

# Hearing - But Not Listening

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[ 0 : 00 ] Well, good morning. Three friends decided to go hunting together one brisk November afternoon.

! Three friends were a pastor, a doctor, a lawyer, and a lawyer. And they went out into the field and took up their positions.

And as they waited there, sure enough, a big, beautiful buck appeared before them. They all three could see him at the same time. The buck just seemed to stand there frozen.

They all raised their rifles at the same time, and they all fired a shot at the same time. They rushed over to where the buck was.

It had fallen over, and sure enough, it was dead. And then the discussion slash argument ensued. Which one of them got the kill shot?

[ 1 : 06 ] Which one of the shots was the one that killed this incredible buck? And so they were discussing, and pretty soon a game warden came across them, and they introduced themselves to the game warden, and they asked the game warden, could you please help us make a decision here?

We're wondering. We all fired at the same exact time at this buck, and we're trying to figure out which one of us shot it. And the game warden said, well, let me take a look.

And he bent over, examined the deer for but a few seconds, and then he stood back up and he said, it was the preacher's shot that killed it.

Well, how could you know? I mean, you only looked at it for a few seconds. How is it that you could know so quickly? And the game warden said, easy.

The bullet went in one ear and out the other. That little story highlights our subject matter for the next couple of weeks.

[ 2 : 25 ] The idea of you may be hearing, but the question is, are you listening to what it is that God has to say to you? And it is a common problem.

It's in everyday life. From time to time throughout our almost 40 years of marriage, I can assure you Sherry has told me to take out the trash, and there have been times where she's had to tell me that two or three times, and I still haven't heard, even though I've answered, yeah, I'll take care of it.

And I don't know if anybody else can relate to that. You guys are all probably perfect husbands, and I get that. I get that. Another dilemma that we have for our day today is the idea of what happens to people when they trust Jesus Christ as Savior.

And I think we've seen this before, where someone makes perhaps a dramatic profession of faith. Back in the old days, you know, they may have walked an aisle, or they prayed a prayer, or they've made some commitment, some dramatic change, and they've begun to attend church.

They may even have joined the church, been baptized, and seemingly their life has been dramatically changed. But then over some period of time, sometimes a matter of weeks, sometimes months, even a couple of years, they seem to drop out.

[ 3 : 57 ] They seem to fade away or fall away. What happens to them? What is the story behind that kind of reaction?

Maybe even you have someone in your mind as you're thinking about this, someone, perhaps someone that you know, or maybe you've had some of that kind of an experience in your own life. What we're discovering today is a shift that begins in Luke chapter 8, a shift in Jesus' teaching. During his first go-around and his preaching tour through Galilee, he has been, for the most part, introducing himself as the kingdom's Messiah, that he is the one that God has promised to come and to redeem Israel, to save Israel.

And he is introducing himself, although it's kind of in an undertoned kind of way, he's doing it more through his actions and his words, not so much openly declaring who he is, but it should be obvious to people who knew the Old Testament scripture that Jesus was indeed the Messiah.

And now it's round two, if you will. It's the middle of Jesus' earthly ministry, and he is returning to many of the towns and places and synagogues that he has already been, and he is shifting in his teaching style.

[ 5 : 29 ] Whereas before it had been a little bit more direct, now, as we'll see, he begins teaching in parables. And that brings an interesting question to our discussion and our reading of the passage, and that is, why?

Why did Jesus, and you have this on your notes, what was the purpose behind Jesus' use of parables? It's good for us to know that as Jesus is now emphasizing, not so much introducing himself as the Messiah, but how he is getting more toward, as he refers to in the Gospels here, the secrets of the kingdom, or more technically correct, the mysteries of the kingdom.

Or we might think of it as the nature of the kingdom. What is this kingdom that he is bringing? His message, the gospel of the kingdom, is what he is proclaiming.

The kingdom of God is at hand. What is this kingdom? What's it about? What is the nature of this kingdom? And he's using parables to teach this, and it's good for us to remember that as we read these parables, we need to look for the one main truth that any parable might teach.

Anytime we try to discover some nuanced truth, or try to find some secondary application out of a parable, we can get into trouble doing that.

[ 7 : 03 ] We need to look for what is the one main thing that any parable is teaching. We're going to focus on that today with the parable that we're looking at today. But before we do that, the thing that we discover with this particular parable, because it's kind of kicking off this second part of his teaching ministry, and his disciples, after he tells them the parable, his disciples are coming back.

