

Ears to Hear

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 30 September 2018

Preacher: Dave Nannery

[0 : 00] All right, well, some of us sitting here today have a history of hearing problems. Some of you, you developed those hearing problems as you got older.

That's a natural part of life, that progression, that aging. Maybe you worked near loud machinery, maybe you attended a few too many loud concerts, maybe your age just got to you.

Now you need hearing aids. Or you need hearing aids and you don't know it, but everyone around you knows it. For some of you, it may have started when you were very young.

Maybe you had a never-ending series of ear infections. Some of you, your children are young enough that this is fresh in your mind, right?

Maybe you, maybe your parents, they thought growing up that you were just not paying attention to them. You were not listening to them, but eventually they figured out you straight up could not hear them even when they were speaking to you.

[1 : 01] You weren't disobeying on purpose. You just couldn't hear them. And so oftentimes the doctors will put tubes near ears and immediately you're a much more compliant child. It's amazing. Now, some of us have ears that haven't always picked up sound waves very well.

And then there are some of us who are sitting here. We have ears that biologically they are functioning just fine. They are picking up sound waves perfectly fine.

You can hear high pitches and low pitches. You can hear loud noises, soft noises. You can even hold a conversation out in the foyer after church where it's all noisy. But there are some things that your ears may be failing to pick up.

Your ears may not be picking up certain things. Maybe you've spent all your life with your ears blocked. And you don't know it.

You don't know it because you've never experienced how sweet the sound of amazing grace really is. Now, we're quick, very quick to identify physical, biological problems with the human body.

[2 : 11] Those become obvious very quickly. But Jesus of Nazareth, he revealed that the spiritual problems, the problems of the human heart, they tend to be far more tenacious. They tend to be far more dangerous.

And they tend to go much longer before we realize they're a problem. Sometimes we go our entire lives and don't even know. During Jesus' earthly ministry 2,000 years ago, he warned us that not everyone has ears to hear.

Not everyone has ears to hear the message that he spoke. This is one of the points that Jesus makes most often in his earthly ministry.

Over the last few weeks, BK has been opening up the Gospel of Mark, specifically chapter 4 of Mark, to explain to us how we bring good news to other people, how we bring the good news of Jesus Christ, his gospel message to the kingdom of God.

And Jesus, in Mark chapter 4, he's teaching a series of parables. He's teaching a series of stories that use simple language to illustrate spiritual truth. And in Mark chapter 4, Jesus begins by telling a parable about parables.

[3 : 22] A parable about parables. We're going really deep down the rabbit hole with this one. And this parable about parables, it's found in Mark chapter 4, verses 1 through 20. That's the parable of the four soils that we looked at a few weeks ago.

If you're using one of the blue Bibles that our ushers handed out, you'll find Mark chapter 4 on page 839. Page 839. And here are the words of Jesus from Mark chapter 4, verses 1 through 20.

Again, he began to teach beside the sea. And a very large crowd gathered about him, so that he got into a boat and sat in it on the sea.

And the whole crowd was beside the sea on the land. And he was teaching them many things in parables. And in his teaching he said to them, Listen, a sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seed fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured it. Other seed fell on rocky ground, where it did not have much soil. And immediately it sprang up, since it had no depth of soil.

[4 : 26] And when the sun rose, it was scorched. And since it had no root, it withered away. Other seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no grain.

And other seeds fell into good soil, and produced grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold. And he said, He who has ears to hear, let him hear. And when he was alone, those around him with the twelve asked him about the parables. And he said to them, To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God. But for those outside, everything is in parables, so that they may indeed see, but not perceive, and may indeed hear, but not understand, lest they should turn and be forgiven. And he said to them, Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables? The sower sows the word, and these are the ones along the path where the word is sown.

[5 : 29] When they hear, Satan immediately comes and takes away the word that is sown in them. And these are the ones sown on rocky ground, the ones who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy, and they have no root in themselves, but endure for a while.

Then when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately they fall away. And others are the ones sown among thorns. They are those who hear the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word and approves unfruitful.

