



NOTES FOR FURTHER STUDY

Supplemental Texts

Matt. 5:14-16; 10:26; 13:10-16; 25:14-30; Mark 3:20-21, 31-35; 4:9-12, 21-25; 6:3; Luke 6:46-49; 8:9-15; 11:27-28, 33-36; 12:2-3; 19:11-27; John 1:9-14; 3:5-8; 7:1-5; 14:15-21; 19:26; Gal. 1:18-19; 2:9; Jude 1

Study Summary

After Jesus' parable about the different soils and the seed of the gospel, Jesus tells a parable about the illuminating word of God and the importance of listening. Then comes a story that highlights the important of putting the word of God into practice. These two episodes highlight the importance of the word of God, continuing the themes of His parable about the different soils, which each represent a different response to the seed of the gospel. We are here reminded of the importance of listening to and obey God's word.

Historical & Theological Background

Faith and Works: Though at times there seems to be a tension in the Bible between faith and obedience, between God's faithfulness and the faithfulness He requires, this tension is relieved in the person and work of Jesus, who makes way—through His life and death—for “a righteousness that proceeds from God's faithfulness and engenders faithfulness.” “In Christ God played out faithful roles, as it were, on both sides of the relationship,” acting as both “God with us” and the Messiah who fulfilled the task of faithful servanthood that Israel failed to give. He was faithful where we were faithless. He did the works required where we failed to uphold God's word. Therefore, salvation by faith in the good news of what Christ has accomplished for us “is the general and undeniable testimony of the NT” and it “is only because Christ has ‘done it all’ that the sinner's faith is possible and can be a saving response to God.” Salvation is by faith alone, a faith which is possible only because of grace (Eph. 2:8-9), because of the initial and continuing work of God on the sinner's heart. At the same time, the works of God are not left behind in the life of faith (Eph. 2:10). The book of James makes clear that faith produces a certain character of life (James 2:46). Obedience is never the basis of salvation but is instead the joyful response to the salvation already received through the work of Christ and is acted out, not in our own power, but in dependance on the power and guidance of the Spirit. “The Spirit of the Messiah nurtures the initial response of faith to the gospel message into a continuing life of joyful praise and obedience.” “When Christian faith matures in this manner the story of faith is finally complete, having proceeded from God's faithfulness to the faithfulness of the people of God.”

The Family of Jesus: “It is generally thought that the brothers of Jesus were the children of Mary and Joseph”. “Joseph does not appear in the Gospels after the infancy narratives; the most plausible explanation of this is that he was by now dead.” Jesus also had sisters (Mark 6:3) and there were those in His family who at first did not believe in Him (John 7:1-5; Mark 3:20-21) but it seems that His family comes to faith after His resurrection, two His brothers (James and Jude) even becoming leaders in the Church (Gal. 2:9; Jude 1) and writing a book of the Bible each (James, Jude). At His death on the cross Jesus cared for His mother Mary by putting her in the charge of the Apostle John (John 19:26). It is safe

DISCUSSION PRIMER

How often do you take time to read and meditate on the word of God? This week, make it a point to read the Bible every day at a specific time. You can start with this text or any other book of the Bible of your choosing. Don't hold yourself to a specific amount of time or portion of Scripture. Just do it every day. Read each day with these questions in mind: Who does God reveal Himself to be in this text? What does He reveal about myself? What is He calling me to do in response? Where is Christ in the passage i.e. what are the implications of the good news of Christ's life and death?

TEXTUAL INVESTIGATION

LUKE 8:16-21

**Big Idea: Listening To and Obeying The Word of God
Fallen Condition Focus: Failing to Listen and Obey**

- What is the “lamp” in verse 16? Consider the previous parable.
- What is the meaning of verse 17? (See Luke 12:2-3)
- What is the meaning of verse 18? How does this relate to hearing and obeying God's word?
- Why were Jesus' family not able to see Him (v. 19)?
- What was Jesus' relationship with His biological family like? (See HTB and reference Mark 3:20-21, John 7:1-5 and John 19:26)
- Who is a part of God's family (v. 20-21)? Where else does Jesus speak about putting His word into practice? (See Luke 6:46-49)
- In what ways does this encounter (vv. 19-21) connect with the previous parable (vv. 16-18)?
- How is listening to and obeying God's word an act of faith? What is the relationship between faith and works? (See HTB)

Gospel Connection: Read John 1:9-14. How is Christ the light of the world? What does it mean to be born of God? (See John 3:5-8)

TEXTUAL INTERSECTION: How does the text intersect with our lives?

- Why can it be difficult to believe that the light of God's word will bring to justice all the darkness and evil of this world? How is this comforting? How is it convicting?
- What fruit comes from a life marked by listening to God's word? How does the momentum of habitually listening to God's word grow upon itself? (v. 18)
- In what other instances does Jesus' parabolic application in verse 18 prove true? What wisdom does this verse express? How can we put it into practice in our walk with Jesus?
- Are you living out of your primary identity as God's child? Why or why not?
- What comfort do you find in resting in your identity as God's child? What identities compete with who you are in Christ by the Spirit?
- What does it look like to “hear and do the word of God” (.v 19)?
- In what ways do you need to bring the actions of your life more in line with the word of God? How might you do so this week?

REPLICABLE QUESTIONS

Read **Luke 8:16-21** and explore together what the passage reveals about:

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| 1) The character and purposes of God? | 4) Our identity in Christ? |
| 2) The fallen human condition? | 5) Our obedience to Christ? |
| 3) The gospel of Jesus Christ? | 6) Our relationship to others |

TEXTUAL APPLICATION: “So, what now?”

Have each participant identify a personal take-away in light of this study. Is there . . .

- a command to obey? • a beauty to behold? • a mission to fulfill?
- a promise to claim? • a truth to believe? • an example to follow?
- a sin to repent of? • a service to render? • a person to tell?