This is more than just the 12. They're coming back, and they're saying, Hey, Jesus, what in the world did that mean? And Jesus is giving them some explanation.

And he's also telling them why, what was his motive behind, what was the purpose of him beginning to use parables.

And so we begin in verse 4. Now, verses 1 through 3, we've already covered in a previous message when we looked at the disciples and those who were in the disciples' group with Jesus.

So beginning in verse 4, when a great crowd was gathering, some people estimate that these crowds were the largest of his ministry. And as the crowd is gathering, so there's people still coming in from towns all over the place, and Jesus is already beginning to teach to the people that are already gathered there, even as others are coming in.

[ 8 : 34 ] And people from town to town came to him, and he said in a parable, so he's going to teach a parable, and we'll get to that parable in a moment. But I want to get to the question of the why the parables.

So down in verse 9, after he shared the parables, when his disciples had asked him what this parable meant, he said, to you it has been given to know the secrets, or as I said before, the mysteries of the kingdom of God.

To you it's been known. But for others, they are in parables. Parables are these clever stories. They're fictional. They're not real people.

And again, they're meant to teach the one main truth. So that quote, and here he quotes from Isaiah chapter 6, and I don't know if you've ever read some of the difficult sayings of Jesus.

We're definitely in that territory today. Some of the things that Jesus is going to say, or that he says in this passage, are difficult to hear.

[ 9 : 38 ] And there may be some preachers and some ministries that would kind of want to avoid this, because these things in some people's minds don't sound like Jesus. Or they don't sound very fair.

And nevertheless, Jesus absolutely says them. And so quoting from Isaiah chapter 6, he says, seeing that they may not see and hearing that they may not understand.

What's interesting about this parable and its commentary is it's found in all three of the synoptic gospels. It's found in Matthew chapter 13. It's found in Mark chapter 4. And then it's also found in Luke chapter 8 here.

And so we refer to, particularly the gospel of Mark, to get even more clarification of what Jesus is saying here. To you it has been given the secret of the kingdom of God.

But for those outside, those outside are those who are lost. They're outside of the kingdom. And Jesus is saying about them so that they may indeed see but not perceive.

[10:44] They're going to see the actions of Jesus, but they're not going to perceive that this is of God. They're going to give it some other explanation. They're going to marvel at it, perhaps follow after it because of the curiosity, because of the spectacle, but they're not going to perceive spiritually.

And they may indeed hear with their ears, but not understand. They're not going to get it. And again, this quote from Isaiah chapter 6, lest they should turn and be forgiven.

Jesus is actually saying here that I'm now speaking in these parables and there's going to be some people who just simply will not understand it, not because they are not able, but because they're not interested.

Not because they can't hear, but because they don't want to hear. And he said, for these people, lest they should turn and be forgiven, it's almost as if Jesus is saying, I don't want that to happen. I don't want them to understand because they've already rejected. And so these parables are given for that reason. And that's hard for our minds to understand.

[12:07] Jesus, knowing that he is speaking some things that people will absolutely grasp and understand and apply, and other people yet will never get it.

They will never get it. So that's difficult to do that. And then in verse 13 of Mark 4, he says this, and this is for all of us here.

He said to them, he's talking to his disciples here, do you not understand this parable? Because they've asked him to explain it. Like, okay Jesus, can you explain it for us? We might have some ideas, but I don't know.

We're not real sure. So can you explain it for us? He said, you guys don't understand this, how then are you going to understand all of the parables? He's just starting to teach parables now.

And he's like, this first one has got you tripped up? And so for us, if we don't perceive these parables, that ought to be a cautionary flag for us, and we ought to spend some time and dedication to understanding what it is that Jesus is teaching.

[13:17] Keeping in mind, each parable is one main truth. So, the purpose of Jesus' parables here. First of all, you have this on your notes.

We'll go through these quickly. Jesus began to use parables to conceal his teaching from some so they wouldn't understand. And again, that's hard for us to see Jesus as saying, I'm going to conceal this so people don't get it.

And it's going to reveal his teaching yet to others. Secondly, by teaching in parables, Jesus did not keep back anything which people were both eager and able to understand.

In other words, if people were in the crowd and they were eager to hear what he was teaching and they were able and wanted to understand it, he was going to go on and teach them and they would get it.

