to give you the kingdom and he is not only giving you the kingdom; he's explained it to you. He's revealed it to you, his mind. He has lit the lamp. He set it on a lampstand. He's been pleased to bring you into his house that you might see the light.

So beloved, don't ever, ever, ever, ever, ever, ever, a lot of evers, take that for granted. But rejoice, that's what this passage is about. It's for every believer, so I close with this

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appeal, beloved. "Take care therefore how you hear, for to the one who has, more will be given, from the one who has not, even what he thinks he has, that'll be taken away too."

Let's pray. Our father, we pray that there would be among none of us an unbelieving heart to turn from the living God. It is such a joy, privilege that we have to know you, to know your mind and your heart and to walk in your ways. So please father don't let this fall on deaf ears. In Jesus' name, amen.