But those that were sown on the good soil are the ones who hear the word and accept it and bear fruit, thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold. This is the word of the Lord.

Now, Mark had a lot of flexibility in how he chose and arranged these true events of Jesus' life and his ministry.

And notice the way that Mark chose to arrange this. He chose to arrange the story like it's a sandwich. Mark does this a lot in his gospel as you read through it. And you'll find here that Jesus begins by telling the parable.

[6 : 45] He ends by explaining the parable. And we followed along as BK has preached on this parable over the last few weeks and we focused on the parable itself. But what I want to focus on today is the middle of the sandwich.

Because right between the parable and the explanation, you'll find verses nine through 13. The meat of the sandwich. And these are the words we're going to be focusing on.

Notice in verse nine, Jesus concludes the parable with this summary statement. He who has ears to hear, let him hear. Now, what is Jesus suggesting here?

Think about that for a second. What is Jesus suggesting? He is suggesting that some people have ears that are able to heed what he's saying. And some people don't have ears that are able to heed what he's saying.

Not everyone is going to understand his parables. Not everyone is going to understand the message that Jesus wants to proclaim to them.

[7 : 52] Not everyone has ears to hear. So later on, when the large crowd has dispersed, there are a few remaining behind. You see in verse 10. He's alone and there's some people around him, but the crowds are gone.

And these people who are remaining with Jesus, they aren't satisfied. You know, they're not here for the interesting little stories that sound vaguely like nuggets of wisdom you can take home to the family. Oh, guess what I heard today? This cool story about soils and so forth.

These people, they're not satisfied with being entertained. They sense that there is more to these parables. They want to understand the truth that's behind them.

They want to hear. So they ask Jesus what he means. And Jesus replies in verse 11 that everyone in the crowd is going to break down into two categories.

Jesus' hearers belong to two different categories of people. There are two types of people who are on the receiving end of his parables. First, there are those, he says in verse 11, there are those who have been given the secret of the kingdom of God.

[8 : 57] They've been given the secret of the kingdom of God. There's a hidden knowledge that is given to them. They didn't figure it out because they're smarter than everybody else and they're clever.

They understand the way that God's kingdom works. They understand who God's king is, but they only know this because they have been given it. They've been given the secret.

They've been given ears to hear. To them, the parables reveal and explain the secret of the kingdom of God. Second, there's a second group, everyone else.

And Jesus lumps them together into a group he calls, in verse 11, those outside. Those outside. These outsiders don't understand how the kingdom works.

They don't have ears to hear. And Jesus says that to people like this, the parables don't reveal truth. They, in fact, conceal and hide the secret of the kingdom of God.

[9 : 59] He says, for those outside, everything is in parables. So there are insiders who get it. The parables teach them. The parables open up and unlock truth. But then there are outsiders who don't get it.

And Jesus, in fact, reinforces this divide at the very end of the chapter. If you see verses 33 and 34, he says, Mark says, with many such parables, he spoke the word to them as they were able to hear it.

He did not speak to them without a parable, but privately to his own disciples, he explained everything. Jesus is well aware of this dynamic.

And he embraces it. And in the middle of this parable sandwich, in verses 11 and 12, Jesus explains, he is not doing this without precedent. This is not some sort of new development in the way that humans hear God's message.

Jesus is fulfilling a pattern. He's fulfilling a pattern in how God reveals truth to a mixed people. A people, a crowd, that includes people with ears to hear and also people without ears to hear.

[11 : 10] There are both in this crowd. Jesus says in verses 11 and 12, for those outside, everything is in parables, so that they may indeed see, but not perceive, and may indeed hear, but not understand, lest they should turn and be forgiven.

Now Jesus is quoting Isaiah chapter six, verses nine and 10. That's the passage that BK read at the beginning of our worship service. This is the message that God gave to the prophet Isaiah.

God gave Isaiah a message of judgment. God was telling Isaiah that the prophecies he spoke to God's people, the prophecies that he spoke to the people of Israel, these words from the Lord, they would not cause the people as a whole to repent.