They would understand it. He wasn't going to hold back from them. And we see that in Mark 4.33.

With many such parables, he spoke the word to them as they were able to hear it.

[14:23] So he didn't hold back. He didn't try to get ahead of them. He just, as people were willing and able, eager and able to understand, he would teach. Third, Jesus viewed his teaching by parables as fulfillment of prophecy.

We don't often think of prophecy in these kinds of terms, but that's certainly what is happening here. Matthew chapter 13. In Matthew's account, we have Jesus saying this, Indeed, in their case, in the case of the unbelieving, therefore unlistening, they're able to hear it physically but not understand it. They're able to see it but not perceive it. Indeed, in their case, the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled.

That was all about Isaiah's ministry as an Old Testament prophet is that he was going to preach, he was going to proclaim, and the Lord told Isaiah, no one's going to get it.

No one's going to want to get it. No one's going to want to hear you. They're going to hate you.

How'd you like that for your calling? So the prophet of Isaiah is fulfilled that says, you will indeed hear but never understand.

You will indeed see but never perceive. For this people's heart, and this was the reason why, this people's heart has grown dull and with their ears they can barely hear, with their eyes they have

closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand and with their heart and turn and I would heal them.

[16:01] and he's saying, I don't want that to happen. And it wouldn't happen because these are people who are from God's viewpoint in eternity, he can see those who have rejected him and they will not be saved.

But, for the rest of us, be blessed. your eyes for they see and your ears for they hear.

Be grateful, be thankful that as you're seated here today you can read these parables, you can see and understand the teaching of Jesus and you get it.

Thank you, Lord. Thank you, Lord. This new teaching emphasis, teaching in parables which was simultaneously concealing and revealing at the same time, concerned the mysteries of the kingdom of God and this is different.

This word mysteries or secret as it's translated in the English Standard Version is the idea of the church. The church is the mystery in the Old Testament.

[17:16] They couldn't see it. They couldn't see Jesus going to the cross, rising again from the dead and coming again a second time. For them, it was all one event and they didn't, the Old Testament prophets couldn't see it.

But now, we're looking back on it and it's obvious to us that we can see it. But this is the mysteries of the kingdom, the secrets of the kingdom of God that for us, we get this now because we're living in New Testament times.

So he's talking about the, again, Luke chapter 8, verse 10, the secrets of the kingdom of God or the mysteries in Ephesians and in Galatians.

He's talking about the mysteries of God, Paul does, and that's what it's referring to. And then lastly, those from whom the mysteries of the kingdom of God are concealed, these are unbelievers. these people who cannot get it, they don't want to get it, and whose condemnation is thereby sealed. It's a done deal.

[18:24] Now, for any one person seated here today, we don't know that. So we would implore all of you to repent and trust Christ as Savior and to follow Him and for your life to become mature and growing in your relationship with Christ.

Absolutely. But we also understand that seated in this room, there's probably some people who are maybe even in between as we'll see with our parable today or people who are even just completely disinterested And don't want to have anything to do with it.

And maybe you're here today because it's just what people do. They go to church on Sundays or it's your family who has coerced you to come or whatever the reason might be.

But deep in your heart you would say, no, I'm really not interested. Thank you very much. So, let's take a look at this parable, shall we? We've taken the time to set up.

A sower went out to sow his seed. Now, this was going to be something that was very familiar. I don't know how many farmers we have in our little community here, but this was something that they would be familiar with.

[19:32] A plot of ground, different soils available on this plot of ground and the sower would be the Lord and the seed would be the gospel, the word of God.

And he begins to, you can imagine him carrying some sort of sack and reaching in by hand and dispersing the seed of the word of God onto these different types of soils.

So, it's not about the sower. The parable is not about the sower, the Lord, and it's not about the seed. The seed is the same throughout the story. The seed is the word of God.

That remains constant throughout this story. And as he sowed, some fell along the path and was trampled underfoot and the birds of the air devoured it.

People in an agricultural community would have certainly understood these kind of situations in any garden or plot of land. There would be footpaths in between where the plants were planted.

[20:30] This is where this first seed fell. And some fell on the rock or on rocky soil. And don't think of this as a field full of little rocks or maybe even some bigger rocks.

Think of this as a field that underneath of it is a base of rock. Think of limestone in that culture, in that setting there in the Middle East where there might be several inches of soil, but underneath of that was a layer of limestone.

