

Luke 8:4-10 The Grace of Hearing

Fruitful hearing of the Word of God depends on the grace of God.

- 1) Everyone is naturally unfit to hear the Word of God fruitfully (8:4-8a).
 - a) The difference between the “good earth” and the unfruitful earth is not mineral content, but cultivation.
 - b) Analogy: As the fallen condition of the earth naturally brings forth thorns and thistles requiring cultivation by man, so fallen humanity naturally brings forth rebellion and unbelief requiring cultivation by God.
 - c) Total Depravity: Romans 3:9-18; 8:7-8; 1 Corinthians 2:14
 - i) Root problem is not physical, though we do have physical obstacles to understanding.
 - ii) Root problem is not environmental, though we do have environmental obstacles to understanding.
 - iii) Root problem is not educational, though we do have educational obstacles to understanding.
 - iv) Root problem is moral. The whole man is turned away from God and against the Word of God. (cf. Isaiah 5:1-2)
- 2) Everyone is morally accountable to hear the Word of God fruitfully (8:8b).
 - a) “He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”
 - i) What is the chief end of ears?
 - ii) General Revelation (creation and conscience) makes all people personally accountable for their rebellion (cf. Romans 1:20; 2:1, “without excuse”).
 - iii) Special Revelation (Word of God written, preached, and Incarnate) increases personal accountability for rebellion (cf. Luke 10:13-16, “Woe to you, Chorazin . . .”; 2 Peter 2:20-21, “better for them never to have known”; Matthew 10:14 “shake the dust from your feet”)
 - (1) The evangelistic mission of the Church is not determined by the response of unbelievers.
 - (2) The evangelistic mission of the Church is determined by the command of Christ and compassion for the elect (Matthew 28:18-20; Romans 10:13-17).
 - b) “Take care then how you hear, for to the one who has, more will be given, and from the one who has not, even what he thinks he has will be taken away.” (Luke 8:18)
- 3) A Christian is graciously enabled to hear the Word of God fruitfully (8:9-10).
 - a) “To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of God.”
 - i) Perfect tense indicates God prior determination to grant this gift to them: “has been given” (cf. Acts 13:48).
 - ii) “To know” involves learning and understanding with faith; the process and the goal.
 - (1) Jesus explains the parable to the disciples. That’s the process of learning.
 - (2) The Lord opens the heart to receive the Word with the comprehension of faith (Luke 24:45; Acts 16:14). That’s the goal of understanding.
 - iii) “Mysteries of the Kingdom of God” refers to knowledge about God and His saving plan in Christ that must be disclosed by God.
 - b) “But for the others they are in parables, so that seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand.”
 - i) Leon Morris describes the nature of parables thus: “Parables both reveal and conceal truth: they reveal it to the genuine seeker who will take the trouble to dig beneath the surface and discover the meaning, but they conceal it from him who is content simply to listen to the story. This is plainly the result of the parables, but Jesus says it is also their purpose (*so that*

. . .). Parables are a mine of information to those who are earnest, but they are a judgment on the casual and careless.”

- ii) Judicial hardening (Isaiah 6:9-10)
 - iii) Redemptive Historical Significance: Judicial Hardening of Israel (Acts 28:24-28; Romans 11)
- c) God’s illuminating grace promotes:
- i) Humility
 - ii) Gratitude
 - iii) Prayer