

“Three Kinds of Hearers”
Mark 12:35-37
(Preached at Trinity, April 16, 2014)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. **Chapter 12** is in the context of our Lord's teaching in the Temple. Several times the Scribes and Pharisees and Sadducees came asking questions in an effort to discredit and humiliate Jesus but Jesus continually foils their efforts.
In the previous verses we found the Pharisees gathered together and one of them asked the question:
Mark 12:28 NAU - "What commandment is the foremost of all?"
Jesus' answer can be summed up with a single word - - LOVE
This concluded several questions asked by the Jewish leaders.
Mark 12:34 NAU - "After that, no one would venture to ask Him any more questions."
2. They ended their questions but that in no way ended our Lord's teaching. In **Verse 34** Jesus told the scribe, "You are not far from the kingdom of God."
The verse records that Jesus saw the scribe had answered intelligently regarding the Law. He saw that obedience to the Law was really a matter of the heart. This is what the Scribes and Pharisees did not understand.
3. But simply understanding the importance of love wasn't enough. While the Pharisees were still gathered before Him Jesus took the opportunity to probe them with the ultimate question, "What do you think about the Christ?"
Mark 12:35 NAU - "And Jesus *began* to say, as He taught in the temple, "How is it that the scribes say that the Christ is the son of David?"
Matthew 22:41-42 NAU - "Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question: ⁴² "What do you think about the Christ, whose son is He?" They said to Him, "The son of David."
4. The scribe was not far from the Kingdom but did he understand the most important part? So Jesus turns to the most important subject. "What do you think about the Christ?" "How is it that the scribes say that the Christ is the son of David?"
 - A. Jesus is causing them to come face to face with the most important question.
"What do you think about the Christ?"
What is the true identity of the Son of David?
 - B. Jesus exposed their faulty understanding of the Messiah. If he was merely the son of David how is it that David called Him Lord? This must have left the scribes both embarrassed and furious. Their ignorance was exposed in front of those who sat under their teaching.
5. **Verse 37** closes with, "And the large crowd enjoyed listening to Him."
 - A. As soon as Jesus entered the Temple He began to attract the attention of the people. He was immediately approached by the religious leaders:

Mark 11:27 NAU - "They came again to Jerusalem. And as He was walking in the temple, the chief priests and the scribes and the elders came to Him"

- B. Soon, however, a large crowd had gathered. Remember, this is the Passover and multitudes would have come to Jerusalem for the annual observance. Mark describes it as a "large crowd." ESV - "great throng"
 - C. While the scribes were infuriated we read that the crowd was greatly pleased by the teaching and preaching of Jesus. The word for "enjoyed" is ἠδέω from which we get our word "hedonist" which is a lover of pleasure.
 - D. This is truly amazing since it is only two days before the arrest and three days before the crucifixion of Jesus. These same people who are enjoying the teaching and preaching of Jesus will soon be shouting, "Crucify Him!"
6. Their enjoyment of the preaching of Jesus really shouldn't surprise us. It simply describes one of the three ways people respond to the preaching of the Word of God. Tonight I want us to consider these three kinds of hearers.
- I. The first kind of hearer can be described simply as disinterested
 - A. Some of these outright reject the preaching of God's Word
 - 1. They avoid being exposed to it
 - 2. Paul spoke of how the lost man rejects the preaching of the Cross of Christ **1 Corinthians 1:18 NAU** - "For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing"
 - 3. This describes the Scribes and Pharisees. They hated Christ and His words. They wanted Him and His teaching forever destroyed
 - 4. This also describes most in our generation. Most people today will not tolerate the truth. They reject any claim of God upon their lives. If they could choose they would forever remove God and His commands from their lives.
 - B. But there are others that fall into this category of disinterest
 - 1. There are multitudes of religious people who merely tolerate preaching
 - 2. They come week after week and sit under the preaching of God's Word but they are disinterested. They don't recognize its life-changing value. They sleep and slumber through the sermon. Their minds drift far away from hearing.
 - 3. Jesus told a parable of a sower of seed that was quickly devoured by birds **Matthew 13:3-9 NAS** - "And He spoke many things to them in parables, saying, "Behold, the sower went out to sow; ⁴ and as he sowed, some seeds fell beside the road, and the birds came and ate them up. **Matthew 13:18-19 NAS** - "Hear then the parable of the sower. ¹⁹ "When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is the one on whom seed was sown beside the road."
 - II. But there are also multitudes who enjoy preaching
 - A. In some cases it is the preaching of false teachers they enjoy