They would not cause the people to turn away from their sins, from their rebellion against God.

Rather, the people are going to respond to God's message, to God's message through his prophet. They're going to respond by becoming more resistant than ever. The message would cause them to lose their eyesight, to lose their hearing, to lose their perception of the truth.

[12 : 18] Not everyone has ears to hear. Jesus and his apostles, they consider this pattern to be one of the most profound assessments of the human condition in all of the Old Testament scriptures.

And we know they think this way because these verses from Isaiah six, verses nine and 10, they are the only verses from the Old Testament that are quoted in every single one of the first six books of the Bible.

Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, Romans. These verses appear in all six. And they're the only verses that do.

When God speaks truth through the mouth of Jesus Christ, some people have ears to hear, but many people do not. Some people will learn and receive more wisdom. Other people will shut down and become less teachable than ever.

And Jesus says in his parables in Mark chapter four, verses 24 and 25. Pay attention to what you hear. With the measure you use, it will be measured to you and still more will be added to you.

[13 : 29] For to the one who has, more will be given and from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. In other words, nobody is left unchanged by the words of God.

No one is left unchanged by the words of God. Every time you read the Bible, every time you hear a sermon, every time a Christian explains who Jesus is, why he came to die and rise again, how you should respond to this news, every single time, the message of the gospel will change you.

Every time it does change you. If you have ears to hear, more wisdom will be measured to you. More insight will be given. If you don't have ears to hear, even what wisdom you have will be taken away.

What effect are the words of God having on you right now? And I don't just mean in your life generally right now. I mean like literally right this second.

What effect are the words of God having on you? Do you have ears to hear? To know whether you have ears to hear, you'll need to answer two diagnostic questions.

[14 : 36] Two diagnostic questions. Here's the first one. The first diagnostic question you'll need to ask yourself, is there anything blocking my ears? Is there anything blocking my ears?

We're going to look to God's word to see what could be blocking our ears. One thing that may be blocking your ears is you. You.

Your own desires and choices. They may be blocking your ears. Your own desires and choices may be blocking your ears. Let me list two possible ways your desires and choices may be blocking your ears.

In the prophet Isaiah's day, it was the people's desires, their choices to serve and worship idols.

That's what's condemned throughout the book. This is what prevented them from hearing and understanding what the one true God had to say to them.

They couldn't see the injustices they were perpetrating because the idols and their worship of idols were blocking their ears. Idol worship happens when you and I turn to anything besides God, anything besides God, as our ultimate source of significance and security.

[15 : 48] Something else or someone else is your ultimate source of significance and security in your life. That's where you go. Any good and beautiful thing can be warped and twisted by us into an idol.

A spouse. A child. A friend. A parent. A test score. A bank account. A house. A car. A mountain bike. A ski hill. These things may be more precious to us than silver and gold, but when something like this becomes that ultimate source of significance and security, when something like that takes the place that only God deserves, then it becomes an idol.

The work of human hands. And Psalm 135 warns us. The idols of the nations are silver and gold, the work of human hands. They have mouths, but do not speak.

They have eyes, but do not see. They have ears, but do not hear. Nor is there any breath in their mouths. Those who make them become like them. So do all who trust in them.

Those who trust in idols become like them. They have eyes, but do not see. They have ears, but do not hear.

[16 : 59] Ask yourself, am I trusting in an idol? Is there something that I turn to as the ultimate source of significance and security? Is there anything blocking my ears?

Here's a second possible way. Your own desires and choices may be blocking your ears. The second way is you may be harboring sin in your heart.

You may be hiding it carefully out of sight where no one else can see it. So that your life looks good on Instagram. But letting the sin fester and grow underneath.

Hidden sin will give you the worst ear infection of your life. The worst ear infection you've ever had. In Hebrews chapter 3 we read, Take care, brothers. Take care.

Lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart leading you to fall away from the living God. But exhort, challenge one another every day, every day, as long as it is called today.

[18 : 03] That none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end.

As it is said, today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion. If the voice of God has spoken to you.