And so the plants would have difficulty holding on to or retaining any kind of moisture would dry out quickly and die. So some fell on the rock and as it grew it withered away because it had no

moisture.

Again, in that community that he's in Israel in that country, they would have been familiar with that kind of land. And some fell among thorns.

The thorns grew up with it and choked it out. So it's competing with weeds. And in the competition, as any gardener knows, sometimes the weeds win.

[ 21 : 37 ] And that's unfortunate if you're wanting to get your produce from your garden. And some fell into good soil and grew and yielded a hundredfold.

And that's an incredible number in this particular context. The yield of which this seed produced the fruit of which it was intended to produce.

And so that's the parable. And he said these, as he said these things, he called out. And so this is like the tense of the, as he called out, the tense of that is that after each one of these little passages, after each one of these little illustrations, he called out, he who has ears to hear, let him hear.

So he would talk about the ones that fell on the footpath. He who has ears to hear, let him hear. As he talked about the ones on the rocky soil.

He who has ears to hear, let him hear. Say that five times fast. And he would do, and he called out, because this is about, are we just hearing?

[ 22 : 51 ] Or are you really listening? And so this is what, this is his parable. And now his disciples are coming, and they're asking Jesus for the explanation of that.

And so if you flip your notes over, you see on the second side of this, why do people respond the way they do? And that's what this parable is about, in terms of their level of listening.

Now the parable is this, Jesus would say, verse 11. Parable is this. He's explained, he's told them the parable, actually parables, but they're getting the explanation for this one.

And he's told them the reason why he's speaking in parables, so that some would perceive and some wouldn't. The parable is this. The seed is the word of God. We talked about that.

The ones along the path, are those who have heard, but then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved.

[ 23 : 57 ] So we have the first group of people, those on the footpath. And then the ones on the rock, the rocky soil with the limestone underneath a few inches of soil, are those who, when they hear the word, they receive it with joy.

They're like, oh man, yes, I'm saved. I'm trusting Christ as my savior. I'm on board. But these have no root. They believe for a while, but then in time of testing, they fall away.

Life gets hard sometimes. Someone they love gets sick, or they lose a job, or someone passes away, and they become bitter.

They begin to blame God. And so in that time of testing, they fall away. What does that mean? And as for what fell among the thorns, they are those who hear, but as they go on their way, they've accepted the message, but as they go on their way, they're choked by the cares and riches and pleasures of life, and their fruit does not mature.

So these are people who are just kind of taken aback by the cares of life. I want you to notice that in this passage, both here in Luke and also in Matthew and Mark, the list of things that this person is distracted by are not sinful or evil things.

[ 25 : 33 ] It's just the cares of this world, the pleasures of life, which can very much be God-given things that are wonderful, but when we allow these good things to crowd out what is the better thing, our relationship with God, that causes us also, then, to not have a maturing life.

Their fruit does not mature. Now, as for that and the good soil, they are those who, hearing the word, hold it fast. They hold it strong and in an honest and good heart, and their life bears fruit with patience.

Because if you're a gardener, a farmer, patience is a good thing. You need patience. And that's a part of this person's life.

So, we have these four different soils, and that's why this parable is referred to as the parable of the soils, not the parable of the sower.

There are some where that's the title of it. This is the parable of the soils, because it's the soils that are different and unique. There's four different kinds. The footpath, which represents a person with a hardened heart.

[ 26 : 58 ] And so, this person is a person who has basically already rejected God. And at first glance, I mean, the seed falls on the footpath, it's hardened, it doesn't penetrate, then the birds come, which represent the devil, right?

We've seen that. The devil comes and plucks the seed and plucks it away, and this person, it seems, it's all the devil's fault, kind of, is what we're thinking, but there's more to it than that. It is deeper than just that. What people who are like this don't understand is that their thinking is not their own.

Their clever ideas, their clever arguments, their opinions about spiritual truth is not original. It is not their own.

This is where the devil comes in and begins to lead them. They think they are firing shots against the message of the gospel or your version of Christianity or however they may term it, but what they don't understand is that, yes, they may be firing shots, but the ammunition is coming from the devil.

[ 28 : 17 ] He's supplying it. And so some of the arguments, well, God loves everybody, right? He's not judgmental. How dare us say anything about sin because God is not a judging God.