1. Sometimes it is the lively stories and anecdotes from talented speakers Paul distanced himself from these preachers
1 Corinthians 2:1-5 NAS - "And when I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God. ² For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. ³ And I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. ⁴ And my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, ⁵ that your faith should not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God."
2 Corinthians 4:2 NAS - "we have renounced the things hidden because of shame, not walking in craftiness or adulterating the word of God, but by the manifestation of truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God."
 2. Paul warned that there would always be those who surround themselves with teachers to tickle their ears with sweet things
2 Timothy 4:1-4 NAU - " I solemnly charge *you* in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: ² preach the word; be ready in season *and* out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. ³ For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but *wanting* to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, ⁴ and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths."
- B. In some cases they enjoy true preaching
1. They attend the conferences and choose their favorite celebrity preachers. Doctrine is to them like a play toy. Reformed theology has become popular today among many. They feel they are on the cutting edge like being a part of the latest fad.
 2. But they are unaffected by what they hear. There is no increase in holiness. No passion for Christ.
 3. Jesus warned of those who enjoy the preaching and receive it with joy only to turn away when the cost of discipleship becomes too great
Matthew 13:20-21 NAU - "The one on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, this is the man who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; ²¹ yet he has no *firm* root in himself, but is *only* temporary, and when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he falls away."
"Joy" = "delight" "rejoicing"
 4. This describes many of these hearers that surrounded Jesus in the Temple
 - a. They enjoyed hearing Jesus. He was a compelling teacher who taught with confidence and authority
 - b. They particularly enjoyed hearing Him disarm the religious leaders who strutted about with pomp. It was good to hear Jesus put them in their place.
 - c. But the crowd remained unchanged by His words. They were unable to receive them. They might have had their consciences momentarily pricked but they walked away and soon forgot.

d. This described Herod who enjoyed the preaching of John the Baptist even though he feared him.
Mark 6:20 NAU - "for Herod was afraid of John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man, and he kept him safe. And when he heard him, he was very perplexed; but he used to enjoy listening to him."

5. Jesus quoted from Isaiah in Matthew 13
Matthew 13:14-15 NAS - "And in their case the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled, which says, 'You will keep on hearing, but will not understand; And you will keep on seeing, but will not perceive;' ¹⁵ For the heart of this people has become dull, And with their ears they scarcely hear, And they have closed their eyes Lest they should see with their eyes, And hear with their ears, And understand with their heart and return, And I should heal them."

6. James described the danger of merely listening to the Word but remaining unchanged.

James 1:22-24 NAU - "But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. ²³ For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; ²⁴ for *once* he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was."

7. This vast multitude remained unchanged. They failed to see Jesus as the Christ, the Savior, the Lord and King. Many of these people must have been a part of the crowd that would gather in 3 days.

Mark 15:11-15 NAU - "But the chief priests stirred up the crowd *to ask him to release Barabbas for them instead.* ¹² Answering again, Pilate said to them, "Then what shall I do with Him whom you call the King of the Jews?" ¹³ They shouted back, "Crucify Him!" ¹⁴ But Pilate said to them, "Why, what evil has He done?" But they shouted all the more, "Crucify Him!" ¹⁵ Wishing to satisfy the crowd, Pilate released Barabbas for them, and after having Jesus scourged, he handed Him over to be crucified."

III. There is a third type of hearer

A. They enjoy the preaching for a different reason

1. They enjoy hearing the preaching because of their desire to be conformed to the Word of God

Psalms 119:9 NAU - "How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping *it* according to Your word."

2. They have an appetite for God's Word. The Christian life is about appetites. Regeneration changes our appetites but we have to continually develop our appetites.

B. Receiving the Word demands preparation

1. LBC 22:8 – “The sabbath is then kept holy unto the Lord, when men, after a due preparing of their hearts, and ordering their common affairs aforehand, do not only observe an holy rest all the day, from their own works, words and thoughts, about their worldly employment and recreations,³⁰ but also are taken up the whole time in the public and private exercises of his worship, and in the duties of necessity and mercy.”
2. You must recognize what you are hearing and receiving. It is God’s Word! Jeremiah Burroughs – “When you come to hear the Word, if you would sanctify God’s name, you must possess your souls with what it is you are going to hear. That is, what you are going to hear is the Word of God”
1 Thessalonians 2:13 NAU - "For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted *it* not as the word of men, but *for* what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe."
3. We should enter the House of God with a spirit of reverence preparing our hearts to meet Him
Donald Whitney – “If you enter the typical evangelical church two minutes before the start of the worship service, it sounds almost like you’ve walked into a gymnasium two minutes before a basketball game. Part of my pastoral heart appreciates the good things represented by people who are glad to see and talk with each other. But I think a large part of my heart longs for reverence and a spirit of seeking God among those who come to hear His Word.”
4. Get enough rest before the Lord’s Day. Your children need extra rest. You need extra rest. Many of you need admonishment here. You need to order and discipline your life to get 7-8 hours of sleep.
5. Pray that God will increase your appetite for His Word that you might come and receive it with great eagerness.
Acts 17:11 NAU - "Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily *to see whether these things were so.*"
6. Come with an attitude of humility and submission and an expectation of being conformed to God’s Word
James 1:21-25 NAU - "Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and *all* that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls. ²² But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. ²³ For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; ²⁴ for *once* he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. ²⁵ But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the *law* of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does."