If the words of scripture have given you commands. If your fellow believers have called your attention to the words of God. Take care that you do not harden your hearts.

Respond today. Confess and reject your sins today. Every day that you persist in harboring sin. Your heart gets a little bit harder.

Your hearing gets a little bit worse. And hell gets a little bit closer. Ask yourself. Am I harboring sin?

[19 : 09] Is there a dark corner of my life? Is there anything blocking my ears? Take care, brothers and sisters. If you are serving idols, if you are harboring sins, your own desires and choices may be blocking your ears.

And that's bad enough. But it's possible that your ears may be further blocked by the judgment of God. By the judgment of God. Remember what Jesus said in Mark chapter 4.

For those outside, everything is in parables. So that they may indeed see but not perceive. And may indeed hear but not understand. Lest they should turn and be forgiven. Jesus is actually, he says himself, he is actually telling parables so that people may not be able to hear and turn and be forgiven.

As we heard him say in verse 25. To the one who has, more will be given. From the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. That is precisely in line with the message of Isaiah's prophecy in Isaiah chapter 6.

Now how can this be? How can this be fair and just of God, we might think? Well the commentator, J. Alec Mottier, who writes on the book of Isaiah, here's what he says.

[20 : 22] It is clear that Isaiah did not understand his commission. As one to blind people by obscurity of expression or complexity of message. You know Isaiah is not being elitist and trying to hide what he's saying from people.

He in fact faced the preacher's dilemma. If hearers are resistant to the truth, the only recourse is to tell them the truth yet again. More clearly than before.

But to do this is to expose them to the risk of rejecting the truth yet again. And therefore of increased hardness of heart. It could even be that the next rejection will prove to be the point at which the heart is hardened beyond recovery.

The human eye cannot see this point in advance. It comes and goes unnoticed. But the all-sovereign God both knows it and appoints it as he presides in perfect justice over the psychological processes he created.

Mottier points out, this is how the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh. We saw this last year through the book of Exodus. He gave Pharaoh over to what Pharaoh wanted to believe and what Pharaoh wanted to do.

[21 : 32] Pharaoh hardens his own heart. God begins the hardening process himself. He hardens the heart of Pharaoh. We resist the message of the gospel.

We fight back against it. We don't want to hear it. And God says, fine. I'm going to hand you over to that. Keep on hearing but don't perceive. This is how the Lord may be hardening your heart and blocking your ears today.

If you continue to resist the message of God, he may give you over to your desires. He may give you over to the choice you made. That is one of the worst things God can ever do to you is just hand you over to your own desires and your own choices.

Jesus hid his message in parables not only as an act of kindness and compassion to those with ears to hear. He also hid his message in parables as an act of judgment on those without ears to hear.

Your own desires and choices may be blocking your ears. The consequent deserved judgment of God may be blocking your ears further. Ask yourself, is there anything blocking my ears?

[22 : 36] That's the first diagnostic question you need to ask. And the second diagnostic question is this. Is there any sign that I can hear?

Is there any sign that I can hear? If you want to test a young child's hearing, you take the child, you put them in a sound booth, you put headphones on them. You play tones in each ear.

You watch and observe to see how that young child reacts. Do they react when they hear a tone in their right ear? Do they react when they hear a tone in their left ear? What about at certain pitches? What about at certain volumes? You can test the hearing by watching the child. And as for spiritual hearing, there are three categories of signs to watch out for.

The first category is signs that you cannot hear. There may be signs that you cannot hear. You cannot hear if you are unable to understand the gospel message.

[23 : 36] That's one sign that you cannot hear if you are unable to understand the gospel message. Jesus encountered this sign very often. He himself said in John chapter 8, Why do you not understand what I say?

It is because you cannot bear to hear my word. Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word. Sometimes, some of us may have trouble understanding the preaching and teaching of God's word.

And sometimes, it's for very simple reasons. That you're new to the faith. There are words. There are concepts that are unfamiliar to you. Sometimes, the problem is maybe I don't do a great job explaining it.

