

“Do you have itching ears?” (2 Timothy 4:1–5)
GCC, 5/2/21, Morning worship

- I. The Spiritual Malady: Itching ears
 - A. Definition
 - 1. hearing what you want to hear and not what you need to hear
 - 2. Intentionally filtering out anything that is hard to do, like repent, and only focusing on that which is easy to do, like “going through the motions.”
- II. Four Symptoms of Itching ears
 - A. Thinking exclusively or predominantly about the “now time” and not the eschatological age (v. 1)
 - B. You get offended when your pastor actually calls out your sin and would rather simply hear that you are ok (v. 2)
 - C. You fight against the word of God in order to safeguard and protect your own passions against anything that would threaten it (v. 3)
 - D. Instead of laying yourself bare before the word of God and allowing it to have its work in your life, you turn away from it and turn to myths (v. 4)
 - 1. Myth #1--“knowing” = “doing” (Jn 13:17)
 - 2. Myth #2—“My sin isn’t my fault, people make me act this way”
 - 3. Myth #3—“I’ll change later. I don’t have time for that right now. I don’t have the bandwidth”
 - a. “What you’re doing now is what you’ll be doing tomorrow”
 - 4. Myth #4—Confessing my sin would just cause more problems. I’m going to keep it concealed for the best interest of everyone” (Psalm 32:1–7; 1 Timothy 4:1-2; 2 Thessalonians 2:9–12).
- III. The Saving Salve for this Spiritual Malady: the active and passive obedience of Jesus Christ

Questions for Application and Discussion:

1. Define the spiritual malady of itching ears?
2. Pastor Josh mentioned four symptoms of itching ears. The first symptom was “thinking exclusively or predominantly about the “now time” and not the eschatological age (v. 1).”
 - a. How does 2 Tim 4:1 support this statement?
 - b. How is this a symptom of itching ears?
 - c. “Faith in Christ makes this life better.” In what ways is this statement correct and in what ways is it incorrect?
3. The second symptom is: ‘You get offended when your pastor actually calls out your sin and would rather simply hear that you are ok (v. 2)’
 - a. Read 2 Tim 4:2. What three imperatives describe the kind of preaching that Timothy is to give to his people? Do these imperatives describe the kind of preaching that seeks to meet ‘felt needs?’
 - b. Why are *both* law and gospel non-negotiable ingredients in the preaching of the word?
4. The third symptom is: ‘You fight against the word of God in order to safeguard and protect your own passions against anything that would threaten it (v. 3).’
 - a. How does v. 3 support this statement?
 - b. How can we become ‘consumeristic’ in our consumption of preaching and teaching? Is this a good thing or a bad thing?
 - c. “I just want the preacher to make me feel good.” In what ways is this spiritually unhealthy? Is there a sense in which this could be a healthy attitude toward the preaching of the word? How?
5. The fourth symptom is: Instead of laying yourself bare before the word of God and allowing it to have its work in your life, you turn away from it and turn to myths (v. 4)
 - a. Discuss the four myths to which Christians often turn?
6. What is the saving salve for the spiritual malady of “itching ears?” Discuss *how* it is a salve. In other words, how does this salve discourage you from having itching ears?