And that all, if there is a heaven, every one of us is going to get to be in heaven. That's the kind of a God that I believe in. Or the Bible is only man's opinion.

It was written by man after all and it's not God. And matter of fact, there's more than just one holy book. There are several religions that have holy books and how can you claim that yours is the only one?

Or something like, well, Jesus never claimed to be God. He never did that. He's just a good man. Or that science has disproven creation.

Evolution is true. And the resurrection is just a legend. It didn't really happen. These kinds of arguments, these kinds of opinions. Christianity is out of date.

[ 29 : 24 ] It needs to change with the times. There's no such thing as sin. The church is full of hypocrites. And what may be right for you?

is not right for me. And what they don't understand is they're being fed these lies without really even understanding that.

We, in Luke chapter, I'm sorry, 2 Corinthians chapter 4 verses 3 and 4, and even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing.

Those who are perishing, the group that Jesus talked about, the reason why the parables are concealed to a certain group of unbelieving people, it is veiled to those who are perishing.

In their case, the God of this world has blinded the minds of unbelievers to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel. unbelievers and the people are not in the gospel.

[ 30 : 35 ] what you might consider clever opinions or worldly wisdom is not coming from yourself. If you can hear the message today, and you have this on your notes, and you continue to not believe the gospel, understand that you are not the only one involved in your unbelief.

you have an enemy who's trying to keep you there. That's his whole goal. It's just to keep you comfortable, feeling safe, in your unbelief.

And the things that you believe are good arguments and wise opinions are just lies from the devil that have been around for centuries.

since creation of the world have been around. It's not new. And you need to understand and recognize this is his strategy.

And it's why the Bible talks about how when a person comes to faith in Jesus Christ, they're being moved from one kingdom to another. Colossians 1.13 says it this way, he has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved son.

[ 31 : 59 ] There's a reason why there's a transfer from the one kingdom to the other. It's because that's real. And so you might say, well, the devil, is that really real?

You believe in the devil and all that kind of stuff? Yes. Bluntly, yes. And if you don't, it's because that's where he wants you to stay.

Hear what it is the word of God has to say. The second soil is the rocky place. It's a shallow commitment. I've made a commitment either because I misunderstood the gospel.

I don't really understand the implications of the gospel. Sometimes people are presented with a gospel that is easy believism. It is a prosperity type of gospel that if I trust Christ as my savior, that everything is going to be wonderful, that I'm going to, my wallet's going to be filled, that I'm going to be healthy, and all of this stuff, God's going to take care of me now that I belong to him.

But we miss and understand that Jesus did not present that kind of a gospel. Any kind of a simple look at the Sermon on the Mount and much of his teaching and preaching throughout the New Testament is about the hardships of following Christ.

[ 33 : 33 ] About the difficulties, about the persecution that those who follow Christ will face as people who have trusted Christ as savior and who are willing to stand up for what they believe, there will be persecution, there will be hardship, there will be things that we have to deal with in a very broken world.

And those promises that the prosperity gospel people keep talking about are promises that are in a coming kingdom, the kingdom of God, and in heaven.

Where yes, in heaven, you will be as wealthy as you can imagine. And you will be as healthy as you can imagine. But we're not there yet.

The promised kingdom is here in the sense of it's where we are at spiritually. We belong in that kingdom. But we have not yet realized all the truths and the benefits that are yet to come from being in that kingdom.

And so the hardship that comes, Mark 4, 17, they have no root in themselves. What's interesting is the way that he says it here in Mark.

[ 34 : 53 ] They endure for a while. Hmm. What does that make them? Then when the tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately they fall away.

Hmm. What does that mean? I'm not going to leave you hanging there. I'm going to answer some of these questions. But it's hard. So the quickness of their response is an indication of their lack of depth or their lack of perception as to what the gospel really means.

And then you have those in the third type of soil, the briar patch among the thorns and the weeds.

And this represents misplaced priorities.

Misplaced priorities. Verses 18 and 19 of Mark chapter 4 read, 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 and choke the word and it proves interesting word here, unfruitful.

So these are not evil things. These actually may be good things that God has given us as gifts.

Every good and perfect gift comes down from the Father of lights.

[ 36 : 28 ] But even good gifts, if they prove to be a distraction from the most important relationship we have in this life, they become evil.

not in and of themselves but because of how they distract us from what God wants for us. So these people here are distracted.