There may be reasons why sometimes it's hard to understand. But over time, is there a pattern? Is there a pattern that you just keep sitting in a church week in and week out, year after year after year, and every time you leave feeling you've just got no idea what was being said?

That may be a sign you cannot hear. You don't have ears to hear. I've also sadly witnessed in counseling times where I ask the person, you know, what did you learn from the sermon this past Sunday?

[24 : 56] And they'll start talking about it. Oh, I just learned that I need to forgive myself and not be so hard on myself. And I'm sitting there thinking, the text of the sermon was, the text of the sermon was, there's not a righteous man on earth who does good and never sins.

How did you possibly get that out of what I said? We filter things. We hear what we want to hear. Maybe you don't have ears to hear the gospel message because you don't want to hear the gospel message.

Maybe you don't understand it because you don't want to understand it. Another sign that you cannot hear is that you lose the distinctive life of a Christian.

You lose the distinctive life of a Christian. Jesus explains in Luke chapter 14. Salt is good. But if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored?

It is of no use either for the soil or for the manure pile. It is thrown away. He who has ears to hear, let him hear. Once again, Jesus says that.

[26 : 02] If there is no distinctive salty flavor to your life, if you're thinking, your choices about money and sex, the way you talk, if they're no different from those of an unbeliever, if your friends and neighbors and coworkers, they have no clue there's anything distinct about you, that may be a sign you cannot hear.

One more sign that you cannot hear is that you grumble about God's words. You grumble about God's words. You find what the Bible says to be offensive or scandalous.

In John chapter 6, many of Jesus' followers became upset with the things that he was saying that scandalized them, scandalized their sensibilities. John chapter 6, they said, this is a hard saying. Who can listen to it? Who can listen to it? But Jesus, knowing in himself that his disciples were grumbling about this, said to them, do you take offense at this?

Or literally, are you scandalized by this? If you found yourself angry or irritated at God, why is this in the Bible? Why does this say this way?

[27 : 16] Why are you asking me to do this? I don't like this. If you found yourself upset at church leaders for preaching and teaching what's in the Bible, they explain clearly how it comes from Scripture, but you just straight up don't like it.

That may be a sign that you cannot hear. You don't have ears to hear. So those are some signs that you cannot hear. Let's talk about another type of sign.

There are signs that might make you think that you can hear, but are false signs. They're counterfeit signs. False signs that you can hear. One false sign is familiarity with Jesus.

Familiarity with Jesus. You might think, oh, I'm familiar with Jesus. That means I can hear. Maybe not. Right before the parable of the four soils, if you just turn back a page to Mark chapter three, I mean literally right before this, Jesus has been in conflict with two groups of people.

Two groups that you think would be insiders, that would have ears to hear. If anyone has ears to hear, it's gotta be these groups. One group is the religious leaders, the people who know their Old Testament backward and forward.

[28 : 29] Many of them probably have the whole thing memorized. The other group is his family, his mother and his brothers. If anyone is familiar with God, with Jesus, it's these two groups.

But you know what? The religious leaders in Mark chapter three, they think he has a demon. And his family, you know what they think? He's crazy. He is out of his mind. They literally say that.

They don't have ears to hear. Immediately after his interaction with these two groups, Jesus tells the parable of the four soils. And says, he who has ears to hear, let him hear.

If you've grown up in church, if you've been around teaching about Jesus for years and years and years, maybe your whole life, if you have familiarity with Jesus, that is not a sign that you can hear.

That is not a sign that you can hear. Another false sign is a fast response to Jesus. So familiarity with Jesus and a fast response to Jesus is the second false sign.

[29 : 35] Remember this parable of the soils. The second category of soil is a thin layer of dirt. There's bedrock underneath. BK did a great job explaining that a few weeks ago.

Verse 5, Mark chapter 4, verse 5. Jesus says that the seed falls in the soil and it springs up immediately. There's an instant response.

But the response doesn't last long. It withers away. If you have a fast response to Jesus and to the gospel message, that isn't a sign that you can hear. One more false sign is feelings about Jesus. Feelings about Jesus. Notice what Jesus says in verse 16. There are some people who will hear the gospel message and immediately receive it with joy.

