

**JEREMIAH 33:3 "CALL TO ME" GROUP BIBLE STUDIES – LEADER'S STUDY -
LUTHERAN HOUR MINISTRIES**

LESSON #11 – A CHRISTIAN'S CALL TO LISTEN

A CHRISTIAN'S CALL – Almost 700 years ago, Johann Tauler said, "If you keep watch over your hearts, and listen for the voice of God..., in one short hour you can learn more from him than you could learn from man in a thousand years. There is little question that Johann was right, at least in principle. Sadly, a great many people would rather teach God than learn from Him. That is why this lesson is concerned with our call to listen. We begin with prayer.

THE PRAYER – Dear Lord, one of the first duties of love is to listen. One of the ways You show Your love to sinful humanity is by promising to hear us when we come to You. Truly, all of Scripture shows how eager You are to hear the words of Your faithful people. Now, we ask, dear Lord, that You will allow us to listen to You and Your will. We ask it in the Name of Jesus. Amen.

ILLUSTRATION - In the following story, the names have been changed to protect the not-so-innocent. Nevertheless, what follows is a true story. A famous producer was convinced he was going deaf. A specialist gave him a complete exam – with no results. Finally, the doctor tried an experiment. He pulled out his gold pocket watch and inquired, "Can you hear this ticking?" The man replied, "Of course." Then the specialist walked across the exam room and held up the watch again. "But, now can you hear it?" The man concentrated and said, "Yes, I can still hear it. Quite clearly, as a matter of fact." The doctor returned, sighed deeply and gave his diagnosis. He said, "Sir, there is nothing wrong with your hearing. You just don't listen."

SATAN'S SUMMONS – Satan would like all Christians to come – down with a similar non-listening malady toward the Lord. He does not wish us to follow Jesus' Garden-of-Gethsemane prayer, 'not My will, but Your will be done.' The devil would far rather call everybody to shut their ears and to direct the shortsighted imperative: "MY will, not Yours" to our Savior.

THOUGHT: The simple truth is, we are to listen, as well as talk, to God. In the Old Testament, God emphasizes listening to Him by offering the simple directive, "Hear, O Israel" (*Shema, Israel.*) In the New Testament the command to listen remains the same, although the audience is God's new covenant people, the followers of Jesus. Jesus says, "Let anyone with ears listen." Let's take a look at the two parables listed and see how.

SCRIPTURE SEARCH 1 –

TEXT QUESTION	ANSWER
Matthew 7:24	What should a hearer do with God's words? Put them into practice.
Matthew 7: 25	What is the advantage of hearing God? He gives a solid foundation.
Matthew 7: 26	What is the disadvantage to ignoring God? You are building on sand.
	Building our lives on a solid foundation comes with what? Listening
Matthew 13: 19	What is the problem in this verse? Hearing the word of God without understanding.
	What is the comparison? Seed sown along the path.
Matthew 13: 20	What problem is described in this verse? Hearing the word without making it yours.
	What is the comparison? Seed that fell on rocky places
Matthew 13: 22	What problem is described here? Hearing the word, and losing it to the world.
	What is the problem? The worries of life and false riches choke it out.
Matthew 13: 23	What are we to be like Seed that falls on good soil.
	What is the result? We end up producing a crop for the Lord.
	Producing a life that glorifies the Lord begins with: Listening.

FIRST APPLICATION: When we talk about 'listening to God', we are not saying that we are to sit like bumps on a log. Listening is far more than just a passive hunk of inactivity. It calls for involvement and action. It is more than just "hearing" God. It means that we pay attention to God's words.

Like Mary, in Luke 2: 19, 51, we should do what? Treasure and ponder in our heart"

To *listen* means that we also discern things. What do the Lord's sheep do when they hear the voice of the Shepherd in John 10: 27? They discern their Master's voice and follow Him.

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To *listen* also implies a relationship. Why do the sheep follow in John 10:3-4? They know His voice.
The book of James points out the foolishness and deception of thinking "passive listening" is the end of hearing the Lord. Look at chapter 1: 22-25 and see what it says:

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| v. 22 | What is the danger of merely listening? | It is a deception. |
| | What should happen as we listen? | We should do what God says. |
| v. 25 | What is the result of looking at God's will and doing it? | We will be blessed in what we do. |

SCRIPTURE SEARCH 2 - CHRIST'S CALL - That we are blessed when we listen to the Lord is something that is pointed out in the Scripture passages which follow. Read the verses and provide the answers.

TEXT QUESTION	ANSWER
Exodus 6:9	Who did not listen? Why? Children of Israel. They were depressed.
Exodus 6:12	Who is Moses afraid won't listen? Why? Pharaoh. Because Moses stutters.
Exodus 7:13	Who will not listen? Why? Pharaoh. His heart was hardened.
Leviticus 26:18	What happens to those who don't listen? Punished seven times over.
Deut. 1: 43-44	Who didn't listen. What happened? Israelites did not listen The Amorites clobbered them The Israelites. To their Judges.
Judges 2: 16-17	Who didn't listen? To Whom.
In the New Testament as well, we are told to come to the Lord and listen.	
Luke 10: 38	Who invited Jesus into their house? Martha.
Luke 10: 39	What did Mary do? She listened to Jesus.
Luke 10: 40	What did Martha want? Mary to stop listening.
Luke 10: 42	How did Jesus feel about it? Mary was doing the one thing needful.

ILLUSTRATION AND THOUGHT - When he was discussing the Lord's Prayer, ("A Simple Way to Pray" (1535) in "Martin Luther-- Later Years and Legacy," Christian History, no. 39), Martin Luther wrote the following: "The Holy Spirit Himself preaches here, and one word of His sermon is far better than a thousand of our prayers. Many times I have learned more from one prayer than I might have learned from much reading and speculation. It is of great importance that the heart be made ready and eager for prayer. What else is it but tempting God when your mouth babbles and the mind wanders to other thoughts? A good and attentive barber keeps his thoughts, attention, and eyes on the razor and hair and does not forget how far he has gotten with his shaving or cutting. If he wants to engage in too much conversation or let his mind wander or look somewhere else he is likely to cut his customer's mouth, nose, or even his throat. How much more does prayer call for concentration and singleness of heart!"

List some of the things that Luther said should happen as we listen to the Lord as we pray:

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| "I have learned" | The heart should be ready and eager for prayer. |
| We should not tempt God with babbling. | Our mind should be kept from other thoughts. |
| We should be concentrated. | We should be single of heart. |

THE WAY OF PRAYER - As Christians, we know that our Heavenly Father hears us when we pray. We know that He, in His love, will listen and respond to us in a way that reflects His greater wisdom and deeper care. Now, in respect, we need to live our role as children and listen respectfully for His reply. He will speak to us, not in a random, haphazard way. He will speak, as He always has, with deliberation and in agreement with His written Word. For His reply, we listen with eagerness.

WE PRAY – Dear Lord Jesus, You said, 'he who has ears, let him hear.' You have given us ears. May we, dear Lord, in every moment and age; every trial and temptation; every success and sadness, listen for Your loving Words and direction. In Your Name. Amen.