

Come to Us to Change Our Hearts

It is vital to be serious about and open to God's Word to actually receive the great benefits!

Wednesday, 12/11 at 11:00 & 7:00

Second Wednesday in Advent – 2019

Advent Wednesdays: Services at 11 & 7; Meals at 12 & 6

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ: I know about some buried treasure: ♦It's worth \$1,000,000, ♦it's buried 5 feet deep, and ♦it's in a particular location. Are you interested in finding it? If so, you must dig by hand; are you willing? Are you willing to dig down 5 feet to get it? If the digging is hard and long, are you still willing to keep digging and not give up? If you said "Yes" four times, *then I know you are very serious about money – which is ONLY for this short life.* However, are you equally serious, or even more serious, about God's eternal treasures, which are buried in His Word? I hope so! This sermon will focus on: ♦interest in God's Word, ♦how hearing is NOT enough, and ♦how the Word must become part of who we are.

1. **Interest in God's Eternal Treasure:** As I think about people, *we are all sinners in need of Jesus;* however, the Bible tells us that many people are deceived; in other words, they believe something that is NOT true. The Bible says, "There is a way which **seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death**" (Prov. 14:12 NAS). Let's speculate on who might say "No" and who might say "Yes" regarding interest in God's eternal treasure:

- a. The ones in the “No” category might say:
 - i. There is *no God and no eternity*.
 - ii. I am good enough, *so God will welcome me into heaven*.
- b. The ones in the “Yes” category might say:
 - i. I have sinned, so I need God’s forgiveness, *which I receive through His Word*.
 - ii. I know God’s ways are best, *so I want to learn and follow them unto God’s glory*.

Because you are hearing (or reading) this sermon, *I am guessing you have some interest!*

2. **Hearing Is NOT Enough:** Going back to the parable of the sower, *regarding all four of the examples given*, all four HEARD the Word of God; however, in three of the four examples, *those who heard did NOT bear fruit*. Let’s think about those three scenarios:

- a. The Word is not understood: 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. //** Hearing, *but not understanding*; regarding such a person, the word has entered his ear, but he does not comprehend *the meaning* or *how it applies to his life*. TO HIM that word seems worthless, so ☹️he holds it loosely and ☹️the devil easily snatches it from his heart.
- b. The Word in the heart does not grow: ²⁰ **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. // Hearing > understanding > joy; regarding such a person, *he initially got it and he was so happy!* However, whenever the word is received, *suffering also follows*. In this case, *the joy was NOT followed by Bible nourishment and growth*, so, sadly, the person fell away.

- c. The Word is overcome by worry and money:
²² And the one on whom seed was sown among the thorns, this is the man who hears the word, and the worry of the world and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. // Hearing > and maybe understanding; regarding such a person, *he allowed worry and money to become more important to him than God's word*. Therefore, like a person *being choked*, *struggling to breathe*, and *barely alive*, so was this man. He had the word, *but it bore no fruit of the Spirit* – “love, joy, peace...” (Gal. 5:22-23).

3. **The Word Must Become Part of Who We Are:** When we eat a cookie, *it becomes part of who we are!* So how can we do the same with the Word of God? Last week, *regarding the Scriptures*, we asked the Lord to help us to hear, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them. Let's think about those words to *understand what they mean* and *learn how to use them in our daily lives*.

- a. Hear: Pay attention and think. If I was telling you the secret location of the \$1,000,000 buried treasure, you would pay attention, think, and take notes; *let's do the same with God's Word!*
- b. Read: Similar to hearing, but now you are in control regarding ✓ what to read and ✓ how fast to read. As you read, ask yourself: what does it mean and how does it apply to me?
- c. Mark: When hearing or reading, *underline or highlight key words or phrases*; then you will have a greater chance of remembering them.
- d. Learn: Regarding some of what you have heard or read, *you have understood* the meaning and the application, so begin to *apply God's Word to your daily life!*
- e. Inwardly Digest: When we chew, swallow, and digest a cookie, *it becomes part of who we are*. When we understand **and** apply God's Word to our lives, *then it has become part of who we are*.

Conclusion: Now, aware of the obstacles that prevent the Word of God from growing in our hearts, and having learned the process that God will bless to make the Word of God part of who we are, let us see our need, let us not become overwhelmed by this commercialized time of the year, and let us become deeply rooted in God's Holy Word!

Let Us Pray: Father in heaven, You know the obstacles between us and Your Word, so help us, guide us, and move us to be in Your Word, and *grow up in the Christ of Christmas!*

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