They will be emotional, excited, enthusiastic, elated, euphoric, whatever other E words you can find. They're going to dance. They're going to sing. They're going to talk endlessly about Jesus to the point of it's annoying almost.

[30 : 37] But it is wonderful to witness. It's wonderful to witness. But Jesus warns in verse 17, when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately they fall away. Immediately they fall away.

If you respond with feelings about Jesus, that isn't a sign that you can hear. And those things, familiarity with Jesus, a fast response to Jesus, feelings about Jesus, maybe you can hear and those are all true of you.

Maybe. But just because they're there, that doesn't necessarily mean you can. What are the true signs? What are the true signs you can hear? If you want a really extensive catalog of all this and you're into reading really dense, theologically heavy books, I'd recommend *The Religious Affections* by Jonathan Edwards.

The Religious Affections. But I'm not going to go into all the different categories and all the distinctions that he carefully draws out from scripture and from his own experience. Let's look at a few of the signs that you can hear.

What do we look for? Well, one true sign that you can hear is a grief over sin and confession of sin. Grief over sin and confession of sin.

[31 : 50] You grieve over your sin and now here's what's important. Many people grieve over their sin, their rebellion against God because it leads to terrible consequences in their lives. It leads to pain and suffering or they see that it's hurt other people.

Oh man, look what I did and someone else got hurt. Oh, I feel horrible about it. But a true sign that you can hear is not that your sin hurts you, not that your sin makes you look bad, not even that it hurts other people, but because it's rebelling against God, because it's an act against that God of whom we said and sang, holy, holy, holy.

because it grieves us because it grieves the heart of God. Remember how the prophet Isaiah responded when his own sin was exposed in Isaiah chapter 6.

Woe is me for I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips, for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.

It is how his sin looks in the light of God's presence, in the light of God's holiness that undoes Isaiah.

[33 : 09] That cuts him to the core. Alas for me. Here's how the apostle Peter responded when he saw Jesus perform a miraculous sign in Luke chapter 5.

When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees saying, depart from me. Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord. That grief, that confession of sin, that sense that I am not worthy to be in the presence of a holy God.

I don't belong. He is so good. He is so great. And I can see in myself the ways that I have rejected him and rebelled against him, the ways that I have defied him and sought my own way to live.

And I don't belong with him. Go. Go. Away. You shouldn't be near someone like me. That's how those with ears to hear respond when they hear the voice of Jesus, when they see the power of Jesus, the Son of God, a heartfelt, grief-stricken confession of sin against God.

That's a sign that you can hear. Another sign that you can hear is a fruitful response. A fruitful response.

[34 : 30] Before the parable of the soils, Jesus says in Mark chapter 3 that his true family, he identifies them and Mark chapter 4, Mark chapter 3, verse 35, his true family is whoever does the

will of God.

Whoever does the will of God. At the conclusion of the parable of the soils, verse 20, he says, those that were sown on the good soil are the ones who hear the word and accept it and bear fruit. 30-fold and 60-fold and 100-fold. In Luke chapter 3, John the Baptist, he confronts the crowds who've gathered around them.

He gives them a similar command. Here's what John the Baptist says, bear fruits in keeping with repentance. Bear fruits in keeping with repentance. In other words, they've heard, they've seen clearly what their sin looks like in front of God and they say, I've got to turn away from that. I've got to turn away from my sin and believe in God and in the Son, Jesus Christ, whom he sent. They have to accept that Jesus Christ died on the cross, taking our punishments in his place so that we can be counted holy, so that we can be accepted and not only accepted but welcomed by God as his child.

[35 : 47] That we have promise of resurrection life because Jesus Christ, our Lord, rose again from the dead. But that new life is a life of turning away from sin, repenting, turning it away and turning to living with God.

And John says, bear fruits in keeping with repentance. He tells them, share their food and clothing. Stop cheating people. Living contented lives. Their lives are to be transformed by the secret of the kingdom of God.