It's just as simple as it can be. The cares of this world. If we look at our typical schedules, we've got so much going on and these are people who may even like to come to church and maybe come occasionally.

occasionally. But if there's anything better available to me, if there's a better option for me on a Sunday morning, well, guess where I'm at? That kind of mindset that says my relationship with the Lord is not as important as my own comfort, my own ability to gain wealth, my own ability to enjoy this life, all great things.

but if they're crowding out my relationship with God, they're chasing so many good things that the better things seldom get their attention.

[ 37 : 50 ] That's the third kind of soil. So these are the people that Paul in 1 Timothy chapter 6 might be describing. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction.

He's writing to believers, so this is not talking about ruin and destruction of hell, it's talking about the ruin and destruction in this life. That your life can be shipwrecked because you're allowing the affairs of this world, the attractions of this world, the distractions of this world, to gain your attention more than, nobody says you shouldn't go on vacation, nobody says you shouldn't have a fine home, nobody says you shouldn't have the finer things in life, have a salary that pays you, none of that is at issue here.

It's the issue of are you allowing those things? Other people can't answer that for you, but are you allowing those things to prove a distraction from the ultimate relationship with your heavenly father?

And then finally the fertile plot, this is the receptive heart, the receptive heart, but those that were sown on the good soil are the ones who hear the word and accept it and bear fruit.

Now the word bear fruit here is an interesting word, it's not just that they produce fruit, but that the fruit matures or we would call it ripens and gets to the point where it's ready to be feasted on, ready to be enjoyed.

[ 39 : 52 ] It has met what it was created for. fruit. We don't have fruit growing, whether vegetables or fruits, we don't grow things in order to eat them when they are immature, when they are not ripe, right?

We take a bite of an apple that's not ripe, we try to peel a banana that's not ripe, we try to eat a piece of corn on the cob that's not ripe, and so the idea here is that it bears fruit, that it ripens to the point where it's perfect, and you pluck the apple off the tree, and it just spits juice in your mouth, and it's wonderful, and the pear and the corn on the cob that the Lord intended for us to dress it up with butter and salt.

I believe that, I'm not sure where it's written, and I would say there is such a thing as the fruit of a cow, well I'm not talking about deer, I'm talking the fruit of cattle, the steak, when it's ripened, that's when it's ready to come off the grill, right?

okay? Do we have an emergency?

We're going to pause for a moment. Actually, what I'm going to do is I'm going to end the sermon right here, and next week we're going to pick up with this question.

[ 41 : 52 ] I always was going to come back next week. I've been wrestling with this passage all week, and it is a tough passage to understand, and answering this question is tough, and as I look at the clock, we're going to be here for a while, so we're going to answer this question, and whether this is even the right question, that might be even more important.

I'll let you, if you want to look at that, but we have some other verses that we're going to catch up to in verses 16 through 21 after we come back and look at this. That was always my intention for next week, so this is a good stopping point, and we're going to leave it here, so let's go ahead and close in prayer.

You might want to bring your sermon notes back, because we have some stuff, and then we'll have a new sermon notes for you for next week as well, so interesting question, which of these soils represents people who are saved?

Lord, we thank you for your word. We thank you for the opportunity that we have as we gather to share the word of God.

God, I pray, Lord, that you would, for each one of us, help us to understand that what matters as we read this teaching and as we try to understand this parable of the different soils, that we ask the most important question of all, and that is, what kind of soil am I?

[ 43 : 32 ] Not other people around me. not other people I may know or I have witnessed, but where am I at? Is my heart receptive to the things of God?

Am I distracted by the cares of this world and the pleasures and all that's available to us in this life? Things that you richly bless us with, and yet at the same time can cause us to be distracted from what matters the most.

Maybe it's a trial, a temptation, a difficulty that has kind of grabbed my life and caused me to pull away.

God's God's life. I pray that each one of us would answer that question and decide, yes, I want to have my life impacted by the word of God.

God's God's God's life. I want my life to produce fruit that matters, fruit that is ripened and ready to eat.

[ 44 : 53 ] May that be my life, the story of my life. So, Lord, again, we thank you for our time here together today.

We continue to pray for Kathleen that you would give her strength and help her to recover quickly. And, Lord, we love you and we thank you.

In Jesus' name, amen. All right, guys, thanks for coming. Have a great week. We'll see you next time.