A fruitful response to the gospel. A sustained, transformed pattern of behavior. That's a sign that you can hear. That is a sign that you can hear.

I want to emphasize this sustained, transformed pattern of behavior. This isn't just you picking yourself up by your own bootstraps and gritting your teeth and like, all right, I'm going to start doing the right thing now.

I'm going to start obeying God. It's not a plodding sense of duty. That's not what's produced by ears that can hear. A sign that you can hear is delighted obedience to God.

[36 : 51] Oh, his words are a delight to you. You start increasingly to sense the Lord is good.

The law of the Lord is a delight. How sweet are your words to my taste. Sweet as honey to my mouth. Through your precepts I get understanding. Therefore, I hate every false way.

In Psalm 40, David tells God, in sacrifice and offering you have not delighted, but you have given me an open ear. An open ear.

Burnt offering and sin offering you have not required. Then I said, Behold, I have come. In the scroll of the book it is written of me.

I delight to do your will, oh my God. Your law is within my heart. David says that God has given him an open ear.

[37 : 50] And literally, maybe it says in your footnote on your Bible, literally David says in the Hebrew, ears you have dug for me. You've dug ears for me.

God has taken a tiny little shovel and dug holes in the side of David's head where there weren't holes before. Where there were no ears, God has created ears. He has dug out ears for him.

And now David, the sound comes in. For the first time he can hear God's word. Now he hears it.

And if you've ever been on YouTube and watched a video of people who are deaf receiving an implant that allows them to hear for the very first time and their eyes light up and tears well up in their eyes and they rejoice because they can hear it.

It is so good. And David says that's what the Lord has done for me. He has given me ears to hear. Now I see how good the law of the Lord is. It didn't sound good to me before.

It didn't make sense to me before but now I see how good it is. It has sunk into my heart. A delighted obedience to God. That is a sign that you can hear. And finally a sign that you can hear is a humble approach to Jesus Christ.

[39 : 03] A humble approach to Jesus Christ. Jesus himself he celebrated that his message is hidden from some but revealed to others.

it's hidden from the proud and powerful revealed to the humble and lowly. And Jesus invites the humble and lowly to come. Come to me. Matthew chapter 11 he says I thank you Father Lord of heaven and earth that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding.

He thanks the Father that he has hidden these things from the wise and understanding and he thanks them that he has revealed them to little children. revealed them to little children.

Yes Father for such was your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father and no one knows the Son except the Father and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

If you have ears to hear it is only because the Son has chosen to reveal the Father to you. come to me. And here's the invitation that the Son of God is making to you to you to you to you.

[40 : 23] Come to me all who labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me for I am gentle and lowly in heart and you will find rest for your souls for my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

When you are thinking less and less about yourself and you are thinking more and more about Jesus Christ when you come to him for forgiveness and rest you humbly approach Jesus.

That is a sign that you can hear. we have asked ourselves do I have ears to hear and then we have asked in turn is there anything blocking my ears is there any sign that I can hear.

Maybe for the first time this morning you have realized you don't have ears to hear. You have said I am thinking about these signs and I am looking at my life and all those signs that I can't hear they are present.

All those signs that I can hear they are not there and all those things that I thought were good reasons I could hear it turns out those are just false signs they are just counterfeits. Now it is time to ask this question how can I have ears to hear?

[41 : 49] How can I have ears to hear? The answer is simple you can't you can't dig out ears for yourself you can't construct an ear on the side of your head a spiritual ear you can't hear Jesus and just understand him here is what you can do humble yourself turn to the Lord ask him to dig ears for you ask him Lord reveal your gospel message to you I have been rejecting you I have been resisting you I have been hiding sin I have been following idols I have been living this way and oh God I turn to you dig ears for me let me hear your truth let me delight in it transform my life let me hear Jesus Christ died and he rose again so that everyone who believes in him will not perish without hearing but will have eternal life and have ears wide open eyes that see a heart that understands and responds and that desires what God desires pray on your knees pray that God may give you eyes to see ears to hear a heart to understand tonight tonight at 630 we're going to be